



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

Gloucestershire Views

Rob Colley



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

www.cpreglos.org.uk
President Dame Janet Trotter

AUTUMN 2017

In this issue ...

3 CPRE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
WELCOMES
Lucy Blyth

4 BUILDING WITH
NATURE
*Delivering
sustainable homes*

7 NEEDS MUST -
*But demand too
high?*

15 NEWS FROM
AROUND THE
DISTRICTS
*Updates from
around the County*

Lucy Blyth

A season for change

*Professor Patricia Broadfoot
Branch Chair*

AUTUMN – as
John Keats wrote
in his much-
loved Ode... is a

*Season of mists and
mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the
maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to
load and bless
With fruit the vines that
round the thatch-eves run;*

Autumn – the time when
we celebrate the harvest
from our fields; when we look
forward to picking wild fruits
and nuts from our hedgerows;

the time when our woods are
tinged with pink and gold
and the time when we say
goodbye to our summer bird
visitors as they head off to
warmer climes. For many of
us, autumn is our favourite
season when we think our
countryside is at its most
beautiful.

But what of spring and
summer too? We know that
every season has its delights
in our green and pleasant
land. But for how much

longer? Our rural landscape
is under unprecedented
attack – from building
incursions on the Green
Belt; from the rapacious
development of unsuitable
housing around our market
towns and villages; and
from the continuously-
increasing traffic that
housing developments,
unaccompanied by the
necessary public transport
infrastructure, are causing.
Coupled with this, a recent

*“If we value our
countryside, we need to
stand up for it”*

COVER STORY continued:

report by CPRE¹ documents the steady decline in the number of small farms that are a quintessential part of our rural landscape, the farms that do so much to sustain the patchwork of fields and hedges that make the English countryside what it is.

Moreover, climate change and intensive agriculture are threatening the survival of many types of wildlife while new pathogens threaten whole populations of tree species. If we value our countryside, we need to stand up for it. We need to be the voice of the natural world and rural communities threatened today in so many ways; we need to press Government to recognise the uniquely precious resources that our rural environment provides, the delicate balance of nature that we must be vigilant to protect for the sake of all our futures.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) exists

¹ *Uncertain harvest: does the loss of farms matter? CPRE Food & Farming Foresight - Paper 2*

to do just that. This year CPRE has been celebrating ninety years of campaigning for all that is important to the sustainability of our rural landscape. CPRE's recently-published book by Peter Wain and Oliver Hilliam '22 Ideas That Saved the English Countryside' shows how again and again, CPRE has fought against attacks on rural life and landscapes, through lobbying, through research, but most importantly of all, by galvanising ordinary people to stand up for the countryside they love.

And this is exactly what CPRE continues to do today. At national level, as other contributions to this newsletter describe, it engages with Government to encourage the creation of policies that are sensitive to rural conditions and needs. The recent Housing White Paper – published just before the last election – is a good example, containing as it does a number of indications that Government is now recognising the undesirable impact of some of its previous policies.

But CPRE is essentially a grass-roots organisation, a Campaign that is supported by dedicated individuals up and down the country who care about their local area; people who give of their time and skills to fight for all that is good in our rural communities and landscapes.

Here in Gloucestershire we are fortunate indeed to have a network of local District organisations actively campaigning on planning and other issues in their area. This is why I am so delighted to have been elected as your new Branch Chairman. I regard it as a great privilege to work with CPRE members across the County to campaign for those things we regard as precious in our rural environment. I look forward to doing everything I can to raise the level of awareness across the County about what CPRE stands for. In so doing I hope we can together attract more people to our Campaign to protect our precious landscape and to help promote healthy and vibrant rural communities.

We are fortunate that we now have Lucy Blyth, our new Campaigns and Marketing Manager, to guide us.

We are living through a time of great uncertainty – nationally and globally, a time when the enduring beauty of our countryside helps to bring a sense of permanence to life in a turbulent world. But it will not be permanent unless we fight for it. Keats paints a picture of an autumn sunset: 'We must not allow Keats'

*While barred clouds
bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-
plains with rosy hue.....
And gathering swallows
twitter in the skies.*

picture of the dying autumn landscape to become a permanent elegy to our fading countryside.

Thank you for whatever you do to support CPRE. I look forward to working with all our Branch members to make CPRE Gloucestershire an even more effective voice in championing all that is best in rural England.

View East over
Evenlode valley and
Moreton-in-Marsh

PATRICIA BROADFOOT

PATRICIA BROADFOOT has lived in Kingswood, near Wotton under Edge for over 30 years. She is married to David Rockey, who is a retired dental surgeon and NHS manager as well as a magistrate and Chair of the Kingswood Parish Council.

Currently Professor Emerita of Education at the University of Bristol, Patricia was formerly Vice Chancellor of the University of Gloucestershire. She has a wealth of experience in the educational and voluntary sectors and has a particular interest in sustainability as well as her academic interests.

Patricia Broadfoot addressing CPRE Gloucestershire AGM in May

Patricia became Chair of CPRE Gloucestershire in May. Her other roles include being a Governor of the Royal Agricultural University and Vice Chair of the Lloyds Bank Foundation as well as being a licensed Reader in the

Church of England.

She is passionate about her adopted County of Gloucestershire and enjoys horse-riding and walking in the countryside regularly as well as cultivating her garden.



Lucy Blyth

CPRE GLOUCESTERSHIRE WELCOMES LUCY BLYTH

WE ARE delighted to welcome Lucy Blyth to CPRE Gloucestershire as our new Campaigns and Marketing Manager. Lucy originally qualified as a Chartered Surveyor but later moved across to the Voluntary Sector where she worked for over 20 years, mainly with children's charities. She has held a wide range of management and marketing roles from Events Organiser to deputising as CEO on several occasions. "I have always worked for small charities where you need to wear many 'hats' at the same time, from sticking stamps on thousands of marketing envelopes to organising royal visits. That variety of role drew me to CPRE, as well as my lifelong passion for the countryside."

On the campaigns side of things, Lucy hopes to focus on raising awareness of the success of CPRE's work in Gloucestershire. "So much of the work done within CPRE is carried out by volunteers who spend incredible amounts of their own time lobbying to protect our countryside and rural community life. They do it really well and I want the public to know about it." With regard to marketing, Lucy is



particularly keen to raise a more engaging profile of CPRE. "I want people to really know who CPRE are and who they help. I want the public to connect their passion for rural life and landscapes with the need to protect it. This is not just about the countryside, it is also about the people who live off it and the people who visit it. They should all have a vested interest in its protection for the future of their own generations."

