

Weekly Round-Up 23 April 2012

National Media

Light pollution: we published the results of our Star Count Week on 11 April. These reveal that only 47 per cent of participants were able to distinguish more than ten stars in the major constellation of Orion. <http://bit.ly/lqUUmE>

Many thanks to all of you who took part. It gained good attention in the press including a *Today Programme* interview with Shaun Spiers, a *Sky* interview with CPRE Surrey's Tim Murphy, and *BBC Breakfast* and evening news coverage featuring an interview with our light pollution campaigner Emma Marrington. Emma also did interviews for over ten local BBC radio stations, *BBC Radio 5 Live* and *BBC Newsround*.

Print coverage was also strong with *BBC Online* (<http://bbc.in/l8G5s0>), *The Independent* (<http://ind.pn/lqY2ix>), the *Daily Mail* (<http://bit.ly/l43bBd>) and *The Guardian* (<http://bit.ly/J6kCLM>) all giving the issue feature attention.

Local food: Saxmundham in Suffolk has lost its long battle to stop Tesco building an out of town supermarket. However, the final store will be considerably smaller than the one proposed in 1998. *The Guardian* has this week reflected on this long drawn out planning battle that caused CPRE Vice President Lady Caroline Cranbrook to produce the *Real Choice* report, and inspired CPRE's current research into mapping local food webs. <http://bit.ly/HNzleu>

Local Media

Light pollution: our star Count Week results also got good coverage in local media. A small sample includes this from the *Newcastle Journal* (<http://bit.ly/lk0fOn>), *The Coulsdon and Purley Advertiser* (<http://bit.ly/lyU9Z4>), *The Shropshire Star* (<http://bit.ly/JjDsTa>) and *The Norwich Evening News* (<http://bit.ly/JKrVZG>).

Housing: CPRE Norfolk has lobbied for a reduction in the ambitions of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership to see 37,000 homes built by 2026 through its Joint Core Strategy. *The Eastern Daily Press* reports that the branch has invited other interested groups to join it in a coalition against the plan (<http://bit.ly/ljbNAR>). The story was also covered by *The Norwich Evening News* (<http://bit.ly/l9lz4Y>).

Housing: the *West Sussex County Times* reports that CPRE Sussex has published a report suggesting that the local council has grossly overestimated housing need in the area. The report found need for 480 new houses a year, totalling 9,600, compared to the lowest council option in the consultation of 590. Roger Smith, of CPRE Horsham and Crawley, called GL Hearn's initial report for the council fundamentally flawed, describing the assumption that economic growth can be achieved by building new houses notional and misleading. <http://bit.ly/lj cudw>

Policy and Campaigns

Policy Committee: PC met on Thursday 12 April to discuss Housing; the Planning Campaign; Parliamentary Strategy; and the Governance of National Parks. There were also brief discussions about devolving local major transport schemes, Defra's Green Food Project, Energy, and the Mapping Local Food Webs project. All papers are available here: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/policy/policy-committee-meetings/item/2800-policy-committee-meeting-12-april-2012>

VAT on alterations to listed buildings: the recent Budget included proposals to withdraw the current zero rate of VAT on approved alterations to listed buildings. This change will prevent many listed buildings finding a viable future. The Heritage Alliance has launched a campaign, which we support, to have this proposal withdrawn. For more information, and some simple actions, such as signing a petition, please have a look at their campaign page: <http://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/2012/04/17/vat-2012-campaign-toolkit/>

Tranquillity: Graeme Willis attended a second workshop at Lancaster University of the Valuing Nature Network project to explore the framework for valuing ecosystem services.

Post NPPF joint campaigning: Neil Sinden attended a meeting at the National Trust with other NGO representatives to discuss the potential for joint work to promote 'smart growth' following the publication of the NPPF.

Front bench Labour Communities and Local Government team: Neil attended a roundtable session with Hilary Benn MP, Roberta Blackman-Woods MP and Jack Dromey MP to discuss future planning challenges, including housing delivery.

White Paper Dinner and Nature NGOs: Shaun had meetings with the chief executives of the other main environmental NGOs. He updated them on CPRE's forthcoming report on onshore wind, due to be released on 30 April.

Branch Forum meeting on Onshore Wind: on 10 April, in the old office, we hosted a Branch Forum meeting to discuss CPRE's policy on onshore wind. Shaun, Neil and Tom heard views from the branches represented and briefed them on the forthcoming CPRE report and press release on onshore wind.

Wildlife and Countryside Link (WCL): Neil met Elaine King, Director of WCL, to discuss future priorities for the umbrella organisation as part of the development of the organisation's new strategic plan.

Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales: Shaun and Neil had a telephone call with Peter Ogden, Director of CPRW, to discuss a number of issues of common interest.

Planning sounding board: Paul Miner, John Hoad and Neil met with branch planning volunteers to discuss how we can best inform branches about the main opportunities and threats arising from the NPPF. The discussion will also help inform the branch planning seminar on 2 May in Birmingham. If your branch has not yet booked a place at the seminar please do so by contacting Rosie Dixon at rosied@cpre.org.uk before the end of this week.

Heritage Angel Awards: the English Heritage Angel Awards 2012 is now open for nominations. The annual competition, backed by Andrew Lloyd Webber, rewards the efforts of local people in saving their heritage. So if your group has been involved in a heritage project, or you know someone who has, why not make a nomination. For how to apply go to: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/heritageangelawards>

Branches and Regional Groups

CPRE Yorkshire and Humber: Gerald Kells attended the regional group meeting on 18 April. There was discussion, among other things, of the impact of Green Belt reviews, particularly around Leeds, energy policy in relation to wind turbines and fracking and their up-coming energy event, the prospect of High Speed Rail in the region, NPPF campaigning as well as the developing Rural and Farming Network.

Friends of the Lake District: Shaun visited FLD to discuss future priorities and potential for joint working with the staff team. He was given an interesting tour showing some of the housing, business and wind energy developments that FLD, which represents CPRE in Cumbria, is facing.

CPRE London: Shaun and John had a meeting with branch trustees to discuss a possible joint project on urban policy and its relationship to countryside protection.

Staffing

Fiona Howie: congratulations to Fiona Howie and her husband Mike, who are the new, proud parents of baby Evelina (Evie) Violet, born on 16 April.

Mel Myers: congratulations are also due to Mel who gave birth to baby Freya last week.

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