

## Tom Hawkes

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**From:** Consultations  
**To:** Alan Baldock  
**Subject:** RE: Objections to proposed plans for Merton Park

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**From:** Erika R [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] October 2025 19:50  
**To:** Alan Baldock [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Objections to proposed plans for Merton Park

### --Email From External Account--

I would like to express my objection to the proposed allocation of 1,930 dwellings at Merton Park.

#### Biodiversity habitat value

Biodiversity of Wincheap orchards is irreplaceable, you can't create it later.

Orchards have diverse range of habitats and attract various species, even endangered birds. Recently a local specialist observed 38 species of birds in the orchards, including:

Kestrels, that are on the Amber List of Birds of Conservation Concern due to a significant decline in their population since the 1970s. While still common and widespread, conservation efforts are focused on understanding and reversing the decline, which is thought to be caused by factors such as habitat change and reduced prey, again due to habitat changes.

Redwings, which again are on the UK's Amber List for Birds of Conservation Concern due to a decline in their population.

Green woodpeckers, that are attracted specifically to orchard trees.

Eurasian skylarks, that are classified as a red list species in the UK, which means they are of high conservation concern.

Also red kites which, on the other hand, have come back from the brink of extinction.

Hedgerows are homes to further species, even hedgehogs.

The hedgehog is a priority for conservation work at People's Trust for Endangered Species. It is hugely popular and currently declining in UK, but lives in Wincheap orchards.

This is just a snippet of the amazing biodiversity that we have in the orchards, which is one of the reasons our Wincheap orchard should be protected and preserved for the future generations.

Narrow landscaped buffers as proposed in the plans, will not compensate for the habitat loss.

#### The price of mental and physical health

Mental and physical health benefits of the orchards and the surrounding fields are paramount. They create the open space needed for all, from little kids having picnics, walking dogs, cycling safely, to school kids, that learn about nature and farming, to growing teenagers that use the playing field, all the way to adult and elderly walkers and dog walkers. The recent pandemic highlighted these health benefits, when the whole neighborhood used the orchards safely for their daily exercise. Research shows how much NHS saves if communities have access to open green spaces. Here in Wincheap we are blessed with great open space right on our doorsteps. It needs to be protected for the future generations.

#### Air pollution concerns

At the time when countries pledge their zero emissions and green policies, when major European cities scramble to create green spaces anywhere possible, even on rooftops, we cannot afford to rush into building over our green space.

We are aware that the air pollution in Wincheap has increased, and is reportedly worst on the junction of Hollow lane with Wincheap road, we cannot allow to turn the narrow minor lanes that surround our local primary school into major traffic routes.

#### Traffic and access concerns

Roads in South Canterbury and Wincheap are already under strain. Wincheap roundabout is particularly difficult at all times, Rheims Way, leading to London road is blocked at peak times, Wincheap road leading to A28 across the A2 has perhaps the most number of traffic lights per meter, currently 5-6 traffic light causing unnecessary stalemate. Many roads/ lanes proposed in the Merton park development are inadequate and too narrow. Hollow Lane and the roads surrounding Wincheap school, are narrow and should not accommodate more traffic, but should be protected from more noise and air pollution and the dangers of traffic, as they are used by families walking to/ from school.

Lime Kiln Road is especially unsuitable as it is narrow and in part forms a footpath. It cannot safely accommodate additional traffic.

Stuppington Lane and the footpaths along it are valued local routes for walkers and dog walkers. Closing it to through-traffic and rerouting vehicles will undermine this important community amenity.

With the A2 slip road cancelled, traffic will be funnelled onto inadequate local routes. The proposed "fast bus link" remains aspirational, with no evidence of funding or operator.

Development should only be permitted where safe and suitable access can be achieved (NPPF 110), and should be refused if there is an unacceptable impact on safety or the cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (NPPF 111).

#### Loss of valuable, productive farmland

The fields around Stuppington Lane are part of Canterbury's rural setting and also productive farmland. At a time when food security is a national issue, it is unwise to permanently lose this land. Planning policies should recognise the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Kent welcomes visitors with 'Welcome to Kent Garden of England's signs. With the rate of the planned development, there soon won't be many fields or orchards left.

I therefore request that Merton Park be removed from the Local Plan. Instead, the Council should focus on smaller, deliverable brownfield and town-centre sites where new housing can be provided more sustainably, without undermining food security, damaging rural communities, or wiping out Canterbury's natural biodiverse environment. Wincheap and Canterbury cannot afford to allow the irreversible impact and harm to the character of the landscape.

With best wishes,

Erika Repaska