

Alexander Gunyon

From: Tony Welch [REDACTED]
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Categories: Blue category

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I am responding as a resident of the Canterbury District and in relation to Chapters 1, 2, 5 and 6 of the Draft Local Plan, particularly policy C12 in Chapter 2, I wish to state my opposition to the development of a 2,000-house town on a greenfield site near Blean and Tyler Hill.

Development Proposal Analysis

The land in question is essential for maintaining local biodiversity and is adjacent to ancient and semi-ancient forests, highlighting its ecological significance. The current development proposal by the Council contradicts existing policies aimed at preserving natural heritage.

The justification provided for the development, which involves converting greenfield sites into urban areas, fails to consider the potential use of brownfield sites that would have a reduced environmental impact. The Council is urged to reassess the proposal in light of its severe adverse effects on the natural and cultural heritage of the region.

Ecological Considerations

The ecological value of these areas is characterized by a diverse range of avian species, including Nightingales, Yellowhammers, Skylarks, Linnets, Buzzards, Green Woodpeckers, Whitethroats, Swallows, Song Thrushes, and Blackbirds. The presence of the appropriate habitat and a current lack of disturbance provide suitable conditions for these species. The proposed development poses a major risk to the habitats upon which they are reliant and could lead to a decline in their populations. The Council should take urgent steps to safeguard these populations and their habitat, particularly as some of them enjoy protected status.

The primary entrance to the proposed new town encompasses the Kent Community Oasis Garden, the University's Astronomical Observatory, and ponds with a high population of Great Crested newts, monitored since 1994. The area contains multiple heritage sites and conservation zones, which are protected under National Planning Regulations and are critical for the preservation of local flora and fauna.

Historical and Cultural Context

The designated areas for development, namely Blean, Tyler Hill, and the Sarre Penn Valley, are not simply land parcels but are significant in terms of historical and cultural heritage. Evidence of Mesolithic hunter activity and Bronze Age burial sites provide insight into the ancient human presence. The Church of St Cosmus & St Damian, alongside the former Roman Salt Road, and the Crab & Winkle Way cycling trail are notable landmarks with historical importance.

Policy Implications

Policy C12 represents a significant shift in the Council's policy direction, apparently driven by the University of Kent's financial needs. The Council should evaluate the proposal based on its merits and align it with existing priorities and policies, potentially ruling out the development to protect the region's natural and cultural assets.

I understand you will be getting many of this type of email but the above points are very important to me and having lived in Rough Common for the last 50 years it would be a tragedy if the proposed development takes place.

Yours sincerely,

Joan Welch