

**Tom Hawkes**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 20 October 2025 09:37  
**To:** Consultations  
**Subject:** Objection to Local Plan N32 proposal

[REDACTED]  
**--Email From External Account--**

Dear members of the planning committee

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## **Objection to Proposed Development – Rattington Street (Site N32), Chartham, Canterbury**

I am writing to formally object to the proposed development at Rattington Street (Site N32) in the village of Chartham, Canterbury.

A similar application with fewer houses was rejected within the past two years, and the reasons for that decision remain entirely valid—indeed, they are now even more pressing given the further deterioration in local infrastructure, road safety, drainage, and sewage capacity, as well as the continuing increase in traffic.

### **1. Highways and Transport**

Rattington Street is a narrow lane leading from Cocking Road to Station Road, passing through the village via the Artichoke Inn before crossing three river bridges and joining the A28. The lane has no pavements, cycle paths, or street lighting. Station Road has limited pavements, and several sections could not safely accommodate new footways. Over one of the bridges, the road is single-track.

Shalmsford Street, located on the opposite side of the proposed development, is already heavily congested, particularly during school drop-off and collection times. The primary school is situated here, and the road becomes hazardous due to parked cars and high traffic volumes. Speed Watch data collected over the past two years across 20 sessions identified **136 speeding vehicles (35–58 mph)**—mostly between 7am and 11am—confirming the use of this road as a commuter “rat run.”

Kent County Council has deemed Chartham “unsafe” for a Walking Bus Scheme due to current traffic conditions. Cars frequently mount narrow pavements to pass, endangering pedestrians. An additional **170 homes could generate over 400 extra vehicles**, further compromising road safety.

Public transport options are limited. Chartham train station lacks parking, forcing many residents to drive to Chilham for rail access. Conversely, commuters from Ashford use Chartham’s village hall car park to avoid high parking fees, worsening congestion. The bus service is infrequent and underused.

The development plans show no clear vehicle access to the site—only pedestrian and cycle routes. One such route (via The Crescent) is **jointly owned by local residents**, who have made it clear they will not permit access. Given the inadequate road infrastructure, lack of lighting, and dangerous conditions, the area cannot safely accommodate additional traffic. Furthermore, the **last Traffic and**

**Road Survey was conducted seven years ago** and is now obsolete; a new, independent assessment must precede any further planning consideration.

## 2. Public Health and Wellbeing

An estimated 470 additional vehicles will significantly increase noise and air pollution. While Canterbury City Council focuses on air quality improvements within the city centre, overdevelopment in surrounding villages like Chartham undermines those goals. The increased traffic, particularly around the school, will endanger the health of residents—especially children.

The city’s lack of a ring road already causes severe congestion through Canterbury. Without addressing this structural issue, adding further commuter traffic from new developments will only exacerbate pollution and safety risks.

## 3. Heritage and Landscape Impact

The proposed site lies adjacent to listed buildings and conservation areas on the rising slope of the Stour Valley. Development here would irreversibly alter the rural landscape and visual character of the valley.

The elevated and steep terrain means the site is widely visible from **Bakers Lane, Summer Peace Grove, The Crescent, Rattington Street**, and parts of **Beech Avenue**. It can also be seen from nearby **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. The proposal would effectively merge Chartham with St. Augustine’s, destroying the clear village separation identified for protection in the **Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment** and **Neighbourhood Plan**, both of which prioritise preserving rural character and green space.

## 4. Flooding, Drainage, and Environmental Risks

The north-eastern section of the site borders the **Chartham Conservation Area**, whose defining feature is its close relationship between built form and open countryside. Developing this land would fail to preserve or enhance the area’s character, contrary to the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**.

The site also lies near the **Nailbourne** and **River Stour**, both prone to seasonal flooding. Increased impermeable surfaces will exacerbate flood risk and runoff. Groundwater and drainage capacity have not been adequately assessed in the proposal. Moreover, there is significant concern about potential impacts on **Stodmarsh International Nature Reserve**, already suffering from elevated **nitrate and phosphate levels** in wastewater. Until nutrient neutrality can be assured, development within this catchment should remain restricted.

These risks contradict the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** principles on sustainable development and environmental protection.

## 5. Agricultural and Ecological Value

The site is **prime agricultural land**, used for arable farming for over 30 years. The **NPPF** directs local authorities to protect “the best and most versatile” (BMV) agricultural land (Grades 1, 2, and 3a) and prioritise poorer-quality land for development.

According to the **UK Food Security Report 2024**, domestic cereal production has already fallen by **22%** due to extreme weather and global supply disruptions. The **Natural England 25-Year Environment Plan** calls for sustainable soil management and the protection of valuable farmland. Building on this land contradicts those national objectives.

## **6. Biodiversity and Wildlife Impact**

Rattington Street Field (N32) contains **ancient woodland** at its centre—home to protected bat species, tawny owls, badgers, foxes, and a range of birds. Even if this woodland were retained, development would fragment habitats and disrupt migration and breeding patterns critical for biodiversity.

Both the **Woodland Trust** and **Kent Wildlife Trust** have been notified of these concerns. The ecological consequences would extend beyond the site itself, damaging wider wildlife networks.

## **Conclusion**

To echo Prime Minister **Sir Keir Starmer's** position on sustainable development:

“Brownfield first... Nobody’s talking about building all over the countryside. That has to be preserved.”

*(BBC Radio Derby, October 2025)*

Given the above considerations—highways safety, environmental risks, landscape harm, and inconsistency with both local and national policy—this proposal should be firmly rejected.

**Yours sincerely,**  
Diane Gates

Sent from Samsung Mobile on O2