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**From:** Kai Hoffman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 06 October 2025 14:40  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Comments against Development of the Old Hockey Field, Beacon Road, Herne Bay

**--Email From External Account--**

Dear Consultations,

The old hockey field on Beacon Road should not be included in the 2025 District Local Plan (lot N26), as it remains designated as a protected open space and continues to hold vital environmental, social, historical, and community value. In addition, the already congested Heron Ward cannot support the additional drainage, sewerage and traffic issues which would be a result of increased housing in this area.

I would like to raise the following points:

**1. Lack of Consultation and Access Restrictions**

Since COVID-19, the field has been locked off by the council without any prior consultation with local residents or user groups. This restriction has created the false impression that the space is redundant, when in reality the community has simply been denied access. The locked fields have been featured in local newspapers, highlighting widespread public concern, and there are numerous local residents interested in the site.

September 2025

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/herne-bay/news/building-over-sports-fields-for-housing-would-be-a-travesty-329910/>

April 2024

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/herne-bay/news/eastenders-legend-nasty-nick-s-fury-as-council-shuts-off-pla-305558/>

**2. Council Recognition of Community Value**

As recently as 2017, council grant funding was awarded to support community projects on the hockey field, demonstrating official recognition of its value (Beach Creative 'Big Picture'

<https://www.facebook.com/BeachCreativeCic/posts/1594817570575055/> )

While a recent **village green application** was denied, the site has been granted *Asset of Community Value* status, further confirming its importance to the local community.

**3. Historical Significance**

There is a longstanding oral history among town residents suggesting that at least one, possibly two covenants exist on the space to serve the town, dating back over 100 years. This historical context adds another layer of protection and community interest to the site. The covenant was agreed by Thomas Dence in 1894. I would be happy to provide photographic evidence of usage of this site dating back as far as 1912 for community activities as well as additional historical data.

**4. Health and Wellbeing Benefits**

Before it was locked, the field was actively used for sport and wellbeing-related activities, including informal games, organised youth group sessions, and exercise. These activities are essential for physical and mental health and cannot easily be replicated elsewhere. The only reason it is not currently in use by the whole community is because the council locked off the land without consultation. There are still numerous

properties backing onto the hockey field which have gate access, included in their property deeds - in fact, these properties have been used by utility companies like BT to access the fields as they could not access their own poles.

### 5. Community and Youth Provision

The hockey field has served as a safe and accessible hub for young people and community groups. Its closure has already diminished opportunities for social connection and youth engagement. Development would permanently remove one of the few open spaces available locally for these purposes at a time when youth provision is so desperately needed in Heron Ward.

### 6. Environmental Value and Climate Resilience

The field contributes to the local ecosystem by supporting wildlife, promoting biodiversity, and acting as a natural carbon sink. It also aids in managing surface water and **reducing flood risk**, benefits which would be lost if the land were developed. Building here would directly contradict council climate emergency commitments and sustainability strategies.

### 7. Allotments and Sustainable Living

A number of residents would like to reinstate the allotments which were formerly on the site (and of which we have historical photographic proof, also happy to supply). Allotments would provide a valuable community resource, promoting food security, sustainable local living, and intergenerational activity. Any development risks undermining these uses.

### 8. Planning and Policy Considerations

The hockey field remains designated as a *protected open space*, and as such, development would conflict with local and national planning policy. Open spaces are recognised as critical infrastructure for health, wellbeing, and climate resilience. Reclassifying or building on this land is inconsistent with those principles: calling the hockey field a brownfield site suggests that it has been neglected by the community. The community does not want this land to be disused but has had no choice.

### 9. Community Collaboration

The Friends of the Hockey Fields, along with a number of other local community groups, would welcome the opportunity to work with the council on finding a healthier, greener solution that involves the community and ensures this protected space remains accessible and preserved for recreation, return to nature and wellbeing.

### 10. Infrastructure Strain

- a.
- b.
- c. **Overburdening existing systems**
- d. — Roads, drainage, water supply, and sewage systems in the Beacon Road area are already near capacity; new development could overload these systems.
- e.
- f.
- g.
- h.
- i.
- j. **Increased traffic congestion**
- k. — More buildings mean more vehicles, deliveries, and parking demand, leading to gridlock in an area already known for
- l. **dangerous intersections**
- m. (Canterbury Road/Beltinge Road/Beacon Road - there have been **46**
- n. **casualties including 1 fatality within 1km** of the proposed site at Beacon Road,

- o. 8 of which were directly on the named streets around the site, 3 directly at the access junction with Beacon Road and Beltinge Road
- p.
- q. <https://dft.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/ea3b071df62a434aa21ed80a6214d690>
- r.
- s.
- t.
- u.
- v.
- w.
- x. **Public transport pressure**
- y. — Existing bus routes might not have the capacity to absorb extra passengers and are constantly under pressure to reduce services, potentially leaving new residents stranded.
- z.
- aa.
- bb.
- cc.
- dd.
- ee. **Utility limitations**
- ff. — Electricity, gas, broadband, and waste collection networks may need costly upgrades to accommodate additional use.
- gg.
- hh.
- ii.
- jj.

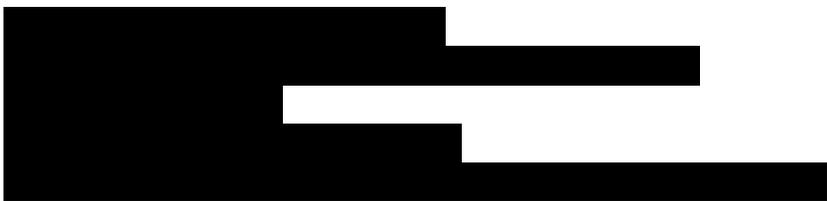
**Conclusion:** The Beacon Road hockey field is a vital community, environmental, and historical asset. The combination of locked access, widespread resident interest, prior council investment, *Asset of Community Value* status, and longstanding oral history regarding a covenant clearly demonstrates its enduring importance. The field supports health, wellbeing, youth activity, biodiversity, and climate resilience. For these reasons, it should remain protected open space, be restored to full community use, and the council is encouraged to collaborate with local groups on sustainable solutions rather than pursue development.

We kindly request that N26 be removed from the draft.

Kind regards

Kai Hoffman

obo Friends of Beacon Road Fields



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