

Stantonbury Neighbourhood Plan, Reg 16 consultation responses

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c/o Kevin & Christine Smith
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We would like to express our frustration about how the Neighbourhood Plan has been developed, specifically the plan identified as SNP 12 Stanton School. As you know, this suggests a new housing development covering part of the school land and also the park (defined as amenity land) behind Naseby Court.

Despite the fine words expressed in the Neighbourhood Plan document, there has never been any direct engagement with the residents of Naseby Court about these plans. The first time we became aware of them was when they were mentioned at the 29th March 2018 Community Drop-in event at the Bradville Hall Community Centre. We did not attend said event, as the SNP 12 Stanton School plan was not publicised in advance. Luckily some friends, who do not live in Naseby Court, attended the meeting because they had an interest in a property on Harrowden which they thought would be discussed.

Subsequent to this, both we and our next door neighbour - whose property is adjacent to Stanton School - have tried to find out more details of the plans. We have not been able to do so. We attended an engagement event together on 27th July 2018 on Redbridge, Stantonbury, where we asked why the residents of Naseby Court had not been consulted. We were told by the Neighbourhood Plan Project Manager that we had been sent leaflets about the plans; this is just not true. We explained that nobody we know in Naseby Court had received ANY direct communication on this.

At this event, we and our neighbour submitted statements on the forms provided, detailing our objections to these plans, together with complaints about the lack of consultation.

Neither of our statements is documented in the Consultation Statement that has been produced. Why have our statements not been included? In fact, there are no statements at all by any resident, that cover the Stanton School development – a damning judgement on the lack of engagement with the key resident stakeholders for this particular plan.

I note that “representatives from the (Stanton School) federation have been on the NPSG since the outset. The policy has been developed with their full support” – but with zero input from the residents most effected. Is this a fair and democratic process?

We would also like to highlight that the first we became aware of the deadline for final comments on the plan was via the Parish Newsletter delivered to us only last weekend – this just adds to a pattern of failure to consult properly.

On the specific merits of the plan itself, I would like to point out some obvious issues:
1/ Environmental

– Why was no Local Green Space Designation considered for the park behind Naseby Court? As well as the splendid trees, it is the home of a variety of wildlife and provides a rare oasis of quiet in the middle of existing housing. Other nearby green spaces are primarily open fields in comparison.

- How is it possible for the ancient copse (described as an orchard) on Stanton School land to be built on? My understanding is that it has a deed of covenant applied to it?

- Surrounding Naseby Court with houses will destroy the peace of the area.

2/ Safety

– Mercers Drive is already a rat route used by commuters. There are regular incidents of speeding and cars parked on the road in unsafe places. This is a threat to the residents of the area, particularly school children walking to and from Stanton and Pepper Hill Schools and Stantonbury International School. Adding an additional 40+ homes is only going to increase the problem.

No doubt we would have other concerns but as we cannot obtain any detailed information on the plans despite freedom of information requests by my neighbour – we will have to reserve them for another day.