



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
Standing up for your countryside

# FIELD WORK

## Winter 2017

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Shropshire Hills AONB - Shutterstock

## Beauty betrayed: the threat to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

**A** new report published by CPRE reveals that our AONBs are being subjected to a dramatic increase in major housing applications (over ten units), with a corresponding leap in the number of units approved and the amount of land lost.

Unlike the National Parks, which have their own planning authorities, AONBs rely on local authorities and planning inspectors for their protection. But the sheer weight of applications and appeals means that large and inappropriate housing developments are getting through as local authorities struggle under pressure from developers. *Beauty Betrayed: How reckless housing development threatens England's AONBs* is based on new research carried out by a group of independent consultants commissioned by CPRE using data from planning consultants Glenigan. The findings show that since 2012, 15,485 housing units have been approved within AONBs, with an increase of 82% between 2012-13 and 2016-17. Decisions are currently pending on a further 12,741 units in AONBs. Based on the 2016-17 approval rate (64%), this could mean another 8,154 units, resulting in a total of 23,639 new housing units being approved in AONBs since 2012-13.

The character of AONBs could also be damaged by development immediately outside their boundary, in the area known as the 'setting' - land up to 500 metres from the edge of an AONB, or 2 kilometres for developments of over 500 units. Since 2012, 11,879 housing units have been approved near to AONBs, increasing by

161% from 1,327 in 2012-13 to 3,459 in 2016-17. In the past five years, annual applications for major housing development on land adjacent to AONBs have more than doubled, from 45 applications in 2012-13 to 105 in 2016-17.

### The lost landscapes

The amount of AONB land approved for housing each year has increased five-fold since 2012 - from 41.06 hectares (ha) in 2012-2013 to 211.93 ha in 2016-2017, based on 190 applications (totalling 7,807 units) where site area was known. Based on this information, 435 ha of AONB land have been approved for housing in the past five years. However, this is likely to be a major underestimate of the total loss, as our researchers did not have access to site area information for another 200 schemes totalling 7,678 units. By using the housing densities of the schemes where site areas were known we can extrapolate the overall land area approved for housing in the past five years. This calculation suggests that 792 ha of AONB land has been approved for development since 2012.

While similar extrapolations suggest that around two-thirds (533 ha) of land approved for housing in AONBs was on previously developed 'brownfield', our calculations showed that these schemes had been planned at a density of just 16 dwellings per hectare (dph) - an incredibly inefficient use of nationally

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## FIELDWORK

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CPRE works locally and nationally to stand up for the countryside: to protect it from the threats it faces, and to shape its future for the better.

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## Beauty betrayed: the threat to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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important landscapes. We believe this shows why AONBs are generally not suitable for large scale housing development. The lack of existing infrastructure, and the difficulty of planning large developments without causing major harm to scenic beauty, means it is rarely possible to achieve anything close to the national average brownfield building density of 37dph.

The area of land approved for housing in the setting of AONBs increased nine-fold between 2012-13 and 2016-17, from 12 to 110 ha (based on 114 schemes totalling 4,390 units where the site area was known). 60% of this was greenfield land. Based on this information, we can extrapolate that at least 566 ha of land in the setting of AONBs has been approved for housing. In total, the past five years has seen housing approved within and around our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty that would cover 1,358 ha of land at an average density of less than 20dph. This constitutes an appallingly careless use of an area of land comparable to England's largest lake, Windermere (1,473 ha), and almost the size of our smallest AONB, the Isles of Scilly, in its entirety (1,600 ha).

### Developer pressure on AONBs

In the past five years, applications for major housing schemes (over ten units) within AONBs have doubled (up 105%), from 80 applications in 2012-13 to 164 in 2016-17. The amount of units proposed increased from 2,530 in 2012-2013, to 6,633 in 2016-2017. However, large-scale housing development is not uniformly distributed across the 34 English AONBs. Housing pressure within AONB areas – defined by the number of applications, approvals and housing units – is most intense in the South East and South West.

## “AONB threats are likely to be exacerbated if Government proposals prioritising housing in areas of high demand are implemented”

Here, just eight AONB areas (Cotswolds, High Weald, Cornwall, North Wessex Downs, Dorset, Chilterns, Kent Downs and South Devon) accounted for 74% of all housing applications and 79% of all approved housing units from 2012-2017. These areas have seen a significant increase in the average number of units built each year - in the High Weald AONB, an average

## “Positive solutions to providing housing within these special areas will ideally come from local people themselves”

of 311 units a year were approved during 2012-2015, almost trebling to 895 between 2015-2017. This is only likely to be exacerbated if Government proposals prioritising housing in areas of high demand are implemented.

The number of appeals against decisions to reject major housing developments has grown within AONBs. Government Planning Inspectors have refused a significant proportion of these - with the trend growing as the NPPF has bedded in - which suggests that many local authorities could be taking a stronger line on resisting housing developments in AONBs. In the past five years, the success rate for appeals has gone down from 71% in 2012-2013 to 24% in 2016-2017 – but a total of 1,882 housing units have been approved at appeal.

### Our recommendations to Government

Based on the new research we are making a number of recommendations to the Government. Firstly, it must include targets in the promised 25-year Environment Plan to enhance AONBs and ensure that development does not damage landscape quality. This would emphasise the importance of AONBs to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of the nation and set out how they will be better protected. Crucially, AONBs must be given a statutory right to be consulted on major development proposals in their area, so that their advice is fully considered by the local authority when determining a planning application. This could be achieved by making additional resources available to AONBs so that they can be even stronger champions for these outstanding landscapes.

We're calling on the Government to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to state a presumption against proposals for large housing developments in AONBs. The framework should also make clear that, as with Green Belt, that demand for housing or the lack of a five-year supply is unlikely to justify large housing developments in AONBs. The NPPF should also incorporate the statutory 'duty of regard' to the purpose of AONBs, and make it the overriding factor in decision-making.

These measures could help ensure that our AONBs continue to help conserve and enhance natural beauty, while allowing rural industries and local communities to thrive. CPRE is particularly keen that positive solutions to providing housing within these special areas will ideally come from local people themselves, through community-led housing schemes and neighbourhood plans.

**Find out more:** Read the CPRE's summary and the full research report at [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)

# BREAKthrough

How our work is making a difference

## Taking back the tracks

**Friends of the Peak District, who represent CPRE in the National Park, welcomed Derbyshire County Council's October decision to consult on a traffic regulation order (TRO) that would ban off-road vehicles from the iconic Jacob's Ladder lane in Stoney Middleton.**

The arguments for a full TRO between the Nook in Stoney Middleton and New Road to Eyam were all made forcefully in the council's report, and the Friends have long argued the lane is completely unsuitable for off-roading as part of their Take Back the Tracks campaign. Once a cobbled route on which families with small children felt safe, the experience of its peace and quiet has long been denied to local residents and National Park visitors due to speeding vehicles suddenly appearing round blind bends on

a steep hill. With no refuges on the narrow passage few walkers dare use it, while severe damage to the lane has left tree roots exposed and created dangerous ruts.

The Friends have campaigned alongside Stoney Middleton Parish Council and Peak District Green Lanes Alliance, and now look forward to responding to the statutory consultations that are required before the TRO can be made. Earlier this year, campaigners celebrated when the Peak District National Park Authority confirmed a traffic regulation order for Washgate, banning use of the lane by all motorised vehicles at all times. Lying within the White Peak near Hollinsclough, Washgate provides a tranquil and intimate walk that descends steeply on both sides of the River Dove, crossing it through

a distinctive and charming ford and on a Grade 2 listed pack horse bridge. The ban, which came into force in July, will allow walkers, horse riders and cyclists to enjoy all that Washgate has to offer.

However, two historic named trials, the Bemrose Trial and the Reliance Cup Trial which use local green lanes and roads, will still be allowed to take place once each year providing their activities can be sustained on this sensitive route. Friends of the Peak District fully support these exceptions as the trials have been part of the local history of the area – the Bemrose commenced in 1921 and the Reliance Cup in 1911. They therefore precede the designation of the National Park, and are tests of skill rather than of speed and noise.

