

Spring-Summer 2019

Kent

PROTECTING KENT'S
COUNTRYSIDE

Voice

In our hands

How we can help save the
natural world we all love

One in, one out...

the tale of two chairmen



The planning system: a study in failure



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Shelduck are a striking and pleasingly frequent sight around much of the Kent coastline; they often nest in disused rabbit burrows before walking their chicks to water (Steve Ashton)
Cover: The peacock is one of our commonest butterflies but no less attractive for that – you might come across one just about anywhere (David Mairs)

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www.cprekent.org.uk



We always love to hear from our members, so please feel free to drop us a line and tell us what's happening in your part of the county. We are especially eager to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer as a district committee member. If you want to help us keep Kent beautiful, then get in touch with us at info@cprekent.org.uk or call 01233 714540.

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Hilary Newport

Director's Introduction

We publish Kent Voice twice a year, which means that once every six months I have the opportunity to write about the most pressing issues populating my 'to do' list.

Thumbing through recent issues, I am disconcerted at how many of these little columns have reflected sadly on the way that national planning policies are making it harder and harder to direct the development that we need to the places where it is needed, and with the minimum degree of harm.

This, surely, is the purpose of town and country planning. People need homes and infrastructure – and over the past years of economic recession there has been an undoubted shortfall in the number of homes that have been delivered – but the current system is unable to deliver the affordable homes that are so desperately needed in this part of England. The same system appears equally unable to protect our finite and precious agricultural land and green spaces.

Every time I lament the latest changes to planning policy, I think quietly to myself that this must be the low point and that policymakers will cease their denial of the failures in the system, and that a more reasoned approach to housing delivery will emerge.

However, a modest revision of the National Planning Policy Framework, published in February, has implemented the proposed changes to housing targets that will see disproportionately high increases in housing targets across Kent.

This change bakes in the requirement for all new Local Plans to aim for housebuilding targets that are greater than projected rates of household growth, greater than any housebuilding rates that have been achieved in recent history, and greater than can be accommodated without significant strain on environmental and infrastructure resources.

(As I write, the chief executive of the Environment Agency has just acknowledged publicly for the first time that water resources in the south-east of England are grievously strained by the twin challenges of climate change and accelerating development.)

Planning guidance seeks to assure planning authorities that the new calculation for housing targets is only a starting point, and that planning districts constrained by, for example, a high proportion of designated land such as AONB or Green Belt can make a case for reducing those numerical targets.

Sadly, in practice, we have seen few planning authorities argue successfully for lower target housing numbers in their Local Plans.

The inescapable conclusion of these higher housing targets is that more land needs to be earmarked for housing within Local Plans, allowing developers to cherry-pick the most profitable sites and build the most profitable types of housing.

If the developers don't build enough homes, the planning authority can now be forced to allocate yet more sites; until it does, the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" that runs through national planning policy prevails, and many more green spaces in increasingly unsustainable locations will be under threat.

Richard Bate's article on pages 14-15 argues this point with great eloquence. CPRE Kent has, I believe, an unparalleled position in being able to campaign 'from parish to Parliament', with a wide network of communities at the forefront of the challenges faced by inappropriate and unsustainable development able to give real-life feedback to our colleagues in national CPRE.

It's more important than ever now to make our elected representatives aware of what national planning policies risk doing to communities everywhere.

Can we save the natural world?

It's in our hands

In the previous edition of Kent Voice, Geoff Meaden examined man's assault on the environment and the widespread loss of biodiversity. Here he considers a range of approaches to reversing the destructive trend.

Hazel dormouse has declined in this country, primarily through habitat loss and changes in woodland management; Kent, however, remains a stronghold (Wildwood)

In the last issue of Kent Voice, I set out the primary reasons for loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems in Kent. Here I suggest what local people and groups might best do to promote nature, with adopted actions varying according to prevailing conditions and personal circumstances.

1. Giving protection to a wider area

Experts have emphasised that it is essential some quantified level of protected status is given to significant proportions of both terrestrial and marine areas. Recommended proportions vary from expert to expert and are dependent on the scale being examined. Edward Wilson, probably the world's leading conservation ecologist, suggests 50 per cent of the planet's land surface needs "sacrosanct conservation", *ie* the land is set aside solely for nature conservation. On a local scale, Kent Wildlife Trust has set a target of 30 per cent of the county being "managed to create a healthy place for wildlife to flourish". That level of protection is probably ambitious but probably necessary if our varied ecosystems are to be maintained and indeed improved.

2. Habitat improvement

If habitats could be improved, there are numerous local sites where greater biodiversity could be encouraged. Examples include degraded ponds, areas of intensive weed infestation, silted stream beds or marshland, source pollution points along streams and areas where rubbish has accumulated. Although much activity is already directed towards improving habitats, a wide range of work can still be usefully accomplished. Besides restoring degraded habitats, new ones can be created allowing for 'more nature, for example new lagoons in marshland or along riverbanks; planting of wildflower meadows, especially on 'set-aside' land; and creating artificial nesting sites in modern barns.

3. Supporting wildlife or local conservation groups

Membership of the many groups supporting nature gives the opportunity for active or static participation. For those who are relatively inactive, their support and encouragement are welcome, as are financial contributions. But organisations such as Kent Wildlife Trust, Kentish Stour Countryside Project, RSPB, Friends of the Earth, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation, The Woodland Trust and Amphibian and Reptile Conservation offer a variety of volunteer opportunities to get involved. Most groups have action plans explaining their aims and how these might be achieved, while ample information is available on websites. It is estimated that worldwide recent conservation efforts have reduced the extinction rate of land-dwelling vertebrates by about 20 per cent.

4. Nature improvement outside conservation areas

The majority of land in Kent will always retain a variety of non-conservation purposes, for example housing, industry, transport routes and urban centres. However, most of these areas offer opportunities for nature improvement, such as providing additional food for birds, adding flower and plant varieties and leaving 'wild areas' in urban gardens. On a broader scale, wildlife corridors need providing outside conservation areas to allow for natural transit routes between dispersed protected areas. This may be along railway lines, hedgerows, through golf courses and via an assortment of 'natural stepping stones'. An important set of wildlife corridors that needs enhancement comprises the headlands or set-aside land along field edges, which too often



David Attenborough, *State of Nature 2016*

Now just an occasional breeder in the county, short-eared owl winters on Kent's coastal marshes and can give fantastic views to naturalist and layman alike (Steve Ashton)

receive no management or improvement by farmers. Most of these non-conservation areas need to be recognised and given some formal level of protection.

5. Tackling local wildlife pressure points

Recognition needs to be given to existing and planned structures, industries, pollution sources and other major constructs that could be detrimental to 'nature'. Kentish examples of these sites include the proposed solar farm at Cleve Hill and the sewage plant at Bybrook. These single points or areas could cause environmental damage out of all proportion to the size or scale of the pressure point itself. We can all participate in 'watching' these developments and, if necessary, contact the owners or the local authority if problems occur.

6. Data gathering

For most local biodiversity there is a deficiency of quantitative and locational data, a deficit that environmental organisations should be able to address. For instance, the RSPB organises an annual garden bird count and this is a valuable source of knowledge about bird populations, at least in urban areas. However, this type of data collection needs replicating across a wider range of biomes and species. Most major wildlife organisations should have the resources to turn their data into useful information, for example tables, graphs, maps and time-trend analyses. This information can be essential to wildlife recovery plans – something to which all major local environmental or conservation groups should aspire.

7. The identification of keystone sites or areas

For all Kent biome types and for a range of important indicator species, it is vital to select conservation areas where either the biomes or selected species are thriving. Once selected, these sites need to be sacrosanct from development; it may also be necessary to bar general human access to some sites. It is now known that Marine Protection Areas (MPAs) have a high capacity (both to give protection to species and to act as overspill sources, *ie* when populations build up within an MPA the resources pressure obliges species to spread into surrounding waters and soon replenishment of these waters becomes noticeable. The same principle is likely to work in terrestrial ecosystems, though management may be necessary).

“Our wonderful nature is in serious trouble and it needs our help as never before”

8. Friendly persuasion

The reversal of ecosystems and biodiversity declines is unlikely to be accomplished solely by actions on a local scale. It will be vital that both groups and individuals participate in 'friendly persuasion' across the widest possible audience; 'friendly' because success is more likely to be achieved through a positive approach, and 'persuasion' because we are attempting to change someone's mind or to suggest new approaches to a problem.

There are many measures that might come under this category, such as letter-writing to decision-makers, issuing press releases, spreading the word via social media, circulating petitions, talking to a councillor or your MP or giving public talks.

These measures must be pursued with determination and commitment – as if our lives depended on what we're doing... which perhaps they soon will. Before embarking on any campaign, it is essential to be well informed on the aspects of a topic about which you feel most strongly; this is important because mindsets need to be changed.

Only if people are thoroughly convinced will there be a chance that the status of ecosystems and biodiversity can be rescued from their present situation.

There is little evidence that any local or international person, body or group has an overall perspective on the management priorities necessary to halt ecosystem and biodiversity decline.



Intensive farming is thought to be a factor in the decline of the brown hare in many parts of the UK; numbers in Kent have been further depleted by coursing (Steve Ashton)

A body like the United Nations should have a whole agency committed to fostering the future of 'nature', but the United Nations Environmental Programme's Convention on Biological Diversity has no such comprehensive plans, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's plans for combating worldwide climate change.

Likewise, the Department of the Environment should be the lead organisation in the UK, and indeed this year Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, produced a 25-year plan for the environment.

However, although this plan recognised some of the main actions that are needed, it said almost nothing on how the plans would be implemented. The same can be said of earlier government plans.

A US-based group taking strong action on species extinction is the Alliance of World Scientists, who in 2017 published a Second Warning to Humanity. This programme is now supported by more than 20,000 scientists in 184 countries.

Vision, action and coordination will be vital to achieve the following essential management actions:

- i) The appointment of an 'ecosystems and biodiversity champion'
- ii) Arranging financial commitments
- iii) Defining primary aims and objectives
- iv) Initiating an overall management structure
- v) Developing suitable metrics for measuring progress
- vi) Data gathering and processing
- vii) Establishing priority actions
- viii) Delegation of specific roles to existing nature conservation groups (a rationalisation of effort)
- ix) Building a volunteer structure

Most of these actions could best operate at the county level. An oversight body in this county might be the Kent Wildlife Trust, the Kent Nature Partnership, the Environment Agency or Natural England.

It would be of interest to find out what actions any of these groups are taking to ensure the overall demise of nature does not continue.

I also believe that an organisation going under the title of the Campaign to Protect Rural England needs to be at the forefront of attempts to reverse the diminishing fortunes of our local ecosystems and biodiversity.

An everlasting gift

In memoriam: What better way can there be to remember a loved one than by making a donation to CPRE Kent?



Your gift in their memory will go towards protecting our countryside into the future.

You could celebrate their life by setting up a fund with Just Giving or CAF Bank for mourners in lieu of flowers, or by making a one-off donation in your loved one's name.

LEGACY GIFT

By leaving a gift in your Will to CPRE Kent you will be joining thousands of other people who want to stand up for the countryside and who care about the future of our wildlife and biodiversity.

They want to play their part in continuing to help preserve nature for future generations.

Leaving a gift to CPRE Kent will help to ensure we exist into the future to carry on the fight to protect our countryside.

Please give the gift of the countryside and remember CPRE Kent when making your Will. What an amazing legacy and tribute!

