

## Alexander Gunyon

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**From:** MARY ANNE SMITH SELLEN [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 June 2024 19:04  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** OBJECTIONS TO THE NEW CANTERBURY AREA DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2020-2045

**Categories:** Blue category

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### --Email From External Account--

From:  
Mary Anne Sellen



#### **1: POLICY C6 – land at Merton Park.**

I object to the proposed development at Merton Park for the following reasons:

1: The land proposed for it is viable farmland which is still producing crops. The proposed development is for 2250 houses, most of which will not be single occupancy. Therefore, if two occupants make 4500 residents, and they then go on to have two children, that could easily mean around 9000 people will be living in an area where currently there are just a few oast houses and farm cottages. This will inevitably have a detrimental effect on both the local and wider, environment. Woodland and green areas near the proposed development will be affected by light pollution, noise pollution and smoke from bonfires and fire pits, therefore reducing wildlife habitat still further.

2: A potential 9000 additional residents in this area could eventually mean an additional 9000 more cars on a road system that already cannot cope. The new access roads and junctions that have also been proposed will just move provide additional points of congestion – they will not solve it. There is no point in providing a Park and Ride facility off Nackington Road, when one is already close by at New Dover Road.

3: The ongoing problems that beset Canterbury need to be addressed before any further development happens. You yourselves have had to close both Dane John and Westgate Gardens at night due to the anti-social behaviour there - which happens regularly during the daytime too. The green spaces and corridors described in the draft plan for the proposed new developments will inevitably become magnets for the same behaviour - unless more is done to deter it in the first place. In addition, the menace of fast-food delivery cyclists and motorcyclists will no doubt spread out even further, to all these new sites.

## 2: Policy C12 – Land north of the University of Kent.

I object to Policy C12 of the Draft Local Plan for the following reasons.

1: In 1999 I applied for planning permission to build one small bungalow on a plot of land I then owned at Pean Hill, Whitstable - only 2.5 miles away from the proposed development at Blean. Canterbury Council refused this on the grounds that (and I quote) they considered it *'not appropriate in location and appearance to its surroundings and would not preserve or enhance the character and amenity of the locality'*. They also stated that:

*'The proposed development would result in intensification of undesirable sporadic development in the countryside and would be detrimental to the rural character of the locality'*.

I also remember being told by someone at the time that only the one-for-one replacement of dwellings was permitted in the Pean Hill area, because the drainage system there was at capacity. And yet, a mere 25 years later, you are proposing to build 2000 new homes only 2.5 miles away from there! To use your own wording, I object to this development on the grounds that IT is *'not appropriate in location and appearance to its surroundings and would not preserve or enhance the character and amenity of the locality'* and that *'the proposed development would result in intensification of undesirable sporadic development in the countryside and would be detrimental to the rural character of the locality'*.

2: The ongoing problems that beset Canterbury need to be addressed before any further development happens. You yourselves have had to close both Dane John and Westgate Gardens at night due to the anti-social behaviour there - which happens regularly during the daytime too. The green spaces and corridors described in the draft plan for the proposed new developments will inevitably become magnets for the same behaviour - unless more is done to deter it in the first place. In addition, the menace of fast-food delivery cyclists and motorcyclists will no doubt spread out even further, to all these new sites.

3: The proposed development is for 2000 houses, most of which will not be single occupancy. Therefore, if two occupants make 4000 residents, and they then go on to have two children, that could easily mean around 8000 people will be living in an area where currently there are probably less than 100. This will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the local, and wider, environment. Woodland and green areas near the proposed development will be affected by light pollution, noise pollution and smoke from bonfires and fire pits, therefore reducing wildlife habitat still further. It says a lot that the Kent Wildlife Trust, who manage Blean Woods NNR, are totally against the proposed development and are standing with Save The Blean in their protest.

4: I approve of the proposals in the plan to introduce hopper buses, but whilst this may encourage some people to use public transport instead, you cannot force everyone to do this. Cars are prized possessions to a lot of people, they provide independence, and are available for journeys at all hours of the day and night. If every family of four on the proposed development ends up owning one car each, this would potentially generate 8000 additional vehicles using the local roads. Heavy traffic on both roads between Whitstable and

Canterbury is a problem already - and has been for decades - proof that most people still prefer to travel by car than by public transport. However, if it is going to take just as long to get to the city from Blean in a bus as it does in a car, then people are naturally going to use their cars so that they can take alternative routes. To put an access road through the site of the existing Blean school - at the top of a hill - is a recipe for disaster, even if a roundabout is built at the junction. When I moved from Whitstable to Sandwich in 2013, my journey into Canterbury often took me no longer than it had from Whitstable. Nothing has changed to improve the situation in the last 11 years. The proposed new junctions and access roads will just move these problems from one place to another - not relieve them.