## A new champion for the Green Belt

**October saw the launch of an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the London Metropolitan Green Belt, following effective lobbying from the London Green Belt Council (LGBC) and CPRE branches.**

MPs at the inaugural meeting agreed to develop cross-party policy thinking and a plan to influence the debate on housing and planning policy. The objective of the group is to "protect the capital's precious Green Belt and achieve sustainable development". Conservative MP Crispin Blunt MP was elected as the group's chairman, with Labour peer and architect Lord Rogers serving as co-chairman. Richard Knox-Johnston, chairman of the London Green Belt Council and

vice-chairman of CPRE Kent, said: "There is far too much unhelpful propaganda being used to force encroachment into this important national resource, which provides health and well-being to the people of London and surrounding communities."

Lord Rogers highlighted some of the issues the group will need to tackle: "There is an abundance of brownfield land which can and should be developed. Land-banking is threatening both the provision of affordable homes for key workers and the protection of the Green Belt. I hope the group will contribute to radical and innovative thinking in this area."

Research from CPRE branches has been instrumental in the

formation of the group, and continues to provide it with an evidence base. September saw the publication of the LGBC's review of current threats, *The accelerating loss of London's Green Belt – who is to blame?*, supported by work from CPRE volunteers in Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, London and Surrey. Findings showed that the number of sites under threat from development more than doubled between July 2016 and July 2017, from 203 to 443. The county with the greatest number of threats is Hertfordshire (44,974 houses), and the council with the greatest number of threats is Central Bedfordshire (17,100).

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## Current issues

### Public polled on planning

A YouGov poll commissioned by the CPRE shows that just 5% of people think that the Government is doing a 'good' job of determining local housing needs. Forty-two percent of respondents - out of a total sample of 4,931 polled in late summer - believe the Government is doing a 'bad' job. Of the Conservative voters polled, just 8% believe the Government is doing a good job. The poll found that the most common reasons for supporting new development was local need for more housing (33%), and the use of suitable sites, such as derelict sites or unused buildings (31%). The most common reasons for opposing new housing developments were increased pressure upon infrastructure and local services (36%), and the loss of green space (30%).

### Support for farming

The 2017 NFU Farmer Favourability Survey, the first since the UK's vote to leave the EU, has revealed that almost seven in ten people have a 'favourable' or 'very favourable' view of farmers, and two-thirds regularly look for British food when shopping.

The NFU said the findings powerfully demonstrate the public's strong recognition of British farming's contribution to the country, sending a "strong message" to MPs and decision makers. Out of 2,000 adults surveyed in England and Wales, earlier this summer, 90% thought farming was important to the UK economy while around three quarters agree that farmers should receive assistance towards protecting the environment and ensuring a fair standard of living.

# NEWSroundup

Keeping you on top of countryside developments

## A long-term plan for landscape?

**The Government's long-awaited 25 year environment plan presents a major opportunity to dramatically enhance England's landscapes and people's access to them. CPRE recently joined the Campaign for National Parks and the National Trust to discuss how to make the most of the landscape opportunities.**

To recognise the importance of landscape within the plan, we believe it should include the following goal: *Everyone is able to experience and benefit from improvements in the character, beauty and distinctive qualities of our landscapes. These improvements will ensure our landscapes are more resilient and better able to adapt and contribute to societal challenges, including the impacts of climate change.*

Together, we came up with a number of possible ways to significantly improve the character, beauty and distinctive qualities of our rural and urban landscapes. Firstly, re-directing

public investment in agriculture could reward the provision of public benefits, including landscape, and access to landscape. The local prioritisation of this funding should be informed by National Character Area profiles, and in particular Statements of Environmental Opportunity, the National Historic Landscape Characterisation Map and the management plans for designated landscapes. This would ensure that funding is targeted to deliver the best value for money and maximise public benefits.

The 25 year plan could also support the improvement of landscapes around towns and cities, including Green Belts, which offer most benefit to the public and ensure people can easily access both local green space and larger, more remote areas. Better integration of landscape considerations into Government policies could make sure it better informs national, sub-national and local decision making. For example making it a requirement in the National

Planning Policy Framework for the development of local plans and local decision making to be informed by Landscape Character Assessments, and making it a requirement for the management plans for designated areas to be informed by National Character Area profiles.

To see if measures work it was also felt that the plan should include steps to assess change within our landscapes. This could include indicators on usage/visits data, and assessments of change in land cover and the extent of developed areas. In light of our emphasis on National Character Areas consideration should also be given to requiring the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) data to be reported for these areas. With no sign of the 25 year plan as *Fieldwork* went to press, our organisations remain ready to take an active role in helping Government to develop and implement proposals such as these.

## Saving small farms

**August saw the publication of CPRE's new Food and Farming Foresight report, *Uncertain Harvest*, which aimed to ignite a wider debate about the issue of disappearing small farms. The report gives a range of reasons as to why farms are being lost, why this matters and suggests what we need to do about it. Author Graeme Willis argued that the starting point was the need to consider that a diverse mix of farm sizes and farmers managing the land is central to the natural environment and thriving rural communities.**

Academic research for England and Wales shows that we lost 128,000 farms of 296,000 from 1950 to 1980 - over 40%. More recent data from DEFRA, for England alone, shows that from 2005 to 2015 we lost a fifth

of all farms and nearly a third of those under 50 hectares (120 acres) - from a much lower base of 132,000 farms. If these trends continue - at a loss rate of over 2,800 a year - we might lose most, if not all, smaller farms by the mid-2040s. This means we are losing key types and sizes of farms that create the rich mosaic of our landscapes.

The evidence we have, especially from the important report from Mike Winter and Matt Lobley at Exeter University in 2016, shows that the potential impacts could affect a wealth of issues: rural jobs, rural services, the relations between farms and rural communities, the character of the countryside, and the 'conservation capital' - the hedges, meadows and woods that are richly present on many small farms and important for nature.

*Uncertain Harvest* calls on the Government to act now to fill this evidence gap by publishing better data and analysis so that the debate can begin and be properly informed. Such evidence should ultimately shape a new English farming policy that factors in farm diversity as part of a funding model which delivers greater environmental benefits. Smaller farmers should be given a strong voice in the distribution of local funding which should encourage new and younger farmers across the sector. The report also recommended that an independent commission should review how more effective regulation could make markets fairer, and consumers better-informed, to help ensure our smaller farms can be economically sustainable.

## dates of note

### Buckinghamshire Rural Affairs Group Annual Conference

This year's theme is *Responding to Rural Change*. Speakers include CPRE's Head of Government and Rural Affairs, Belinda Gordon.

Friday 24th November 2017, 9.30am (for 10am start) - 2.00pm, Great Kingshill Village Hall, HP15 6DW  
Book for this free event via [www.cprebucks.org.uk/events](http://www.cprebucks.org.uk/events)

### CPRE Northwest Regional Group Climate Change Lecture

Professor Kevin Anderson, Deputy-Director of the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research.  
Tue 23rd January, 2018, 10am (for 10.30 start), Friends' Meeting House, Manchester  
A free event, but please register via [www.cprelancashire.org.uk/events](http://www.cprelancashire.org.uk/events)

### No Finer Life on tour

CPRE branches are hosting performances of the hit play about post-war rural life written by The Archers' farming expert Graham Harvey.  
Sun 18th February, Medway Community Centre, Bakewell;  
Wed 21st Feb, Home Farm Barn, Farleigh Wallop, Hampshire; Tue 27th Feb, Tarporley Community Hall, Cheshire;  
Search for 'No Finer Life' on [www.eventbrite.co.uk/](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/) for booking details.

### Heritage Training - for Parish Councils and Amenity Groups

Sussex Preservation Society host a seminar with Bob Kindred, of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation.  
20 March, 10am - 1pm, Haughley Park Barn, Haughley, Suffolk  
Free to Parish Councils and Societies which are members of CPRE. Contact Linda Cockburn at the SPS office for further details. Tel: 01787 247179 Email: [sps@suffolksociety.org](mailto:sps@suffolksociety.org)

## A27 plans a 'dangerous precedent'

**October saw CPRE join eight other national transport and conservation organisations, including the Woodland Trust, RSPB and Wildlife Trusts, in signing a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, about the devastating impact of the A27 Arundel bypass proposals.**

The letter recognised the challenges of addressing issues concerning traffic volume on the A27 but advised that all three options in the current public consultation would involve unacceptable development within the South Downs National Park and the loss of a significant amount of ancient woodland. It pointed out that no option has been presented which avoids this significant harm, which is a major oversight and in

contradiction of the Roads Investment Strategy objective of delivering no net loss of biodiversity by 2020.

