



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

FIELD WORK

Winter 2016

Great news for National Parks and AONBs **p.3**

The latest initiatives from CPRE branches **p.7**

Better design for rooftop solar **p.8**

Award-winning local campaigners **p.11**

Progress on neighbourhood planning **p.14**

The case for a Deposit Return System **p.16**



Brownfield registers reveal capacity for more than a million homes

New research published by CPRE in November shows that suitable brownfield sites across England can provide at least 1.1 million new homes. CPRE is using this evidence to support calls for national policies that ensure brownfield development is prioritised over greenfield development and support the provision of new homes on suitable brownfield sites.

Previous CPRE research has shown that on average brownfield sites are developed half a year faster than greenfield, and that brownfield is a renewable resource. The Government had described CPRE's previous estimate of capacity (from November 2014) of around 1 million homes as "wildly over optimistic" in its Housing & Planning Bill Impact Assessment of October 2015. The document claimed that "only a fraction will be suitable for housing", which appeared to disregard the fact that the estimate was based only on sites councils considered "suitable for housing". Now, using the Government's own pilot brownfield register scheme, CPRE has calculated that suitable brownfield sites can provide between 1.1 and 1.4 million new homes.

CPRE studied the findings of 53 councils that have published their data on suitable sites, and found that these areas alone could provide 273,000 homes. Comparing this new data with the most recent official data used for their 2014 study (councils last submitted their records of available brownfield land to the Government's National Land Use Database between 2010 and 2012), CPRE noted an 11% increase in the number of homes that could be provided on suitable

sites, with planning permissions for such sites increasing by 21% and the number of suitable sites being identified by 50%.

Applying the same 11% increase to the 2010-2012 figures for the whole country gives a new estimated minimum capacity of 1.1 million homes on suitable brownfield sites. This figure was the most conservative estimate; a second methodology extrapolated the figures from the pilot register based on their rural/urban classification. Adding the London Land Commission's estimate of a minimum of 130,000 homes across London, this method provided a minimum estimate of 1.4 million homes.

Brownfield could help meet housing targets

It is also worth noting that the study of the 53 pilot registers produced a figure – 273,000 – that is both higher than previous Government estimates of countrywide brownfield housing capacity, and almost enough for the participating councils to meet their five-year housing targets without releasing any countryside for development. Based on the most current local plan documents for each council, the amount of land available for housing development identified through the pilot brownfield registers is 4.89 years' supply across the 45 local authorities that have draft or adopted housing land supply figures. Eighteen of these local authorities have a brownfield land supply that exceeds the five-year housing land supply requirement set by the Government.

Continued on p.2

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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Brownfield registers reveal capacity for more than a million homes

Continued from p.1

CPRE chief executive Shaun Spiers said: "The Government needs to do much more to reconcile its commitment both to build a million homes and to protect the countryside, including the Green Belt it recently described as 'sacrosanct'. These official figures show that there is plenty of suitable brownfield land available, and that the supply of brownfield land continues to grow. The Government and local authorities must now ensure that developers use it. This will not only save countryside, it will help ensure thriving towns and cities."

The Government created the brownfield registers pilot last year in order to secure a consistent set of data on brownfield sites suitable for development. The registers enable the Government to monitor its commitment that 90% of all brownfield sites have planning permission by 2020, and deliver 200,000 new homes on those sites. CPRE's research suggests that this ambition for new homes should be much higher.

The findings

The Housing and Planning Act, which received Royal Assent in May 2016, requires local authorities to adopt a brownfield register in order to enable housebuilders to identify suitable sites, quickly speeding up the construction of new homes. 73 local authorities were chosen to pilot the development of brownfield registers in spring 2016, and as of August 2016, 53 of these local authorities had made their pilot brownfield registers (pBFR) available.

"These official figures show that there is plenty of suitable brownfield land available"

Comparing the findings of 53 of the council submissions to the Government's pilot brownfield registers scheme against those council's submissions to the National Land Use Database in 2010, 2011 and 2012, CPRE found a 50% increase in the number of brownfield sites identified as suitable for development (from 3074 to 4631 sites), with a significant increase in the number of small sites. In the pilot brownfield registers almost 25,000 homes could be built on sites smaller than 0.25Ha, and 605 sites could support fewer than five homes.

There was also a significant increase in the proportion of sites with planning permission (from 41% to 62%), and the amount of brownfield in the South East and East of England - with capacity for 75,000 homes in just 14 local authorities. In these areas, where there has been most of the growth and where there is huge

"CPRE calls on the Government to amend the NPPF to prioritise the use of suitable brownfield sites over greenfield"

pressure to release areas of Green Belt for housing, there is untapped potential for development on brownfield sites that could in some cases meet identified local need. The total area of brownfield identified has increased from 7,304 hectares to 12,408 hectares (a 69% increase).

Recommendations

CPRE welcomes the pilot brownfield registers, which suggest that there is more brownfield land available for housing development than previously thought - in particular in the South East and the East of England, the regions with the greatest pressures for housing. More needs to be done to get these houses built, and the Government must recognise that registers show a pipeline of potential regeneration opportunities that could be realised with the right policy and financial interventions.

CPRE calls on local authorities to be more proactive in identifying small brownfield sites. Town and parish councils, neighbourhood planning bodies and local amenity societies are well-placed to help with the identification of suitable small brownfield sites. They should ensure that only suitable brownfield sites are recorded on these registers: sites with an unsustainable location or high environmental or heritage value may be unsuitable for development. An annex of rejected sites would enable this process to be transparent.

CPRE calls on the Government to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to prioritise the use of suitable brownfield sites in urban areas over greenfield, particularly in areas where there are both brownfield sites and competing greenfield sites in the same housing market area. Local councils and the Government should refuse permission for greenfield sites where there are alternative brownfield sites suitable for development. Brownfield sites must also be the first priority for site planning and any public funding to bring forward new housing.

In addition, we're urging the Government to push for more housing completions as well as permissions. A commitment for the proportion of sites on which development should have commenced would be a major step forward in addition to the commitment to having planning permission on 90% of suitable sites by 2020. They must also guide local authorities to identify all suitable sites, including the smallest sites, in final policies, and provide support to small house builders and self- and custom-builders through targeted funding mechanisms that overcome the initial high costs of brownfield development.

Find out more: Read CPRE's full research report, including regional breakdowns, by searching for 'Housing capacity on suitable brownfield land' at www.cpre.org.uk

BREAKthrough

How our work is making a difference

Fighting for the Farthingloe valley

CPRE Kent were delighted to hear in September that they had won their landmark battle to protect the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty after a lengthy legal battle to save the historic Western Heights landscape near Dover.

Two judges at the Court of Appeal quashed the planning application to build 521 homes and a 90 apartment retirement village. Lord Justice Laws and Lord Justice Simon allowed the Branch's appeal against last December's judicial review on the basis that Dover District Council's planning committee failed to give legally adequate reasons for granting permission, contrary to an officers' recommendation which had made "trenchant criticisms" of the density, layout and design of the proposed development.

Council planning officers had made huge efforts to mitigate the harm while ensuring the scheme was still financially viable. They recommended a reduction in the number of homes to 375 and changes to the density and design to protect the most sensitive part of the landscape. This was ignored by both the developer, China Gateway, and the planning committee.

CPRE Kent Chairman Christine Drury said: "This is excellent news – we have been absolutely determined to save this beautiful and historic area of countryside. The developer and planning committee knew the scale of the development – one of the largest ever proposed for an AONB – would cause severe damage but rejected all efforts to mitigate this. This case is not

just important to the people of Dover but for the principles of planning law because AONBs have the highest possible level of protection."

In his judgment, Lord Justice Laws acknowledged that it was "an unusual case" and that "the scale of the proposed development is unprecedented in an AONB". He said: "A local planning authority which is going to authorise a development which will inflict substantial harm on an AONB must surely give substantial reasons for doing so." CPRE Kent awaits Dover Council and China Gateway's response to the quashing, which could result in them appealing to the Supreme Court. Christine concluded that, "this is therefore not the end of this fight, but we have undoubtedly obtained an important victory to celebrate for AONBs."

National Park saved from pylon threat

National Grid is to spare the Lake District National Park from the prospect of 50 metre tall pylons being built through 24 km of the park following a national campaign by Friends of the Lake District (FLD).

