

CPRE Gloucestershire Views

Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside



Issued each Spring and Autumn. For the latest information see our website

www.cpreglos.org.uk
President Dame Janet Trotter

**SPRING
2017**

In this issue ...

3 SOLAR PANELS ON BUILDINGS - *a good practice guide*

4 FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET - *a first reaction to Housing White Paper*

8 CPRE AWARDS *A bumper and varied selection*

11 NEWS FROM AROUND THE DISTRICTS
Updates from around the County

A failure to co-operate

*Mike Mackey
Branch Chairman*



FOR SOME years, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) has been working on the Minerals Local Plan which will cover the period from 2018 to 2032. Gloucestershire's crushed rock resources are severely constrained environmentally – the Jurassic limestone lies wholly within the Cotswolds AONB and almost all of the Carboniferous limestone lies within or adjacent to the Wye Valley AONB. These extensive environmental constraints were considered by the then South West Regional Assembly (SWRA)

over 10 years ago and an understanding reached that longer term resource availability would need to be addressed on a region-wide basis.

However, SWRA no longer exists and the work alluded to above was abandoned when the Assembly was abolished. The formalised process set out in the former Minerals Policy Statement 1 has gone and has been replaced by the

less formalised "Duty to Cooperate", introduced in the Localism Act (2011) and enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 179 of the NPPF states:

"Local planning authorities should work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and

"A major extension to a quarry at Clearwell/Stowe Hill in the Forest of Dean is included in the Draft Minerals Local Plan as a major resource in South Gloucestershire lies mothballed"

The land which Stowe Hill quarry would swallow up - and the rock isn't needed

clearly reflected in individual Local Plans. Joint working should enable local planning authorities to work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met from within their own area – for instance, because of a lack of physical capacity or because to do so would cause significant harm to the principles and policies of this framework.”

This establishes that there is a statutory duty on all Councils which have relevant minerals resources which could contribute to Gloucestershire’s needs to engage in effective collaborative discussion with GCC to meet requirements for crushed rock in their areas. There is acknowledged, in particular, to be a close

relationship between market areas in Gloucestershire and crushed rock production in South Gloucestershire, which has a very substantial minerals landbank.

The Duty to Cooperate, however, has failed to function in this case. GCC’s own Duty to Cooperate paper (2014) states:

“With regards (sic) the meeting with officers from the West of England although linkages were recognised between the market/resource areas for crushed rock (in particular crushed rock in South Gloucestershire and the Forest of Dean), the West of England had established what partners it needed to work with under joint working.”

The updated paper

(September 2016) does not change that position. The consequence is that GCC is planning for crushed rock capacity (formulaically calculated by extrapolating past average production) in isolation, with scant regard to the environmental consequences for the County. We have thus arrived, for example, at the ridiculous position whereby a major extension to a quarry at Clearwell/Stowe Hill in the Forest of Dean, on a greenfield site, in a sensitive landscape and adjacent to the Wye Valley AONB, is included in the Draft Minerals Local Plan at the same time as a major resource in South Gloucestershire with superior communication links to the same markets lies

mothballed, presumably for economic reasons.

CPRE Gloucestershire has repeatedly stated in submissions that the failure of GCC to achieve effective implementation of the Duty to Cooperate to address the County’s environmental capacity issues leads to a conclusion that the emerging Plan cannot be deemed to be sound in respect of its assessment of crushed rock aggregate needs. To date, this argument has fallen on deaf ears within the County Council. However, soundness is a key hurdle which must be jumped in order to satisfy the Inspector when he/she examines the Plan later this year. We shall continue to press our case and hopefully sense will prevail.

JOINT CORE STRATEGY: INCHING CLOSER

Lisa Belfield



AT THE time of my last report on the progress of the Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury (JCS), examination sessions had recently taken place at which the JCS Authorities had put forward their alternatives to the Inspector’s Interim Report. Following these, in October last year the JCS team proposed ‘main modifications’ for approval by the three local authorities.

The Main Modifications document was agreed by Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City but failed to gain the approval of Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Tewkesbury Borough Councillors rejected the inclusion of Twigworth as a strategic site for 1363 houses. They were primarily concerned about issues of flooding and traffic congestion on the local road network. There was

also doubt whether the MOD site at Ashchurch would be available for development in the plan period. The capacity of the MOD site had been identified as 2725 houses, 2125 of which were to be provided by 2031.

The JCS Authority officers then prepared an amended Main Modifications document which reduced the number of houses allocated at Twigworth from 1363 to 995. These Main Modifications were then agreed by all three Councils in early 2017 and will have been subject to six weeks public consultation from 27th February until 10th April. By the time you read this, CPRE will have made its response to the Main Modifications consultation.

This latest consultation should be the last step in the process before a final version of the JCS is approved by the three authorities and put to the Secretary of State. Might the JCS for 2011 really come into effect by the middle of 2017?

“Main Modifications were agreed by all three Councils in early 2017”



Part of the proposed Twigworth 'urban extension'

INSTALLING SOLAR PANELS ON BUILDINGS

Richard Lloyd

CPRE SUPPORTS the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on buildings. Electricity generated from photovoltaic systems is now a well-established form of renewable energy but systems on buildings need to be well designed if they are not to detract from a building’s appearance: there are too many examples out there of “how not to do it.”

