



SAVE TREES IN GUNNERSBURY

21 Oct 09

Dear Mr Thompson,

Thank you for your detailed reply. It is apparent that the Councils are quite rightly going to wait for the results of the public consultation before proceeding and we find this reassuring. However, the execution of the public consultation worries us considerably. What concerns us is that Regal Distribution UK Ltd has not distributed the leaflets appropriately. Even as late as 21st September, at Save Trees in Gunnersbury's (STIG) last public meeting, 20% of the people who should have had a questionnaire had not received one. We find it disconcerting that you believe that in an exercise of this size inevitably some houses will be missed. Are we to conclude that you are saying you expected the firm the Councils engaged to not be fully efficient in their task and that you are happy to accept such incompetence? If a significant proportion of local residents did not receive the questionnaire, may we suggest that Regal Distribution UK Ltd pays for another public consultation? Nor is it correct to say there have been few complaints. Several of us had reason to contact Richard Gill on a number of occasions because of missing questionnaires and have heard from many people who hadn't received theirs.

It is also worrying that only 4000 replies have been received. We presume that you have a minimum response rate required before analysing the results and a 5.2% rate is nowhere near what would be considered in market research to be statistically significant. What is the minimum response rate the Councils will accept?

Although you highlight that Jura is an independent body, they prepared the survey, a survey heavily biased towards their proposed option. How can we trust the results presented by the same consultants? Where is the independent scrutiny? Will we be allowed to examine the questionnaires and the results ourselves? The public consultation was based around the one option that Jura deemed to be viable. Their priority seems to be the preservation of the buildings. Our priority is to preserve the green space and the trees in Gunnersbury Park. We understand that the buildings are important but we also realize that the buildings have powerful champions, people who do not seem to care about turning a large part of our park into bricks and mortar.

It is rather strange that the Councils asked the public for its views given that 'the landscape masterplan for the park has not been worked up and the level of information on access roads and car parking is not available' to quote your reply. Should you opt for this project, is a further public consultation to follow once the final details of the plan are known? Our guess is probably not, and anyway our views would be far too late to change your plans by then.

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We are also very disappointed to hear that English Heritage played a part in appointing Jura. English Heritage are naturally primarily in favour of ensuring the upkeep of the buildings, with some park around to make a pleasant backdrop for the buildings. How can we not suspect that they chose Jura with this in mind? You said that the options appraisal was also part funded by English Heritage. We are dismayed that English Heritage was afforded so much control over the whole process.

Whilst we appreciate that you took the time to reply to our letter, our misgivings have not been allayed and, rather than our concerns being resolved, in fact more questions have arisen.

Yours sincerely

Giuseppina Ortu

(on behalf of STIG)