The North West Coast Connections project will run 400kV cables around the west of Cumbria from Carlisle in the north to Heysham in the south to provide connections from the proposed Moorside power station to the electricity grid. It has now confirmed that it plans to look at putting 23.4km (14.5 miles) of new line underground through the entire western section of the Lake District National Park. This work could also see the existing lines there being removed completely, leaving this part of the park

free of pylons for the first time in 50 years.

FLD chief executive Douglas Chalmers said: "We have fought a long and well-supported campaign to stop these giant pylons being built within the Lake District National Park and we're delighted that the stunning landscape within the park has been spared from a line of 50 metre tall pylons. National Grid should be congratulated for listening to public opinion and respecting the designation of National Park status which affords the Lake District landscape the highest level of protection in the UK."

National Grid is still proposing to build erect pylons along a 14 km section of the southern route running close to the national park boundary. This has raised some significant concerns about

their impact on some additional parts of the west coast that do not enjoy the protection afforded by national park status, but contribute to the setting of the Lake District's landscapes. The consultation ends on 6th January 2017, and FLD will be making the case for other areas to be undergrounded to protect the landscape setting of the National Park. Campaigners have raised specific concerns over the decision to place pylons within metres of its boundary along the Whicham Valley, and across the Duddon Mosses Special Area of Conservation – the only estuary in England where mountains meet the sea.

Find out more: Keep up with the campaign and add your support at www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk

featured contents

Brownfield registers reveal capacity for more than a million homes p.1

Heathrow decision increases pressure on the south east p.4

Litter warden scheme launched in Bristol p.5

Supporting Bedfordshire's parishes p.5

A sustainable future for farming p.6

New films promote Shropshire campaigns p.7

A housing strategy for over 55s in Leicestershire p.7

Improving the design of rooftop solar p.8-9

Parish council projects highlighted in CPRE award schemes p.10

CPRE's new award winners p.11

Hazardous waste case has implications for nationally significant infrastructure p.12

Planning guidance on permitted development right p.13

CPRE Essex help save a local nature reserve p.13

AONB helps promote CPRE's dark sky mapping p.14

CPRE's aims for the Neighbourhood Planning Bill p.14-15

The case for a Deposit Return System p.16

Current issues

Standing up for Lyneham

CPRE Wiltshire have been providing valuable assistance to one local community – with successful results. Elizabeth Money and Anne Henshaw initially assisted the village of Lyneham with a letter to Wiltshire Council objecting to a proposed development of 111 houses. The letter noted that the community was about to consult on a Neighbourhood Plan, and highlighted the unproven need for such a large and car-dependent expansion on a greenfield site outside the village boundary. Wiltshire Council refused the application in April, but developers returned with an application for 60 homes.

Another detailed objection letter from Anne in August highlighted that any decision to grant housing on a greenfield site would run counter to the council's policies on restricting development in villages, like Lyneham, with a limited range of employment, services and facilities. The villagers of Lyneham also collected 284 signatures on a petition, saying that it "helped us immensely to have support from a prestigious national organisation like CPRE."

In late October, we were delighted when villagers informed us that the second application had been refused for reasons closely following CPRE Wiltshire's arguments. The notification of refusal cited the fact that "the site lies outside of the limits of development defined for the village in the Wiltshire Core Strategy", while the development had "not been forward through a Site Allocations Development Plan Document or a neighbourhood plan" and "would provide an unsustainable level of housing in a rural area".

Find out more: Get advice on commenting on planning applications at www.planninghelp.cpre.org.uk

NEWSroundup

Keeping you on top of countryside developments

Heathrow decision increases pressure on south east

CPRE had consistently argued that although both locations short-listed by the Airports Commission would have a devastating impact on the countryside and efforts to promote growth outside the overheated south east, Heathrow would represent "an assault on the Green Belt".

The Government's October announcement that it would support a third runway at Heathrow was therefore greeted with great dismay by Ralph Smyth, CPRE's Head of Infrastructure and Legal, who said it would "take a huge chunk out of the Green Belt" and mean that "pressure for extra development would be felt in almost every village from the north of Oxfordshire to the south coast". Ralph added that by "giving the

go ahead to get another runway in the south the Prime Minister has effectively pulled the rug on her own flagship policy of rebalancing our nation's economy."

In a letter to *The Times*, CPRE's Shaun Spiers argued that "the impact on communities has been overlooked in this decision", with new flightpaths meaning an almost 50 per cent increase in planes over London, which already has 50 per cent more flights than New York or Tokyo: "The tranquillity of countless thousands of people will be harmed and air quality degraded." Shaun called for an alternative approach based around "using the spare airport capacity we have and improving our railways for journeys within the UK".

CPRE Kent also expressed its concern about the effect on

tranquillity and the environment, having campaigned against airport expansion at both Gatwick and Heathrow on the grounds of the serious impact on air quality and the devastating effect of aircraft noise. "Aircraft noise brings misery to those living under the flight paths, including many people in west Kent," said CPRE Kent Director Hilary Newport. "The importance of tranquillity cannot be overstated – it is the main reason why people enjoy the countryside, it can prevent stress and increases our enjoyment of exercise and play." The Branch also raised the issue of the damage to the UK's efforts to control its carbon emissions, and is calling for a national approach to aviation to avoid intensification beyond environmental limits in the South East of England.

Mixed news on the Green Belt

New CPRE analysis for *The Times* in October found that local authorities are proposing almost 300,000 homes on England's Green Belts, despite repeated Government pledges over its protection – a Conservative manifesto commitment.

The Communities Secretary Sajid Javid told the House of Commons in July that "the Green Belt is absolutely sacrosanct . . . Unless there are very exceptional circumstances, we should not be carrying out any development on it." However, CPRE's analysis showed that between June and October, councils have proposed an additional 22,000 homes for the Green Belt in their draft local plans, including 5,300 in Poole, Dorset; 4,000 in Hampshire's New Forest district; and 2,400 in Waverley borough council in Surrey.

CPRE's planning campaign manager, Paul Miner, said: "Too often [ministers] have shrugged off responsibility for defending the Green Belt,

saying it is a matter for local authorities. But upholding national Green Belt policy is the Government's responsibility, and it has been shirking it. This has allowed developers and planning consultants to pressure local authorities into setting unrealistically high housebuilding targets."

A recent report by the London Green Belt Council and local CPRE branches showed that London's Green Belt is under "greater threat" than ever, with almost 123,000 homes proposed on 203 sites. Paul told *The Sunday Times* that four sites near Guildford could earn the borough council £67m over 20 years from the New Homes Bonus, a central government grant to incentivise building. He suggested that "the Government will in effect be paying such councils to break its own policy," and that a "cash for sprawl" approach would only encourage homes in the wrong places.

In more encouraging news, CPRE welcomed Housing Minister Gavin Barwell MP's decision to

ask Bradford Council to suspend the adoption of its Core Strategy on the grounds of proposed Green Belt releases. The minister issued a holding direction in October that requires the council to provide further evidence that the plan does not needlessly eat into the Green Belt by failing to make full use of local brownfield sites. This follows an earlier, similar intervention in relation to the Birmingham Plan and its proposals for Green Belt release near Sutton Coldfield.

Bradford Council's Core Strategy had been approved by a Government planning inspector in September, despite including 11,000 houses on Green Belt land in an area with plenty of brownfield land in need of regeneration. Andrew Wood, planner for CPRE West Yorkshire, had highlighted the "huge problems looming with the scale of growth proposed in Airedale and Wharfedale, which straddle the border between Leeds and Bradford and are under development pressure from both cities."

dates of note

The Prince's Countryside Fund Forum

The day-long event will explore the most effective ways to support the long-term viability of family farms and rural communities. Includes creative workshops and opportunities to meet the Fund team for advice on future applications. Contact Clare Crookenden on 0207 566 6615 or email clare.crookenden@bitc.org.uk.
6th December, Church House, Westminster, London 9.30am-4pm (tickets £57.76)

Building the future - Neighbourhood plans, infrastructure and service planning

Jeremy Leggett, Chief Executive of Action in rural Sussex will speak on helping rural communities to thrive and build social capital. Followed by a workshop session. Book via <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk> - search for 'East Sussex Rural Partnership: making your own future'
19th January 2017, Barcombe Village Hall, Sussex 2pm - 4:30pm

CPRE Lancashire Branch Development Day 2017

All members of CPRE Lancashire are very warmly invited to attend. The focus of this year's meeting will be on integrated campaigning and the formulation of Branch activities and initiatives for the forthcoming year. RSVP to anne.kurdock@cprelancashire.org.uk by the 16th of January 2017
21st January 2017, Creative Concern, Fifth Floor, Fourways House, 57 Hilton Street Manchester 11am - 3pm

Friends of the Lake District Burns Night Ceilidh 2017

Following the success of last year's ceilidh, join us for an evening of Haggis, Neeps and Tatties and the "Piping of the Haggis" followed by ceilidh dancing. With Eden Valley Ceilidh Band.
28th January 2017, Castle Street Centre, Kendal 7pm

Litter warden scheme launched in Bristol

CPRE Avonside has successfully launched its Community Litter Warden Scheme, which was made possible by Bristol 2015 Small Grants Fund and the Quartet Community Foundation, awarded as part of Bristol's year as European Green Capital.

