

Helen O'Connor

From: [REDACTED]
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10.10.2025

I wish to object to the proposal to turn Thanington Recreation Field into a park and ride site.

The concreting over of the only green space, in the area, is at best shortsighted and at worst demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the needs of the local community.

With the building of new homes, in Saxon Fields and beyond, to concrete over the field would be deplorable. To remove the opportunity for people to exercise, walk their dogs, meet up with friends and to play games in a safe environment would have a detrimental impact on those living in the area. The benefits of spending time in green spaces is compelling and has shown to improve people's physical and mental health, with a positive impact on happiness and wellbeing.

The recreation ground and associated Resource Centre draws in a number of other clubs and societies who benefit from this large, open space. The need to protect our green spaces is indeed recognised in the Draft Canterbury District Open Space Strategy 2023 to 2040 where it states that open spaces are critical contributors to the quality of places and people's quality of life. With health and wellbeing acknowledged as being so important to people's lives I find it inconceivable that this proposal has even been considered as it goes against everything the policy stands for.

I am aware that alternative recreational facilities have been proposed, however, they are either too far away for the community who need the facility close at hand or the parcels of land too small. These promised areas, unfortunately, will not replace the large, open space you are proposing to cover with concrete. Furthermore, in my experience, promises made at the planning stage, by developers, rarely materialise.

I was present at a local meeting, held at the Resources Centre, on the evening of Tuesday, 7th October where a number of young people spoke so passionately about their 'rec'. Their contribution to the cause were genuine and heartfelt. The value of the recreation ground clearly had a profound impact upon their lives and those who had come before them.

It was clear, from all the speakers, that they felt their council gave them little consideration and perceived their community to be an easier option to choose as they would provide least resistance when compared to more affluent areas of the city with the experience and means to challenge proposals more professionally.

The current park and ride site is currently too close to the city centre and from the outset should have been sited further out. From the drawings, I have seen of the proposal, there are no access or egress roads shown. As an area with more than enough traffic lights, to site more in this area would only increase the current congestion.

Rarely is the park and ride site more than half full so to propose an even larger one would appear to be overly optimistic. Has the council considered keeping the existing site with enough spaces for current, daily use and having a second park and ride stop on the industrial estate for those occasions when more people wish to travel into the city centre?

I would hope, in coming to your decision, that you would give due consideration to the lasting legacy you will be leaving for the present and future, growing, population of Thanington. How would you like to be remembered? Will it be for allowing Thanington to continue to thrive with its green and open spaces or for reducing it to Thanington Without a recreation ground?

Your sincerely,

Peter Hellman