

OUTLOOK

Winter 2012

Online www.CPRENorthants.org.uk

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High Speed Rail goes ahead

The coalition Government has announced its decision

In the end, the decision came as no surprise. After a carefully managed media strategy, Justine Greening's statement to the House was a foregone conclusion. It looks as if the Government has the parliamentary support it needs, but opposition groups are intending to fight them in the courts.

We in CPRE Northamptonshire have pursued a policy of constructive engagement with the consultation, and this will continue during the next phase of the process. We are pleased that our mitigation arguments dealing with significant threats to

countryside in Greatworth, Chipping Warden and Edgcote were accepted. The line has been varied to address each, and in the case of the first two exactly as CPRE had recommended. The Government have said that they are still open to proposals for further mitigation. Our experience shows that dialogue is the way forward.



Deer running across south Northants farmland (*Peter Hopkins*)

The trees in the background are the southern tip of Halse Copse, which will be replaced by track if HS2 is constructed as currently planned

What's next: the Hybrid Bill explained by Sir Paul Hayter

Subject to the expected legal challenges, a Hybrid Bill will be published for the first phase of the network, London to the West Midlands, by the end of 2013. This is designed to obtain the necessary Parliamentary approval - the legal authority to build the railway without further planning controls. It is called a Hybrid Bill because it is an amalgam of both public and private Parliamentary procedures.

Public procedures are those used for all legislation implementing changes in Government policy and the law affecting the public. In this case, the question of whether there should be a high speed railway at all, and the conditions for its construction and operation. Private procedures are those designed to protect the interests of individuals who may be affected by the implementation of public policy - the detailed route of the line, the effects on those who live on or close to it, and how their interests should best be preserved or compensated.

The public procedures in Parliament involve debate by MPs and members of the House of Lords, and consideration of amendments to the Bill submitted by them. They have to decide whether they want a railway in principle. The private procedures allow those closely affected to petition Parliament and to seek redress. Their petitions are considered by small committees of MPs and Lords, who act in the manner of a jury. (The procedures take place in both Houses of Parliament, one after the other.) The most likely timetable is the introduction of the Bill into the House of Commons in autumn 2013, transfer to the House of Lords in the winter of 2014 and Royal Assent in the summer of 2015.

Local Foods: a cake recipe - with a difference

We are continuing our Local Foods campaign in 2012 by working with the Northamptonshire Food and Drink Awards. Through their Made in Northamptonshire promotion, they are publicising local food and drink businesses.



The Northampton microbrewery Frog Island Brewery was an Award winner in 2011. They are keen to encourage the use of their bottled beers as cooking ingredients as well as for drinking. Beer is a very versatile cooking ingredient and can be used in a wide variety of savoury and sweet recipes. Frog Island's Croak & Stagger beer lends itself particularly well to this purpose: it is made with only natural raw materials using traditional methods and without artificial additives or carbonation. Here is their recipe for Croak & Stagger Cake:

Ingredients:

225g (8oz) self-raising flour
 225g (8oz) mixed dried fruit
 110g (4oz) butter or margarine
 110g (4oz) dark brown soft sugar
 140ml (¼ pint) Croak & Stagger bottled beer
 2 eggs
 1 tsp mixed spice

Method:

Place the dried mixed fruit in a mixing bowl, pour in the beer and allow to soak overnight. Next day, pour the contents of the mixing bowl into a large saucepan and add the butter or margarine and the dark brown soft sugar.

Place the saucepan over a gentle heat until the butter or margarine is melted and then simmer the ingredients together for 15 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat and allow the contents to cool. Once cooled, add the beaten eggs and mix. Then add the sifted flour and the mixed spice and fold it into the mixture.

Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin or a 7in round deep cake tin. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for approx 1 hour at 200°C/400°F or gas Mark 6. Once cooked, allow to cool in the tin for a few minutes before removing and cooling on a rack.

