

# OUTLOOK

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[www.cprenorthants.org.uk](http://www.cprenorthants.org.uk)

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The newsletter of  
CPRE Northamptonshire

Photograph of Stanwick Lakes  
courtesy of Suzanne Bowen

## All paths lead to where we stand

*Bill Heelan*

For those who don't know, the Open Spaces Society, founded in 1865, is Britain's oldest conservation body. The work of the OSS very much complements the work of CPRE and it is both rational and sensible to work with each other in our shared endeavours to save, preserve, and enhance the countryside we all love.

On 1 January 2026, in accordance with the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the rule '*once a highway, always a highway*' is effectively revoked. At this juncture, the official map of public rights of way '*the definitive map*' is scheduled to be closed to claims for bridleways and footpaths, which existed before 1949, but have not been recorded on the map and they will cease to exist for public use.

Not only will this prevent the use of these routes, it will also provide the opportunity for landowners, so inclined, to close paths or bridleways, making the land available for possible development, and one must assume that they are aware of this change and the potential opportunity that it affords them.

January 2026 will be here before we know, so it is absolutely paramount to act without delay. This article is too short to be able to provide comprehensive guidance on the methodology used to identify, gather evidence on, and then record footpaths, though I have provided a link to the OSS site, where these details can be found. But to emphasize the importance of this work, you should understand that even a short length of unrecorded path, just a few feet long, could allow the landholder to stop up the path for ever. Additionally, you should not discount or ignore village or urban alleyways, as they may also be poorly recorded and therefore unprotected.

Where to start? The current definitive map is available to view at most libraries and council offices. Viewing is the logical first step in establishing what is already recorded. Once this is understood, it will help to inform and identify the size and scope of what lies ahead. You should now be able to determine your approach, and complete the process as laid out in the OSS website. You will need to know the history of usage over some 20 years, help with gathering, collating and

recording this information, completing the application for registration and finally ensuring that the 'definitive map' is updated. Much of the work is most efficiently completed via the internet. Communicating and coordinating action, is most effectively achieved using social media, and this is clearly where the younger generations have great experience and skill.



It is the younger generations that have most to lose if we fail to save this national public network. It acts as the veins and arteries of a vast system, at the heart of which is the freedom of public access to the beautiful English countryside.

There is clearly common interest and much to gain from this work, but in reality, much more to lose, if we fail to take action. Good luck to you all.

OSS link: [www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk)

## Town and Country Awards



2017 saw a record number of 25 entries for the biennial Town and Country Awards. Entries included gardens, restoration projects, shops and a petrol station.

The five winners received their awards at a most enjoyable carol singing evening held at Easton Neston Church on 3 December.



Dr Martin Gaskell, chairman of CPRE Northamptonshire, presented plaques to the successful entries, which were:



- **Sulby Gardens**, Sulby. The restoration and development of the walled gardens of Sulby Hall (demolished 1952) by Mrs Alison Lowe and her late

husband. The gardens include a collection of over 60 varieties of apple, wildlife habits, a restored greenhouse and an icehouse. The gardens are regularly open to the public for charity

- **Roadside Petrol Service Station and Shop**, Roade. An innovatively designed petrol filling station and small local supermarket on a main road location designed by Adcock Associates of Stratford for Mr Navaratnam

- **Waterside Housing, Monksmoor Park**, Daventry. A large housing development by national house builders, Crest Nicholson, using a distinctive architectural style with a good interface

with the adjacent open countryside

- **Stoke Doyle**. Conversion of redundant stone farm buildings at Mr Gent's Farm by Mr Peter Moules of Village House Ltd retaining traditional features and materials to provide 10 new dwellings within this small community
- **Jacques's Yard**, 71-75 High Street Thrapston. Restoration and conversion of eighteenth century grade II listed buildings in the heart of this historic market town, by Mr Frank McBride of Rosguill Developments Ltd

A wide ranging and fascinating group of winners. Thank you to all who provided nominations.

*Alan Mayes*

## New CPRE Community Awards

Over the years, within the list of entries for our Town and Country Awards, there have been fascinating projects, involving groups of volunteers, such as community gardens and community run shops that are difficult to judge against the majority of our other entries.

