

OUTLOOK

Spring 2012

Online www.CPRENorthants.org.uk

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Spring cleaning our villages

Litter picking remains as popular as ever

We have been publicising our spring Stop the Drop campaign for a number of years now. There have been undoubted improvements to some areas, but unfortunately we cannot yet claim overall success. It is pleasing that our spring campaign this year has produced entries to our Litter Heroes Awards from new villages, and that the general level of enthusiasm is still as high as in previous years.



Scenes from this spring's community litter picks: clockwise from top left - Nassington, Wellingborough, Mears Ashby and Tansor

The judging for this year's CPRE Northamptonshire Litter Heroes Awards will take place in the summer. We have some strong contenders!

Chairman's campaign report

Sir Paul Hayter has been busy with litter, HSR and planning

The last week of March was an active time for the chairman of CPRE Northamptonshire. In four days I led a CPRE village litter pick, attended a Consultative Forum on high speed rail and recorded a TV interview for BBC1's Sunday Politics show in the East.

The litter pick was mostly very rewarding, with 15 adults and 8 children clearing 30 sacks of rubbish from the roads and playgrounds of the village in South Northants where I live. The only disagreeable feature was the large amount of dog poo I had to collect, neatly tied into plastic bags and dumped in the verge. It is amazing that anyone can think that this is what is meant by clearing up after their dog.

All along the projected high speed rail line from London to the West Midlands, Consultative Forums have been convened by HS2 Ltd to give representatives of local councils and pressure groups (one representative from each) the chance to discuss how to reduce the adverse effects of the line, if it is built. As a representative of CPRE, I joined the Forum for the stretch between Greatworth and Boddington. The first meeting took place in Aston-le-Walls Village Hall with an attendance of about 25. It was approached in a very constructive manner by all those present: once it was recognised that attendance did not in any way imply acceptance of the line, the attendees began the long process of discussing how to make the line more bearable. Further meetings are expected about every two months for the next couple of years, and I intend to go on attending.

My TV interview, broadcast on Sunday April 1, concerned the reaction of CPRE Northamptonshire to the Government's newly published National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Government's laudable aim of simplifying more than a thousand pages of planning guidance into a single document of about 60 pages was in danger of proving a disaster. CPRE, the National Trust and most environmental bodies protested loudly at the first draft, which looked set to offer developers a free for all in the countryside. After a vocal campaign, the final document was greatly improved and I was able to give it a general welcome. For a county like Northants it was vital that the intrinsic value of ordinary countryside should be recognised as a core principle in planning decisions; not just designated green belts, national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty - of which Northants has none. This was an amendment which we supported. So too was the continued identification of brownfield land as a preferred location for new building; the detailed definition of "sustainable development", with its balance between social, economic and environmental factors; and the additional time given to councils to agree local plans as the basis for future planning decisions.

When asked whether Northants had anything to fear from the NPPF, I said that I thought it could be made to work, provided that speculative building was not permitted without adequate infrastructure, constructed in advance, and provided that the Government planning inspectors stop overruling local planning authorities and forcing Northamptonshire to be covered with industrial scale wind turbines.

Is nowhere safe from wind farms?

The go-ahead from the Planning Inspectorate for Lyveden New Bield is alarming

The decision of the Inspector to overturn East Northants District Council's rejection of the four-turbine installation at Lyveden New Bield (Sudborough) is inexplicable. A few days later, we learned of the Kettering BC's decisions to approve turbines at both Glendon and Cranford. These decisions were accompanied by a press release declaring that Kettering was now a "green town", which implies that we shall see a proliferation of applications and then approvals for wind turbines across the borough.

The Lyveden decision has provoked bitter correspondence in the press both locally and nationally. It suggests that no part of the countryside is safe from these industrial scale developments, described by the inspector as alien and incongruous in the landscape. Northamptonshire is at risk of becoming the wind farm capital of England, with 21 wind farms installed, approved or announced. Yet it is one of the least windy parts of the country.

