

## Round Robin February 2016 *from CPRE Gloucestershire*

Happy 90th Birthday – to our Patron Queen Elizabeth II and to CPRE!

A very happy year is in store for CPRE this year with 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in the offing. Look out for announcements in the coming months to see how you can help us celebrate this noteworthy anniversary. Could this also be the year that the campaign at last makes progress to make Gloucester-



*Cannop Ponds in the Royal Forest of Dean*

shire's unique landscape of the Forest of Dean an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty? The Forest of Dean District Councillors have reaffirmed their support for this campaign, which is nearly as long-running as CPRE itself.

CPRE has joined forces with other organisations to celebrate our Patron's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with '**Clean for the Queen**' this year. Organisers are co-ordinating school and workplace groups to give her Majesty 'the best possible birthday present - a clean country', with a schools' competition to design a poster. Find out more at

<http://www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk/home/2365>.

### Leadership: changes and challenges

Our Branch Chairman, Charlie Watson, will be standing down at the next AGM at the beginning of May after completing his five-year term of office. We have been seeking a suitable successor.

Details of the position were included in the Autumn 2015 Branch Newsletter *Gloucestershire Views* and we have promoted the opportunity widely, but without success so far. If you know of anyone who might be suitable and potentially interested in becoming our Chairman please let [Lisa Belfield](#)



*Charlie Watson (fourth from right) with Viscount Bledisloe, Dame Janet Trotter DBE and CPRE Gloucestershire award recipients 2015.*

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know at the Branch Office. This is an exciting and rewarding opportunity for someone and a key role in driving forward CPRE's vital work in Gloucestershire.

*CPRE Berkeley Vale's President John Berkeley is retiring this year and we would like to welcome **Mr Anselm Guise** of Elmore as his successor. CPRE Berkeley Vale committee said, "We are grateful for the many, many years of support and care for the countryside and of the Berkeley Vale in particular."*

### 2016 Annual General Meeting

The 2016 AGM will be held at Stowell Park on 4th May. Put the date in your diary. Details will be included with the Spring 2016 Newsletter.

### Planning news

With thanks to all our hard-working volunteers and committee members, here is a round-up of the latest news from around the Districts.

#### *Cotswold Local Plan*

Just before Christmas we submitted our comments on the draft policies for the Cotswold District Local Plan. Our major concerns (in a ten-page report) were that:

- the policy on allowing housing in small settlements was much too loosely worded and would result in a lot of development going to our villages instead of to the sustainable principal settlements
- there was no policy restricting development in the open countryside - indeed the opposite was the case
- the policies did not recognise the special character and strategy for the Cotswold Water Park and needed substantial re-writing.

We were glad to see that the draft policies required Kemble airport to be retained as an airport and precluded development for housing.

#### *Stroud Local Plan adopted*

Part of CPRE's vision for the countryside is to encourage and strengthen Local Plans so the adoption of the [Stroud Local Plan](#) in November last year was welcome news. This is the first Local Plan to be adopted in Gloucestershire since the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) came into effect in March 2012. In the absence of an up to date NPPF compliant local plan local authorities are prey to speculative planning applications which has been a big issue in Gloucestershire. [Read CPRE's viewpoint on neighbourhood planning in this article by Shaun Spiers written this month:](#) *"We are so enthusiastic about neighbourhood planning that we want the Housing and Planning Bill amended to give a right of appeal against developments that conflict with a neighbourhood plan."*

*CPRE Stroud* has objected to a series of development proposals at Minchinhampton - for 150 houses, for 31 houses and for 5 houses - all outside the settlement boundary, a solar farm at Upton St Leonard (S.15/1765) and an 80 house development at Grange Field in Stroud (S.15/0656, application refused). Gladman has applied again for houses on Baxter's Field in the much-loved Slad Valley, this time for 20 houses. Their previous application was refused and dismissed at appeal with the applicant withdrawing from a judicial review at the 11th hour.

