

OUTLOOK

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Autumn 2011

Online www.CPRENorthants.org.uk

Our website is re-launched

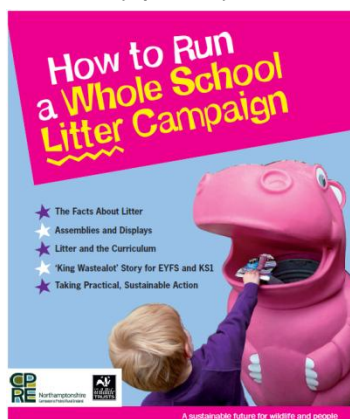
Schools litter campaign is now a major section

The third incarnation of CPRE Northamptonshire's website is now in place. From modest beginnings in the dial-up age, through an amateur effort worthy of the digital world of five years ago, we now have a professional design worthy of the broadband age.

The new design is not only much fresher and cleaner, it is much simpler for our volunteers to keep up to date. It was created for us by the Northampton company in.house.media, which has built upon the previous content with such good results.



Our ambitions were first to create a website that would satisfy our established needs, and then to add a major section that would appeal to tech-savvy primary schoolchildren. Our litter campaigning has to reach this age group, who are much more comfortable with smart boards and graphics tablets than leaflets and local newspapers.



The Education Pack, free to Northants Primary Schools (contact Schools@CPRENorthants.org.uk)

We have invited every primary school in the county to consider running a school litter campaign during Spring Term 2012. Our generous local sponsors - Margaret Giffen Trust and the Wilson Foundation - have funded our adaption of a litter campaign Education Pack, which was originally created by the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and CPRE. This provides children with a fun way to learn about the harmful effects of litter on wildlife. The online element of this project is the Schools Rubbish campaign, which has quizzes, interactive games and teachers' resources. It also has a way of sharing photographs and comments about animals endangered by litter, a topic which so appeals to children.

The new website has a slightly different name (or URL): we have added the country code (.uk) to make us www.CPRENorthants.org.uk, in line with other county Branch CPRE websites and with our national organisation. Please do visit us and let us know your views, using the Contact Us section.

Planning

The National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Currently there is a major triangular struggle on the draft National Planning Policy Framework. A coalition of countryside groups, most notably CPRE and the National Trust, is fighting to retain the use of the planning system to protect our countryside, against the building lobby which has persuaded the Government that the country's economic recovery depends on unfettered development. Of course, it's not as simple as that...

CPRE is not and never has been anti-development. We believe that good quality housing, and especially affordable housing, is vital both to the rural economy and to the quality of life of those who want to live in the countryside. We are determinedly anti-sprawl. We don't like treasured landscapes being desecrated so that landowners can put up a few executive houses and then retire to sunny climes. We don't believe house-builders who say they have to build on fields, when they are sitting on enormous banks of land, which they are not developing because in this economic climate the profit margins are unacceptable to them.



We do believe that the planning system is ripe for overhaul: while it has been effective over the decades, it has not been efficient.

Perhaps it is even more complicated than a triangular fight. The Government corner is, naturally, political. Many commentators have referred to a Treasury that has swallowed the house-builders' line: economic growth will magically leap if only the tiresome brownfield before greenfield policy could be put aside. Other Government ministers - including the Prime Minister - have made assertions that the country's green belts, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are safe. Such assertions are of no value to our Northamptonshire countryside, which doesn't have them.

If the outcome of the current consultation on the draft NPPF is that

it passes into law, the threat to our landscapes is very great and certainly genuine. Sir Paul Hayter has written to all seven of the Northamptonshire MPs expressing our alarm at the proposals. We accept the main policy objectives, such as simplification of planning policy, encouragement of affordable housing and support for the rural economy, but we consider that the draft NPPF will not deliver them. We believe it is a fallacy to blame the current planning system for the failure to build enough houses.

Sir Paul's letter then lists defects in the NPPF which we believe have to be corrected. These are:

- the presumption in favour of sustainable development, without a definition of "sustainable"
- the illogicality of calling the permanent loss of agricultural land "sustainable"
- the need to protect countryside for its intrinsic value and not because it has been designated in a particular way
- the move away from "brownfield first"
- disallowing the lack of adequate transport facilities as a reason to refuse development, and
- the irresponsibility of allowing development in the absence of a local plan based on the NPPF.

You can read the full text of these letters on our [website news section, What's Going On](#).

If the proposals become law while some councils lack an up-to-date plan and others lack the resources to create one, a policy vacuum is likely. If this happens, developers will certainly use it to their advantage. If you agree with us, PLEASE MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN to your MP and through him/her, to Government. The formal consultation period has now ended, but the debate is continuing.



If you have been a 50/50 stakeholder this year, thank you very much. If you have been one of the many winners, congratulations! Please make a point of renewing your membership for 2012. Or, make a resolution now to join for the first time. [Details are on our website](#).

Summer prizewinners

July: *No draw made (double prizes in December)*

August: Mrs P Flory of Haselbech, Clementine Harrison of Barnes, London, Brian Worton of Hollowell

September: Oliver Scarfe of Old, Deborah Hayter of Charlton, John Day of Spratton

Already we have heard from a planning officer who believes that, because a full survey of the requirements for building land over the next six years has been completed, his council will be able to defend a refusal for development, if taken to appeal. CPRE Northamptonshire does not share this interpretation of the proposals as published.