On a personal note, Lucy, husband Paul and two daughters love living in the hills of the North Cotswolds. "It is great walking country for our three dogs. I am a professional enthusiast and amateur photographer with a particular passion for landscape photography. I feel really fortunate that my role with CPRE allows me to work in an environment I love."

JOINT CORE STRATEGY: ALMOST THERE

Lisa Belfield



WHAT SHOULD be the final examination sessions of the long-awaited Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury (the JCS) took place in July. These examined the 'Main Modifications' to the Strategy to take account of the Inspector's guidance. The JCS now includes the strategic allocation of sites for 995 houses at Twigworth, 1100 at West Cheltenham and 620 at Winnycroft Farm on the south east edge of Gloucester. At the same time, strategic housing allocations at North Churchdown, at the MOD site at Ashchurch and at Leckhampton/South Cheltenham have been deleted. The Inspector has asked the JCS authorities to get any additional information to her by early September. She will then write and issue her final report. The crucial issue now is whether or not she finds the JCS, as modified,

to be 'sound'. Assuming, as we expect, that this is the case the JCS can finally be adopted as formal policy of the three authorities and guide development in their authority areas until 2031. It will thus enable completion of the Local Plans for Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Tewkesbury Borough.

The Strategy is intended to be reviewed every five years to take account of the monitoring of housing and job creation figures and other targets set out in the JCS document. As it has not been possible to identify sufficient land to meet the Objectively Assessed Housing Need in full, an early review of housing requirements in Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester City is likely.

We expect the Inspector's report to be issued before Christmas, enabling the adoption of the JCS in the Spring of next year. This will be almost three years after the Examination started in May 2015.

BUILDING WITH NATURE DELIVERING LIVEABLE AND SUSTAINABLE HOUSING



*Dr Gemma Jerome,
Gloucestershire
Wildlife Trust Green
Infrastructure
Project Manager*



The challenge

The UK needs to build more homes, with 300,000 new houses a year needed in England alone to meet demand. Many parts of the country face ambitious targets, with the rush to increase housing numbers threatening the quality of new development. The challenge is not just about building new homes. We need to create new communities that are also resilient to climate change impacts, support economic growth and create healthy, liveable environments where people experience a high quality of life.

People value living in places which are close to nature, places full of green features, places where water is well-managed, places where people can enjoy improved health and wellbeing, places offering more sustainable urban living. These 'green infrastructure' (GI) features include parks, play areas, nature reserves and street trees, as well as rivers and ponds. The benefits of high quality green infrastructure are well documented, but no model currently exists to secure their delivery and the standard of GI provision nationwide is inconsistent.

How can Building with Nature help?

Building with Nature is a new innovative way of securing the delivery of high quality GI in all new housing developments. Currently, there is no model which supports every stage of green infrastructure delivery. This can result in poor provision for long-term management of green features, minimising its potential to be an essential component of liveable and sustainable places. By providing a model for high quality GI, Building with Nature supports better decision-making. It delivers cost-effective solutions to make urban places more liveable and

*“We need to create new communities
where people experience a high
quality of life”*



Gloucestershire



University of the
West of England

Innovate UK

*The Applewood
development at Cashes
Green in the course of
landscaping*



Timothy Seear



The Applewood development at Cashes Green – this housing scheme received a CPRE Award in 2014 in part for its approach to green infrastructure

Timothy Soar

sustainable. It also provides a certification scheme for developments which delivers safe and attractive spaces for play, education and recreation, which minimises the health and economic harm associated with flooding and which creates space for wildlife to flourish. The process is transparent and enables potential homeowners to identify the quality of green infrastructure in new developments.

The model has been successfully piloted in Gloucestershire and the West of England, and has resulted in higher quality GI across five case studies. Building with Nature has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of end-users, including local planning authorities, developers, policy makers, built environment consultants, public health professionals, and citizens.

Who is behind Building with Nature?

Building with Nature has been developed through

an Innovate UK/NERC-funded Knowledge Transfer Partnership between Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) and the University of the West of England (UWE).

GWT has been involved in planning for decades, making sure that new development protects existing habitats, and where possible creates new places for wildlife to flourish.

More recently, they have become advocates for GI as a way to deliver 'natural solutions' that meet the challenges facing existing and future communities. As part of a federation of 47 charities, GWT has national reach to influence the delivery of resilient and sustainable communities, and secure benefits to health and wellbeing, economic growth, and climate change adaptation.

The team at UWE is drawn from the Centre for Sustainable Planning and Environments: a multi-disciplinary group of academics representing the specialisms involved in the development of GI including

property development, planning, environmental science, healthy planning and urban design. Their research focuses on developing an understanding of how to achieve places that are environmentally sustainable, socially just and economically competitive.

Next steps

The next stage for Building with Nature is to replicate the pilot project at a national scale. The existing team will partner with the Town and Country Planning Association to recruit a further 80 demonstration projects to establish the Building with Nature model as the 'go to' approach

for delivering liveable and sustainable housing development across the UK.

The local launch of Building with Nature takes place on 9th November 2017 at a high-profile event, hosted by Kevin McCloud.

If you would like more information about the project, please get in touch with the Building with Nature Project Manager, Gemma Jerome, (gemma.jerome@gloucestershirewildlifetrust.co.uk).



Timothy Soar



Charter

for Trees, Woods
and People

THE CHARTER FOR TREES, WOODS AND PEOPLE

Richard Lloyd

IN THE Spring 2016 newsletter, I reported that CPRE was supporting a call for a new UK Charter for Trees, Woods and People. In an initiative being led by the Woodland Trust, and involving over 70 partner organisations including CPRE, the Tree Charter will recognise, celebrate and protect the rights of the

people in the UK to the benefits brought by trees and woods. I have been serving on the national professional steering group.