On Lyveden, we at CPRE Northants share the horror of the National Trust and English Heritage at the threat posed by 400ft wind turbines to heritage sites and precious landscapes. The inspector acknowledges that damage will be caused but his hands are tied by the Government policies within which he has to operate.



If you are not already a stakeholder, please join these lucky winners and support us for £1 per month. You will be protecting the Northamptonshire countryside - and might win some cash. [Details are on our website.](#)

Winter prizewinners

January: Alexandra Rice of Chalfont St Peter, Bucks and Max Nicholls of Geddington

February: Cyril Young of Kettering and Anne Usher of Aynho

March: Helen Garton of Hulcote, R Burnham of Clipston and Clare Pollak of Sulgrave

The inspector justified his decision by saying that, in relation to nearby villages, “any reasonable observer would recognise the settlement and the church as features of historic, architectural and cultural significance, and the wind turbines as modern, large-scale, functional impositions designed to capture energy from the wind. The presence of the wind turbines would be something of a distraction”. So that’s alright then.

The Government is giving precedence to national targets for onshore wind energy generation over local planning decisions. Subsidies for developers and landowners are encouraging wind turbines in unsuitable places, ignoring both landscape damage and the limited amount of electricity they generate.

From our press release after the decision: “We remember the Arctic temperatures of December 2010 when the wind did not blow. Are we going to sacrifice our precious countryside and heritage for the benefit of developers and an unreliable source of power? If the conditions at Lyveden New Bield are not worthy of protection, is anywhere safe?”

Local Food and Drinks Awards

CPRE Northamptonshire will continue to sponsor the ‘Northamptonshire Local Food Hero’ during 2012/13.

The categories are: New Local Product of the Year, New Local Drink of the Year, Artisan Local Product/Drink of the Year, Restaurant of the Year, Pub or Bar Restaurant of the Year, Community Pub of the Year - Town, Community Pub of the Year - Rural, Booker Chef of the Year, Young Chef of the Year, Spice Chef of the Year, Local Food Hero and Northamptonshire Jubilee Breakfast.

The nomination form can be found at www.northamptonshireletyourselfgrow.com

What is happening to the planning system in Northamptonshire?

Alan Mayes has contributed this review

As many of you will know, significant changes have taken place to the planning system in England over the past year. First there was the consultation on the Localism Bill and then the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework. This was followed by the Localism Act and, at the end of March, the published National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF has effectively swept away all the thousands of pages of Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements and replaced them with a 60 page single document.

How will it affect planning in Northamptonshire? In order to try and answer this question and to build up a picture of what is happening in each local planning authority, the CPRE Technical Secretaries team has written to the Chief Executives of each of the county’s District Councils, posing a series of questions.

The foremost question relates to the state of each authority’s Local Plan. Under the Localism Act and NPPF, if no up-to-date Local Plan exists, then there is no yardstick against which planning applications can be judged. This could lead to approvals being granted that do not protect our countryside or enhance our towns.

Other questions relate more specifically to the Localism Act, which will remove the old Regional Strategies and offer more decision making at a local level. We have asked authorities how prepared they are to respond to communities that wish to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, and how many villages in each area have prepared either a Village Plan or Village Design Statement. More strategic questions relate to each authority’s retailing policies and the location of employment in an area. Finally, we ask how they will define the term sustainable - a heavily used word in the NPPF.

At the time of writing, responses to our letters have arrived from some, but not yet all of the District Councils. One important change that has emerged from the authorities in the south and west is the cessation of the West Northants Development Corporation as a joint planning authority from 1st April.



Bluebell time in Whistley Woods

Crème Caramel

We hope that our Local Foods recipe in last quarter's Outlook went down well, in every sense. Here is another, this time from Sheena Harris, one of our Local Foods award winners in 2010/11.

Sheena delivers eggs to local villages from her business 'Definitely Different' based on her farm, Overstone Grange in Moulton, which also stocks jams and chutneys. Her recipe includes eggs from the farm:

For the caramel: put 6 tbsp sugar, 6 tbsp water into a heavy based pan and boil until the liquid turns to a caramel colour. Pour into a one pint dish.

