

LETTERS to the editor

We hope university will realise error of judgement

THANK you for more coverage of the Save Chaucer Fields Campaign in last week's Kentish Gazette (Fighting The University Plan, May 5).

As residents, we were not expecting to see a battle evolving between the Lib Dems and Conservatives over this matter, as appears to have happened in the past two weeks.

Our joint objection document makes no reference to the claim that the land being earmarked for the development may be protected under the terms of the original planning permission back in the 1960s.

In fact, our document was completed and submitted in electronic form to the council on Thursday, April 21, before we became aware of the Lib Dem claim.

This is obviously becoming a very contentious planning application with more than 400 objections to the proposed development and 300-plus against the removal of hedgerows and the consequential destruction of the landscape.

Perhaps this is a record for objections to any one development scheme?

It is heartening to see so many letters of objection that cover a wide range of topics and make for a really good read.

There are many with detailed technical criticisms of aspects of the planning application, a huge number concentrate on the destruction of the open space and the area of high landscape value which are protected in the Canterbury district local plan. It's also good to read how many people have used this area as a safe haven for children to play and enjoy over the years, and equally importantly, many people have highlighted the very negative impact that this proposal has caused to relations between the university and the residents of our city.

We sincerely hope that the university will realise that they have made an error of judgement and choose to mend broken bridges and relocate the development to alternative sites that will not impact on the local community.

David Smith, on behalf of the Save Chaucer Fields Campaign, Leycroft Close, Canterbury

■ WITH reference to the University of Kent's controversial plans to build on Chaucer Fields, I read with surprise Cllr John Gilbey's comments (Kentish Gazette, May 5) regarding Canterbury's 2006 Local Plan.

Cllr Gilbey stated that "even Canterbury's 2006 Local Plan is weakening day by day as circumstances change in advance of the next plan".

Could he tell us which sections no longer apply, or whether there are other council policies that can be ignored because they are a few years old?

This is not how democracy should work.

The local plan exists to protect the city and it remains in place until it is replaced by a new one.



STRONG OBJECTIONS: Handing over the dossier in protest against UKC plans for proposed building on Chaucer Fields

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as being inappropriate, but they also reflect a wider concern that the relentless increase in student numbers in Canterbury is bad for the city and just has to stop. We need our politicians to respond to overwhelming public opinion. Saying no to this development would be a good place to start.

Gary Atkinson, Durnford Close, Canterbury

■ THE university's Chaucer Fields planning application has led to enormous community-wide opposition.

Local Liberal Democrats found the 200-page document setting out the history of the original compulsory purchase conditions at the city council offices.

In this it was clearly stated that the southern slopes be left as open land.

This information was not to hand when the residents' document was produced and was therefore not included in it.

However, the document provides further evidence that the intention, as most people thought, was that this land be left as open space between the housing of St Stephens and the university buildings.

The document is to be further studied by opponents of the scheme.

Every shred of historical information is useful in the analysis of a planning application.

Indeed the university itself cited plans dating from 1964 as part of its case.

Then along comes council leader John Gilbey, heavy-footed as usual, in last week's Gazette stating that the information is "half-baked". Although the application is actually in his ward, this seems to be the first time he has become involved.

I suggest he reads a selection of the hundreds of objections, including those by the residents, and he will see well informed analysis of the historical context and the present concerns of local people about this ill-conceived application. It will, however, take him quite a while.

Nick Blake, a Lib Dem candidate for St Stephens ward, Leycroft Close, Canterbury

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