

GROWING OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSED MSA

Increased air, noise and light pollution, increased traffic on our local roads and the congestion and risk that this entails, the permanent destruction of green land overlooked by the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty incorporating part of our own Special Landscape Area, a few low paid jobs and a local market that you can only get to via the M5. These are just some of the outcomes that we can expect from the proposed Motorway Service Area (MSA) just to the South of our City.

Let's face it. However it is dressed up an MSA is still an MSA. Whatever environmental frills you add you can't avoid hundreds of cars, dozens of HGVs and acres of tarmac replacing green fields. Most people, when given the facts of the matter, would chose fields instead of tarmac every day of the week and twice on Sundays! Those closest to the MSA will suffer most from this eye-sore and its associated pollution but the whole County will be the less for this project. Profit will pay for bonuses, pay increases for executives and more tarmac, it will not increase the poor pay of employees or enhance anything locally, to think otherwise may be naive.

This is not the first time that someone has tried to build an MSA on this site. In 1994 Roadchef's attempt to build on this site was refused owing to 'a detrimental effect on the character and appearance' that such a site would have on the area. In addition, it was also observed that 'an MSA here, however well landscaped, would appear alien in the landscape'. In 2005 another proposal was made to build on this site by the same main individuals who are back with vengeance today in the form of this latest proposal.

We are lucky to live in a beautiful part of England with excellent local amenities and countryside that is amazing, picturesque and unique. Shortly after World War II Gloucester City began to expand around Robinswood Hill by building along both the Stroud and Painswick roads. After a hard fought public enquiry the complete urban encirclement of Robinswood Hill was avoided with the Hill and adjoining area with the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) being designated a Special Landscape Area (SLA). Since World War II this area has been preserved and retained for all of the residents of Gloucester and Gloucestershire.

At least 75% of the SLA is within the Parish of Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon and apart from a small triangle to the Southwest 100% of the Parish lies within the SLA or AONB. Several Parish questionnaires have underlined the desire of residents to retain their rural status i.e.:

-)= The importance of the SLA & AONB is immeasurable to both the parish and all residents of Gloucestershire
-)= It provides us all with a welcome break from the bustle of City life
-)= Nobody can deny its outstanding scenic qualities
-)= The rich wildlife of Robinswood Hill is dependent on clear and unimpeded contact across to the Cotswolds, there are tunnels under the M5 to ensure this.

The community of Matson borders Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon to the North and immediately overlooks where the proposed MSA would be constructed. Residents of Matson are extremely proud of their close contact with what is clearly a beautiful part of the County. The location of an MSA in this area could only have a detrimental affect on their health and well-being.

Very little has changed since the previous two attempts to turn fields into car parks, shops and petrol pumps but Gloucestershire Gateway Services, supported by Westmorland Ltd, feels that another attempt is worthwhile. Lots has been said about how wonderful this MSA will be for the community, these perceived good aspects, however inflated or indeed unlikely, have been spun heavily but nobody has yet taken the opportunity to point out the significant negative effects of construction, least of all Gloucestershire Gateway Services. CAMSA feels that it is time to redress this balance.

The Campaign Against the Motorway Service Area (CAMSA) is made up of residents of both Matson and Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon and its intent is clear:

-)= To fight against plans to build an unnecessary Motorway Service Area on this site
-)= To highlight to negative impact that would accompany such a construction
-)= To ensure that everybody hears the facts of the issue once 'the fluffy feel good sugar-coating' is removed

There will be a opposition meeting at Wynstones School at 7:30 p.m. on 17th November 2009 (GL4 0UF). This will be one of the first steps in ensuring that the public have the facts of this planning application. All interested parties are welcome, even if you are pro-MSA. However, it is not intended to make this a verbal confrontational debate, that will come later. **803 words**