

OUTLOOK

Summer 2011

Online www.CPRENorthants.org

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HIGH SPEED RAIL

The Government's HS2 Consultation period ends on July 29

Our response to the Department for Transport's proposal has been made - have you submitted yours? If your home or business is directly affected, you probably have. Nevertheless, we encourage everyone who travels around the country, loves the countryside along the HS2 route, or pays tax - in other words, nearly everyone - to make his or her views known. Our responses are on the home page of our website, www.CPRENorthants.org.

We believe that a high speed rail network linking the north and south of the country and continental Europe is in the national interest, and has the potential to reduce carbon emissions. However, the route threatens disruption to our countryside, its people and wildlife.

We must engage with the HS2 project, so that if the line is eventually built we have done what we can to ensure that disruption is minimised, noise is reduced, blight is properly addressed, wildlife habitats are restored and the visual impact on the countryside is positive.

MICHAEL HEATON

Since the start of this year, our volunteer funding officer



Although he had no prior experience of seeking grants from Charitable Trusts, Michael has applied his business disciplines to the funding of the Litter Education pack. This has been successful: we have been awarded grants from six Trusts (more on this project in our next issue).

Having moved to Northamptonshire 16 years ago, Michael loves its gentle rolling contours, punctuated by villages with their honey-coloured stone buildings. Since retirement he has become increasingly involved with his local community in Spratton, where he is archivist to Spratton Local History Society and has been involved in achieving Lottery Grants. He has now joined the parish council, with responsibility for its budget.

Michael is also the Treasurer and in charge of publicity for the county branch of the National Gardens Scheme, which raises some £60,000 per annum. Recently he graduated with a Masters degree in English Local History at the University of Leicester.



Turweston Lane, near Brackley

The proposed HS2 route runs through the trees in the middle distance

We have taken the opportunity of a new visual brand identity devised by CPRE nationally to refresh the graphic design of Outlook. We hope that you like it.

If you have design or publishing skills and are willing to help, we are always looking for new volunteers.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE DISTRICTS

North & East Northamptonshire

The Rothwell Lorry Park has been approved by Kettering Borough Council, despite vigorous local opposition. The Kings Cliffe low-level radioactive waste site appeal has been approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government, despite our objection on the grounds of an incomplete geological assessment. We continue to work on the numerous new housing proposals, and the plan to move the Thrapston cattle market out of town and to allow Sainsbury's to build on the space. Raunds now has a town Master Plan.

West & South Northamptonshire

Four CPRE volunteers visited a number of the Department for Transport's HS2 road shows and had further meetings with parish councillors and other interested residents. Some technical resolutions to specific concerns were identified. We have submitted a response to the West Northants JPU Joint Core Strategy and commented on new housing proposed for Towcester, Radstone Fields in Brackley, Middleton Cheney, Greens Norton and a caravan site at Paulerspury.

Localism Bill & Planning Road Show

There is still great concern around the parishes as to exactly how the Localism Bill will work. Parish Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders are a good idea in theory, but will be expensive and time consuming and will always have to conform to Local Authority and national strategies, as well as EU requirements. They will not be able to change pre-set housing targets.

At our Planning Road Show in April, the Bill was addressed in a presentation from Fiona Howie, Head of Planning at CPRE National Office. Fiona is actively involved in meeting with ministers and others involved in the Bill's development. The anticipated date for Royal Assent is November or December 2011, and the roll out of planning reforms will commence in April 2012.

Fiona's comments and Q&A session were very well received by the parish councillors present. At the same event, David Quayle, Chief Executive of Northamptonshire ACRE, spoke on "Parish Plans and the Potential of the Localism Bill", which was informative on the various aspects of Community Led Planning.

Over 100 people attended our Road Show and we were delighted that 11 parish councils took up the offer of becoming members of CPRE Northamptonshire. We intend to be ready to assist member parish councils once the Bill becomes law.

BOZEAT TO LAVENDON AND BACK - AT BLUEBELL TIME

Brian Skittrall led our guided walk in early May

We had a glorious day for our Bluebell Walk and the bluebells did not let us down. The countryside was at its best wearing its spring colours - the vibrant greens of new growth, a bright blue sky with a few wisps of white and the bright yellow rape flowers. As we walked, we stopped to listen to the skylarks, watched buzzards and heard the cuckoo. We paused in Three Shires Wood at the meeting point of Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire before continuing along the Three Shires Way to Lavendon. The sun shone as we took a lunch break at The Green Man, where they did us proud with soup & sandwiches.

There were butterflies aplenty along the woodland edges. We spotted orange tips, holly blues, tortoiseshells, large whites, a meadow brown, a brimstone, a red admiral and a peacock. We were delighted when later on a hare got up; we watched it run along the headland until it eventually turned into the crop. All too soon, we turned back towards Bozeat across a ridge and furrow field of ewes with their lambs.

It was a pleasure to spend time together enjoying what we are fighting to protect - something heightened by the knowledge that there is a windfarm proposal that would fill most of our walk with turbines.



50/50: spring prizewinners

April: Terry Young of Kettering, Brian Skittrall of Bozeat, Dr Robin Sheppard of Pitsford

May: Alan Mayes of Irthlingborough, Gayle Robinson of Cranford, Jenny Le Roi of Walcott, Lincs

June: Tean Hatt of Oundle, David and Susan Banner of Upper Heyford, Brian Worton of Hollowell

Make sure that you and your family are stakeholders when the next random numbers are generated at the end of July. Visit www.CPRENorthants.org, email 5050@CPRENorthants.org or phone 01858 43313.

