

15th December 2019

Comments on Stroud District Council Local Plan Leonard Stanley PS16 and PS42

Both of these sites were farmed by the Godsell family as part of Mankley Field until building work commenced in 2015. The evidence file for the Village Green application held by GCC contains copies of the annual rental agreement with GCC for their land PS16. No written agreement re rental was produced for the Basilica land PS42 but it was farmed together with the rest as one unit. Until 2010 the land was grazed and thereafter crops were sown and harvested. The final harvest was taken in 2014 but the two sites PS16 and PS42 were not ploughed and reseeded but left uncultivated.

Part of the reason why there is a wide strip of grassland in the centre of the Saxon Gate development is because a portion of the land was deemed by the Developers as too wet to build on. That portion of land is far less wet than the Basilica land (PS42).

The Basilica land was always the wettest part of Mankley Field. In one of the years when a crop was sown (? 2012) the crop was not harvested because the land was too wet for the harvester and the crop was left to rot. All of the other land was harvested. In wet weather you can actually hear the water flowing beneath your feet.

All of this land has always been wet. Not for nothing is Marsh Lane so called. Some 3/5 years ago the school flooded with water coming up through the floor. The housing built (2015-2017) by Lioncourt on the site adjoining Mankley Field in King's Stanley was equally wet. I am told by an ex Stroud District Councillor that to date 8 of those houses have been flooded by water rising through the floors and I am aware of at least 2 houses having been flooded for the same reason on the Saxon Gate Development with a number of others reporting rising damp in their houses. Given that these are people's homes it gives me no satisfaction to say we told you so. To build more homes where there is every likelihood of them being flooded would be grossly irresponsible. For this reason alone the proposal to build on these sites should be abandoned. I attach a plan showing the various locations.

Sustainability.

People moving onto the Saxon Gate Development have been unable to register with Doctors in Stonehouse because they are full. Children cannot get in to any of the local schools because they are full. The school is, I hear, building a new classroom for the 2020 intake but if that is going to be a year on year doubling of intake they will eventually need 6 new classrooms which will take up most if not all of the existing playground meaning that the land PS16 will be needed for what we villagers have always understood it to be for ie. an extension to the existing playground. The children from Saxon Gate are having to go to schools in places such as Nympsfield , Cashes Green etc. not through parental choice but because there is no room for them locally. Some of the parents were taking legal advice with

a view to suing the builders for false information suggesting there was local schooling.

The numbers of children estimated prior to Mankley Field being developed by GCC was totally inadequate, anyone could guess that 50 "affordable" homes would have more than 32 children and to that needs to be added the children of the other 100 family homes.

Social housing tenants have moved in and then out because there are no facilities eg coffee shops on the doorstep. People unemployed and accustomed to town life do not settle here because of the lack of anything to do.

The following are the Planning Inspector's comments re his decision on Mankley Field:

I have studied the criticisms of the transport assessment and accept that this may contain some flaws. I saw on my visits, including along the local roads referred to, that many of these are not suitable for cycling.

27. On the other hand, subject to conditions and the s106 obligation, there would be improvements to footways, bus stops and shelters, and the houses would be built to Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Finally, a travel plan could be required to demonstrate a modal shift away from the private car and so promote more sustainable modes of transport and help move towards a low carbon economy. No details were provided of how this shift would be expected to be achieved, but a sum of £49,250 would be made available through the s106 obligation. In the absence of details, such as specific proposals for significant subsidies for improved bus services, or schemes for new cycle lanes, the likelihood that what I consider to be a relatively modest sum, for the number of houses, could make a significant impact is unclear. Nevertheless, while greater precision would have been desirable, on balance I find that the condition and s106 obligation would be likely to make some, albeit modest, contribution to the environmental role of sustainable development. This would offset some of the harm that would otherwise arise as a result of the limitations of the existing transport links.

Despite the above the through bus to Gloucester has been withdrawn meaning that anyone wanting to go to the hospital either for an appointment or visiting has to get off the bus in Stonehouse and wait for anything up to ½ an hour to go on to Gloucester. This is clearly a useless service for anyone working in Gloucester.

We are now in a worse state than when the Inspector made his ruling and added to the problems that then existed we now have some 300 extra vehicles (plus another 100 from the Lioncourt development) using roads which were already inadequate.

There is no work in the village. Anyone working here has to travel outside of the village. It is clear from the time people leave and re-enter the village that most of the newcomers are commuting distances. The number of cars outside practically every house on Saxon Gate is 2+. As ever the number of vehicles estimated at the planning stage of Mankley Field was seriously understated.

