

County council to debate village green status Tuesday

Crunch day for protesters

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THE future of Chaucer Fields could be decided next week.

County councillors begin a hearing in Canterbury's Westgate Hall at 1pm on Tuesday into whether the open space should be granted village green status.

Campaigners have lodged the petition to stop the University of Kent from turning it into a £60 million "student hub" with flats, hotel and conference centre.

The bid is supported by more than 260 members of the Save Chaucer Fields group which staged an end-of-summer picnic

on the fields at the weekend. Members of the county council's regulation panel will visit the site on Tuesday morning.

Inquiry

Councillors will decide whether to approve the application – which would protect the land from development – or refer the decision to a Governmental public inquiry.

The university's plans to develop the land between the university and homes at Hales Place, came up against fierce opposition from residents. University bosses have now put their plans on hold.



FIELD DAY: Campaigners gathered at Chaucer Fields as a show of solidarity

David Smith, chairman of Save Chaucer Fields, said the village green bid helped scupper the university's plans for the site because financial backers have been reluctant to proceed amid uncertainty.

The university is expected to submit a revised planning application later this month.

Mr Smith said: "Our support has increased with time. Local people are more determined than ever that the university should pursue its development proposals on less sensitive sites that do not affect the local community and do not destroy a much-valued green space."

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