



STONEY STANTON PARISH COUNCIL

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23rd November 2023

Objection to the Proposed Disposal of Land adjacent to South Drive

Dear Blaby District

The Council is opposed to the proposed disposal of the land adjacent to South Drive. The Council were also very disappointed that Blaby District Council (BDC) failed to inform SSPC that the disposal had been considered and that we first learned of the disposal in the Leicester Mercury and the very tight response time of 2 weeks had already begun. There have been no notices on lampposts or notice boards and given the limited readership of newspapers these days, only the very bare minimum of advertisement has taken place. Between these and that the BDC session where this was consulted upon was held as a closed session must also be questioned as to the adequacy of consultation in an open and transparent manner took place. The document in the Leicester Mercury states "a parcel of land used as open public space" is somewhat misleading bearing in mind the statements below and the actual use and value of the land.

The land is described as open countryside by BDC and whilst the space is open, it is certainly not countryside. The land has been a recreational space since the inception of the South Drive estate and forms part of the land title that the remainder of the estate falls within. As part of the development of the South Drive estate, the recreational land was left in BDC ownership and for 20+ years had a playground for children located within it which was maintained by BDC throughout its tenure. The playground consisted of a monkey climb and swing set that many residents have fond memories of and pictures of many generations enjoying the land.

The land is the only safe place for children to play without crossing major over capacity roads and within a local distance to their homes, indeed there is no other local space in the vicinity. The land is also used by the local Cubs and Beaver groups where they conduct regular sessions when the weather permits. The area is in continual use by dog walkers, exercise groups and many elderly people whose only access to recreational space is this land and thus a significant contributor to their health and wellbeing both physical and mental. During the pandemic the land served as a space for local people to exercise and meet in a safe location and this has continued with an increase in local dog ownership.

Given that in BDC's own strategy stipulates that "good quality green space make a considerable contribution to the quality of life of residents and visitors and sustainable communities", the removal of the land from the control of the local councils with safeguards against use for residential or

industrial purposes or roads to support future developments would detrimentally impact the local community the sale of the land is against the strategy of BDC itself.

Further BDC document “Blaby Green Space Strategy 2012” considers “all green space of public value.... Which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”. The land in question falls very much within this category and given the examples that local residents have provided on separate responses as well as those documented here, the disposal of the land would fall outside the criteria and strategy document.

The Blaby District Health and Wellbeing Plan 2023-2026 stipulates “This plan recognises and acknowledges the importance of creating engaged and cohesive communities by building trust and gaining a deeper understanding of their needs if we are to make a difference”. Given the statements previously in this objection the sale of the land and release of control from the local Councils would be detrimental and negatively impact the local community and go against BDC plan.

Over a number of years, the village has had many issues with flooding and excessive water be it foul or fresh water. The land is adjacent to one of the main watercourses and during heavy rainfall absorbs large amounts of water, this must be taken into consideration for any disposal and maintenance of the watercourse and protection of the adjacent properties.

Should BDC still continue with the disposal of land, it must be sold with options that it can't be used for housing development or to support green space in a new housing development. If it is, then used by a potential housing developer either for house building or as green space for a future housing development then BDC must receive additional monies between the value as open Countryside and that of development land thus maximising the return on the sale. A concern of SSPC is that when we enquired about the proposed procurement of the land, we were informed that it would probably fall outside the financial abilities of the council, this indicates that if the land is sold then it would only be to support or directly for housing or infrastructure development.

In summary given that the disposal of the land directly contradicts many of BDC's own policy documents, fails to identify the use of the land and the value to the local community as well as the lack of communication that has taken place regarding the proposed disposal that this should be rejected, and the land retained as recreational space under the control of the local authority. If the local authority is unable to carry out maintenance works, then approach to SSPC would be most appropriate and welcome where an adoption of land could be considered as has been the case in many other areas in the village.

Kind Regards

Roz Ward

Clerk to Stoney Stanton Parish Council (SSPC)