Until now there has been no guidance material on how to design solar installations in harmony with buildings and the local environment. With encouragement and financial support from CPRE Gloucestershire Branch, good practice guidance has been produced by the Building Research Establishment’s National Solar Centre. I was a member of the Steering Group for the project.

Solar PV can be installed in two ways:

- by retrofitting to an existing building, known as building applied photovoltaics (BAPV); and
- by making the installation an integral part of the building fabric, known as building integrated photovoltaics (BIPV).

BAPV is the most commonly seen type of installation, typically in the form of solar panels. BIPV should be encouraged in all new construction. Visually, it can be very effectively applied on roofs using, for

“With encouragement and financial support from CPRE Gloucestershire, good practice guidance has been produced”

example, solar slates and shingles as an alternative to larger solar panels. It can also be applied in the form of canopies, louvres, facades and as solar glazing with glass incorporating solar cells which allow light through.

Two good practice guides have been produced: detailed good practice guidance aimed primarily at designers, manufacturers and installers of PV systems; and a short guide, in the form of 10 design tips, primarily aimed at homeowners. Both guides can be viewed on the Branch website and downloaded. Go to Campaigns – Energy Campaigns. The download files are:

- Place responsive design for photovoltaics
- CPRE solar design booklet (for homeowners)

It is good to see solar PV installations on commercial and industrial buildings. CPRE was delighted to be able to recognise the outstanding example at Renishaw’s Innovation Centre which received a CPRE Gloucestershire Award last year.

Shading louvres at the Renishaw Innovation Centre.



Solar slates installed as an integral part of the roof, with colour matching the roof tiles, arranged symmetrically. The building is Grade 1 listed.



Dark coloured frameless panels adjacent to similar sized roof lights, matching the roof tiles in colour. Four homes designed in a similar style.

Dark coloured frameless panels matching the roof tiles in colour and arranged symmetrically



FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET

Charlie Watson

JUST BEFORE the deadline for this newsletter to go to press, the Government published a White Paper titled 'Fixing our broken housing market'. It is over 100 pages long and uniquely seeks a response to 38 questions. The comments in this article therefore are my first thoughts and not the formal views of the Branch.

My first reaction was one of relief that at last the government appears to have responded to CPRE's consistent, factually-based lobbying over the past 5 years. No longer is it merely argued that the failure to build sufficient new homes is the fault of the planning system but at last it is acknowledged that the building industry and other issues might be part of the problem.

The White Paper sets out a series of policies that I believe we may in principle support; for example, the need for all Local Authorities to have up to date Local Plans, the need to simplify their production, greater support

for Neighbourhood Plans and an emphasis on the need for better design. And – at last – there is recognition that local authority planning departments need extra resources (to be paid for by additional planning application fees), encouragement for smaller builders and some limited support for the provision of affordable homes.

Importantly, it is acknowledged that nationally around 700,000 homes with planning permission have not been started. Indeed in London currently a third of all planning approvals are not being implemented. As a result, the Government now proposes to reduce the period for a developer to start building to two years before the planning permission lapses and that projected construction rates must be lodged and monitored by the local authorities who will be given simpler compulsory powers to acquire stalled sites.

Elsewhere the White Paper seeks to clarify Government

“At last the government appears to have responded to CPRE's consistent, factually-based lobbying”

support for Green Belts by including Green Belts in a clear, definitive list of areas where there are 'strong reasons to oppose development'. A sequential test is proposed before development of Green Belt land. This stresses that all options should be explored for the use of brownfield land, estate regeneration, redevelopment of underused land, the optimisation of densities in the urban area and investigation of opportunities to meet demand in adjacent authorities before loss off Green Belt land can be justified. This sounds good but in reality it just formalises the process being carried out by good planning authorities.

However, local authorities will soon be penalised for taking too long to determine planning applications and, remarkably, will also be held to account where the building rates set out in their Local Plans are not being achieved! With so many factors affecting both issues it will be interesting to see how local government reacts to the proposals.

Unfortunately, these and other detailed changes now being proposed look more likely to complicate than simplify the planning process. Far too much will rest upon matters of judgement rather than facts – and we all know that is a recipe for legal debate and delay. Issues like the shortage of around

400,000 workers in the construction industry and a lack of practical measures to improve infrastructure provision can only complicate matters further.

Finally, a key aspect of the planning process has yet again been ducked until a further round of consultation – namely how future housing figures will be determined. The White Paper indicates that in the near future a standard process for calculating housing need will be published. Once approved, this should save a lot of the hot air expended at Local Plan examinations and at planning appeals.

Much, however, will depend upon the methodology proposed. As the Local Plan Expert Group recently recommended, hopefully it will ignore the aspirations of the Local Enterprise Partnerships for growth and more growth everywhere. Indeed, if it leads to lower and more realistic housing figures then most of the Government's problems with the housing market will disappear – but perhaps that is that is just my wishful thinking.

Overall, the White Paper sets out a comprehensive and practical analysis of many problems facing the housing market and proposes some sensible improvements. But it also contains a number of proposals that I believe will complicate rather than simplify the planning process. There is a risk that these will ultimately frustrate the Government's laudable intentions to assist the provision of new homes in the right places.

Kingshill Meadow, Cirencester - a good example of design.