CPRE Northamptonshire has now launched a Community Awards Scheme that will run on the alternate years between the Town and Country Awards. Entry is open to community projects that have protected or enhanced Northamptonshire as a place to live, work in and enjoy. The first awards will take place this July so

entries should be sent by the end of May.

Entries are open to any community project (not an individual person) where a significant enhancement has been made to the countryside or urban environment.

Permission must be obtained from the group before submitting an entry. Entries should be made in the form of a short written statement about the project and what you think the group has achieved. This should be accompanied by photographs with before and afters if appropriate and sent to [alanmayes123@gmail.com](mailto:alanmayes123@gmail.com).

50/50 is a very simple idea. As you probably know, volunteers do almost all of our work. Nevertheless, we need an income to cover the operating costs of that work: protecting the Northamptonshire countryside. That funding comes from our members and supporters - we receive no government money.



As well as fundraising events, each year we run a 50/50 club. Our well-wishers buy stakes for £12 each, typically one for themselves and some for family members. Every three months we have a draw for money prizes, ensuring that half the stake money is returned to randomly selected stakeholders. The other half helps to keep CPRE Northamptonshire functioning.

Prize cheques go out in April, July, October and January. The sixteen prize-winners in 2017 banked £630 between them. If you are interested, please leave a message with 01604 780000 or [info@CPRENorthants.org.uk](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org.uk).

### Winners - October to December:

- Sue Baylis of France £50
- Deborah Hayter of Charlton £50
- Susan Castle of Farthingstone £40
- Gayle Robinson of Cranford £40

## Planning Roadshow June 2018

At our last Planning Roadshow Jane Roemer from SEMLEP, the Local Enterprise Partnership that covers Northamptonshire, gave a fascinating insight into funding streams that might be available to parish councils through Local Enterprise Partnerships.

It has been decided that this year we will hold just one Planning Roadshow which will take place on June 7 at Great Houghton Village at 7 pm. In view of falling numbers and taking on board your comments, we felt that our efforts will be best concentrated on one event with the emphasis on guidance as to how parish councils and individuals can make robust responses to planning applications. This will be demonstrated with live (determined) applications. If any parish council does have an application that has been determined which they wish to share and discuss, please contact me with the details: alanmayes123@gmail.com. There will also be an update on the current planning system with Brian Skittrall's ever popular Planning Layer Cake!

We do hope that this subject matter will appeal to Parish Council Members, Parish Clerks and CPRE members and that you will put 7 June in your diaries.

I am delighted that Bill Heelan has accepted my invitation to take over from me as Chairman of the North Northamptonshire District.

Since he joined CPRE Northamptonshire, Bill has been very active as the Technical

culminating as major in the Defence Intelligence Centre in Bedfordshire. Leaving the Army in 2000, he worked with a start-up company involved in the development of systems for tracking high value items around the world, using both Low Earth Orbit Satellite and GSM

## New chairman to take over in North Northamptonshire

Secretary covering the Corby area and has developed a very considerable knowledge and understanding of the issues facing CPRE in that part of the county. I am sure he will bring great expertise and enthusiasm to the District. I know he shares both my concerns regarding the challenges facing CPRE, nationally and in Northamptonshire, as well as my aspirations for the development of CPRE in the county. I look forward very much to working with him.

Bill was born in London and moved to Yorkshire in his teens. He served for some 25 years in the British Army, with various roles in communications and intelligence, worldwide,

communication systems. He was also involved in freelance consultancy work for a number of organisations in the UK, advising on the development of processes and systems. He subsequently moved into the charity sector, where he was Head of Beneficiaries for an Almshouse Charity, responsible for all aspects of the care provided for 450 beneficiaries who had suffered financial hardship through no fault of their own.

His wife, Helen, grew up in Northamptonshire and they moved to Stanion in 2005, splitting their time between London and Stanion until Bill retired in 2016.

