

SAVE CLAYGATE GREEN BELT

www.saveclaygategreenbelt.com

WHY SO MUCH FUSS OVER A COUPLE OF FIELDS?

THE GREEN BELT MUST BE SAVED

In the speech launching his Makerfield campaign, Andy Burnham said that he would “shift the burden of development from greenfield [land] to the local centres”.

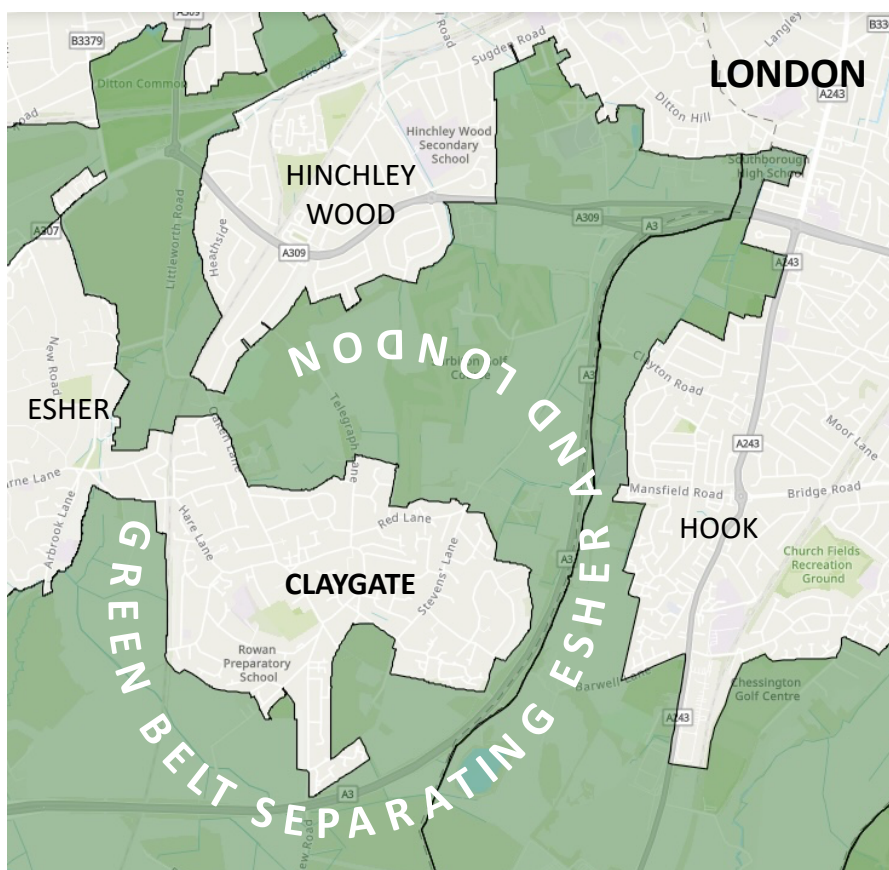
We are delighted, provided he meant it. And doesn’t change his mind.

But why do we get stressed about a couple of fields in the first place?

A deep connection with a place is a fundamental human need. Claygate gives us that bond. It’s a sense that rootless people and refugees have lost, and it’s part of our identity. It’s partly geographical, but much more a connection with the feeling, the culture and the community that Claygate provides.

Intrinsic to Claygate’s contribution to our sense of identity is its separateness, its uniqueness and its relationship with nature – all things that a village can have to a degree that is impossible for a city, town or suburb.

And, in turn, it is the Green Belt that connects all those features that make us a special village. The Green Belt encloses Claygate like a giant fist. The “thumb” of the fist holds back encroachment from Esher, while the back of



the fist restrains Hinchley Wood and Hook from continuing the outward sprawl of London.

And because the Green Belt is so central to Claygate being a village, it too is important to Claygate people’s identity.

It connects us with history and helps give us a sense of place. It is a link with local nature, and was so for centuries before “ecology” was invented.

(And as for the benefits to flora and fauna, well, that deserves a whole piece on its own.)

So, it’s not just a matter of a few fields. It’s about the Green Belt. More, it’s about our Green Belt.

The alternative is to become a suburb – to surrender our home’s separateness for absorption, our uniqueness for ordinariness, our relationship with nature for one with concrete.

It is unthinkable.

Whether Andy Burnham thinks about any of the above is anyone’s guess. But he should.



SAVE CLAYGATE GREEN BELT