

Tom Hawkes

From: Mary Golding [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 October 2025 16:02
To: Consultations
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Objections to Merton Park and the use of Thanington Rec for Park and Ride

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From

Mary Golding

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Copy to Mel Dawkins and Beth Forrester, my representative councillors.

To Canterbury Council Consultations

I am writing to voice my objections to the plans to build houses on the Merton Park Orchards site and the Ridlands Farm site. The paths through the orchards are well used and the site should remain a green field area. The area is an important green space, landscape and habitat and the council has expressed a commitment to protecting such areas so it is an anomaly that the areas have been included in the local plan.

The Local Plan has only just included this site. Previously it had been considered and there was a decision that it was not viable. How has it suddenly become viable again? There were plans to build in Blean - now that those plans have been rejected it seems that once again the Wincheap and Thanington areas are being 'dumped upon' as usual! Both the Blean plans and the Brookfield plans have had ample time to prepare their campaigns to voice their objections (successfully in the case of Blean). The nature of the late inclusion of Wincheap smacks of it all being an after thought, "Oh well we will have to try to use Wincheap again!"

The road infrastructure in the area is already very badly overloaded. The planned access routes for the huge development are residential streets and as such are not suitable for the construction vehicles or the subsequent residents. There is no way that Victoria Road and Hollow Lane could be main access routes as roads in themselves - but using those roads to exit onto Wincheap will further complicate massive congestion issues. It is nonsensical to 'dump' hundreds of houses with such poor access routes. It is madness to think that such roads could be used in this way. There will be increasing chaos on the surrounding roads. It will be a nightmare. The Blean site was removed from the plans due to concerns regarding provision of suitable access, impact on the highway network and

impact on ecology. The Merton Park site itself should be removed for all the same reasons - all with stronger reasons.

Part of the Local plan to further complicate matters for the residents of Wincheap and Thanington is to build an access road from the A2. While this may indeed help with some congestion it is currently at the expense of the Thanington Recreation ground for the replacement Park and Ride. So I am not against the slip road but I totally reject the use of Thanington Recreation ground. Surely there are brown field areas which could be used for the Park and Ride, ones which themselves don't add to the congestion in the area? Have such areas been investigated? There can be no reason strong enough to deprive the Thanington community of their well used recreation ground. It is used daily by residents for their exercise and recreation. The suggestion that the residents could use new planned sports areas probably a couple of miles away just doesn't work. They need a recreation ground locally - not a sports hub miles away which in itself serves an entirely different purpose. To hear a councillor say, "the new sports hub facility proposed at Merton Park will significantly outweigh the loss of the current Thanington Rec shows how little they know about locality and community. Thanington needs its Community Hall and the surrounding Recreation Ground. It is a vital green space for the residents and their families.

The current local plan does not appear to be a 'plan' but a knee jerk response to rejecting the Blean site for building. It is not fair just to keep 'dumping' on the Wincheap and Thanington area. I am not a resident of the area so this is not Nimbyism but I feel strongly that the residents in what would be considered an area of deprivation should not be treated in this way. Far be it from that, there should be much more thought about the ways in which life for the residents can be improved.

Canterbury is a city with poor hospital facilities. The Ridlands Farm site had been earmarked for a new hospital extension for the city as recently as 2024. Unfortunately 310 homes are earmarked for the ground with only a small area safeguarded for future healthcare development. If anything is built, it should be a hospital building - certainly not 310 homes.

I hope that the Council listens to reason and further rethinks the siting of the required housing. Don't dump on Wincheap!

Thank you for your time in reading this.

Yours sincerely,
Mary Golding

Sent from my iPad