For details, please see our advert on page 19 of this edition of Kent Voice or contact Vicky in strictest confidence on 01233 714540 (email vicky.ellis@cprekent.org.uk)

A member's personal perspective

When I wrote my will, I found it a solemn and yet joyful thing to do. It made me take stock. What did I have to leave behind? And who did I love that I could leave it to? And, once those fundamentals were thought through, what gift could I give to charity? Well, there was only one main organisation I had in mind.

Planet Earth is our support system. When we have clean air and clean water, good land to grow crops on, healthy seas to fish in, good neighbourhoods and green spaces to exercise and relax in... then we, our friends and family can thrive.

When natural habitats are preserved and enhanced, our fellow bird, animal, insect and plant species can thrive, too. We need dark skies to see the stars. We need nettles and bushes to see the butterflies. We need the English countryside with its tremendous variety of landscapes, so useful, so beautiful and so productive.

I live in the Kent countryside. I walk, ride and bike through it. I gaze at it, smell it, touch it and love it. And when I go to towns and cities, I seek out the wonderful parks and green places there, too.

But as I get older, I see that it is all under threat. Everywhere I look, I see front gardens being paved over, flytipping and litter in lay-bys. I see good agricultural land ripped up for luxury homes that the needy cannot afford. I learn of fish stocks falling, of animal, bird and insect species becoming extinct. Faster and faster. We are told these losses are like the canaries in a coal mine foretelling of disaster. But haven't there been a thousand canaries and have any of us taken any notice?

Well, I know one organisation that has. With knowledge, stamina, passion, good arguments and tact, CPRE Kent has, for years, painstakingly stood up for the Kent countryside and the sustaining of our villages and towns.

So how simple, how fitting, to take the opportunity to support its work. I have planned a bequest. It is my way of supporting the future of our wonderful land so that it thrives, so that our children and grandchildren, the animals, birds, insects and plants, can all thrive, too.

And now my will is written, I can get on with the business of living, feeling great inside.



There's Cleve Hill... and then there's a brighter view of the future

We've covered the threat of the proposed 1,000-acre solar farm near Faversham – potentially the largest in the country – extensively in the two most recent issues of Kent Voice.

Since then, the application for a Development Consent Order, made on November 16, has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate.

An inquiry into the scheme will now be held, CPRE Kent being among 867 groups and individuals to have registered as Interested Parties for this process.

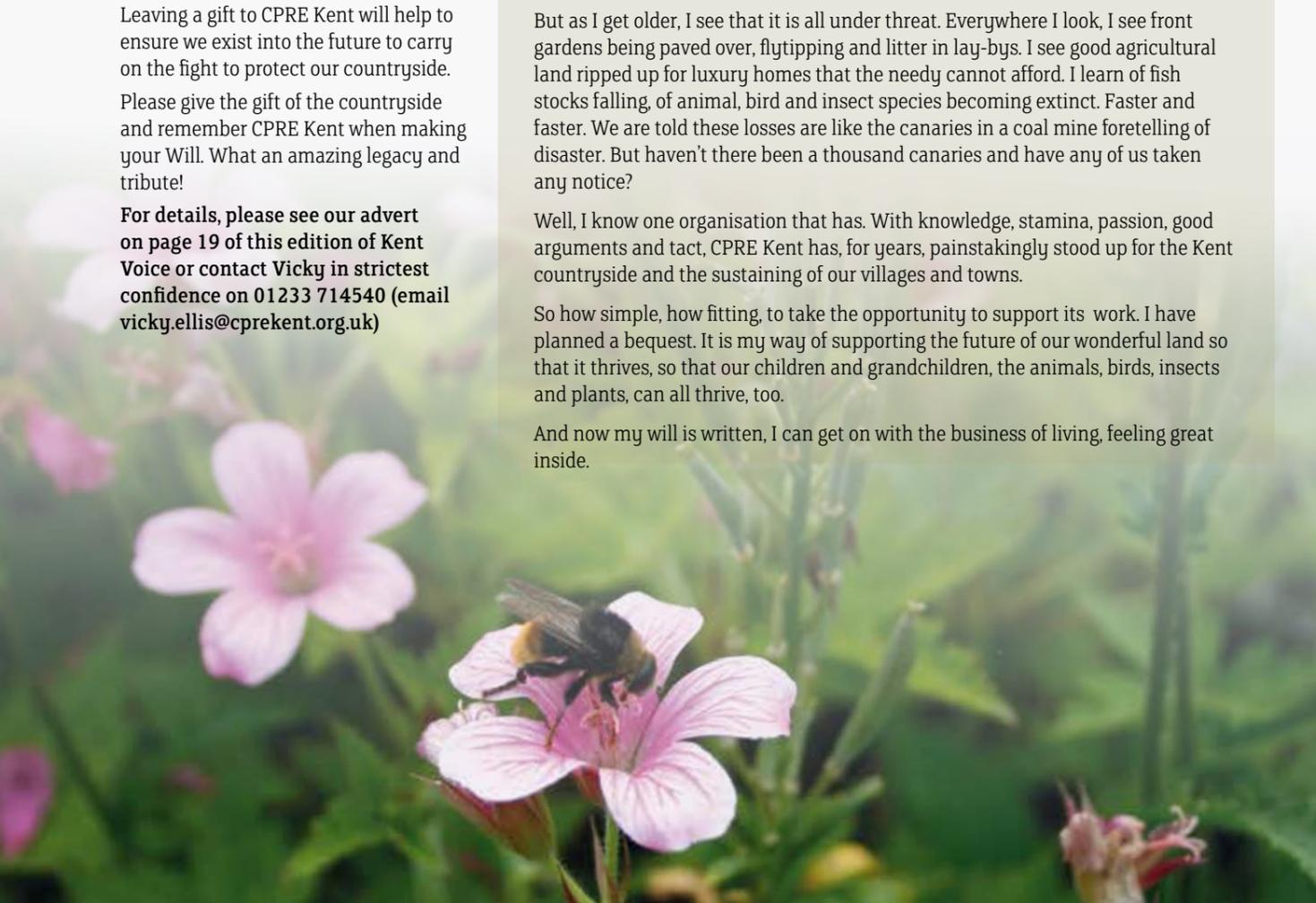
We anticipate hearing from the inspectorate within the next few months about a potential timeline for the inquiry stage. In the meantime, CPRE Kent's Vicky Ellis gave a talk to Year 6

pupils at Claremont School in Tunbridge Wells (above) about the Cleve Hill scheme and, more broadly, the North Kent Marshes.

"We talked about the wildlife, where else we can put solar panels other than on such a sensitive area, giving a voice to wildlife, and why it is endangered," said Vicky.

"The children asked excellent questions such as 'Why don't they put solar panels on roofs?' and 'Where will the animals go if the solar farm goes ahead?'"

"They also made models of alternative ways to produce solar energy that would have little impact on our natural environment."



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Your letters



Why the EU drives me wild

Dear Editor,

I am sorry to write in a negative spirit, but I have to say how disappointed I was with the latest issue of Kent Voice.

At a time when many in CPRE are saying we must 'accentuate the positive' about our countryside in order to build our membership and engage more with the Kent public, the magazine seemed to offer gloom.

In particular there was the article 'The killing of nature' (which talked about Africa and South America) and a negative piece about disengagement from the European Union, 'How green is our Brexit?'

Naturally, figures can be mustered from either side about the latter issue, but the article talks about "recession", even a "sinking economy", and states that the EU was responsible for much of our environmental protection.

This wouldn't be the same EU, would it, that presided for years over the dumping of entire boatloads of dead fish into the English Channel and North Sea if a trawler was unfortunate enough, by accident, to catch just slightly over its quota?

Or the same EU whose countryside throughout northern France and Belgium is a hedgeless monoculture, largely devoid of wildlife?

Also, the report from Tonbridge and Malling ('Around the Districts') failed – spectacularly – to mention a matter of overwhelming urgency for CPRE: the possible impending building of thousands of new houses on farmland close to East Malling and the profound concern of hundreds of local people. How could such an omission be allowed?

I very much hope that this edition provides more encouraging and inspiring reading for our members and – given Kent's resounding vote for Brexit – a less sympathetic coverage of the European Union's environmental credentials.

Stuart Millson, East Malling

Editor replies: *I'm sorry the last edition of Kent Voice was such a disappointment to you.*

I should stress that, as was made clear, the Brexit article presented the considered views of one individual.

Those views are not necessarily held by CPRE Kent (or CPRE nationally). Rather, the article was intended to contribute to open, informed debate on this country's departure from the EU and its impact on the environment.

As for 'The killing of nature', and as was also stated, the writer suggests in this edition (see pages 6-8) positive ways in which we all can try to stem the tide of biodiversity decline.

Either way, with October's announcement from WWF about the staggering loss of the world's wildlife over the past 40 years or so, sadly, the article could hardly have been better timed.

The writer's mention of other continents could hardly be avoided. Wildlife does not live in a national microcosm – it does cross borders.

Finally, 'Around the districts' is essentially put together by the relevant chairmen; it is their prerogative as to which issues they choose to cover.

Thank you for your observations – feedback is always welcome.

It should come as no surprise, but the readers of Kent Voice really are a learned bunch, as the following letter shows...



The (very) complex world of stag beetles

Dear Editor,

I read the enjoyable Autumn-Winter 2018 edition of Kent Voice and wish to comment on the article 'Unearthing the giant stag beetle'.

The reader was introduced to the concept of metamorphosis and the critical importance of thyroxine and T3 and T3 in chordate development and metamorphosis.

We then moved straight on to the stag beetle and its merry life below ground. Unfortunately, the hormones involved in insect development and metamorphosis are completely different. The two most important ones are ecdysone and juvenile hormone (JH), structurally miles away from iodothyroxine.

The corpora allata, a small paired organ above the insect's brain, secretes an increasing amount of ecdysone towards the end of each instar, thereby inducing the larva to moult.

Basically, it lays down a new soft skin beneath its old skin, sheds the old skin and allows the soft new skin to expand before it hardens into a larger instar.

There comes a time when the production of juvenile hormone, a hormone that keeps an individual insect in its immature form, is reduced in output and this leads to the metamorphosis of the insect through either a pupal stage to adulthood or from a nymph to adult.

Many years ago, I worked on insect stem cells, though the term hadn't been invented then. The newly-hatched larva has a dual body plan – one consisting of larval cells making the larva we see and imaginal cells for the future adult.

The imaginal cells are often grouped together as imaginal discs increase in each instar, so by the time of the last larval instar these organs are quite big and ready to expand into wings and legs.

Knock these cells off course early enough and a group of cells designed to form, say, a compound eye will develop into legs or wings.

The article was a little misleading as completely different hormones are involved in insect metamorphosis. We obtain a lot of our iodine used in the synthesis of iodothyroxine from milk. Insects don't really need milk, but houseflies fed on this wonderful drink produce much larger insects.

The impact of our human population increase on the planet as described by a weight comparison is huge – 33 per cent plus another 66 per cent for domesticated animals makes the point.

As we are an exceptionally heavy animal – c99.999 per cent of animal species on the planet are lighter – any change in our numbers has a disproportionate effect.

One heavy human equates to c10 million individual insects, so a billion increase in numbers would equate to a mere 100 humans.

I am aware of the figures but not of how they calculated them – a lot of animal species and huge numbers of individuals live on sheep and cattle pasture and I wonder if these are accounted for as other species or grazing land just becomes the weight of sheep or cattle and other wildlife forgotten.

John Badmin Hon FRES, Selling

How do we join the planning process?