The campaigners continued that the situation sets a dangerous precedent and goes against Government guidance to avoid major development in National Parks and to avoid routing traffic through them. They added that it is in stark contrast to the announcement on the A27 East of Lewes, where a Selveston bypass was recently dropped not least because of its impact on the South Downs National Park. The letter concluded: "A national asset should be protected for its own sake: appropriate mitigation must be an integral requirement of any major development affecting it. If a road proposal brings insufficient benefit

to justify the cost of this mitigation, then it should not go ahead." CPRE's chief executive Crispin Truman added: "Our research has found new roads generate new traffic and lead to yet further congestion. Highways England must go back to the drawing board and come up with a better solution."

CPRE Sussex submitted its response to the Arundel Bypass consultation in October, outlining their concerns for mature woodland, the Arun floodplain, tranquillity and dark night skies, as well as the National Park. The branch also highlighted that the iconic view of Arundel and Arundel Castle would be heavily impacted, and called for an integrated mobility strategy to be developed for the South Coast to reduce the demand for car use.

## Fracking banned in Scotland

**Six years since the prospect of drilling for unconventional oil and gas was first mooted, the Scottish Government has announced a ban on fracking. The October announcement follows a public consultation earlier this year with over 60,000 responses, the second biggest number of people to respond to a single issue in Scottish history.**

The Scottish Government has committed to a debate and vote on the ban in parliament, likely to be held after the autumn recess. The message from this announcement is emphatic: England is now on its own, with both Scotland and Northern Ireland having banned fracking outright and a moratorium being in place in Wales since 2015. CPRE's recently updated position is that the UK Government should

review its policy in England, and adopt a moratorium on all shale gas applications until it can be proven that expansion of this industry would not damage the English landscape, and not threaten the chances of meeting our climate change targets.

Following the adoption of our new Policy Guidance Note (PGN), CPRE has been campaigning with the Fit to Frack Coalition of NGOs, and held meetings with civil servants at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to learn more about the Government's position. Prior to the election, the Conservative Manifesto pledged to introduce a new shale gas regulator and a change in regulations regarding permitted development (PD) rights.

In October, CPRE joined organisations including

Greenpeace and WWF UK in writing an open letter to Energy Secretary Greg Clark requesting answers on the climate impact of fracking on the UK's commitments to the Paris climate agreement. The letter states climate change is the "most urgent and complex threat" to the British countryside today and that fracking "risks undermining further deployment" of renewables and energy efficiency measures, and jeopardising progress towards carbon reduction. The letter also highlighted that the most recent government poll showed a record low of just 16% of the public supports fracking due to concerns over local impacts such as air pollution and increased traffic.

**Find out more:** Read the latest at [www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/energy-and-waste/shale-gas](http://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-do/energy-and-waste/shale-gas)

## Current issues

### Supporting Bucks communities

CPRE Buckinghamshire has teamed up with a local group called SHAVE (Sustainable Housing for Aylesbury Vale and the Environment). SHAVE hopes to build on their victory in getting Bovis Homes to delay removal of hedgerows in Aston Clinton, until after the nesting season in an attempt to protect the habitat of the red-listed house sparrow.

The branch is working with SHAVE to help ensure development truly accounts for the needs of local residents and minimises damage to the countryside through prioritising brownfield sites. Particular sites of concern include the Woodlands development for 1,100 houses and Hampden Fields development for 3,000 houses.

CPRE volunteers are also supporting Oving residents in opposing a planning application to build a new estate of 21 houses at Stone View, within the setting of the Oving Conservation Area and in an Area of Attractive Landscape (a local landscape designation used by Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe District Council). Following a Planning Committee meeting in May 2017 the case has been deferred pending legal advice. CPRE Bucks has also objected to a development for 10 houses within the Quanton-Wing Hills Area of Attractive Landscape, in nearby Whitchurch. CPRE Bucks believes both of these valued landscapes should be protected and that development would damage the open setting and character of the area.

**Find out more:** Visit [www.cprebucks.org.uk](http://www.cprebucks.org.uk) for the latest planning news. If you would like to get updates from SHAVE and get involved in their work contact: [toomanyhouses17@gmail.com](mailto:toomanyhouses17@gmail.com) or visit their website [www.shave2017.co.uk](http://www.shave2017.co.uk)

# letter from the field



Words from local campaigners

## CPRE Bedfordshire volunteer Shelly Dennison writes on the importance of local food for a living countryside

### Dear reader,

When I started volunteering with CPRE Bedfordshire earlier this year, one of the things I was tasked with was sorting through the archives. Some of the most interesting folders were those full of material from our Living Countryside Awards which were launched in 2008. The awards recognise individuals, organisations and projects which enhance Bedfordshire's environment and rural communities. Many of the stories involved food in some way and included producers, farm shops, community gardens growing fruit and vegetables, orchards concentrating on local and heritage varieties and even, in the most recent round of awards, a vineyard!

After my induction day at national office I went home with a large pile of reading – including some of the From Field to Fork reports which were fascinating. I learned a lot about the connections between local food, the local economy, the local community and the local environment. Looking back at some of our CPRE Mark winners with new appreciation, it's clear that many of them show how interconnected good local food and benefits to the environment, economy and community are.

A really good example is Mrs Middleton Ltd which was awarded a CPRE Mark in 2014 in the Sustainable Enterprise category. Mrs Middleton Ltd was created by two sisters and produces high quality cold-pressed rape seed oil. They are committed to farming in a way that enhances biodiversity on the land. Behind the business was the realisation that many visitors to the countryside have little knowledge of how healthy, good quality foodstuffs are produced. The oil bottles show a map reference to indicate in exactly which field the seed was grown and bear a Made in Bedfordshire label.

The oil is already being used in top restaurants and is sold in farm shops and delis across the country. It can also be ordered through their website, which offers a wide range of mouthwatering sounding recipes showcasing their products. The enterprise has diversified into flour, which is ground locally at Stotfold Mill.

Back in 2009 Barton Hill Farm, the family farm where the rape seed is grown, was awarded a CPRE Mark in the Landscape Improvement category for their Songs and Plovers project which was designed to attract birds and encourage wildflowers and other wildlife.

Stotfold Mill, where the flour is ground, has also received the CPRE Mark twice! The first was in 2009 in the Landscape Improvement category for work on the Mill Meadows Nature Reserve which improved biodiversity, environmental protection and community access. In 2010 the award was in the Historic Buildings and Landscape category for restoration work to the mill itself, making it once more fully operational and open to visitors, including schools and community groups.

The thing that stood out for me was that around the products produced by Mrs Middleton Ltd are awards which recognise not only food production but biodiverse landscapes and historic buildings. Education also comes through strongly, whether it's school groups learning about the history of milling or consumers learning about where their food comes from. Local food production turns out to be about much more than the finished product.

The awards will next be run in 2018 so we will soon be on the lookout for more inspiring local food stories from across Bedfordshire.

**Find out more:** Be inspired by previous Living Countryside winners at <http://www.cprebeds.org.uk/awards>



# GOODideas

Learning from each other

## Awards for innovative projects in Hampshire

**Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson Esq, presented the 11th annual CPRE Hampshire Countryside Awards in September, in a celebration of good ideas from communities, volunteers, young people and businesses.**

In the Community and Voluntary category sponsored by Southern Co-op, the Hordle Environment Group, Lymington was highly commended for the way local residents have come together to volunteer their time to manage and improve the wildlife value and visual amenity of two residential areas in Lymington. Activities include tree, hedgerow, wildflower and bulb planting, ditch clearance, restoration of a small hazel coppice, and the creation of wildlife habitat homes. Gemma Lacey,

Director Sustainability & Communications at Southern Co-op said: "Hordle Environment Group perfectly demonstrates the power of local community action, and the positive difference a group of like-minded people can make to their local environment and community. The project is something that can be easily replicated by communities across Hampshire and I hope will provide inspiration to others to care for and value our precious green spaces and the wildlife that inhabit them."

