

## **Motion on Green Belt Land**

### **This Council notes:**

- That Green belt land in Bishop's Stortford has been split into residential-sized parcels for sale, with two recent examples being the Thorley Lane East Woods and the Meads Land, South of Meadowlands off Rye Street
- The Thorley lane East Woods are Green Belt Land, have a Tree Preservation Order on the site and are listed as Open Space in the recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan
- The Rye Street land is Green Belt land, Local Open Space, and an Area of Archaeological Significance
- The sale of Green Belt and rural land in this manner is a problem across East Hertfordshire and beyond, with similar examples in Much Hadham, Braughing and Tewin
- The strong public feeling that Green Belt land should not be parcelled up into small chunks
- The considerable public desire to protect the woodland on Thorley Lane East and the Meads Land Rye Street from development
- That both the Thorley Lane East Woods and Meads Land are considered by local people to be important local amenity land
- Bishop's Stortford Town Council approached the sellers of both the Meads and Thorley Lane East Woods to try buy the land. In both cases the sellers were not willing to sell at the market rate for amenity land. In both cases the sellers were asking for prices closer to development land prices
- On 10th October 2022, Bishop's Stortford Town Council passed a motion substantially the same as this motion, and it received cross-party support

### **This Council believes:**

- Green Belt land should be protected from being sold off in small plots

- Some prospective buyers of small plots of Green Belt land do not fully understand the planning challenges associated with trying to develop this land

**This Council resolves:**

- To ask the Leader of the District Council to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:
  - Express the Town Council's frustration that Green Belt land is being sold in small parcels
  - Ask the Secretary of State to consider new legislation and/or regulations to tighten up the rules about selling Green Belt land
  - Ask the Secretary of State to ensure that there are strict rules around the information that is made available to prospective buyers of Green Belt land by sellers. In particular, a full assessment of the planning status of the land should be prominently displayed in any planning material
- To ask the Leader to write to the Thorley Lane East Woods Action Group to send them a copy of this motion

Proposed by Cllr David Snowdon

Seconded by Cllr John Wyllie