

# *Prestbury Parish Council*



**Mrs Georgina Ryder  
41 Kenilworth Road  
Macclesfield  
Cheshire  
SK11 8PE  
Tel: 01625 260362**

**Email: [parish.clerk@ntlworld.com](mailto:parish.clerk@ntlworld.com)  
[www.prestburyparish.com](http://www.prestburyparish.com)**

Dr. Simon Hyde,  
The King's School,  
Cumberland Street,  
Macclesfield,  
Cheshire,  
SK10 1DA.

c.c. Mr. David Malcolm & Mr. Nick Turpin,  
Cheshire East Council Planning Department,  
Westfields,  
Middlewich Road,  
Sandbach,  
Cheshire,  
CW11 1HZ.

Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Dear Dr. Hyde,

**Response to pre-planning application consultation by King's School about their proposals to move from their Cumberland Street and Fence Avenue sites in Macclesfield to a new Green Belt site within Prestbury Parish and to redevelop their two existing sites**

Although you came to address Prestbury Parish Council in April about King's School's hopes of relocating from two Macclesfield sites to a Green Belt site within Prestbury Parish, the Council has only just, along with the rest of the public, been able to see indicative proposals for the new campus (and for the existing sites) illustrated as part of the exhibitions currently being held and on the website that was opened up on the date of the first exhibition, ie. July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. We have a number of issues to raise about the consultation and about information that is still not in the public domain.

The Parish Council received notification by e-mail of the exhibitions and the consultation at the end of the working day on Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> (ie. the day before the school's last day of term). This notice informed us that the first exhibition (and preview for Councillors) would be taking place six days later on Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup>.

As no notices appeared on any of our noticeboards about the exhibitions and consultation, we felt it incumbent upon us to post some notices ourselves, which we did. The only school-generated notice we have in fact observed is an advertisement in the local newspaper, the Macclesfield Express, which appeared on the same morning as the first exhibition. And then, when the July Parish Council meeting took place on July 14<sup>th</sup>, some suggested notices for noticeboards were discovered in the letterbox at the Parish Council Chamber, sent by your consultants Savills. The date on the covering letter was July 9<sup>th</sup> – the day after the first exhibition in Prestbury!

The Parish Council enquired what other measures the school had undertaken to raise awareness amongst local people and has been informed that the school delivered notifications to properties in the immediate vicinity, ie. along the eastern end of Alderley Road, around Four Lane Ends and down Macclesfield Road as far as Summerhill Road. In other words, to households that would be most affected as immediate neighbours if the proposed new school campus were to go ahead. This being the case, the Parish Council is endeavouring to have a newsletter published and circulated in time to give all residents a couple of days' notice of the last exhibition on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

No closing date for the consultation has been advertised anywhere – not even on the survey form. When consultants were asked about the closing date at the first preview, they first of all stated, following some confusion, that it would be two weeks after the last exhibition. This was then amended to one week after the last exhibition, ie. July 29<sup>th</sup>. This, therefore, is the date we quote in the newsletter.

Unless potentially interested people happened to spot the King's School advertisement - which was on the educational page in the Macclesfield Express - or were browsing through your main website, they would not be aware of the fact that you have set up a special website showing some of the same images that were on display at the exhibition (although not the same text). Even people attending the exhibition would have to have a keen eye to spot the reference to the special website – and there is none on the consultation form. It is unknown how long this special website will remain 'live' for, whether it will be a constant factor throughout the planning process or whether it will 'come and go'.

The survey form itself has a number of shortcomings.

Question 1 asks *'Do you agree that it is important to Macclesfield that the King's School retains its association with the town?'*

We believe that this question and other statements which refer to the school "*remaining within Macclesfield*" (as is opined, for instance, on an exhibition board) are disingenuous. The entire footprint of the proposed new campus is within Prestbury Parish. The border with Macclesfield Town lies some way beyond the other side of the Four Lane Ends junction. There is a genuine risk that material which has been published to date (such as the original press release of April this year) will have misled some people. Prestbury Parish Council seeks reassurance that all future references to the location of the new campus state honestly and openly that the site is in Prestbury.

