

Outlook

CPRE Northamptonshire News



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Issue 6 - Summer 2005

CPRE Northamptonshire - Branch News - John Baylis, County Secretary

Northamptonshire CPRE website www.cprenorthants.org

We are very fortunate now as we have a website manager – Alan Samples. Alan also works for another local charity with their website and he is very knowledgeable and aware of the information to be included in this electronic format. This edition of our newsletter and previous editions are now included - as are regular notes from the Technical Secretaries' Committee Meetings. Click on "News".

We hope very much that more people will look at the site regularly – Alan does maintain statistics of the number of "hits" we have had! Please also do let us know of any suggestions, improvements, changes you think should be considered for our website. Or just email us to keep in touch. Many thanks.

Please contact: Sue.Baylis@cprenorthants.org

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

All Northamptonshire CPRE events are open to both members and non-members. Please telephone Sue Baylis – 01858 433136 – for information on any events.

There are still places at:

Summer Ball - Friday 15 July 2005 7.30 pm
champagne reception – dinner, auction and live music
– Summer Ball, Wadenhoe House – we need your support please. Tickets £45 each.

Sunday 10 July 2005 – Castle Ashby Fair – 2 – 5 pm.
Please come and visit us at the CPRE Stand.

Wednesday 24 August 2005 – 7 pm – Welland Valley Vineyard, Holthorpe Road, Marston Trussell, Market Harborough - Tour of vineyard - wine-tasting and canapés. Tickets £5.00 each – *limited availability so please reserve early*

Sunday 11 September 2005 – County Fair and Fun Day, Boughton House.

Future dates to note:

November 2005 Annual General Meeting – Monday 28 November 2005, Parsons Memorial Hall, Great Houghton.

HOW TO CONTACT NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Please note local CPRE office contact telephone number has changed - currently 01858 433136

VISIT TO THENFORD HOUSE/GARDENS Sunday 19 June 2005

On a perfect summer's day some 125 members and friends paid a visit to the magnificent gardens at the home of Lord Heseltine in Thenford – towards the south of the county. Although originally it had been planned that Lord Heseltine himself would lead a tour of the gardens, unfortunately he was unable to do so because of illness. Nevertheless we were all provided with an easy-to-follow map of the gardens so that we could wander around at our own pace. After morning coffee and refreshments we set off to explore what are truly spectacular gardens. There is a walled garden, a water garden, sculpture garden, fountain garden, herbaceous border, lakes and mediaeval fishponds. The flowers, shrubs and trees were looking at their best and we could only marvel at the perfection of the planting schemes and their execution. Above all the privilege of being able to enjoy what must be one of the most delightful privately owned gardens in England on a beautiful day made a truly memorable experience.

After visiting the gardens we came back to a delicious three-course lunch provided by Anne Keys and her helpers held in a marquee, which Lord Heseltine had thoughtfully provided for our use. There was a marked reluctance on the part of many of us to raise ourselves after lunch but there were still some more of the gardens to be seen! All too soon it was time to depart and some of us were pleased to be able to meet Lord Heseltine, who had come (via his golf buggy) to see us off. Our thanks to him were profuse for his generosity. A book is to be published next year on his arboretum – sure it will definitely be worth reading. Warm thanks were also expressed to Sue Baylis and Sally Hanrahan for their hard work in creating such a happy occasion. Especial thanks too to David Stoddart – whose contact with Thenford House enabled this event to be held – without him we could not have done it!

This event helped us with our fund-raising and we also made a donation to St Mary's Church, Thenford.

Thank you everyone who joined us.

Jeffrey Greenwell

Drinks and Canapés at Great Oakley Hall Thursday 19 May 2005

As I write this bathed in the warm sunshine of “flaming” June, or at least of that latter part of the month that was so hot, it is hard to recall that only a month or so ago we were shivering in below average temperatures wondering whether our summer would ever come. It was on one such bright but chilly evening in May that CPRE Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough were the guests of Hugh and Bianca Capell-Brooke at Great Oakley Hall. As we drove in via the village of Great Oakley and into the parkland setting for the magnificent stone house which is the Hall, one would never have guessed just how close it is to Corby’s urban borough. As if anyone needed a reminder of the importance of open space and the separation of urban clusters, this was it.

It was indeed a pleasure to sup chilled white wine dispensed unobtrusively, but with great charm, by members David Charlton-Jones and Jane Nicholls and consume mouth-watering canapés, which appeared regularly on large trays from Bianca’s kitchen, while being regaled about the ever-present threat of the Milton Keynes Strategy. We were also relieved that our hostess had thought fit to provide a roaring fire for our comfort so in keeping with the saying: “N’er cast a clout ‘til May is out”.

The serious side of the business which fell to me as Chairman was to state what we stand for in terms of protecting the countryside and how we go about influencing high level decisions on planning. The Milton Keynes Strategy is undoubtedly a much better plan than it might otherwise have been without CPRE intervention. Now the major decisions have been made it is the task of every one of us to hold the authorities to account, to ensure that the various precautionary measures agreed by Government under pressure from us and others are followed through. No mean task but one that will be much more manageable with more volunteers and funds. Thankfully a dozen or so were so impressed by these arguments that they decided that evening to fall in with us as members of CPRE.

