



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

on

16th May 2022 at 19.00 for 19.30

Allum Manor (Large Hall)

Allum Lane, Elstree WD6 3PJ

Our speaker will be

Ross Whear

Head of Planning and Economic Development
for Hertsmere Borough Council



Report for the 2022

Throughout the year Elstree and Borehamwood Green Belt Society has campaigned for the revision of the Draft Local Plan with emphasis on saving our irreplaceable Green Belt rather than building on it. We succeeded, in cooperation with other conservation bodies.

Our district is already heavily developed. The road grid is inadequate to contain the present traffic load and we experience daily tailbacks at pinch points in the network. Widening of the local roads would be prohibitively costly and result in a desert of tarmac and traffic fumes with dire consequences for us all to health and quality of life.

Careful planning for denser eco-friendly housing in accord with the revised targets expected from the Minister for Housing, Michael Gove, and reuse of brownfield and redundant commercial buildings should minimise loss of Green Belt.

We opposed the installation of a Solar Plant on 53 hectares of agricultural Green Belt in the fields alongside Butterfly Lane. Food production is now very important and solar panels are better placed on South facing buildings.

The future of Aldenham Reservoir has been a serious concern and we are glad that all political parties and Local Authorities are now united in working for a positive outcome with 'Jewel of Hertsmere', the owner. Public ownership by a Trust or Community Interest Company with funds to maintain the dam and Reservoir and peripheral footpath and restoration of the water levels allowing reinstatement of the Aldenham Sailing Club would be our ideal conclusion. The historic 'Res' is an invaluable local asset for recreation, health and wild life habitats and beautiful when not surrounded by malodorous mud.





Woodcock Hill is another local green space endangered by development. The hard-won Village Green status, achieved in 2008, is threatened by the application from Taylor Woodrow for deregistration and land exchange for inferior land which has not been managed as a wild life habitat and is less accessible. This valuable local green open space with the historic sites of the Beacon and Lord George Murray Optical Telegraph on it must be saved for the residents of Elstree and Borehamwood.

The placement of a new Schopwick Surgery on the Green Belt Allum Lane fields was opposed by us. The necessary new Surgery could be built on other sites in the settlement and these have not been fully considered.

The Green Belt was represented at the Parish Council Meeting on 9 March and we had a meeting with our MP for Hertsmere, Oliver Dowden CBE, to discuss our local concerns. (See report p.10).

The climate change and food shortages which are future hazards make preservation of green countryside even more important, indeed essential if human and animal life is to be preserved also. We must share this planet with the rest of creation for the benefit of all life.

Ann Goddard — Chairman

Media Quarter

HEL 376 Land East of Rowley Lane

Draft HLP proposed to make the Media Area a Special Policy Area

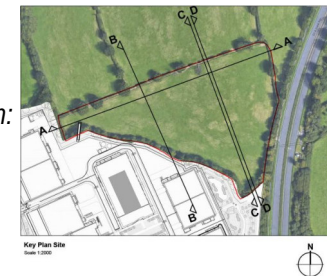
'...a further 50 hectares of adjacent land which is earmarked for the development of additional sound stages and supporting facilities, including the proposed second phase of Sky Studios'

Reasons EBGBS oppose the Media Quarter:

- Prime Green Belt land with beautiful views and walks prized local and surrounding communities
- The DLP gives the impression that the proposals are a forgone conclusion
- Strangeways Stables, home to 200 horses, the biggest stables serving Hertfordshire and North London, would be lost.
- Borehamwood's only surviving country pub, The Mops and Brooms would be surrounded by the studio complex.
- In addition to the traffic impact of Sky Studios the 'Media Quarter' plan for 650+ extra vehicles during peak hours causing roads to be gridlocked, making life impossible for local residents and those accessing the new studios.
- The Media Quarter may create a few local jobs but the majority of the workforce will be brought in by the teams hiring out the studio
- Such a facility could put the Elstree and BBC studios at risk.
- The demand for such a huge complex has not been proved, particularly with so many similar developments being planned around the country.