Supporting Communities and Neighbourhoods in Planning

As part of the Government's drive to empower people to take an active role in shaping the future of the areas they live and work, CPRE Northants are working with Northants CALC to host two free of charge events. The purpose of these events is to give delegates an opportunity to understand how the planning system works and how to get involved in it for the benefit of local communities.

The first event is at Cranford Hall at 6--9pm on 28th February and the second at Great Houghton Village Hall at 10am - 1pm on 1st March. The keynote speaker is Helen Metcalfe a Community Planner and a former Planning Aid Officer.

Places are limited so do please let us know if you would like to attend either event.

A flyer is included with this edition of Outlook. We would very much appreciate it if you could place this in your village hall, library, local shop or local pub. We want to let as many people as possible know about these interesting and informative events.

How to Run
 a Whole School
 Litter Campaign

LITTER POSTER COMPETITION

SPRING TERM 2012

CPRE Northamptonshire invites entries from primary school children to a Poster Competition that is a key part of our initiative "How to Run a Whole School Litter Campaign".

SCHOOL COMPETITION

- First prize - a cheque for £500 and commemorative plaque
- Second prize - a cheque for £250

The prize money is to be spent on educational resources, at the discretion of the Head Teacher. The prizes will be awarded to the school that, in the opinion of the judging panel, is responsible for the most inspiring collection of entries. The judges will not necessarily be impressed by the school with the most entries, or the best artwork; they will be looking for the school where children have really responded to the message that litter imperils wildlife, debases our environment and degrades the quality of life of us all.

PUPIL COMPETITION

- 3 age group categories - Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6
- First prize in each category - £25 Amazon gift voucher and CPRE certificate
- Highly Commended £15 gift vouchers for best runners-up

The judging panel will award prizes to children on the intrinsic merit of their posters.

PRESENTATION

Prizes will be presented at an event in May 2012, to which local press will be invited. Winning posters, and a selection of others, will be added to our website. We will identify the school of origin, but not individual children.

Please send A4 posters (which unfortunately are not returnable) to the address below before April 1st, 2012. Ensure that the back of each poster is labelled with the child's name, year group and school.

CPRE Northamptonshire
Campaign to Protect Rural England

PO Box 7939
Market Harborough
LE16 9XW

Email: schools@CPRENorthants.org.uk
Telephone: 01858 433136

To find your local stockist of Croak & Stagger bottled beer, visit www.frogislandbrewery.co.uk. There are a number of other good local breweries to support.

Are you a primary school parent, teacher or governor?

Please encourage your school to send us entries for our Litter Poster competition during Spring Term 2012. There are substantial prizes to be won by both schools and pupils, and entry is free. The flyer (left) went to all schools last term, but more copies can be requested from schools@CPRENorthants.org.uk or 01858 433136. More details about our Schools Rubbish campaign are on www.cprenorthants.org.uk/primaryschools

Stop the Drop 2012 campaign dates

These are Friday March 23 to Sunday April 1.

Do you have experience of taking meeting notes or minutes
- and then producing reports?

We are looking for someone who can attend five meetings a year in Northampton, either on a voluntary basis, or possibly for an honorarium. We will pay travelling expenses. For more information please contact info@CPRENorthants.org.uk.

Will we soon be living in the wind farm capital of England?

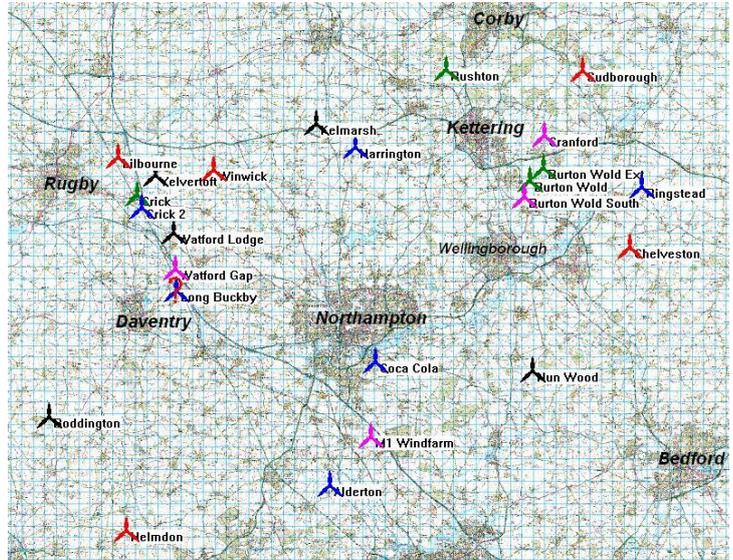
Subsidy farming has distorted the push for decarbonisation:

before long the damage to our landscapes may be irreversible

Recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate look likely to turn Northamptonshire - one of the least windy counties in Britain - into the one most densely covered with wind farms. We are known as "the county of squires and spires" because of our historic stately homes and churches set in a rolling rural landscape, but this is set to be transformed by an excess of industrial scale wind farms.

The Government's Planning Inspectors have recently overturned decisions by local authorities to refuse permission for wind farms at Nun Wood (Bozeat), Kelmarsch, Boddington and Watford Lodge. A decision is expected soon from another appeal at Barnwell Manor (Sudborough). Further appeals are lodged for wind farms at Chelveston, Helmdon, Lilbourne and Winwick.

The first wind farm decision to be overturned in the county was Yelvertoft in 2010. Since then the only wind farm refusal *not* to be overturned by a planning inspector was at Harrington, where turbines would have been only yards from a Scheduled Monument. Even there the developer has not withdrawn, but has instead announced that a proposal for three turbines will be submitted.



So what is so special about Northamptonshire that makes it popular with wind farm developers? Are the wind speeds second to none? Quite the contrary. Being in central England, the county has one of the poorest wind resources in Britain. The reason why the area is such a hot-spot for developers is that it has no National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), green belts or airport exclusion zones, which would get in the way of turbines 125m (410ft) high. The other important factor, of course, is that the subsidies paid to onshore wind farm developers are so high that they can make enormous profits, even without generating much electricity.

Northamptonshire is in line to meet singlehandedly the entire East Midlands regional target for large-scale onshore wind farms, which is 175MW of installed capacity. Our share should be only ten percent of that. This has already been exceeded threefold by the 50MW of wind farms approved locally. The Planning Inspectorate has added another 60MW, and there is more to come. Five more applications totalling 72MW are in the appeals system, five in the planning system totalling 41MW, with a further five sites where a proposal has been announced but an application has yet to be submitted, which would add another 38MW.

This would bring the county's grand total to 121 turbines on 24 wind farms with an installed capacity of 260MW. It sounds like a lot of renewable energy, but of course it is only available when the wind is blowing, not when the power is needed. In total it is only 1/15th the output of a small power station.

Sir Paul Hayter of CPRE Northamptonshire has commented: "When the least windy part of England is carpeted with wind farms it is a clear sign that the subsidies are excessive. It is also a sign that, despite the much-vaunted Localism Act, we have a planning regime in which national targets take precedence over local decisions."

Hopes that the imminent review of the renewables subsidy system might put an end to these excessive profits are fading fast. DECC's draft review proposes a cut of just ten percent in the level of subsidies for onshore wind farms - matching the expected cut in the costs to the developers. Even under these reduced subsidies, developers in low-wind areas like Northamptonshire can expect a virtually risk-free average return on investment of 2½ times the amount so recently deemed sufficient for people investing in solar panels.

More information on the size and status of all of the wind farm sites is on the [Campaigns section of our website](#).



If you were a 50/50 stakeholder in 2011, thank you very much. Please renew your membership for 2012. Or, make a resolution now to join for the first time. [Details are on our website](#).

