



From:
The Directors of
Tonbridge Angels Football Club
Longmead Stadium
Darenth Avenue
Tonbridge, Kent

To:

Mr James Bailey
Planning Department
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
Head of Planning
Development Control
Gibson Building,
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4LZ

And by email to:
planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk

Dated 8 February 2026.

Re: Formal Objection to Planning Application 25/01976/PA

Dear Sir,

We write in our capacity as Directors of Tonbridge Angels Football Club (the Club), a community-owned benefit society and long-established tenant of council-owned land at Longmead Stadium.

We submit this letter as a formal objection to planning application 25/01976/PA, specifically concerning the section of the proposed works outlined in red that extend south of Hilden Brook, and which encroaches on land currently leased to the Club. Our objections are as follows:

1. Land Included in the Application Falls Within our Existing Lease

TAFC holds a legally binding lease with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the land adjoining the proposed development, with eight years remaining on the current term. Discussions are ongoing with the Council on the future extension of that lease.

A significant portion of the area outlined in red — the land south of Hilden Brook — falls within our demised lease area. This land is therefore not available for development without our explicit consent.

Neither the developer, nor the Council have made adequate or sufficient contact with the Club in order to:

- Seek our consent to build anything on the area of the application that overlaps our lease;
- Vary the lease terms;
- Discuss compensation, mitigation, or alternative arrangements to benefit the club in the course of seeking such consent

Until such discussions take place and mutually agreed terms are in place, including appropriate compensation, this part of the proposed development cannot lawfully proceed.



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2. Public Consultation in July 2025.

The developer failed to invite or notify us to its public consultation in July 2025, meaning we were not aware of it and were unable to provide any input into the development proposals at that stage.

On reading the documents within the application we understand that council members attending the consultation expressed a desire to include road access at the southeastern corner of the development. This may perhaps explain why the Red area of the application encroaches on our leased land.

In any event we now understand from recent correspondence with the Council that the Council and developer are planning a 'pathway', with a width of 4m, thus being more akin to a road. This is not directly stated in the application documentation, and the documentation suggests that the details of the 'access route' could be dealt with as a 'reserved matter'. We do not believe that this is appropriate and it needs to be addressed and settled now, and at the same time as the application as a whole is being considered. Plans for any pathway across our land must be clear and agreed as part of the main planning application, as otherwise the interests of the current leaseholder with a lease lasting until at least 2032 (and expectations of it continuing beyond this) are not being properly considered during the application process.

3. Any Development in the Red Area South of Hilden Brook, and Any Proposed Pathway Therein Would Directly Impact Our Operations

While the Club is not opposed in principle to the creation of a public pathway, the pathway seems unnecessarily wide, and the current application contains significant and unaddressed operational impacts including:

a. Potential restricted Access to Our Marquee Venue

The proposed path would run directly through the area that provides essential access to our marquee hospitality and events venue. The area outlined in red on the proposal encroaches onto land we use for events associated with the Marquee, and even goes right up to the edge of the current marquee building. This will restrict ease of access for event operations, suppliers, and emergency movement, and potentially diminish the venue's appeal and commercial value.

b. Deterioration of Event Environment and Visual Setting

The current backdrop of woodland and scrubland provides a natural and attractive backdrop for our events. This would be replacing this with a public path and industrial-style fencing, and increased pedestrian activity which will significantly reduce the venue's quality and ambience, negatively affecting future bookings and revenue.

c. Security and Compliance Costs

The footpath's placement will likely require extensive changes to our secure perimeter, including; new stadium-compliant fencing; enhanced security measures; and works to ensure the separation of public access zones from restricted areas. These works would come at significant cost to the Club and currently no provision or compensation has been proposed.

Accordingly we expect to have active dialogue with the developer and Council to rethink the exact location of the border of the planning application marked in Red, and the path it contains.

4. The Proposal Appears to Overlook Local Plan Obligations and Community Asset Considerations

As a community owned football club and one of the top 200 football clubs in the country, the Club is recognised as a valued community sports asset. It is embedded within the heart of the local area. As a community-owned club operating extensive youth, adult and community programmes, we form a critical part of the local sporting infrastructure adjacent to the proposed development site.

Despite this, the current application documents appear to take insufficient account of:



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- The Club's presence and existing operations,
- Local Plan requirements relating to community assets and sporting infrastructure,
- Opportunities for Section 106 (S106) contributions or mitigation that might reasonably benefit the Club or the wider community,
- The need to engage with affected leaseholders in forming the proposal.

Any significant development at Longmead should therefore properly consider, and ideally enhance, the area's existing community infrastructure of which we are manifestly an essential part — rather than diminish and compromise it without consultation as is currently being proposed.

5. Willingness to Engage and Possible Lease Variation

For clarity, the Club is not wholly opposed to the creation of a footpath as the council is currently considering. We recognise and understand some of the potential public benefits. However, our consent is clearly required for any part of the development on the leased land, and any such development would involve surrendering or reassigning part of our lease area. We do not believe that the developer has given sufficient consideration to the Club, as sporting infrastructure when considering and drawing up its plan.

We are willing to engage constructively with the Council and developer to facilitate a pathway in the expectation and understanding that:

- The line and area drawn outlined in Red as being the subject of the planning proposal is reconsidered and redrawn to more accurately reflect what is actually needed for a path of appropriate size;
- Appropriate compensation to the Club is agreed for any loss of part of the leased land, and the amenity it currently provides;
- Operational and security impacts are fully considered and mitigated;
- Community benefit mechanisms (e.g., S106) are properly considered and utilised in favour of the Club and immediate local community; and
- Lease extension negotiations with the Council progress without being contingent on our accepting the path, or alternatively if this is to be the case, they proceed only when the other bullet points directly above had been adequately addressed and agreed.

Until such discussions occur and agreement is reached, the Club must continue to object to this application.

Conclusion

Tonbridge Angels FC requests that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council withhold approval for application 25/01976/PA in its current form, on the following grounds:

1. The application includes land legally leased to Tonbridge Angels FC, and cannot proceed without our approval.
2. Inadequate consultation or compensation discussions have taken place with the Club thus far, despite the obvious direct and material impact on our operations, and as outlined above.
3. The proposed footpath has operational, commercial, visual and security impact for the Club which have not been considered or addressed by the developer or council. At the very least, the plans should be reconsidered and the boundary lines redrawn to more accurately reflect what is actually needed for a path.



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4. Local Plan obligations and community asset considerations in respect of sporting infrastructure appear to have been overlooked and/or disregarded by the developer, including the opportunity for appropriate S106 benefits.

We request direct and more open engagement with the Council and developer to explore a mutually acceptable solution and welcome the opportunity to meet and discuss these matters urgently.

Finally, we also request a formal extension of the time for objections to the developer's application to be raised, and suggest an additional two weeks to 28 February 2026. This is to allow additional time for our fans and other interested parties to raise their objections in view of their only being likely to have seen the application very recently and as a result of this letter and our club statement that will follow it.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Cornish'.

Mark Cornish
As Director of Tonbridge Angels Football Club
For and on behalf of the Board of Directors



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