Dear Editor,

I live in Northbourne and have been a member of CPRE Kent for the last two years. Dover District Council is updating its Local Plan, which will run from 2018-2032. The process has been delayed so the consultation period will now take place after the elections in May.

Its last Plan included about 40 per cent greenfield developments by large-volume builders.

Plans for a massive development have, by chance, come into the public domain.

This would be very large and involves a new road joining north Deal to the Sandwich-Dover road. My initial feeling is that such a plan is inappropriate and would produce a conglomeration stretching from Sholden, where about 600 hundred houses have already been built recently.

I would like to do some research on this scheme and wondered if there was a book that explained how to find background information.

For example, do developers buy options on land when planning developments? What is the role of the local council in relation to such matters as Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) and promises to build infrastructure?

Is information about land ownership and sales publicly available?

I would like some advice about how to research and get involved with the planning process.

Peter Cutler, Northbourne

Hilary Newport, CPRE Kent director, replies: *Information about land ownership is available through the Land Registry (at a cost), assuming that the land has actually been registered: <https://www.gov.uk/search-property-information-land-registry> However, local knowledge is probably equally useful – you may already know someone who is aware of the ownership of the land in question.*

Many volume-housebuilders buy options on land in private agreements with the landowners, but these are harder to research without personal knowledge.

As far as CPOs are concerned, they are generally only relevant for infrastructure projects (for example, roads, rail and energy) that can be demonstrated to be in the national interest.

You will find useful information on the CPRE Planning Help website: www.planninghelp.cpre.org.uk/

... and particularly here:

www.planninghelp.cpre.org.uk/improve-where-you-live/how-to-comment-on-a-planning-application

... and this information is also available as a PDF booklet: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/download/1388>

... while this one explains more about engaging with Local Plan consultations: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/download/1565>



Just let wildlife do its thing

Dear Editor,

In Geoff Meaden's article 'The killing of nature' (Kent Voice, Autumn-Winter 2018) he highlights 'Too much public access to 'nature'' as one of the pressures on wildlife.

I agree with him – why do we have pond-dipping and bug hunts? Can't animals be left to get on with their lives?

We have plenty of wildlife where I live, including kestrels, which nested in one of the nearby oast cowl and produced four young. There are also dozens of swallows.

If people just sat quietly watching, there is so much going on – for example long-tailed tits eating blackflies on the runner beans; we also have buzzards and tawny owls.

Mary Owlett, Sevenoaks

Readers' views are always welcome; please email david.mairs@cprekent.org.uk

A city champion steps aside

The year, 1966. England won the World Cup. Barrie Gore moved to Kent...

Whether you regard the two events as of similarly momentous significance depends perhaps on personal perspective, but the decision of the former chairman of Canterbury CPRE to up sticks from the capital was, it is fair to say, not without impact.

The word 'former' is the one that catches your eye as Barrie has become almost a fixture in the cathedral-city role over the previous 10 years or so ("I haven't counted them").

"I've had enough," he says. "I shall continue to support CPRE Kent – I'm as enthusiastic as ever – but although I'm in good health a few issues are starting to take their toll."

He finally called it a day at the beginning of April after what was in fact two stints, having manfully stepped back into the breach after the death of Alan Holmes in 2017.

The initial engagement followed a spell helping out the Canterbury committee with CPRE's Night Blight campaign. That took him to London, where he was "impressed" by the organisation.

"Even so, I didn't particularly volunteer for the Canterbury job," he says. "But the chair, Katrina Brown, a farmer's wife who was very good on agriculture, was pregnant and had other priorities! Against my better judgment, I was persuaded to take on the job."

We need to campaign more

The last remark was (thankfully) said with a smile and it is apparent that Barrie's respect for the organisation runs deep, even if he believes it might change a little the way it goes about things.

"I think CPRE is a wonderful organisation," he says. "But we need to campaign more and run demonstrations. I wanted to have a funeral march down New Dover Road – at the head would be a coffin containing the soul of Canterbury."

"Surely CPRE did campaign in the early days, for example for the creation of National Parks? We do in a way now, by writing to the press and commenting on planning, policies and Local Plans, but we could sometimes be more demonstrative."

The love of Canterbury is something else that shines bright, but he is of course not a genuine local. Rather, the cathedral city is Barrie's adopted home.

"I was born a cockney, the genuine article, but moved to Rainham in 1966 and Canterbury in 1973."

A solicitor, he ran "a small family practice" in Boughton that he eventually sold after starting up in Canterbury. "I had some wonderful staff working with me," he says.

With wife Valerie, he has five grown-up children (Jonathan, Felicity, Elaine, David and Sophie) and "lots of grandchildren", and it is perhaps the fact that east Kent has provided the home for his loved ones that has helped fire his passion for the area.

It is a passion, though, that is tinged grey with regret at many of the changes that have occurred during his time there, as well as obvious frustration.

He's been a leading light of Canterbury CPRE for a decade and he's as enthusiastic for the cause as ever, but Barrie Gore has decided it's time to vacate the chairman's seat

"I have a theory – Kent has traditionally always been the point of invasion, and people have become conditioned to being steamrollered over. Kent people don't jump up and down – if the things that have happened to Canterbury had happened to London, there would have been an uproar.

"I think people across the county have lost faith in having their views entertained and acted upon. Now it's all about going to court and it shouldn't be like that – you now have to be a wealthy person to be able to challenge decisions you might not like. That was not always the case."

The shift in the planning environment, perceived or otherwise, is not of course restricted to Canterbury, but it is nevertheless enlightening to hear the views of someone who has spent years on the campaign frontline largely in one particular place. What has been the greatest change during his tenure?

"The main difference is the individual feeling that whatever people say they can't make a difference – that's the greatest sadness.

"The consultation process, so lionised by government, brings in people far too late as, in reality, the actual decision has often already been made. We've seen problems with our draft Local Plan, which in my view, and that of many others, didn't accurately summarise comments from the public – the process was geared in a way that indicated it had more support than it actually did.

"Democracy has on the face of it stepped backwards, despite us theoretically being told more. People are shovelled away. Having only three minutes to speak before the planning committee on a major application is a case in point.

"A classic example in Canterbury is at Wincheap, where the city council wants to build a car park right up to the River Stour, ruining a historic setting and adversely affecting the adjoining countryside. That car park could be put anywhere on Wincheap with a far less destructive outcome.

"Another is the way the local authority follows the government line on housing, whereas it should be saying publicly: 'Sorry, Canterbury can't cope with this sort of thing'. I have asked the council to do this, but they have not done so – nor have they told us what they discuss on their visits to central government."

More broadly, Barrie is clear where the blame lies for what he sees as a fading democracy: "The local government reorganisation in 1974 – I knew it was a bad thing as soon as it happened. Things weren't overtly political before, but now it's all black and white, wholly polarised.

"It's a terrible situation here – Canterbury is losing a lot of its character and the status of its World Heritage Site could be lost. There is a management plan, but it isn't being monitored, which it should be at least twice a year. The WHS management committee was apparently without a chair for a period and has not met as often as it should in recent years.

"We, and others, have written letters to UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] about the dangers to the WHS – I don't like the idea, but we've tried everything else."

Has the onslaught ever been so bad?

"Not since I've lived in Canterbury, anyway."

What is to be done?

"I ask myself the same question. I don't know.

"There should be pressure on central government to bring back the central grant system. Canterbury is a small district with a lot of heritage liabilities, such as the city wall and many other lovely buildings.

"I think they're failing to protect the assets they have and are spending money on new projects when they are perhaps financially unable to protect and look after them as well. They wanted to 'improve' St George's Place at a cost of £80,000 and have spent more than £10 million on a shopping precinct that has no local businesses and appears focused solely on attracting large companies from outside.

"Another theoretical consultation – they pulled down a perfectly good cinema [the building that became The Marlowe Theatre] at considerable expense for a replacement that does not cater as well as it should for the needs of the disabled and has an unfortunate effect on the conservation area and its historic buildings.

"As for its design and the illumination, whoever thought of having Piccadilly Circus in front of the cathedral?"

Alternative ways forward

The disenchantment of Barrie Gore with much of what he sees around him cannot be denied and he is not, it is fair to say, enamoured with the condition of local democracy, at least in this part of the world.

There is a train of thought that says we should only highlight the positive, avoiding any hint of naysaying, but if that is not a true reflection of matters then aren't we in danger of entering the realms of, at best, complacency or, at worst, dishonesty? Either way, we do need to be able to offer alternative ways forward. Over to Barrie...

"I've often thought amenity bodies should have a voting place on planning authorities.

"The most disappointing thing is all these protective amenity organisations only have advisory status – they have no statutory teeth, so councils can ignore them.

"Organisations such as ours have far more rural experience than many of the councillors elected to represent rural communities."



Time to take off the boots and have a break... Barrie with grandson Jed and son Jonathan after tackling The Three Peaks in North Yorkshire

It would be wrong to give an impression of Barrie the doom-monger. Rather, he is a jolly fellow who rejoices in the finer things in life, notably, in our context, the scuffed gem of Canterbury, while he is warm in his praise of those he thinks deserving of it.

"I think CPRE national office does a really good job with some wonderful and very sincere people. It is short-staffed, which is a shame and means they can't perhaps deal with all the nitty-gritty in detail – the NPPF was a wonderful example of that."

It is no secret that CPRE is looking to move with the times in a way it has arguably not done before, a process with which Barrie is fully on board.

"We should be getting more out of our members – and getting more members. We need to hit people at the inquiry stage: 'Right, you've seen our mettle – cough up!'

"Let's get into primary schools and talk about heritage and countryside – children are very responsive and would take leaflets home to their parents. We have to put idealism to one side, and sometimes the economy too, and get on with protecting what's important.

"Our role is to defend and protect the countryside, but we should include heritage in that objective. We've done a lot of work here and I should say that the Canterbury Society was also very good in that department.

"The problem is, people don't know what we stand for. We do so much good – if it wasn't for us, groups like the RSPB wouldn't have the land to protect."

The positivity horse is now in full gallop, so, in wishing Barrie the very best in his retirement from the Canterbury CPRE chair and thanking him for his efforts, let's ride it to the end...

"We've raised the profile of CPRE here – our Canterbury committee has a wealth of experience and knowledge, and has been very supportive to me personally and to the aims of CPRE Kent. As a result, I believe we have the respect of the council. I do think we have made a difference."

Setting up the planning system to fail

Richard Bate, planning professional and CPRE Kent trustee, delivers a withering analysis of government housing policy

Get out the way! Government housing policy is showing precious little concern for local need

How often have you heard it said that if only the planning authorities would release more land for housing, then the builders would build more houses and prices would come down?

This is the fundamental belief across the government at present. To the Treasury this is the simple law of supply and demand. Furthermore, given that the market knows best and the planning system gets in the way of the market, it must be right to pull the teeth of the planning system. This is what the government has been doing.

The inconvenient reality is that housebuilders do not wish to reduce house prices discernibly.

At the site level they anticipate particular sale prices for particular products, subtract construction costs, financing and profit, and bid for the land as a residual cost.

If house prices come down, profits erode and enthusiasm to build deteriorates. That's what happens in recessions. Strategically, businesses do not deliberately flood their own market with the objective of reducing their own sale price.

Release more land for housing?

Giving builders more land may help them to supply more houses, but only up to a point.

Firstly, there has to be a market at their chosen sale price. The government has generously aided this process through Help to Buy and other mechanisms, enabling purchasers to pay inflated prices.