*Martin Gaskell*

## Brownfield Update

Following the research work carried out by CPRE volunteer Chuks Meniru into the state of brownfield land registers in Northamptonshire, CPRE National have now produced a publication entitled 'Unlocking Potential'. It aims to be a best practice guide for local and central government departments involved with the production and usage of brownfield registers. Their research nationally has revealed disparities in local

authorities' approaches to the registers. There is a need to try and unlock smaller brownfield sites to increase the potential housing numbers that can be accommodated without eating up yet more countryside. CPRE Northamptonshire is now carrying out some secondary engagement with local authorities to try and spearhead brownfield potential.



## We need you to tickle your tastebuds

A strong rural economy helps protect local countryside and encourage endeavour so CPRE Northamptonshire is happy to support MIN (Made in Northamptonshire) in their annual



local food and drink competition.

The competition, which launches this spring for its tenth year, is looking for CPRE volunteers to become 'Mystery

Shoppers' in its four categories - Restaurant, Spice Restaurant, Booker Food Pub and Independent Café/Tea Room of the Year. So the Carlsberg UK Northamptonshire Food and Drink Awards team would love to hear from you.

The task is simply to dine at one of the many venues that enter the competition. You then complete a brief form about your visit, giving scores and passing comments on everything from service and portion size, to food quality and even the

cleanliness of the toilets.

Your review will then be used anonymously by the judges to help determine the finalists in each category as well as offer really useful feedback to those who entered.

If you are available between mid-June and mid-August, are happy to pick up the cost of your visit and would like to help the awards team in raising dining standards here in the county or would simply like to find out more, please contact Anna at The Mallows Company on 01933 664437 or email [anna@themallowscompany.com](mailto:anna@themallowscompany.com). You can find out more at [northamptonshirefoodanddrink.co.uk](http://northamptonshirefoodanddrink.co.uk),

 [facebook.com/foodawards](https://www.facebook.com/foodawards),  
 [@foodawardsHQ](https://twitter.com/foodawardsHQ).

Meanwhile if you have a favourite pub, restaurant or café which you think should be encouraged to take part in the competition, please do let the Awards team know. Call Anna on 01933 664437.



## Sulby Gardens

Sulby Gardens (Town and Country Award Winner - see page 2) is an interesting and unusual property, on the Leicestershire border between Welford and Husbands Bosworth. Covering 12 acres, it comprises a working Victorian kitchen garden, orchard and a late 18<sup>th</sup> century icehouse. It also has a species-rich nature reserve which includes woodland, a feeder stream to the River Avon, a variety of ponds and established wild flower meadows.

See guided tour information in 'dates for your diary'.

## Dates for your diary

- ◆ **The Rockingham Castle International Horse Trials**  
18 - 20 May  
Come and visit the CPRE Northants stand
- ◆ **CPRE Community Awards**  
Final submissions by end of May
- ◆ **Planning Roadshow**  
7 June 7.00 pm  
Gt Houghton Village Hall  
'Making successful objections to Planning Applications'. All members welcome.  
Please confirm attendance to 01604 780000
- ◆ **'Music for a mid-summer's evening'**  
21 June 7.00 pm  
St Andrew's Church, Cranford Hall. Tickets £20 per person, which includes supper and a glass of Prosecco. See invitation enclosed with this edition.  
By kind permission of Sir John and Lady Robinson
- ◆ **CPRE AGM**  
2 July 5.30 pm  
The Studio, Cranford Hall, Cranford. Speaker tbc
- ◆ **Guided tour of Sulby Gardens**  
16 August 7.00 pm  
£15 per person including Pimms and canapés. By kind permission of Alison Lowe
- ◆ **Postcard photographic competition**  
Final entries by end of August

## Postcard photographic competition

During the autumn it is planned to produce a set of 6 postcards featuring aspects of Northamptonshire, using pictures submitted by members.

There are no strict rules; the photos can be urban or rural, landscape or close up.

High quality data images with a note of the location, date and photographer's

name should be sent to [info@CPRENorthants.org.uk](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org.uk) by 31 August.

This is a new venture for us and we hope to exhibit the images at our winter seasonal events. The 6 winners will each receive a prize and acknowledgement on the reverse of their postcard.