

**Helen O'Connor**

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**From:** Catherine Hellman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 October 2025 16:36  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Proposed development of Thanington Recreation Ground - objection

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Dear Councillor,

I wish to object to the proposal to turn Thanington Recreation Ground into a park and ride site. I have lived in the area for over 30 years.

This is the only green space with over one hundred mature trees in the area that is a safe space accessible to children, families and community groups such as the dog and puppy training group as well as being used by Canterbury football club for games.

It is well documented that green spaces support mental and physical wellbeing. Thanington is a community with a lot of deprivation and to suggest that people travel to other areas of the city such as Merton farm demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of the living conditions of a significant number of the community. Access to Merton farm on foot requires walking down a country lane (Hollow Lane) with at times no footpaths and no street lighting. Highly dangerous. The other suggested alternative green spaces on Saxon Fields and other new build sites in the area will not be of a size to match Thanington recreation ground and will be too far away for a community that needs facilities close at hand. Furthermore, from my experience, promises made at the planning stage, by developers, rarely materialise. ie promises of Thanington Primary School and a replacement to Pilgrims Hospice. They are just hollow gestures to get a planning proposal across the planning permission line.

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.

The potential re-siting of the park and ride with the proposed new slip road off would require yet further traffic lights to be installed at a site that already has seven or more sets. The requirement of all traffic coming off the new slip road to double back up the A28 to access the new park and ride would cause further traffic congestion and delays on the road.

The present Wincheap park and ride is rarely full at any time other than possibly Christmas. It struggles to be half full most of the time. How sure are the council that this new park and ride will be used by more drivers? Has a survey been undertaken to identify uptake? Personally I believe that the original park and ride was sited too close into Canterbury and should have been positioned further out along the A28 where the garage showrooms are currently situated. That would have eased the traffic congestion on the Ashford Road approaching the city. The environmental impact of the runoff from such a large area of concrete into the River Stour does not bear thinking about either. Has this been considered?

I was unable to attend a local meeting, held at the Resources Centre, on the evening of Tuesday, 7th October however I understand a number of young people spoke so passionately about their 'rec'. Their contribution to the cause was genuine and heartfelt. The value of the recreation ground clearly had a profound impact upon their lives and those who had come before them. I understand the perception from many speakers was that they felt the 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. This is so disappointing and I hope that they are proved wrong. I attended the meeting at the Guildhall on Thursday 9th October and witnessed the dignified opposition to the proposal.

In coming to your decision, please give due consideration to the lasting legacy you will be leaving for the present and future, growing, population of Thanington. Thanington is known as Thanington Without. Please don't let that be Thanington Without the recreation ground as your legacy as a council.

Thank you for your time reading this communication.

Your sincerely

Catherine Hellman