The Chartered Institute of Housing has shown recently that more government subsidy is being ploughed into home ownership than into 'affordable' (sub-market) housing to rent. It's hardly surprising house prices don't come down.

Secondly, 'more land' has ceased to be the solution, because builders can't use it fast enough. Data commissioned by the Local Government Association shows that planning permissions each year far outstrip completions, that unimplemented permissions are rising, and the period from permission to completion is lengthening.

Third, the greater the choice of sites available to builders, the more they can cherry-pick the financially attractive

ones – often greenfield sites rather than recycling the urban sites the planning system would largely prefer. So planning is already less effective.

How many houses?

Despite plenty of planning permissions, annual completions in all tenures are below the estimated growth of some 230,000 a year in numbers of households in England.

Government policy is for the completion of 300,000 dwellings annually, almost twice the number achieved in 2017. You can guess its preferred means of achieving this aspiration: release more land!

To arm-twist planning authorities, the government changed the rules on housing need and supply in February this year.

Housing need is to be calculated by a new 'standard method'. This is based on the well-established (but still volatile) household projections prepared by the Office for National Statistics every two years.

The 2016-based projections were generally lower than the 2014-based projections, so the government has decreed that the older set will be used. Never mind not using the most up-to-date information if it is inconvenient to the outcome...

The housing need figure for each authority is then adjusted to take account of affordability (a specific ratio of house prices to incomes). All but about five local authorities in the country have affordability ratios above the threshold at which, under the government's method, their housing need figures will be raised. (The local housing need figure is capped at 40 per cent above the average annual housing requirement set out in existing Local Plans.)

The policy therefore builds into planning practice the government's belief that releasing more land will bring down house prices.

Unsurprisingly, there is no mention of the degree to which affordability ratios are expected to fall for a given stimulus of land supply. The number of plots that must be provided will generally be well above the number of dwellings needed to match the household projections, so land must be made available for households that are not projected to exist.

Each authority must supply land for at least five years' worth of building at the required rate.

The government wants 'concealed' households to obtain their own homes more readily and wants households to form that have allegedly been deterred from forming by the shortage of dwellings.

This is more economic gibberish.

The concealed and unformed households are in that position because they cannot afford to buy or rent on the open market and would be unable to obtain subsidised housing, so their needs will only be met by greatly increasing the provision of sub-market housing, ideally traditional social housing.

That is irrespective of the volume of land release. The extra sub-market housing planned is far short of real needs.

Is it all planning's fault?

The government's *coup de grâce* is on housing delivery. Instead of being assessed for their land supply, local authorities will be assessed on the number of dwellings built in their areas. This is despite local authorities barely building

any houses these days: that's the task of builders.

When housebuilding rates in a local authority fall below 85 per cent of its assessed requirement, the government assumes (again) that this is for want of land. The authority will then be obliged to find a 20 per cent extra 'buffer' of additional deliverable housing sites.

On current figures, that affects 86 councils in England: in Kent – Gravesham, Medway, Swale and especially Thanet. The instruction to release more land for housing at repeated stages in the process inevitably threatens more countryside, with builders likely to play the system to achieve that result.

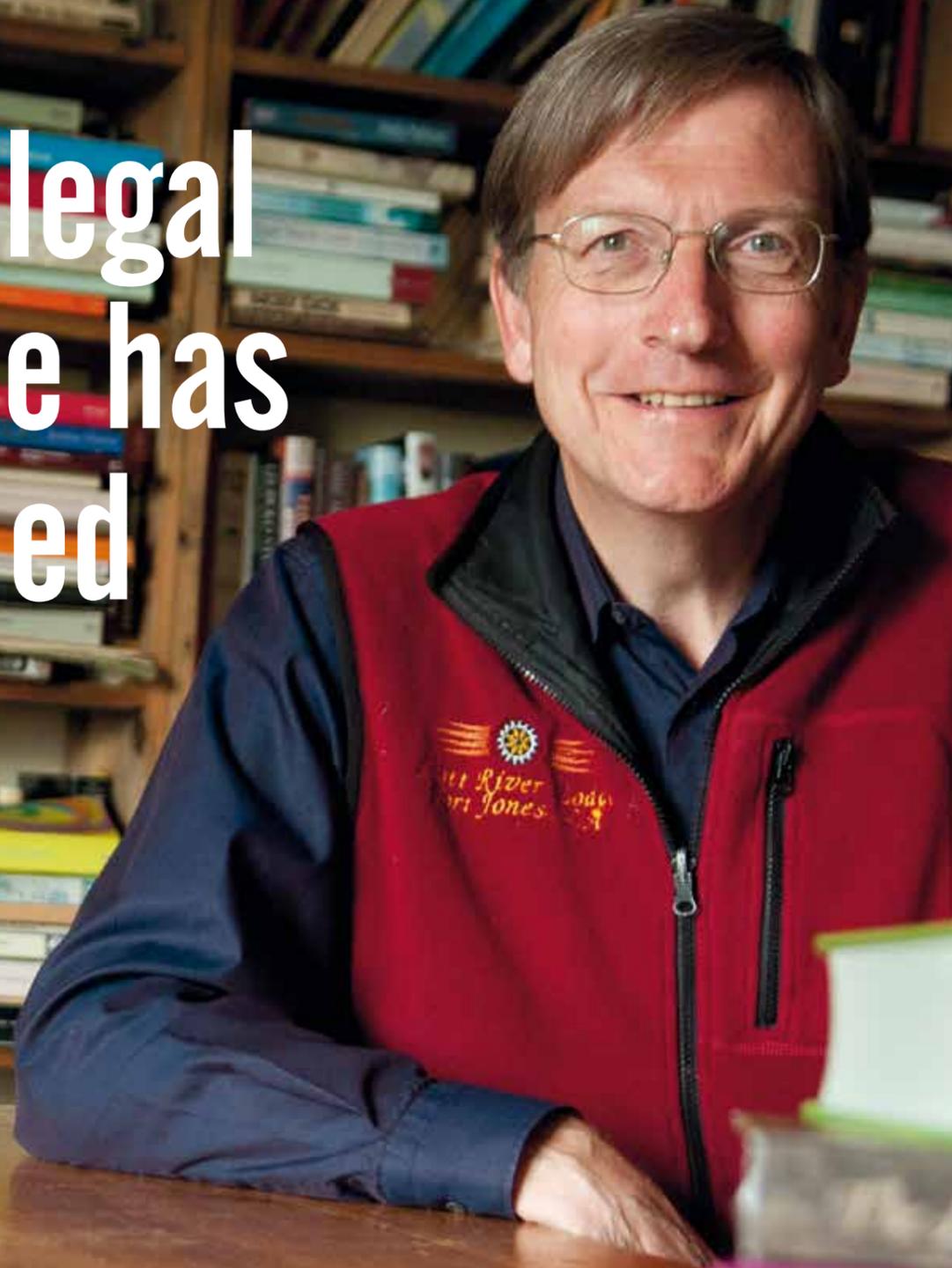
The government is setting up requirements that it must know are wholly undeliverable for many local authorities. When housing supply falls short of the new proposed 'needs', the government will berate the authorities and claim it's all the fault of their planning practices.

That will make it easier to impose yet another round of significant weakening of planning powers – which are obviously getting in the way of housing the nation.

Meanwhile, the original culprit, high house prices, which could be tackled by policies on the 'demand' side rather than the 'supply' side, will go unchecked. Further, the government has announced its intention to fuel the fire with yet another extension of Help to Buy, beyond 2021.



The legal eagle has landed



John Wotton, the new chairman of CPRE Kent, talks to David Mairs about how he thinks this organisation should develop and shares (some of) his background as a lawyer in the City

A study in scarlet... John Wotton has called Kent home since 1983

“Where I am now is that I’m not a lawyer any longer!”

John Wotton, new chairman of CPRE Kent, was cheerily setting the record straight during a discussion in which he set out his ambitions for this organisation.

It would be remiss to introduce John without referring to his life in the legal profession, during which he worked for more than 30 years as a City lawyer with an international corporate law firm.

Suffice to say, a stellar career included such roles as president of the Law Society of England & Wales and chairman of the Law Society’s EU Committee and has been winding down with the chairing of Competition and Markets Authority inquiries for the past five years.

Now “spreading his wings” and focusing on a range of very different interests that include, of course, his role at CPRE Kent, he is strengthening his involvement with charities, notably in the world of wildlife conservation, and in education.

Born in Hounslow and brought up in Sunbury-on-Thames, he was able to call this county home when he moved to Marden in 1983 just as he and wife Linde were starting a family. ‘Children’ Ruth, Tom and Sophie are now all in their 30s.

“We moved into what one of the rich farmers in Marden referred to as a gentry house – we had the smaller, older half of it. It was tucked away, set well back from the main road, but had a relatively small garden.

“All around were orchards and hop gardens, half of which have now been built on. I was told there were once 80 working oasts in Marden parish and there were still five when we moved there. Now there’s not a hop grown in Marden.”

Despite the changes and so much loss of what many regard as the county’s heritage, it was in Marden that John got “a feel for Kent”. He moved to nearby Cranbrook in 1992.

Although fresh in his chairman’s role, John is of course no stranger to CPRE Kent, having chaired the Historic Buildings Committee for the past three years. Initially a joint operation between the Kent Archaeological Society and CPRE Kent, it is now run solely by the latter.

How did that particular interest develop?

“I’ve always been attracted to older buildings. A university friend – he’s still a good friend – went straight from his architecture degree to conservation and showed us around his patch in Suffolk. I found that interesting.

“Thinking about it, my interest may even date back to university. Jesus College Cambridge, where I studied, retains the medieval chapel and cloisters of the nunnery formerly on the site, now surrounded by fine buildings from every century since the foundation of the college in 1496. I fell in love with the place the moment I first set eyes on it.”

Historic buildings do not necessarily come to mind as falling under the CPRE remit – indeed Kent is the only branch to have such a committee – so how does John view their place in the wider scheme of things?

“Historic buildings can be overlooked in the work of CPRE branches. A lot of what we do is protection of the countryside, but the built environment is hugely important. The character of most settlements depends on historic architecture and protecting the fabric of old buildings and historic monuments is terribly important.

“The National Planning Policy Framework also protects the setting of heritage assets, so there’s often a very good ground for opposing or seeking to change an undesirable planning application, even where the historic structures themselves are unharmed. Protecting them in this way is highly congruent with the aims of CPRE, to protect the countryside.”

John acknowledges the challenge of following in the footsteps of predecessor Christine Drury, who worked tirelessly to make CPRE Kent such an effective organisation during her five-year term. What changes might we expect under his chairmanship? “My main concern is my comparative lack of detailed planning knowledge. Even though I was a lawyer, my practice didn’t involve planning law.

“Externally, what concerns me most is our limited resource in combating undesirable applications and providing critical review. Local councils are subject to huge and conflicting pressures where planning is concerned and are hugely overstretched, which combine to increase the risk of bad developments being approved.

“I think we have to work very hard to bring in more people with the time and skills to intervene effectively.

“Even though we have some endowment, from a very generous benefactor, which provides us some financial security, we don’t have a big annual budget.

“We need more professional planners and more volunteers with the time and skills to intervene effectively in the planning process.

“I would like to instil a giving culture among our supporter base, one in which more of our members and other supporters make regular donations and leave legacies to CPRE Kent. It’s what other charities do and we don’t need to be reticent about it.

“We have to explain why one large windfall some years ago doesn’t enable us to do everything we need to do. But, of course, we can only expect people to support us financially if they see the value of what we do and believe their contribution will make a difference.”

