

Tom Hawkes

From: Mike Bland [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 October 2025 16:33
To: Consultations
Subject: FW: Formal Objections and concerns regarding proposed development at Wincheap Orchards

--Email From External Account--

Cllr Mike Bland
Chartham & Stone Street
Chair of Licensing Committee & Licensing Sub-Committee

From: Mike Bland
Sent: 21 October 2025 15:54
To: consultations@canterbury.gov
Subject: FW: Formal Objections and concerns regarding proposed development at Wincheap Orchards

Another response

Cllr Mike Bland
Chartham & Stone Street
Chair of Licensing Committee & Licensing Sub-Committee

From: emma claydon [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 October 2025 12:35
To: Mike Bland [REDACTED]
Subject: Formal Objections and concerns regarding proposed development at Wincheap Orchards

--Email From External Account--

Dear Councillor Bland,

I am writing to formally express my deep concern and opposition to the proposed housebuilding on the site known as Wincheap Orchards, which forms part of the wider Merton Park development plan. The community strongly believes this proposal is fundamentally flawed and fails to serve the best interests of local residents or the environment.

My primary concerns and feedback are detailed below:

1. Traffic Management and Site Access

We are profoundly concerned about the inevitable increase in traffic that new housing will bring. Local roads, particularly around the Wincheap area, already struggle with existing congestion, leading to frustrating delays and unsafe conditions. The proposed primary access route via Hollow Road is particularly problematic and raises significant safety concerns, especially as it runs alongside Wincheap Primary School during peak hours. Furthermore, increased congestion directly translates to increased air pollution. We note that the Council's own research and policies have

highlighted the vital role that green spaces play in maintaining and improving local air quality, a benefit that this proposal would actively diminish.

2. Loss of Green Open Space and Biodiversity

The potential loss of Wincheap Orchards represents a critical reduction in our community's access to vital, accessible open green space. This open area provides multi-generational benefits for recreation and mental well-being that are irreplaceable. Crucially, the ecological impact is deeply concerning. The site currently supports significant biodiversity, including valuable habitats for various species. The destruction of the orchards will lead to the irreversible loss of this biodiversity, which includes rare bird species whose existence relies on this specific environment.

3. Inadequate Replacement of Community Facilities

The proposed sports hub will not fully replace the broad, multi-generational, and health-specific benefits currently provided by the open space. From an ecological and community viewpoint, converting orchards to standard sports fields or grass is not a "like-for-like" replacement. Orchards offer unique ecological value that manicured turf cannot replicate. Moreover, if access to the new facilities is not free, it will deepen social inequalities by excluding residents who cannot afford the associated membership or usage fees, thereby negating any perceived community benefit for the most vulnerable in our area.

4. Failure to Meet our Local Housing Needs

It is clear that this current plan is not what the local community wants or needs. While we recognise the urgency of the housing crisis, housebuilding in Canterbury needs to be strategically focused on meeting genuine local needs. I support the argument, championed by groups like the Green Party for Canterbury District, that there is a clear and immediate need for small, affordable homes for local people built on brownfield urban sites. Such a focus would revitalise existing areas without impacting our precious natural assets.

I urge you to use your influence to oppose the current destructive approach. Please do not allow the destruction of precious farmland and green spaces, which provide essential ecological and well-being benefits to the residents of our ward.

I look forward to your urgent response and confirmation that you will champion the community's strong opposition to this development.

Yours sincerely,

Emma Claydon