The grants were for voluntary and community organisations whose projects would help Bristol's residents to live more sustainably and will benefit the city as a whole. The new Community Litter Wardens and their volunteer litter picking teams were invited to Bristol Zoo on the 17th August 2016 to celebrate their work and hand out multiple litter picking kits. Each Community Litter Warden also received an honorarium of 100 'Bristol pounds' to be spent in the city, meaning further benefits for the local economy.

Community Litter Wardens are individuals who work in their

chosen area to reduce litter. Some are part of or nominated by a local community group or neighbourhood partnership, others are committed individuals who prefer to litter pick alone on a regular basis. Litter picks in Bristol will range from weekly individual picks, to monthly community picks of ten or so people; Community Litter Wardens are given up to 10 Litter Picking Kits. Sophie Spencer, Community Litter Warden Scheme Co-ordinator said: "For many people, litter is the most important issue on the local environmental agenda, and rightly so. Figures show that this is a widespread problem. Litter has a destructive impact on the beauty and quality of our countryside and urban areas. Litter spoils the view, pollutes and land and endangers wildlife."

Despite CPRE's successful campaign for a 5p bag charge (as part of the *Break the Bag Habit* coalition) reducing plastic

bag use by around 85% and raising millions of pounds for good causes, national litter clean-up costs remain around £1 billion every year. This figure is clearly unacceptable and CPRE's national Litter Programme is promoting ways to reduce this through a stronger legal framework, better design of products and packaging, and financial incentives – like the bag charge – that change people's behaviour. Most recently, CPRE President Emma Bridgewater has gained national press coverage with her calls for the introduction of a Deposit Return System; CPRE research has already shown such a scheme would be economically viable and would move us closer to a closed loop system of consume-capture-recycle.

Find out more: Search 'deposit return' at www.cpre.org.uk and join our litter picking community at www.litteraction.org.uk

CPRE Bedfordshire celebrates local heroes

The people making a real difference to Bedfordshire's countryside were once more recognised by the prestigious Living Countryside Awards in October. Gerry Sansom, CPRE Bedfordshire's Chairman, said: "These awards are about recognising those who, in our opinion are getting it right - enhancing the rural and urban areas across Bedfordshire for people and wildlife today and for future generations."

This year's awards were made even more exciting with the creation of a new category. "What's becoming more crucial is encouraging our young people to notice and enjoy the natural world, especially these days when there is so much to draw them indoors," explains Gerry. "This is why we added a new category – our youth award, to recognise young people and schools who are enhancing our local environment, introducing

children to our wildlife and biodiversity. I think that those shortlisted in this new category show a real hope for the future." Mrs Helen Nellis, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, presented awards to two schools who were judged to have made a positive difference to their local environment in a way that will encourage a love of the outdoors and natural world in the next generation.

Woodlands Secondary Special School received a prestigious CPRE Mark for turning a large section of its grounds into a food growing and wildlife-friendly sensory garden, accessible to learners with a wide range of special educational needs. The garden was designed on permaculture principles and operates all year round, with work areas helping the pupils learn where the food comes from alongside wider environmental issues. Swallowfield Lower School

also received a Mark for the work to enhance their grounds with new wildlife habitats. An active eco-committee of pupils plant saplings and maintain features such as bug hotels and bird feeders, encouraged by the school's ethos of engaging with nature through outdoor learning.

13-year old campaigner Francesca Maza received individual recognition for her campaign to tackle dog fouling in her neighbourhood by introducing emergency Poo Bag stations. With the support of Northill Parish Council, the bag dispensers are located on four of the most popular bridleways and footpaths in the area. Throughout the six months of the scheme's operation Francesca has been providing usage reports to councillors; they were so impressed with her enterprise and community spirit that they nominated her for her efforts - which were deservedly commended by the judges.

Supporting Bedfordshire's parishes

CPRE Beds' Nicola Scholfield writes: "With half of Bedfordshire's parish and town councils being members of CPRE, Bedfordshire's branch feels it is important to support them where possible in protecting countryside and green spaces impacted in their areas. Over the last year, our planning volunteers in Central Bedfordshire have responded to around 25 applications for housing developments on open countryside outside settlement envelopes, many making the case that Central Bedfordshire doesn't have a five year supply of housing land.

Although the decision doesn't always go our way, we've been pleased that in many cases our involvement has made a difference to the parish or town council affected. Councils have let us know they have appreciated that we've been in touch to better understand the impacts of the development and their concerns, offered them support and written well-considered letters in response to proposals. From our planning volunteers' point of view, it's great to know that their efforts have been helpful, and has strengthened our resolve to keep looking through the lists of planning applications each week!

To further support parish council members, the branch has also brought parishes together over common issues. North of Luton, the parishes of Chalgrave, Toddington, Chalton, Harlington, Streatley and Upper Sundon have joined a partnership to oppose development on Green Belt, with the aim of sharing information and co-ordinating responses. This partnership will be put to the test early next year as Central Bedfordshire puts its draft Local Plan to consultation, amid concerns that these parishes will be impacted by proposals for changes to Green Belt boundaries and some development on the adjoining Chiltern Hills AONB."

Find out more at www.cprebeds.org.uk

letter from the field

Words from local campaigners



CPRE Lancashire volunteer Audrey Dawson considers the future of farming

Dear reader,

Born in the beautiful Lune valley in Lancashire, I look back on my happy childhood in a wonderful farming community, but with all the struggles I remember for my parents: electricity did not come to the valley until around 1952; drawing water from a well; and no luxury of an indoor loo then!

I still connect with the farming community whenever I visit agricultural shows and am out in the countryside. It is always good to chat with farmers about the difficulties they face too: milk payments are far too low – large supermarkets use milk as a loss-making attraction but a local Lancashire supermarket is now promoting Bowland milk as well as much local butter and cheese, and they get my vote!

As do Farmers' Markets in Lancashire. My nearest one is at Hoghton Tower and the range of locally grown vegetables and fruit is wonderful. On the Fylde, and particularly on the rich soils of West Lancashire, we grow a good range of vegetables – and it does not matter if some are less than perfect. It pains me that our local supermarkets do not make more of our local produce – asparagus from Formby is a prized asset for Lancashire. I frequently look

for the Union Jack to show British produce. More and more Farmers' Markets are springing up and 'Marketing Lancashire' is now highlighting links with local producers from meat from our local farms to butter and prize-winning cheeses – who does know about Lancashire 'crumbly'!?

Farming communities are often at the heart of our countryside and many farmers regard themselves as guardians for our brief sojourn on earth. Hedges are laid, field edges protected for wildflowers, birds, and animals; and cows and sheep have normal lives in the open fields from spring to October. Obviously, the question is: is this sustainable? I would argue that for the sake of the British countryside, and both town and country dwellers, it should be. Pesticides cause untold damage, and bees (critical for pollination) are undoubtedly suffering from the use of neonicotinoids; GM (genetically modified) crops have their own dangers, with seed-manufacturers having near arbitrary control. The milk yield is all-consuming and so this has defined the change in bovine breeding too. Where are Red Polls and Shorthorns these days? Some of the old breeds have good genes going back aeons and we should not lose that.

