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From: Carolyn Dobbie [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 May 2024 16:03
To: Consultations
Subject: Objections to the proposed development at Brooklands Farm

Categories: Blue category

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28 May 2024

Consultations@canterbury.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT BROOKLANDS FARM

I write to object to the proposed development of Brooklands Farm which would, in local opinion, cause further congestion on supporting and connecting roads and local village smaller roads, prompt more flooding and more than double the size of Chestfield and the surrounding South Street area. It would turn the area into an urban jungle with very little open or green space.

This increased development would increase already heavy traffic, increase noise pollution, increase air pollution, reduce our human right to good light and put further strain on an already fragile struggling infrastructure. Flooding in the area is frequent along the riverbank and in fields and woodland and increasing sewage in an area which already struggles to meet demand would destroy an area of natural beauty.

The urbanisation would bring increased unrest, frustration, impact mental health, public disorder and increase crime. I also have to say, the majority of new developments in the Canterbury District aren't even local people in those homes! Where do those born and bred in the district live these days?

This development would turn the area of South Street and Chestfield from one of village life and community with beautiful scenery to an urban concrete jungle with traffic congestion, and the destruction of the lifestyles those who currently live here. This proposed development and the high number intended would change the shape and character of the area and there will be significant air and noise pollution for years to come.

Farmland and other green spaces help to reduce flooding by absorbing excess water. The areas around South Street, Grasmere Road and Chestfield Road are already subject to regular flooding, and this is with the current farmland to protect it. Despite works on drainage under the new Thanet Way near Radfall Road, the road still floods and makes it dangerous to use if at all passable. It is often closed and traffic

diverted via Blean or Greenhill meaning longer journeys and congestion. This area will simply not cope with another huge development. Nor will this already over used route into Canterbury. Look at the huge increases and queues whenever another route is closed. No-one gets to school or work on time due to the increased volumes and you are going to add with all these developments, choking our roads further and our beautiful natural countryside.

I would also like my objection noted as when I moved into my property in 2001, on completion of build, I applied for my rear fence to reflect what was advertised by Matthew Homes and to be placed several feet back in a straight line to newly planted hedging. I applied with full disclosure on areas of concern and paid the fees due. I had a visit from our then local councillor who viewed the area and talked with me about my proposal and my application which was subsequently turned down by Canterbury City Council on the basis that my crooked fencing with a straight hedge line in front of it to the KCC path behind / between my rear fence and Brooklands Farm field was “a natural barrier to the new Thanet Way” and permission was refused on this basis.

Objections were made by residents of Blackberry Way at the Planning Meeting at the time but were dismissed. You rejected permission to move my property boundary a few feet nearer the Thanet Way and now you want to build 1,400 houses hundreds of yards nearer – hypocrisy!

-2-

Since I moved to Whitstable as a young adult it has trebled in size. Maybe, if the housing already provided in the town and surrounding roads and Tankerton, Swalecliffe and Chestfield hadn't been purchased by people moving to the area for weekends at the seaside, we could have remained the great small seaside town our families grew up in. The prices for affordable housing provision aren't affordable for most young people who are either stuck with their parents or are forced to move away.

More housing needed? The new houses on sale at Whitstable Heights and Grasmere Pastures remain unsold but developers keep building all over Whitstable, for example Pearson Heights and no doubt in place of The Long Reach soon at that same roundabout. These developments are all too big and ripping the heart out of communities and most parents fear our children who have been born here, raised, and schooled here will have to move out of the local area on the grounds of affordability, having been outpriced. More housing and development in Whitstable is not going to help this problem, the developers just want the money and have no local interest and you are selling Whitstable and its surrounding areas to the highest bidders without any thought or compassion to the local communities who support Canterbury City Council.

Road access

I understand the main access point to the proposed development is via South Street. Again, for the benefit of anyone reading this who is not familiar with the layout, South St is a narrow, country lane with many tight spots for passing vehicles and almost single file across the small humpback bridge over the river.

From Chestfield Road to the entrance to Brooklands Farm, it is narrow, undulating, and windy with high hedges on both sides. It is the sort of road you drive with your heart in your mouth every time you go round a bend in case something is coming the other way. Usually, people drive this road in the middle to avoid raised banks and hedging and sightlines are very poor. When the sun is low or going down you can

be blinded at points and to consider making this road busier is a catastrophe. Whilst the road at this end would undoubtedly be widened should the proposed development proceed, access to and from Chestfield Road would not be able to cope with the massive increase in traffic turning in and out of South Street.

