

Subject: Beacon Road (Site N26) — Request to Remove Housing Allocation and Redesignate as Protected Community Open Space

Dear Consultations Team,

I am submitting a formal representation regarding the former Beacon Road Hockey Field (Site N26) in Herne Bay.

Primary Basis for Objection

The proposed housing allocation on Site N26 is **unsound and contrary to national and local planning policy**, as it would result in the permanent loss of a valued area of open space and a former playing field **without demonstrable surplus or equivalent replacement**, in direct conflict with **the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024, paragraphs 103–105)**. The proposal therefore fails the tests of soundness under national policy and conflicts with the Council's own **Open Space Strategy 2025–2040**, which prioritises the retention and enhancement of open spaces for health, culture, biodiversity and climate resilience.

I therefore request that Canterbury City Council **removes Site N26 from the proposed housing allocations** in the Local Plan and **redesignates it as protected community open space**.

1. Policy and Planning Grounds

The NPPF (Dec 2024, paras 103–105) requires that existing open space and playing fields must not be built on unless a clear surplus or equivalent replacement is demonstrated. No such evidence exists for this area. The site meets the criteria for designation as a **Local Green Space** (paras 106–108), offering exceptional community, recreational and ecological value.

This request aligns directly with Canterbury's own:

- **Open Space Strategy 2025–2040**, which recognises open spaces as essential for health, culture, environment and climate resilience;
 - **Biodiversity Emergency declaration (2023)** and **Tree, Woodland & Hedgerow Strategy (2024)**, committing the Council to nature recovery and urban canopy expansion;
 - **Climate Action and Public Health frameworks**, emphasising access to nature, active lifestyles and sustainable food systems.
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2. Historical, Cultural and Place-Making Importance

Beacon Road is not just land; it is a **place of shared memory and identity**. For nearly fifty years it served as a sporting and social commons, nurturing connection and belonging. Since closure, it has evolved into an informal greenway supporting wildlife and quiet recreation.

The **Canterbury Cultural Strategy** and **Open Space Strategy** both recognise that green spaces are “anchors of civic identity”. To build over this site would erase a vital piece of **living heritage** — a space where local culture, sport and everyday life intertwined.

Redesignating it as community open space would allow the Council to demonstrate leadership in **creative, regenerative place-making** — celebrating heritage while meeting contemporary needs for wellbeing, biodiversity and inclusion.

Healthy Herne Bay – Reviving a Legacy of Wellbeing

Herne Bay has a proud history as a **place of health, recovery and fresh-air wellbeing** — celebrated in the 1920s–30s as “*Healthy Herne Bay*.” Reviving that legacy through a community-led green hub would reconnect the town to its historic identity as a seaside sanctuary while updating it for the twenty-first century. The Beacon Road site could once again act as a **destination for regenerative tourism and education**, offering green, health-oriented infrastructure that blends ecology, learning and culture. In doing so, the project would both **reclaim and renew Herne Bay’s heritage** as a place where people come to heal, connect and thrive together.

3. Addressing Urgent Community Needs

Herne Bay faces documented shortfalls in accessible open space and community facilities. Transforming Beacon Road into a **multi-functional Community Green Hub** would directly respond to these needs by providing:

- **Food security** through community allotments and gardens;
- **Engagement and empowerment** via co-design, volunteering and local stewardship;
- **Mental health and wellbeing** through access to nature and active outdoor use;
- **Social connection** across generations and backgrounds;

- **Sustainability and climate resilience** via tree planting, soil regeneration and rain-garden infrastructure;
- **Skill-sharing and local enterprise** opportunities — training, markets and community events.

This vision supports Canterbury's commitment to inclusive growth and health equity while delivering measurable biodiversity and carbon benefits.

4. Economic and Partnership Potential

A protected, community-led Beacon Road site can generate sustainable income through education, events, community markets and wellbeing programmes — creating **social value without the loss of public land**. Partnerships with schools, health networks and environmental organisations would make this a flagship example of **regenerative local development**.

5. Specific Requests

1. **Remove Site N26 from housing allocations** in the Local Plan, on NPPF and open-space protection grounds.
 2. **Redesignate it as Protected Community Open Space**, supporting biodiversity, health and culture.
 3. **Initiate a co-creation process** with residents and partners to develop the Beacon Road Community Green Hub concept.
 4. **Consider Local Green Space designation** to secure its long-term protection.
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Beacon Road can become a **Lighthouse Project** for Canterbury — a living example of how heritage, ecology and community can co-create a thriving, sustainable future.

Please confirm receipt of this submission and include me in any discussions concerning Site N26 and the Local Plan's open-space policies.

Yours faithfully,

Lucy Platel