



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Chairman's report, page 2 • Press and publicity, page 3 • Peterborough and Fenland reports, page 3
East and South Cambridgeshire reports, page 4 • Huntingdonshire report and Abbreviated annual accounts, page 5
Statutory information and contacts, page 6

Chairman's report

Alan James

This has been my first full year as Branch Chairman and the volume, range and complexity of meetings, issues and concerns that we have been faced with and are expecting continue to grow. Clearly, this could be a full-time role but that is not possible.

Our small team remains under pressure and our priorities must be to increase our active membership and add to our branch funding. In this respect it has been heartening to hear that CPRE nationally is developing a climate change policy based upon principles and have joined the Climate Alliance, while here in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough we have been seeking to bring climate, flood risk and air pollution to the fore in many of the development applications we are faced with. These are issues which really concern young people whom we must engage with and support.

We agree with Tom Fyans, Director of Campaigns and Policy, at National Office when at the Annual Conference he asked "Do we really have a planning system anymore?" and defined the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) a "developer's charter". Even local experts are telling me that "the planning system is broken". I also have a concern that in an era of "fake news" and social media, facts and the truth have become accepted as optional within the agencies of government as well as the development industry.

We experienced this with the A14(M) application for a "non-material change" from A-road to motorway when it became apparent that this was not just a change of signage as broadcast publicly. Farmers' concerns about access to their land had not been looked at in a truly practical manner. Concerns about additional signage, noise and pollution were dismissed with inaccurate responses and it was clear that £100m of council tax-payers' money had been used to fund a different outcome to that described in the original planning application and its public inquiry.

We experienced further obfuscation with the East-West Rail "consultation" where the corridor options were so wide as to be deliberately misleading, where there was no consideration at all of wider transport integration issues and where key locations such as County Wildlife Sites and Croxton Park had been omitted from the list of sensitive locations.

For the Hinxton Agritech Park a local district councillor discovered and published to parish councils a financial link between the applicant and the current party of government. Meanwhile our concerns were compounded by the record of the December 2018, "Westminster Social Policy Forum Keynote Seminar: Next steps for the Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor". The morning session of this seminar was chaired by Ms. Emma Fletcher, Managing Director of the applicant. In her opening remarks, Ms Fletcher stated: *"I'm leading a project at Smithson Hill based in South Cambridgeshire that has a reach through to the London Stansted/Cambridge Corridor, into the East of England, to the North through Peterborough and of course to the Cam-Ox Arc."* and *"I'm very pleased to be Chairing this first session, providing a different perspective based on our unique*

contribution to the region, with a cluster vital for the UK's Industrial Strategy." So, clearly, as we stated at the public inquiry into this now appealed application, it has more to do with getting a development foothold on the edge of the Cambridge Greenbelt than it has to do with facilitating agricultural research.

We have continued to contribute to the Cambridge-Oxford Arc discussion. We supported the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust legal case for a proper environmental impact assessment of the "expressway", another motorway in disguise. Sadly, this has been turned down by the courts. We contributed to the national response to the East-West rail consultation. We are pleased that climate change and pollution are being brought into consideration nationally when considering transport projects and we hope that the decision of the Welsh government to halt expansion of the M4 around Newport will be seen as a model to follow for the Arc. We continue to ask National Office to prioritise encouragement of a national economic debate about the whole concept of the Arc.

More locally, we have become very concerned by the actions of East Cambridgeshire District Council to withdraw from their Local Plan process in order to continue, against the examining Planning Inspector's advice, with their misuse of rural exception sites, branded as Community Land Trusts, for financial gain by the council's own development company.

We have continued to support the Great Ouse Valley Trust who are campaigning to have the river valley designated as a new AONB. With the help of Peterborough Environmental City Trust, we made a very successful contribution to the 2018 Green Clean with a visit from the reverse vending machine, which gained significant local radio and TV coverage.

We are in the process of updating our knowledge of and support for local food producers. One of our key supporters, Lizzie Bannister, researched the links between access to the countryside and health resulting in an excellent article which is published on our web site.

The AGM at St Ives Corn Exchange in October was again well attended. Prof. Paul Leinster of Cranfield University and former CEO of the Environment Agency gave an excellent presentation explaining the concept of Natural Capital and the work that he and others are doing as members of the Natural Capital Committee, to bring Natural Capital strongly into the planning and development process.