EBGBS requested that the Media Quarter be taken out of the DLP and be reconsidered in great depth with full public consultation once it is identified this is a viable proposition. EBGBS request proof that the demand can be proved without reasonable doubt.

Location of Sky backlot application:



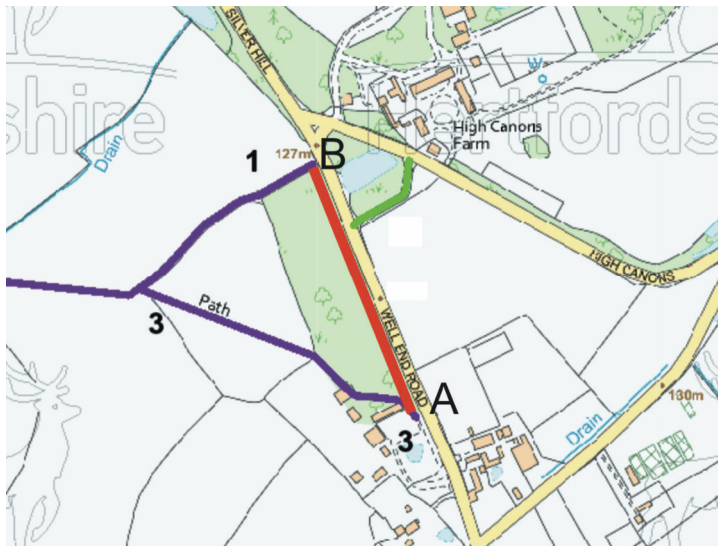
Shenley Footpath no 3

Progress has been very slow. Doug Stack, Scout movement, Phil Wadey, Open Spaces Society and British Horse Society met Grace Middleton, Hertsmere Borough Council in February. The hold up on making this path a safe route from Shanley to Borehamwood via The Well End Scout Activity Centre, for horses, cyclists and pedestrians is from one objector. The objector must remain anonymous.

The present route compromises the safety of young people using the Scout site.

Part of the present route is being used illegally by horse riders who churn up the footpath and make it impossible in places at times for walkers use.

Cllr Sandra Parnell, with the help of Carol and Len Denbigh, brought this to the attention of HBC in 2008. Plans are well advanced with all the information necessary to make part of the path a bridle way. HBC have the advice and the finances but not the legal right to move forward yet.



The Hertsmere Local Plan

With a large number of objections to the Hertsmere Local Plan draft the consultation was suspended and we are still awaiting a decision on how the Borough Council wish to proceed. Until a new plan is adopted, the existing plan, which is becoming more out of date, will continue to apply.

Woodcock Hill Village Green



The story continues:

Part 1 Virtual Public Inquiry 24-18th Jan

Part 2 Virtual Public inquiry 15 to 16th March

Site visit 17th March

By 21st March

Written evidence from WHVG Committee expert rebuts all TW has said regarding the required increase in bio diversity (Government Act 2018) on the replacement land in Elstree as compared to release land at Byron Ave in Borehamwood over time.

TW have upped the offer to pay a new Management Committee (to be called Village Green Committee) from £100,000 to £350,000 to last 15 years. This is only for the replacement land if they win. Our expert's conclusions are supported by evidence from Alex Melson, Clive Butchins and Matt Dodds (Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust). Our expert believes that TW should commit for at least 30 years.

Our expert challenges TW Landscape Plan for the replacement and retained land by Leslie's bench. It is a landscape plan not retention or replacement of a Nature Reserve or Local Wild Life Site as it is now



Our expert challenged TW evidence that the London Loop uses Barnet Lane. The author of the London Loop has changed his map some years ago to encourage users to ignore the boring and unsafe route from Allum Lane via Deacons Hill Rd, to walk from the station through the estate and enter WHVG by the Byron entrance. Our expert actually met 3 walkers doing just that during his visit.

