

## Campaign to Keep Wimborne Green

### Notes on the public meeting, which was held at the Colehill Memorial Hall, Colehill on Wednesday 29th March 2006.

Those present:

Sheila Bourton (Campaign to Keep Wimborne Green)  
Derek Burt (District and County Councillor)  
William Wallace (Head of Policy & Planning for East Dorset District Council)  
Don Wallace (District and Parish Councillor)  
Terry Stewart (Vice President Dorset CPRE)  
Janet Dover (County, District and Parish Councillor)  
George Russell (District and Town Councillor)  
Concerned residents (Approx 120)

Sheila Bourton opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, including Terry Stewart from CPRE and the various District and Parish councillors. Sheila explained some of the background to the events that led up to the meeting and gave her thoughts on why it was important for all concerned residents to be involved in protecting the green belt in our area.

Terry Stewart from the Campaign for Rural England gave a brief presentation on the effect of the current proposals to build large numbers of new homes in our area and the need for protecting the green belt at a time of great pressure from central government and from regional planning authorities to roll back (or rather as one heckler correctly put it “to destroy”) the green belt. The presentation was a little statistic heavy and if, like me, you got the general thrust but failed to follow the detail I have summarised the main points:

- Green Belts are there for a reason and have successfully kept the city in the city for 50 years. Loss of green belt adversely affects the environment and once gone, is gone forever.
- The S.W.R.A. will decide how many houses are required in the Bournemouth/Poole/Christchurch Joint Study Area over the next 20 years. The current estimate is 34,500.
- East Dorset is expected to absorb an additional 5,200 new homes.
- 2,400 of the above 5,200 will be “urban extensions” on Green Belt Land made up from the following sites:
  - An area West and North of Wimborne in the Burts Hill area.
  - An area North of Corfe Mullen
  - An area West of Ferndown (Commercial)
  - Two areas West and East of Parley Cross.

Terry asked for a vote of hands to indicate all those who knew about the South West Regional Assembly and what they did. There were approx 20 hands raised (out of about 120 present).

William Wallace then gave a very clear and concise description of the processes involved in producing the Regional Spatial Strategy and the future events. In summary they were:

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- South East Dorset Strategic Planning and Transportation Joint Committee met in Poole (9/9/2005) and 5 green belt sites were identified for development. These sites were listed and the information sent to the South West Regional Authority (S.W.R.A.) to be included in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
- Draft RSS agreed by South West Regional Assembly (10/3/2006) and submitted to Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).
- Public consultation period between 12/5/2006 and 8/8/2006.
- An independent panel will be appointed by John Prescott to review RSS. This will involve a public examination but not a public enquiry. The panel will report to the ODPM with any suggested changes. The panel will begin work at the beginning of next year (2007) and will have approximately a year to finish its review. Thus it will be in 2008 before it returns to the ODPM.
- Local Councils will then be asked to produce a Local Development Framework that I presume will contain detailed plans on where the development will take place.

William Wallace read out relevant parts of the RSS and stated the Councils general support for protecting the green belt. (You will have to decide for yourself whether this statement gels with the council vote to include plans in the RSS for building on the green belt).

Derek Burt took issue with the statement (by Terry Stewart and Sheila Bourton) that the SWRA was “unelected” and stated that it consisted of 120 or so elected representatives from the various district councils (Derek Burt is one of East Dorset’s members) that make up the region. For your information the SWRA also consists of

“Social Economic and Environmental Partners (SEEPs) including businesses, trades unions, the voluntary sector; education and training, environmental, Training and Enterprise Councils, agriculture, arts, equality, sports, tourism, faith, health and co-operative agency representatives. And of representatives of other non government organisations such as the CPRE.”

Obviously the point being made by Sheila and Terry was that no one in the hall had voted to elect Derek Burt to represent our interests at the SWRA anymore than they had voted for the SEEPs referred to above.

Derek Burt then gave a short explanation on why the East Dorset District Council was the only council to suggest sites for development to the SWRA for inclusion in the RSS. He stated that by suggesting these particular sites the council was seeking to protect the green belt in other areas. He also stated that 40% of any new housing would be affordable housing for residents of the area who could not afford the current market prices.

The floor was then thrown open for a general Question and Answer session.

A resident questioned the reason for the meeting and the campaign as the green belt area between Colehill and Wimborne (north of Leigh Road) was not included in the RSS. William Wallace stated a number of good reasons why the campaign should continue for the foreseeable future:

- Just because the sites are in the RSS doesn’t mean they will definitely be part of the Local Development plans. There are various reasons why these sites may be found unsuitable when complete surveys are carried out and other sites adopted.

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- There are a number of developers who own or have options to buy pieces of land in this area of green belt and in the same way that we can submit our objections to any building on the green belt these developers will be able to submit plans to the review panel and the ODPM suggesting that their piece of land be developed in preference. As these developers have money tied up in this land it is most unlikely that they will not take this opportunity.
- Other Campaign groups are fighting to prevent building in their areas (Corfe Mullen has a highly organised campaign and Parley Cross is already starting to organise). The development may be moved to a site where the residents are less organised to resist it..

A question was raised concerning proposals for development of the 40 acres (to the west of Bye The Way) that the council currently owns. William Wallace stated that development of sports facilities (with limited building) within green belt sites was allowed and that a feasibility study had been agreed that morning. I suspect from the general murmuring in the hall that there were a number of residents who were not aware of these proposals. If you have objections to this development now is the time to make these known to the council.

A question was raised concerning the area west and North of Wimborne that had been chosen for development. William Wallace indicated that it was west of the Cranborne Road near to the old pumping station. There was a short discussion on the possible hydrological problems inherent in developing this site that may eventually eliminate it from the plan

William Wallace stated that the Council supported limited release of green belt land for urban extensions.

A question was raised concerning how the Council had voted on the question of submitting green field sites to be included in the RSS. Derek Burt stated that it was a unanimous vote. At this point Janet Dover got to her feet at this point and indicated in no uncertain terms that she had not and would never vote to develop green belt land. This was greeted with a round of applause from the audience. Derek Burt then stated that the vote was passed by a majority of 26 in favour, 3 against with 4 abstentions.

Don Wallace made a plea for letters of complaint to be personalised. He stated that he felt it was easier to dismiss petitions and standardised objection letters than if everyone wrote individual letters. These all had to be opened, read and the contents noted by the council.

A question was raised concerning the reasons behind granting planning permission to develop the Bye-the-Way site as a Head Quarters for a local construction company in what is ostensibly a green belt area. None of the parties present could remember.

The meeting closed at about 9.30.

Finally Sheila and all those involved in organising the meeting would like to thank everyone who gave up their evening to attend, our various elected representatives, Terry Stewart and William Wallace.

## **Campaign to Keep Wimborne Green**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our fighting fund. £99.06 was collected, £35 will go immediately to pay for hire of the hall.

Thanks also go to The Minster Press who generously offered to print the leaflets and objection letters for free.

These notes are as full as my memory and note taking allowed. If you feel that I have omitted something important from these notes or I have misrepresented something said or you dispute any of the details included please let me know by email at

[info@keepwimbornegreen.co.uk](mailto:info@keepwimbornegreen.co.uk)

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