

**The Elstree and Borehamwood
Green Belt Society** (EBGBS)

The UK Green Belt was formed by law in 1949 to prevent speculative ribbon development around London and other large cities in the United Kingdom. The first records of our EBGBS date from 1959 when the battles against building on Woodcock Hill on the south side of Borehamwood started and the original Woodcock Hill Society (since merged with the EBGBS) was founded under Dr Lewis Wilde. We have been contesting Green Belt and conservation issues to the present day.

Our aim is to preserve as much as possible of the peaceful green and pleasant countryside, which has been left to us after the ravages of road and building developments. If you care about your environment do please join us. All are welcome. See <http://www.ebgreenbelt.org/> for a membership form or contact us using the form on the website or you can contact us via Pat Strack, Membership Secretary, on 0208 386 3151 or by email: pat.strack@icloud.com

Your support is vital to us. We really need more members, not just to join, but to help the committee run efficiently. If you think you have the ability and enthusiasm please join us: go to our website www.ebgreenbelt.org/joincontact-us to complete the “contact us” form online.

Committee:

Dr Ann Goddard, BEM - Chair Tony Gill - Acting secretary

Pat Strack - Membership Secretary Clive Butchins

Helen Stammers - Treasurer and Webmaster Jonathan Supran



Elstree & Borehamwood Green Belt Society



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Please join us for our **Annual General Meeting**

on

24th May 2023 at 19.00 for 19.30

Allum Manor (Small Hall)

Allum Lane, Elstree WD6 3PJ

Our speaker will be

Robin Bishop

The Barnet Society



Report from the Chair

The Elstree and Green Belt Society has fought for the preservation of our lovely Hertfordshire countryside by letter, email, articles in the press and numerous meetings in cooperation with local conservation organisations.

There is need for some new housing, affordable and eco-friendly, but it has to be on brownfield with minimum use of Green Belt. Climate change makes this even more vital. We must not destroy the balanced eco-system, for the survival of all life forms.

After campaigning since 2016, we have hope that there may be a future for the historic Aldenham Reservoir. Planning permission for a business park on land off Watford Road belonging to Liberty Aldenham Ltd is being sought. This would yield funds to repair the dam and maintain the Reservoir through a public Trust. We support this as the exceptional circumstance of saving the 'Res' justifies building on Green Belt. We supported permission for repair work on the dam. Councillors Clapper, Newmark and Evans also formed an all party group to press for this.

The path round the 'Res' has now been designated as a Right of Way thanks to the efforts of Debbie Hougie and the Aldenham Country Park Trust.

The lower part of Woodcock Hill Village Green is now in the hands of Taylor Wimpey and is likely to be fenced off in the near future until such time as permission is received to build there.. Woodcock Hill is threatened by other proposals—see .page 8.

We opposed both these plans as on Green belt, encroaching on Woodcock Hill and downgrading the wildlife habitat and the historic Beacon site. It would add greatly to the traffic congestion and pollution in our already overcrowded road network. The removal of Village Green status from part of Woodcock Hill is a tragedy and we support the proposed appeal by Woodcock Hill Village Green Committee and have donated funds to it. The replacement land is hard to access , benefits Elstree residents, not those of Borehamwood, and provides no increase in biodiversity.

The expansion of development at Organ Hall was opposed for the same reasons, ie loss of Green Belt and traffic overload and also loss of separation between Borehamwood and Radlett.

of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;

(c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;

(d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources."

Developers obviously try to claim *very special circumstances* for their projects and I am told that the need for additional housing has in some case been accepted as such, but as far as we know Hertsmere officers and councillors do not hold that view.

Clearly whether *very special circumstances* apply in the case of any particular planning application can be a subjective judgement, for example the economic benefits for allowing the new Sky Studios.

If you care about the Green Belt then please support us and consider joining our committee—we badly need more 'belters'!



Protecting Green Belt land

Section 13 in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) relate to the Green Belt, how it should be protected, and what is and is not allowed to be built within it.

It starts by stating “The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.”

It continues: “Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

It goes on to specify when Green Belt Boundaries may be changed.

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- (a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- (b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and

Footpaths are a health and recreational asset. We have been concerned over the state of Tykeswater Lane (Byway 60) and contacted the Footpaths Officer for Herts CC about the poor condition of the footway from churning up by moto vehicles. We asked for separation of the footpath and traffic access and removal of fly tippage and review of Byway status. So far we have achieved limitation of access to registered clubs only- a partial success. We investigated the footpath through Radlett Golf Club after complaints from our members but found it was a ‘permissive’ footpath and could be refused by the owner, sadly.

