

Once Again, Your Help is Needed to Protect Littlebourne!

The threat to Littlebourne and our Four Villages has reappeared, this time **three times bigger than before!**

Developers are moving rapidly to obtain planning permission for 300 new houses on prime farmland off The Hill. This six-year development which will **increase the village size by 40%** is up for consideration even though Canterbury District's new Local Plan is still pending approval.

It's clear this an opportunistic and economically motivated attempt to suburbanise our local, rural environment. Here are the main reasons this must be stopped:

River, Environmental Pollution and Flooding

Let's begin with the most outrageous aspect of this application: this is to dump sewage effluent not into Southern Water's already creaking infrastructure, but into the precious chalk stream that connects our villages. The on-site treatment plant is conveniently 'supported' by the company that will get the contract to build and operate it — Severn Trent Connect— a wholly owned subsidiary of one of the worst performing water utilities in the UK. We are facing 150 tons of effluent every day, forever, entering one of only 210 true chalk streams in the world -yes, **the world!** Recognised as habitats of principal importance under English Law, and even featured in David Attenborough's Wild Isles series, these unique freshwater ecosystems are extremely vulnerable to pollutants. The Rivers Trust notes "if government is serious about protecting our "green and pleasant land", the fate of England's chalk streams is the litmus test." Yet, incredibly, the application makes no attempt to recognise any of this, even suggesting that their on-site sewage treatment and effluent discharge into the river will be of 'benefit' to local wildlife.

The development site contains the village's main tributary of the river which the Developer is very likely considering using as a conduit for wastewater. The conversion of vegetation and soil to hard surfaces will significantly increase run-off directly to the river. Climate change means extreme rainfall events will become more frequent leading to increased village flooding risk from powerful surges in surface water and overflowing attenuation ponds.

Villagers! If you want to stop our crystal-clear stream together with its endangered wildlife being transformed into a lifeless, smelly ditch akin to other unfortunate UK rivers in recent years, then say NO to this application!

Traffic Increase

Access to the development from the A257 will be located between the existing Laurels development and Jubilee Road. Littlebourne residents will have to suffer significant and already unsustainable levels of traffic, noise and associated pollution within and through the village. In the absence of alternative infrastructure, this is likely to be magnified by several other large-scale developments in the area.

Loss of Heritage Landscape & outside Existing Boundaries

The development site is situated outside of the existing village boundary on attractive rising landscape and gives an important rural setting and character to the Littlebourne Conservation Area. Canterbury City Council's Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal describes this as: Grade 1 land farmed traditionally as orchards and hops but giving way to arable, with gently rolling landform with deep loamy soils, and strong field pattern created by windbreaks and crops. The Appraisal's recommendation is to conserve and improve this character, rather than to create a suburban environment through the imposition of modern housing that is inconsistent with Littlebourne's existing size and landscape setting.

This is mirrored by the policy of both existing and emerging Local Plans. Under the latter, Policy R2 clearly states that in 'rural service centres' such as Littlebourne, new housing development will only be supported where it is within the settlement boundaries.

Loss of Excellent Land for Food Production

The development site comprises high quality and versatile "Grade 1" agricultural land. Given the impacts of Brexit, the war in Ukraine and climate change, national food security and local sourcing are becoming increasingly important. Canterbury's Local Plan aims to promote the sustainable use of land and conserve soil quality, specifically to avoid the unnecessary loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, while national policy requires areas of poorer quality land are preferably allocated for development.

Wildlife and Biodiversity

The proposed development site is home to many threatened species especially reptiles, farmland birds and birds of prey. The loss of suitable habitat for nationally-declining skylarks will be quite simply irreversible. Rather than eliminating species from our landscapes, Canterbury's Local Plan requires that developments enhance biodiversity by 20 percent.

Please write your objection to this application ref CA/23/00484 at:

<https://pa.canterbury.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=RRKIUHEAFQ200>

Also please help support our fund-raising events to fight this imposition on our community!