Our branch administrator Tracey Hipson continues to provide us with excellent support and I am pleased to report that due entirely to the careful expenditure control exercised by Tracey and Nick de Chenu, the branch remains in a stable financial position.

Ali Sargent continues to provide press advice and press releases. I have to thank Jean Prince who has been fronting the discussions with National Office about the forthcoming new web site design, who attended the National Conference on our behalf, has been monitoring the activities of the

continued on page 3 ►

Press and publicity

Ali Sargent

There's nothing quite like a really good picture story to excite the media. This proved the case in September when CPRE rolled out their "reverse vending machine" which distributes cash in return for empty bottles and cans. The Green Clean event, which we ran in conjunction with Peterborough Environment City Trust, attracted a huge amount of coverage, not just in Cambridgeshire but across the region.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc has also been of consuming interest to the local and regional media with Branch Chairman, Alan James and Regional Chairman, Michael Monk both airing our concerns about the development.

There has been the usual interest in Green Belt and major development issues in the print media. The Cambridge News and Ely Standard both carried lengthy obituaries for Shirley Fieldhouse, fitting tributes to someone who gave so much of her time and planning expertise to our branch.

We've also been helped on occasion this year by National Office. Graeme Willis appeared on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire to discuss the Agriculture Bill and Emma Marrington leapt into the breach to do an extended interactive interview on Look East about light pollution. We do need more people who are prepared to give media interviews. Chairman Alan James can only stretch himself so thinly! I would be happy to give potential spokespeople some media training if it would make the prospect less daunting.

Peterborough

Sally Jackson

Peterborough has been much in the limelight over the past few months. Our MP, Fiona Onasanya, lost her seat after a successful recall petition, the first parliamentarian to be removed from office. In June 2019 the local Labour Party candidate Lisa Forbes defeated the favourite Mike Greene from the Brexit Party by 683 votes.

The Brexit Party then immediately launched a formal legal challenge against the result, claiming corruption involving postal votes. For a short while we were the main news story! Meanwhile, things have also been exciting on the planning front!

The new Peterborough City Council Local Plan was submitted for examination on 26th March 2018 and was eventually found sound (subject to certain modifications). It was presented to a meeting of the full council on 24th July 2019.

The main concerns from the Inspector, in the Peterborough City Council Local Plan, were that East Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had a Memorandum of Co-operation dated 2013, in which the Peterborough Local Plan would include 2,500 dwellings from the identified need in East Cambs.

The East Cambs Local Plan was being examined at the same time, by a different Inspector. The same planning team had

Chairman's report

continued from page 2

Greater Cambridge Partnership and who continues to maintain our web site and strengthen our Twitter presence.

Finally, I must mention the saddest event of this year which was the rapid onset of illness and the resulting death of Shirley Fieldhouse on December 30th 2018. I am not going to repeat the obituary which we wrote at the time but I will just quote this from it:

"Shirley certainly "made a difference" to the county of Cambridgeshire, in particular, Cambridge city and South Cambridgeshire. Her considerable skills, determination and dedication have helped to ensure that much inappropriate development does not destroy precious farmland and countryside, and erode the enjoyment and amenity these assets bring to local residents." and say that, just as predicted in that obituary, everyone at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Branch of CPRE is missing Shirley for her unique skills and knowledge, her tenacious and energetic campaigning, and her love of our precious countryside.

The continuation of our efforts to protect that countryside, to combat climate change and to ensure healthy, vibrant rural communities within it will be our legacy to Shirley.

produced both plans. The East Cambs Inspector was concerned that these houses were not being included in their Local Plan and the Peterborough CC Inspector felt that the Memorandum was no longer enforceable! This meant that Peterborough could reduce some of its proposals and that East Cambs had to find more sites if it was to be found sound. In February 2019 East Cambs withdrew their Local Plan from the examination process. Meanwhile the Fenland Local Plan also became out of date in May 2019.

Fenland

Alan James

CPRE's involvement in planning activities in Fenland has been very quiet. At the time of the East/West Rail (E-W Rail) "consultation", we were approached by a local District Councillor to support the campaign to reopen the March to Wisbech rail line, much of whose route is still intact.