Look for food produced in Britain: we need to support our own farmers, horticulture, and even orchards – many of the latter we have sadly lost. We have far higher standards of care for our livestock in Britain and this should convince many people to go for local or British produce – just read reports from Compassion in World Farming charity and you will see what I mean!

We all live on this beautiful planet and in the micro-environment of Great Britain. The majority of people will agree we need to care for our planet, our countryside and nature. The Campaign to Protect Rural England is happy to continue its work aiming to do the best to protect it – as we have done for 90 years – and for protection and support of our farmers who work so hard to grow our food. 'Dig for Britain' in the Second World War was a major success and inspired (and helped to feed) the country: now we need the same spirit to protect and encourage us to support our own food production in this country: next time you go shopping for food: think British – and visit a local Farmer's Market near you! And, supporting the above, I am proud to have been a CPRE member now for over 40 years!

GOODideas

Learning from each other

Making Places in Sussex

As villages across Sussex face ever greater pressure for housing, CPRE Sussex has joined forces with Action in Rural Sussex and Rabble Place Architects to challenge 'developer mediocrity' and encourage higher quality, community-led building design.

The *Making Places* campaign aims to both help local communities influence design in the countryside, and also to persuade developers to improve the design of their projects and support local character. So far an initial series of workshops have been run to explore what good design means for seven Sussex towns/parishes. These have informed the development of a *Making Places* handbook which is

hoped will be used by both local communities and decision makers at all levels to support 'good design' as communities grow.

The workshops have shown that many people feel positive about development but they want a role in shaping the places where they live – yet another nod to the value of neighbourhood planning. Most negative views could be traced to feelings of frustration over planners or developers refusing to listen – as this ultimately results in development which takes no account of what defines their unique community... or what makes it work.

The *Making Places* handbook will be launched on Tuesday, 29th November at an evening

reception at the RIBA HQ in London, with a panel debate led by Hank Dittmar, author, columnist, Fellow at Oxford University and Principal of Hank Dittmar Associates, and Robin Hambleton, author, Professor of City Leadership at the University of the West of England and Director of Urban Answers. The question being debated is..... 'How does localism create beauty?' CPRE Sussex is now looking to develop phase 2 of this project which would involve more detailed work with two Sussex parishes.

Find out more: Read more about the project and download the full report at www.cpresussex.org.uk/campaigns/making-places

New films for Shropshire

Before embarking on her move to Edinburgh, CPRE Shropshire's former vice chair Judy Crabb worked on a great project, together with John Woolmer, to create two new campaign films with Harper Adams University students.

How to object to a planning proposal gives some handy tips on the process in simple and engaging language, while *Take it home* is an educational anti-litter film with a musical soundtrack. The final year students were enrolled on countryside-related courses, part of which involved the creation of promotional videos for real-life clients including CPRE Shropshire, the county's Wildlife Trust and the Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme. The students learned how to use the camera equipment and edit

their footage, while working to a brief created by their 'clients'. As with any CPRE campaign, the task required the students to communicate complex messages and make them suitable and engaging for wide audiences – resulting in films that make great viewing and will help the branch reach younger audiences.

One film made with even younger students was screened in November at a Fields, Farming and Food festival in Newcastle Community Centre, near Clun in South Shropshire. *Memories of the landscape* documents a CPRE Shropshire project that started in October 2015 and brought together eight year 6 pupils from Newcastle CE Primary school with a group of older local people who have an interest in, or connection to, the land. The group

explored how the local landscape has changed in living memory, and the impact of man on the landscape over hundreds of years.

Judy, together with Cath Landles (Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership), Viviana Culshaw (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust), local artist Angela Martin, film-maker, Tom Middleton and Sarah Griffiths, heritage learning consultant, orchestrated this pilot project, which has the potential to be rolled out and have value in other rural areas. The reminiscing aspect of the project was hugely enjoyed by the older members of the community, while Mrs Gittins, Head of Newcastle CE Primary School, said the project outcome has "enthused children about their local area."

Find out more: View the films via www.cpreshropshire.org.uk/

Anniversary calendar launched

The CPRE Staffordshire 2017 calendar, featuring spectacular views of this beautiful county,

is now available from <http://staffordshire.cprelocalgroups.org.uk/>.

The calendar features images from the branch's 80th anniversary photo competition.

A housing strategy for over 55s

CPRE Leicestershire has been concerned about the inadequate supply of 'open market' housing for the over 55s, suitable for those wishing to downsize and for those requiring accessible accommodation, such as bungalows. These properties are simply not being built in acceptable numbers. The CPRE response to Leicestershire County Council's Consultation on an Accommodation Strategy for older people commended the County Council for attempting to address the problem of housing suitable for an increasingly ageing population. It called for a new approach by the County and District Councils with fresh policies and efforts to ensure that there is an adequate supply of this housing being provided in all developments. All new housing sites should provide some single storey dwellings (bungalows). 'Right to Buy' should not be allowed for social housing properties specifically designed for rent for the over 55s. The branch also suggested that any new developments should be protected from 'Buy to Let' by limiting the numbers available.

Updated walking guide

A fantastic updated guide to the 52 mile d'Arcy Dalton Way is available direct from CPRE Oxfordshire at www.cpreoxon.org.uk/resources. The d'Arcy Dalton Way, running from north of Banbury to south of Abingdon, is named after Col. W.P. d'Arcy Dalton, a notable defender of Oxfordshire's rights of way and the first chairman of CPRE's Rights of Way Group. This newly revised edition of Nick Moon's guide to the route is an essential companion to the unspoilt countryside, tranquil villages and wildlife along the way, and features eight bonus circular walks off the main route.

Current issues

Hampshire successes

CPRE North Hampshire's recent focus has been on prospective housing developments where they impact on greenfield territory and disfigure the local landscape. They have witnessed successes in Sherfield-on-Loddon (95 houses), Baughurst (145 houses) and Highclere (50 houses) - all either refused or withdrawn. They are supporting the proposed development on a brownfield site in Basingstoke which will produce a large number of new houses close to the centre of town.

CPRE South Downs and Central Hampshire helped defeat plans for 350 dwellings at Vale Farm, Pitt on the edge of Winchester. The District Group made a strong case explaining why there could be no planning justification for permitting development on a large site outside the settlement policy boundary, and which is not allocated for housing in the Local Plan, when there is a five-year supply of land for housing both for the city and Winchester District as a whole.

Positive Peaks

The Friends of the Peak District joined campaigners from the Save Longstone Edge Group (SLEG) for a walk and picnic at the end of September to celebrate the end of a long and hard-fought campaign to protect this beautiful part of the Peak District from illegal and hugely damaging quarrying. The area which was saved is now being restored and nature is beginning to cover over the extensive workings. We now look forward to the launch of the Friends of the Peak District Boundary Walk - 192 miles of stunning scenery following the route of the National Park boundary - which will be opened in Spring 2017.

stepbystep

Guide to good campaigning

Improving the design of rooftop solar

Equipping our homes with solar PV installations to capture the sun's energy is a simple and clean way of locally generating electricity. Even on cloudy days the PV system can still produce power to run household appliances and keep the lights on, reducing bills and making homes more resilient to power cuts.

But whereas we see less of the sun as we move into winter, we don't see less of the solar PV systems installed on our home or that of our neighbours. These installations are there 24/7, and are built to last for many years. As with all developments, solar systems can be installed in a variety of ways, and good design doesn't just happen by chance. Some installations can be considered 'unsightly' or outright 'eyesores'. These poorly designed systems tend to have the largest negative impacts on the visual appearance of a building or the wider landscape, at times resulting in neighbourhood disputes. Yet there are also installations that are beautifully designed, and add to the appearance of a building and its surroundings.

CPRE supports solar on buildings that is considerate of the landscape it's situated in. We argue for careful siting and sensitive design of solar systems, taking account of the character of the building and wider landscape, for example through installing solar slate tiles into a slate roof: closely resembling the colour and size of the roofing material. We need more widely available and

easily accessible principles to guide the design and siting of solar panels on buildings. For example, greenhouses can be ideal structures on which to integrate transparent solar PV glass. That's why CPRE and BRE (Building Research Establishment) National Solar Centre have developed a guide in which we illustrate principles of good design with a range of images of solar systems on buildings throughout the UK.

