



## Press Release: 12<sup>th</sup> July 2014

### Subject: Closure of Panshanger Airfield announcement

Our community group, Panshanger People is very disappointed at this announcement to close the airfield. We had previously applied to have the area designated an asset of community value in order to give a group of local residents first refusal on buying the land should the airfield land be put up for sale. The council rejected our application on grounds that we believe are invalid. This closure brings the outline proposal for 700+ homes on the site a step nearer.

It's clear that the owners of the airfield, Mariposa (a company based in Jersey) now want to realise the value of this land. With planning permission the airfield land would be worth many millions of pounds. The land is of course currently part of the council's emerging core strategy. We and hundreds of local people have been campaigning to have it removed from the strategy since 2012. We are told by local councillors, including cabinet member Roger Trigg, that they also want to see the area removed from the next draft local plan, due out in a few months time.

The aerodrome is a going concern and part of the local economy, even if the flying club closes the site is still designated as an "aero sports facility" and this carries weight under the National Planning Policy Framework.

Panshanger People will be asking residents to make it clear to the Borough Council's leadership and Panshanger councillors that they want this land removed from the forthcoming list of sites for housing development in the next draft local plan.

All is not lost and several options for the site are feasible. As we saw last week with the incinerator, local people banding together and using their right to be heard effectively can achieve the right outcome for Welwyn Hatfield. People should also consider the huge pressure on schools, doctors, health services, traffic, parking, shops, and more, if Panshanger becomes home to potentially thousands more houses on the airfield site and beyond. Currently there is absolutely no defined plan for how the local infrastructure would be upgraded to cope with the additional demand. As we have always stated, we are not against new housing in Welwyn Hatfield, but we are against all new housing for the next 16 years mostly being placed only on the airfield site, and a site in Hatfield. New housing developments should be geographically balanced across the whole Borough.

We urge people to visit our website: [panshangerpeople.org.uk](http://panshangerpeople.org.uk) to find out more about the issue and the huge impact this development would have on our much loved area.

The Panshanger People Committee.

