

Blean Church *and Friends*

St Cosmus & St Damian in the Blean

The Parish Church of Blean and Tyler Hill

www.bleanchurch.net

Local Plan Consultation,
Canterbury City Council,
Military Road, Canterbury,
Kent CT1 1YW

27th May 2024

Statement from the Church of St Cosmus and St Damian in the Blean in response to proposals to develop Site C12 in the Canterbury City Council District Plan

The Parochial Church Council, having carefully considered the proposals to develop site C12 adjacent to the Church, wishes to object to both the location and scale of the proposed development citing in particular its impact on a historical site, on biodiversity, on traffic implications and on the negative impact on users of the Crab and Winkle Way.

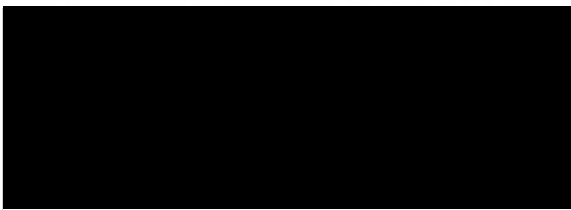
The Church of St Cosmus and St Damian in the Blean, the Parish Church of Blean and Tyler Hill, is a Grade II* listed building. The current church dates back to the 13th century but it is believed that a place of worship has existed on the site since the late 6th century. The Church and churchyard are surrounded by other sites of historical and heritage importance including ancient earthworks (a scheduled monument), which has been claimed to be the remains of a Roman Villa, and other evidence of the Medieval landscape. Recent archaeological investigations have identified important remains in the field on the other side of the Crab and Winkle Way suggestive of earlier settlements which have not been fully excavated. Any development on the scale proposed for Site C12 would not only have a direct impact on the Church building but more importantly on the setting of a rural church of great importance to the adjacent villages which has significant landscape value in its current location.

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The churchyard is carefully managed to reflect this rural setting, recognising its location within the existing green corridor between the East and West Blean Woods. This helps to contribute to the important biodiversity of the immediate area. The proposed development would cut it off from the east and impact negatively on this contribution.

The church serves the two villages of Blean and Tyler Hill and many regular worshippers also attend from Rough Common. Access is along Tyler Hill Road which is referred to correctly in the plans as narrow and winding without footpaths. Many Blean residents regularly walk to the church along Tyler Hill Road, which is already dangerous given current levels of traffic. Any increase in traffic would present increased danger to pedestrians. The section of road between the Recreation Ground and the church lies within the Blean Conservation Area. Given the proximity of buildings to the road and the mature hedgerows and trees, it would be infeasible to widen the road and/or add footways.

The church is also the nearest church to the main residential areas of the University of Kent and currently accessible along the Crab and Winkle cycle and foot path. Any compromise of this safe route through the proposed new access roads would jeopardise the value of the church to the student body and also to the many walkers and riders using the Crab and Winkle Way who value the church as place of rest and tranquillity as evidenced by the many messages left in the Visitors' Book. The Crab and Winkle Way is also used as a pedestrian route to Blean Primary School, parents using the church car park to avoid congestion on the A290.



Revd Dr Stephen Laird
Parish Priest

