

STAPLEGROVE PARISH COUNCIL

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Dear Rod,

17th February 2018

Connecting Staplegrove Spine Road to Cheddon Road

You will have received a copy of my letter to Mike O'Dowd-Jones which contains a number of reasons to refute his claim that there is no demand for the connection between Staplegrove Spine road and Cheddon Road. I know that you have been told and have always said that a ring road is not going to happen, but it has been a strong desire of TDBC for many years to have this extension and it will most certainly come sometime in the future. The road being installed now has the advantages stated in my letter and would reduce congestion at the many road junctions identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

The proposed development plan of course includes a 'protected route' aimed at going round the north of Pyrland Hall. This was no doubt positioned by the promoters who might rather fancy a second bite at the cherry with another huge estate which would be necessary to fund the road! But this land would firstly have to be found acceptable for housing and be included when TDBC next need to show a five year supply of land for housing. It would then have go through the whole planning process such as is happening now, which means it would be 10 or more years before a ring road would appear. The benefits are needed now.

It might seem perhaps unfortunate that the connection would have to cross National Trust land. However, Pyrland Hall was converted to a school in 1953 and is no longer connected to NT. The remaining land belongs to *Pyrland Hall Farm and its 45 hectares* (including the parkland) *was bequeathed to the NT in 1972 as 'investment land'; that is, land that the National Trust can sell when the time is right and use the proceeds to raise funds for the Trust's conservation works. Pyrland Hall Farm does not meet the Trust's rigorous criteria for land that should be protected for ever. It was stated that money raised by the sale of the farm should be used to benefit Fyne Court, with any residue used in Somerset.* (I am quoting from a NT leaflet).

Fyne Court gets a glowing write up in their year book but there is no mention of the farm or the parkland at all, but I believe it has been suggested that some money would go to reinstating trees in the parkland south of the Hall. Another way of NT benefitting the local area would be by selling more land for the connecting length of road, without any housing alongside, which would also enable the parkland to be viewed by the public and be an additional band of unofficial green wedge.

Ideally, the junction with Kingston Road should move approximately 150m further north from its current planned position which would then make both the spine road and the connecting link much straighter and significantly shorter. The road in this position could preserve a few more 100 year old oak trees and still avoid confirmed dormice nest sites. I'm sure that an approach to the NT with this in mind might well be rewarding and they would be benefitting the local area in a much more satisfactory and valuable way.

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The Parish Council will continue to push for this very short length of additional carriageway and will stress with Highways the advantages of a 6 mile long ring road alternative route round Taunton when we have the face to face meetings with them, as required following the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

I would welcome your thoughts and any help that you could give through your contacts in the meantime would be very much appreciated.

Regards and many thanks

Michael