Before even reaching the point of South Street have you ever tried getting into Canterbury via Radfall Road to Hackington Road in Tyler Hill. So many accidents in poor conditions, another winding road with muddy banks and woodland. One straight length of road that people precariously risk an overtake on. Turnings to the right for Clowes Wood and an occasionally missed junction from the left from Greenhill, Herne Bay. A few more winds in the road ahead of Frog Hall and the caravan parking site access road before the loop the loop corner coming into Tyler Hill. Another opportunity for some foolish drivers, should congestion allow, to overtake a slower or larger vehicle. Winding down out of Tyler Hill you meet Calais Hill and approach the University of Kent, on a very uneven lumpy road. If you've managed to get here within 20 minutes at peak times you feel like a real winner! The volume of traffic heading into Giles Lane usually means you join a slow queue of traffic from Clowes Woods, if not further back.

It was originally decided not to put a junction from the A299 at Chestfield due to additional traffic and the objections of villagers in Chestfield. In fact, a tunnel was built to avoid disturbing Chestfield Gold Club. Whilst I feel it's a long way between the Whitstable and Herne Bay turn offs, is it practical to carve up more countryside to put access roads each side?

The additional traffic with cars coming off a fast 70 mph road on to 30 mph road, assuming they slow down, maybe reducing their speed to 50 mph, will cause problems on roads not suitable for this type of additional traffic and safety concerns for cyclists and walkers in the area.

Concerns are for the additional cars looking for parking for the new housing, 1,400 houses minimum with at least one car, probably two, if not three or four, as kids have to stay home these days as they can't live locally or get on the property ladder. Space / provision would need to be made somewhere to avoid the roads choking with traffic congestion, where does this fit the scheme?

More roads mean more concrete and tarmac on farmland. Less absorption of excess water. More flooding. Sandwiched between the old and new Thanet Way either side of South Street and Chestfield we already have busy roads, queues at roundabouts that cannot cope with influxes of traffic to local services and businesses.

-3-

Both roads regularly flood with even a small amount of rain which causes accidents and closures. Your intended proposals for further developments all the way through from almost Faversham to Thanet will only make these conditions worse. We cannot tolerate further developments and increased capacities. We chose not to live in a busy capital city for a reason.

Sewage

As you are more than aware the beaches at Whitstable remain under constant threat of "leaks" from the sheer volume already straining the local systems. There are several campaigns and groups already gunning for Southern Water whose systems simply cannot cope with the already increased volumes and lack of their investment.

Does Canterbury City Council not think it owes the people of the District, to make sewage and clean water provision a priority to find a solution to this continuing blight rather than just to ramp it up with further development? When do these water companies have to take their responsibilities seriously and make adequate provision and investment to meet your existing demands not alone anything for the

future? Seems they get a bad press write up, say sorry it was extreme weather, and move on. The poor workers at ground level take the frustration from irate and rude people who do not want to tolerate this abuse of our coastlines. The risks of swimming at the beach these days are too high, sickness and diarrhoea being the least you can expect.

Rivers, fields and gardens in areas local to Brooklands Farm already flooded with rainwater in these new extreme weather conditions. Extreme weather seems to be the world's way forward now so maybe additional development in supporting services to sustain this ought to become more paramount?

Future freshwater provision

With all the additional housing in Whitstable now, aside from any new developments you consider, can I ask where the higher demand for clean water provision will come from and be managed by the bumbling South East Water?

The reservoir conversion recently reignited in Tyler Hill has been discussed since my uncle and aunt moved to Calais Hill after marrying in the 1940s. Back in the 80's Southern Water were pressurising them to sell up to them and move away before the reservoir came "any day". They moved when they retired for peace of mind; they'd turn in their graves now knowing it's only just been bought back to the table and who knows whether it will or can ever happen. Sadly, seems they could have stayed from their first day newly married until their deaths now several years ago, had it not been hanging over them. It saddens me greatly.

New homes should run on less water is what the developers say but do we / can we believe that? If this is the case, why can investment not be made in existing housing to help everyone? The type of houses and facilities they will build will just drain already short supplies and we'll all be living in the misery of reduced supplies and uncertainty.

Supporting Infrastructure

Help - it's already creaking under the strain!