THE A417 'MISSING LINK'

Crickley Hill (left) and the present A417

Richard Lloyd

IN 2015 a new public company, Highways England assumed responsibility for operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England which comprises motorways and the main A class roads.

The Government is providing funding for a major programme of upgrades to the network to tackle congestion and support economic growth. In the South West, which includes Gloucestershire, investment of around £2 billion is envisaged including seven major schemes. One of these schemes is the so called A417 "Missing Link", the single carriageway section of the A417 from the end of the Brockworth Bypass to the Cowley Roundabout including Crickley Hill, the Air Balloon roundabout and Nettleton Bottom.

Highways England's briefing document of October 2015 "Better journeys on better roads: South West region" says

A417 near Birdlip – We need to achieve optimal performance on the A417/419 between Birdlip Hill and Nettleton Bottom. We appreciate the environmental sensitivity of the site and the importance of the route to the local economy. We are working with local stakeholders and will be developing options before an application for Development Consent is submitted. This will enable us to start construction in 2020.

The environmental sensitivity of the Crickley Hill/Cotswold scarp area cannot be overestimated. Part of the Cotswolds AONB, the landscape is dramatic, and there are important nationally recognised wildlife habitats and ancient monuments. The existing road up Crickley Hill divides the landscape. Users of the Cotswold Way have to cross the road at the Air Balloon

roundabout, a crossing point which is highly unsatisfactory and dangerous. All these factors demand a road scheme designed with environmental considerations at its very heart and not an add-on.

CPRE has met with Highways England officials and has put the following points to them.

- From a traffic perspective the main issue is ensuring safe, reliable and predictable journeys but this does not mean that the improvement scheme has to be designed for 70mph throughout which should provide more route options.
- The challenge is to design a road scheme which meets the traffic objectives but at the same time delivers real improvements for the environment, walkers in the area and local communities. The outcome should be a road scheme which Highways England can be proud of, and so too can environmental interests, other groups and not least Gloucestershire.
- They should develop and consult on a wide, but realistic, range of route corridors and schemes setting out the pros and cons of each.
- A way needs to be agreed of valuing the environmental damage that each option entails to be set against the environmental and wider community benefits arising from different options. This would justify any higher scheme costs. Highways England

“The environmental sensitivity of the Crickley Hill/Cotswold scarp area cannot be overestimated”

must be prepared to spend more than the minimum in this highly sensitive area, considerably more if necessary.

- If a route up Crickley Hill is selected, we would support the concept of creating a wide green corridor over the road towards the summit at the Air Balloon. It might be in the form of a tunnelled section of road or a wide "land bridge" and would connect the landscape on either side of the road. For other routes, the same principle would apply wherever the road crosses the scarp.
- Importantly, a green corridor would also provide the opportunity to reconnect wildlife habitats: this is a key objective for the Cotswolds Scarp Nature Improvement Area which has been defined along the scarp where areas of species rich limestone grassland still remain. In addition, such a green corridor would provide a greatly enhanced route for users of the rights of way network.
- All aspects of the design in this sensitive area should reflect the local character of the landscape including extensive use of Cotswold stone walling, tree species appropriate to the area and appropriate seed mixes for grassed areas. This treatment should extend beyond the immediate road corridor.

The Highways England officials seemed to accept the sense of what we put to them.

We will be working closely with other groups to input to the consultation process as scheme options are developed by Highways England. Other key partners are the Cotswolds Conservation Board, the Local Nature Partnership (of which CPRE is a member), Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Woodland Trust and the Ramblers.

“An immediate issue concerns proposals to develop one or more tidal lagoons using technology which is new and untried”

SEVERN VISION - AN UPDATE

Richard Lloyd

River Severn from Newnham

Rob Colley

IN THE last Newsletter, I reported on the “Severn Vision”, an ambitious vision for the Severn Estuary developed by an alliance of organisations which includes CPRE.

Over the winter, work has been taking place to promote the Vision among the partner organisations and to other key organisations whose support will be vital to its achievement.

The Vision is bold and clear but currently lacks detail on how it can be delivered. Three topic groups, including outside experts, have been set up to develop a “route map” for delivering each of its main components:

- **Nature** – an estuary that by 2040 is restored as a healthy functioning ecosystem, valued for its internationally important wildlife, habitats and landscapes;

- **Ecosystem Services** – an estuary that by 2040 provides more benefits for people, local communities, places, and economies, including greater resilience to climate change; and

- **Energy** – an estuary that by 2040 becomes a natural powerhouse, where development is planned and managed in a way that sustains and enhances the estuary’s resources.

The outcome of the work of the topic groups will contribute to an Advocacy and Enablement Plan to be developed in the following months.

An immediate issue concerns proposals to develop one or more tidal lagoons in the Estuary to harness the power of the tides, using technology which is new and untried. A government review (the Hendry Review) into the economics of tidal lagoon power has recommended proceeding with a pathfinder project in Swansea Bay, which already has development consent but not yet a marine licence. Environmental organisations are urging a precautionary approach and careful monitoring of the environmental impacts of the project at Swansea before proceeding with further projects which could include large lagoons off Cardiff, Newport and in Bridgwater Bay.

The River Severn at Slimbridge

Richard Lloyd

PLANNING TRAINING DAY

David Brooke

UNDERSTANDING THE rudiments of the planning system is an essential part of day-to-day activity for both CPRE and the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC). Accordingly, it made much sense to run a joint planning training day for our respective members, which took place on 10 November 2016 at the Centigen Centre, Newent.