Since then many people have worked hard and on 6th November 2017 the Charter for Trees, Woods and People will be launched in Lincoln. This is 800 years exactly since King Henry IIIrd

“Sign up to the ten Principles to show your support for trees and woods”



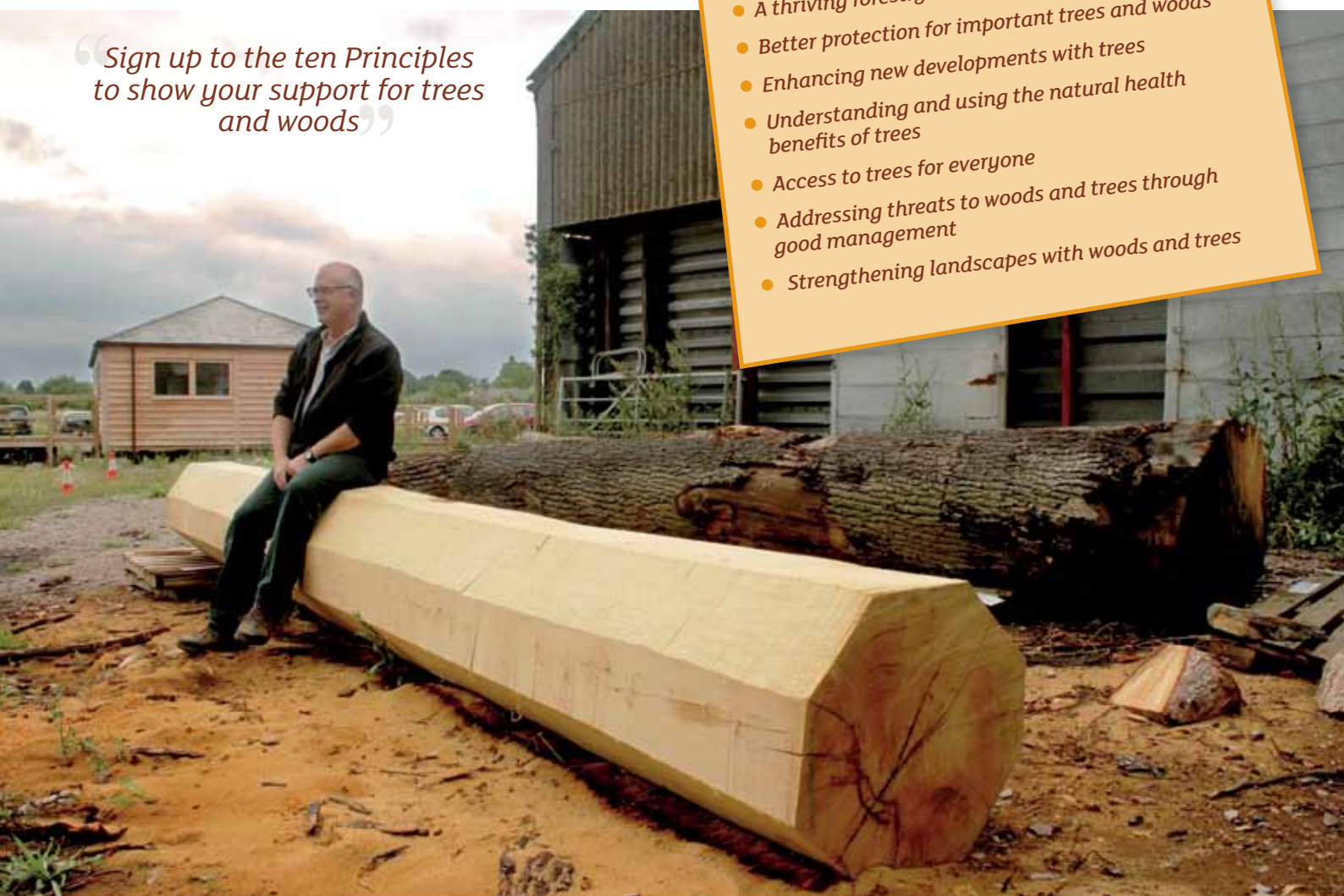
Artist Simon Clements at work on a Charter Pole

Matt Larsen-Daw

THE TREE CHARTER PRINCIPLES

The Charter will be based around ten principles. We believe in:

- Thriving habitats for diverse species
- Planting for the future
- Celebrating the cultural impact of trees
- A thriving forestry sector that delivers for the UK
- Better protection for important trees and woods
- Enhancing new developments with trees
- Understanding and using the natural health benefits of trees
- Access to trees for everyone
- Addressing threats to woods and trees through good management
- Strengthening landscapes with woods and trees



signed the influential 1217 Charter of the Forest, following the Magna Carta in 1215 of Henry's father, King John.

The new Charter is being written using the evidence of 60,000 tree stories, collected from the UK public, about what trees and woods mean to them. This, together with the expert knowledge of the partner organisations, will form the content of the final Tree Charter.

Individuals and organisations are being encouraged to sign up to the ten Principles to show their support for trees and woods. The Tree Charter will draw its strength from the number of signatures collected.

If you have not signed yet, please do so. Be a part of this historic moment, go to <https://sign.treecharter.uk/page/6023/petition/1> and sign the Tree Charter. In return we'll plant a tree in the UK.

Tree Charter Legacy

As a legacy in the landscape for the Tree Charter, eleven Charter marker poles are being created from Grown-in-Britain oak from the Crown Estate, carved by artist Simon Clements at the Sylva Wood Centre in Abingdon. These huge carved monuments in wood will represent the ten Principles. The 11th, representing the Charter overall, will be 'The Champion Pole'. It will be unveiled on 6th November in Lincoln Castle, the location of an original copy of the 1217 Charter of the Forest. The other ten Poles will be unveiled at regional events around the UK during National Tree Week (25th November – 3rd December 2017).

As a living legacy in the landscape, 800 community marker trees are being given away, due to the significance of the 800 years since the Charter of the Forest was signed. These will be offered to groups and organisations who show support for the Tree Charter, and will be delivered in time to plant during National Tree Week.

Go to www.treecharter.uk for further information.

NEEDS MUST - BUT DEMAND TOO HIGH?

Charlie Watson

FOR THE past three years our County Branch uniquely has funded a post in CPRE National Office. Its role has been to prepare a series of Housing Foresight Papers aimed at stimulating informed debate. The eighth Paper in the series has just been published to help CPRE lobby government over much-needed changes to its planning policy for the future provision of extra homes.

The latest Paper has tackled the thorny issue of the difference between projections of the 'need' and 'demand' for new homes. Its publication alongside the Government's review of forecasting methodology, now out to consultation, is particularly timely as a standard process is being proposed for determining 'Objectively Assessed Housing Need'.