As a finale, Kenneth Jack conducted the raffle with aplomb and the evening was pronounced a success by one and all. There was a significant credit to our funds as well as our membership and we hope that everyone attending is now better informed than before. Our warmest thanks go to Hugh and Bianca de Capell-Brooke for their agreement to host the event and for their kind hospitality.

Grainger Davies

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Profile – Keith Allsop, OBE Corby Borough Technical Secretary

CPRE Northamptonshire Branch was actually formed on 22 June 1934 – the Chairman being Earl Spencer (grandfather of the current Earl). There were two Honorary Secretaries – W Carey Wilson – shoe manufacturer and Ralph Surrudge – architect – a partner of Gotch, Saunders and Surrudge. Carey Wilson was also at one time Liberal candidate for the Harborough division. During the Second World War the branch went into repose. It was reactivated in 1956 – the same Lord Spencer being both president and chairman, Carey Wilson was “literary” secretary and myself the technical element.

We were lucky to have a cache of money to restart the branch as many members had not cancelled their bankers’ orders in all that time. I can recall the first meetings being held in the Council Chamber, no doubt due to the influence of Lord Spencer.

Over the years we have had many excellent speakers: Professor L D Stamp, John Betjeman, Langley Taylor (Chairman of CPRE - 1960) and our current President, Lady Juliet Townsend, at the time of her writing the Shell Guide to Northamptonshire. Good press coverage came from both Evening Telegraph and Chronicle and Echo – ET printing our glossy Annual Report.

Two of our great concerns were the construction of the M1 cutting a swathe through the countryside and the threatened airport at Thurlleigh (1971) – the rejection of which we must thank Sir Colin Buchanan. Wellingborough expansion was curtailed due to our efforts and also the proposed M40 and its effect on Cherwell Valley.

My training as an architect – joining GS&S in 1949, triggered my own interest in the English countryside. The practice has worked with Lamport Hall – Sir Giles Isham has a wide knowledge of architecture and I gained much from him.

My other interest is the profession itself. I have held a number of different positions within Northants RIBA, East Midlands RIBA and RIBA Council and was delighted to receive an OBE in 1989 just after I retired from practice – “for services to Architecture”.

I served on the County Council 1970-74 and 1989-93 and have been Parish Chairman for over 30 years – having gained a great deal of knowledge about rural matters. I was CPRE Branch Vice Chairman for a number of years and a “stopgap” chairman for two – when our Chairman, at that time, became President on being appointed the Queen’s representative.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FARMERS' MARKETS

... have provided this list of certified markets, the NAFM members selling produce within the recommended criteria.

BRACKLEY Location:

Market Place 3rd Saturday monthly
9.00am - 1.00pm

DAVENTRY Location:

High Street 1st Saturday monthly
9.00am - 1.30pm

HIGHAM FERRERS Location:

Market Square Last Sunday monthly
9.00am - 2.00pm

NORTHAMPTON Location:

The Market Square 3rd Thursday
monthly 9.00am - 1.30pm

OUNDLIE Location:

The Market Square
2nd Saturday monthly
8.30pm - 1.30pm

TOWCESTER Location:

Richmond Road Car Park
2nd Friday monthly
9.00am - 1.30pm

WELLINGBOROUGH Location:

Market Place
Last Thursday monthly
9.00 - 1.30pm

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE URBAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

You will all be fully aware of the development proposals for Northamptonshire within the provisions of the Milton Keynes/South Midlands sub-regional strategy. That strategy now indicates that the three districts of West Northamptonshire are expected to grow by an extra 47,000 homes and 37,000 jobs to the Year 2021.

The Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) ... not to be confused with the Local Defence Volunteers ... selected to ensure the intended growth is made manifest is an Urban Development Corporation (UDC)

The Government could have opted for a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) or a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) but instead chose a UDC ... a statutory development body and the most powerful of the available options!

In January 2004 the Government consulted on proposals to establish an Urban Development Corporation for West Northamptonshire to ostensibly provide strategic leadership for regeneration and growth in the area. The UDC would have an indicative lifespan of 10 years and would focus on the three towns of Northampton, Daventry and Towcester.

The Decision Document ultimately published following the consultation process took scant account of the comments made and the Government with due haste proceeded to seek to establish the UDC by way of an Order submitted for approval before the House of Lords. The said Order involved a statutory process it seems not used for some 14 years and the Chairman of Committees reported that the Order was 'hybrid' and that Petitions might be deposited against it. Petitions had to be presented within 14 days of the submission of the Order ... and CPRE (Northamptonshire Branch) made use of the opportunity.

Five other parties also lodged petitions ... one subsequently withdrawn.

Considerable pressure was exerted by officials from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister first to prevent petitions being lodged ... and thence to get the petitions presented withdrawn.

A formal petition was presented by CPRE (Northamptonshire Branch) in May 2004.

The petition maintained that the order had direct and adverse affect upon that part of the County of Northamptonshire for which the said branch had concern.