The training day developed and repeated a similar event held in 2015 that had been over-subscribed. This session allowed some 40 further participants to attend, drawn from both organisations.

Those attending covered all the basics of the planning system, including considerable detail on the preparation of development plans and the operation of development management (formerly known as development control). A series of experienced professionals outlined the scope of the planning



Richard Lloyd

“Experienced professionals outlined the scope of the planning process, followed by case studies of planning applications and appeals”

process, followed by case studies of planning applications and appeals. Opportunities for influencing the process were identified at each stage.

A lunch break was marked by the buzz of informal discussion, and an afternoon

session followed, covering the often-neglected developers’ perspective of the planning process. The day ended with a lively discussion on neighbourhood planning.

Participants clearly drew much from the event, and the Branch and GAPTC were pleased with its smooth operation. Both organisations, though, feel that we have now probably reached all those who want this sort of planning training. We will be meeting in spring 2017 to look at future joint training opportunities, topics and formats.

Obituary: MRS ANNE PRUFER

David Brooke

WE WERE able to include a brief note with the autumn edition of Gloucestershire Views, recording the sad news that Mrs Anne Prufer had died on 28 September 2016.

Anne Prufer was a good supporter of the Branch and for more than a decade she led the CPRE Forest of Dean District as its Chairman, retiring in 2013. Latterly she was pleased and proud when members asked her to become Honorary President of the District.

During her time as Chairman, she worked with a small core of Forest members to promote the beauties of the area and to fight purposefully against proposals that were clearly at variance with her own love of a beautiful countryside. The CPRE concerts she arranged in Westbury on Severn Church will be remembered by many.

Anne’s love of beauty was manifest in many other aspects of her life. With a background in art history,

she travelled widely in the middle and far east, spending ten wonderful years with her American husband in Tehran. It was there that she developed her impressive knowledge of Persian and Afghan carpets and a fluency in Farsi that she took with her to the United States and finally back to Britain.

Anne spent her final years in her homeland of West Gloucestershire and Monmouth – back in the countryside where she was born.



Anne Prufer in 2013 when elected as President of CPRE Forest of Dean District

The Branch and District will miss Anne’s wise (and sometimes idiosyncratic!) ways. We extend our sympathy to her sister, close family and friends.



CPRE Gloucestershire AWARDS

LAST YEAR was the ninth year of our Awards scheme. Awards were made to seven projects and we again used the Gambier Parry Hall at Highnam for the Awards' Ceremony. Following an overview of the projects by Richard Lloyd, the

citations were read by Anna Jones, one of the Awards Judges, and plaques and certificates were presented by our Vice-President Adrian Phillips to representatives of each project. The event concluded with a delightful tea. Below is a brief

description of each project, the citation and a photograph. You can find details of all the projects that have received Awards over the years by visiting the Branch website (www.cpreglos.org.uk) and clicking on Awards recipients 2008 – 2016.

The Walled Garden Project, Stratford Park, Stroud

A delightful new garden and learning centre has been created in the hidden and abandoned walled garden adjoining the Museum in the Park. The project was the inspiration of the Friends of the Museum and has been largely delivered by volunteers. The garden is fully accessible for people with disabilities

■ **CITATION:** For a new garden and learning centre in an historic site, inspired and part created by volunteers, which combines excellence in design and imaginative use of terrain with superb attention to detail.



Richard Lloyd

The Green Shop, Frampton on Severn

In 2014 Frampton on Severn lost its remaining shop and post office. The Frampton Court Estate came to the rescue providing land for a new shop on the edge of the village green. Great care has been taken with the design and construction materials in this sensitive location and the shop is stocked, as far as possible, with local produce

■ **CITATION:** In recognition of the patronage of the Clifford family in providing and establishing a fitting new village shop in this sensitive location in Frampton on Severn, that will continue to give a focus and heart for that community into the future.



Simon Pizey

Gloucester Services

Gloucester Services, the new motorway services on the M5, have set the highest standards of design and sustainable construction and are a joy to use. Their design integrates the buildings into the landscape, food is sourced locally, while the local community benefits from a percentage of the sales

■ **CITATION:** For designing, building and operating motorway service stations which fit into the local landscape and exemplify sustainable development in respect of landscape, biodiversity, economic and social criteria.



Richard Lloyd

Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage Project

This innovative project reduces the risk of flooding in the Stroud valleys after high rainfall by slowing the rate at which water flows from smaller streams into the River Frome. Simple measures such as "leaky dams" and field bunds have been applied which are inexpensive to provide and visually acceptable, and they work!

■ **CITATION:** For developing and implementing, in conjunction with local people, a rural sustainable drainage project in the Stroud Valleys which reduces flood risk using innovative techniques and improves biodiversity.



Richard Lloyd



Richard Lloyd

Reordering of St Michael and All Angels Church, Tirley

This historic 13th century rural church was extensively damaged in the 2007 flooding of the Severn Vale, which effectively destroyed its interior. The church has been lovingly restored with great care and sensitivity to create a building more suited to present needs and to make it flood proof for the future

■ **CITATION:** In recognition of a community and its advisors that when faced with serious flood damage to a much loved building, produced such an elegant solution, in both design and craftsmanship, that will be worthy of future generations.