The survey form also fails to ask for respondents' opinion on Green Belt per se. Question 2 is worded in such a way that anyone answering it appears to be giving tacit approval to the concept of building on Green Belt. This will affect the way the survey responses are analysed.

There are no questions about landscape or setting and, very noticeably, nothing about traffic. No factual information is provided on the exhibition boards, the website or the survey form about the amount of land that buildings would cover (3.5 acres - over 150,000 square feet), about the amount of car parking (a minimum of 250 spaces) or the amount of land taken for internal roads and alterations to external roads. Nor is there anything about the provision of a paved footpath leading to the new entrance on Alderley Road or about the future of mature trees along Alderley Road.

Other environmental issues such as floodlighting of the site and/or new playing fields or potential impacts on the Bollin Valley, Big Wood and Dumber Wood are also not covered.

When asked, the consultants present at the first exhibition:

- refused to outline what ‘special circumstances’ applied to the site to unequivocally make the case for a major new school campus being built in Green Belt – they merely persisted in explaining what the school wanted to do (the Parish Council had already heard this at the presentation in April).
- refused to supply sight line views – the exhibition merely showed where sight lines had been taken from
- refused to reveal any traffic modelling information at all – they merely explained in response to a direct question that they had only been asked so far to model impacts as far as the village centre and not impacts on all access and egress roads

If this consultation were intended to be the first of more than one and another stage was intended to reveal the essential missing and more detailed information, these shortcomings might have been acceptable. But this is not the case.

The intention, which has been spelt out to us quite unequivocally, is that – following this consultation and series of four exhibitions held during the school holidays – the school intends to submit its planning application to Cheshire East Council later this summer. If this is what is allowed to happen, it means that stakeholders such as ourselves, residents and others will not have been properly consulted beforehand. As this is the largest planning application in our parish in a generation – and it is on land which the Green Belt assessment for the Local Plan classes as making a ‘major contribution’ to Green Belt – we feel that we have no alternative but to object to being treated in this manner.

We would also like to draw your attention to a press release issued by Cheshire East Council on Friday (July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015) following last week’s budget. In relation to building on previously developed land rather than Green Belt, the Leader of CEC, Councillor Michael Jones said:

***“I echo the statement by the Business Secretary that this [ie. the relaxing of planning regulations on brownfield sites] will speed up schemes and preclude the need for building in Green Belt and we in Cheshire East see ourselves as a vanguard of this new policy.***

***“Here in Cheshire East we are under constant pressure to grant permissions on Green Belt and we want to protect the countryside on behalf of our residents. This policy will help us do that”.***

The press release went on:

*“Cheshire East Council recently secured a £100,000 grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government to establish a local development order in Macclesfield where two brownfield sites can be cleaned up and prepared for development.....*

*“Such a policy will help to breathe new life into our towns”.....*

*Around 47 hectares of brown land has been identified as having development potential.*

Prestbury Parish Council has also made the point, many times in previous submissions, that it is important to focus on brownfield development in the urban areas in order to regenerate them.

We would point out that examples used by the consultants for this application quote grammar schools elsewhere in the country that have been allowed to build on greenfields. Such examples are not relevant in this case. One of them involved an extension of an existing building – not a new build - and neither of them relate to Green Belt.

The government has consistently re-stated its commitment to protecting Green Belt and the vast majority of Prestbury residents, who we represent, have stated in two household surveys conducted since the turn of the millennium that they value it enormously and do not want to see it built upon. This being the case, we are still waiting to learn from the school what very special circumstances exist that make the case for such a large development on Green Belt.

We also want to see the evidence the site lines exercise has produced, a full environmental statement, the results of a comprehensive traffic modelling exercise and infrastructure plans outside the campus for dealing with the extra traffic and all the new walking and cycling movements into and out of the site. We trust that the principal authority is also asking for this same information.

Should you be minded to respond to this letter, I would be obliged if you would please send your correspondence to me at [Christine@musgrove.me.uk](mailto:Christine@musgrove.me.uk) as the Parish Clerk is currently on sick leave. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

**COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE MUSGROVE**

Vice Chairman,  
Prestbury Parish Council