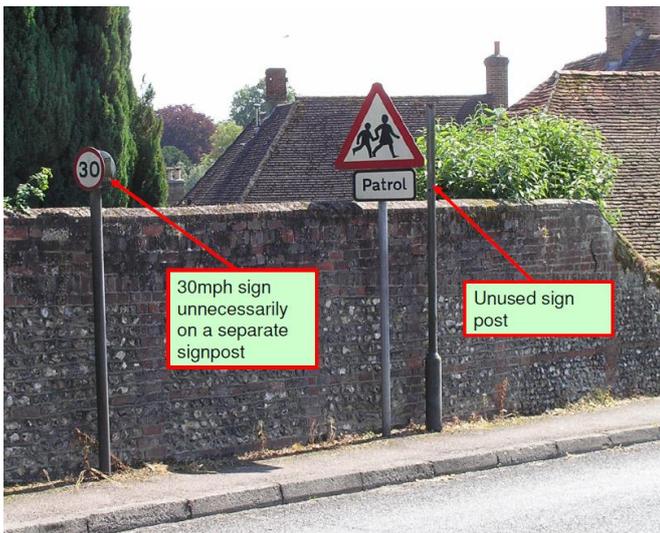
Autumn prizewinners

October: Paul Fairey of Fleet, Hants, Robert Burnham of Clipston, Jonathan Charlton-Jones of Geddington
 November: David Montagu-Smith of Farthinghoe, Peter Hopkins of Brackley, Sir John Greenaway of Lois Weedon
 December (DOUBLE PRIZES): Mrs M Gardener, John Baylis of Market Harborough, Peter Pollack of Sulgrave

Do you know of a stretch of Northants road with too many signs?

It is time to make your views known

The roadside clutter initiative was launched by the Coalition Government last spring. It has been taken up locally by Northants County Council (Transport and Highways) and CPRE Northamptonshire, working in partnership.



CPRE believes that our roads should be safe and pleasing for drivers, walkers, cyclists and horse riders. Some signs are necessary to alert road users to potential dangers, but “the more, the better” obviously does not work. Excessive signage leads to confusion and “information blindness” and destroys the character and natural beauty of the countryside. We should identify and have removed duplicated, redundant and unnecessary signs - and especially unused signposts - while maintaining those required for relevant information and road safety.

Perhaps we haven't see anything quite as crazy as this along our roads, but there are some signs that make you wonder...

We need your help to identify the worst examples of pointless signage and so prioritise NCC's de-cluttering work plan. Signs that “advertise the bleeding obvious”, as Matthew Parris put it in his recent column in *The Times*. Signs that are permanently and needlessly illuminated, at the expense of Council Taxpayers - and the planet. Signs that make our rural roads and village streets look like an urban jungle.

Please email info@CPRENorthants.org.uk (by February 4) with your suggestions for sign removal. If you can attach photographs, or a link to Google Street View, it will assist greatly, but if not, your favourite examples are still most welcome. We will of course need a precise location, and your reasons for proposing: sign redundancy, detracting from a landscape view, potential to confuse road users, and so on.

Localism: how to fund a Neighbourhood Plan

Neighbourhood Plans are a key component of Localism, but they require expertise and are time consuming to prepare. The costs of outside help may be beyond the resources of many parishes, and of course, external consultants must not get in the way of proposals that are well supported by the local population.

Wellingborough Council (we are told) is funding survey work and administrative assistance in its villages, but other districts do not have the financial resources to do so.

Daventry DC are intending to prepare a “Settlements and Countryside” Development Plan Document which will have district wide policies. This can have annexed more detailed policies specific to a parish or neighbourhood. The advantage of this approach, compared to a full-blown Neighbourhood Plan, is that the annexe would be examined with the DPD, and thus would not require the separate and costly examination (by public enquiry) of a Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Spring and summer dates for your calendar

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

Wednesday April 2

at West Haddon Hall – West Northants District meeting. All members are welcome, but please email.

Friday May 18

Evening event at Newbottle Manor, by kind permission of Lady Juliet Townsend

Saturday June 9

Garden Visit (similar to that held at Great Addington Manor last year) to Titchmarsh House, by kind permission of Sir Ewan and Lady Harper

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Comments to: info@CPRENorthants.org.uk

Are you working on a Neighbourhood Plan? Please let us know (info@CPRENorthants.org.uk) if you are.