

Alexander Gunyon

From: Michael S Norwell [REDACTED]
Sent: 31 May 2024 20:32
To: Consultations
Subject: Objection to Policy W4 - Land at Brooklands Farm, Near Whitstable

Categories: Blue category

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Dear Sirs

I am writing to express my strong objection to the proposed housing development at Brooklands Farm, Whitstable. Brooklands Farm is a precious green field site, in a rural area with irreplaceable and quality agricultural land offering a vital sanctuary for wildlife and contributing to the overall ecological balance of the area.

In detail:-

- 1) The scale of the proposed development in this area is unsustainable. The area does not have (nor it appears does it plan to have) the appropriate infrastructure to support the proposed development.
- 2) The site lies outside of the town boundary on quality agricultural land and the proposed development would result in the unacceptable loss of open green space. The area proposed for development is Rural, not Urban, and it should remain as such.
- 3) There would be a deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient hedgerows and the Swalecliffe Brook. The proposed development would have significant detrimental impact on the local wildlife and their natural habitats. Birds of prey, sparrow hawks and buzzards use the hedgerows for hunting. Bats are seen regularly across the fields, as is the albino squirrel. An abundance of birds use the hedgerows for nesting. There are 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 potential for 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 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 dessicated 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 pavings. 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 systems due to the potential additional housing would 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, and supplying an additional 1400 houses with sewage facilities would 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.

7) Traffic - the roads in this are narrow and are unable to cope with the amount of extra traffic that would be generated by 3000 plus extra cars. Noise and air pollution would also increase significantly. 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 would create a significant impact both on the roads and residents in the area, and as the road goes through ancient woodland, said pollution and noise would have a detrimental impact on wildlife.

Conclusion

The concerns set out above must be examined and thoroughly evaluated . The negative consequences for both residents and the environment are too far reaching to be ignored.

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.

Yours faithfully

Michael S Norwell,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and any contact information that might have been present.