This is consistent with the CPRE national response to E-W Rail which called for an integrated approach to transport planning around Cambridge and across the county. We have

continued on back page ►

East Cambridgeshire

Alan James

We have been very active in East Cambridgeshire, not least because of the decision by the District Council to withdraw from the Local Plan process and revert to the 2015 Local Plan which does not have a demonstrable five-year land supply.

This resulted from the Council's questionable use of "rural exception sites" to be developed by the Council's wholly-owned trading company. These are basically mixed-use developments containing a small proportion of "affordable" housing and branded "community land trusts". To date CPRE has objected to sites in Haddenham (59 houses with 19 "affordable") and Kennett (500 houses with 150 "affordable"). The Planning Inspector for the Local Plan defined the Kennett application as unsound and asked the Council to withdraw it and the policy which made it possible. Unfortunately, both of these applications have been passed by the Council and not called in by the Secretary of State.

We are aware that others are in the pipeline.

This decision has opened the floodgates to speculative development. We have objected to further applications in Haddenham (110 houses and 40 houses). and are evaluating an application on farmland in Isleham (215 houses) which follows another passed earlier in the year for 125 houses. We are assisting a resident in Bottisham with a consultation about a proposed "retirement village", and reviewing an application for a further 38 houses in Kennett.

We are evaluating an application for a further 450 houses in Littleport. We fully expect further speculative developments to come forward in East Cambridgeshire given the situation with the Local Plan.

Finally, we have been asked to cooperate with Suffolk CPRE to prepare a response to the proposed Sunnica solar park, which promises to be one of, if not the, largest such development in the UK on farm land.

South Cambridgeshire

Alan James

In South Cambridgeshire, we welcomed the fact that the District Council has been able to deliver nearly 100 truly affordable houses in discrete developments in rural communities using a combination of government housing loan, actual community land trusts and other funding.

We are, however, concerned by the scale and approach to some of the other developments in the district and the momentum of the Cambridge-Oxford Arc.

There are concerns about changes to the development plans for Waterbeach, in particular the lack of joined up transport and infrastructure planning and concerns from the Environment Agency about waste water and flooding. We joined the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England in objecting in the strongest possible terms to the formal Amendment to the Planning Application for Waterbeach Barracks and Airfield Site. The intention to develop North Cambridge and move the existing sewage plant is marred by no clear statement about a location for the replacement plant. We cannot see where it could be located without using Green Belt or good farm land.

We objected to the application for a giant waste incinerator at Waterbeach within a few hundred metres of the planned development of thousands of homes and close to Denny Abbey. This application was refused but has now gone to appeal. We continue to support the Cambridge Without Incineration, CBWIN, group in opposing the appeal and have invited Waterbeach and CBWIN to participate in this year's Green Clean.

We objected last year to the so-called Agritech Park at Hinxton which was rejected on grounds that we fully supported. This went to appeal and we appeared at the public

inquiry where we reiterated our concerns for the Green Belt and pointed out that the site is within a few miles of the Chesterford Research Park which already has planning for 1 million sq. ft. of new research space and a history of agricultural research.

We objected to the application for the expansion of the Genome Campus because of its potential effects on Hinxton and the Green Belt as well as the loss of best and most versatile farm land for an associated 1,500 houses and remain concerned by the mooted "garden village" in the hills to the north of Chesterford. Although this is an Uttlesford, Essex matter, we believe it will have negative impact on the landscape viewed from Cambridgeshire as well as being reliant on services from Cambridge.

The lack of integration in the planning of public transport infrastructure around Cambridge came to the fore in the East-West rail "consultation" and we also raised the failure of the "consultation" to consider effects on County wildlife sites and on Croxton Park. All these points were noted in the national CPRE response to the "consultation". We are maintaining a watching brief on proposals to extend Whittlesford station. We objected to an application to build a major garage and showroom in Duxford at the northern end of the Duxford airfield runway.