Berry Hill Community Orchard

In Berry Hill, in the Forest of Dean, volunteers have transformed an area of waste ground leased from the Forestry Commission into an attractive community orchard. Paths have been laid out, benches have been provided, varieties of Gloucestershire's heritage fruit trees have been planted and biodiversity has been enhanced

■ **CITATION:** For a project at the heart of the community, devised and implemented by volunteers of all ages and abilities, which recognises historical context, is simple in design, enhances biodiversity, and provides opportunities for a greater understanding of the world around in the Forest of Dean.



Richard Lloyd



Renishaw

Renishaw Innovation Centre

This major new building is an exemplar of sustainable design and construction. It sits low in the landscape, is well insulated and mechanically heated, cooled and ventilated. An important element is an extensive solar array on the roof and walls which has been carefully designed to complement the architecture of the building

■ **CITATION:** For a project to accommodate the company's activities in a building which incorporates best practice in terms of energy efficiency and sustainable construction and respects its setting in the landscape.



COME TO OUR BRANCH AGM on Tuesday 30th May

30th
MAY
2017

THIS YEAR our Branch AGM will be held at the Royal Agricultural University at Cirencester on Tuesday, 30th May. Members are invited to come and enjoy the fine campus and grounds from 2.00pm before we all assemble in the Boutflour Hall for the AGM at 2.30pm.

Following the AGM itself, we are delighted that our speaker will be Shaun Spiers, outgoing Chief Executive of CPRE who has led the national organisation for the past 13 years. As well as responding to the most far-reaching changes to the planning system since its inception, during this time CPRE

has developed a progressive vision for the future of the countryside, and played a major role not only in opposing inappropriate development, but promoting better development, in particular affordable rural housing. Shaun is leaving CPRE to head up independent think tank and charity Green Alliance, which is coordinating the environment sector's response to Brexit through the Greener UK Coalition. His talk will be followed by tea.

Enclosed with this newsletter you will find your invitation to the meeting, along with your copy of the Branch Annual Review for 2016, the agenda for the meeting and the minutes of the previous AGM. Summary accounts are included in the Annual Review while nominations for the Executive Committee can be found on the Agenda. Please return the slip at the bottom of the invitation whether or not you will be coming to the AGM. Do please include your email address (if any). We need this if we are to maintain an effective way of communicating with you quickly and cheaply.



Shaun Spiers

Berkeley Vale

Prue Vernon, Chairman

PROPOSALS FOR the large developments included in the Stroud Local Plan are emerging. West of Stonehouse, Redrow and Robert Hitchens' house designs for the initial developments at Nastend Lane and West End are depressingly banal. So far they make no concession to Stroud District Council's requirement for good design that sits comfortably with the local building vernacular. CPRE, Eastington Parish Council and others have objected to this and I understand Stroud District Council is not prepared to accept this standard either. We must keep pressure on the developers to raise design standards.

The first stage of the large development at Draycott,

Cam, for 450 houses is being closely scrutinised. The height of houses is being reduced from three floors to two with rooms in the roof. Cotswolds Conservation Board's comments on the need for trees and green spaces to break up the development seem to be appreciated. We are also pressing for solar energy tiles and panels to be used on the houses and, particularly, on industrial units.

A sizeable green field development is proposed between Hardwicke and Quedgeley, along the aptly named Sticky Lane. We have objected as the site is outside the village envelope and the Local Plan already has an agreed Five Year supply of housing.

At Berkeley, the

development for 188 houses behind Canonbury Street was allowed at Appeal; we understand this is to go for Judicial Review but no hearing dates are available at the moment.

At Wotton under Edge, there is an application for 10 houses and parking for 98 cars and 2 coaches beside the fire station on the edge of the escarpment. While the proposed car park area is not particularly conspicuous, the houses would be on a highly visible, steeply sloping, greenfield site. Coaley and Hawkesbury both have outstanding applications for over 20 houses; both villages have poor road systems, no local employment and the developers are probably trying to optimise the

subsidies for affordable housing. The development of the longstanding 'brownfield' eyesore of Newport Towers on the A38 is stuck through lack of adequate provision for surface water drainage. It would be good to have this derelict site sorted out and building started.

We congratulate the Green Shop at Frampton on Severn on gaining a CPRE Award in 2016. Do visit it, buy your picnic and enjoy a walk by the canal – a cheering spring activity when you might see a kingfisher!

Our committee is working on an interesting location and speaker for our AGM in the summer which you should find listed in the enclosed Diary of Events.

View from the main road into Berkeley towards Canonbury Street, with the castle out of the picture to the left. The development site is the field beyond the hedge ahead and two more further to the right.

Prue Vernon



Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury

Tom Hancock, Chairman

THE COUNTY Branch continues to handle the CPRE response to the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), progress with which is reported elsewhere. Meanwhile, both Gloucester City and Cheltenham Borough have issued local plan proposals for consultation. These flow from the JCS, giving more detail at the local level including proposals for development of smaller-scale sites not identified as strategic sites in the JCS. The Gloucester City proposals are largely welcome and non-controversial and include ambitious plans for regeneration and re-use of brownfield land. In Cheltenham, while much of the new housing will be provided via the 'urban extensions' contained in the JCS, the Local Plan Part 1, Preferred Options considers a number of additional

sites for houses which need assessment. By the time this newsletter is received, the District will have submitted comments on the Cheltenham Plan.