Deciding to use solar panels or tiles in your home is a great step, but the wide choice of systems can be daunting. To help you make up your mind, we've put together some quick pointers on working out what is best for you. The better the system fits with the building, the better it fits with its surroundings, keeping both you and your neighbours happy. Whichever stage you are at, here are our 10 principles to think about when it comes to choosing a product, working out how to position it and considering the wider environmental setting.

Solar PV (photovoltaics) can be installed through two approaches: Building Applied Photovoltaics (BAPV) which are installed to the building after its construction, or Building Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV) which refers to approaches that integrate solar PV into the building and its components.

1 Colour and contrast

Colour wise: the colour and finish of solar panels and how they reflect light should be chosen to fit in with the building or surroundings. The

majority of crystalline and thin film panels are dark blue or black; within these shades are a variety of finishes and tones to help make the panels unobtrusive.

2 Framing

To frame or not to frame:

panels without frames, or black framed panels, should be used where framed panels would detract from the building. Untreated or natural finished metal panel frames can look out of place and draw unnecessary attention to the panels. Many manufacturers sell panels with frames that are painted or anodised to blend in better with the building.

3 Size

Size it up: think about the size of all the parts of the system. It helps to match it with other building components, such as windows or building/roof stones - this can help your system to look more like an integral part of the roof, and fit in with the building and its surroundings.

4 Symmetry in panel layout

Super symmetry: the way in which panels are laid out in relation to one another can make a huge difference to the appearance of the system - symmetrical installations tend to work much better. If feasible, it's worth moving roof 'furniture', such as aerials and flues, to enable a symmetrical solar installation to be put in place.



St Paul's church in Devon is a great example of how solar energy can be sensitively used on heritage buildings in rural settings

5 Coverage

Edge to edge: think about how the installation relates to the shape of the roof or building. If it's possible, covering the whole roof is often the way to go. If the roof is not symmetrical, don't visually overload the roof – if you can't achieve a clean edge, then install fewer panels.

6 Complementing features

Get in style: consider the style of the building and, if possible, position the solar PV panels so they are in proportion to the building and its features. For example, they can resemble roofing elements such as roof lights or windows. Whether they are portrait or landscape can also make an impact. And if you are building a house from scratch, it's worth looking into BIPV and integrating the solar energy system into the design of the house.

7 Mounting system

Sitting pretty: solar PV applied to the roof will need a mounting system to hold the panels in place. The advantage of 'in-roof'

systems over 'on-roof' systems is that the mounting system is not visible. If you're using an on-roof system, pay particular attention to minimising the distance between the roof and the panel mounting system and cutting back protruding rails.

8 Roof positioning

Low visibility: for non-domestic buildings or houses with inverted pitch roofs, sometimes called London roofs or butterfly roofs, solar PV can be installed in the valley of a roof, or on roofs that are not visible from the ground or other buildings. In such situations where the panels are hard to see from the ground, less attention needs to be given to principles related to the product or application of the system.

9 Neighbouring solar roofs

Neighbourly love: solar PV on adjacent houses of the same type may look odd or out of place if the approaches are very different. For example, if neighbours use different sizes and colours of panels or position them differently in relation to the roofs, it can

have a significant impact. So start by taking a look at your neighbours' panels and see if you can find a similar style to fit with theirs.

The inevitable: of course, as more people install solar panels, some cumulative impact will occur. As technology develops it will be challenging, if not impossible, to create uniformity between newer installations and older systems on neighbouring homes.

10 Planning designations

The landscapes around you: small-scale solar installations do not normally require planning permission. For some buildings there may be special requirements if they are listed or located in a National Park, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site or conservation area. If in doubt, contact your local planning authority.

Find out more: This guide was based on the report *Ensuring Place-Responsive Design for Solar Photovoltaics on Buildings* produced for CPRE by BRE National Solar Centre with financial support from CPRE Gloucestershire. The report is available at www.cpre.org.uk/resources

Current issues

Future farmers

CPRE Devon attended the Churston Fatstock Show in November, an important annual event which is growing every year since it moved recently to Churston New Farm on the Brixham Peninsula. This year the branch donated the recently published book *22 Ideas That Saved The English Countryside* as the prize for the 'Exhibitor with the most points under 42 yrs of age'. The trophy and CPRE book was won by Emily Pearse whose spectacular Belgian Blue named Mr Darcy won Reserve Champion Beast in Show. Carole Box, Chair of CPRE Torbay District Group, spoke to Emily afterwards to learn that she is studying for a degree in Agriculture at Bridgewater. Carole said: "We wish Emily every success in her career and are delighted to see young and talented students embarking on agricultural careers. The next generation of farmers are so vital for Devon, not only to protect our landscape but also to put food on our plates. We must encourage and support our young farmers particularly with new ideas and innovations. We live in very unsettled times today and we strongly believe food security should be a priority for the UK".

CPRE Devon volunteers were delighted to have been chosen as one of the three charities in October's Community Matters green token scheme at Waitrose's Teignmouth store. They were subsequently presented with a cheque of £480 towards their campaigning, and thanked Waitrose and all the customers who supported them. The branch continues to support the Naturally Healthy Devon Schools project to encourage children to be outdoors and value the outdoor environment. Dr Margaret Hall, Chair of East Devon CPRE, said "the achievements of the project so far are very positive."

Current issues

Community support

The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Group of CPRE commissioned KVA Planning to comment, on behalf of CPRE Northern Lincolnshire, on an application for a pub, supermarket and up to 70 dwellings on the important green space of Top Field in Barton-upon-Humber. They were delighted to receive the following letter from a local resident:

"As a resident of Barton-upon-Humber I should like to express my thanks and appreciation for producing your timely report commenting on the NLC planning application PA/2016/1490 to build commercial & residential properties on the last natural open green space at the western side of Barton on Ferriby Road. You have put together a report that encompasses all of the concerns of the very many local residents who are opposed to this proposal in a clear and concise manner that illustrates not only what the loss of this beautiful natural space means to us all. But also the huge impact on the present infrastructure and the very nature of our town itself.

I just hope that NLC take a long and measured look at your report and have the conviction to come to the only right minded conclusion and abort this ill conceived proposal. We all know and understand the financial constraints that face this country, after all we have to live them everyday too. However this field and its wonderful boarder of mixed mature trees is worth so much more than pounds & pence, leave it for the present and future generations to enjoy. We must never forget if this building goes ahead our green space will be gone forever."

PARISHbeat

Effective solutions for your parish

Recognising parish efforts

CPRE branches around the country have been rewarding parish council initiatives in their latest award schemes. Towards the end of August, CPRE Nottinghamshire judged the entries for the Harry Johnson Award 2016 which is run by the branch with Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust.

Upton Parish Council was commended for its entry into the New Build category of two semi-detached bungalows at Upton for the Babthorpe Trust, which provides accommodation in the village for elderly individuals and couples with connections in the Parish. The need for additional bungalows was shown in the Upton Housing Need Survey of 2013 and a site was made available on the edge of the village for these and three future dwellings. The careful choice of traditional forms and materials, by designer

Martin Hubbard Associates Ltd (brick, natural slate, timber bays and porches) provide an attractive setting for residents. The judges also praised Collingham Parish Council for providing a new building as a permanent home for the village library, staffed by local volunteers.

At CPRE Hampshire, the Medstead Village Pond Project was highly commended in the branch's 10th annual Countryside Awards after the Parish Council entered the scheme in the Community and Voluntary category. Award sponsor Gemma Lacey from The Southern Co-operative, said: "The village pond provides a truly special place that can now be enjoyed by the local community and provides an educational opportunity for schoolchildren, with a pond dipping platform and wildlife information boards. This project really showed the power of collective action at a community level and what can be achieved as a result.

It is also a great showcase for neighbourhood plans in action."

Berry Hill Community Orchard won a CPRE Gloucestershire Award for the transformation of Forestry Commission land leased to West Dean Parish Council. An imaginative new space has been created thanks to community effort and enthusiasm, and generous help from local businesses. Paths have been laid out with benches, and varieties of Gloucestershire fruit trees and fruit bushes planted. Biodiversity is enhanced through bird and bat boxes and ground cover planting. The area is already well used by groups such as the local primary school and the Scouts. Jo Revill, secretary of Berry Hill Community Orchard said: "For our community to be receiving recognition for all that hard work, and from such a prestigious organisation as CPRE, is such an honour."

