



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Outlook

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STOP THE DROP

NORTHANTS COUNCILS’ PERFORMANCE ON LITTER AND FLY-TIPPING

We have written to the Chief Executives and Council Leaders of all seven of our Borough and District councils to challenge their performance, as recorded in DEFRA’s published statistics, at preventing and clearing litter and fly-tipped rubbish. Some of our councils were well behind their peers; Kettering’s was the best performance at dealing with this huge problem.

We have received some highly detailed replies from the Chief Executives. All have recognised that they have more to do, and most claimed that they have already reacted and have improved their performance in the year since DEFRA’s reporting period. Please let us know (info@CPRENorthants.org) if you would like to know more.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Sally Hanrahan writes: You will be aware that our President Bill Bryson is spearheading a campaign against litter and fly-tipping in the countryside. Litter is not only unsightly, but it makes us think badly about the places where we find it. In a recent survey, Northamptonshire Police found that a quarter of the perception of anti-social behaviour in our county is related to litter.

Local authorities will usually perform periodic litter picks, but these are not likely to be very frequent. However your parish or town council can choose to have a higher level of litter collection, either by organising volunteers to do litter picks or by funding a litter warden. A simple letter to the council or a request from the public meeting may be all that it takes to prompt them into action.

If you have the time and energy, you can take matters into your own hands and set up a litter group to adopt an area and keep it clear. The CPRE has set up a web site where you can register your group so that others can join you: go to www.letteraction.org.uk.

SUMMER EVENTS

SOUTH NORTHANTS PARTY: CHARLOCK FARM NEAR SILVERSTONE, MAY 9TH

Peter Pollak writes: Our grateful thanks go to Caroline Brocklehurst for her generous hospitality, which made the superb evening possible. What could be better than a beautiful English May evening in a



wonderful Northamptonshire country house and garden? Where else would you want to be?

The party was held on the terrace of the garden in warm sunshine, with magnificent views of the Northamptonshire countryside, complete with mares and their foals. Many of us heard the cuckoo for the first time. Then a big black cloud snuck up on us, unleashing a spectacular thunderstorm and we all had to scuttle indoors, salvaging what we could from tables and a bar that had been set up outside. Thus the event engendered a cheerful Dunkirk spirit among us.



Thanks to those who supplied food, ran the bar and provided gifts for the sumptuous raffle. The event raised over £700. Well done everyone!

SUMMER BALL AT HIGHGATE HOUSE, CREATON, MAY 30TH

Graham Lingham writes: It was our first time at the ball and our first impressions as the electric gates opened at Highgate House were: what a great place, an old coaching inn/house converted into a wonderful hotel and conference centre. Perhaps an analogy for the work of the CPRE: recognising change as an aspect of everyday life, but trying to ensure that change enhances the environment and the lives of everyone.

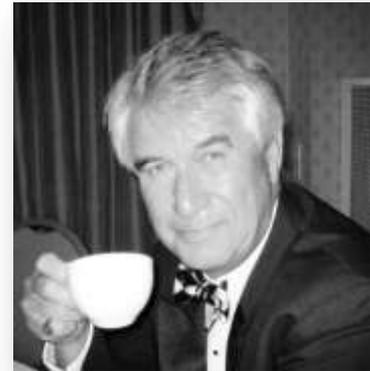


As newcomers, we were impressed by the warm welcome we received. We also had the good fortune to be on a very lively table, everyone dancing until the around 1am. Would I recommend attendance at the next ball? Yes, if you want to spend a great night in good company, support the work of the CRPE and have a ball yourself!

John Day writes: In the most beautiful countryside of 'Northampton Heights' at Highgate House, Creaton we held our annual Summer Ball. The location is perfect for such a CPRE event and we were blessed with a most pleasant summer's evening. 106 members and guests attended the event ... a thoroughly enjoyable evening with good entertainment and much music and dancing.



Our new County Chairman Sir Paul Hayter reminded us of the dual purpose of the occasion: to enjoy ourselves for the evening, and to raise much needed funds to effectively fight the most difficult battles that lie ahead, protecting and saving for future generations the wonderful countryside of Northamptonshire.



The event has become a most important fund raiser and does enable CPRE Northamptonshire to survive; we would most certainly welcome much wider support from the county membership (please be assured dancing is totally optional).

Such events do take a very considerable amount of time and effort to arrange and the County Executive is most grateful to Sue Baylis our Events Co-ordinator and to Sally Hanrahan our Development Officer for the total contributions that they make. Without the devoted time and effort of Sue and Sally the event may well not take place at all. The County Executive will look forward to greeting all county members at the Summer Ball of 2009.

These and other photographs of both of these events are in colour on our website: www.CPRENorthants.org.

CPRE NORTH NORTHANTS DISTRICT

ALFRESCO SUMMER SUPPER: AUG
15TH'08

The North Northants district of CPRE has pleasure in inviting you to a glass of Pimms and a three course supper with light entertainment in the delightful grounds of Fermyn Woods Hall, by kind permission of Mary and David Laing.