The deal, if TW are successful in having the land at Byron Ave deregistered is that there will be a Management Trust to be set up by Herts County Council or HBC but not WHVG Committee as we are not a statutory body. If neither of those wishes to take up the offer TW will set up their own Management Trust. They would still rely on the goodwill of people volunteering to help as even £35k does not go anywhere near what is needed. Where did goodwill get us when local volunteers have worked since 1996 to have TW take it away from us?



If they win TW will fence the land even though they would have to get agreement to remove the land from the green belt and release from Wild Life Status before they could get permission to build. By 25th March Inspector will begin his determination of the case.

Site Visit

Clive and Pat visited with the inspector and 2 reps for TW. It was like a wetland. The point was made about the improvements since 2008 with permission, then permission was withdrawn by TW in 2018. We looked at ponds and their ecosystems irreplaceable on the replacement land.

Along Barnet Lane which we reached about 2.30pm the Inspector remarked at the constant flow and the noise of the traffic. I pointed out that this was all in a lull, the traffic in another half an hour and the school run would begin.

We entered the replacement land and saw how devoid of anything but grass it was. I pointed out to the Inspector where 70 homes (including flats) were proposed. TW protested not relevant. The Inspector said it needs to be considered and asked for details to be sent about HEL 376 behind Hartfield. I made the point that it is the intention that the Draft Hertsmere Local Plan be 'shelved'. Wendy Hague, HBC, told the Inquiry on Thursday 28th January about the announcement at the HBC Full Council meeting.

The visit highlighted the TW case that the replacement land in Elstree instead of the land at Byron Ave, Borehamwood allowing 200 more households more easily to access the new rural Park. The difference in the deprivation index demographics between Elstree and Borehamwood was highlighted. The 200 extra households in Elstree have never indicated that they wanted an Open space there. TW reps denied that those proposals to build on the adjacent fields were connected to them.

At the January hearing TW accused the WHVG committee of committing an unlawful act by using machines to excavate the Ponds. We had permission given by guess who? No other than TW!!!



For TW to access the woodland paths to the replacement land they would need permission from HBC who own the land and garages. We are not sure who owns the barbed wire fence.



Next steps WHVG Committee will meet and then circulate an update to all households

As we walked in the woodland area where TW propose a path to be built from Byron Avenue to the replacement land through old woodland, trees had been chopped down and vegetation removed. A water pipe had been laid not by the water company and not TW. The pipe started at Ohana, the new house in Barnet Lane, and reached Byron and drained into a manhole. The clay had not been put back properly and it was quite dangerous in the damp conditions.

Pat Strack

Rights of Way report 2022

- Most unsurfaced paths have very muddy stretches due to waterlogged ground and trampling by horses.
- Herts CC is gradually cleaning all of the (dark green) path signs - or replacing those which do not meet current standards, e.g. re destinations and distances
- All path signs now have stickers with a QR code linking via a smartphone app to the on-line HCC footpath map
- "Inhibitors" have been installed at the ends of some local pedestrian-only paths to discourage misuse by cyclists
- The landowner has applied to divert part of path 7 so that it would exit onto Barnet Lane about 100 yards further east
- HCC has been advised of the fallen trees which have blocked paths 8 (off Barnet Lane) and 53 (Green Street to Haggerston Road) following the February storms

- Path 57 (Allum Lane to Parkfields) has been flooded by an overflowing drainage ditch
- Several urban paths are persistently affected by untrimmed hedges and/or bramble clumps
- Persistent dumping continues, e.g. in Edwarebury Lane
- Tykeswater Lane is in an atrocious condition as a result of churning by off-road vehicles (e.g. trail riders), but its status as a “byway open to all traffic” makes this impossible to prevent.

John Cartledge

Tykewater Lane

Tykewater Lane running back and forth across the parish boundaries of Radlett and Borehamwood, continues to be a difficult traverse for all walkers and other users. The designation of this route as a BOAT (Byeway Open to All Traffic) has allowed 4x4 to completely destroy the footpath, and allow vehicular access for fly tipping.