The winner of the Rural Enterprise category sponsored by Hildon Mineral Water was Holden Farm at Cheriton, near Alresford for its camping enterprise established to diversify the farming business of a fourth-generation farmer.

At the campsite, in the South Downs National Park, visitors can learn about nature, enjoy the incredible landscape and watch a farm at work. Debbie Jones, Executive Director at Hildon said: "Holden Farm Camping is at heart a very simple campsite offering families a low-cost way of coming to enjoy the countryside. The judges were impressed with the way that the business has faced up to the challenges that an influx of people presents. Rebecca Corbett has demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and creativity in making sure that her new business enterprise makes a minimal impact on the beautiful local countryside - especially through her passion for re-cycling, while at the same time bringing benefits to the local economy and the neighbouring community.

## Researching flood resilience in Cumbria

**Friends of the Lake District, who represent CPRE in Cumbria, have agreed to host an exciting new research project on their land at High Borrowdale in a partnership with the University of Cumbria and with the support of funding provided by United Utilities.**

The University will be conducting research into how the characteristically steep fell sides of Cumbria can best be stabilised, thus reducing surface run-off and landslide events, particularly during Storm events, in an effective and environmentally friendly way. As part of a three year trial they will investigate the effectiveness of a material called Sisal in slope stabilisation. Unlike plastic based alternatives, which are currently widely used, Sisal has

the potential to be significantly more effective, as it is water absorbent, and significantly more environmentally friendly as it is made from natural, biodegradable materials.

The study will also compare the impact of using Sisal for this purpose to other natural materials such as coir and jute. The trial will run over three years and be led by Dr Lois Mansfield of the University of Cumbria. Regular photographic monitoring work will also be carried out by Friends of the Lake District volunteers. If this trial is successful, this best practice will be rolled out to land managers across the Lake District and Cumbria. The Friends hope that this will be at the leading edge of research that would help inform actions relating to flood recovery and climate change mitigation.

They will be contributing not only the use of their property, time and volunteers' time in monitoring, but also money kindly donated by members to their Flood Recovery Appeal.

The first week of September also saw Friends of the Lake District launch their Great Landscapes Week with a packed programme of events and the publication of *Why Landscape Matters; a Landscape Charter for Cumbria and the Lake District*. The Charter has been created to explain why landscape matters to everyone, and highlight work towards supporting a living, working, wildlife friendly and culturally rich landscape in Cumbria. Find out more about the Charter at <https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/why-landscape-matters>

### Scoping HS2 in Cheshire

CPRE Cheshire and Mid-Cheshire Against HS2 organised a walk on 7th July, led by geologist Ros Todhunter, enabling members to see the signs in the local landscape indicating the subsidence that is a consequence of the Mid-Cheshire Brine Field's underlying geology.

Eddisbury MP Antoinette Sandbach secured a special debate in the House of Commons wherein she highlighted the findings of the geological report by TerraConsult, and called for the route to be realigned owing to the significant extra cost of routing the line across the brine field. The branch is asking why HS2 has ignored the report, which warns of the potential for the rapid development of significant ground movement and subsidence in the Middlewich to Northwich section under the weight and vibration of trains.

CPRE Cheshire and Lancashire branches have submitted a joint response to the HS2 Phase 2b draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultation, which sets out the methodology proposed for determining the likely environmental impacts. Both branches regard the scope of the EIA as too limited, due to their inadequate consideration of alternative options. They are calling for an up-to-date analysis of east to west rail options to support improved connectivity within the North and to support rail freight from the port of Liverpool. They believe the Government should focus investment on a proper transport 'network', providing cross-country links to help the city-regions link together, rather than a system that simply links London to all major towns.

**Find out more:** Read the joint branch response at <http://tinyurl.com/ChesLancsHS2>.

## Current issues

### Shrewsbury Relief road

Local campaigners in Shrewsbury have used CPRE's national research to challenge the business case for the town's North West Relief Road (NWRR). The research behind CPRE's *End of the road* report, published in spring, concluded that new roads should be built as a last resort after all other options have been fully implemented. Dave Green, of Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth, argued that CPRE's study was "another blow to those who propose building the NWRR", adding: "According to Shropshire Council the NWRR would reduce traffic on Smithfield Road by three per cent, we have always said that this is optimistic and that any benefit would not last long, this report confirms our stance. If Shropshire Council want to proceed they will need to find at least £21m of the cost locally with no evidence that this will ease congestion or benefit the local economy, there has to be better ways of spending this money".

### Tackling rural crime in Dorset

CPRE Dorset has joined a range of organisations, including the NFU, CLA and Environment Agency, in a new partnership aimed at combatting crime in the countryside. Representatives from partner organisations and the rural community teamed up with Dorset Police's Rural Crime Team to launch the partnership. Police Constable Claire Dinsdale, rural crime co-ordinator, said: "It is vital we work with partners and members of the public to share information, ideas, best practice, concerns and suggestions to tackle rural crime. Poaching, fly-tipping and criminal damage can have a huge impact on rural communities."

# stepbystep

## Guide to good campaigning

### Improving rural design

**CPRE Northamptonshire has recently updated and extended the Rockingham Forest Trust's Design Guide so that it applies to the whole of the county. The guide's analysis allows the necessary links to be made between building design and countryside character, and provides principles which will be relevant to rural parts of most counties. Its purpose is to identify ways in which new development can be designed to harmonise with and enhance local character.**

Today, the distinctive character of settlements within the county is threatened by inappropriate development, which all too often has resulted in standardised suburban design solutions. With recent planning decisions failing to take adequate account of this rich heritage, the Guide aims to create a presumption in favour of encouraging change which must contribute positively to the character of the area if the unique beauty of the county is to survive.

In the foreword to their Northamptonshire Countryside Design Guide, outgoing branch Chairman Sir Paul Hayter explained the thinking behind the initiative: "For the countryside to prosper some new development is important, so CPRE seeks to encourage the right kind of building in suitable places. New building does not have to follow old patterns but it does at least need to fit in with the distinctive vernacular style of Northamptonshire."

Estates of new houses which could have been built anywhere in England are unlikely to improve the character of

the county. We hope that this Design Guide will assist planning authorities, parish councils and developers to create a built environment of which the county can be proud".

#### 1 Apply the planning context

This Design Guide has been prepared to be in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which places great emphasis on good design and local distinctiveness. The NPPF states that: "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and history, reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping." The Government's planning practice guidelines on design, revised on 6 March 2014, state that "distinctiveness is what often makes a place special and valued" and that "good design interprets and builds on historic character, natural resources and the aspirations of local communities".

#### 2 Understand landscape setting

The landscape around village and town edges is particularly important as it delineates a settlement and integrates it within the wider countryside setting. In the landscape immediately around settlements there are more enclosed areas of

pasture, with smaller field sizes, a better defined hedge structure, a greater number of trees and overall a more intimate character, than in the open countryside. The linear form of many villages creates an end-on perspective, which makes them unobtrusive in the landscape.

Small open areas and landscape features create variety and soften the appearance of village centres. Mature trees provide landmarks, break up the skyline and define spaces. Stone walls and native hedgerows form attractive links between properties and provide continuous enclosure along street frontages. In many settlements large open areas – including churchyards, enclosed pasture and stream-side meadows – provide a continuation of the surrounding agricultural landscapes.

#### 3 Consider settlement pattern

Character analysis at this level is relevant both in the design of larger developments and in ensuring that individual buildings are appropriately positioned in relation to existing street frontages. Topography is an important factor which historically has determined the form of the county's settlements and limited their expansion. The containment of the built form at the same elevation, set within mature landscapes, ensures that settlements sit comfortably within the wider countryside, particularly where traditional buildings still form the settlement's edges. Open land in village centres creates variety within the street scene and frames views into the open countryside.





Carefully planned development can blend in with existing village vernacular.