An invitation was enclosed with this copy of Outlook, or email Sally.Hanrahan@CPRENorthants.org

WIND FARMS

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE - A COUNTY UNDER SIEGE

Brian Skittrall writes: Our county seems to be under siege by wind farm developers. Many of us are aware of the wind farm at Burton Wold, where an extension has recently been approved; it seems that hardly a month goes by without another prospective site coming to light. To date we are aware of 13 further sites under consideration in our county and six more just over the borders.

Although wind farms produce low-carbon electricity, the enormous industrial scale turbines that are now being proposed would be tremendously damaging to the landscape. The standard for new proposals seems to be turbines 125 metres high to the tip, with 45 metre long blades – as tall as a 40 storey building with something 1½ times the wingspan of a Jumbo Jet turning at the top. In a landscape characterised by rolling countryside interspersed with church spires, the impact of such large moving structures is enormous.

Landscape is not the only issue. Wind farms have a reputation for being bad neighbours and, because there are no wide open spaces in Northamptonshire, each application brings with it years of stress and anxiety for the nearby rural communities. Each application can take two to three years from its announcement until it is decided by the local planning authority and, if it is refused, there is invariably an appeal or a new application. An appeal can take up to 18 months and, if that is lost, the developer can apply all over again.

During all this time, not only is there the worry within the communities about what may happen, but it can be difficult or impossible to sell homes that may be affected, and so people's lives have to go on hold until the uncertainty is resolved. Communities that want to defend themselves must mount a campaign against the development. Not only is this expensive, but it takes large amounts of time and effort – usually from people who would otherwise be giving these precious resources to their community in a more positive way.

Another unseen victim in this process can be the landowner. They can find themselves ostracised by their local community while they are locked into a contract from which they are unable to escape. In one case, a Norfolk landowner committed suicide after suffering depression, reputedly caused by the reaction of his local community. Landowners are being offered around £250,000 per turbine over 25 years; they can be all too willing to believe that any fuss will soon subside, once the wind farm is up and running.

With so many applications, you would think that Northamptonshire must be an ideal location for wind farms. However the opposite is true: we have the lowest wind speeds in Britain. The Burton Wold wind farm only generates just over one fifth of its theoretical maximum output – a level of output that even wind power specialists say does not make sense. The Government is well aware of our poor wind speeds and has set correspondingly low wind energy targets for the county. The Burton Wold wind farm with its extension will take us well past our 2020 target; and so there is no pressure to approve more, simply to be seen as green.

So why are there so many proposals in our county? There are two possible reasons. First, even in our low wind area, developers can expect a net profit of around £250,000 each year for every turbine (in a windy area this can soar to £400,000). The other reason might be that the county is thought of as a soft touch, because both the Burton Wold wind farm and its extension sailed through the planning system with little resistance.

We are all concerned about the potential impact of climate change and the need to reduce carbon emissions but, as with many green issues, we need to be careful that we do not do more harm than good. It has already been calculated that the majority of home turbines will never repay the carbon that was emitted in their construction and delivery. Although industrial scale turbines will eventually repay the carbon released during manufacture, surely they need to be sited in windy areas, if their net carbon reductions are to justify the wider harm that they do to the local environment?

The sites that we are aware of are near: Bozeat, Brackmills, Brixworth, Charwelton, Chelveston, Harrington, Kelmarsh, Mawsley, Ringstead, Rushton, Watford Gap, Watford Lodge and Yelvertoft. If you are aware of other sites or want help at your site, please let us know via info@cprenorthants.org.

THE LOST VILLAGES OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Deborah Hayter will be speaking on this fascinating subject in the autumn, provisionally October 23rd.

Decline, decay and desertion: why does Northamptonshire have so many deserted villages? These are usually explained by 'the Black Death', or 'sheep and the wool trade'. Deborah Hayter will look beyond these rather too easy explanations at the life and death of deserted villages and at the research into their decline.

Deborah Hayter is an associate tutor at Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education, and has taught many courses in Local and Landscape History, both in Oxford and in Northampton for the University of Leicester.

PERMACULTURE

Are you interested in low impact sustainable living, local food, organic gardening and the like? Local CPRE member Dawn Houghton has written an intriguing article on this subject in the Extra section of this Outlook.

If her article inspires you to learn more, she has an "Introduction to Permaculture" course, which aims to inspire participants with the prospect of a future that is positive and innovative whilst promoting the long term guardianship of our planet.

The course is on **July 11th to 13th** at her smallholding in Rothersthorpe, led by Graham Burnett (www.spiralseed.co.uk).

Costs: Full fee £120.00, concessions for low waged/retired/etc £80.00, including shared meals and refreshments. Accommodation is either camping on site or local B&B's (by arrangement). Contact Dawn on 07885 981 789 or permorganics@yahoo.co.uk. More info: www.permorganics.org.uk.

DESIGN AWARDS 2008

We have received a number of good entries for this year's competition, but there is still time to add your nomination - see the leaflet enclosed with this copy of Outlook.