Even bearing in mind the relative health of the Kent branch, it is no secret that CPRE needs to attract more members. There is no silver bullet, but how does the new man at the helm see us tackling things?

“Many other membership organisations are in the same position and unfortunately people generally seem less willing to get involved. I’m hoping that the work being done nationally on the CPRE brand and image will help us at branch level. But for the sterling efforts of the Charing team and volunteers in promoting CPRE Kent at events around the county, we’d be a good deal worse off than we are.

“Successful campaigns are key. A high-profile campaign is what

“I think we have to work very hard to bring in more people with the time and skills to intervene effectively”

attracts people and makes them think we're worth supporting. "We sometimes get new people at meetings but often don't see them again, so we have to ask if we're projecting the right message. The existing supporter base have signed up to and accept what we are, but most of us also see why we might need to attract a wider audience."

That national work should help CPRE clarify what it's about and a rumoured greater focus on green issues chimes with the new Kent chairman.

"CPRE as a conservation body should be concerned with protection of biodiversity in the countryside, as well as cultural, aesthetic and social considerations.

"We understand the environmental impact of planning, as well as the importance of green spaces and biodiversity to the health and well-being of people."

John's agreement to take the chairman's seat can only be welcomed, but is there a danger of CPRE being viewed more widely as an organisation catering largely for high-end achievers?

"The greater danger is more, I think, that we are seen as a crowd of people with substantial houses and substantial gardens telling people that they must live in high-density housing to protect the countryside.

"We can only tackle that by explaining how the countryside and access to it are of benefit to people's well-being."

Which brings us to the issue of how much CPRE can influence housing policy.

"Housebuilding doesn't make housing affordable," says John. "I don't see how we can meet the need for rural affordable housing without significant funding and other incentives being provided for social housing – genuinely affordable housing that will remain so, in the places where the need is greatest.

"Housing ceases to be a problem when there's an adequate supply of low-cost housing for people without substantial means, and that includes housing in the private rental market. When I was young, it was very difficult to get anywhere to rent.

"I do believe we need a mixed housing market, with three primary types – social housing, private rental and home ownership – but government is only promoting one of them."

Difficult times, unquestionably, but for John Wotton retirement does not entail the surrender of all other responsibilities.

Trustee of the Cranbrook School Trust and Great Dixter, council member of Fauna & Flora International and, of course, front man for our own cherished organisation... before you even consider the maintenance of his garden, orchard and mini-arboretum, opened regularly for charity, it is apparent the demands on his time will be rich and varied.

You can but sympathise when he says that, after three years chairing the Historic Buildings Committee, he wants to step aside from that particular task "but didn't manage it in the meeting we just held".

So there you are, dear readers: a new challenge could be yours. Who knows where you might end up?



John spends much of his spare time maintaining his garden, orchard and mini-arboretum, which are opened regularly for charity



Farewell Christine and thank you!

One of the most poignant events of last year's AGM, held at Lenham Community Centre in November, was the end of Christine Drury's five-year term as chair.

After matters had got under way, the time soon came for her to hand over the reins to new chairman John Wotton.

Tributes to Christine were warm and generous, and she was presented with gifts and flowers by director Hilary Newport (left).

Come with us on an exclusive tour of Wildwood

Join us for a very special look behind the scenes at Wildwood!

You will be treated to an exclusive CPRE Kent members' look behind the scenes at the Wildwood Trust's animal park, where you will get to learn about the important conservation work carried out at the venue, which specialises in British wildlife.

The tour starts in the morning with a visit to the harvest mice before we go behind the scenes to look at the conservation breeding of water voles and hazel dormice; we finish up with a private meeting with the beautiful rescued red foxes and their keeper as she feeds them.

The afternoon is left free for you to explore the park, with plenty of time to visit the bears, the wolves, or maybe the badgers.

No coach has been organised for this trip – there is plenty of on-site parking for visitors.

A café serves hot food, while there is a picnic area should you prefer.

As this is a look behind the scenes, some of the tour may not be suitable for wheelchair-users, but the main part of the park has full disabled access. Please wear suitable footwear for walking and wet-weather gear if conditions are poor.

The outing takes place on Saturday, June 8, starting at 10.30am. Numbers are limited, so booking is essential. The cost is £20 per person.

If you would like to join us on this wonderful tour, please fill in the enclosed form, phone the office on 01233 714540 or email info@cprekent.org.uk

Save the date! This year's Christmas lunch is being held at the award-winning George Inn, Molash, on Friday, November 29



Help protect the future of Kent's countryside with a legacy gift

By remembering CPRE Kent when considering your will, you can help ensure we will be here protecting the Kent countryside well into the future



If you are thinking of having a will written, or have an existing will, please think about leaving a gift, no matter how small, to CPRE Kent.

To find out more contact
Vicky Ellis 01233 714540
vicky.ellis@cprekent.org.uk



Chairman's Update

Would you like to join one of our committees? **John Wotton**

Christine Drury, my predecessor as chairman, provided inspiring and effective leadership to CPRE Kent throughout her five-year term in office, which came to an end at our AGM in November.

I am grateful that she has agreed to chair the Ashford district committee, following the sad death of Dr Hilary Moorby, who was both an energetic and committed chair of that committee and former chair of the branch.

Another long-serving and hard-working committee chair, Barrie Gore, has decided the time has come for him to give up chairing the Canterbury district committee.

Barrie went beyond the call of duty by undertaking a second stint as chairman after Alan Holmes passed away and I am immensely grateful to him for all his hard work and insight into the threats facing the unique architectural character of the city of Canterbury.

Nick Blake has kindly agreed to serve as acting chair of the Canterbury committee.

I am also very grateful to another active member of the branch, Graham Horner, who has taken over as chairman of Shepway district committee (a name he prefers, notwithstanding the local authority's decision to change its name to Folkestone & Hythe District Council) while continuing with the demanding role of secretary of the Kent Historic Buildings Committee.

Our district and specialist committees are the driving force of much of the work that we do to protect the Kent countryside and the burden carried by the chairs and members of those committees is considerable.

We have seen a trickle of new committee members coming on board over recent months, but new members are needed on all committees. Do please come forward and volunteer, if you are able to do so, by contacting the Charing office.

It is very important that we have strong district committees throughout the county, combined with specialist expertise in transport, the environment and heritage, to respond to the many threats now facing Kent.

We need to respond effectively to major infrastructure proposals, such as the Lower Thames Crossing, Cleve Hill solar farm, the reopening of Manston airport and various plans for lorry-parking.

We need to review critically the constant flow of new and amended Local Plans throughout the county, many of which are unrealistically ambitious in terms of the scale and timing of development they provide for and potentially hugely damaging to Kent's countryside, villages and towns.



The first (but most certainly not the last) proposal for a new town in Kent, Otterpool Park, near Hythe, is now on the table and would have a massive impact on what is now a quiet and beautiful rural area.

We also need to provide effective opposition to major speculative development proposals, which increasingly drive planning outcomes across the county.

Combining our committees' local knowledge and networks with the efforts of our small but highly professional and committed team at Charing is the best way for us to protect Kent.

At times, the size and multiplicity of the threats to our countryside can seem daunting, but we can take pleasure in small successes as well as big ones.

Recently, members in Swale spotted that a fine old house in a conservation area was about to be demolished and as a result galvanised the local community and the council to secure its protection.

The chair of one of our district committees, reviewing the papers for a modestly-sized housing development, spotted that the planning officer's report was using an out-of-date housing supply calculation, which made a crucial difference to the proper treatment of the application.

As a result, both the application concerned and two others were withdrawn from the planning committee.

In May, we will be supporting Swale Borough Council in the Court of Appeal as it resists attempts to overturn the refusal of planning permission for a housing development beside the A2 on air-quality grounds. This is a case of national significance.

With your support, we continue the fight to protect Kent.



Margaret Micklewright: an appreciation from CPRE Kent director Hilary Newport

In December 2018, Margaret Micklewright passed away at the age of 87.

Margaret was a central figure in the CPRE Kent family, acting as our volunteer events co-ordinator from 1999 until well into 2018, bringing together CPRE members from across the county and beyond on a wealth of fascinating trips.

Margaret organised well over a hundred trips for CPRE Kent members, ranging from springtime bluebell walks to a visit to the European Parliament.

Her repertoire included some particularly quirky destinations such as the 'secret' cold-war nuclear bunker in Essex, the South East London Combined Heat and Power plant and the Brighton sewers; Margaret delighted in telling us how her party surprised people in the park near Brighton pier when they came up out of a manhole dressed in appropriate hi-vis gear and hard hats.

Alongside her come-rain-or-shine day at the CPRE Kent offices each Wednesday,

Margaret also volunteered one day a week at the College of Arms, the official authority for granting coats of arms, which can trace its own history back to medieval times.

CPRE members enjoyed several entertaining visits to the college, hearing from the serving heralds and viewing fascinating historical documents.

Her tireless commitment to maintaining a full calendar of engaging and unusual events brought a great deal of pleasure to CPRE members who might otherwise have had little opportunity to meet each other.

I will remember Margaret as an engaging conversationalist with a wicked sense of humour and fiercely proud of her family – especially granddaughter Freya. I will miss her greatly.

Margaret survived her beloved husband Len by only three months, and our thoughts are with her family and all those who will remember her with such fondness.

Gift of Membership

Have you considered the gift of CPRE Kent membership?

CPRE Kent's membership is in serious decline.

Without our members we would not be able to protect the countryside from inappropriate planning decisions or campaign on litter issues and biodiversity at a time where there is unprecedented pressure on green spaces and protected areas. Nature is under serious threat.

Please consider giving a CPRE Kent membership when making a gift to a friend or family member.

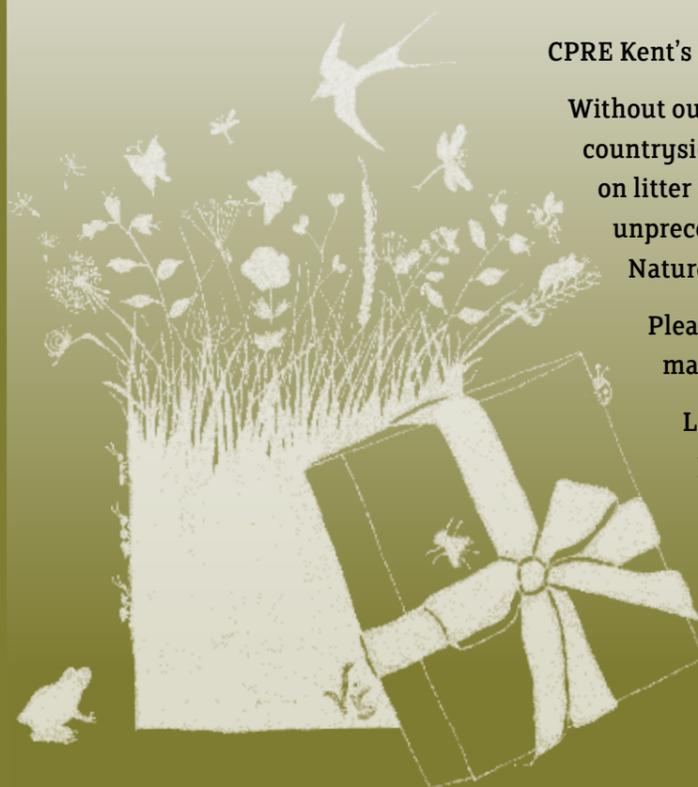
Let us know it is a gift and we will send a card and small present to make it special.

