

## Alexander Gunyon

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**From:** Heather Newman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 14 May 2024 23:01  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Consultation proposed C12 Rural Settlement Blean (Local Plan)

**Categories:** Purple category

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I am writing an email to make my feelings known with regard to the proposed "Rural Settlement" in Blean. The consultation response is too long winded and is not user friendly, it may put people off responding.

I am very concerned that what is being suggested as a vision will actually become a living nightmare!! The sheer number of houses being built in what is currently a beauty spot, an area which has protected heritage and conservation areas which are protected by public sanctions, a whole host of protected wildlife, some of which are in decline and are threatened with extinction. Currently the villages of Tylers Kiln, Rough Common and Blean are distinct villages with this new proposal, they will lose their identity and merge together causing a negative impact. Therefore C12 does not satisfy policy DS19.

Site C12 is on "best and most versatile" farmland: Grade 2 in the northern part of the site and Grade 3 in the southern part of the site. Policy DS12 6.35 of the Draft Local Plan states to protect the best quality agricultural land outside of urban and settlement boundaries, which means this has been contravened.

The council's 2021 Landscape Character Assessment described the area which is made up of woodland, orchards and farmland was described as having "strong rural character" and says the landscape should be conserved. The southern part of the site is located in Canterbury's Area of High Landscape Value, is situated between two Sites of Special Scientific Interest they are RSPB Blean and West Blean Reserve. C12 proposals are incompatible with the 2021 assessment, the Local Plan is required to conform.

Blean is rich with heritage assets- church of St Cosmos and St Damian, roman villa remains (scheduled monument), mediaeval tile kilns (schedule monument), together with numerous listed buildings and many conservation areas. The Rural Development will have massive impact on these areas, the peace, serenity, mood and feel of Blean and the surrounding areas will be eradicated and gone forever, with the arrival of this huge of a development and the arrival of the huge number of owner occupiers. The effects of this rural development will be irreparable on the countryside, nature and wildlife.

We already have major issues getting Doctors and Dentist appointments, with more people there will be even more pressure on these already strained services. Water is a problem in this area, there are so many leaks (water loss) and our water pressure is appalling, with more houses, the pressure will only get worse. In the summer we barely have enough water for the existing houses, there always seems to be a water ban, 2000 more houses and approximately 4000-6000 people will not help the issue we have with water here. What happens to the sewage, how can the water company keep up with an extra strain on an already weak sewage system, will it go into local rivers, as happens in so many places, spoiling a beauty spot, destroying wildlife??

The soil at Blean is clay and the drainage is poor, when it rains the water does not drain away, at the end of last year and the first quarter of this year, our gardens were like lakes for a good few weeks, our driveways had massive puddles which did not drain away. In December 2023 a land investigation was carried out at the land at C12 and found that the land was not suitable for development. However, for whatever reason the soil and flooding issue now seems of little consequence.

SS1.10 states that the Council will continue to work with partners to extend and improve connectivity of the Blean Woodland Complex, however the Site at C12 would make this impossible. Once connectivity has been lost which it would be as the development would be in the middle of Blean woods surrounded by parts of the National Nature Reserve, there are many rare and endangered species in ponds, fields and hedgerows. The rural settlement will impact detrimentally on these rare/endangered species, as more of their habitat is taken for development, their food sources dwindle, their lives and their breeding programmes disturbed by the increase in people.

Blean Primary School is to be demolished to make way for an access road, another bigger school is to be built, what are the timings of the school being demolished and the new school being built as the primary school will need to go ready for the access road. A bigger school also means more traffic on the road at peak times when people are going to work, extra stress on already exceedingly busy roads.

Housing to meet the needs of the district! How will you prevent people buying the new builds as second homes or people from abroad buying them as investment to rent them out at extortionate rents. It has happened before where some London Boroughs get rid of their undesirables to new housing estates, what is in place to prevent this?

I note in your vision you say that you want to protect open spaces for the next generations. However, you will not be doing that, you will be destroying some of the most biodiverse countryside in Kent, by building your "Rural Settlement"! You say that you want to create high quality open space, by building 2000 houses you will be reducing the amount of amazing open space. You say that you will restore important habitats and landscapes, but you will be destroying the existing habitat that is home to rare birds, and a whole host of wildlife. It is very unlikely after all the land clearance and building is finished that you would be able to maintain never mind increase the biodiversity that currently exists, particularly given there will be less open space, more buildings and an awful lot more people.

Your point re climate change and nature based responses to reduce carbon emissions is interesting, given that plants and trees in particular being the ultimate carbon capture and storage machine of atmospheric carbon. You are proposing to destroy a great swath of countryside and instead of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide, you will be reducing nature's ability to absorb carbon dioxide within this area and creating further climate problems down the line (for future generations)

Improved connect? I like the idea of comprehensive walking and cycling networks. however, you are dealing with people not robots, people will take the easiest and quickest mode of transport, particularly during the working week when time is of the essence, which means getting in the car, driving to work, the shops school drop offs/pick ups, which will inevitably lead to a dramatic increase in vehicles on roads which can already barely cope with the current amount of traffic, more fumes, more carbon dioxide, more traffic jams and more angry people.

The Plan refers to A2 Harbledown junction and upgrading Rough Common Road, however, it is unlikely that this will elevate the already overloaded road, if there is to be another 2000 houses, there will potentially be a further 4,000-6,000- cars on the local roads (2 or even 3 cars per household), which will just add to the already packed roads.

The site shown as C12 is called a "car dependent development" in the land assessment. I note that you are trying to promote bus first transport, and are hoping for a 20-30% uptake (a rather optimistic view) in the first instance that means 70-80% of the residents will not travel by bus, again this leads to more traffic on the roads, more congestion. I myself am unlikely to use the bus as I've tried and have found the service sadly lacking, unreliable and expensive. It is unlikely that a family will get the bus when they could all get in the car and go where they wanted to go and more cheaply.

The two access points for traffic are on Whitstable Road (only 400 metres apart) near Rough Common roundabout, these roads are both incredibly busy particularly in the mornings and evenings. It is also proposed that road "improvements" to Rough Common will be required!!, Two new slip roads are also proposed on the A2 slip road, which will lead to Rough Common being used as a major route into Canterbury, it is then anticipated that the traffic will go down Whitstable Road to St Dunstons more traffic, more congestion, more air pollution.

C12 of the plan does not sit right with SS14 which states "focusing growth at urban areas, and Canterbury in particular, presents the greatest opportunities to plan for a switch to sustainable transport" C12 is referred to as "rural settlement" outside the city and the SLAA describes it as a "large scale car-dependant". The rural settlement

is far enough away from any town that inevitably residents will use cars as default rather than the bus no matter how much you push/encourage it, leading to more cars on the road, more carbon dioxide, more congestion.

The proposed rural settlement will be out on a limb, for a Council that wants to cut down on the amount of cars on the road, carbon emissions, etc C12 is an odd choice, there is no supporting infrastructure and it is not near a railway station. There must be better areas for development rather, than the Site at C12, given it's great biodiversity, landscape, rich farmland, ancient woodland, historical sites, listed buildings, it's lack of amenities and logistics.