EBGBS and RSGBA will be working with our County Councillor Caroline Clapper and Dawn Grocock, Herts County Council Rights of Way officer, to have the designation reversed. We will seek help from Oliver Dowden MP.

This has been an ongoing battle led by Ken and Eileen Herbert. We need your support to make this our voices heard.

There must be an end to this, surely the intention was not to make this a haven for 4x4 users. The 4X4 lobby is strong and powerful The peace and tranquillity of the countryside is disturbed as well as the destruction of eco systems and habitats.

Please write to us or any of the above to make your point in support.

The Old School House

We have been in Contact with the current owners to ask that the Old School House be preserved due to its historical importance to Borehamwood. We remain in contact with the owners but have had no indication of any future plans to restore the building.

Meeting with Oliver Dowden Friday 25th March

Ann Goddard, Helen Stammers, Sandra Parnell and Pat Strack met our MP to discuss 3 issues : Woodcock Hill VG, Draft Hertsmere Local Plan and Aldenham Reservoir (on behalf of EBGBS, EVPS, ACPT Ltd, EBTC and Aldenham Country Park Advisory Panel)

Woodcock Hill Village Green

The Public Inquiry finished with the final written evidence submitted 25th March.

Ken Coyne, expert witness for WHVG on ecology, along with our other experts, made many points about the failure of Taylor Wimpey’s QC and experts to recognise the weakness of their ecological case comparing the release land by Byron Ave, Borehamwood and the Replacement Land to the north of Barnet Lane in Elstree. Ken knows that the increased offer of £350k from £100K goes nowhere near what is needed to run and maintain the replacement and Retained land. Further criticism of TW was their failure to recognise the difference between their ‘tidy and neat’ landscape plans compared to the work carried out by WHVG committee and community volunteers to not only maintain the Local Wild Life Site but also to improve the biodiversity on the site. In 2018 TW withdrew permission for the planned meadow cuts to take place and therefore already brambles are growing back and the improvements being lost.



Joe Thomas, barrister for WHVG Committee, and Martin Edwards QC, put up strong rebuttals to TW. The area of benefit for residents was in Borehamwood not Elstree, yet the case for extra use of the replacement land hinges on the accessibility for Elstree Residents. HBC has not been contacted by TW about building a footpath through the wooded area using access across HBC land. TW have not acknowledged that the release land means something to the residents of Borehamwood and nothing to those in Elstree. Why would anyone volunteer to give their services freely when clearly all the hard work achieved since 1996 can be taken away with the stroke of a pen? All the money that has been raised from local funds will be lost and meaningless.

Full reports will be available on www.woodcockhill.org.uk.

ACTION It was decided that EBGBS will work with the Open Spaces Society and other Groups to get the law allowing changes to Village Greens be repealed.

Draft Hertmere Local Plan process has been suspended until a full council decision due in April.

This is the case that was put: EGBS say we need

- a full public consultation prior to next or amended Local Plan, ensuring all the concerns of campaigning groups are heard and addressed.
- Proper and robust protection of our green belt land
- Up to date housing needs numbers. Oliver Dowden CBE asked to contact Michel Gove for these
- To limit the Green Belt land allocation as Hertsmere is a special area with huge amounts of Green Belt land
- To ensure that work on a current HBC statutory Brown Register is started as soon as possible and completed in a timely manner. The present Brown Register is dated 2017 but the effects of Brexit and the pandemic need to be taken into account. There should be more opportunity to utilise brownfield sites.
- More social housing is built. "Affordable homes" is a discredited term. HBC need to ensure that we house the most needy in our community
- A substantial levy for the use of Green Belt as opposed to brownfield.
- More housing per hectare
- No more sacrifice of our Green Belt for luxury homes as at Cowley Hill Stables, which development benefited no one in our community nor in Shenley
- A proper investigation into demographics. Extra school places are not needed due to falling rolls in the Town: Challenge need for new Secondary school south of Barnet Lane



A current traffic survey was undertaken that is shared with the community.