## 4 Harmonise styles with surroundings

A knowledge of the traditional building styles of the Northamptonshire countryside is essential if new development is to be designed to respect its context. Typically there is a mixture of house types and styles within settlements, but they often share a number of common features. It is the relatively small palette of materials and techniques traditionally used in the countryside and the variations between the character areas which ensure that buildings of different ages and styles sit harmoniously together.

Walling and roofing materials should be selected which are traditionally used in the area in general, with local variations in particular settlements. Windows and doors are an important element in the overall design of a building, so careful consideration should be given to the type, size, position and details.

## 5 Assess design implications for landscape

A design and access statement, which is usually required with

all planning applications, is a structured way of assessing the characteristics of a particular site and demonstrating how they have been taken into account in developing specific design principles. Development proposals should seek to sustain and enhance the wider countryside setting by contributing to the conservation and enhancement of landscape features; maintaining or improving footpath and bridleway links to the wider countryside; taking account of the impact of new development on prominent views; and maintaining vistas of important features such as church spires or landmark buildings.

Creating new landscape features which reflect the traditional patterns will soften and enclose new settlement-edge development, integrating it with the surrounding landscape and providing both visual and ecological links. Maintaining or re-creating a 'sense of arrival' along approach roads into villages can be achieved through the planting of groups or avenues of trees. Landscaping within new development should be used to create interest and integrate with the immediate surroundings and the wider countryside by conserving existing features and habitats

through appropriately designed site layouts and landscaping.

## 6 Use design to enhance settlement character

New development can provide an opportunity to enhance views of the settlement edge from the countryside, while providing a variety of routes and pedestrian links to the existing settlement is essential to reduce car use and fully integrate new areas. Layouts should be designed to reduce the visual impact of the car, with parking provision screened or hidden.

Creating a sense of place and focal points in larger new developments may involve incorporating a variety of spaces, with buildings enclosing streets, squares and courtyards, or positioned to provide landmarks and vistas. New development should be designed to achieve a sense of community by including the creation of a pleasant and safe environment for people to meet and socialise.

CPRE Northamptonshire hopes its Design Guide will be a reminder of the county's distinctive character, improve understanding of its built character and show how new buildings can be designed to respect tradition. Local communities and Parish Councils can use it as a reference point for commenting on planning applications and formulating their own Neighbourhood Plan. Developers are also encouraged to use the guide to help development appraisals and prepare planning applications which respect the traditions of the Northamptonshire countryside. Containing so many universal principles of good design, it is well placed to promote local distinctiveness around England, and help us all aspire to rural development that makes a positive contribution to countryside character.

**Find out more:** Read or download the Northamptonshire Countryside Design Guide at <https://www.cprenorthants.org.uk/countryside-design-guide>

# Current issues

## Needless Demand

CPRE's latest *Housing Foresight* report, *Needless Demand*, was published in September and analyses the current method that councils use to plan for local housing and what is being built as a result. It finds that 'housing need' and 'housing demand' are being conflated in planning policy, with the result that sheer numbers matter more than type and tenure of housing.

CPRE had hoped that the Government's new consultation on housing - *Planning for the right homes in the right places*, would clearly distinguish between genuine local needs and market demand, and in calling for a standardised approach to identifying the needs of different social groups, the Government took some steps towards this.

However, Trinley Walker, CPRE's housing policy adviser and the author of *Needless Demand*, said: "When the Government talks about meeting housing need, what it really means is catering for market demand in the overheated south east. Ministers have for too long shirked the responsibility to make sure we are building the right mix of housing across the country, including homes for first time buyers and social homes to rent".

*Needless Demand* shows how Government could split need and demand, and thereby tackle the housing crisis more effectively. It calls for clearer definitions of both to be enshrined in planning policy, and for councils to apply them to their housing targets and local plans. If the market cannot meet genuine local needs, CPRE believes that councils should be empowered by Government to buy land for new affordable housing.

**Find out more:** Download the paper at [www.cpre.org.uk/resources](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources)

### Devon wind farm defeated

A number of parish councils were relieved this summer when an appeal over an 11 turbine wind farm in Week St Mary was dismissed by the Secretary of State. CPRE Devon were pleased to have been able to add their weight to strong objections from Week St Mary Parish Council, and several neighbouring parish councils. At last year's public inquiry, the Planning Inspector reported to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, recommending that the appeal be dismissed on the grounds that "the harm that would be caused to the significance of designated heritage assets, the landscape in general, and the scenic beauty of the AONB, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits".

With regard to the Written Ministerial Statement of 18th June 2015, the Inspector stated that "the impacts identified by the affected local communities are not and cannot be made acceptable and that the proposal does not have the backing of the local community". On 26th July 2017 the Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector's recommendation and dismissed the appeal. Week St Mary Parish Council's original objection pointed out that 70 people had written to them objecting to the development, while 98% of parishioners were against the proposal. In terms of visual impact, the parish council pointed out that this type of development would industrialise an area of countryside where the only visible landmarks are small farm buildings and church towers. The argued the turbines would adversely affect public rights of way and dominate the local nature reserve recommended in The Times as one of Britain's best wildflower meadows.

# PARISHbeat

Effective solutions for your parish

## Defending local woodland

**C**PRE Worcestershire has backed parish council concerns over plans to build 50 holiday lodges and a reception building in woodland outside Malvern. The proposals, submitted by the Three Counties Agricultural Society, are designed to counter what they argue is a shortage of accommodation in the Malvern area. However, the Langdale Wood site, near the Society's showground, is a designated Local Wildlife Site.

Hanley Castle Parish Council says approving the plan would remove a valuable amenity from the parish, arguing: "There are no comparable woodland

areas left close to the parish, and this development would completely destroy this beautiful woodland." The CPRE objection, submitted earlier in 2017 stated: "There is no doubt that 50 chalets will cause considerable damage to the trees, tree roots and vegetation, plus great disturbance to many birds, butterflies and other insects. Although it is plausible that events at the showground bring an economic benefit to the Malvern area, there is little prospect that the new development will generate any significant additional benefit, whereas the potential damage to Langdale Wood is certain."

The highways authority have raised concerns that

the proposed access to the development off Blackmore Park Road is too small for refuse collection vehicles to get in, while the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty says that light from the development will have "effects on visual amenity in views from the AONB". With a decision now imminent, local residents have set up a Save Langdale Wood campaign, gaining over 250 signatures. Sharon Taylor, who started the campaign, said: "It is such a lovely place to go and take the dog for a walk to escape from the stresses of life. If this application goes through, the woodland and its wildlife, including the cuckoos, nightingales and moorhens, will be lost forever."

## Promoting community planning

The Wessex Conference Centre at Sparsholt College, Winchester was full for CPRE Hampshire's conference on Neighbourhood Planning held in October. Entitled *Planning our future – what are the best options for local communities?*, the event attracted a mix of individuals and groups representing communities at all levels of local government, from parish to county. Most delegates were

about to start or considering how to approach developing a Neighbourhood Plan or alternative planning solution for their area.

CPRE Hampshire chief executive, Charlee Bennett said: "We had a brilliant morning at Sparsholt College with 34 parish councils as well as district, borough and county representation from across Hampshire, joining us to have an honest

conversation about how best to plan for their areas. One of the highlights was Ann Skippers who gave an Examiner's perspective on Neighbourhood Plans and her top tips on how to be successful at examination - vital information if you've been working on your plan for over two years! Thank you to Hampshire County Council for making the conference possible."

## Lincolnshire's Best Kept Village

Parishioners of Greatford have been celebrating being named Best Kept Village in CPRE Lincolnshire's 2017 competition, having last won the award in 2008. The award was won after the parish council encouraged dedicated villagers to clear

out dykes, clear footpaths and tidy up the churchyard at the Church of St Thomas Becket. CPRE judges commended the village on the absence of litter and the good condition of community assets such as the playing field and village hall.

Lois Webb, clerk to the parish council, thanked those who took part, saying: "Our litter picking working party works exceedingly well, with individuals doing many extra jobs in the village throughout the year – not just for the competition! It was a real community effort."

# CAMPAIGNER

## Campaigning for a litter free Dorset



Litter activists from Dorset Devils cleaning up the county.

**A**nti-litter campaigners in Dorset have been stepping up their activity over the summer with support from CPRE Dorset.