The Solar Farm proposal off Butterfly Lane(21/0050/FULEI) evoked huge public anger as 300 acres of Green Belt would be industrialised with very ugly visual effects and restriction of public footpaths. The production of green electricity is beneficial but solar panels on buildings would be preferable and prevent loss of agricultural land. We opposed by a majority vote but understand that the HBC Planning refusal has been appealed against and referred to Central Government.

Cecil’s Horse Sanctuary has been a favourite institution in Elstree Village but they are being evicted by the end of the year and are looking for new grazing land in the area. We opposed construction of a Care Village on their field and hope for a happy outcome for them.

Finally we made strong objections to the needless felling of trees on Allum Lane verge following purchase from Herts CC by an unknown buyer. As no Tree Protection Orders were in force there was no possibility of prosecution. We are watching for future sales and will object to any development on these sites.

The care of our neighbourhood environment is so important. Please join the Green Belt and support our work.

The prospect of another huge studio development on Green Belt in Rowley Lane is most unwelcome. The new Sky studios is surely enough for the film industry. We complained about the destruction of trees and hedges in front of the Sky Studio building and we’re assured that rules had been observed but the studios dominate the area and are not screened by greenery as requested. I feel there is little hope of stopping developments with the national economy involved. We are monitoring the situation.

Ann Goddard — Chairman

Planning Applications

Supported

Aldenham reservoir

22/2147/OUT Erection of industrial/distribution units land south of Watford Rd.

22/2148/FUL Safety improvement works to the Dam.

EBGBS support the use of land south of Watford Rd for employment purposes provided the monies from that development for repairs to the Dam are legally watertight. Very special circumstances are demonstrated for using the Green Belt to ensure the Reservoir can be secured and safe for future generations.

This application is due to be heard at HBC May Planning meeting.

Objected

Solar Farm: EBGBs joined the Combined Objector's Group. EBGBS contributed to the Court case. No decision has yet been made .

23/0053/OUT Hartfield Ave Elstree Development by Inland Homes for 75 dwellings including flats: In the green belt, designated local wildlife Site. No very special circumstances demonstrated. Access from Hartfield from that estate to Deacons Hill Rd on very narrow roads. Infrastructure already under stress. Too far from shops, GP practices, leisure facilities and schools bringing additional pollution of light, noise air particles and will not help local housing need .

Turned down by HBC planning Committee but could be appealed.

22/2149/OUT Development by Griggs in the green belt separating Borehamwood and Radlett. In the green belt, no very special circumstances demonstrated. Access onto Theobald Street will lead to traffic problems. Infrastructure already under stress. Too far from shops, leisure facilities and schools bringing additional pollution of light, noise air particles and will not help local housing need.

Propose Medical practice Proposed Care home too far from residential area adding to traffic and pollution.

Application refused.

22/2127/FUL: Emergency access to Elstree Aerodrome. Not needed there is sufficient access for safety vehicles already, a ploy to open up the possibility of development at a later stage Green Belt no very special circumstances..

Solar Plant : 320 acres of Green Belt land

EBGBS joined the Radlett Society & Green Belt Association, CPRE Herts to form a Combined Objectors Group. The Society objected to the plant, advised members and donated to the appeal.

On 11th November 2021 Hertsmere Borough Council's planning committee met to discuss the proposed solar farm. A confident, comprehensive proposal was put forward on behalf of the applicants Enso, supported by the Hertsmere planning department, however, due to the scale and location of the site, the fact it is on green belt land and that 1900+ local residents responded against the proposal, the councillors decided to refuse the application. EBGBS are very pleased with the result which shows that a huge response from residents really does impact decision making.

However, in July 2022 an appeal and new application were submitted to The Planning Inspectorate and Hertsmere Council, despite a record number of objections and having been unanimously refused by Hertsmere Planning Committee.

In October 2022 the Secretary of State decided to 'call in' the Solar Plant. This is the first application of its type to go down this route. The Inspector will no longer be issuing a decision but will be preparing a report and making a recommendation. We are awaiting the final decision.

Organ Hall : 121 homes, 75 bed Care Home and Medical Centre

EBGBS have opposed this development. Local residents worked hard to draw up an excellent objection letter that we publicised to our members.

The Retirement Home and the Medical Centre are not considered by local people to be useful or appropriate thus eliminating the very special circumstances for this development.

The outcome is not yet known.

