



Robin Bishop writes:

As my article [opposite page] highlights, these are critical times for London's Green Belt. Thanks in good measure to our Society's efforts over decades, Barnet still possesses many open places where the illusion of countryside is remarkably unspoiled.

You can now view video clips of eight of these lovely Green Belt locations, all in Totteridge or Mill Hill, on YouTube at <https://londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk/why-londons-green-belt-is-so-important/> without needing to leave your house – though do make the effort, if you can, to walk the real places!

In 1945 our Society was founded to protect the fields around Chipping Barnet from being built over for 40,000 houses. We're longstanding members of the London Green Belt Council which helps us fight inappropriate developments. The LGBC has around 100 member organisations, but needs more members and a higher profile to get its messages across to the public and policy-makers. This is especially

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urgent today, when councils across the country are drafting plans to build on the Green Belt, and when the government's Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill is working its way through Parliament. There are frustrating inconsistencies between government and council policies and decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate. The Bill is our best hope for bringing coherence to the planning system and reinforcing protection of the Green Belt – but it contains some worrying flaws.

In the videos, LGBC Chair Richard Knox-Johnston explains why retaining the Metropolitan Green Belt is so vital now for the health of both the environment and each of us. He speaks with enthusiasm and authority reminiscent of David Attenborough.

LGBC chair Richard Knox-Johnston says his passion for the Green Belt was ignited more than 50 years ago when he was a councillor

In Richard's introductory clip, he says that his passion for the subject was ignited half a century ago when, as a young Bromley councillor, he represented a ward that was largely Green Belt. In the subsequent clips, he identifies key reasons for its protection:

- Safeguarding our mental health
- Stopping urban sprawl
- Securing food supply
- Providing opportunities for leisure, recreation and sports
- Enhancing biodiversity

He concludes by demolishing the fallacy that new housing in the Green Belt is affordable.

The filming itself went like a midsummer dream. On a perfect day (before the worst of the heatwave) I drove our small crew around the locations. Richard spoke unscripted and needed few retakes.

The videos were shot, recorded and edited most professionally by Jayd Kent of Simply Graphics. And we found time for a nice lunch at Finchley Nurseries – in Barnet's Green Belt, naturally!