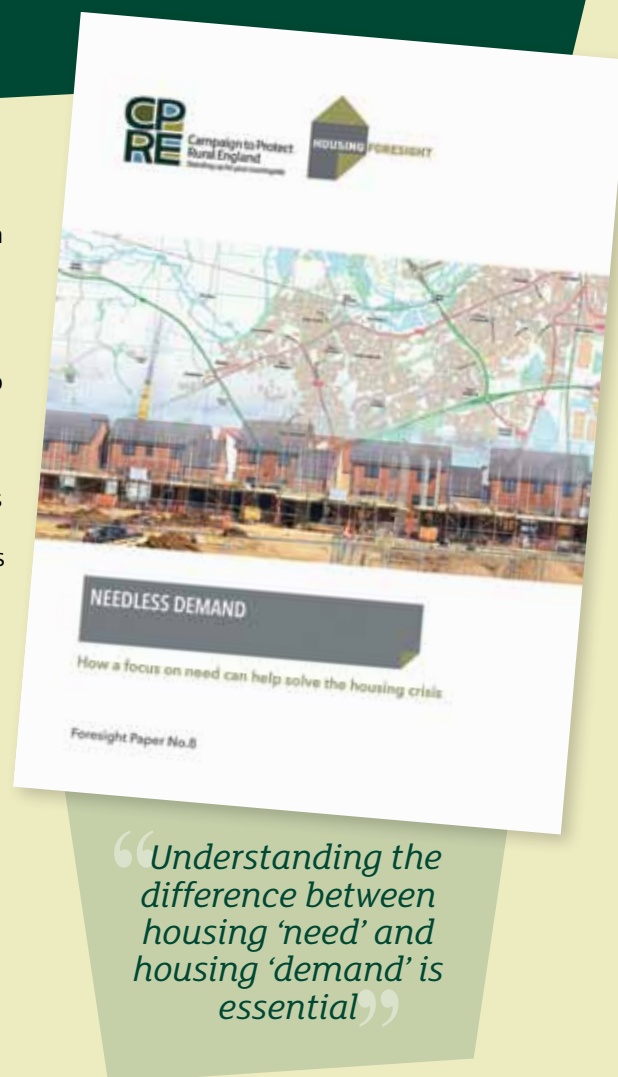
For years, National Planning Policy and its Guidance notes have mixed and matched the use of the two very distinct terms of 'need' and 'demand'. As a result, we have seen a dearth of much needed affordable homes as housing projects have concentrated on the potential demand for extra homes in Gloucestershire and elsewhere. Developers have gained and communities have lost.

In planning future housing provision, therefore, understanding the difference between the two terms is essential. Housing 'need' is influenced by affordability, location, quality, size and type of home. Whereas housing 'demand' is contingent upon availability, a household's preferences and its ability to pay.

Using these definitions, the latest Foresight Paper makes a series of policy recommendations relating to the method by which housing requirements should in future be calculated by local authorities.

However, it must also be remembered that the 'Objectively Assessed Housing Need' that all Local Authorities must calculate is, importantly, just a starting point in any local planning process. Planning policy and agreed changes to it can and should influence the final number of homes to be built in any area.

A lack of infrastructure, services and environmental constraints can and should restrict provision in a particular area. Equally, realistic and practical needs for economic growth and for national projects,



bearing in mind the above, can and should increase the final housing requirement for any Local Plan.

Local planning therefore is not a simple process. CPRE has argued since its inception in 1926 that crucial decisions concerning the amount and location of development must always be taken via a democratic process and not merely based upon who shouts loudest and who can afford to pay for hired help.

The Foresight Papers have already been influential by providing evidence-based research to persuade Government to change its policies. Let us hope that the latest is also successful in helping us to protect our precious countryside from further unneeded losses and that future housing development is of the right type, right amount to meet need and in the right locations.

Full details of the report are available on both the Branch and National CPRE websites.



HOUSING THREATS TO AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

GLOUCESTERSHIRE INCLUDES parts of three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) – much of the Cotswolds, about a third of the Wye Valley and a small part of the Malvern Hills. AONBs are designated for their nationally important landscapes and are supposed to have the same level of planning protection as National Parks. For example, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) says that ‘Great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in [National Parks and] AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty’. It also sets out a ‘Major Development Test’ which states that planning permission should be refused for major development in an AONB except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest. The national policy sounds strong, but problems arise when local planning policies are out of date or when a local authority cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. This has prompted speculative planning applications for housing schemes that are inappropriate in AONBs and their settings, and would normally be expected to be refused.

CPRE at national level, in partnership with the National Association for AONBs, has commissioned research into housing development in England’s 34 AONBs. The aim of this research is to find out which AONBs are under the

Richard Lloyd

most pressure, to establish how many housing units have been proposed in the last few years and to understand how this links to local policies. Gloucestershire Branch has been contributing to the work.

The project is a unique combination of both factual data and qualitative research. Comprehensive quantitative data has been provided by a company called Glenigan for all AONBs in England. It covers the period since March 2012 when the National Planning Policy Framework came into effect and includes planning applications and their outcome and what happened if cases went to appeal. Planning applications surrounding AONBs have also been identified. In Gloucestershire, we were able to provide detailed information on the Gloucestershire part of the Cotswolds AONB from an independent exercise by Geof Murray from our Stroud District. Geof had collated information from local authorities over the same period.

Early indications are that the Cotswolds have been a particular

“the Cotswolds have been a particular hot spot for speculative planning applications”

hot spot for speculative planning applications and for planning appeals. In the Wye Valley cases have been fewer but are expected to increase when tolls on the Severn Bridge are removed as it will make the area more attractive for commuting into the Bristol area.

CPRE has appointed consultants to analyse the data supplied by Glenigan, and to carry out their own contextual research, including interviews with AONB teams and CPRE branches. The overarching objective is to develop and use a sound evidence base to campaign for strengthened and better-implemented planning protection for AONBs against excessive or inappropriate housing development. It will also investigate where AONBs and communities have supported a housing development, for example via a Community Land Trust.

The work will inform CPRE’s input into future policy reviews of the NPPF and on consultations arising from the Housing White Paper, including the current consultation on a standard method for determining Objectively Assessed Housing Need. There will also be a short CPRE summary of the research which will include recommendations for what needs to change, ensuring that England’s Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty remain just as beautiful in years to come.