EGBS challenge developments that will worsen the traffic impacts, including:

- ◇ proposed new care village in Elstree Village,
- ◇ proposed relocation of Schopwick surgery,
- ◇ proposed development HEL197 north of Barnet Lane (Hartfield Ave and Deacons Hill Rd),
- ◇ proposed development BE6 at Barnet Lane/Furzehill Rd,
- ◇ proposed new media quarter in Shenley/Well End,
- ◇ proposed 800 homes at Cowley Hill in Shenley (NOT Borehamwood) but will primarily impact on Borehamwood services and traffic

Environment Act, Biodiversity Net Gain and sustainability

EGBS wants HBC to provide a robust climate change policy. The plan is in line with the environment act and controls are in place for developers.

Plans for work at the Station roundabout are well advanced.

Plans to put a cycle lane from Sky studios to Manor Way then onto Tesco will be next. Somewhat belatedly an investigation to plan a safe cycle route along Shenley Road should eventually take place later this year.

HBC signed a contract with Beryl's Bikes on February 15th to provide 70 bikes for hire with only existing cycle routes in place. Docking stations will be built in 7 places from the Civic Offices to the Station and at the Shopping Park in Theobald Street. Where will these 70 bikes be ridden: on the pavement? In the road? Sky will be providing an electric shuttle bus to transport employees between the station and Sky Studios. Estimates are of 40 extra vehicle movements per day exacerbating the vehicular traffic on Shenley Rd.

A moratorium was asked for against any applications for development in the green belt until strong safeguards are in place, a satisfactory HLP is in place and the Government green legislation is on the statute books.



The date for the HBC discussions "shelving" the Draft HLP is scheduled for 23rd April. EGBS will be taking a close look at the outcome to decide what plans need to be made with other campaigners. EGBS have to

be assured that it is not being kicked down the road until after the election in May 2023.

Aldenham Reservoir

EGBS deplores the present state of the Reservoir.

Oliver Dowden CBE has been asked:

To find out how far the investigations into a Compulsory Purchase Order have progressed.

As the reservoir is registered as an Asset of Community Value were the owners to sell could we expect any financial help from the government?

What help can the environment agency give?

To put pressure on HBC to look again at development on land south of Watford Road identified as employment land to be rezoned as housing and revisit possibility of money for a trust to manage the Reservoir owned by Gosrani brothers but Taylor Wimpey has an option to build.

Our MP was thanked for his time and he promised to champion the challenges we foresee.

Cecil's Horse Sanctuary

Cecil's Horse Sanctuary is a small horse and pony sanctuary based in Elstree



Cecil's Horse Sanctuary offers a loving permanent home to horses and ponies who are old, abandoned, neglected, abused or unwanted (many would have been euthanized). Many of our residents come to us with physical and/or mental health problems – some requiring special diets or ongoing medical treatment. Our ethos is for all the ponies to have a happy life where they enjoy just being ponies. They live together in herds and spend the day with their friends eating, sleeping, drinking and playing. They are fed, watered, cared for and loved. Many of the ponies have paired up and formed close bonds with another pony in the herd.

The threats to CHS are:

In draft local plan: HEL212 Land north of Watford Road - Growth of key village 90 extra care units proposed. This is in the green belt - irreplaceable loss. Development will impact on a rural setting.

Unsuitable for extra care: distance from Town Centre, Shopping Park, Leisure Centre. Impact on local health and care facilities, which may be moving further away. Impact on traffic air noise and light pollution.

Herts County Council asked for this to be included in the HLP but did not provide any evidence of need. This will not be a Care home. This would be an independent living complex with many additional buildings on the lines of McCarthy and Stone. Few residents in our community could afford to buy into this facility. Does not benefit the majority of our residents. This would not address needs of the local community: as it would be far too expensive!

