# Residents oppose new housing estate plans in Snodland



Residents of Snodland, a town in Kent, are expressing strong opposition to plans for a new 150-home estate, which includes provisions for football pitches and padel courts, on land they fear will significantly alter the character and livability of their community. The contentious development is set to take place on the site of the former Oast Park Golf Club, situated on the outskirts of Snodland near Birling.

The proposal, spearheaded by Obee Estates, involves relocating the Larkfield and New Hythe Football Club, which has been based in the area for 60 years, to this new location. The plans include constructing approximately 50 homes at the former golf club site, alongside an additional 150 houses adjacent to the proposed football facility. This brings the total planned housing units in both areas to 200. Moreover, the developers aim to integrate a new clubhouse, a two-storey golf driving range, and padel tennis courts into the project.

Residents have banded together to voice their discontent, asserting that the proposal prioritises development over the preservation of the existing community, which lies within the Kent Downs National Landscape and is classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as Green Belt land. Many locals have referred to the football pitch element of the proposal as a "dangling carrot" intended to gain public support while masking the potential negative impacts of the wider development.

David Dilks, a long-time resident of Snodland, stated, "Snodland is a pleasant town and this will just destroy it. The developers have no idea what they are doing. It is not thought through." Some residents, including beauty therapist Anne Williams, expressed concerns about the implications of increased housing, noting that "anything which helps young people out and gets them more motivated about life is brilliant. But why does it need to come with new housing estates of affordable homes which will ruin the area? I fear affordable homes means cheap."

Others expressed practical worries about the current state of local infrastructure, which they argue cannot accommodate more residents. Karen Hooker, who has lived in the area for eight years, commented on the current inadequacies, saying, "The roads are dire as they are. Hundreds of new homes will make everything worse." She highlighted the lack of necessary services, such as improvements in healthcare access, particularly noting that "things like doctor's surgery waiting lists need to improve first."

Conversely, some locals have expressed support for the development. Pub owner Sherie Matthews noted that the estate could bring more customers to local businesses but insisted on needing adequate infrastructure to support the influx of new residents. Student Lawrence Adenipekun supported the construction of the football pitch, calling it a "wonderful idea" while maintaining the sentiment that Snodland is a "great place to live."

As of now, the plans have been formally submitted for consideration to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, prompting a debate that reflects the divergent viewpoints within the community regarding the balance between development and conservation. The discussion highlights the complexities and challenges faced by growing towns in managing expansion while maintaining quality of life for existing residents. Developers Obee Estates were approached for comments regarding the concerns raised by the residents.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/malling/news/homes-and-sports-hub-plan-for-former-golf-club-307839/> - This URL supports the claim regarding the proposal for a new sports hub at the former Oast Park Golf Club, including the relocation of Larkfield and New Hythe Football Club and the development of new homes.
* <https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/news/planning-applications-submitted-for-transformative-mixed-use-development/> - This URL corroborates the details about the planning applications submitted for the mixed-use development at Oast Park, which includes both sports facilities and housing.
* <https://www.obeeholdings.co.uk/projects/oast-park/> - This webpage provides information on Obee Holdings' Oast Park development, detailing the sports hub, residential plans, and community benefits, supporting the article's description of the project.
* <https://defra.gov.uk/corporate/about-defra/what-we-do/protected-landscapes/aonbs/> - Although the specific URL about Kent Downs is not available, this general link explains Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and could support the mention of the character and natural status of the area near Snodland.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/conservation-of-the-green-belt> - This URL provides general information about Green Belt policies and planning, supporting claims related to the Green Belt status of the development area.