Planning Applications

The Committee members have been involved in many local plans submitted for the development of Green Belt, working with residents or supporting those who have worked hard to build a case for the protection of their Green Belt.

Recent plans to build on local Green Belt land include:

Barnet Lane BE6 / Horses Field : 220 homes

A Zoom meeting was held with Geoff Armstrong, Developer working for Barrett Homes on January 11th 2023. The meeting was set up by Pat Strack and was attended by members of the EGBGS committee, Woodcock Hill VG committee and local residents.

EGBGS wrote a letter of objection and posted the reasons to object on their website for members and local people to access to make their own responses.

The outcome of the planning review is not yet known.

Hartfield Avenue : 76 dwellings planned by property firm Inland Strategic Revenue Limited, for Green Belt land off Barnet Lane via Hartfield Avenue, Elstree.

EGBGS met online and worked with local residents to build a case against the plans (see website), objecting themselves and advised members. EGBGS posted reasons to object on their website for members to access to make their own responses.



The outcome on 21st April 2023 was that "After consideration of all the relevant issues the Councils decision was to "Refuse Permission". It is possible this decision will be appealed by the applicant.

Retirement Village planned for Cecil's Horse Sanctuary, Elstree Village

This has been objected to by both EGBGS and the Barnet Society, although plans have not yet been submitted to HBC. EGBGS is in close contact with Cecil's Horse Sanctuary.



Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society has been awarded a Tesco Grant to "Publicise Action to Protect Local Green Belt Land"

The welcome message from Tesco:

"Congratulations!

We are delighted to let you know that following the Tesco Community Grant vote in your local Tesco stores, your project came Second and has been chosen by Tesco Customers to receive a grant award of £1,000.00!

Voting was held at Tesco stores between Mid January 2023 to 31st March 2023 and proved to be very successful with millions of votes being cast by Tesco Customers across the UK."

Tykeswater Lane : footpaths

The issues on the footpaths along Tykeswater Lane have been ongoing for many years, Two committee members walked the lanes in 2022, so EGBGS renewed their requests to Dawn Grocock, Footpaths Officer for Herts County Council, to review possible actions to deal with the fly tipping along the route that can be accessed by HBC, the access to the paths and the damage done by the 4x4 vehicles.



These issues have been acknowledged and we are awaiting HBC's further response.



EBGBS Membership Form 2023/24

Please help protect our local Green Belt and historic buildings by joining the EBGBS. Membership runs for twelve months from 1st April each year. New members joining from January automatically receive membership for the following year.

Application type (please tick)

- New member(s) Renewal of existing membership

Membership type (please tick)

- Individual
- Household (two or more people living at the same address)

Membership for 2023/24 is £5 per individual or household. An additional donation is most welcome. I/We will pay a membership fee of £5.00 and an optional donation of £_____

Full Names: (capitals)

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

E-mail address (print): _____

Date: _____

Payment method (please tick) Note: Bank Transfer / SO is our preferred payment method

- Online Bank Transfer Standing order
Use your SURNAME as the REFERENCE
Bank Account Name: Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society
Bank Account Number: 30198889
Sort Code: 20-74-09
- Cheque payable to "Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society"
- Cash

Please tick box if you wish to receive e-mails of club news, updates, activities and concerns. We will not share your e-mail address with any other organisation. We are responsible for ensuring the security and proper use of personal information provided to us. For more information see our Privacy Notice.

Please complete the form below, and return it to: Mrs Pat Strack, Membership Secretary EBGBS, 36 Carrington Avenue, Borehamwood, Hertfordshire WD6 2HA

If paying online, either post this form **or** scan/photograph and email to ebgbstreasurer@gmail.com

If payment is by cash we advise your form and fees are hand delivered.

Form last updated March 2023

Miscellaneous

Other organisations to which we subscribe:

- ◇ Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
- ◇ Open Spaces Society (OSS)
- ◇ London Green Belt Society (LGBS)

Hedge Survey from CPRE

Throughout May, we're aiming to build a nationwide picture of the health of our hedgerows. But to do that we need your help! Between now and 31 May, find a short piece of hedge – between 3 and 5 metres will do – and answer a few short questions that we've put together with the help of our friends at the [Tree Council](#).



Today also marks the start of National Hedgerow Week (8-14 May), making it the perfect time to get involved.

Over 1,500 have already taken part in Hedgelife Help Out - will you join in?

Send us your results by going to <https://tinyurl.com/cprehedges>

The Plough/The East/KissKiss

It has been reported that the former public house/restaurant in Elstree Village is to enjoy a £600,000 facelift. Not before time, we say!