The research will be published later in the year and will contain full details on the data.

MAPPING THE LOWER SEVERN VALE

David Brooke

“**W**HERE”, WE might sometimes muse, “are the areas of real development pressure in the county?” The tempting answer is often “where I live” – and this is true up to a point because no area is without its pressure.

But the answer can usually be found in the Severn Vale. There lie our three main towns together with north-south arterial routes for road, railway and (for those who like completeness), canal. With them comes development pressure – housing, jobs, infrastructure and energy.

Paradoxically, though, the Severn Vale is the area about which we know the least. And this becomes

particularly noticeable as we involve ourselves in planning policy and planning applications. The Cotswolds to the east and the Forest plateau to the west have been studied in depth for generations; but when we need good information in the Vale we usually find it wanting.

Help, though, is at hand. For the past four years, the Branch and the University of Gloucestershire have been running a joint research programme in the Severn Vale south of Gloucester. The research is designed to increase and map our general understanding of the character of the area – and what makes it ‘tick’.

Undergraduates – usually

two or three a year – have been collecting a wide range of information covering all aspects of the local environment. Some collections are based on their own research and others are adapted from publicly available data. Some hundred datasets are now in place.

At one time such information had to be considered in relative isolation but the creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) now allows us to see and analyse all the data as one. Even better, two University interns (with CPRE financial backing) have recently designed a web-based mapping process that will allow organisations

or individuals to access and analyse all the GIS data – in a way that suits their particular purposes.

For example, for those (including CPRE members) who wish to comment on a planning application, a range of background data that affect the development site can be selected from a ‘menu’ and displayed as a single map. The process works at a variety of scales.

The website needs some final tweaking and will be available shortly; meanwhile two more students are taking the baton as the research programme continues and prospers.

We hope to publish a more detailed and fully illustrated explanation of this work in the Spring 2018 newsletter.

“*The Severn Vale is the area about which we know the least*”

University Students get to know the Severn Vale

Rob Berry





TO FRACK OR NOT TO FRACK?

Colin Evers

LAST AUTUMN, national CPRE decided to revisit its policy on hydraulic fracturing for shale gas (fracking) and other unconventional means of gas/oil extraction. This was thought necessary following the Department of Energy and Climate Change's December 2015 publication of Regulations and Best Practice for Onshore Oil and Gas Exploration in the UK and HMG's April 2016 Guidance on Fracking: Developing shale oil and gas in the UK.

The revisit has now been completed. Its main findings are set out in recently-published CPRE revised policy guidance that can be accessed on CPRE's national website (www.cpre.org.uk). A key outcome is that CPRE now believes there should be a moratorium on fracking unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- it will help secure the radical reductions in carbon emissions required to comply with national planning policy and meet legally binding climate change targets;
- it will not lead to unacceptable cumulative harm, whether for particular landscapes or on the English countryside as a whole; and

- it can be carefully controlled by effective systems of regulation and democratic planning, which are adequately resourced at both local and national levels.

The revised policy guidance note set out key matters CPRE wants addressed to counteract the harm caused should the Government decide to encourage large-scale fracking. The same matters apply to other forms of unconventional gas/oil exploitation such as coal bed methane extraction and underground coal

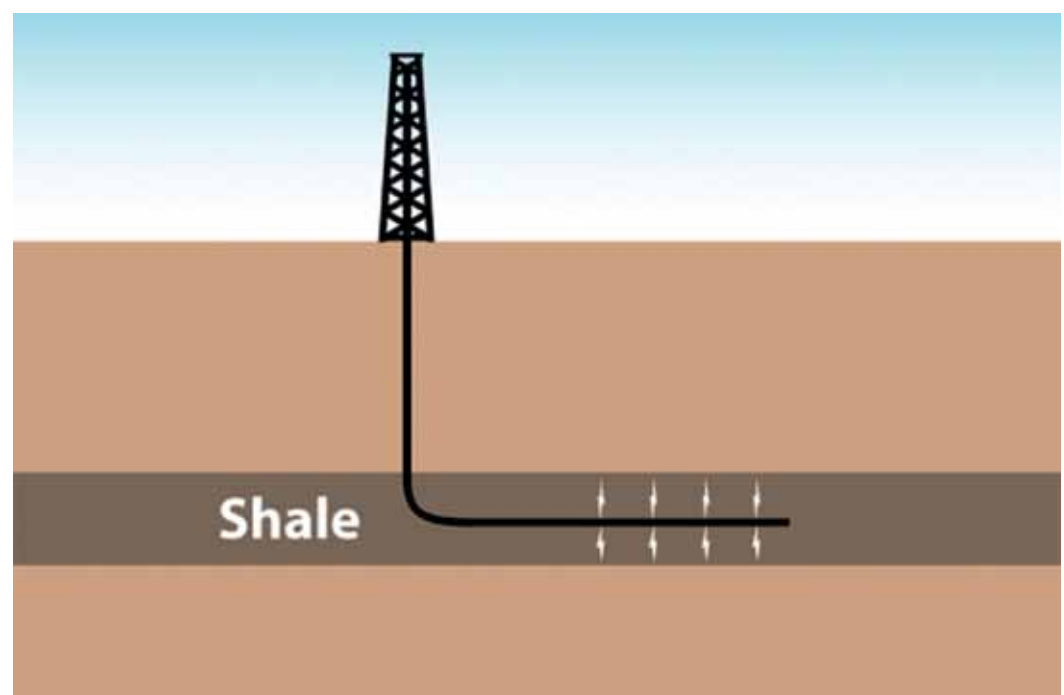
gasification. And it applies whether or not the above conditions are met.

For instance, CPRE believes that any Shale Wealth Fund (or similar) must provide a funding stream to deliver both local landscape enhancements and Carbon Capture and Storage of the carbon dioxide produced by unconventional fossil fuel.

It is not enough just to induce local communities to support fracking developments. Rather, CPRE is keen that they be given a stakeholder involvement. They need access to baseline information, and to data

from independent real-time monitoring of exploration, site development and gas/oil production activities.