A worrying precedent in the Peak District

Friends of the Peak District and Hartington Parish Council were extremely disappointed by a Planning Inspector's October decision to allow a housing estate to be built on the edge of the village.

The proposal for 26 houses on the former Dove Dairy site was refused by the Peak District National Park Authority in 2015, and an appeal hearing took place in early 2016. A previous, similar scheme was refused on appeal several years previously. David Annat, Chairman of Hartington Parish Council commented.

"This is an extremely worrying precedent for National Parks and almost impossible to see how this can be in the public interest. It was opposed by the Parish Council and Community, 98% of the wider public, who wrote almost 200 letters opposing the scheme, and rejected by a planning committee made up of planning experts and elected and parish council representatives. So the democratic and public voice gave a resounding no to a scheme completely at odds with this historic village or local needs. Yet a single

individual can dictate we were all wrong."

Andrew Wood, planning officer for Friends of the Peak District, commented: "The site is out on a limb from the village, includes a conspicuously large house, twenty-one other private homes and a measly four affordable homes. The community in Hartington have spent years trying to secure more affordable homes and workshops, so that the site could really contribute to the life of the village. This is the wrong scheme, and it's deeply disappointing that it has been approved on appeal."

CAMPAIGNER

Recognition for latest award winners



John Denham, left, receives his Countryside Medal and Lifetime Achievement certificate from CPRE West Yorkshire chair David Cove

Earlier in 2016, CPRE Hampshire used its 50th anniversary AGM to reward one of its outstanding campaigners. Branch President, The Earl of Malmesbury presented a prestigious Countryside Medal to local countryside champion, Caroline Ford from Shedfield. Caroline was acknowledged for her services as a Trustee for eight years and as an active campaigner on local food and litter.

Caroline has been a member of CPRE since 1998 and a Trustee for the past eight years but will step down in 2016. She has been instrumental in redeveloping the branch website, which is now managed in-house, providing up to date information and an easy way to communicate its work. She has been the litter coordinator for Hampshire and has supported many groups throughout the county, including the Shedfield

Society, which first took part in CPRE's Stop the Drop campaign in March 2009. This is now an annual event, collecting on average 40 large bags of rubbish in under two hours from verges each year.

She has a passion for local food and started a local food web initiative in Bishops Waltham which looked at these connections and the benefits of providing and selling more local food. Caroline is also on the organising committee of the Taste of Wickham Festival – an annual festival showcasing the best in local food. Caroline is founder member, secretary and volunteer coordinator of the Bishops Waltham Action Group, formed in 2009 in response to proposals for a new Sainsbury's superstore in the village which were ultimately scrapped in 2015.

John Denham has been a CPRE member for some thirty years, holding a number of committee posts for CPRE West

Yorkshire during that time. Although he has now retired from an active role in the Branch's affairs, he still serves in the honorary position of Branch President. At the West Yorkshire Branch 90th Anniversary tea, John was presented with a CPRE Countryside Medal and a long service certificate. John has given a great deal of time, commitment and support to CPRE West Yorkshire over the years and still makes valuable contributions to the Branch newsletter.

John has been one of the leading voices for urban regeneration and Green Belt protection in West Yorkshire. In 2013, he told the Yorkshire Post: "We're not against housing developments, we want beautiful towns and villages to make beautiful countryside but we reckon this can be done without major incursions into Green Belt. It has protected towns and villages for many years and stopped them merging into one. That's particularly true between Leeds and Bradford."

In 2010, John was an early advocate for CPRE's campaign to bring back bottle deposits, having collected bottles for pocket money as a child, before working in the fledgling recycling industry: "When I was 15 I got a Saturday job working as a bottle basher at Ben Shaws, checking the bottles which had been returned. I would sit on a stool and bang the bottles against the side of a crate. If they cracked or smashed we would throw them away, though very few did. It was a very hi-tech system!"

Take action: Why not make sure the volunteers in your area are recognised by nominating them at www.cpre.org.uk/awards

Maldon successes

Local activists were celebrating this autumn when developers appeared to abandon hope of winning planning permission on two precious sites. Leech Memorial Garden is safe for now after repeated efforts - contested all the way by local campaigners - to push through an application for 70 houses behind it. The development would have ruined the tranquillity of the garden and adjacent open countryside, and threatened historic views to Beeleigh Abbey. Land at Maldon Hall Farm also appears safer after campaigners saw off repeated speculative applications to build 340 houses and a supermarket on it. The location, abutting Maldon's cemetery and including productive farmland, was particularly prized for its tranquillity. Developers recently withdrew their application in the face of strong opposition from local residents and other organisations including the Maldon Society and CPRE Essex. The leading force in both campaigns was the Leech Garden Hall Farm group of local residents including CPRE member Rosalind Oakley, who was praised by the branch and national CPRE staff for her passionate campaigning for the cause.

Dorset awards

CPRE Dorset has recently rewarded two of its leading campaigners. Janet Healy received an Outstanding Contribution Award for putting her research background to good use for CPRE in the East Dorset District. She responds to the Local Plan and large housing applications, and campaigns to protect the Green Belt in the District, where she maintains a strong CPRE presence despite not having a local group committee. Terry Stewart was presented with a Countryside Medal in recognition of his active campaigning over many years, working tirelessly on issues related to housing and wind turbines.

Current issues

Turbine plans 'invalid'

Following much hard work campaigners in Hartlepool were delighted to find an inquiry into three wind turbines has been cancelled. The 175m turbines would have been bigger than Blackpool Tower and visible from the rest of Teesside. The three applications (each for a single turbine but effectively one wind farm) were called in by the previous Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark, following a request from local residents who were assisted by CPRE North East Chair Richard Cowen.

A Public Inquiry was scheduled to commence on 4th October 2016. However, campaigners argued that the applications were invalid because of inadequate pre-application consultation and the Inspector appointed to report on this matter, Richard Clegg, agreed with them. As a result, all three applications have been declared invalid and the Public Inquiry has been cancelled. The time has now passed for the developers to make a legal challenge to the Inspector's decision.

Branch joins urban group

West Yorkshire is one of the most urban CPRE branches and so it is appropriate that they are participating in CPRE's Urban Network. Protection of urban green space is a high priority and the Branch will concentrate on this in their forward plan. They have identified the Aire and Calder rivers as potential green corridors and recreation areas and a feasibility study will see how this might be developed. The initial study will analyse a moderately short stretch of each river, identifying interested bodies and areas where strengthening would be beneficial.

INreview

Our perspective on countryside issues

Hazardous waste in Lancashire

On 5 October 2016 in the Court of Appeal at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, a local resident opposing the Whitemoss hazardous waste landfill extension was successful in gaining permission to bring a judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to allow the Development Consent Order.

CPRE Lancashire has supported the campaign for a review of the decision which the resident argued failed to take account of local opinion and important submissions against the project. After being refused several times in various courts, the resident's legal team had the chance to explain the case more fully on this occasion, to a judge, Lord Justice Lindblom, with planning expertise and a particular interest in the case.

"This case has implications for other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects elsewhere and could set an important precedent"

Claire Robinson of local, volunteer organisation ARROW (Action to Reduce and Recycle our Waste), which is also supporting the resident said: "The main issue was that the planning policy says there is a need in principle for hazardous waste sites, but the resident's legal team argued that this did not mean

that a developer could claim that there was a need for a site of any size in a specific location without proving that this specific site was needed. There was a question as to whether the Secretary of State was misreading the National Policy Statement for hazardous waste. The judge said that this case has implications for other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects elsewhere and needs to be heard in full because it could set an important precedent."

The resident has argued that the case "will directly affect other communities where developers use the Nationally Significant Infrastructure planning process to set aside local objections and ignore local planning processes in order to get the outcome they want." The judge decided that the resident's case was arguable and gave him permission to proceed to a full judicial review, expected to be heard next spring in the Court of Appeal in front of three High Court judges.

Circumventing local planning

The resident's website for the crowdfunding appeal (which CPRE Lancashire has contributed to) argues that when plans for the extension were rejected by both West Lancashire Borough Council and Lancashire County Council during a local plan process, the applicant presented an even larger proposal to enable it to be considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. By substantially increasing the amount of hazardous waste the site was proposed to handle

(up to 150,000 tonnes per annum for 20 years), the site operator, Whitemoss Landfill Ltd, was able to circumvent the local planning authority and directly apply to the National Infrastructure Planning Commission. Regrettably, on 15 May 2015, the Secretary of State for the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), granted a Development Consent Order for the enlargement of the existing hazardous waste landfill site.