You can write to us at:

CPRE Kent, Queen's Head House, Ashford Road, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN27 0AD;

email info@cprekent.org.uk;

or phone us on 01233 714540.



Around the districts.

A quick catch-up with our committees – more extensive reports from our chairmen are on the website. Don't forget, if you would like to become more involved with CPRE Kent in your local area please contact us in the office and we will put you in touch with your district chairman.

Ashford – Christine Drury

- The Ashford Local Plan was adopted by the council on February 21. Time for a brief sigh of relief as it secures Ashford's planning decision powers so long as the delivery rate can be maintained. On the Housing Delivery Test results finally published by the government in February, Ashford is one of the 34 per cent of local authorities that have gained a small cushion by coming off the 20 per cent buffer 'naughty step' to the standard 5 per cent buffer. The government issued further guidance in February on how delivery should be calculated: outline permission on smaller sites can count "unless there is evidence to the contrary". Ashford has quite a lot of larger sites, so how these are delivered will determine whether the borough can keep its five-year housing land supply status. Work on the next Local Plan is likely to start this year!
- There is a complex set of sites on the green fields immediately to the south and east of Ashford town. Delivering those coherently with enough cycle paths and bus services to make them more transport climate friendly is the current challenge, alongside good design guidance and management of the flood risks. If we have to lose 200 acres of agricultural land, let it not be to bad development. CPRE Ashford put in a full initial comment and is involved in the masterplanning workshops. Safeguarding the villages, countryside and dark-sky area further south is one of our objectives. We hope to put in a full comment and also engage on the other large sites to the north of the town. As these are outline applications, it may be difficult to get as strong commitments to good design and green space structure as necessary.
- The Local Plan has some difficult challenges in the rural part of the borough, facing a much larger amount of development than it is practical to assimilate quickly in the villages. There are all the usual problems of sewerage capacity, drainage (now requiring SuDs), transport and parking as villages have entirely inadequate buses. Trains only meet part of the need, and only in those with stations.
- If we have the capacity, we will encourage more to work on Neighbourhood Plans. The Secretary of State says he is committed to them and now that Ashford has an up-to-date Local Plan they are unlikely to be overridden. So far, Ashford has two, Wye and Pluckley, but several are getting close.
- Mersham, Aldington and neighbouring villages are challenged by the squeeze of an expanding Ashford to the west and the threat of Otterpool garden town to the east. Two local councils, two MPs and a busy motorway between them and the AONB to the north make for tough challenges. CPRE Ashford is doing all it can to ensure that, as all this development progresses, the countryside is not forgotten and communities have a voice. We are working closely with the Rural Means Rural action group, so we can do more.
- And finally... 'brownfield first' is becoming a reality as the council puts a lot of its money and delivery priority into the regeneration of Ashford town. The residential, office, college and cultural development is finally happening after 20 years. CPRE Ashford celebrated this in March with its AGM at the new town-centre Picturehouse cinema. There is a long way to go, but it's a start.

Canterbury – Barrie Gore

- The city's heritage remains under attack. This time it is the section of the River Stour forming part of the historic setting of our World Heritage Site: the long-distance view of the city from Tonford and Stour Meadows. The Canterbury Conservation Appraisal identifies this as one of nine important views of the city, stating that the city's landscape setting is part of its character and also that it is important visually and for its biodiversity. The city council has applied to build a large section of Wincheap park-and-ride on the bank of the Stour opposite the popular Great Stour Way on the other side. The council owns much of Wincheap Industrial Estate, so objectors feel strongly it should be using part of this unlovely commercial area for the park-and-ride. Sadly, the application was poorly advertised and the statutory notices were posted in locations that were primarily motorised rather than pedestrianised. None of the notices appeared on Great Stour Way. Consequently, almost all objectors learnt about the application by word of mouth. We have persuaded the council to extend the time for comments and to repost notices, hopefully in better locations. From the way in which our city's heritage has been devalued, one would not believe we have a heritage champion at the city council.

Dartford and Gravesham – Alex Hills

- The threat to the Green Belt in Gravesham is still there, but nothing will happen until after the May elections, during which it will very much be an issue. What the government is telling Gravesham council it must build is at odds with its Green Belt policy. Hopefully, the new administration will sit down with CPRE Kent to work out how defensible the Green Belt really is after the election.
- The Bean interchange upgrade is out to consultation. It appears Highways England has not been given the budget to do the work properly, while it has not listened to local residents or the parish council. The HE officials and thus the consultants working for them were not allowed to look at the impact on the strategic road network. This could explain the inclusion of a new eastbound slip road that will increase congestion on the A2. CPRE Kent remains committed to helping protect residents' quality of life from this terrible plan. This project proves that Kent needs a sustainable countywide transport plan. The only good thing that can be said about the project is that walking and cycling routes have been improved. In addition to these improvements, Atkins Global has been given the task of spending the designated funding money for NMU (non-motorised user) routes in the area. As chairman of the local cycling forum, I arranged a productive meeting with the company in February about the design concept routes – if we only get half of them built, it will make a big difference to walking and cycling safety in the area. The route concepts were due to be put forward for feasibility studies at the end of March.
- CPRE Kent has been offered a stand at the Gravesend Rotary Club charity bike ride on May 12 to promote active travel and sustainable transport. The event has three distance options: 15, 30 and 45 miles. All routes are well marshalled and refreshment stops provided. Commuter cyclists and leisure cyclists have very different requirements; however, they can cross over given the right encouragement.
- The KenEx tramline (which will be cycling-friendly) is still progressing well, if far too slowly for my liking. Rather than spending money on roads that will increase congestion, it should be investing more in active travel plans like the tramline and NMU routes.

Dover – Derek Wanstall

- With the Local Plan being reviewed, Dover District Council has organised a consultation on a green infrastructure strategy. This is very much welcomed. It also states it will operate alongside the Local Plan. Hopefully, it will be adhered to.
- As expected, the development proposal for Farthingloe and Western Heights has re-emerged, with CGI submitting "updated application documents" prior to redetermination by DDC. The plan seems little changed. However, with the Home Office placing the nearby immigration centre up for sale for redevelopment, there is a need to review policy for the whole area.
- With alternatives to Operation Stack still being considered, proposed widening of the A2 from Lydden to Whitfield Hill a constant theme, Lydden Hill racing circuit still causing issues and Dover immigration centre up for redevelopment, there will be much to discuss.

Maidstone – Henny Shotter

- Maidstone Borough Council has just begun its Review of the Local Plan for 2022 with a new 'call for sites'. The recent relatively quiet time is coming to an end. A meeting was held with the director of regeneration and place and the strategic planning manager on February 6, when they confirmed that they think the government's requirement for new housing in the borough will increase from 882 to some 1,200 per annum. How the consequent infrastructure needs will be tackled was less than clear. So much for the Garden of England.
- We objected on design grounds to a planning application for a development of eight dwellings in the AONB. The application was to convert a basic structure of corrugated barns from the 1970s and '80s. Not much was done to reflect the vernacular in the area. This application is a follow-up to an earlier one that established development rights. With the changes to permitted development rights that came into force last year, the government took a further step to undermine Local Plan policies. Dispersed development in the countryside, which we had thought was a thing of the past, is back. There will be negative consequences for landscape and ecology, but it will also limit the ability of the agricultural sector to adapt to changes in farming.
- To end on a positive note, an appeal for the development of eight very large barns in the AONB that would have served as a warehouse for hay harvested from all over the county was turned down by the inspector.

Medway – Hilary Newport

- Publication of the next draft of the Medway Local Plan had been expected in December, but this has been delayed by at least six months. The local authority says the document cannot be completed until it learns the outcome of its bid for £170 million from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. This is anticipated in May and it is hoped the draft Local Plan will go out for public consultation in June or July.
- The hugely contentious plan to build homes at Lodge Hill has taken another twist with Homes England submitting revised plans for 500 new properties, rather than the 2,000 proposed previously. The whole sorry saga of this site began in 2014, when Medway Council approved a Land Securities scheme for 5,000 homes there – a decision that led to the inspector examining the Medway Local Plan in 2013 advising it was sufficiently flawed for it to be abandoned. The Chattenden Woods and Lodge Hill SSSI hosts some 85 pairs of nightingales, about 1 per cent of the UK population. The most recent application claims the revised scheme "will avoid direct Special Scientific Interest impacts on the Lodge Hill site".
- Plans to build 450 homes at Gibraltar Farm in the Capstone Valley have re-emerged, with a fresh outline application submitted to Medway Council that includes two new access routes off Ham Lane. The local authority had refused proposals to develop the site, but two years ago the Communities Secretary overturned that decision, saying the benefits of the development outweighed the disadvantages of losing farmland.

Sevenoaks – Nigel Britten

- We are nearing the final stage of the new Local Plan process. Consultation on the Submission Version closed in February and we await a date for the examination, probably in the autumn. Much has changed since the first draft, in particular the whittling down of proposed Green Belt sites. What has not changed is the basis of the standard method to calculate housing need, in spite of the latest census data indicating in our case a considerable reduction in the 20-year projection. Data from 2016 would have justified a reduction in housing need from 13,960

to something nearer 10,000. Sevenoaks District Council has settled for a proposed Plan target of about 10,600 houses. As might be expected, promoters of ‘exceptional circumstances’ Green Belt sites who lost out in earlier rounds, such as Quinn Estates (800 units) and Squerryes (600 units, a bypass and landfill site), are known to be gearing up for a counter-attack at the examination. The call for sites was left open until last year, attracting three late proposals from Savills and adding a possible 750 units.

- As well as continuing to oppose these major developments in the Green Belt, with support from Julie and Paul in the CPRE Kent office we will focus at the examination on challenging the treatment of Green Belt agricultural development as previously developed land, contrary to the NPPF definition, thus allowing 360 houses to be built where there should not be any. Top of our list is the council’s identification of land at Pedham Place (at present a golf course) as a “broad location for growth” to be brought forward later in the Plan period as a site for 2,500 houses in the Green Belt and Kent Downs AONB.
- As a footnote, it has been encouraging to see some lengthy, detailed and strong submissions from the Kent Downs AONB Unit on sites such as Pedham Place and Fort Halstead. Inspector please note!

Shepway – Graham Horner

- Attention has been focused on the deluge of documents that arrived on the council’s website as the Regulation 19 consultation on the hastily prepared Core Strategy Review. This document, if found ‘sound’, will legitimise Otterpool Park garden town, which has attracted vocal local opposition. The plans for Otterpool are, in essence, to fill up all the available space in Folkestone & Hythe district that is not in the AONB or on Romney Marsh with housing – more than 10,000 homes. In the face of central government housing targets, it is difficult to argue against the idea in principle, but the council is kidding itself about how quickly the thing will be built. It appears to be assuming an insatiable demand for (un-‘affordable’) new homes in east Kent and infinite capacity of housebuilders to construct them. Our prime concern is that things will proceed a lot more slowly than anticipated, leaving the new ‘garden settlement’ as just another housing estate under construction for years, without supporting infrastructure and dragging on long enough for everyone to forget the lofty ideals of sustainability and high quality set out in the plan. The planning application for Otterpool has been submitted but not yet made public. We look forward to seeing the 10,000 pages it is reported to comprise.
- Princes Parade was approved by the council’s planning committee in August, but the consent has not yet been issued. The proposal will cause significant harm to the setting of the Royal Military Canal and destroy an urban green space unnecessarily. Campaigners are planning a legal challenge, which we support, but we fear the most that will come of it is delay rather than cancellation as the council is the landowner.
- The proposed holiday village in the Kent Downs AONB at Densole, which the council approved against officers’ advice, and approved again after a successful legal challenge, has been stalled by a second JR application. The council’s determination to try again and again to get the outcome it wants does not bode well for the Princes Parade campaign.