CPRE wants high weighting given to ensuring the continued quality of atmospheric air, water courses and water supplies, as well as the protection of nationally and locally designated landscapes, wildlife sites, and areas prized for their tranquillity and recreational value. Hence, environmental regulators and planning authorities need to be adequately resourced and empowered to take a



precautionary approach to environmental impacts and not be compelled to prioritise economic growth or to meet unrealistic decision deadlines.

CPRE wants decisions on fracking applications taken by Minerals Planning Authorities. If there is an appeal, it should be decided by the Planning Inspectorate and not by a Minister. That decision process needs to give significant weight to ensuring that all extraction facilities and access routes for HGVs will be carefully located and designed to avoid harm. All associated well and site facilities from exploration to end of production must be the subject of restoration and other conditions, backed up by guarantees or bonds, so that former sites cannot be treated as brownfield land.

Lastly, the cumulative impact of fracking, etc, should be carefully and frequently assessed at national and sub-regional level. For example, air quality and the quality of water supplies and other water bodies should be regularly monitored,

as should the effects of increased HGV traffic; and credible processes should be developed to fulfil these requirements.

Here in Gloucestershire, HMG's offer of a current round licence to explore for coal bed methane has not been taken up. It does not appear to be the Government's intention to offer a shale gas exploration

licence as part of this round. From present knowledge it would also appear unlikely that any significant gas/oil bearing shale exists under Gloucestershire. However, there could be future offers of shale gas/oil exploration licences, and there may well be more offers of coal bed methane exploration licences.

So, having an up to date

Example of a Shale Gas Exploration/Development Drilling Rig operating at night

CPRE policy on fracking, etc could be relevant to Gloucestershire in the years to come. CPRE Gloucestershire Branch will continue to keep its eyes on the ball.

“There should be a moratorium on fracking unless ...”

A typical shale gas exploration/development drilling compound



dreamstime.com



dreamstime.com

RESPONDING TO THE GROWTH IN RURAL CRIME

THE GROWING extent of rural crime has featured recently in both the national and regional news. In Gloucestershire it has increased by 38%, according to the latest figures released by NFU Mutual Insurance Company.

Within the farming community we have been hit by waves of crime. Quad bikes are especially popular targets with over 48 stolen recently from across the North Cotswolds, Newent and Stroud areas. And a flock of sheep was stolen from the North Cotswolds two months ago. Thieves seem to know just where to find machinery and how to overcome security precautions. They can be brazen: for example one quad bike was driven away while the farmer had got off the machine to do some fencing in the same field. Fortunately this farmer was able to give

*Tanya Robbins
Chair, Gloucestershire NFU*

chase in another vehicle and the quad was abandoned and recovered.

Theft can be unpredictable. Why do we have seemingly mad weeks when lots are going and then nothing for a while? Could these crimes be related to cash machines being ripped out of buildings such as the two that were attacked in Bourton-on-the-Water? Whoever is responsible appear to be very well organised and very experienced! But we should not have to experience the fear of these criminals striking at our farms – I am concerned that sooner or later someone is going to get hurt.

Rural crimes are taking place across Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire. The National Farmers Union (NFU) has been able to present the rural community's concerns at a highly constructive joint meeting with Gloucestershire and West Mercia police, including with representatives from the offices of both Police & Crime Commissioners. We learned in

*“It is vital we all
report suspect
activity”*



particular about the 'Stop That Thief' campaign that has been rolled out in Herefordshire to great effect and about a tracker system designed by a garage near Gloucester called Defenderdefender.

We trust that the areas of best policing practice highlighted at the meeting will now be adopted across the counties. Whereas before we had the impression that crimes committed within cities and big towns were of greater priority to both police forces, we have been reassured that rural crime is of high significance and receiving the attention it needs. I would like to thank the police from both Gloucestershire & West Mercia for their cooperation.

The rural community now needs to build on this progress by developing better ways of working to assist our police in combating rural crime. It is vital we all report suspect activity including vehicle registration numbers and rural crime to either 101 or in an emergency 999. And of course many CPRE members are very well placed to play their part in this.



FILLING THE A417 'MISSING LINK'

SINCE OUR article in the last newsletter on the so-called A417 Missing Link, Highways England have been progressing proposals. We have been advised that the work is on track to consult on a shortlist of possible scheme options by the end of the year, but with 30 options being identified afresh it is still unclear how many and which options will go to public consultation. At present Highways England are undertaking a sift, including landscape assessments of five alternative route corridors. Members may have seen a report in the local media in August outlining a number of possible

options, all of which would cost significantly more to achieve than the so-called "loop scheme" supported by Gloucestershire County Council a few years ago. The environmental bodies are concerned that the budget provision remains wholly inadequate, since it is based upon this historic and inappropriate surface scheme.

We are alarmed that local politicians and business interests may resist schemes with higher costs as risking deferral of the road improvement. The environmental sensitivity of the continuous Cotswolds scarp in this area cannot be overestimated. The



Lorries on Crickley Hill

Rob Colley

need is to deliver the right scheme which will require a higher level of government funding. There will only be one opportunity to get this right.

In a position statement we have said that "We believe that it is possible to achieve an exemplary scheme that

meets the needs of traffic and the economy, but which at the same time delivers real environmental improvements and makes this magnificent part of the Cotswold scarp more attractive to visit. That is a prize worth striving for – and paying for."

SHAUN SPIERS ADDRESSES BRANCH 2017 AGM

OVER 80 CPRE members and guests gathered on the afternoon of 30th May at the Royal Agricultural University for the Branch AGM with Shaun Spiers, outgoing Chief Executive of national CPRE, as guest speaker. Beforehand, all had the opportunity to wander in the University grounds and to visit the fine chapel with its amazing east window commemorating Robert Boutflour.

Proceedings took place in the adjacent Boutflour Hall with Dame Janet Trotter, Branch President, in the chair. In a wide-ranging report, outgoing Chairman, Mike Mackey, reviewed the extensive work of the Branch and its districts over an eventful past year. This included commenting on local plans, making Awards to beneficial local projects, challenging planning applications of concern, communicating with the public and working with CPRE National Office and other like-minded organisations, including funding specific environmental projects. He welcomed Lucy Blyth whom the Branch had recently engaged as its Campaigns and Marketing Manager to help improve CPRE's public image and reverse membership decline. (For more detail see www.cpreglos.org.uk.)

