

SAVE ST. GILES

14th March 2016

Chiltern District Council

Planning Policy Team
Chiltern District Council Offices
King George V Road
King George V House
Amersham
Bucks
HP6 5AW

Dear Chiltern District Council,

Please accept this submission in request to a call for responses to the Local Plan.

We would like to express our concern that this was a very poorly organised and badly executed exercise to assess the response of real people who live in Buckinghamshire and who care about their communities and environments.

The hundreds of pages of information, the complex terminology and the complicated phrasing of questions meant that everyone from university graduates to Parish Councillors to normal local people were completely baffled by what was being asked of them.

In addition the time scale was so short that no one had time to properly research or prepare their responses.

As residents of Chalfont St Giles we became aware of the Local plan only two weeks before the closing deadline when we discovered that an area of green space in the centre of our village, an area classed not only as Green Belt but an Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty was highlighted on Page 40 of the Local Plan.

It was then discovered that this 'apparently' random area that is so integral to the heart and character of our village was owned by Chiltern District Council and having purchased the land at an agricultural rate the Council would benefit significantly from downgrading it under their own system in preparation to sell as prime development land.

Our village was outraged at this suggestion and immediately mobilised themselves setting up a Face book page (Save St. Giles) and Website (www.savestgiles.com) to use the Local Plan to voice their opinion and to request that the area under threat (Upper Stone Meadow) in addition to a separate Meadow also Council owned (Lower Stone Meadow) be protected from any development in the future by placing a restrictive covenant on the land.

As part of our submission we would like to include all facts, figures, reports, local posts and opinions featured on our Facebook page and Website mentioned above and would ask that you visit and review these sites to strengthen our opinion and evidence relating to our own community.

Our calculations relating to our own group suggest you will receive close to 1,500 responses by post, online, email to the Local Plan and the same number of rejections to the proposal to downgrade Stone Meadows from Green Belt and AONB. This response is with 2 weeks notice and from a small village with a population of less than 6,000.

If the Local Plan is a genuine exercise, if despite the time scale and the complex and confusing criteria, you genuinely want to know what local people are passionate about, if you want to know what they want to preserve and protect as set out in the Local Plan then you will find it has been made very clear from the community of Chalfont St Giles.

We demand that you immediately cancel any plans to downgrade or develop the land as detailed above and accept that our green infrastructure needs to be protected, This is a green space that is integral to the character of our village, to its history and heritage and to the community of today and in the future.

We request that Chiltern District Council, as owners of the Stone Meadows respect the process of this Local Plan and respect the voice of our community and place a protective covenant on Upper and Lower Stone Meadow and protect land that was bought with public funds for the good of the public.

Yours Sincerely,

Save St. Giles Group