



Press release

The last farm in the Bristol Green Beltⁱ under threat?

How long until is it before the last farm in the Bristol Green Belt is under concrete?

Catherine Withers, farmer at Yew tree farm will speak to a Campaign to Protect Rural England (Avonside branch) event on Saturday 24th November about her fears for the future of her farm.

Catherine has lived at the farm all of her life, and raises cattle to sell to Waitrose. The Bristol Local Plan proposes removing some Green Belt south of Bristol, which makes the future of the farm very vulnerable.

Catherine Withers, Yew Tree Farm said:

‘We feel that we’re the green lungs of Bristol. It would be such a shame to see Bristol sprawled out, possibly even as far as possibly the airport’

Georgie Bigg, Chair of CPRE Avonside said:

‘The countryside around Bristol and Bath is under huge pressure for more housing, but we’re faced with a future where we’re losing valuable countryside without actually giving local people the affordable housing they need.’

‘Our planning system should, and could, help us achieve a better future for this area, where people are able to get about without always needing to use a car; where everyone can afford a place to live and homes are located in well-connected, sustainable locations; and where our countryside is valued as a vital resource, and as an important part of what makes this area a special place to live.

ENDS

Contact:

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Notes:

The Bristol Green Belt refers to the Green Belt within the Bristol boundary, rather than to the whole of the Avon Green Belt, which covers land in North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset.

CPRE Avonside's event/AGM will take place at Cosham Hall, Chapel Street, Thornbury BS352BJ on Saturday 24th November, 10:30-1pm.

It will feature speakers, Catherine Withers, Yew Tree Farm; and Dr Phillip Bratby, retired physicist and CPRE Devon's spokesperson on energy, speaking about his research and the impact of Government's housing policy on our local countryside. All are welcome.

On Monday 12th November the four West of England Councils published a further consultation on the [West of England Joint Spatial Plan](#), with comments due on 7th January 2019. CPRE Avonside have responded to all previous consultations and will do so again. In particular:

- The quality of new housing must improve, and we include in 'quality' more affordable housing - up to at least half social housing or otherwise affordable to people on average local incomes or below. The Plan has some welcome aspirations to improve design quality which we support. New housing schemes must be better linked to existing public transport networks and facilities. Some greenfield housing will be needed, but more should be done to regenerate existing towns - particularly areas with concentrations of deprivation such as Norton Radstock and Weston-super-Mare.
- Car usage must be decisively and robustly tamed. Currently the Plan has aspirations towards 'mass transit' but it is not clear where or in what form this will take. [First there must be a planned public transport structure that will link both the areas of existing housing and the new proposed areas, in order to reduce existing traffic as well as growth.](#) The return of trams to Bath and Bristol should be seriously considered. Alongside this, there is also scope to learn from Oxford and take radical action on air pollution by banning polluting vehicles altogether from the city centres.
- We should cherish and invest in the area's countryside for the value of its farming, public footpath network and nature reserves. Reviving the Forest of Avon and the good work it did would be a great start, and there is also scope to support the exciting new Bathscape project that aims to improve the lesser known landscapes of the World Heritage City.

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