Whilst I appreciate, we are lucky to have such a great service at Estuary View Medical Centre with supporting branches at Chestfield Medical Centre and Harbour Street, but have you tried getting a doctor's appointment recently? There are far too many people chasing far too few appointments. Are these new developments only going to be sold to people who don't need a doctor or can go out of area or afford private healthcare?

-4-

From a recent experience with a friend, mental health services and provision are stretched to the optimum too, and whilst they are doing a great job where they can, where they have capacity all of these issues (pollutions, additional traffic and noise, limited open space, inaccessible beaches, overcrowding) around new developments will only increase their workloads. Can we stretch services and provisions like this any further developments?

Likewise, have you tried to get an NHS dentist in this area recently? Don't bother, there is no capacity or space. Appointments at the local dentists are months in advance or you pay an emergency fee to be seen

quickly when things have gone passed the point of acceptable and you'll do whatever you need to for treatment. Are these new developments only going to be sold to people who don't use a dentist or can go out of area or again afford private healthcare including dentistry?

The car parks in the town are regularly packed and queues form throughout the town each weekend and in the summer, even after your massive price increases! Traffic looks for free parking and our town streets are choking and becoming dangerous. Whitstable High Street cannot even cope with these streams of constant traffic tearing the soul out of our beautiful town.

This doesn't even take in to account the hoards that arrive by train. Whilst more friendly to the roads, Whitstable pavements simply don't have the capacity for this additional footfall. It often feels Whitstable is not a place for local people as we are brushed aside by the people saying, "oh look how quaint, how lovely, must eat here or there". Have you ever tried Whitstable High Street and Harbour Street with a pushchair or wheelchair? Whitstable was never made for the capacity of either footfall or traffic and is already overly crammed and struggling to cope.

Local buses can be a bit too hit and miss and not relied on, forcing people into their vehicles, not even to travel down into the town. For residents trying to reach Canterbury and Herne Bay isn't reliable, school children are often late to school, workers late there too and all arriving stressed and hassled.

Supermarket provision has increased and the out-of-town option at Prospect Retail Park has increased and given options to local residents but please no more! New developments of the scales you intend for the Canterbury District will just encourage further interest and applications from big corporate names who will swallow up more land and take local business. In Whitstable, you see regular faces and have a sense that you are a part of a community, a good customer in both local and national shops and services, let's not flood the markets and lose that special feeling.

Whitstable town's shops need help from locals using them, the individual butchers, bakers, greengrocers and other shops, let's not turn Whitstable into a ghost town with an out-of-town shopping mall, like so many other places which lose their identity.

Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay are losing their identities to become one great concrete blot on the landscape. All our open and green spaces, woodlands, parks and coastal spaces are becoming victims of their own success and seem to be sold to the highest bidders, usually nationwide developers with no soul. Please keep our District as it was intended when I first moved across in 1977 and thought Canterbury Cathedral from my bedroom window was a fairy princess castle and the beach something special.

In conclusion, it seems Canterbury City Council have not met their quota on housing for the future and have now grabbed any open space and determined large developments are the way forward. At times like this it's hard to believe the Council works for the people it serves, you've lost your power to complain and object at any higher levels therefore letting us all down.

Canterbury City Council needs to remember it should serve the local communities within its District and should work with them instead of leaving us feeling betrayed as the highest bidder gets our countryside and green spaces to concrete over whilst rubbing their hands together and not thinking out of the box about what they could bring to the area.

In summary and noted in full above, my objections to this development and others in the Whitstable, Chestfield, Swalecliffe areas are:

- Impact of losing more agricultural farmland. Once you've concreted over it all, it'll never revert back. Provision won't be made elsewhere and instead of being a self sufficient country with our own crops and food we'll be buying more and more in and relying on other countries.
- Impact of losing more green landscape forever. We're concreting, bricking and building roads over our beautiful open spaces. What future does that offer future generations?
- Impact of years of building work, noise and air pollution, traffic and heavy goods vehicles driving down unsuitable roads.
- Impact of increased traffic pollution during the build and forever after. Ongoing pollution for every house built with insufficient parking provision in the future. South Street will be impassable and access to green spaces at Clowes Wood and Canterbury further thwarted.
- Impact on further local flooding risks.
- Impact on lack of proper sewage provision.
- Impact on future freshwater provision.
- Impact on our already fragile infrastructure and supporting services.
- Empty promises from our Council and future developers.

I will follow progress and hope that this objection will be heard fairly and that I will be kept informed along the way.

Regards

Carolyn Dobbie