

**Tom Hawkes**

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**From:** Consultations  
**To:** Andrew Thompson  
**Subject:** Bread and Cheese Field: proposed Development

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**From:** Antonie van den Broek [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 21 October 2025 5:27 PM  
**To:** Andrew Thompson [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Bread and Cheese Field: proposed Development

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

Dear Mr Thompson,

**Reasons for challenging the proposed plan to include the Bread and Cheese Field as suitable for building 150 houses**

**Introduction**

According to the 'Draft Canterbury District Local Plan: Focused consultation 2025', the Bread and Cheese Field (BCF), which lies immediately to the east of Westbere, remains a potential building site for 150 houses.

This proposal has been commented on repeatedly by the Westbere Parish Council (WPC), the Westbere Village Preservation Society (WVPS) as well as Westbere residents, particularly Colin Bell and Deborah Thompson, who have variously pointed out that either Canterbury City Council (CCC) made a mistake when redrawing the *Settlement Boundary* for Westbere, or that boundary was deliberately done to obviate future objections to any proposed development on the BCF.

We argue, here, that Westbere's current Settlement Boundary should be revised, because it was done without proper consultation and because it arbitrarily excludes a recognised part of the Westbere settlement. CCC argues that Settlement Boundaries are arrived at following site visits and technical calculations, but serious questions surround the creation of the Westbere boundary.

**CCC's Plan and Rationale for Developing the BCF**

The proposal for the potential development of the BCF is found in CCC's 'Draft Canterbury District Local Plan 2040: Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 March 2024' (under Development allocations, see Policy R5, pp. 118-21).

It relies on a Settlement Boundary decision, which excludes houses lying within both the Parish *and* the Settlement areas of Westbere. On the Settlement Boundary map, nine houses lying along Bushy Hill Road (counting down from the top of Bushy Hill Road) are excluded from the Westbere Settlement. The map even suggests that one of the houses has the peculiar distinction of being half in Westbere and half out of it.

**The Significance of that Settlement Boundary**

Among the consequences is the fact that Westbere residents living in the 'excluded' houses are denied their rightful identities. According to the Settlement Boundary, they are not Westbere

villagers but dwellers in an unnamed rural area – perhaps affiliated with Hersden Parish? No account seems to have been given to the fact that they are directly, which is to say, geographically, connected to the rest of Westbere, that their official addresses clearly list them as Westbere residents, and that Bushy Hill Road, which lies within the CT2 0HE postcode, makes them Westbere residents – not rural outliers. When CCC conducted their site visits and applied other technical determinations, did they not note the absurdity of all this?

CCC's response to this might well be, of course they are Westbereans, since they belong to the *Parish* of Westbere, whereas the *Settlement* Boundary is only used for planning purposes.

But therein lies the rub. By excluding the top half of Bushy Hill Road, CCC's planners are conveniently free to consider the BCF as no longer adjacent to Westbere; and that makes the land suitable for potential development. It now appears to be part of a rural area, closer to Hersden than Westbere, and it can therefore be developed under planning regulations.

But note the sleight of hand: if Westbere's Settlement Boundary included the actual settlement of Westbere, i.e., all the houses along Bushy Hill Road, planners would not be able to make that argument. They would not be able to grant building 150 houses on land that is in fact immediately adjacent to Westbere.

They would be prevented because that green space would mean 'bleeding' of Westbere and Hersden into each other – something the Council has always been keen to avoid. Moreover, that would also amount to more than doubling the number of houses in Westbere, which would be patently absurd. All sense of proportion would be lost: the development would outnumber the existing houses in the village.

### **The Timeline of Events**

A close examination of the timeline of events strongly suggests that the potential for developing the BCF has long been allowed for, and that Westbere's residents have been misled by CCC into thinking that Parish Boundary changes are significant when it is in fact Settlement Boundaries that matter.

By late 2017, CCC's planners had already given thought to two housing developments in the soon-to-be-created Hersden Parish, south of the A28, namely Hoplands Farm and the Chislet Colliery site. Significantly, at that time, the BCF was *not*, publicly at least, identified as suitable for development.