In brief, the following points were made:

(i) An Urban Development Corporation was considered an inappropriate agency for the further development of West Northamptonshire

(ii) The area of the Urban Development Corporation if established should be confined to Northampton and Daventry and Towcester excluded from the UDA.

(iii) The establishment at the time of the Urban Development Corporation was deemed premature (bearing in mind the Public Hearing dealing with the Milton Keynes/South Midlands sub-regional strategy insofar as it impacted upon Northamptonshire was in process) ... and insufficient time had been given for public consideration and consultation.

Further:

a. substantial grounds of complaint existed against the order;

b. the matters complained of had not been dealt with adequately or at all;

c. there had been no previous opportunity of having the matters complained of inquired into

and

d. having regard to all the circumstances there was a strong case for detailed inquiry into the Order by a Select Committee pursuant to Standing Order 216.

In July 2004 ... I attended a Hybrid Instruments Committee (Chairman: Lord Brabazon of Tara) and it was determined CPRE (Northamptonshire Branch) had *locus standi* and the Committee recommended to the House that there should be a further inquiry by a Select Committee into the matters complained of. The House agreed, when appointing the Committee, that the proceedings should be conducted 'as if they were a committee on an opposed Private Bill'.

The Select Committee was appointed on the 19th of October 2004 to consider the matters complained of and began its inquiry on the 25th of October ... and sat for seven days (over two weeks) to hear evidence and submissions.

Lord Boston of Faversham was appointed Chairman with four other members.

The 'CPRE case' made is encapsulated in the principal concerns duly listed in summary by the Select Committee:

The Government's consultation process was poor, only eight weeks were allowed for responses instead of the twelve weeks recommended by the Government's own guidelines and insufficient effort was made to inform the local public and obtain their views.

The heads of the four local authorities who wrote to Lord Rooker to set the UDC process in train acted undemocratically and without the full knowledge of their councils.

The UDC, whose members would be appointed by the Secretary of State, would lack democratic accountability.

The proposal to appoint one member from each of the four affected local authorities to the UDC would not give the interests of Northampton sufficient weight.

The UDC would be inappropriate for Daventry and Towcester, which were so much smaller than Northampton and their interests would become marginalised within the UDC.

The Order only established the framework of the UDC: matters such as the extent of its planning powers and even how long it would last, were left open.

The development in the region would not be sustainable - there had been insufficient planning for transport, schools, hospitals, policing and job creation.

It was particularly emphasised that CPRE's concern to simply protect and promote the rural landscape and heritage and by inference have no concern for the urban environment ... as was suggested by the Government's Counsel ... was seriously flawed. It was stated CPRE is and must be concerned for the proper and reasonable management of the urban environment as vital factors affecting the protection of the rural environment. Towns (and indeed cities) it was maintained are an integral part of the wider landscape and campaigning to help ensure such are attractive places in both the visual and the social context is a paramount factor in helping protect the rural landscape.

At the end of the inquiry the Select Committee gave the following opinion:

The Committee having noted the Government's arguments, considered that the Petitioners raised a number of valid issues to be emphasised.

First, the Committee considered that the consultation on the UDC to date had been inadequate. The Committee were strongly of the view that the Government should do all it can to ensure the UDC consults effectively, not only within the UDA boundaries but also within the surrounding area. Further the Committee considered that in setting up any future UDCs the Government should take full account of the need for local people to have sufficient opportunity to express their views.

Second, the Committee recommended that the record of these proceedings, and particularly the evidence given by the Government (that included undertakings) should be taken account of by the

Local Authorities in determining future planning applications in the area. More generally the Committee would expect that the UDC would take note of the issues which have been raised to inform and assist it as it goes about its work.

Last, the Committee emphasised that it is important for the UDC to concentrate on the redevelopment of brownfield sites. The Committee draws attention to Lord Rooker's assurances that greenfield development will occur as a last resort, or when it is crucial to the development of brownfield land.

AND finally the Committee concluded that the Order should proceed. However, being sensitive to the need to ensure local accountability of the UDC, the Committee sought and received the following undertaking from the Government:

That the members of the proposed UDC will include

Two members representing Northampton Borough Council

One member representing Daventry District Council

One member representing South Northamptonshire District Council

Two members representing Northamptonshire County Council

And that the two members from each of the Northampton Councils should belong to different political groups.

The Order was approved.

The UDC Board has a statutory membership of 13 including the Chairman.

The increase of local authority raises 'elected representation' to 50% when excluding the Chairman.

In April 2005 a consultation paper was issued by the Urban Development Corporation seeking views as regards the development control power to be adopted by the UDC. Comments have been submitted by CPRE (West Northants).

John Day RIBA
CPRE (West Northants)

Members of the UDC Board

Keith Barwell	Chair
John Weir	Deputy Chair
David Dickinson	
John Farrow	
Nick Thompson	
Mary Burrows	
Ann Tate	

Cllr Lee Barron
Cllr Phil Larratt
Cllr Sandra Barnes
Cllr Chris Miller
Cllr Ben Smith
Cllr Arthur McCutcheon