Litter Free Dorset (LFD) launched the 'bin your butt' initiative on 11 September starting in Dorchester Town. The campaign is asking people to use appropriate street bins, wall-mounted cigarette bins or a portable "stubby bin" to help achieve a cleaner county. Businesses are doing their bit to help by displaying posters, having bins for smokers available and handing out the personal stubby packs provided by CPRE.

In Purbeck, Litter-free Purbeck's volunteer groups took part in twenty events this summer to push out their anti-littering message during peak holiday season. Their new group the Wareham Wombles, led by Nicola Wiggins, got off to a fine start on 1 July when 30 volunteers including Michael Tomlinson, MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole, and Wareham's Mayor Malcolm Russell, turned out to litter pick areas around Bere Road and Northmoor. Volunteers removed a lot of historic rubbish and were complimented on their work. All four quarters of the town have now been given the same 'tlc'

following three more litter picks, and the group will continue to go out regularly throughout the year.

Volunteers also took part in beach cleans on Swanage beach, and as part of an outreach project supported by Sustainable Dorset, Litter-free Purbeck's litter awareness stall was at local fetes. In partnership with the National Trust, the stall was also to be seen in the tourist-magnet locations including Corfe Castle, Knoll Beach and Studland. Visitors to the stall could pick up CPRE Stop the Drop portable ashtrays; learn about the long-term harm that litter does to marine life, wildlife and farm animals; and see how small changes in lifestyle can have a positive impact on reducing plastic waste and litter.

The stall also provided a list of #RefillDorset locations – shops and cafes where free of charge anyone may top up their refillable water bottles with tap water – along with the details of the scheme's free app for smartphones, produced by the Litter Free Coast & Sea group. Most encouragingly, younger visitors to the stall provided some wise words when invited to write their views on litter onto luggage tags. "I think that litter is a downside to our world and it makes our

environment an unpleasant place to be," wrote Eliza from Hertfordshire, while Louise from Weymouth wrote "Dropping litter is lazy and irresponsible". Anonymous writer left the straightforward message "Rubbish is Rubbish. PUT IT IN THE BIN!".

Another community litter group, Dorset Devils, played an active part in raising awareness of the damage plastic can do to the environment at the this year's ArtsbytheSea Festival in Bournemouth. This year's theme was Plastic Beach, which chimed with the Devils' determination to keep Bournemouth beach clean by prevent plastic litter from entering the sea. 34 new members signed up over the course of the event, and the group is also celebrating taking delivery of new equipment and branded hi-vis vests thanks to Bournemouth Borough Council and Bournemouth University.

Away from Dorset, Yorkshire litter campaigner Thomas Black has become an internet sensation for the second time. In 2014 he made the film *Don't Drop Litter or Else!*, which has received 200,000 hits on YouTube. Now, he's created a musical message inspired by George Formby called *Cleaning Up The Laybys* that has clocked up over 280,000 views. Thomas feels that "with the support of CPRE and Keep Britain Tidy, there is a real momentum growing behind my anti-litter campaign. I am really hoping it makes a difference."

CPRE salutes the fantastic efforts of Thomas and the litter heroes of Dorset, along with the groups and individuals working hard to clean up the rest of the country. To find a local litter picking group or event near you, take a look at [www.litteraction.org.uk](http://www.litteraction.org.uk).

### Raynsford Review of planning

CPRE's national planning team has submitted its response to the Raynsford Review's Call for Evidence, to inform the Review's appraisal of the kind of planning system England needs. It aims to identify how the Government can reform the English planning system to make it fairer, better resourced and capable of producing quality outcomes, while still encouraging the production of new homes. Our submissions were in response to a call for evidence on six themes, including the scope of the planning system; community involvement; planning and taxation; and effective implementation. Evidence will continue to be collected and examined over the coming months, with a report presented at all major party conferences in autumn 2018.

On the topic of 'planning and sustainable development', CPRE pointed out that the Government now states that it is "fully committed" to the implementation, both domestically and internationally, of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A number of the SDGs have a clear relevance to the UK planning system, in particular 11 (making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable). The ONS has also recently consulted (until September 2017) on how to measure progress in achieving the SDGs. The SDGs are not referenced clearly in any current statement of national planning policy, guidance, or related consultation. We recommended that the Review should thoroughly consider how the references to sustainable development in the NPPF, which are now largely out of date, should be refreshed and given more weight in the light of the SDGs.

**Find out** more about the UN Sustainable Development Goals at <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>



## Current issues

### Meeting local need?

CPRE Bedfordshire has learned from a Freedom of Information request that 60% of the planned new homes that Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) claims it needs are for people moving into Central Bedfordshire from elsewhere, rather than local need. The branch established this figure from a Freedom of Information request it sent to Central Bedfordshire Council this summer. CBC is claiming that it needs anywhere between 44,000 to 55,000 new homes built in Central Bedfordshire over the next twenty years – which includes 23,000 homes that are already allocated or have planning permission. The plans include loss of valued countryside and green spaces to urban extensions and new towns.

The starting point for these housing figures is an 'Initial Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Luton and Central Bedfordshire', which was published in July 2017 and identified that the full 'Objectively Assessed Need' for housing in Central Bedfordshire to be 32,000 dwellings in Central Bedfordshire over the period 2015 – 2035. Of these, the response to the Freedom of Information request reveals that just 41% of the new housing is to meet the needs of people currently living in Central Bedfordshire – most homes are being built for people moving into the area. A CPRE Bedfordshire spokesperson said: "Of course new homes need to be planned for those moving into the area, but 60% is simply unsustainable, especially given that the local road and rail infrastructure is already struggling to cope at peak times. This over-development of the countryside is unsustainable and not fair on the residents of Central Bedfordshire."

# INreview

Our perspective on countryside issues

## London - a National Park City?

**In his draft Environment Strategy published this month, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has followed up on his commitment to support the London 'National Park City' initiative. CPRE's branch for the area, CPRE London, supports the initiative. But not all in the planning world do. Blogger Andrew Lainton, for example, argues that the 'National Park City' idea 'devalues London and devalues National Parks'.**

The promoters of the 'National Park City' have always wanted to draw a clear distinction from a National Park. The National Park City website emphasises opportunities for city residents to be able to connect with nature, and has largely avoided questions of conserving natural beauty that would be more prominent in the rural landscape of our National Parks. But it also has clear messages about environmental improvement – a more physically green environment, better air and water quality and better connected wildlife habitats.

This is particularly relevant to CPRE for two reasons.

### New roles for the Green Belt

First, there is a significant amount of rural fringe land towards the edge of Greater London's boundaries. The Green Belt, most of which is farmland, woodland or other open space, covers 22% of Greater London. The Environment Strategy gives a welcome reiteration of the Mayor's commitment to protect the Green Belt. It also drops a tantalising hint of using the Green Belt for creating new woodland. The four things that CPRE would like to see more of

in the Green Belt are woodlands, wetland, public access and food grown for local markets.

Much of the Green Belt, both within Greater London and beyond, is a resource that, in future, could achieve National Park status on landscape merit. Some is already Regional Park; some – largely just outside Greater London's boundaries – is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, already accorded equal status to National Park in terms of conserving scenic beauty.

**“There is an exciting opportunity to visibly connect fragments of countryside - land that has never been developed - within London itself”**

Second, there is an exciting opportunity to visibly connect fragments of countryside - land that has never been developed - within London itself, in particular through more tree planting. London has relatively good levels of green space cover given its size. But on some measures of tree cover, London comes off poorly compared with other cities of comparable size or population density.

### Enhancing public spaces

Treepedia, published at the end of 2016 by researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of

Technology, measures street tree cover in cities using Google Street View. Street trees have all kinds of benefits for society, including providing shade on hot days and filtering air pollution. But the website gave London a 'green view index' of 12.7%, considerably lower than Boston (18.2%), Singapore (29.3%) or Vancouver (25.9%). London is also relatively low in population density, compared with other world cities such as Singapore. CPRE London is campaigning to show that we can use brownfield land in London more efficiently for new housing, through developing car parks, for example. This would save Green Belt and green space, but also encourage more use of public transport, walking and cycling.

