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How much ancient woodland is left in the UK? In 2022 (Index Mundi) a survey concluded that only 2.5% remains - up to 70% of ancient woodland has already been lost making the UK one of the least wooded countries in Europe. Woods are fantastic carbon catchers and are teeming with wildlife besides which they offer an oasis of tranquility so badly needed in this troubled world. The government Forestry Commission stresses the need to ' reconnect our most wildlife rich spaces' advising planting larger areas to join up existing woodland. Thereby improving the survival chance of species moving around the landscape. The Wilder Blean Initiative shares the same objective. The Council's SS1.10 policy states ' it will continue to work with partners to extend and improve connectivity of the Blean woodland complex.

Despite this the Council is putting forward a proposal to build site C12 which would destroy this possibility- forever separating West Blean, Thornden Wood SSSI and RSPB Blean Woods. It is vital that we protect the area of ancient woodland we have left, work to expand it and outrightly reject any proposal that threatens its existence. We owe this to ourselves, our children and future generations. Blean belongs to us all

Canterbury District Council and the University of Kent have already formulated some of the best strategies aimed at protecting wildlife areas and increasing biodiversity. Canterbury District Local Plan identifies as a key issue the need to protect 'our valued landscapes, open spaces and habitats' The University of Kent Estates Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy 2012-2023 declares a commitment to manage the campus grounds sustainably, to protect and enhance Biodiversity-setting out targets to achieve this. How can such a highly respected, valued and trusted establishment turn back on itself in this way, utterly disregarding its own policies and proposing a development that would be so destructive.

Sarah Smitherman