

## FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

### AGM Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025

Chaired by our Honorary Vice President Claire Taylor

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 at 8pm in the North Mymms Memorial Hall, 36 Station Road, Welham Green.

The formal notice of the meeting, agenda and financial statements are available on our website.

There will be a presentation about local development and the Local Plan with opportunity for questions and discussion. Come along and have your say!

### Membership is Now Due for 2025

Make your voice heard by strengthening our membership. With annual subscriptions only £1 per head, donations would be greatly appreciated to cover the extra costs of engaging professionals to help fight to protect the area we love. See payment options below:

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Post / Drop this form to: **NMDGBS**, c/o North Mymms Memorial Hall, 36 Station Road, Welham Green AL9 7PG.

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 and/or £ ..... voluntary contribution to funds.

## CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

The last year has been a turbulent time for the Green Belt – both nationally and locally.

At national level, a new government has upped the target for new homes, aiming to build 1.5 million more homes in the next five years - helped by changes to the planning laws, the reintroduction of mandatory housing targets for local authorities and, inevitably, the release of Green Belt land.

There has already been a review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on which the Society commented. A new version, published in December, thankfully retains the concept of The Green Belt with its five purposes but at the expense of some weakening in favour of development. There is a confusing introduction of a Grey Belt within the Green Belt and a strengthened requirement for local plans to use the government's standard method rather than local circumstances to establish the number of dwellings required.

At local level, the Welwyn Hatfield local plan is being implemented. Many of our residents appear surprised at the speed with which planning permissions are being sought and development started on the half - dozen or so former Green Belt sites in the parish. On some sites building is well under way. These sites are lost to the Green Belt: we must do our best to minimise further losses in the next round of local plan discussions.

In September, Welwyn Hatfield council, faced with having to update its existing plan, agreed instead to prepare a new one which would be adopted in June 2027. The council conducted what was described as an "Early Engagement" consultation in the autumn.

Our response emphasised how the Green Belt was a defining element of the borough; even after the local plan allocations, Green Belt comprises some three quarters of the borough's area. It is the spaces between the towns and villages – the surrounding countryside - that contribute so much to the borough's character and make it such a pleasant place to live.

Consultations on the new plan will continue through 2025; a formal draft plan including a target number of dwellings is to be published in Spring 2026. Regrettably, there will almost certainly be further allocations of Green Belt sites.

So, the "turbulence" will continue.

We have the technical support of our planning adviser, Jed Griffiths. However, this is not just a technical matter, and our effectiveness will depend on how our members show the strength of local feeling in favour of the Green Belt. Please continue to support us by renewing your membership – see overleaf for details on how to complete this step.

But we need more. We need youthful energy! We need help to improve our communications, and volunteers to contribute to our committee. Can you do that?

Please talk to us about how you might get involved. You can speak directly to one of our committee members at the AGM or get in touch by using one of the many digital methods listed at the top of this page.

**We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at the AGM  
on Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 at 8pm**