I hope that the final London Environment Strategy will be ambitious. In particular, the GLA needs to do more to protect and enhance existing green space. More encouragement needs to be given to the new regional parks emerging in places like the Wandle Valley. CPRE's report *Our Green Belt: Worth Investing In* last year called on local government to make wider use of the Lee Valley Regional Park model of managing land funded by a local environmental levy. The draft strategy suggests that the GLA is listening to this. Local authorities and developers should also do more to increase tree cover in connection with new developments. They are already under a duty to do so, though you wouldn't know that from reading the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. These actions could make the 'National Park City' an initiative with a visible, lasting legacy.

**Paul Miner**  
CPRE planning  
campaign manager

# QandA

The answers you need

## Protecting the setting of listed buildings

**Q** My neighbours and I are concerned about an application to develop land in front of a local building, which we believe is listed, having been built by a notable architect. Are there any rules or regulations governing development around listed buildings? We are convinced the plans would have a negative impact on the enjoyment of a building we believe owes much to its natural setting.

**A** CPRE Kent's excellent new report, *Looking after heritage through the planning system*, provides some good advice on this matter. It is important to note that just as a listed building receives statutory protection, so does its 'setting'. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 provides a strong presumption against development that harms a listed building or its setting. It states that if a development is proposed which affects a listed building or its setting, then the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This does not mean that change cannot happen. It means that its special interest should be preserved, and as recent appeal decisions have confirmed, that this issue should be given considerable importance and weight in planning decisions.

When an energy company appealed the

non-determination of their application for four large wind turbines near Lyveden New Bield lodge in Northamptonshire, the Inspector acknowledged that while the visual impact of the turbines would clearly cause harm to the setting of the lodge, that harm was not sufficient to justify refusal, and granted planning permission in 2012. An iconic unfinished 17th century building in rural surroundings, Lyveden New Bield is Grade I Listed and owned by the National Trust. Although a Planning Inspector granted permission for the wind turbines 1-2 km from the building, a subsequent Judicial Review challenged the lawfulness of that decision, and a High Court Judgment overturned that planning permission in 2013. The High Court judgment was upheld at the Court of Appeal in 2014, setting an important precedent. In the months that followed, the (then) Secretary of State Eric Pickles turned down several applications for onshore wind farms, in some cases doing so against the advice of Planning Inspectors, ruling that inadequate weight had been given to the harm to heritage assets or their setting.

In 2015, Forest of Dean District Council refused a speculative application for 85 homes on the edge of a village in Newent, next to a Grade II listed farmhouse. The applicant appealed the refusal, and was granted permission on the grounds that the council could not demonstrate that it had a five-year supply of housing land available. The council

challenged the Inspector's decision in the High Court where it was ruled that the permission be quashed. The judgment considered that the Inspector had given inadequate weight to the degree of harm to the setting of the heritage asset, even in the absence of a five-year supply of housing land.

The following questions include some of the useful things to consider when preparing your response to a development proposal which may impact on the setting of a listed building. Does the proposed development affect the relationship between the listed building and its setting? Are views to (or from) the development an essential component of the setting of the listed building and would these views be harmed or disrupted by the development? Will the proposed development undermine (or improve) the ability to appreciate the significance of the listed building? Does the fragmentation of the site amount to substantial harm to the significance of the listed building? Would the harm to landscape or wildlife habitats (including trees and hedgerows) be detrimental to the significance of a heritage asset through changes to its character and setting? Would new buildings or structures introduce a pattern/design/scale of development that would be unsympathetic to the heritage asset?

**Find out more:** For more useful information on how to use the planning system to defend listed buildings and other heritage assets, explore CPRE Kent's report by searching for 'Looking after heritage' at [www.cprekent.org.uk](http://www.cprekent.org.uk)

## Current issues

### Landmark air quality decision

CPRE Kent was in the High Court in October, giving evidence in support of a planning inspector's dismissal in January of two linked appeals made by Gladman Developments Ltd against the local authority's refusal of planning permission for its scheme at Pond Farm, Newington, near Sittingbourne.

Swale Council had rejected Gladman's plans for up to 330 homes and 60 residential and care "units" at Pond Farm on the grounds of harm to the landscape and increased air pollution, the latter factor relating specifically to the impact on the council's Air Quality Management Areas at Newington and Rainham. Gladman subsequently challenged that decision, but the inspector dismissed both of its appeals because of "the substantial harm that the appeal proposals would cause to the character of a valued landscape and their likely significant adverse effect on human health".

Although Gladman contested that dismissal on grounds including the inspector's treatment of future air quality and mitigation, Mr Justice Supperstone of the High Court has dismissed its latest challenge.

Richard Knox Johnston, CPRE Kent vice-chairman, said: "This is the first time air quality has been considered as a factor in determining a planning decision. It had been put forward as a reason for turning down planning permission in the first instance – and that has now been vindicated further. This is an important decision as it means that air quality is something that must be considered seriously when considering planning permission in polluted areas."



## Current issues

### Gloucestershire success

The Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury district group of CPRE Gloucestershire has taken part in two appeals recently, for 65 houses at Trumans Farm, Gotherington and for 76 houses on the edge of Prestbury. Both sites are part of the setting of the Cotswolds AONB and lie outside the village boundaries. Campaigners are delighted that both appeals have been dismissed, thanks in no small part to the work and representations of David Crofts. CPRE North Cotswolds district group recently considered an application to build a Doctors' Surgery on part of the Gypsy Field site at Stow-on-the-Wold. In a complex case, the district committee considered the application on its own merits: in particular, the scale of the building, the impact on the local landscape, the historical nature of the site and its planning history. After careful deliberation, the committee decided that CPRE should object to the application, and the application has since been refused by Cheltenham District Council.

### Restoring natural assets

CPRE Northern Lincolnshire has presented an award to Barton Civic Society in recognition of its work to help restore Barton Beck. The beck had become an eyesore due to a shortage of water, inappropriate treatment and general neglect, but thanks to sponsorship and the support of North Lincolnshire Council, the tireless work of the Beck Sub-Committee has transformed the beck. The CPRE award comes after the improvements were shortlisted for a National Design Award by Civic Voice. There is now a permanent pond – complete with a family of ducks; and, when the artesian springs are active around the beginning of each year, the beck is brimming full and mirrors the adjoining St. Mary's Church.

# Towards a Deposit Return System

**L**itter continues to deface our beautiful countryside, yet valuable materials such as glass, plastic and aluminium are used in the manufacture of drinks containers designed only for single-use. Without efficient recapture and recycling systems these resources are wasted, and end up polluting our fields, woods, rivers and beaches.

Following the success of the carrier bag charge and ban on microbeads, introducing new measures that promote efficient use of our resources, such as a Deposit Return System (DRS) for capturing single-use containers, would be a significant step in reducing this blight on our rural and urban landscapes.

### Building on the bag charge

A DRS for England would be a great way to build on the

plastic bag charge that CPRE was instrumental in securing. In July, we heard yet more good news about the positive impact of the charge, when the Government announced the latest figures for single use plastic bags in England. It reported that bag usage is down by 9 billion – or 83% - from 2015-16, and CPRE welcomed the fact that the initial huge reduction in bag use has been sustained over an 18-months period. Crucially, in the context of DRS, we argued that it proves that the public support environmental incentives.

The Government's National Litter Strategy, launched in April, included a pledge to look into deposit return systems, and CPRE is currently supporting Defra with its Voluntary & Economic Incentives Working Group inquiry into drinks containers. More recently, the Conservative Party Conference

in October saw the Environment Secretary Michael Gove say that "we are looking to go further to reduce plastic waste by working with industry to see how we could introduce a deposit return scheme for plastic bottles".

Having campaigned in favour of deposit return systems for almost 10 years, CPRE is keen to work with the Secretary of State to help achieve this. Our research, and that of other bodies, has shown that deposit return systems offer

**“Following the charge on carrier bags, people are increasingly supportive of other economic incentives”**

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Single-use plastic drinks bottles are wasted resources that end up littering our environment.



opportunities for the recycling and waste management sectors to process higher quantities of better quality materials, which leads to greater investment and more jobs. Evidence, from 20 countries around the world shows that deposit return systems have a positive impact on household collection services – consistently saving councils money. Deposit systems have also been found to be consistently popular with people across all sectors in society.

