

Les Mitchell

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3rd June 2024

Canterbury City Council
Planning Department

Objection to Policy W4 Land at Brooklands Farm.

To Whom it May Concern,

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 that additionally gives a level of protection to the surrounding community from already busy and noisy A299 dual carriageway. Below are my reasons.

Firstly I would like to express my frustration over this process, something so major that could effect thousands of residence and dramatic scaring of the environment, there should have been promoted and evidence given across willingly . On the first round we were just told it a consultation chat and shown a rubbish diagram that probably wont be representative of the development, then suddenly second round of consulting , the land has been chosen and being told by your director that make the most of it and get what you can for your community. This alone needs to be challenged, it sounded like the developer speaking not a councils representee of the people being effected.

I believe Whitstable is being exploited by developers for their own profit margin, to raise money for the council and not to help the community and its town. It's easy picking to build where the houses sell for most and inviting the migration of people from other towns/cities. In addition, the sale of social housing is pre bought by other local authorities' to solve their housing issues, what about our social housing needs? CCC and KCC should look at this at a county issue not a Whitstable issue.

Further Reasons for objection:

- 1) The scale of development in this area is unsustainable.
- 2) The site lies outside of 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 & buzzards etc, 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. 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 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 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 & 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. 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.

6) Traffic. Our roads in this area are narrow and are unable to cope with the amount of extra traffic that will be created by easily 3000 plus extra cars, not to mention the pollution and noise. The 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. It is essential to thoroughly evaluate and address these concerns to avoid any negative consequences for both residents and the environment.

Your junction will bring extra traffic to the door-step of the community with your planned park and ride Development. The access road through the new estate will bring uncontrolled traffic even closer to the door-step of the surrounding community. This is not even allowing for the HGVs to short cut to the existing industrial estates in the surrounding area and no doubt additional commercial premises with these 1400 houses. We should not pay the price for the current poor road infrastructure on the Whitstable turn off from the A299. The lack of planning strategy or understanding on previous commercial development's, has led to traffic lights and 2 roundabouts in 150 yards on the main access road to Whitstable which will always cause tail backs.

We already know the people that would purchase these proposed 1400 house will not work in Whitstable, the train station does not have enough parking facilities and it is too far to walk from Brooklands, this would cause untold pressure all around the station. A cycle store will not be used in the middle of winter or any bad weather day. For the other residences that do not use the train, they will use their vehicles. For those heading London bound, the current access route is totally inadequate at present and this does not include traffic for housing development along the Thanet Way yet to be completed / still in the planning process. Those heading to Canterbury a clash of car users from other large development's from Greenhill and Blean as they meet causing misery for the residents of Tyler Hill and Blean, Rough Common. There is no strategy that can offset this only not Building the development.

7) Education and Health Care. The need for schools and SENDs has been an issue for more than a decade and has been promised on many occasions and has had allocated land opportunities for use but never come to fruition, more homes and commercial property were just built on it. Promises of additional educational centres are not a good enough reason to build 1400 extra homes on working high grade farmland

Health care services are already overstretched and have long waiting times to see doctors and dentists. Wating times at our A&E centres are excessive now and this is without the completion of current local developments. Hospitals are struggling to provide a service to our local communities; your strategies are not working.

8. There is no evidence that Whitstable?Chestfield area needs 2000+ houses, the country needs housing(the right housing) not just Whitstable.

I truly believe this would not have been considered if it were not for a developer offering ££££££ to a retiring farmer. The farmland would have stayed secure to the next generation of farmers, supporting the nation's food security, the welfare of the community and wildlife habitat.

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. Sitting in traffic jams is not a strategy.

Promises and Provisions rarely come to fruition in development they should not form a part of your strategy until you can see, touch and feel them.

Also, under a general election all this should be put on hold until clear directives are given by the new incumbent government

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Yours Sincerely