



Fact checker

For misinformation circulated by Stop the Swap campaign

Who is behind the Stop the Swap campaign?

The publishers, funders and distributors of this misinformation have not declared who they are. You are entitled to ask why.

Do we have to have any more housing?

Yes. Additional housing was imposed upon Modbury by the Joint Local Plan (JLP).

The two Bloor sites already account for most of the new housing. So we must do our best to have the remainder as the type of homes that the people of Modbury said the town needs: i.e. **genuinely affordable housing**.

Will the site east of Ayleston Park provide many more affordable homes?

Yes. The site east of Ayleston Park would provide **50% i.e. 20 genuinely affordable homes**. By contrast, commercial developers are required to build only 30% of "affordable" homes on sites of more than 11 homes. Their definition of 'affordable' means the market price less a discount of 20%. But at Modbury property prices and local salaries, these homes are still out of reach for many. No plans have been proposed for Pennpark so the actual *type* of affordable homes cannot be compared.

Did residents want all new housing in one part of the town?

No. An overwhelming **89% of respondents** to the 2016 questionnaire **stated they did not want all the new housing to be in one part of town**. The Pennpark site is adjacent to the Palm Cross sites, so were that site to be developed, it would create exactly what 89% of the people said they did not want: one large development of 173 homes in one area of Modbury.

Will home density on the site east of Ayleston Park be greater than the surrounding area?

No. The density will be less than that of nearby Tuckers Brook.

Is the Pennpark site a 'brownfield' site?

No. It is a mixed greenfield and brownfield site.

Is there a flooding risk on the site east of Ayleston Park?

Thanks to the considerable efforts of the Environment Agency, and funding support from Devon County Council, Modbury recently emerged unscathed from one of the wettest winters on record.

See independent assessments below:

"I can confirm that the development site in question was included in the design runoff calculations for the flood storage volumes. With a suitably designed SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) for the new development, mimicking the greenfield runoff rates, this will not have any negative impact on the flood defences. It is therefore understood that the development will not compromise the new flood improvements."

Devon County Council Flood and Coastal Risk Manager

Ayleston Park was designed to accommodate further development to the east, therefore the foul water system would have been designed with capacity for more dwellings.

"I would suggest that the alternative housing site at Ayleston Park has better access to our infrastructure and would, from our point of view, be preferred to PennPark"

South West Water

Was there a preference for development sites to the north and west of Modbury?

Unsurprisingly, residents tended to favour the sites furthest away from them. There was some preference for sites to the north and west of the town. That wish has been fulfilled by the construction of 133 homes at Palm Cross phases one and two.

Was the re-consultation on the site legitimate?

Yes. The questionnaire was drafted by an independent planning adviser and distributed to all homes with the Modbury Messenger in July 2019 and posted on the Parish Council's noticeboard and website. The response period ran until Aug 30th. The verdict was clear: 59% in favour and 41% against.

All statutory organisations were also reconsulted. However, their responses were not counted in the community response figures.

Details of community responses 'For' and 'Against' and organisational responses are contained in the Response to Consultation reports which can be found on the following websites: www.modburynpg.co.uk and the PC website: www.modburypc.co.uk. All of these documents were scrutinised by SHDC before publication. Consultation results were formally presented to the Parish Council and published on PC's website in February 2020.

Is it true the community were not informed?

No. The Neighbourhood Plan process has been subject to a number of consultations since it began in 2015. A look on the Neighbourhood Plan website www.modburynpg.co.uk under "Consultations" gives details of these.

The proposal to substitute the site East of Ayleston Park for Pennpark was shown very clearly in an 8 page overview of the then 'draft' Neighbourhood Plan in March 2018. This was distributed as an insert in the Messenger.

SHDC confirmed that a substitution of sites would not undermine the aims of the Joint Local Plan, as long as it delivered the same number of homes and fulfilled all the necessary requirements and was considered to better meet the needs of the community. It was decided that an additional consultation would be undertaken. The Consultation Paper was distributed with the Messenger in July 2019 and ran until August 30th 2019.

The progress of the Neighbourhood Plan was regularly reported upon at Parish Council meetings, posted on the Parish Council website and periodically in the Messenger.

Was the Neighbourhood Plan Group's website down this year?