CPRE Lancashire does not believe the Whitemoss site to be nationally significant, as there are surplus, better facilities, elsewhere in the North West. The branch has consistently opposed the western extension of the site, most recently responding to the Environment Agency's consultation on the Environmental Permit for the site in April. They have argued that the site is a long-term risk to the environment, to the health of those who live nearby and to the safety of food grown in West Lancashire. The existing landfill site, in the West Lancashire Green Belt south of Skelmersdale, was originally granted planning permission in 1977 for peat extraction with restoration using inert waste. It was expected to close by the turn of the last century, but the site area has been increased, the scope of waste materials widened, and the life of the site extended several times since. CPRE Lancashire continues to advocate the recycling of waste and argue that landfill is the least desirable method of disposing of it.

Find out more: Follow the campaign at www.cprelancashire.org.uk/campaigns/energy-and-waste/waste

QandA

The answers you need

Permitted development rights

Q Old farmers' barns are being converted to houses in open countryside where new houses would not normally be allowed. Our local authority says that there is little or no scope to resist them as they get automatic planning permission. Is this true?

A Since 2013 planning regulations, known as the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO), have made it much easier to convert agricultural buildings, such as barns, to houses. Rather than full planning permission, the developer now only needs to apply for 'prior approval'. The scope for a local authority to refuse 'prior approval' is strictly limited. Further Government guidance, titled *Permitted development rights for the change of use of agricultural buildings*, was published online in March 2015. The new guidance prevents a local authority from refusing a proposal merely on the grounds that the conversion would create an isolated new house in the open countryside.

However, there are checks and balances that are

intended to prevent abuse of the new rights. These have meant that, even under the more permissive new guidance, a significant proportion of applications for barn conversions have been rejected, with the rejection upheld by planning inspectors at appeal.

First, the regulations require that the existing structure of the building must be capable of bearing the load of any new house without a substantial rebuild or replacement. Internal works to the building such as flooring and layout are outside the definition of development. But if you have reason to believe that a complete *external rebuild* is likely to take place rather than the *conversion* of an existing building, you can refer to the November 2016 Hibbitt High Court judgment to argue that the application should be refused. The case involved a barn with a light steel frame that was largely open to the elements on three sides, which was unlikely to support a new house without a complete rebuild. Also, if the application is in designated Green Belt, it is relevant that the National Planning Policy Framework

allows for the *re-use* of buildings but not their *replacement* if the proposal is to convert an agricultural building to a house.

Second, the building must be both on an established agricultural unit, and have been solely in use for agriculture, on 20 March 2013 or for at least 10 years before the proposed development if the building was erected at a later date. Conversion proposals have been refused on the basis that the building was being wholly or partly used for something other than agriculture. Examples of this have included the keeping of recreational horses, which are not an agricultural use in planning law; and where works towards the building of a house took place before March 2013.

Third, the guidance also gives some scope to refuse an application on grounds that the proposal is 'impractical' or 'undesirable'. In Derbyshire Dales district, a planning inspector found insufficient evidence that the highway impacts of a proposal were satisfactory, meaning that the proposal was judged to be 'undesirable'.

Green Belt openness

Campaigners often talk about protecting the 'openness' of the Green Belt, and CPRE North Yorkshire have been involved in a case involving an industrial scale poultry farm in the York Green Belt.

Their objection makes some interesting points about openness.

The objection noted a 2014 judgement over a cemetery and crematorium in the Nottinghamshire Green

Belt (*Timmins v Gelding* BD EWHC 654) that stated: "any construction harms openness quite irrespective of its impact in terms of obtrusiveness or its aesthetic attractions or qualities. A beautiful building is still an affront to openness, simply because it exists. The same applies to a building that is camouflaged or rendered unobtrusive by felicitous

landscaping" (para 74).

The application the branch is fighting consists of six large warehouse type sheds, an access road, grain silos, diesel tank, woodchip store, site office and biomass boiler, as well as parking. It is estimated that 280,000 chickens would be moved every eight weeks.

Find out more about the campaign at <http://www.cprenorthyorkshire.co.uk/>

Current issues

Local nature reserve saved

Working alongside local groups, CPRE Essex helped fight off an application to convert a local nature reserve into a commercial fishing business. The plan was rejected by Maldon District Council, whose decision notice included several points that were used in the CPRE Essex submission. The application by Mr J Purdy to establish commercial fishing, involved installing 63 fishing platforms, around the perimeter of the Heybridge Lakes. The lakes, originally gravel pits, are a Local Nature Reserve within the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Conservation Area and are home to wide range of birdlife and a refuge for many migrating species in autumn and spring.

The lakes sit in a natural landscape and are enjoyed by many residents and visitors from further afield. Had the application been granted the threat to wildlife and urbanisation of the area (by 24 hour car parking, a toilet block and potentially a clubhouse) would have degraded and ultimately destroyed the landscape and tranquillity of the Lakes. The decision also noted that the application would fail to protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the locality contrary to the requirements of policies in the Local Plan.

In preparing his objection on behalf of CPRE Essex, John Drake consulted with several local groups, one of which – the Friends of Heybridge Gravel Pits - have decided to press now for full Nature Reserve status for the Lakes, thereby conferring greater intrinsic protection. John has offered to write a supporting letter on behalf of CPRE Essex.

Current issues

Dark skies forum

A forum promoting the protection of dark skies was held by the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in October. The event was in support of CPRE's latest dark sky mapping, which revealed that Swindon and surrounding cities have a very bright impact, with areas such as Harwell Enterprise Centre and Chieveley Services causing light pollution to spill out across the county.

Rose Somerset, communications officer for North Wessex Downs AONB, said "people are starting to appreciate the darkness around them. When you look at the maps it is encouraging to see that planning restrictions and making people aware is making a difference." Bob Mizon from the Campaign for Dark Skies presented Dan Oakley from the South Downs National Park with a certificate for sterling service to the cause. The South Downs National Park has been awarded International Dark Sky Reserve status by encouraging their local authorities to comply with Dark Skies Standards.

The AONB suggested using the CPRE maps to lobby to local councils about light pollution, inform future neighbourhood plans, and provide schools with an educational resource to illustrate the risks of light pollution and value of dark skies. The forum heard that a properly dark sky doesn't just provide the perfect environment for star gazing, but protects nocturnal wildlife as well. Moths and bats need adequate darkness to live a healthy lifestyle. To support the nocturnal wildlife in your garden, the AONB recommends buying bulbs under 500 lumens (leaving them turned off where possible!) and planting pale-coloured flowers to attract evening insects.

Find out more: View the *Night Blight* maps at <http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/>

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood plans allow people to decide the future development of their area, including where new homes and businesses should be built, what they should look like and what local infrastructure is needed. They are community-led planning frameworks for guiding future development, regeneration and the conservation of an area.

Putting planning power in the hands of local people involves the whole community, from plan drafting to referendum stages. Empowering local people through neighbourhood planning has positive outcomes on attitudes towards and delivery of new development. The average percentage of 'yes' votes in the first 170 neighbourhood planning referendums was 89%. Government analysis also suggests that housing delivery is enhanced in areas benefiting

from a neighbourhood plan. The latest figures from the Department of Communities and Local Government show that plans for housebuilding are more than 10% higher in the first areas with a neighbourhood plan as opposed to only the council's local plan.

Neighbourhood plans can therefore be popular and effective, but they suffer from a lack of substance in planning law; a lack of resources; unnecessary complexity; and issues with conformity and precedence. In particular, the integrity and popularity of neighbourhood planning is at risk from perceptions that policies and proposals can easily be overruled by local planning authorities.

The Neighbourhood Planning Bill

CPRE is generally supportive of the Bill, published in September, which offers the opportunity

to simplify and strengthen the planning system, making it more effective and accessible. The Bill also contains provisions relating to planning conditions and compulsory purchases. CPRE generally supports the objective of removing the burden of unreasonable conditions from developers, but essential environmental and heritage safeguards need to be retained; we also support the improvement of compulsory purchase procedures as these

"The Bill fails to send a clear message about the weight that should be attached to neighbourhood plan policies"



Community-led action through neighbourhood plans can help provide affordable housing for local people and promote innovative design

are often critical in enabling the successful implementation of brownfield regeneration.