However, it was unilaterally – and against Westbere residents' wishes – reallocated to the soon-to-be-created Hersden Parish. That decision was finalised in January 2018 – which explains why the March 2018 Parish boundary consultations with the Westbere PC and a large number of residents were ignored: decisions had already been made.

The 2018 Hersden Parish Boundary map shows the BCF (adjacent to, and to the east of Hersden Hill) as suddenly belonging to Hersden, despite the Field having had long historical links with Westbere.

The Westbere Settlement Boundary that we are now appealing was also first considered in 2017-2018. And the coincidence of these two events leads to further questions about CCC's lack of transparency and the strong suspicion that plans were drawn up to force through potential planning decisions for the BCF, should these become necessary to meet housing quotas.

The BCF was first identified in July 2022 as potentially suitable for development (see CCC's SLAA site reference 163, initially published in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment, Appendix C.) The establishment of the Westbere Settlement Boundary, essential for that proposal to go

ahead, predates that by 5 years, which again suggests that planning decisions, without proper consultations, have been ongoing for a significant number of years.

### **The Current Situation**

The removal of the BCF from Westbere Parish to Hersden Parish prompted local Westbere residents to petition CCC for a reversal of that decision. The latter was strongly supported by Westbere residents, and, in 2024, CCC did in fact return the BCF to Westbere.

The same petition also called for the BCF to remain a green space between Westbere and Hersden – but that issue was not addressed by the Councillors – and it also appears to be further ignored by the Planning Department.

Meanwhile, the Westbere Settlement Boundary remains unchanged. And that is wrong for the reasons already given. Perhaps these objections should have been made many years ago, but then, in defence of that, it is worth recalling CCC's decision making prior to consultations and its tendency to encourage residents to believe, wrongly as it turns out, that Parish Boundary changes matter when it comes to land development. When the BCF was returned to Westbere, people believed the BCF would be removed from the SLAA lists.

A further change in Westbere's status is seen in the way the village is described. In the current adopted Local Plan 2017, p. 34, Westbere is included in a list of *hamlets* where 'development will be permitted which specifically meets an identified local need and in the open countryside ... [where it is ] required for agriculture and forestry purposes (see Policy EMP 13). In the 2045 Draft Local Plan, Westbere is described as a Local Service Centre where

New housing development will be supported where it is:

(a) Allocated for development in Policies R12 - R18, in an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan or through the Carried Forward Policies (Chapter 8);

(b) The redevelopment of previously developed land, including at first-floor level or above existing commercial or community premises, where this is of a scale and form appropriate to the size and character of the settlement and protects the rural character of the settlement; or

(c) Minor development including infilling on appropriate sites.

What has changed in Westbere to change it from a hamlet protected from large-scale developments to a Local Service Centre where development will likely occur? The answer is nothing has changed in Westbere.

Earlier this year, there was a suggestion that the local church might be deconsecrated by the archdiocese because they cannot find a vicar for the parish. If that occurs, and it has not been altogether ruled out, Westbere will have even less in the way of local services. Are these possibilities/eventualities considered/taken into account?

### **Conclusion**

Settlement Boundaries should indicate where a town or village's built-up area ends, and the countryside begins. Arbitrarily omitting nine houses along the top Bushy Hill Road is simply unacceptable. The only plausible justification for that is because CCC's planners thereby hope to ignore objections to any future housing development on the BCF.

It is worth noting that if the BCF is approved for development, CCC will have succeeded in 'cramming' a development within a settlement, which, ironically enough, Settlement Boundaries are there to prevent from happening.

No Settlement Boundaries is cast in stone: it can change to reflect new information or circumstances.

In the interest of common sense, and in the interest of protecting the distinct identities of Westbere and Hersden (with a suitable green space that the BCF provides), we respectfully ask CCC for the following:

- Amend the Settlement Boundary by including the whole of Bushy Hill Road;
- Remove the BCF from the list of suitable areas for development.

Finally, the WVPS fully endorses Mr Colin Bell's emails to you, dated 21 October 2025, on the same subject.

Yours sincerely, and with kind regards,

Dr Antonie G van den Broek  
Chair, Westbere Village Preservation Society

**Andrew Thompson**  
Lead Corporate Policy and Strategy Manager  
Policy and Communications



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