5: The 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024 issue of the Kentish Gazette includes a letter from former city planner J. Mansell Jagger, in which he states that the proposed *'huge growth'* is *'completely unsustainable'*. He also states that *'the government does not set a mandatory housing target'*, and that in *'exceptional circumstances local authorities can put forward their own approach'*. The opinion of someone who was at the front-end of planning decisions in this city for 14 years can only be ignored at the peril of all who live and work here. Surely the seat of Christianity in England, with its most famous place of worship at its heart, must be one of the most exceptional of cases there could be? Blean and Tyler Hill are two distinct communities, and the feelings of the existing residents need to be considered. I appreciate that you may still be obligated to build a certain number of houses but would urge you to fulfil this obligation by building on brownfield sites wherever possible.

### **3: POLICY W4 – Land at Brooklands Farm.**

I object to the proposed development at Brooklands Farm for the following reasons:

1: In 1999 I applied for planning permission to build one small bungalow at Pean Hill, Whitstable on a plot of land I then owned. Canterbury Council refused this on the grounds that (and I quote) they considered it *'not appropriate in location and appearance to its surroundings and would not preserve or enhance the character and amenity of the locality'*, also stating that:

*'The proposed development would result in intensification of undesirable sporadic development in the countryside and would be detrimental to the rural character of the locality'*.

I also remember being told by someone at the time that only the one-for-one replacement of dwellings was permitted in the Pean Hill area, because the drainage system there was at capacity. And yet, a mere 24 years later you are proposing to build 1400 new homes only 3 miles away from Pean Hill at Brooklands Farm. To use your own wording, I object to this development on the grounds that IT is *'not appropriate in location and appearance to its surroundings and would not preserve or enhance the character and amenity of the locality'* and that *'the proposed developments would result in intensification of undesirable sporadic development in the countryside and would be detrimental to the rural character of the locality'*.

2: Whitstable is already notorious for sewage pollution, a problem that has continued for decades. How will the addition of 1400 homes here affect this, when no workable solution has ever been found before?

3: 1400 hundred homes with four occupants each will put an additional 5600 people into a rural area, and will potentially mean an additional 5600 cars on roads that already cannot cope and are frequently subject to flooding.

3: Traffic has also been a decades-long problem in Whitstable. On paper, a Park and Ride Scheme sounds like a good idea. In practice many people don't like using Park and Ride. People who have driven all the way down from London will not want to make the last part of their journey to the town on a bus. If they wanted to use public transport, they would take already be taking a bus or a train all the way to their destination.

4: The destruction of centuries-old countryside and viable farmland will have a devastating effect on local biodiversity, no matter how many 'green wedges' you say you will provide. These 'wedges' will be surrounded by new developments so are likely to end up as targets for vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

5: The Brooklands Farm area is steeped in history. According to Kent County Council's 'Exploring Kent's Past' webpage, a Roman Building was found and excavated near Brooklands Farm in 1962. It is also the site of the (now) oldest railway bridge in the world. Any new development here will put all this at risk of being lost forever.

#### **TO SUMMARISE:**

Your 'Vision' for the district should be to retain and maintain all the existing green spaces, including cleaning them up (and keeping them clean) and clamping down on the blight of anti-social behaviour. If you want *'thriving'* communities and *'vibrant'* town centres, then you need to acknowledge the needs of people of ALL ages, not just the young. Ironically, Canterbury used to be a thriving community with a vibrant town centre, no more than 20 years ago. Of course, much has changed nationally and globally since then - the digital world, Covid, Brexit etc., but there is much to be learned from the past that can be used as a foundation for the future. For example, finding ways of making high streets shops and outlet more affordable for small, local, independent businesses, and prioritising them over large chains. PLEASE: Look at the past as a path to the future, acknowledge the unsustainability of your current proposal for growth, and make the case to the government for exceptional circumstances and offer a fresh – and fully sustainable - approach for the district.

**I register my strong objections to these developments on all the grounds stated.**