Swale – Peter Blandon

- Until recently, Swale’s housing land supply met the five-year target and so there was a defence against speculative applications for housebuilding. However, the government’s publication on February 19 of the new Housing Delivery Test found that the council’s land supply, as now assessed, is only 4.6 years. Swale Borough Council is now required to apply a 20 per cent buffer to its housing targets. This will influence a development under consideration in Wises Lane, Borden, for 675 houses. We objected to this on the grounds that it extended beyond the allocation agreed in the Local Plan, but that argument will now be set aside. The application looks set to be accepted, with officers having received delegated powers to negotiate S106 agreements. One condition is £583,200 as contribution to the local NHS. A recent report showed that Swale has the highest number of patients per GP in the country: 3,342 patients per doctor.
- The council is considering four ‘garden community’ proposals. Quinn Estates is pushing Kent Science Park and a new junction on the M2. Another proposal by Crabtree and Crabtree would see 2,500 new homes spreading from the A249, engulfing Bobbing and leaving, if the proposal map is to be trusted, about 50 yards between the new estates and the eastern end of Newington. The Duchy of Cornwall proposes to fill in the space between the M2 and A2 east of Faversham. A total of 2,500 homes is included in the plan, as well as proposals to ‘tame’ the A2. The final contribution, and the only one that really creates a stand-alone village, is south of the M2 in a pocket of non-AONB land. It runs along both sides of the A251 and would engulf the hamlet of North Street but otherwise is all on agricultural land. It is promoted by Gladman and would be between 1,500 and 10,000 dwellings in size. The council website states: “these submissions are currently being independently assessed. We will then decide whether any new communities should be shortlisted as one of the options to be considered by the next Local Plan.” Despite the fact that the idea of garden communities has not been formally approved or consulted upon, four job advertisements have appeared, all of which mention the garden communities projects. For example, one states: “This post offers a unique opportunity to progress and lead on the garden communities policy and masterplanning as well as having a direct involvement with progressing associated planning applications.” All four jobs are full-time and permanent.

Thanet – David Morrish

- Two inspectors from the Planning Inspectorate began examination of Thanet’s Local Plan in April; this process will end in May. Another, separate, quartet of inspectors are grappling with 5,000-plus pages of evidence relating to Manston airport for which public hearings started in March – a conclusion is expected in July. Never, as far as we are aware, will the two teams of inspectors meet formally, and by the middle of this year two different ministers – Communities Secretary James Brokenshire and Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport – will be given the two separate reports upon which to make their own individual decisions. Manston is the first aviation proposal to be examined under the new infrastructure regulations.
- The Local Plan inquiry is taking place under 2012 NPPF guidelines, rather than the current NPPF, and the debate on housing numbers should be of national interest, with Thanet last year registering as the second-worst achiever of housing targets.
- There are serious concerns about the lack of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan; the county council has identified a £2 billion shortfall on the

estimated £4b that is required in east Kent.

- The Transport Plan has not so far recognised the Margate/Ramsgate Road as the most dangerous in the country and there seems to be an indifference to public transport by bus. We hope the Planning Inspectorate may understand the shenanigans behind the efficacy of the Transport Plan and we look forward to the outcome of an inquiry into a transport strategy kept under wraps for years and not formally approved by the county council as highways authority.
- In the meantime, democracy has reared its lively head as the Thanet council planning committee unanimously rejected officer recommendations to refuse a 120-bed hotel next to Dreamland and gave its approval.

Tonbridge and Malling – Mike Taylor

- Our biggest issue is the Local Plan. We are in an awkward position as we believe it is unsound, largely due to the 3,000 houses planned for Borough Green Gardens to the north of Borough Green, across still-working sandpits and landfill sites. It is awkward because if this scheme is rejected by the inspectors, which it should be due to such considerations as Green Belt and AONB, traffic and air pollution, contamination and mineral plan sterilisation, it throws a huge extra housing burden on to the remainder of Tonbridge & Malling, with the added problem that should the Plan be declared unsound, the rest of the borough will have the extra 23 per cent housing as well, despite the Plan being lodged within the January deadline.
- It is worth noting that the council has ample sites deemed suitable and available, and on non-Green Belt land, to have completed its Plan without invading Green Belt.
- We have learnt that the appointed planning inspectors have written to the council demanding more evidence – evidence that should have helped form the Plan but was still being collected. The council had until March 29 to provide this and update its website with the Regulation 19 responses and résumé of those responses.

Tunbridge Wells – Liz Akenhead

- Our annual meeting will be held at 8pm on Monday, September 23, in the small hall at Bidborough village hall. This is an opportunity to come and meet your local committee, discuss local issues (especially the draft Local Plan, which will be in its final week of Regulation 18 public consultation) and enjoy some cheese and a glass of wine. Please put the date in your diary now. For catering purposes, it would be helpful if you could let me know if you are planning to attend: email elizabeth@akenhead.co.uk or phone 01233 714540.
- The current timetable for the production of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council’s new Local Plan, which will include land allocations to meet its Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) as defined by the government and its economic and other development needs, is:
 - Late May 2019: draft Local Plan first published when it enters the borough council’s committee cycle (look out for it on the Planning and
 - Transportation Cabinet Advisory Committee’s agenda)
 - August 5-September 27, 2019: public consultation (Regulation 18) on the draft Local Plan
 - Spring 2020: public consultation on the (Regulation 19) pre-submission Local Plan
 - Summer 2020: submission of the draft to the Secretary of State
 - Autumn 2020: formal Examination in Public of the draft Plan (ie public inquiry stage)
 - Spring 2021: adoption of the new Plan

Some developers are jumping the gun and making planning applications in advance of publication of the new Local Plan, relying on the fact that the council does not have an up-to-date Local Plan and cannot show it has sufficient allocations to meet its OAN. We are concerned the council will be under pressure to approve many of these, even though they are on Green Belt or within the High Weald AONB. Meanwhile, as Tunbridge Wells has met only 88 per cent of its Housing Delivery Test (net homes delivered over the three-year period to 2017-18 divided by housing need in those three years), it is required to produce an action plan in line with national planning guidance to assess the causes of under-delivery and address how to increase delivery.

Environment – Graham Warren

- A draft of proposed guidelines has been prepared for use by districts in responding to planning inquiries relating to water resource and supply management.
- CPRE Kent has been continuing technical support for the Sussex and Surrey offices in making representation against shale-gas exploration and development.
- Air pollution is now a high-profile issue, as reflected in the government’s Clean Air Strategy. There is continuing concern about the ineffective monitoring of diesel particulates, with no indication of any decline in urban areas or the wider environment.

Historic Buildings – John Wotton

- Attempts were made, supported by the Kent Historic Buildings Committee, to have Heritage Hextable Centre, the former botany laboratory of Swanley Horticultural College, listed by Historic England. Those efforts were not successful, but the local authority is now consulting on options for development of the site, some of which would preserve the building intact.
- Committee members noticed plans were afoot to demolish Mount House, Teynham, an attractive and unmodernised early 19th-century house, unlisted but in the local conservation area. At very short notice, an energetic campaign was mounted to save this building from destruction. The local authority, with whom committee members were in close liaison, issued a building protection notice pending its application to have the building listed by Historic England. Sadly, just before the notice was served, some of the interior fixtures and fittings were destroyed.
- The committee made its second visit of the year, this time to Wickens Court, near Charing, a fine listed hall house with a fascinating history, courtesy of owners Tim and Corrie Bain Smith.
- We look forward to partnering Kent School of Architecture for a third year of the Gravett Award for Architectural Drawing.

Local Plans: an overview

Our list gives the latest situation on Local Plans throughout Kent. In addition, many local authorities have an old-style Local Plan that has ‘saved’ policies still relevant when considering planning applications. These will gradually be replaced as new Plans are adopted. Details of currently ‘saved’ policies are provided on local authority websites.



Ashford

- Final draft of Local Plan 2030 submitted to Secretary of State on December 21, 2017. Independent examination process into Local Plan held over summer 2018 and inspectors notified the council in January 2019 that, subject to modifications, Local Plan 2030 was sound and compliant with the relevant legislation. Local Plan has now been formally adopted.

Canterbury

- Local Plan adopted on July 13, 2017. Early scoping work has begun on evidence that will inform a Local Plan review. It is expected that a review will formally commence in summer 2019 (after elections).

Dartford

- Regulation 18 consultation on ‘strategic issues’ for new Local Plan (Core Strategy review) took place from June 8-July 20, 2018. Further period of consultation expected in spring 2020.

Dover

- As set out in Local Development Scheme (May 2018), Regulation 18 consultation on key issues for new Local Plan (2014-2037) is planned for July 2019, with adoption scheduled for early 2021.

Folkestone & Hythe (formerly Shepway)

- Places and Policies Local Plan submitted to Secretary of State in September 2018. A planning inspector has been appointed to oversee the examination process. Regulation 19 consultation on Core Strategy review ran from January 25-March 11, 2019.

Gravesham

- Regulation 18 consultation took place (April 25-July 11, 2018) on Site Allocations: Issues and Options (Part 1) and Development Management Policies (Part 2) documents. Next round of consultation expected in autumn 2019. Once adopted, these policies will replace the remaining saved policies in Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Maidstone

- Local Plan adopted October 25, 2017. Regulation 18 scoping/option consultation expected in summer 2019, with adoption anticipated April 2022.

Medway

- Regulation 18 consultation on Local Plan development strategy document ran from March 16-June 25, 2018. It is expected that Regulation 19 consultation will take place this summer, with adoption in 2020.

Sevenoaks

- Regulation 19 consultation ran from December 18, 2018-February 3, 2019. Submission/examination expected spring/summer 2019, with adoption by end of 2019.

Swale

- Local Plan adopted July 26, 2017. Regulation 18 consultation (scoping issues) for Swale Local Plan Review 2022-2038 took place in spring/summer 2018. Preferred Option (Regulation 18) consultation will take place in autumn/winter 2019, with Regulation 19 consultation winter 2019. Adoption expected by spring 2023.

Thanet

- Regulation 19 consultation took place in autumn 2018 and Local Plan submitted on October 30. Local Plan will now be subject to examination by two inspectors appointed by the Planning Inspectorate – this is due to run across five weeks from April 2-May 31. Adoption expected summer 2019.

Tonbridge and Malling

- Local Plan submitted to Secretary of State on January 23, 2019. Two inspectors have been appointed to carry out examination of the plan. Adoption anticipated in December 2019.

Tunbridge Wells

- Regulation 18 consultation on a draft preferred Local Plan will take place in summer 2019. This will be followed by Regulation 19 consultation on the pre-submission Local Plan in spring 2020, with submission in the summer and formal examination in autumn 2020.