It has again been a busy period dealing with planning applications. CPRE opposed an industrial-scale anaerobic digester facility on a rural site at Fiddington. This was refused by Tewkesbury

Borough Council but there is now a scaled-down proposal which may be more acceptable. There have been several more applications for housing at Gotherington, in particular one for 65 houses at Trumans Farm, outside the village envelope, contrary to the Neighbourhood Plan and harmful to the local landscape and the setting of the AONB. While, happily,

this application was refused, an appeal has been lodged. In responding to both the above cases we have been grateful for the services of David Crofts.

Elsewhere, sadly the High Court upheld permission for 377 houses at Farm Lane, Leckhampton. The application for 725 houses at Twigworth was refused but has now gone to appeal. However an urban extension at this location is now back in the JCS.

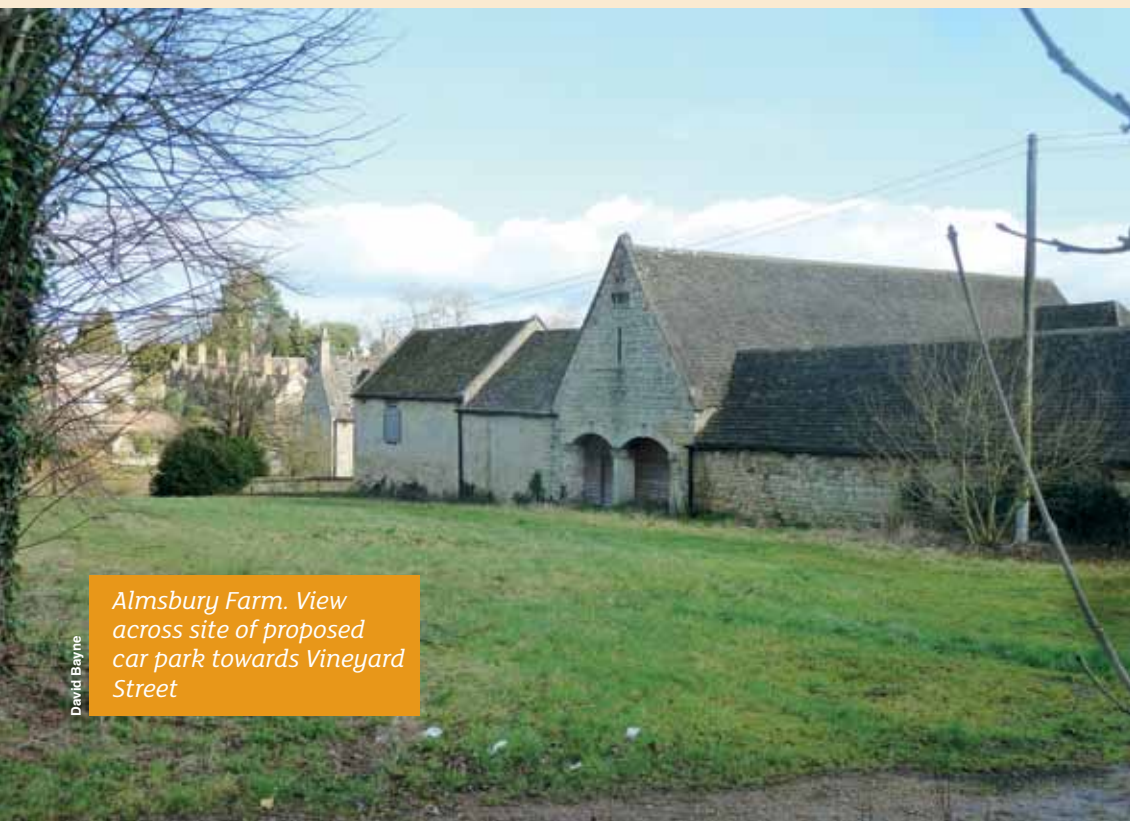
A major new application has been submitted at Almsbury Farm, Winchcombe, including car parking in front of the listed barn, provision of a 52-person care home and 53 assisted living units. This site on the south side of Winchcombe is in the AONB and visible from the Cotswold escarpment. Vehicle and pedestrian access would be via Vineyard Street which is both narrow and steep.

The District AGM will be on Thursday, 18th May at 7pm at Highnam Court by kind permission of Roger Head who will talk about his delightful gardens - to be open to members from 6pm. On Wednesday 5th July we are planning a coach trip to Rodmarton Manor and Brownshill Church - both Arts and Crafts - with a WI lunch.



View of Gotherington from the slopes of Nottingham Hill. The Trumans Farm site is the triangular field beyond the railway

“A major new application has been submitted at Almsbury Farm, Winchcombe”



Almsbury Farm. View across site of proposed car park towards Vineyard Street

Forest of Dean

Clive Osborne,
Chairman

TWO LARGE solar farms proposed in the Forest of Dean will not after all go ahead.

Plans for a 20-acre, 24,000 panel solar array with 5MW installed capacity at Cowles Farm, Elton, have been dismissed on appeal. CPRE Forest of Dean District's main objections were based upon the proposed development's insufficiently warranted impact on the landscape, heritage assets and consequent enjoyment of the area. The District Council's Planning Committee refused the application, against the recommendation of its Officers, on almost identical grounds.

