

## Supporting Evidence for Objections to the 2017 SBC Plan by

### Margaret Ashby/ FoFC

Paragraph ...2.1..... (please specify)

Policy ....A Picture of Stevenage..... (please specify)

Proposals Map

Objection already submitted

Para 2.1 is inaccurate. Stevenage did not, as is implied, originate 'around the High Street'. It began as a Saxon village centred on the site of St Nicholas' church. The road was not known as 'The Great North Road' until the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Additional corrections

Stevenage began some time before c600AD as a Saxon village called Stigenace. By 1281, the

Abbot of Westminster, lord of the manor of Stevenage, had been granted the right to hold a

market here and from then Stevenage developed into a small market town, with a number of greens and hamlets (not villages) within its boundary. Shephall was a neighbouring village, with a completely separate history from that of Stevenage.

St Nicholas church, with the old Bury (manor house) beside it, still remain in their historic site, the centre of the ancient Saxon village, within the St Nicholas and Rectory Lane Conservation Area which was extended in 2012 to protect them and the surrounding land.

#### Sources

1.The Victoria County History of Hertfordshire

2.Robert Trow-Smith, The History of Stevenage, 1958

3. Margaret Ashby & Don Hills, Stevenage, a History from Roman times to the present day. 2010

4.St Nicholas/ Rectory Lane Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary

Planning Document. Adopted 19 July 2012.

For 15 years Margaret Ashby was a tutor in local history for the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education

## Supporting Evidence for Objections to the 2017 SBC Plan by Margaret Ashby /FoFC

Paragraph 5.159

Policy SP13: The Historic Environment

Proposals Map

#### Objection already submitted

Cannot agree that the proposed mitigation measures will minimise the impact of development on Forster Country, Rooks Nest or the 'fields to the north that provide their setting'. The land around St Nicholas' church, stretching across to Rooks Nest and up to Chesfield and Graveley is that of the original farmland of the Saxon village of Stigenace. . It is the only farmland left within the Borough. Following a Public Inquiry in 1992, the Inspector recommended and SBC accepted, that the Green Belt Boundary be re-drawn to include the whole of the Stevenage Forster Country, thus giving it permanent protection. This was ratified in 1994.

#### Supporting evidence:

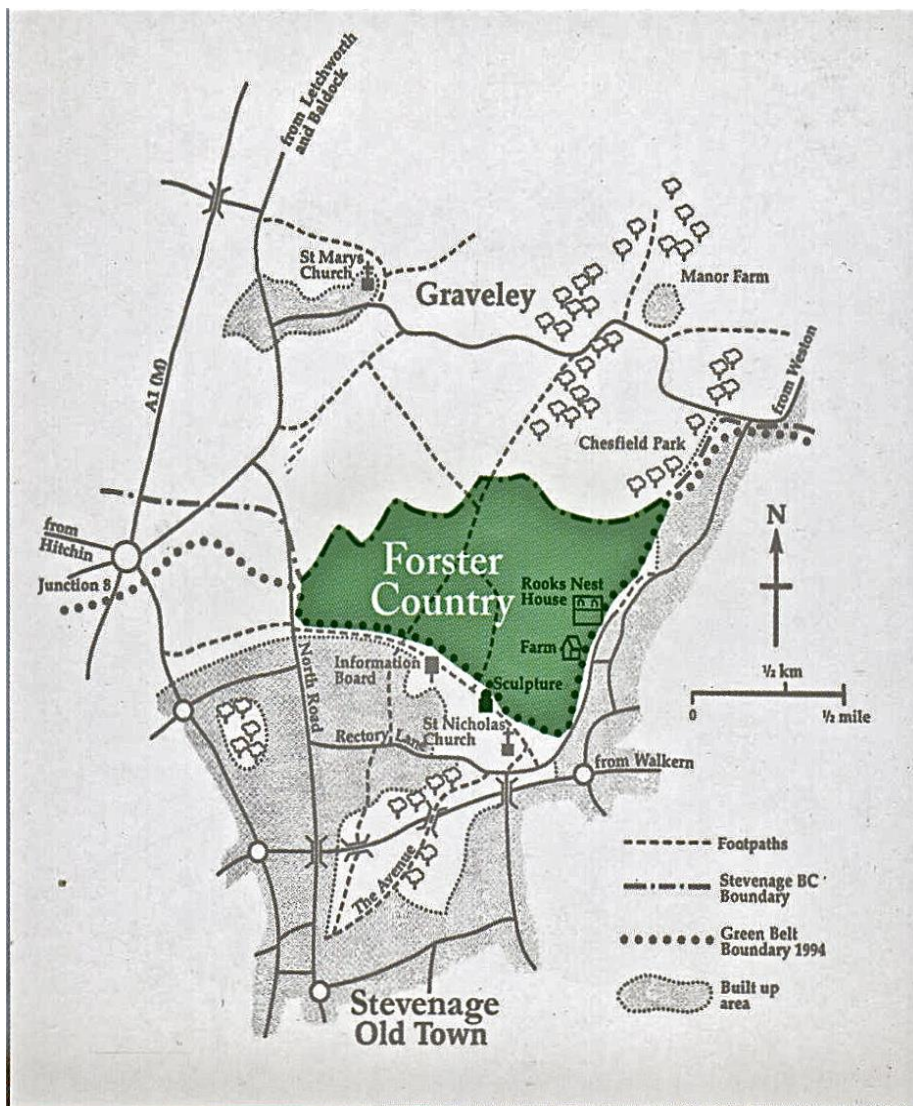
Before 1992, the Stevenage Forster Country had not been within the Green Belt, although the adjacent land in North Herts was. Following the Public Inquiry in 1992, the Inspector recommended and SBC accepted, that the Green Belt Boundary be re-drawn to include the whole of the Stevenage Forster Country, thus intending to give it permanent protection.

SBC incorporated the Inspector's recommendations into two documents, published in 1993: *Statement of Decisions and Reasons in Response to the Inspector's Report* and *Proposed Modifications to the Stevenage District Plan 1990 Review* (effectively a revised version of the District Plan, published in 1994).

In 1997, the FoFC commissioned the sculpture 'Only Connect', partly paid for by grants from both SBC and HCC. It was erected in St Nicholas' churchyard beside the gate into the Forster Country as a reminder that this Green Belt is intended to give permanent protection to the Forster Country.



Unveiling of the 'Only Connect' sculpture, 1997. Left to right: Ian Hamilton, Margaret Ashby, Cllr Ken Vale, then Mayor of Stevenage, Revd John Bainbridge, Vicar of St Nicholas church, Barbara Follett, MP, John Hepworth, Angela Godfrey, sculptor. The sculpture was erected to mark the redrawing of the Green Belt boundary to protect the Forster Country.



The Stevenage Forster Country within the Green Belt since 1994.

