

Alexander Gunyon

From: paula bell [REDACTED]
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From: Paula Bell,
[REDACTED]

I should like to comment on the proposals set out in the 2040 Local Plan and in particular, the Bread and Cheese Field, Westbere.

The Westbere Village Preservation Society has been very helpful in informing residents as to the proposed Local Plan and how it could impact on Westbere residents. Having carefully considered their position I am firmly of the view that there has been some fundamental errors made by Canterbury City Council which will have an extremely detrimental effect on the character, identity and social cohesiveness of the Westbere community if the proposals come to fruition.

My first concern is that the proposed Settlement Boundary will be very divisive for residents. To exclude most of the residents in Bushy Hill Rd from the Settlement area is an extraordinary and absurd proposal. Westbere prides itself on the close community spirit that exists. To suggest that a substantial proportion of the village can be considered to be outside of the Settlement and therefore not part of the Village is inconceivable.

In trying to understand why CCC would contemplate such a suggestion I can only think that it has been done in order to facilitate the proposal to develop the Bread and Cheese Field. It is clear that by omitting Bushy Hill Rd from the Settlement area it has allowed the Hersden Settlement Boundary to be extended beyond its built up area, to include the Bread and Cheese Field.

As you will no doubt be aware, the village is currently attempting to return the historical Field to Westbere, through a Governance Review, after it was wrongly included in the new Hersden Parish. Should CCC look favourably upon this request, it will also appreciate the argument for excluding the Field from the Hersden Settlement area and retaining it as a Green Gap in order to protect the identities of both Parishes. If the unthinkable was to happen and the field was built on, the coalescence that would occur would be extremely damaging for both communities. The current suggestion that Headley's Field should be the Green Gap cannot be contemplated as it sits firmly within Westbere and not on the border with Hersden.

I therefore strongly urge CCC to include Bushy Hill Rd within the Westbere Settlement area and re-designate Headley's Field and the Bread and Cheese Field as Countryside or 'Rural'.

My second comment relates to the proposal to build 150 homes on the Bread and Cheese Field.

Notwithstanding the errors made when setting out the Settlement Boundaries of both communities the notion that this area needs and can support a further 150 homes is plainly wrong. It is currently very clear that the existing developments within Hersden are not selling and that the developers are slowing down the building process in order to reduce costs.

This state of affairs is reinforced by a recent ACRA report that confirms that the projections for population growth and therefore the demand for housing have been overestimated by CCC when assessing requirements. This situation is particularly acute in the Westbere/Hersden areas and beyond, as the lack of essential infrastructure and work opportunities, coupled with the horrendous traffic issues along the A28 exacerbated by the Sturry Rail Crossing, has made it a very unattractive place to live.

It is clear that there is no need for this development and the likelihood is that if the developers are granted permission to build on the field, they will sit on it for many year. We will then have a Sword of Damocles hanging over our heads, affecting property valuations and making it harder to sell our properties.

I urge you to remove the proposed development from the Local Plan and to make the Bread and Cheese Field a Green Gap.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Paula Bell

Sent from my iPhone