In February the Inspector

accepted that the scheme offered considerable public benefits, particularly concerning renewable energy, but these were outweighed by the "substantial harm" to the landscape and effects on people living nearby.

The Inspector added that the proposal by Wessex Solar Energy Renewables "does not accord with the development plan taken as a whole and is in conflict with the emerging AP [area plan]. Furthermore, having regard to the policies within the NPPF it would not be a sustainable development." The locality is used by Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats, and the Inspector stated

“Large solar farms proposed in the Forest of Dean will not after all go ahead”

that a further ground for refusing the appeal was insufficient evidence that the development would not affect the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites Special Area of Conservation. The Inspector's report is particularly illuminating in that it sets out several arguments which could be deployed elsewhere.

It appears that plans for one of the biggest solar farms in the country, overlooking the River Severn at Awre, will not proceed as the deadline for an appeal against refusal has now passed. The plan was to install around 185,000 solar panels and associated equipment, with an installed

capacity of 49.9 MW. Although CPRE supports the use of sustainable energy generation, including solar PV, this proposal would have covered almost all of the Awre peninsula and threatened to blight this beautiful area and harm the Forest of Dean tourism industry.

We argued that the adverse effects of such industrialisation of a particularly sensitive landscape would substantially outweigh the benefits. CPRE Forest of Dean and Berkeley Vale Districts contributed to a Branch submission strongly objecting to this development.

Land at Awre currently spared from a massive solar array



North Cotswolds

Alison Clifton Barnard, Acting Chairman

“A significant application to build 150 houses on agricultural land opposite the hospital in Moreton in Marsh”



Karen Abel Smith

BACK IN the autumn Peter Loveday announced he was standing down as District Chairman. He has done an excellent job over (very) many years and the committee has appreciated his ‘in-depth’ knowledge and attention to detail in dealing with planning applications. Peter will continue as Treasurer and to advise the committee on its response to planning applications.

The District has responded to two applications during the autumn. We opposed an application for an individual dwelling at Coneygree Mill in Blockley. Although this might seem rather a minor matter, the site – set within an enclosed

woodland wildlife sanctuary and containing a covered reservoir and pumping station – was possibly unique to the centre of any village settlement. In addition, the whole woodland area is a nature reserve within the Blockley Conservation Area, within the AONB and outside the development area. Despite strong objection from local people and the Cotswolds Conservation Board the application was allowed. It does make one wonder what has to be done to uphold the value of the designations that were put in place to protect our countryside.

The second application was from the Farncombe Estate above Willersey which used

to be the training base for G4S and is now a hotel and leisure complex. The applicant wished to expand various leisure activities, including clay pigeon shooting and quad biking. The overriding concern of the majority of the objectors and the local Parish Council was the noise generated by these activities. We objected to the proposal on the basis of the impact on the tranquillity of a designated landscape and were pleased to see that Cotswold District Council took the same view.

The New Year has begun on a worrying note with a significant application from Spitfire Homes to build 150 houses on agricultural land opposite the hospital

Land under threat at Moreton in Marsh

in Moreton in Marsh. This land is currently outside the town boundary but moves to incorporate it have been put forward under the emerging Local Plan. However, this application goes substantially beyond the proposed new boundary. We have recommended refusal on the grounds that the proposals deviate significantly from the emerging Local Plan. We are once again grateful to David Crofts for supporting the District committee by preparing a very thorough statement of objection to this proposal.

South Cotswolds

Nicholas Dummett, Chairman

AS A result of the many comments that they received on the draft Local Plan, Cotswold District Council have issued another consultation on some limited further changes. We were pleased to see that some of our suggestions had been taken up, principally on affordable housing in villages and making clear that land close to the development boundary of the towns would be treated as open countryside and therefore not be available for housing development. However they did not respond to our major concerns about housing numbers and the over-allocation of land in the Plan. Hopefully the Plan

will now be submitted to the Secretary of State as soon as possible and we will fight the housing number issue at the Examination in Public, when this takes place.

In the meantime, developers are submitting speculative applications for sites before the development boundaries come into effect. We are urging CDC to refuse these, usually on the grounds of damage to the landscape. The largest was for up to 375 houses on the edge of Cirencester near Kingshill. We sense that the Council are looking for support in refusing these proposals.

Otherwise we have had the usual assortment of

more minor schemes to deal with such as inappropriate expansion of a pub, construction of a wedding venue, where the traffic would ruin the tranquillity of a small village, and an excessive extension of a house in a sensitive location. In all we have commented on ten planning applications since the last newsletter.

On 13th Sept 2016 members of the District visited Gloucester Services on the M5. Some people might think this a rather odd choice for a CPRE visit but we felt that the development was an outstanding example of good design blending into the countryside, with the added bonus of providing

employment and support to local businesses.

Our host was Sarah Dunning, Chief Executive and daughter of the founders of the very successful TeBay Services in Cumbria. She described the history of the business and the lengthy process of getting planning permission. Members were given a tour of the farm shop and gained an insight into the links that have been established with 130 local suppliers. We were delighted to learn that about 140 staff have been recruited locally and that a Gloucester charity is benefitting to the value of £0.5 million per annum thanks to the success of the company.