Mike Mackey paid tribute to CPRE's extremely knowledgeable and supportive volunteers and expressed his gratitude to district chairmen

David Bayne

and their committees. Dame Janet then presented CPRE's 20 year Long Service Award to Rosealeen Lane who had played such an important part in the work of both the Branch and of the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury District.

The meeting unanimously adopted the 2016 Accounts and Andorran were reappointed as reporting accountants. Members went on to re-elect the President, Vice-Presidents, officers and executive committee members. Professor Patricia Broadfoot was unanimously elected Chair to replace Mike Mackey who was leaving the area. In making a presentation to him, Dame Janet expressed the Branch's gratitude to Mike for his significant contribution to its work, especially over the past year as Chairman.

Following the formal business, the meeting was delighted to welcome Shaun Spiers. When he arrived in 2004, the Barker report had just been issued arguing for a step-change in house-building, something which still threatens the countryside today. There was also the matter of how to get the organisation to live within its means and how to attract an increasing and younger membership.

Although attracting members remained an issue, otherwise CPRE had turned itself around with significant success: it had become a more unified organisation with a more positive outlook, for example through its 'Vision for the Countryside'; and it had become more successful in influencing the thinking of ministers, civil servants and political parties. It could celebrate its role in keeping a large part of England undeveloped. But more needed to be done to stop the setting of unrealistic housing targets, to make sure houses are actually built, and in the right places, and to tackle the need for affordable homes. And there was a need to put more focus on the character of the countryside, where Brexit may offer new opportunities.

Shaun Spiers went on to handle questions on the rising population, transport, CPRE's influence post Brexit, agriculture policy and influencing politicians and others. Richard Lloyd, Branch Vice-Chairman, then gave a Vote of Thanks in which he thanked Shaun for his professionalism and thoroughness and wished him well for his future with the Green Alliance.

The RAU laid on a delicious tea during which members were able to catch up with old friends and make new ones. CPRE is most grateful to the RAU for their flawless facilities and arrangements for the meeting.

Dame Janet Trotter, Shaun Spiers and Professor Patricia Broadfoot at the 2017 AGM



WHAT LEGACY WOULD YOU LEAVE FOR YOUR GRANDCHILDREN?

MOST OF us want our children, and our grandchildren, to be able to run freely through countryside wherever they live. We want them to explore our ancient woodlands on nature trails, play pooh sticks in hidden brooks and pick the blackberries from our hedgerows. But how much of the countryside will be left for generations to come? And how will our rural communities fair?

Over the last 90 years CPRE has successfully fought to protect our Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), to limit unnecessary urban sprawl, to encourage urban regeneration and to protect farmland, hedgerows and rural community life. The pressures on our country life and landscapes, however, are increasing at an alarming rate. What greater legacy can we leave to future generations than a legacy to save, protect and enhance our greatest natural asset – our countryside?

By deciding to remember CPRE Gloucestershire in your Will, you will help us protect your countryside from the increasing number of threats it faces. Countryside lost is lost forever. We cannot let that happen.

*For more information on leaving a Legacy to CPRE, please contact Lucy Blyth
lucy.blyth@cpreglos.org.uk*

Lucy Blyth

CPRE Gloucestershire AWARDS 2017



THE BRANCH celebrated 10 years of Awards at our annual presentation ceremony on 4th October which again took place at the Gambier Parry Hall, Highnam. A record number of projects were recognised this year with representatives of the organisations involved receiving plaques and certificates from Viscount Bledisloe. The projects were:

- **Dursley Tree House**
A highly innovative domestic dwelling built on a wooded sloping site with the principal floor elevated above the ground.
- **Ham Mill Lock restoration**
An outstanding restoration of a Grade II Listed Thames & Severn Canal lock, with the work undertaken by volunteers.
- **Horsley Play Project**
The transformation of a run down play area into beautifully designed space with numerous different opportunities for recreation.
- **Kingswood Village Allotments**
New allotments carefully laid out with raised beds to protect Great Crested Newts, and cultivated using organic methods only.
- **Little Pinnolds**
A well-designed, contemporary holiday home created by rebuilding a dilapidated Cotswold stone cow shed.
- **Minchinhampton RFC Clubhouse**
A new clubhouse which fits well in the landscape through the simplicity of the building and attention to its external detailing.
- **Plusterwine and Alvington Court Farm Saltmarsh Creation Project**
New areas of saltmarsh have been created as part of an ambitious project to provide better flood protection along the Severn Estuary.
- **STIHL Treetop Walkway (Westonbirt Arboretum)**
A stunning tree top walkway, fully accessible to wheel chairs and with interpretation along its length, now provides the main access to Silk Wood.
- **Stoke Orchard Community Centre**
A new Community Centre and Community Shop for Stoke Orchard with exemplary design and environmental credentials.
- **Vegetable Matters Farm Shop**
A new farm shop for Ebrington in a high quality purpose-built building with excellent environmental credentials that fits well in the landscape.

More detail and photographs of the projects will be included in the Spring 2018 newsletter.

Berkeley Vale

Prue Vernon, Chairman

WE HAD a rather thin AGM at the Wool Barn Manor Farm, Frampton on Severn with the opportunity to enjoy Mrs Clifford's beautiful garden. Chris Uttley from Stroud District Council gave us a most interesting talk on the natural management of flooding through slowing the flow of water from upland areas. This project received a CPRE Gloucestershire award last year. He also led a walk with Stroud District round Cranham to show some of these projects working.

The Stroud District Local Plan was 'highly commended' in the 2017 Royal Town Planning Institute South West Awards for Planning Excellence for its excellence in Spatial Planning. Our County Chair has sent a letter of congratulation which was

much appreciated.

The green fields of the Berkeley Vale continue to attract large planning applications from developers. The fields around Cam/Dursley railway station will disappear under houses. Some of these developments are included as part of the Local Plan to meet forecast housing requirement. Two others are not but will be hard to resist. The pressure on the road systems, particularly through the bottle necks of Dursley and Uley, will be considerable.

The first part of the huge housing development west of Stonehouse round Nupend is now visible. The proposed houses are off the shelf designs. Stroud District Council is not satisfied and is requiring more sympathetic designs, as stipulated in the original planning permission. The

Judicial Review for 186 houses below Canonbury Street, Berkeley has been unsuccessful. An outline application has been submitted for 300 houses and industrial buildings at Sharpness. This is in the Local Plan. We will be expressing our concern that the junction with the A38 will not be able to cope with the extra traffic. The proposed stadium for Forest Green Rovers and industrial site at Junction 13 on the M5 rumbles on. Highways England, we suspect, are concerned about increased traffic at the motorway junction. CPRE have objected to this large greenfield development.