There have been problems in the houses on Saxon Gate with sewage backing up into the houses. I do not know whether this is because of the way the builders have built or whether it is as a result of the main sewers not being adequate. I am, however, aware that all of the water and sewage had to be taken off the main supply network on Bath Rd and that none was allowed to be connected to Marsh Lane/ Dozule Close. It is well known in the village that the sewage capacity in Dozule Close has been reached. Presumably the same restrictions would apply to the land PS42 and PS16 and if the problem is with the main sewer on Bath Rd this will be exasperated by yet more housing.

The Draft Plan does not show where the access point(s) for the two sites are located. Dozule Close has a weight limit of 7 tons. This is the same as that for Marsh Lane where huge chunks of tarmac were ripped up by the 44 ton trucks turning onto the site. Because Marsh Lane was being widened the builders reinstated the surface. This would not be the same if the entrance was from Dozule Close which is already a two car width. Highways are not too keen to repair the damage to the Highway as is clear from the length of road outside the Village Hall in Marsh Rd which has been destroyed by the lorries. The water flowing up through the various holes is not Severn Trent water etc. but is as a result of the underlying clay being compacted. Water was coming up even in the very dry weather and this has been an ongoing issue for 9 months. Highways do not want to do the necessary work until after the builders have finished on Saxon Gate, presumably because they know that the continuous movement of heavy traffic will destroy the road again. This being the case any access to PS42 and PS16 should be refused other than via Bath Rd. This damage extends along the whole frontage of the Village Hall and car park. The damage is almost weekly repaired by tarmac patching but only lasts a few days. The road had a temporary repair on Monday 9th December and by 12th December the tarmac had been ripped up and the pavement outside the Village Hall (Polling Station) was littered with lumps of rubble.

Meanwhile the stretch of road in Marsh Lane between the junctions of Church Rd and Dozule Close is splitting into two halves with a crevasse running up the middle of the road.

It is just not realistic to keep dumping more housing into small villages just to play a numbers game without bringing the infrastructure up to date.

SDC's responsibility to its citizens.

I believe SDC should have a duty of care to its citizens. It was accepted by the Planning Inspector that the village had an elderly population and for that reason strict rules were put in place for the builders by the Inspector as follows:

10. No construction site machinery or plant shall be operated, no process shall be carried out and no construction-related activities taken or dispatched from the site except between the hours 08:00 and 18:00 on Mondays to Fridays, between 08:00 and 13:00 hours on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.

These rules have constantly been disregarded by the builders and despite repeated reports being given to SDC little action has been taken. The site has been opened daily at around 6.15. We elderly, home all day, have lived with the constant disruption to our lives for what will be 4 1/4 years by the time that work finishes next March. The constant bleeping from reversing machines the shouting and screaming, radios blaring out Rap Music and at times three or four radios with different programmes vying with each other, the dust, constant window cleaning etc. have totally disrupted our lives. I had my gas connection broken and which I ended up notifying the Gas Company as the builders had merely covered it over with gravel, all my neighbours up Marsh Lane had their phone lines ripped out by the roadworkers. I know that this has affected my health and I know others who say the same. To ask those in Dozule Close to have yet more years of this is unreasonable. All the bungalows in Dozule Close backing onto PS42 are occupied by elderly folk. It is a narrow strip of land so any work there will be right up close to their homes. Furthermore if, as is rumoured, these are self build homes then it will be virtually impossible to stop building works in the evenings and weekends.

To say that "it is only for a couple of years" is maybe ok if you are out at work all day and if you are young but at our ages that might be the only few years left to us! It really is time to say no to this and put that housing elsewhere. The Dozule Close residents have already had their fair share of this disruption. Unless you have experienced living with a building site you will not know how horrendous the experience is and the toll it takes on you.

We were given assurances that once the Saxon Gate Development was done that there would be no more development on Mankley Field. That assurance has been very short lived.

These two sites were not included as preferred sites on the earlier Plan. It would seem that they are now so included because another authority ie GCC wishes to make money. Planning should I suggest be based on the right location to build and not on the basis of who is going to make the money from it.

These sites, and in particular site PS42, are not the right place to put more housing.

Wildlife Protection.

I note that the portion of land adjoining Marsh Lane in PS42 is to be a green space and not built on. My request is that whatever happens can there please have some form of protection for the Blackthorn thicket which has a very large roost of sparrows which I believe are now in a steep decline? I have marked the area with an S on the plan. I believe that the remainder of the hedge between Saxon Gate and Basilica already has protected status, We have already lost so much land for our wildlife. Please let us conserve something.

It would seem that I personally am not likely to be affected by the proposals in the Draft Plan. Perhaps therefore you will read this in the knowledge that I am not being a nimby but am telling you the truth as I and others did re Lioncourt and Saxon Gate. Unfortunately the new home owners are having to live with the consequences that have arisen from housing being built on land which was unsuitable for development.