Yes, due to technical issues beyond their control. However, all the key Neighbourhood Plan information was available on the Parish Council's website which was operational throughout and the Neighbourhood plan website is now operational.

Was there a previously agreed 3 month consultation period?

No. That time period was never agreed. It became a possibility (not an agreement) when the Government published advice on Neighbourhood Plan consultation, during the COVID restrictions. In May, as a result of this, the Council agreed a six week period was sufficient, subject to agreed measures being in place for those without access to the internet.

The Parish Council consulted with SHDC and also checked what other Parishes in South Hams and West Devon were doing prior to commencing the consultation. It was established that the 6 week period was the norm. The Parish Council did not consider the people of Modbury were any less able than residents of other parishes to evaluate their Neighbourhood Plan in the required 6 week period.

Will Pennpark be removed from the JLP if the Neighbourhood Plan is approved?

Yes. If the Neighbourhood Plan is approved, the PennPark site will be removed and replaced by the proposed site east of Ayleston Park. What will happen to future Government/District Council planning policy is impossible to predict.

Is it true that the east of Ayleston Park site was rejected by SHDC in 2017 in their site consideration for the Joint Local Plan and for 25 homes?

No. The site which was considered by SHDC was a much larger site of 9.68 hectares which included land running down to the stream. The proposed site is much smaller at 1.45 hectares and in 2019 was subject to an independent Strategic Environmental Assessment by AECOM which is available on the NP Group's and Parish Council's websites.

So the site referred to in the quote used by Stop the Swap campaign (and taken from the JLP assessments in 2017) refers to the much larger site that included adjoining fields. This quote has thus been taken out of context, distorting the information. That larger site was not rejected due to the number of homes but due to topography. The currently proposed site has never been rejected and has been subjected to a number of independent assessments of its suitability.

Will the site east of Ayleston Park site worsen traffic congestion and add to safety concerns for pedestrians?

The east of Ayleston Park site offers better pedestrian access to most town centre facilities and a safe pedestrian route to the school. The independent Strategic Environmental Assessment concluded that this site had significant advantages in terms of health and transportation due to easy

pedestrian access to the town centre facilities which will encourage walking rather than cars for local journeys.

Traffic is an issue in Modbury whichever site is considered. Residents coming from Pennpark would be more likely to use cars to come into the town centre as there is no pedestrian access along the A379. A key problem for Brownston Street is the volume of heavy commercial traffic and the PC intends to lobby DCC for restrictions to be placed on these and to look at other measures for traffic calming and pedestrian access around the town. This is also an ambition in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Is the site east of Ayleston Park about to “disappear under concrete forever”?

No. Through the creation of a Community Land Trust, Modbury would have a say in the development of the overall site, not just the **genuinely affordable** part. The environmental and housing policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are designed to promote a good quality, well landscaped development and to protect and enhance valuable biodiversity.

Is the proposed field of high value in terms of biodiversity?

No. The site is a monoculture of low-grade agricultural grazing land (as was Ayleston Park before it was developed). The biodiversity value lies in the surrounding hedgerows which would be retained and protected by the environmental policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Will there be no off-street parking on the site East of Ayleston Park?

A plan clearly marked (on STS’s own leaflet) as a ‘concept sketch’ has been misinterpreted. Off-street parking is a mandatory planning requirement so it will be provided.

Is the site east of Ayleston Park one of Modbury’s public open spaces?

No. It is privately owned farm land with a public footpath which runs *around the perimeter* of the field. There is no right of way *across* the field. The footpath would be retained for public use.

Would the site east of Ayleston Park have homes made from containers?

No. The very notion is absurd. Yet it is claimed in the Stop the Swap literature.

There is also an attempt to suggest that ‘genuinely affordable’ means cheap and shoddy. This is totally untrue. One of architecture’s most prestigious awards ‘The Stirling Prize’ was awarded last year to a social housing development in Norwich. It can be done.

Is the site east of Ayleston Park on steeply sloping land?

Yes but only partly and it is no steeper than Ayleston Park itself i.e. typical Modbury topography. Lower Green Park at Palm Cross is an example of another recent Modbury development on steeply sloping land.

This information was produced by Modbury Parish Council, supported by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, to ensure the community is correctly informed about aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan

If you feel you have been misled by misinformation from the Stop the Swap campaign, you should make your views known to SHDC. Contact details are in the letter from the Parish Council.