



Manor Close Residents' Association (MCRA-Canterbury)

David R. Silcock

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19 October 2025

Dear Councillors

Objection to Proposed Relocation of Wincheap Park & Ride, onto:
Thanington Recreation Ground.

I am writing on behalf of local residents to express strong objection to the proposal to relocate the Wincheap Park & Ride onto land at Thanington that has, for many decades, been used by the community for recreation, sport, and social activities.

Historical and Community Context

Thanington has a long and distinctive history, as documented by the late local historian Prof. Clive H. Church BA PhD. Once a small agricultural hamlet, it was transformed in the 20th century into a substantial housing estate. With this expansion came the deliberate provision of open spaces¹ such as the Recreation Ground, which were intended to serve the health, wellbeing, and cohesion of the new community.

These spaces are not incidental. They are the living legacy of a century of estate-building, providing the only large, accessible green area for thousands of residents. They have hosted football matches, fetes, informal play, and community gatherings across generations.

Planning and Policy Considerations

- **Loss of Amenity:** The Recreation Ground is the only significant open space available to the Thanington Estate. Its loss would disproportionately affect families, children, and older residents who rely on it for everyday recreation.
- **Contradiction of Policy:** Both national and local planning frameworks emphasise the protection of open space, particularly in areas of high housing density. Thanington is precisely such an area.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** In a community with limited amenities, the Recreation Ground is essential for physical activity, mental health, and social cohesion.
- **Precedent:** Once open space is lost to development, it is never regained. Allowing this relocation would set a damaging precedent for further erosion of community land.

¹ You can use our [grounds maintenance map](#) to see which areas we look after.



Alternative Solutions

We recognise the importance of sustainable transport and the role of Park & Ride facilities. However, these objectives must not come at the expense of the very communities they are meant to serve. Other sites for expansion should be explored that do not sacrifice vital recreational land.

Conclusion

Thanington's open spaces are not "spare land". They are the heart of a community, rooted in history and essential to its future. To build over them for Park & Ride would be to erase a century of shared life and identity.

We therefore urge Canterbury City Council to reject any proposal that would relocate the Wincheap Park & Ride onto Thanington's Recreation Ground or adjacent community land, and instead to work with residents to identify alternative solutions that balance transport needs with community wellbeing.

Yours faithfully,

David R Silcock
Chair, MCRA-Canterbury
Official website: <https://www.mcra-canterbury.org.uk/>

Thanington Recreation Ground & Neighbourhood Resource Centre – Archival Trail

Stage	Date / Period	Source & Reference	Entry / Notes	Ownership Status
Farmland	Pre-1930s	Tithe Maps (c.1840s), Land Tax Assessments	Land recorded as farmland/orchard	Private agricultural land
Council Acquisition & Estate Development	1930s–1950s	Canterbury City Council Housing Committee minutes; Parish Council minutes	Council acquires land for housing estate; "open spaces" noted in plans	Canterbury City Council
Recreation Ground Designation	1950s–1970s	Parish Council minute books	First mention of "Recreation Ground"; approval of play equipment/football pitches	Council-owned public open space
Community Facility Stage	1980s–1990s	Parish Council minutes; local press	Ongoing upkeep, youth facilities, anti-social behaviour discussions	Council-owned recreation ground
Neighbourhood Resource Centre	2000	Canterbury City Council records; SRB funding documents	Land adjacent to Recreation Ground allocated for Centre; SRB funding confirmed	Council-owned land allocated for community use