

# Save Jealott's Hill Newsletter

21<sup>st</sup> January 2020

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## A Brief History of the Green Belt

I read a comment on Facebook today where someone asked "Is working land Green Belt?" so I thought maybe a brief explanation might help.

For a more comprehensive read on the history of our Green Belt there is a good piece on it in Wikipedia.

Here in the Bracknell area we are on the very edge of what is called The Metropolitan Green Belt or sometimes the London Green Belt. Richard Knox-Johnston who is speaking at the meeting on Friday 24th is Chair of the London Green Belt Council. The green belt was established by Act of Parliament back in 1947 and it is an integral part of Government and Local Government policy ever since. We are in the London Green Belt but there are many other areas of Green Belt around the country and they generally encircle a large urban area.

The 2019 version of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)** confirms that "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 are their openness and their permanence".

So, to answer the question simply, NO, not ALL land and not ALL working land is Green Belt. You can see a map in Wikipedia which shows just how small an area is actually Green Belt and you will realise how precious it is for that reason given where the Green Belt areas are relative to big cities, conurbations and the industrial heartland of our country.

The Green Belt has a clearly defined purpose in the planning law and practice. The **NPPF 2019** says that the Green Belt serves 5 Purposes:

1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

This is a serious set of statements because

**"Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered where exceptional circumstances are fully evidenced and justified" (NPPF 2019) and "before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, the strategic policy-making authority should be able to demonstrate that it has examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting its identified need for development" (NPPF 2019). In this case, the Strategic Policy-Making Body is our own Bracknell Forest Council.**

Come to Woodhurst on Friday 24th at 7:30pm and find out what BFC thought they were doing when they ignored their own Green Belt review of 2016, their 2017 Local Development Plan of 2017 and their Housing Background Paper in 2019, all of which said they should not touch Green Belt land for random development, when they formed the view that they should agree to Syngenta's proposal. Do you think anything you read here implies that 4,000 houses should just be "plonked down" on a beautiful green hillside in the Green Belt in an area poorly served by public transport (and located 5km from Bracknell and 8km from Maidenhead) beyond a vague statement from a local bus company that they would consider increasing frequency if it made sense.

Their explanation will be worth hearing, no doubt, and you will get a chance to quiz Councillor Chris Turrell the Planning Lead councillor on the Council.

Remember you must register in advance as we have limited space in the school hall but admission is free and we have a lot of interest from the area and from surrounding areas.

Register by email at [cpreberkshire@btopenworld.com](mailto:cpreberkshire@btopenworld.com) or by telephone to 011899306756

**LETS PUT A STOP TO THIS NONSENSE ONCE AND FOR ALL**

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