We attended a workshop for stakeholders concerning plans by the Greater Cambridge Partnership to create a Citizens Assembly for Cambridge, and another workshop for statutory consultees, interest groups and service providers concerning the preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This was also hosted by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

We are concerned that with so many planning applications,

continued on page 5 ►

Huntingdonshire

Gareth Ridewood

The Local Plan for Huntingdonshire to 2036 was adopted in May. We continued to monitor local planning applications. In particular, we are alarmed at the number and scale of development proposals planned for Buckden where we have opposed several applications.

For example, in September we objected to an application for 230 houses outside the planning envelope north of Mill Road. In March we objected to a planning application for up to 340 homes east of Silver Street and were concerned that the proposed developments would have an adverse effect on the character of the landscape and setting of the village and potentially impact local wildlife.

We are dismayed at the proposed reduction in size of the Country Park that was planned for Alconbury Weald, Grange Farm, and we will continue to monitor this.

We raised concerns about Highways England's application to

reclassify the new A14 into motorway standard and the quality and accuracy of the information that has been made public.

We are currently reviewing the route consultation on the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet; our concern being that the road is being looked at in isolation and have called for a refocus on a properly integrated public transport system with East-West Rail at its core. We note that it is also now accepted by government that road transport is the largest source of climate change emissions in the UK and one of the largest sources of health damaging pollutants.

South Cambridgeshire

continued from page 3

appeals, consultations, workshops and campaigns going on, we may miss something important where we could provide a significant input. So, if you are able to contribute to our activities in any way, even if it is only to send us an informative email, please help.

Abbreviated receipts and payments accounts for the year ending 31st March

Nicholas de Chenu

	For the year ending 31st march 2019 £	For the year ending 31st march 2018 £
Receipts		
CPRE subscriptions received	9,230	9,219
Donations received	346	163
Interest received	87	38
Lottery receipts	173	173
Receipts from Training event	–	1,960
Total receipts for year	9,838	11,553
Payments		
Charitable activities	10,808	10,810
Governance	890	863
Cost of Training event	–	1,030
Total payments for the year	11,698	12,703
Excess of expenditure over receipts	1,862	1,150
Balance of Cash Reserves at the beginning of the year	32,570	33,720
Balance of Cash Reserves at the end of the year	30,708	32,570

The charity does not have any funds which are of a Restricted nature.

During the year to 31st March 2019 the charity received a steady flow of income from members' subscriptions to CPRE £9,230 (2018 £9,219), and donations of £346 (2018 £163). In the prior year we ran a very successful training seminar for people interested in planning issues, and in 2018 this raised £1,960 and it had associated costs of £1,030.

All other expenditure for charitable activities and governance remained steady £11,698 (2018 £11,673).

The net result for the year was an outflow of funds of £1,862 which reduced the cash reserves as at 31st March 2019 to £30,708 from £32,570 as at 31st March 2018.

The accounts have been independently examined by Staffords Chartered Accountants. Their full report is available on request.

About CPRE

We campaign for a beautiful and living countryside. We work to influence how we plan our towns and cities to make them better places to live and work, to ensure the countryside is protected for all to enjoy for now and future generations.

Our Patron is Her Majesty the Queen. Our President is Emma Bridgewater.

Nationally, we have around 60,000 members and a branch in every county. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning. CPRE is a Registered Charity (No. 1089685).

Please note the opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of individual contributors, or the editor, and do not necessarily represent the views of the branch or the national charity.

CPRE Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Branch

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Huntingdonshire

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Website Manager: Jean Prince

Fenland

continued from page 3

continued to monitor the River Great Ouse bank-raising which is the current Environment Agency (EA) response to the longer-term threat of widespread flooding of the Fens. The sea level rise of 1 metre by 2080 in the Wash projected by the EA is now widely thought to be optimistic because it is based on 2014 climate change predictions.

Cambridgeshire's agriculture is such a large proportion of the UK's food production that it is in the national interest that we support the EA in ensuring that flood protection of the Fens is adequately funded and that planning decisions upstream do not add to that risk.

Keeping in Touch

CPRE Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are happy to help you. As well as this report and our printed newsletter, there are lots of ways to keep in touch with us. Please contact our office: Tel: 01480 396698.

If you have an email address, sign up for our occasional e-bulletin: office@cprecambs.org.uk

Our website is frequently updated with both local and national news and issues. Have a look and tell us what you think: www.cprecambs.org.uk.

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 Follow us on Twitter: @CPRECambs.

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