#### *Large mixed-use development at Eastington*

Stroud District Council has just granted outline planning permission for a large mixed use development of 1,350 dwellings with 9.3 hectares of employment land, a mixed-use local centre, primary school, open spaces and landscaping. (Enter planning reference **S.14/0810/OUT** on the [Stroud District Council's website](#) to view the application.) The Planning Committee emphasised the importance of design quality and a foot/cycle bridge as an alternative to the level crossing over the railway. The development was a late addition to the Stroud Local Plan in response to the need to increase housing numbers. CPRE took the view that this was a better and more sustainable option than spreading the additional housing across the villages and smaller settlements.

#### *Kingswood Appeal pending decision*

The Appeal against the refusal to allow up to 59 new houses next to the playing fields and cricket pitch at Kingswood was heard in December. As this was the first appeal to be heard since the 2015 Local Plan for Stroud District Council had been accepted, and Kingswood was not included as a suitable village for development within the plan, it will be interesting to see the outcome.

#### *Awre Peninsula Solar Farm*

Campaigners from the Awre peninsula fighting against the installation of a highly visible, vast solar farm on farm land on the banks of the Severn are delighted with the decision of the Forest of Dean



*Picture: Land at Awre Peninsular proposed for a solar farm with the River Severn in the background.*

District Council to support their Planning Officer's recommendation in refusing planning permission. The packed public gallery on 17th January spontaneously applauded when 9 councillors voted for the recommendation with only one against it and two abstaining. One Councillor described the application as, "An April Fools' Day joke" and there were insightful comments on the potential of [carr \(salt marsh\) as a habitat](#) from a Councillor who had worked as a dairy

farmer on the peninsula and who questioned the agricultural assessment of the land by developers. Councillors were instructed to give little weight to the community funding suggested by developers and a number of listed buildings in the village and surrounding areas were highlighted as well as concerns over flooding. Campaigners later thanked CPRE Gloucestershire for the support shown by local volunteers and via [our Facebook page](#). Through the work of CPRE Gloucestershire member Bob Brown, we were able to show that information on the land surveys produced by the developers did not give a clear picture of the agricultural value of the land.

#### *The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury*

The second phase of public hearings for the Joint Core Strategy is now complete. The Inspector's 'Preliminary Findings' question Tewkesbury Borough Council's decision to permit high-density development at Farm Lane on the edge of Leckhampton. The Inspector's inclination to accept unsubstantiated employment aspirations and their consequences in terms of additional development are very worrying however. The final phase of the Examination is scheduled for late March – early April.

#### *A welcome change in appeals decisions.*

Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury District have at last seen some successes in preventing major new housing estates overwhelming rural villages including proposals for 113 homes at Alderton and 42 homes on the edge of Gotherington. Since the introduction of the NPPF almost every appeal against the planning authority's refusal of a major housing development has succeeded. The main arguments have been the absence of an up-to-date local plan the lack of readily available building land. Happily, during 2015, this trend seems to have at least stalled, even if not gone into reverse with half of the major appeals being dismissed.

#### *Digital photo library*

We would like to build up a library of digital photos of Gloucestershire for our newsletters, website and campaigning. If you have photos of the countryside, tranquil skies, green lanes, wildlife, brown field sites or others pertinent to CPRE campaigns please contact David Bayne and Richard Lloyd. If you are a keen photographer, then please tell us as it would be good to be able to ask when a specific need comes along for a particular shot.

*NB photos to be used in printed material such as banners and printed media should be at least 1MB in size, preferably more, in order to provide sufficient definition.*



# Charter for Trees, Woods and People

## UK Charter for Trees, Woods and People

Our nation's woods and trees are facing unprecedented pressures from development, pests and diseases, and climate change but risk being

neglected, undervalued and forgotten. On 13<sup>th</sup> January, almost 800 years since Henry III signed [the original Charter of the Forest](#) (published online by the British Library), a campaign was launched calling on people across the UK to stick up for trees and help create a new **Charter for Trees, Woods and People**. Led by the Woodland Trust, 43 organisations have come together to back the campaign and CPRE is pleased to be one of them. To kick the campaign off, the coalition is asking people from all corners of the UK to share their 'tree stories'. It would be lovely to hear some from Gloucestershire. Submit them online and listen to other stories from across the UK at <https://treecharter.uk/>.