

Tom Hawkes

From: Sarah Smitherman [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 October 2025 15:15
To: Consultations
Subject: Policy N3 Thanington Recreation Ground, Draft Canterbury DLP (2040)

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--Email From External Account--

Re Policy N3 Thanington Recreation Ground
Policy C6 Merton Park Development

I wish to make it clear that I am categorically against the proposals put forward concerning Thanington Rec and the Merton Park development.

Firstly I cannot believe the Council is once again considering turning Thanington Rec into a Park and Ride. An expensive and thorough consultation held back in 2008 concluded that this site was unsuitable for a p & r and the whole scheme was scrapped. It was recommended that further car park spaces should be created by building onto the existing p & r site - just as the local residents had been saying. The situation has not changed - resistance to this proposal is just as strong and for the same reasons and the final recommendation of local residents, including myself is that the original p&r site should be built upwards into a multi storey car park.

Thanington Rec is the heart of this community- since I arrived here with my family 16 years ago it has been a vital, creative and positive part of our lives. Friendships we made there and at Mother and Toddler groups at the Thanington Resource Centre have stayed with us. We have spent many happy times playing in the park and sports field, having parties and exercising. This green space is rare - I cannot understand why the Council still fails to recognise the true value of this space and the Thanington Resource Centre to the local community. I do not understand why, yet again we have to fight to defend and save this beautiful natural area for the sake of our children, their children and future generations.

There has been so much research into the positive health-giving effects of green spaces. I will quote just one example:

A study that proved that 'early life exposure to residential green space impacts cognitive functioning in children aged 4-6 years'. The findings were:

The influence of green space on cognition is already evident in 4 to 6 year olds

Childhood green space is associated with reduced hyperactive behaviour, better attention-related outcomes and better visual memory-related outcomes.

Source: Environ Int 2022 Mar; 161:107094

The implications of this study are profound and prove that the contact children have with green spaces during their early years has a highly beneficial and long lasting effect on their lives. Many more studies prove that these safe and inclusive outdoor spaces enhance the mental, physical and emotional health and wellbeing of adults and children alike. They also give a sense of community and belonging which is ever more important in an age when increasing isolation and loneliness is a massive problem. Canterbury City Council itself has previously reported that there is a deficit of accessible green spaces in Thanington. The Council's very own green infrastructure strategy and open space strategy came to the same conclusion so how can it be that they can even consider taking this one precious space away from us?

My second objection is to the Merton Park development. My biggest concerns are regarding the destruction to wildlife including the loss of red listed bird species and

the serious traffic access problem. My arguments for the protection and preservation of green recreational spaces that I made above also apply to the Orchards. I have known and loved this area since my child started attending Wincheap Primary School. I would go there with her friends and their parents after school so that the children could run around, play and explore the animals and plants there. I attended a local meeting last week at which one of the speakers presented her in-depth study of the local wildlife and showed photographs of 38 species of birds that live there - some are endangered species. The shocking loss of biodiversity in the UK means that it is critical to protect any wildlife rich areas that we still have left. Aside from that the positive effects of trees in acting as a carbon sink, helping absorb potential floodwaters and helping to reduce heat means we need to protect them.

I have carefully studied the map showing the planned site for the Merton Park development and I cannot understand how traffic access to and from the site is going to work. None of the possibilities shown: Lime Kiln Rd, Heaton Rd, Hollow Lane would be suitable for such a big residential site. The traffic problems we currently suffer every day through Wincheap would only be exacerbated by the addition of so many more cars on the roads. The Cockering Farm development is already projected to add thousands more cars to the same roads and can only lead to worsening levels of air pollution. I hope you will read my objections and take them seriously into account when making decisions that will affect me, my family and all Thanington residents

Sarah Smitherman [REDACTED]