However, the Bill fails to take the opportunity to send a clear message about the weight that should be attached to neighbourhood plan policies by local planning authorities (LPAs). Communities are holding back from undertaking neighbourhood planning because this depends upon the long-term commitment of volunteers who are concerned that the effort will simply not be rewarded with favourable planning decisions. The enterprise of neighbourhood planning is at risk, and Government must reinforce its commitment to “give more power to local people” through a few small changes to legislation and policy.

A ‘neighbourhood right to be heard’

An amendment was promoted to the then Housing and Planning Bill that would have given neighbourhood planning bodies a limited right of appeal against the approval of development that conflicted with made or well-advanced neighbourhood plans. That ‘neighbourhood right of appeal’ amendment fell due to understandable concerns about introducing a third-party right of appeal into the planning system. However, the Government did recognise the concern the proposal was intended to address, and committed to ‘returning to this issue’. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the issue is being addressed in the Neighbourhood Planning Bill.

“Where communities have gone to the effort of neighbourhood planning they should be protected from speculative proposals”

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Neighbourhood planning can be used to help retain the unique character and green spaces of rural communities

In light of this, we are promoting a new approach intended to reassure communities that the neighbourhood plans they devote their time and resources towards preparing are given due weight in the consideration of planning applications by:

1. Placing a duty on local planning authorities to explicitly pay special attention to the policies of neighbourhood plans when considering speculative planning applications;
2. Empowering neighbourhood planning bodies to influence the attention paid by local planning authorities to neighbourhood plans in a meaningful way;
3. Providing the opportunity, through a call-in direction or similar, for independent evaluation of the merits of a proposal that the local planning authority is minded to approve, limited to certain circumstances, such as the extent to which the neighbourhood plan is positive towards housing development.

Giving communities confidence

Current analysis shows that current neighbourhood planning measures are not enough to convince communities that neighbourhood plans will be given due consideration. Research undertaken for DCLG’s Neighbourhood Planning Mobilisation project by ACRE and CPRE found that communities are often put off

preparing a neighbourhood plan as a result of concerns that developers would take advantage of uncertainty while a neighbourhood plan was being prepared, or that local planning authorities would not always be robust in upholding neighbourhood plan policies in decisions on planning applications.

Local planning authorities could be opposed to particular neighbourhood plan policies; they could also choose to set aside a neighbourhood plan if there has been a failure to maintain an up-to-date local plan or housing targets. Where communities have gone to the effort of planning for development to meet identified needs, they should be protected from speculative development proposals, and there should be a degree of protection while they are working on their plans. We need to address these issues in order to encourage communities to put in the effort into producing a neighbourhood plan.

We feel the neighbourhood right to be heard amendment will assure communities that their efforts will be recognised by local planning authorities. We hope ministers will heed the backbench support for our amendment; by doing so they can improve local trust in the planning process, and encourage more communities to adopt their own neighbourhood plans.

Current issues

Neighbourhood Planning advice

CPRE Leicestershire’s latest newsletter contains some very handy information from a member responding to frequently asked questions about neighbourhood planning:

“Making your community plan doesn’t have to cost the Parish Council anything at all. Grants of up to £9k are available from Locality (<http://locality.org.uk/projects/building-community/>) and it is also possible to secure up to £10,000 from Awards for All (www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/funding/Awards-For-All). Locality also offers free expert help – our PC has just had a helpful “health check” on its draft plan. You can’t rely on contracted consultants to drive the plan although their help is invaluable. A consultant will get you started and help all the way through, but people from the community are needed to keep it moving and provide vital local knowledge. If you are driving the process there is no reason why it can’t be completed comfortably within 18 – 24 months. Larger communities inevitably may take longer.

You can buy in expertise with your grant funding - that is what it is for. It is essential to have planning expertise on board to help form the policies in the plan - to say what the community wants in a way that can be used by planners. There are some consultants who can help with this. Your district/ borough council will advise you. A Neighbourhood Plan can’t stop development but it gives the community the opportunity to build a picture about how and where and what your neighbourhood wants to develop and what local characteristics it wants to protect.

Find out more: Read the full article in CPRE Leicestershire’s excellent newsletter at www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk/

MATTER of fact

Support for your case

Changing behaviour to eradicate littering

Around 90% of people in England now take their own bags with them when food shopping as a result of the plastic carrier bag charge, new research by Cardiff University has revealed. This has increased from 70% before the charge was introduced.

In addition to this, less than 1 in 15 shoppers (7%) are now regularly taking single-use carrier bags at the checkout, as opposed to 1 in 4 shoppers before the charge. The study (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council) showed that the charge made shoppers stop and think whether they really need to use a single-use plastic bag for their shopping. 1 in 2 people now regularly take their own bags when shopping for clothes and healthcare products, compared to only 1 in 10 people before the carrier bag charge was introduced.

Results also showed an increase in support in England for the carrier bag charge since it was introduced, rising from 51% to 62%, as well as an increase in support for other potential waste reduction charges, such as a charge on plastic water bottles. Professor Wouter Poortinga, who led the research, said: "We've seen that the charge has become increasingly popular with the English population since it was introduced, and that it has changed attitudes towards waste policies as well. This suggests that other similar policies could be successfully

implemented, such as a deposit return scheme on plastic bottles or a charge on disposable coffee cups."

A window of opportunity to make plastic waste arguments

Elena Sautkina, an expert in environmental psychology and one of the academics behind Cardiff University's research, told the BBC that there is a "window of opportunity" to bring in further potential charges against plastic, saying "people are sensitive right now to the plastic waste arguments." Her research has shown that since the plastic bag charge was introduced public opinion in England has grown towards introducing a similar scheme for plastic bottles. She surveyed a representative group of people spanning England, Wales and Scotland one month before the 5p bag charge was introduced, a month afterwards, and six months afterwards. Her results saw what she termed as "strong support" for a plastic bottle deposit scheme grow over time in all three countries - from 33% to 39% in England, 44% to 50% in Wales and from 25% to 34% in Scotland.

Following high profile backing for a return to bottle deposits from CPRE's new President Emma Bridgewater, the co-leader of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas MP, tabled an early day motion in November calling for the introduction of such a scheme as part of the

National Litter Strategy. The motion noted that a staggering 38.5 million plastic bottles are used every day in the UK and that, along with cans, plastic bottles account for approximately 40 per cent, by volume, of all litter found in our environment. It also pointed out that Deposit Return Systems (DRS) were commonplace in the UK until the 1980s, and are successfully used in 11 other European countries with recycling rates often in excess of 90 per cent.

The Welsh Assembly debated the possibility of introducing a DRS in Wales in December 2015, while in March the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) called for the introduction of a DRS after a record amount of litter was found on UK beaches last year. A report by the MCS showed that the number of plastic bottles found on beaches had increased by over 43 per cent between 2014 and 2015.

Scotland asks 'have you got the bottle?'

In June 2015, Richard Lochhead, Scotland's Environment Secretary, called for a UK-wide DRS to be introduced in a meeting with then Environment Secretary Liz Truss. His call followed a study by the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS) that claimed nearly 80 per cent of the Scottish Public would support such a system to reduce litter and boost recycling. The APRS-led campaign for a bottle deposit system,

"The bag charge has changed attitudes towards waste policies, suggesting that a deposit return scheme on plastic bottles could be successfully implemented in the UK"

Have You Got The Bottle?, points out that US research has shown the typical rate of drinks container litter has been reduced by 70%-84% in states that use deposit return, and the overall amount of litter has typically been reduced by 34%-47%.

Even further afield, with 90% support from New South Wales residents, the Australian state will introduce hundreds of 'reverse vending machines' from July 2017. Their container deposit scheme is projected to generate \$65 million a year for charities, schools and sporting groups. Environment Minister Rob Stokes said it was a "historic decision" to move ahead with a scheme that had been put in the "too hard basket" by successive governments.

Find out more: Read Shaun Spiers' informative blog on the issue at <https://cpreviewpoint.wordpress.com/2016/08/>