For the custard: beat together well 1 pint of milk, 1 tsp vanilla, 1 tbsp sugar and 6 eggs. Pour into dish on top of caramel. Sprinkle or grate nutmeg over the top.

Place in a bain-marie in the oven at 170 deg C for approx one hour or until firm to touch. Leave to cool and then turn out in to a serving dish.

Enjoy!

All planning powers have now returned to South Northamptonshire District Council, Northampton Borough Council and Daventry District Council.

We hope that at the end of this consultation process, a clearer picture will emerge of how the planning system will operate in the county under the new legislation. We will keep you informed.

Do you believe that the NPPF is a welcome simplification? Alternatively, has simplification created uncertainty and ambiguity - and therefore a retirement savings plan for planning barristers?

Please let us have your thoughts - info@CPRENorthants.org.uk.

Are you a primary school parent, teacher or governor?

A number of schools have now submitted their entries for our Litter Poster competition. If yours is one - thank you. If not, please encourage your school to send us entries for our Litter Poster competition. **We have now extended the entry deadline to the end of May**, because there was an address error in the factsheet sent out by NCC.

There are substantial prizes to be won by both schools and pupils, and entry is free. The flyer (below) has gone to all primary schools in the county, but more copies can be requested from schools@CPRENorthants.org.uk or 01858 433136. More details about our Schools Rubbish campaign are on www.cprenorthants.org.uk/primaryschools.

CPRE National Office has moved

The new address is: Campaign to Protect Rural England, 5-11 Lavington Street, London SE1 0NZ.

The phone number is unchanged: 020 7981 2800.

The move will reduce the high cost of leasing office space in central London, while retaining proximity to central Government.

Summer dates for your calendar

Events: Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org.uk or 01858 433136

Saturday June 9

Explore the gardens of Titchmarsh House, near Kettering, by kind permission of Sir Ewan and Lady Harper. Tickets £10, which includes a garden tour, wine, soft drinks and canapés

Tuesday July 3

Lings Wood Environmental Centre, Northampton: AGM 5.00 pm Followed at 6.30 pm by the presentation of awards for School Poster competition.

(Invitations for both of these events were included in this mailing of Outlook)

Looking ahead to Christmas: Carols at Cranford this year will be on December 12.

How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign

LITTER POSTER COMPETITION
 SPRING TERM 2012

CPRE Northamptonshire invites entries from primary school children to a Poster Competition that is a key part of our initiative "How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign".

SCHOOL COMPETITION

- First prize - a cheque for £500 and commemorative plaque
- Second prize - a cheque for £250

The prize money is to be spent on educational resources, at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The prizes will be awarded to the school that, in the opinion of the judging panel, is responsible for the most inspiring collection of entries. The judges will not necessarily be impressed by the school with the most entries, or the best artwork; they will be looking for the school where children have really responded to the message that litter imperils wildlife, debases our environment and degrades the quality of life of us all.

PUPIL COMPETITION

- 3 age group categories - Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6
- First prize in each category - £25 Amazon gift voucher and CPRE certificate
- Highly Commended £15 gift vouchers for best runners-up

The judging panel will award prizes to children on the intrinsic merit of their posters.

PRESENTATION

Prizes will be presented at an event in May 2012, to which local press will be invited. Winning posters, and a selection of others, will be added to our website. We will identify the school of origin, but not individual children.

Please send A4 posters (which unfortunately are not returnable) to the address below before April 1st, 2012. Ensure that the back of each poster is labelled with the child's name, year group and school.



Northamptonshire
Campaign to Protect Rural England

PO Box 7929
Market Harborough
LE16 9XW

Email: schools@CPRENorthants.org.uk
Telephone: 01858 433136

Outlook editors:
 Sue Baylis & Sally Hanrahan
 Published by: Peter Hopkins
 Comments to: info@CPRENorthants.org.uk