Elstree Aerodrome: In the Draft Hertsmere Local Plan as a Special Policy Area

'Elstree Aerodrome will be a newly designated Special Policy Area where development that relates to the main operational requirements of the site will be supported'.

Response

EBGBS in common with RSGBA, EBTC, EVPS would support the development at Elstree Aerodrome, to enhance and improve future provision at the site, providing adherence to all the proposed safeguards but opposed the use of additional Green Belt fields being taken to extend the runway or provide additional services.

We requested that HBC reconsider this plan to ensure that the extended runway does not use green belt land previously unbuilt on. We requested proof this has been done.

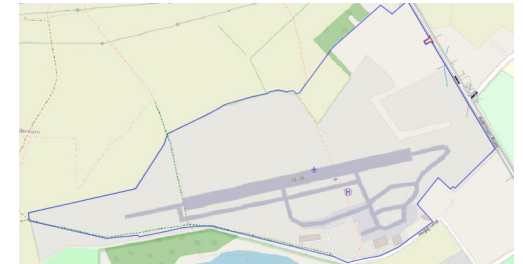
Emergency Access at Aerodrome Application 22/0025/FUL

EBGBS opposed this application

Very Special Circumstances are not demonstrated to build access on the green belt.

The applicants claim that the construction of a new roadway across the field comes under permitted development rights. Our information suggests that permitted development rights only apply to "operational land" and the field in question has never been used for airport purposes. For the past 26 years until August, 2021 it has been continually rented out for grazing horses.

Additionally, it would to extend the envelope of the airport leading to the potential for further development on Green Belt land.



The reasons for this application cite the need to gain emergency access for large vehicles kept off-site e.g. by the Local Authority Fire Service. The Aerodrome has its own Fire and Rescue Service vehicle on the runway south side; able to negotiate the grassed areas. The claim by the applicant is for different access for larger vehicles estimated to require only 2 to 4 two-way vehicle movements per year.

CPRE Hertfordshire – the Countryside Charity: campaigning for Hertsmere’s Green Belt

CPRE Herts has been especially active over the last year on responses to draft Local Plans throughout the County and most recently the Hertsmere Draft Local Plan public consultation. Together with a record-breaking number of responses (over 20,000) from a huge range of local interest groups and residents, we made a detailed submission to Hertsmere Council and attended a number of public meetings where we were able to provide information and encourage people to reply.

The Hertsmere Draft Local Plan proposes totally inappropriate amounts of development in a Borough which, outside the built-up areas, is all designated as London Metropolitan Green Belt, to be protected and enhanced for present and future generations. This damaging draft Local Plan ignores almost completely the massive contribution that the Green Belt makes to the lives of residents and visitors alike, and proposes entirely unacceptable levels of residential and commercial development of over 1000 hectares of open countryside.

CPREH welcomes the recent statement by the Council leadership that they intend to ‘shelve’ the Local Plan due to the community response. We now need to hear what this actually means and have asked for a programme for the revision of the Local Plan that takes full account of local community concerns. We will continue to campaign for the protection of the open countryside which provides so many benefits for both rural and urban residents, businesses and visitors.

See www.cpreherts.org.uk for more information on how to join our campaigns!

Chris Berry



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 Woodcock Hill Society (now 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 using the form below or via Pat Strack, Membership Secretary, on 0208 386 3151 email: pat.strack@icloud.com

Your support is vital to us. To encourage new members - especially younger residents - membership is now free, however a donation would be welcome to support our work. To join us please go to our website www.ebgreenbelt.org/joincontact-us to complete the membership form online.

Committee:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| Dr Ann Goddard, BEM - Chair | Clive Butchins |
| Pat Strack - Membership Secretary | Jonathan Supran |
| Helen Stammers - Treasurer and Webmaster | |



Elstree & Borehamwood Green Belt Society

