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From: [REDACTED]
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Subject: Objection to Policy W4 Land at Brooklands Farm

Categories: Blue category

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I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed housing development on Brooklands Farm.

First and foremost, Brooklands Farm is a precious green field site, in a rural area with irreplaceable good quality agricultural land offering a vital sanctuary for wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological balance of our community.

- 1) The scale of development in this area is unsustainable. It lacks the infrastructure.
- 2) The site lies outside the town boundary on good quality agricultural land and will result in the unacceptable loss of open green space. It is Rural, not Urban, and should remain as such.
- 3) There would be a deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient hedgerows and the Swalecliffe Brook. The significant impact the development would have on the local wildlife and their natural habitats is of grave concern. Birds of prey, sparrow hawks and buzzards etc, use the hedgerows for hunting. Bats are seen regularly across the fields, as is the albino squirrel. A huge variety of birds use the hedgerows for nesting. We have regular sightings of woodpeckers, greenfinches, wagtails, goldfinches, and all the usual wild birds. There are many slow worms on the site and hazel dormice.

The destruction of this green space would result in the loss of biodiversity and disrupt the delicate ecosystem that currently thrives in the area. Preserving such natural habitats is essential for maintaining a sustainable environment and ensuring the well-being of future generations.

- 4) Flooding: Brooklands Farm's green fields currently act as natural drainage, absorbing excess rainwater during heavy rainfall and reducing the likelihood of severe flooding. The replacement of these fields with impermeable surfaces such as buildings and roads would disrupt the natural drainage system and potentially exacerbate flooding issues, placing both existing and future residents at risk. The road under the New Thanet Way between Radfall and South Street already floods regularly, as does South Street itself where the road crosses Swalecliffe Brook. The fields are London clay which is highly susceptible to volumetric changes depending upon its moisture content. During exceptionally dry periods or where the moisture is extracted by tree root activity, the clay can become desiccated and shrink in volume, and conversely swell again when the moisture content is restored. This can lead to many problems near the ground surface, including structural movement and fracturing of buildings, fractured sewers and service pipes/ducts and uneven and damaged road surfaces and paving. Such damage is recognised to be covered by the interpretation of subsidence in buildings insurance

policies, and the periods of dry weather in 1976/77 and 1988/92, in particular, led to a host of insurance claims. As a result, many insurance companies have now increased the cost of premiums for buildings located in the most susceptible areas where damage occurred, where the clay is close to the surface.

5) Sewage: Brooklands Farm is situated in an area that already faces challenges with flooding and sewage. The increased strain on the existing system due to the additional housing could lead to overflows, pollution of water sources (the Swalecliffe Brook also), and a decline in water quality. Southern Water is unable to cope with the present pressure it is under, let alone supplying an additional 1400 houses, which will generate in excess of 400 tonnes of wastewater and sewage. 1400 more houses with one or two toilets will add to its already overstretched capacity. The Swalecliffe Brook flows through the Thanet Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) before joining the north Kent coast to the east of Whitstable, a section of the coast which forms part of the Saxon Shore Way. It runs through Brooklands Farm. It could have been classed as a Salmonid River (trout stream) due to having brown trout and eel, both of which are of conservation significance. There is also the possibility that three-spined sticklebacks will still be present, despite the 2013 sewage dump that polluted the brook at Long rock. Swalecliffe sewage works already unable to cope with existing demand, resulting in serious illness for some visitors to local beaches. This is totally unacceptable for a town with a famous seafood tradition that aspires to be a tourist destination.

6) Traffic: Our roads in this are narrow and are unable to cope with the amount of extra traffic that will be created by 3000 plus extra cars, not to mention the pollution and noise. The planned new junctions for the A299 would be dispensing traffic onto roads that are ill equipped to deal with it. The additional traffic then going through to Chestfield, South Street and Canterbury will create a significant impact on not only the roads and residents in the area, but going to Canterbury, the road goes through ancient woodland, and pollution and noise etc will have a detrimental impact on wildlife. Turning right from my road into Millstrood Road is already difficult at most times of the day; with a likely increase of 2500+ vehicles in this area, it will only cause further problems for the current local area residents as the configuration of Millstrood Road by Tesco will be completely inadequate. It is essential to thoroughly evaluate and address these concerns to avoid any negative consequences for both residents and the environment.

I have lived in Whitstable for most of my life and am aware that its popularity in recent years has made it a more desirable place for others to move to. However, a development of this scale is not the answer to satisfy those perceived housing requirements. There are already issues with over-stretched health and other services in the area, which are struggling to provide essential care and support to those in need. 1400 additional homes will only exacerbate this problem.

In conclusion, I strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed housing development on Brooklands Farm. The preservation of this green field site, the mitigation of sewage issues, the protection of wildlife and their habitats, and the prevention of flooding should be of utmost importance. It is crucial to explore alternative options that prioritise sustainable development and do not compromise the well-being of our community and environment.

Thank you for considering these concerns and taking the appropriate action.

Signed

Nicola King

