

Tom Hawkes

From: Bethany Cunnington [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 October 2025 12:25
To: Consultations
Subject: Canterbury district local plan

--Email From External Account--

Dear Canterbury City Council

I would like to add to what I said in my consultation form regarding the development on the land proposed at the Wincheap Orchards. It is undeniable that this space is an area rich in biodiversity. I have been recording the bird species there for several years now using the Merlin app and photography and have recorded 43 species of birds in this area. Many of which are threatened or endangered. Some species travel across the globe just to come to this space which highlights the Orchard as of international significance.

Here is the list of bird species categorised into conservation status:

Red-
Cocoo
Eurasian Skylark
Starlings
Yellowhammer
Spotted flycatchers
Fieldfares
Common Linnet
Cetti's warbler
Herring gull
House Martin
House sparrows
Greenfinch

Amber-
Meadow Pipit
Redwing
Song Thrush
Common Whitethroat
Dunnock
Kestrel
Eurasian Wren
Black-headed gull
Lesser Black-backed gull
Sparrowhawk
Rook

Green-
Great spotted woodpecker
Green woodpecker
Robin
Chaffinch
Chiffchaff
Blue tit
Great tit
Eurasian Blackcap
Black bird
Buzzard
Red Kite
Goldfinch
Long tailed tit
Pied wagtail
Wood pigeon
Collared dove
Magpie
Carrion crow
Jackdaw
Pheasant

I have evidence for all of these birds and will be uploading it to the KMBRC.

We should be protecting these birds not destroying their chance of survival by removing one of the last strongholds. I believe that we should protect and preserve this land for both the community and wildlife. Kent used to have 25,000 acres of Orchard. Today the number that remains is a fragment in comparison. The Orchard Project that 'Orchards are classified as 'Priority Habitats' by Natural England and DEFRA, and they are included as such in the UKs Biodiversity Action Plan. This is because they make ideal homes for thousands of flora and fauna.' The Uks Biodiversity Action Plan describes Orchards as "hotspots for biodiversity" which "significantly contribute to landscape character and local distinctiveness" and support "a wide range of wildlife containing UK BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan) priority habitats and species, as well as an array of Nationally Rare and Nationally Scarce species". In the Plan it also outlines why specifically Orchard habitat is so significant for wildlife. It says, " the wildlife of Orchard species depends on the mosaic of habitats they encompass, including fruit trees, scrub, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, non-fruit trees within the Orchard, the Orchard floor habitats, fallen dead wood and associated features such as ponds and streams". From this it is clear that the apple and pear orchards themselves are of high significance. But not only are they important, but their relationship within the surrounding landscape is also important. As the surrounding fields add to this mosaic of habitats and have led to species like the Eurasian Skylark and Meadow Pipit to inhabit the area. The Orchard in Wincheap is also a traditionally managed Orchard. According to the UK BAP orchards is that are managed traditionally are of much higher ecological value than intensively farmed orchards. It's abundance of available habitat supports life from all trophic levels including a diverse variety of flora. A species of significant importance at the Orchard is the wild asparagus which is categorised as an endangered species and on the red list. The variety of wildflowers supports a large array of invertebrates which underpin the survival all other species including us. Their pollination and presence maintain the ecosystem around us and supports food production. Local bat populations rely on them and as protected species they require consideration. As I have already mentioned the birds are crucial. They help us by controlling pests, weeds, remove dead matter, disperse seeds, help with pollination, and maintain ecosystems we can emotionally and physically benefit from. Large numbers of birds of prey hunt in the Orchard

which shows how abundant the prey is. This land has resident nesting kestrels, sparrowhawks, a growing population of buzzards and this year a red kite was sighted. Badgers also annually breed on this land as well as foxes, hedgehogs and rabbits.

I hope that the work that I have been able to show the Council has highlighted the abundance of life here and bring to their attention its significance not only for the wildlife but its significance that it plays on members of the community. This Orchard is a hub for all sorts of life. Life which will be snuffed out along with its precious web of habitats if building goes ahead. The council must understand that these species will not return if the Orchard and fields are removed. This is the only local green space to Wincheap which provides the necessary niches for these species. Where else are they going to go?

I understand that housing must be built which is why I propose that the University of Kent should be built on instead. The environmental impact would be much less in that area as it is not the only local green space, is less biodiverse, holds less cultural and communal significance and would have the Blean Woodland itself to reduce the impact support the change.

Thank you for reading my concern

Bethany Cunnington

<https://www.theorchardproject.org.uk/what-we-do/we-create-wildlife-habitats/#:~:text=Orchards%20are%20classified%20as%20'Priority,species%20of%20flora%20and%20fauna.>

<https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/2829ce47-1ca5-41e7-bc1a-871c1cc0b3ae/UKBAP-BAPHabitats-56-TraditionalOrchards.pdf>