Stroud

Pippa Schwartz, Secretary

“The Stroud Local Plan is continuing to do its job”

IN THE Stroud valleys, happily the Stroud Local Plan is continuing to do its job and we are all keeping our fingers crossed that this continues. One appeal is still pending – that for Baxter’s Field. A second, regarding Montserrat Caravan Park in Butterrow, has just been dismissed. Thankfully a third appeal – to develop a site in Bath Road, Leonard Stanley – was dismissed because of its likely impact on the surrounding landscape. This is good news indeed in an area that recently has suffered from some less favourable decisions.

The Committee is preparing events for the summer and autumn. The first will be on 9th May at 3pm when we are hosting an afternoon in the Pavilion of the Museum in the Park, at Stratford Park in Stroud with a guest speaker from the Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage Scheme (RSuDS). Both the

Museum in the Park walled garden and the RSuDS project received CPRE Awards in 2016.

The RSuDS was the combined effort of a number of different bodies. Chris Uttley, who leads the project for Stroud District Council, will speak to the title “Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage (RSuDS): Three years of natural flood management in the Stroud

valleys”. He will explain why the project was set up, what and who it involves, what it has achieved so far and how it’s possible to reduce flooding and restore natural habitats in harmony with the landscape of the Cotswolds. If you would like to undertake a little bit of homework before the talk, an informative film can be viewed at: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/>

rsudsfilm. Tickets for the talk and tea are £5.00 and are available from Margaret Fedrick on 01453 823224 or margaretfedrick@yahoo.co.uk.

Later, on 15th July, the Stroud committee will be present at the Stroud Show as usual and we look forward to seeing members there. Please come and visit us and tell us about any planning thoughts or concerns you may have.

View across threatened Baxters Field, currently the subject of another appeal.

Nick Turner



Tetbury

Jeremy Lodwick,
Chairman

TETBURY IS currently witnessing huge building projects, the majority of which are situated on the east side of the town, on either side of the London Road, the A433 towards Cirencester. There is a mixture of developments: three to four bedroom new houses in the large Highfield site, larger executive homes in the Dormers site, small flats in a former office block (SIAC), a retirement

village (Steepleton) and a dementia care centre. All at once! The disruption to the town is considerable and townspeople have been quite vocal in raising the legitimate issues regarding inadequate infrastructure to cope with this number of new residents. However, as we know at CPRE, permission was granted for all this new building a number of years ago and there is precious little to be done about it now.

What we have been doing is trying to mitigate some aspects of the disruption. We wrote to the Town Council encouraging a clean-up/tidy-up campaign, specifically focused on the ridiculous

number of signs around the town. One development alone had over 15 yellow signs pointing to its location; another site had 7 'Let By' signs on the roadside. The town council responded positively, although there is little evidence of the removals of these signs so far.

One site, at the very eastern edge of the town, has been given permission for three additional pitches for the town rugby club, with provision for parking only and no new clubhouse or other building. We enthusiastically support this provision of playing fields but have inquired

whether there will be outdoor lighting for evening activities. To date we have not yet received clarification.

The town's Neighbourhood Plan remains with the Town Council, following public consultation last August. Our latest understanding is that the Basic Conditions Statement should soon to be submitted to Cotswold District Council. Nick Dummett has continued to lead on the Cotswold Local Plan on behalf of CPRE Tetbury and both Cotswolds Districts. Our next involvement will no doubt be at the public examination, due in 2018.

BRANCH AND DISTRICT CONTACTS

CPRE Gloucestershire office

(manned Tuesdays and Thursdays)

Community House, College Green Gloucester GL1 2LZ

Tel/Fax: 01452 309783

e-mail: info@cpreglos.org.uk

www.cpreglos.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 248577

Chairman Mike Mackey

Vice Chairmen Richard Lloyd, David Brooke

Office Manager and Planning Advisor

Lisa Belfield

Branch Administrator Vanessa Paterson

Membership Secretary Elizabeth Bourne

Hon Treasurer Julian Oxley

☎ 01452 750797

Hon Secretary David Bayne

☎ 01242 237074

e-mail: secretary@cpreglos.org.uk

District Chairmen

Berkeley Vale Prue Vernon ☎ 01453 860329

e-mail: chairberkeleyvale@cpreglos.org.uk

Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury

Tom Hancock ☎ 01242 602173

e-mail: chaircheltglostewks@cpreglos.org.uk

Forest of Dean Clive Osborne ☎ 01594 563043

e-mail: chairforestofdean@cpreglos.org.uk

North Cotswold Alison Clifton Barnard ☎ 01385

584976 e-mail: chairnorthcotswolds@cpreglos.org.uk

South Cotswold Nicholas Dummett

☎ 01285 720090

e-mail: chairsouthcotswolds@cpreglos.org.uk



Stroud Pippa Schwartz (Secretary)

☎ 01453 883973

e-mail: pippaschwartz@btinternet.com

Tetbury Jeremy Lodwick

☎ 07843 283884

e-mail: chairtetbury@cpreglos.org.uk

Newsletter Editor David Bayne

e-mail: secretary@cpreglos.org.uk

Design Colette Brownrigg

e-mail: colette@riggerjig.co.uk

Printing TopFlight, Cheltenham

☎ 01242 528906