Remember, half of each stake goes to the prizewinners, half to protecting the Northamptonshire countryside.

Autumn dates for your calendar

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

Tuesday October 11

Fashion Show at Cranford Hall, organized by North Northants District.

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.

THE LATEST DILEMMA FOR CPRE

Brian Skittrall on solar parks

When the Government announced generous feed in tariffs for electricity generated using solar panels, it was probably inevitable that there would be applications for large solar parks. We had not considered our views on this technology, but we had to decide quickly when notification of the county's first application arrived in our inboxes. It was time to decide how we felt about this new approach to generating low carbon electricity in the countryside.

Our first thought was to welcome solar parks as far less damaging than windfarms. In comparison, their impact is small and their output more predictable. If only they could take the pressure off local authorities to approve windfarms, that would surely be a good thing. Our next thought was that solar panels can be installed in towns where the electricity is needed and so there is no need to sacrifice the countryside to this technology. Other questions soon surfaced: should we not support diversification on farms? Does it make sense to lose productive land when there is the prospect of food shortages? Would bio-mass or bio-fuels generate more energy than solar panels? This was clearly not a simple decision.

Almost inevitably, we came to the conclusion that we would have to judge each application on its merits, but keep in the back of our minds that there is no inherent need to place this technology in the countryside. In fact we discovered one system that can be used on canopies to provide both shade and power generation - ideal for use in urban design and above garage forecourts.

We decided in the end that we should object to proposals that would be widely visible, particularly in sensitive landscapes. For all applications we decided that we should ask that panels be non-reflective and screened from wider view where practical.

What are your views on solar parks, or solar farms? Please let us know - info@CPRENorthants.org

STOP THE DROP? THAT CALLS FOR A CARLSBERG

Our Stop the Drop corporate partners Carlsberg UK again organised a community litter pick in Northampton town centre. More than 40 Carlsberg employees met CPRE Northants volunteers for a second successive year, to clear litter from around the brewery.



Darran Britton, Marketing and Strategy director for Carlsberg UK, said: "We are delighted to join forces with CPRE again. All of us at Carlsberg UK have a strong commitment to our local community and taking part in events like this are all part of our Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.

"Not only do we want our local environment to be tidier, but we encourage Carlsberg drinkers not to 'Drink and Drop'". The Northampton brewery again sponsored the CPRE Litter Heroes Awards, which feature below.

2011 LITTER HEROES AWARDS PRESENTED AT FERMYN WOODS HALL

A marvellous evening at which the heroes of Northamptonshire litter picking were recognised

Our Summer Event at Fermyn Woods Hall lived up to its billing. The Hall is an elegant 17th century country house, the private home of Mary and David Laing, set in six acres of imaginatively planted gardens with rolling parkland beyond. It really is a very pleasant place to spend a summer's evening.

After the delicious dinner - somehow, salmon was a most appropriate choice - Sir Paul Hayter introduced the presentation of the 2011 CPRE Northamptonshire Litter Heroes Awards. Our Stop the Drop partners Carlsberg UK again generously sponsored Awards for those county villages and community groups that impressed the judges most. They were looking at the level and breadth of community participation achieved in spring litter picks. The top prize was £500, with two further prizes of £200, to be spent on equipment, campaigning or similar litter-related enterprises.



The High Sheriff of Northamptonshire Penelope Escombe presented the top award with a cheque for £500 to the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, Northants and Peterborough, and the two further prizes to Deanshanger Village Society and Spratton Parish Council.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM this year, held at the Four Pears in Little Houghton on May 26, was by common consent the "best in many years". A number of people expressed an interest in volunteering for us, and enjoyed the informal ambience.

All AGM reports are on our website.

In the photographs taken in the marquee at Fermyn Woods, Sally Hanrahan and Sir Paul Hayter look on as Penny Escombe presents the 2011 CPRE Northamptonshire Litter Heroes Awards to...



...to Louise Tuffin of the Wildlife Trust and Lesley Ingram, Environment Warden from Northampton BC



...to Anita Ball and Anna Wood of Deanshanger Village Heritage Society



...to Michael Heaton and Lynne Compton of Spratton Parish Council

REMINDER:
TOWN & COUNTRY AWARDS 2011

Nominations for this year's competition may be submitted until the end of September. If you know of a Northants project completed in the last five years which has preserved or enhanced landscape, improved an urban area or sympathetically restored a building, then complete your entry form now! More details are on the entry forms, which are on our website (or [click here](#)).

A letter from our Treasurer Emeritus

Fellow Members

It seems strange after 15 years no longer to be responsible for the financial affairs of the Northamptonshire Branch, but the demands of other charities with which I am involved coincided with the CPRE constitution that requires that the Treasurer and Chairman stand down after 5 years in office. I am sure that the finances are in good heart and in good hands with Robin Jones; the Branch is much stronger and more secure than when I first joined the Executive. There is of course the continuing need for new (and younger) members both of the Branch and the Executive and I would urge you all to help support the fundraising events that are so important to the future of the Branch.

I would like to express my thanks to you all and in particular to my fellow members of the Executive for the help and support over the years and for your very kind present on my retirement. After such a dry spring, the wet spell arrived with perfect timing: I was able to plant my gift of a plum tree just before the first downpour. I shall now just have to patiently await the first crop.

I wish the Branch well and look forward to seeing many of you at future events.

Kindest Regards, David Watson

David Watson plants his retirement present



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