

Jill Britten. Whitewood Farm, Norton Lane, Whitchurch

We are farmers running an organic beef suckler herd within the Green Belt around Whitchurch and have lived and farmed in the area for over 40 years so have an understanding of what is at stake here, if you'll pardon the pun. I am here to tell you about the Green Belt at Whitchurch Village. The visual entry into Bristol on the A37 is the envy of all other routes in and surpasses most other city accesses. The land is farmed right up to the City boundary giving the area a rural "cared for" and "involved" feel unlike others often referred to as "edgelands" where the land is neglected, owned by developers waiting for their chance to maximize on their assets from their Land Banks. This is a fact.

The Green Belt at Whitchurch Village truly is special. Here we have the most fantastic example of why Green Belts exist and the huge benefits it brings to people's lives. It has a network of footpaths readily available for people to walk out and enjoy space and fresh air. All local people have access to:-  
2 Rugby Clubs, A Cricket Club, 2 Football Clubs, Children's Playground, Allotments  
A Cemetery, Equestrian Centre, Garden Centre, Horse World Visitor Centre and lastly  
Farming. Not only is this good agricultural land with trees and greenery, it must be remembered it also provides man's only true means of Carbon Capture.  
This impressive list represents diverse land uses and will be fought for vehemently.

Whitchurch Village only survives because of the Green Belt. Without it, it will become just another outer extension of Bristol, losing its identity. In August the folk at Whitchurch Village organize and run their own Village Fete, which is one of the largest in the South West, with thousands of people enjoying a lovely family day out, on Green Belt Land of course.

**Your required "Robust Evidence Base" cannot be fulfilled here on three counts –  
to stop unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas ie Bristol,  
to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another ie Whitchurch Village being swallowed up with Stockwood  
to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.**

Localism is supposed to be on the Government's Agenda and recently, when asked about possible development on their Green Belt, 70% of households took an interest in their surroundings by saying they wished it to stay undeveloped. Over 800 letters were submitted to your Council. An astonishing response saying no to development here. Full support for maintaining this Green Belt comes from my ward Councillor, Malcolm Hanney, my neighbouring Ward Councillor Peter Edwards, my MP Jacob Rees Mogg and three Parish Councils, namely Whitchurch, Norton Malreward and Publow with Pensford. Localism says No.

At Whitchurch, the infrastructure is poor with roads already congested. The local Village Primary School is already over-subscribed. To access facilities such as Post Office, Doctors and Dental Surgeries, Shops, Employment and Comprehensive Schooling all new developments will require cars because Public Transport is very limited. This area is inappropriate for sustainable development.

You have given yourselves the difficult task of choosing one out of the four sites for the District's extra housing requirements. All are on Green Belt, which we were told would not be built on by both Bath & North East Somerset Council and the Present Government. In the House of Commons in April 2011, Bill Esterson Labour MP for Sefton Central asked Eric Pickles MP Secretary of State:-

"Will the Secretary of State take this opportunity to confirm whether the new legislation will make it harder for developers to build on the Green Belt?" and the reply from Secretary of State, Mr Eric Pickles, was this "Our general policy is this: we intend to ensure that the Green Belt is held SOLID AND ABSOLUTELY INVIOLATE by this Administration. We are not going to follow the tenets of the former Labour Government by concreting over the Green Belt"

I am confused – are you?

**On behalf of Whitchurch Village, I ask that this Green Belt Jewel be treasured, valued and maintained.**

On behalf of all the Green Belt I ask you all to scrap these ideas. Where is your promise of using Brownfield Sites? How can we trust our votes with you if you renege on your promises.