Planning highlights from the Districts

- There is a scheme for a new canal arm from the Grand Union Canal to Daventry town centre, which should be beneficial and encourage regeneration.
- An outline application has been made for a 376 dwelling development, with a primary school, at the eastern end of Buckton Fields, Boughton. The principal issue is the inadequacy of the local road network to cope even with the existing traffic load.
- A residential development proposal has re-emerged at Brampton Lane, Boughton, in the form of a 1,050 dwelling scheme. The developer is leaning on the NPPF, as currently drafted, in support of the new application. The site has now been nominated by the Joint Planning Unit as one of the sustainable urban extensions of Northampton.
- We have responded to the developer’s application for the part of Priors Hall in East Northants and suggested that this should be delayed until more progress had been made on the main site.
- East Northants Council has now adopted the Oundle and Rural North plan.
- The plan for Rushden, Higham Ferrers and Irthlingborough will now include Raunds and will be known as the Four Towns Plan.
- There are two applications relating to Thrapston. The first covers the new market on a site north of the old IKEA warehouse, out of the centre where Sainsbury’s want to establish a supermarket, and the second for the demolition of the buildings on the original site. While some people oppose the Sainsbury’s plan, others take the view that it could re-invigorate the town centre. We have written stressing the importance of maintaining the full functioning of the market during the transition period.
- Wind turbines: an application for the Burton Wold extension has been submitted, as has the Chelveston appeal. Supplementary information has been requested on the Cranford site. Building is expected to start at Rushton in 2012, but concerns have been expressed over wind levels and viability.
- Braybrooke Travellers’ site: this covers an area of 42 acres - as large as the village itself. It has been sub-divided into 100 plots, a number of which have been developed. The local residents’ group (RAID) wants to limit further illegal development. A key issue is the ability of Kettering Borough to find alternative sites to which the travellers could move. CPRE Northamptonshire has committed to supporting RAID in their efforts to preserve the countryside around Braybrooke and Arthingworth.

West District Committee - Open Meeting

To all CPRE members living in South Northants or Daventry districts, or in Northampton Borough

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Monday, 9th January, at 7.00 pm. The meeting will be held at the George Row Club, Northampton. For the first time the meeting will be open to CPRE members in the west and south, as well as to invited local councillors. We will be reviewing the controversial new planning rules and localism, as well as other current issues such as wind farms.

As numbers may have to be restricted, all members who would like to attend are urged to let the Committee Secretary, Susan Castle know as soon as possible - and, at latest, by 1st December. You can reach her at Susan.Castle@CPRENorthants.org.uk, or you can leave a message at 01858 433136.



Sally Hanrahan at the Holdenby Food and Drinks Fair on the August Bank Holiday weekend (left) and the Local Food & Drink mobile unit (supported by CPRE) at the Becketts Park Riverside Festival earlier in the month (below)



News on the Local Foods campaign

It's been a busy summer! The Holdenby Food and Drinks fair was a major event, which attracted over 10,000 people. The local food tasting and master chef classes were well supported. In September, also at Holdenby House, the Carlsberg UK Northamptonshire Food and Drink Awards for 2011/12 were held.

Again, CPRE Northamptonshire supported the Local Food Heroes Award - this year's heroes were Collyweston Community Shop (winner) and Nick Riseley of Creamers Coffee House, Raunds (runner up).

Sandra Johnson of Collyweston Community Shop said: "The Award is a wonderful tribute to all the hard work of Shop Manager Chris and her team of volunteers. The result came as a complete surprise, being a very small shop in a tiny village on the edge of the county. We were delighted to reach the finals, so winning such a prestigious Award against so many amazing entrants was beyond our wildest dreams. The village is really buzzing with excitement and we are already receiving excellent feedback. Thank you to CPRE and all the Awards Team for a wonderful evening."

North District holds a Fashion Show

More than sixty people attended the fashion show at Cranford Hall in October. The clothes were presented by Frances Fallows, the proprietor of Francesca in Kibworth Harcourt, a long established and successful boutique specialising in elegant, stylish, fashionable and sometimes quirky designer clothes. Outfits in a range of styles were on show, which with the wine and canapés made for an entertaining evening. CPRE supporter Wendy Meredith said what a wonderful time she and her friends had had, and what good value they had seen.

CPRE partner with NALC to raise awareness of planning changes from the Localism Bill

CPRE, in partnership with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), was one of four successful bidders in the DCLG's "Supporting Communities in Planning" scheme. As a result, we are now funded to provide advice and guidance on the planning system to our members, parish councillors and interested members of the public.



Cransley reservoir in November (June Middleton)

We have already met our local NALC colleagues, to establish agreement on working together on local training events. The aim of this work is twofold: to make more people aware of the role of the planning system, so they can make an informed choice about whether or not to engage with it, and if they wish to, help them to understand how to do so.

Road show events are being planned for February and March 2012. These will include technical information to assist parish councillors, and non-technical information for anyone else

who is interested in the planning system and its effects. The scope of the events will be the current local planning process and some of the opportunities presented by the Localism Bill.

More information will appear on our website and in the next edition of Outlook.

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Autumn dates for your calendar

Events: Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org.uk
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Thursday December 15

Christmas Carols by Candlelight and the presentations of the CPRE Town & Country Awards 2011 at Cranford Hall, by kind permission of Sir John and Lady Robinson. Tickets £20, including supper.