

Drop in to find out how to save Chaucer Fields

EXCLUSIVE

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CAMPAIGNERS trying to stop the University of Kent from building student flats and a hotel on a meadow are attempting to get the land granted village green status.

To scupper the development plans they need to gather evidence that the Chaucer Fields have been used by local people for recreation 'as of right' for at least 20 years. Only then can they submit an application to the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs, under the Commons Act 2006, for their case to be considered.

The university says the site, which is some distance from the main campus, is the best location for a new 800-bed hall of residence, hotel and conference centre but the buildings would be just yards away from dozens of homes where residents have enjoyed the open fields.

In an effort to gather the necessary evidence the Save Chaucer Fields campaigners are organising a drop-in session at St Dunstan's Church Hall on the afternoon of Saturday, March 19.

Spokesman Oliver Fry said: "For decades, even centuries, all have been free to enjoy dog walking, playing, running, sledging and simply lounging about on the Chaucer Fields. It is a vital recreational space and valuable wildlife habitat which should not be developed when the university has other options much closer to the main campus.



"We want people to provide us with statements and even photographs and other evidence as to why they value the fields and which prove an established use. The drop-in meeting will also be a chance for fellow residents and users of this historic resource to support the campaign."

University estates bosses argue that there is now no suitable alternative for the scale of the development than the Chaucer Fields.

■ For information on the campaign visit www.savechaucerfields.com

Above left, Oliver Fry; above right, the proposed development site at Chaucer Fields which campaigners are trying to protect

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