District	Plan	Oct-Dec 2018	Jan-Mar 2019	Apr-Jun 2019	Jul-Sep 2019	Oct-Dec 2019	Jan-Mar 2020	Adoption
Ashford	Local Plan 2030							Adopted 21.2.19
Canterbury	Local Plan							Adopted 13.7.17
Dartford	Local Plan							2021
Dover	Local Plan							2021
Folkestone & Hythe	Places and Policies Local Plan							2019
	Core Strategy review							2019
Gravesham	Site Allocations & Development Management Policies Local Plan							2021
Maidstone	Local Plan Review							Adopted 25.10.17 (2022)
Medway	Local Plan 2012 - 2035							2020
Sevenoaks	Local Plan 2015 - 2035							2019
Swale	Local Plan 2022 - 2028							Adopted 26.7.17 (2023)
Thanet	Local Plan 2031							2019
Tonbridge & Malling	Local Plan							2019
Tunbridge Wells	Local Plan 2033							2020

KEY

- Regulation 18
- Regulation 19
- Submission
- EIP
- Adoption

Regulation 18 consultation: early stage consultation often with open questions and a wider remit for consultation input.

Regulation 19 consultation: views sought on whether the Local Plan is legally compliant and meets the tests of soundness set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Examination in Public (EiP): hearing held by a planning inspector to assess whether the Local Plan has been prepared in line with relevant legal requirements and meets the tests of soundness.



From the Frontline

Hilary Newport with the campaigns update



Cleve Hill Solar Park

The application for a Development Consent Order for this 1,000-acre solar farm was accepted by the Planning Inspectorate at the end of 2018. Well over 800 people or organisations have registered as Interested Parties to participate in the inquiry that will determine the application. Our trawl of those registrations revealed about eight in favour of the proposals. Despite the widespread recognition that solar is an essential part of our renewable-energy strategy, there is clearly overwhelming consensus that it must not come at the cost of sensitive landscapes and fragile wildlife habitats.

Garden towns

At the time of writing, the outline planning application for Otterpool Park in Folkestone & Hythe (formerly Shepway) district has just been submitted. Meanwhile, Swale continues its deliberations over at least four separate options for garden towns to expand housing delivery in the borough.

HGV parking

As we go to press, the nature of any Brexit deal is still being deliberated upon. Nevertheless, work has been under way for some months on the delivery of Operation Brock as a temporary solution in the event of delays to HGV movements resulting from extended customs checks at the Channel crossings. Meanwhile, Highways England continues its much-criticised consultations on possible locations for dispersed HGV parking sites across the roads network.

Western Heights and Farthingloe

Some thousands of pages of supplementary evidence have been submitted in support of the refreshed application, but the scheme proposed remains largely unchanged from the original proposals.

Those proposals were, of course, roundly rejected by the Court of Appeal in 2016 and again at the Supreme Court in 2018; both legal judgments confirmed that the development would cause significant harm to the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and should not be permitted without substantially stronger reasons to do so.

Last time, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government declined to call in this application for proper scrutiny, against the advice of his civil servants. This time we hope that the proper planning procedures will be applied; suffice to say, we will continue in our opposition to an unnecessary, unsustainable and unacceptable incursion into the AONB at Farthingloe.



Don't forget to keep up with our campaigns news on our website and via Facebook and Twitter @cprekent



The brollies made a show as some 60 people gathered near Lenham to air and share their concerns that a lorry park could be built in the area

One of the perks of CPRE membership is reduced admission to some of England's finest gardens, historic houses and attractions

Wildwood

Wildwood is a place where you can see amazing British wildlife past and present – it's a great day out for all ages.

Set in 40 acres of ancient woodland near Canterbury, it holds a stunning collection of more than 200 British animals in natural enclosures.

See bears, wolves, otters, foxes, deer, badgers, owls, wild horses, lynx, beavers, wild cats, bison, squirrels, wild boar, reindeer and much more as you walk around the twisting trails through an ancient woodland.

Finish your day by letting your children go wild in the amazing adventure play park featuring Kent's tallest vertical drop-slide, zip-wire, wild fort, twisting tube-slide, pine marten towers and a special area for under-fives.

Join animal experts at weekends and school holidays for free close-up animal talks and feeds, visit the Beaver Lodge Café, or enjoy your own food in the spacious picnic area.

Wildwood Trust opened in 1999 as a centre of excellence for the conservation of British wildlife and was established as a registered charity in 2002.

As one of the leading British animal conservation charities in the UK, Wildwood Trust is dedicated to saving Britain's most threatened wildlife and has taken part in many groundbreaking conservation programmes.

They include saving the water vole, using wild horses to help restore Kent's most precious nature reserves, bringing the European beaver back to Britain and returning the hazel dormouse and red squirrel to areas where they had been lost.

Find out more about their conservation, education and rewilding initiatives at www.wildwoodtrust.org

Wildwood is open seven days a week, including public and bank holidays. The only days that it is closed are Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Opening hours change with the seasons:

Spring/Summer: 10am-6pm (last entry 4.30pm)

Autumn/Winter: 10am-4pm (last entry 3pm)

CPRE members can get a discount of £2.50 per day ticket for up to four people; just show your valid membership card at admissions.

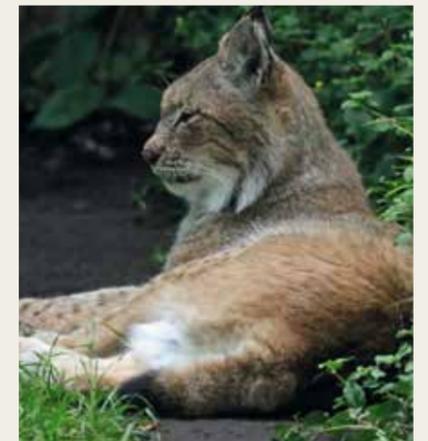
Wildwood has ample parking and is on the Triangle bus route between Canterbury and Herne Bay on the A291.

Find out more about the Triangle route at www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/south-east/introducing-the-triangle – ask your bus driver for the Wildwood stop, and see the Wildwood website for special offers for bus users.

To plan a car-free journey, visit www.goodjourney.org.uk/attractions/wildwood/

Why not join other members of CPRE Kent for an exclusive look behind the scenes on Saturday, June 8? See page 19 for details.

More details at www.wildwoodtrust.org





General round-up

Spring 2019

with Vicky Ellis



Events

We will be attending lots of events this year, helped, with thanks, by our trusted team of volunteers! At these events we hope to raise CPRE Kent's profile, chat to visitors, raise funds and hopefully attract some new members.

If you would like to meet like-minded and friendly people with a love for our countryside, then we would be delighted to welcome you into our fold. Just contact the office in the first instance.

Help is always welcome in manning the stand, transporting the gazebo (if your vehicle is large enough) and helping with putting it up and taking it down.

If you have an event near you that you think might suit CPRE Kent, then please let us know.

"ONE OF THE PREMIER AGRICULTURAL EVENTS IN THE KENT CALENDAR"

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WEALD OF KENT PLOUGHING MATCH ASSOCIATION

Saturday 14th September

POPLARS FARM, CHURN LANE, HORSMONDEN TONBRIDGE TN12 8HN

- 9 Modern & Vintage Ploughing Classes • Horse-Ploughing
- ... and many other attractions throughout the day ...
- Gymkhana • Fun Dog Show • Trade Show • Terrier Racing • Steam Ploughing
- Dog Agility Competition • Tug-of-War • Hound Parades • Scurry Racing
- Birds of Prey Flying Display • Tossing-the-Sheaf Competition
- Farmers' Market • Clay Pigeon Shooting • Bar and Refreshments



ENTRY £5 - CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE



Advertising in Kent Voice

Placing an advert in Kent Voice not only reaches a wide audience across the county but also helps us fund our campaigns. For more information and to place an advert, please ring 01233 714540.

Fundraising ideas

- For Payroll Giving, visit www.charitrustrust.org.uk/payroll-giving-individual/
- For the Lottery, contact Vicky in the office
- For raising money while you shop, go to easyfundraising and Amazon Smile and choose CPRE Kent
- Collect stamps and send them in to us at the office
- Buy a Gift Membership
- Recycle your old phones, foreign money and laptops by sending them off. Contact the office for a freepost label.



Week in the absence of plastic

CPRE Kent was lucky enough to be invited to have a small stand at the second Plastic Free Faversham's Challenge Week, held in March.

There was lots of information on how to avoid using plastic, as well as inspirational artwork made from plastic depicting endangered sea life.

Following on from its success with Plastic Free Week, where all the shops in Faversham stopped handing out plastic bags, this inspirational group has taken the town forward in our fight against single-use plastic and it was an honour to be involved.

To see what else Plastic Free Faversham does and other events in the pipeline, why not visit the group's website: www.plasticfreefaversham.co.uk/ You can also 'like' the group's Facebook page.



Events for your calendar in 2019

Spring Fair, Belmont House	Monday, May 6
Taste of Kent, Biddenden Vineyard	Sunday, June 9
Kent County Show, Detling	Friday to Sunday, July 5-7
Biddenden Tractorfest and Country Fair	Saturday and Sunday, August 17-18
Weald of Kent Ploughing Match	Saturday, September 14
Shadoxhurst Village Fete	Sunday, September 29
East Kent Ploughing Match	September, date to be confirmed
CPRE Kent's Green Clean	September, date to be confirmed
Green Christmas Market, Faversham	December, date to be confirmed



Lottery results: 2018/19

Here are the Lottery winners since the last edition of Kent Voice:

October 18	November 18	December 18	January 19	February 19	March 19
Mr M Loveday £50	Dr F Simpson £50	Mrs M Palmer £150	Mrs M Palmer £50	Mr N Pearson £50	Ms J Barton £50
Mrs G Scales £30	Miss S Jacobs £30	Mr M Corfe £50	Mr B Potter £30	Mrs P Darby £30	Mr C Mackinlay £30
Mr J Gandon £20	Mrs P Pollock £20	Mrs A Hone £50	Mr C Daniel £20	Mr M Corfe £20	Mrs P Pollock £20
Miss J Lushington £20	Mr D Page £20		Mrs P Pollock £20	Ms J Kastelnyk £20	Mr & Mrs J Mercy £20

CPRE Kent (the Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England, number 4335730, registered charity number 1092012. CPRE Kent, Queen's Head House, Ashford Road, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN27 0AD. T: 01233 714540 F: 01233 714549 E: info@cprekent.org.uk



The countryside you cherish is disappearing fast, greenfield land is being swallowed up.

Noise and light pollution are destroying the tranquillity of our countryside. Our village and rural communities are under threat. We are fighting for a beautiful and thriving countryside that all of us can enjoy for generations to come.



Please join us to help protect the countryside we all love

CPRE membership starts at just £3 per month

Title	Full name		
Address			
			Postcode
Telephone		Email	

We would like to update you on our campaigns and fundraising from time to time.

Please tick here if you are happy for us to contact you by:

Phone		Email		Post	
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If you would like your partner and/or family to also enjoy CPRE membership, please add their details. We recommend a minimum membership of £5 per month for a couple. The more you give, the more we can do.

Title	Full name	Age (under-18s)

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay and helps us plan our work. Membership starts at £3 per month but you may like to give more.

I wish to give the monthly amount of £3 £5 I'd rather pay £ per month/year (delete as appropriate)

Please complete the Direct Debit form below and Gift Aid if applicable.

Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. Simply tick the box below and complete the declaration below. Thank you!

giftaid it

Please treat as Gift Aid all donations and subscriptions I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Full name	
Signature	
Date	

If your circumstances change, or you want to cancel your declaration, please contact us on 0800 163680

For more information or to join over the phone, please call the Supporter Services team on freephone 0800 163680. CPRE holds and manages data in strict accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Name of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/building society name

Name(s) of account holder(s)

--

Bank/building society account number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Branch sort code

--	--	--	--	--	--

Service user number

7	2	4	2	4	5
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Reference (for office use only)

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Instruction to your bank or building society

Please pay CPRE Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with CPRE and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)
Date

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