## A global success story

Other governments around the world have also realised that deposit systems deliver these important benefits. Within the last five years, a deposit system has been launched in the Northern Territory in Australia, with other schemes due to be implemented in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Canberra over the next three to four years.

Lithuania launched its deposit system in 2016, with a target return rate of 55% for the first year. In reality, it delivered 74% - equal to 415 million containers. For 2017, the target rate has been confidently set to 90%. Its Chairman, Saulius Galadauskas, who is also the Head of the Lithuanian Brewers Association, said this year “any successful, modern business should be eager to get involved, as it will benefit them.”

In Norway, the Government didn't mandate a deposit system. Instead it set an additional environmental tax for drinks containers, which could be avoided if the return rate for all drinks containers put on the Norwegian market reached 95%. The beverage companies could achieve 95% in any way

**“DRS could save local authorities across England a combined total of up to £35 million every year”**



**In many parts of the world deposit return systems are part of everyday life.**

they saw fit. The system they chose, which consistently gives them that return rate of 95%, is a deposit return system. Then, in September, the Scottish Government announced that it will introduce a national deposit return system for drinks containers. This comes after a number of successful pilot schemes across Scotland, alongside evidence commissioned by the Scottish Government that confirms the system's many economic and environmental benefits. CPRE welcomed the announcement as a “momentous step towards a cleaner environment” and noted that it would begin to shift the financial burden of dealing with waste from the public, as council tax payers, to those who produce the packaging.

## Saving local councils money

If the case for an English DRS was not strong enough already, a new study by Eunomia Research found that it could save local authorities across England a combined total of up to £35 million every year. Commissioned by a consortium including CPRE and Keep Britain Tidy, the analysis of data across eight local authorities, including those with high and low recycling rates, found that rather than losing income, the individual authorities could potentially make savings of between £60,000 and £500,000. This will help

address concerns expressed by some local authorities that the introduction of a DRS would lead to a reduction in their income, as people use the scheme to recycle their bottles and cans rather than the local authorities' kerbside recycling systems.

The report found that local authorities would lose some income as there would be a reduced number of cans and plastic bottles in the kerbside collections to sell to recyclers. However, the savings made from having fewer containers to collect and sort, as well as reduced levels of littering and reduced landfill charges, will actually create savings that outweigh the loss of revenue. The report also makes recommendations for both government and local authorities on how kerbside services can be adapted to ensure that the savings resulting from a DRS are shared equally between county councils and district councils.

Launching the research, CPRE's Samantha Harding, said: “There are no longer any valid arguments that DRS doesn't work and the environmental case is crystal clear. For our coasts and countryside, the cost of not taking action will be far greater than any incurred by the parts of industry that are trying to block this. Michael Gove can now build on the success of the Government's bag charge and the ban on microbeads by confirming England will have a deposit system.”

## Current issues

### Sustaining hungry students

Real food is replacing junk food as the staple diet for students taking part in a nationwide project. Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming (comprised of around 100 organisations including CPRE and the Fairtrade Foundation), is now working in partnership with the NUS Student Eats project to help young people across the UK set up food co-ops in their universities and colleges. Tilly Jarvis combines her work as food co-op project co-ordinator for Sustain with similar work for the NUS's Student Eats project, which for several years has been promoting the growing of food on campuses across the country. “We set up Student Eats in 2012 to support students. It was hugely successful – so much so that we were growing a lot of produce which was often being wasted. So there was a lot of interest in setting up food co-operatives on campus or locally.”

The National Union of Students has funding for 67 food enterprises – offering £1,000 in start-up costs for each one. Some focus on providing produce for farmers' markets, others on the preservation of food, and several concentrate on using up surplus food – offering ‘pay as you fill’ cafes where people pay what they can afford. “All the co-operatives have to be student-led but they can be run in conjunction with the local community,” explains Ms Jarvis. “Our enterprises aim to be profitable, but any surplus goes to the social and environmental groups who are growing food on campus or with the local community.” With fast food chains taking over many campuses, the project gives students the opportunity to buy fresh, local food.

# MATTER of fact

Support for your case

## The Clean Growth Strategy

**T**he Government published a Clean Growth Strategy in October, as part of its obligations to explain how it will meet its fourth and fifth climate budgets under the 2008 Climate Change Act – which requires that the UK reduce its emissions by 80% of 1990 levels by 2050.

While progress has been made in the energy and waste sectors, there is a need to significantly reduce emissions in transport, business and heating if the government is to meet the fifth Carbon Budget of a 57% reduction below 1990 levels. Clean Growth represents the UK's strategy towards achieving this – delivering increased economic growth and decreased emissions at the lowest cost while maximising the social and economic benefits. The majority of this approach revolves around investment in (largely private sector) innovation and development in the following sectors.

### Housing

The Clean Growth Strategy aims to reduce emissions from housing by improving domestic energy efficiency, which the Government also hopes will reduce heating costs for tenants and address the fuel poverty crisis. The strategy states that £3.6 billion will be invested in upgrading around a million homes through the Energy Company Obligation, with the aim of having the 2.5 million fuel poor homes in England improved to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C by

2030, and for all homes to have EPC band C by 2035.

£4.5 billion will be spent on reforming the Renewable Heat Incentive to focus on long-term decarbonisation, with the Government targeting the 850,000 homes currently not connected to the gas grid. That could involve using some of the £200 million package of Rural Development Programme funding to support renewable energy projects in rural areas.

### Transport and energy

The headline commitment is the Government's recent announcement to ban the sale of petrol and diesel cars from 2040. While the impact of the Government's new roads investment strategy is notably absent, there is mention of the £37 billion invested in the public transport system between 2011-2016 in order to broaden travel choices, alongside investment in the Cycling and Walking Strategy. Furthermore, the strategy is ambitious for the uptake of Electric Vehicles, on which the Government will spend £1 billion to help consumers with upfront purchasing costs.

£255 million from the implementation fund for local authorities will establish a clean air fund, and the government will announce a clean air strategy in 2018 to work further on this issue. Low carbon energy sources such as renewables and nuclear will expand to comprise over 80% of electricity generation, parallel to the phase out of unabated

coal. For this to be possible, the Government is hoping for 10GW of new offshore wind capacity in the 2020s. The strategy states that £900 million will be spent on priority areas of nuclear, smart systems, renewables, and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS).

### Land use

The strategy outlines plans for increasing tree cover to 12% by 2060, largely through the incentives provided in a new Post-Brexit Agricultural Bill (announced in the Queens speech) for farmers and landowners to plant trees on marginal land. There are also plans to establish a new domestic carbon offset market that encourages businesses to plant trees in the UK, and to streamline investment in afforestation through forestry investment zones. This relates to a Government commitment to plant 11 million trees and increase timber in UK construction as part of a growing bioeconomy.

The strategy reaffirms Government efforts towards zero avoidable waste, with a target that no food waste will be entering landfill by 2030, and the total amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill will be around 45 per cent lower than that seen in 2015. Opportunities are identified in analysis from the Waste and Resources Action Programme suggesting that progress to a more resource efficient economy has the potential to create up to 205,000 jobs.

**“The strategy outlines plans for increasing tree cover to 12% by 2060”**

There has been a mixed reaction to a strategy widely hailed as a positive sign of progress, albeit with a number of glaring omissions. *The Guardian's* Damian Carrington pointed out that the strategy neglects to mention how expanding Heathrow's third runway will fit in with UK climate change targets. He also contrasts the promise of more investment in Hinckley C with the reduction (down to just 10% of the original £1bn) in the planned investment in Carbon Capture and Storage. The Carbon Brief website raised concerns that the strategy talks of being compliant with the goal of keeping warming within two degrees, despite the Paris Agreement's aim to work towards 1.5 degrees as a level scientists agree is a much safer level of warming. Carbon Brief also points out that while £3.6 billion to upgrade household energy efficiency is welcome, there is no mention of the recently scrapped zero carbon homes standard, which would have ensured all new homes are built efficiently in the first place.

**Find out more:** Read or download the full Clean Growth Strategy at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>