The Severn Estuary has no protected status. It is scenically beautiful and ecologically very important – Sir Peter Scott described it being as important to wildlife

migration as the Serengeti. The Severn Vision project was set up by CPRE South West, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and other conservation organisations associated with the Severn Estuary, to record the essence of the Estuary and present a Vision for its future, bringing benefits for the environment, the economy and people. It should also inform careful management of the Estuary and flood prevention in a changing climate. The Estuary needs to be considered and planned as an entity but this is not easy across two countries and with many vested interests. Please talk to your friends about it – www.severnvision.org will tell you more.

Site of proposed industrial park beside M5 Junction 13 (for Stroud)



Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury

Tom Hancock, Chairman

THE GLACIAL progress of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is reported elsewhere. Always assuming the Inspector finds it to be 'sound', the JCS seems at last to be within sight of adoption. Progressing the three underlying local plans should then be possible. The District commented on the Cheltenham Local Plan Part 1, Preferred Options during the public consultation last March.

Both the original and scaled down proposals for an industrial-scale anaerobic digester at Fiddington have now been refused but Ecotricity have appealed against both decisions. There

is to be a joint public hearing in the new year. CPRE has taken part in two further appeals, for 65 houses at Trumans Farm, Gotherington and for 76 houses on the edge of Prestbury. Both sites are part of the setting of the AONB and outside the village boundaries. We are delighted that both appeals have been dismissed. In all the above cases we have been grateful for the work and representations of David Crofts.

The public inquiry has taken place but there has been no decision yet on the appeal for 725 houses at Twigworth. Meanwhile the District has submitted evidence to three further appeals – for 6 houses in the

Green Belt at Stoke Orchard, for 75 houses in the AONB on the edge of Winchcombe below Langley Hill and for 45 houses off Kidnappers Lane, Leckhampton.

Applications for two small-scale developments in sensitive AONB sites on the edge of Charlton Kings have been refused but a third is awaiting decision. CPRE wrote objecting to all three. A decision is still awaited on the proposals for a care home and assisted living units at Almsbury Farm, Winchcombe. The District has objected as they would affect a listed building in the AONB. It has also objected to a development of 500 homes on greenfield land off the Evesham Road North of Bishops Cleeve as it would be a major urban extension outside any development plan.

“Appeals at Gotherington and on the edge of Prestbury have been dismissed”

The District AGM at Highnam Court in May was a great success. Around 35 members and guests heard owner Roger Head gave a compelling talk about his restoration and creative work in both house and garden. We were delighted to welcome a new member to the Committee but we are still looking for candidates to take over as Chairman or Secretary. The proposed trip to Rodmarton Manor and Brownshill Church was cancelled for lack of support notwithstanding the prospect of a WI lunch but the District again had a stand at the Winchcombe Country Show.

Roger Head addressing Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury members in the Orangery at Highnam Court



Forest of Dean

Clive Osborne,
Chairman

“All areas of the District remain at risk because the District Council does not have an up-to-date Local Plan”

IN LINE with our aim to support Forest heritage, on 13th July our 2017 AGM was held at Hopewell Colliery near Coleford, one of the Forest's few remaining working free mines. After the business meeting members and guests enjoyed a talk by freeminer Rich Daniels, the chair of campaign group Hands Off Our Forest, who was recently elected to the historic role of Forest Verderer. This was followed by an opportunity to explore the mine under Rich's expert guidance.

The AGM was the last local event attended by Mike Mackey, who is moving back to Scotland. Last year Mike stood down as Forest of Dean District chairman in order to take the chair of

the Gloucestershire Branch, although he remained an active member of the District committee, whose members will miss his insight and understanding. We wish him well.

The meeting elected a new member of our committee - Martin Hillier, who has a planning background from working for local authorities.

Housing remains a key issue, as all areas of the District remain at risk from developer attempts to engage in large-scale speculative house-building. This is because the District Council does not have an up-to-date Local Plan, principally because its Allocations Development Plan is still the subject of an examination in public. Hence

it remains unadopted. As a consequence developers have been able to win a number of planning appeals. Happily, the planning appeal for a proposed 37 houses opposite Yorkley primary school has recently been dismissed, mainly on Landscape but also on highways grounds.

On the minerals front, the County Council has yet to determine the proposed major extension of Stowe Hill quarry. Currently there are objections by Natural England and the Environment Agency, citing potential irreversible damage to the Slade Brook Site of Special Scientific Interest. CPRE has submitted additional representations refuting claims that the

landscape consequences can be effectively mitigated and reiterating the view that the additional crushed rock is not required, given existing reserves.

The Stowe Hill application is now being considered in the same time scale as a final draft of the Minerals Local Plan. CPRE's representations on the latter have also laid very strong emphasis on the lack of need for more 'greenfield' working in the Forest of Dean during the plan period and the absence of any evidence that Gloucestershire County Council has adequately co-operated with other mineral planning authorities. The 'duty to co-operate' is a key requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework.

North Cotswolds

Alison Clifton Barnard, Chairman

“Representing the views of all our members is sometimes difficult to achieve”

AS I write we are expecting yet another band of rain so it's good to remember our District AGM at Notgrove Manor on 5th July held in glorious summer sunshine. Over 30 members attended the meeting and enjoyed the beautiful venue and Harry Acland's most entertaining talk about the work of the Notgrove estate.

We were pleased to hear that the application to build 5 houses on 'Colonel's Piece' in the centre of Blockley was refused by Cotswold District Council (CDC). The decision notice stated that: "The proposed development

would form a prominent incongruous feature which would be conspicuous in important local viewpoints."

The application from Spitfire Homes to build 150 houses on agricultural land at Moreton-in-Marsh has been withdrawn. However, we expect a further application, keeping within the extension to the town boundary that is proposed in the Local Plan.

The application to build 14 houses in Longborough was permitted by CDC. The view of the Council was that "... the site is located in close proximity to existing post-war development

and will be seen in context with existing village development. The visual and landscape impact of the development will be very localised and is considered not to have an adverse Impact on the intrinsic character and beauty of this part of the AONB."

While we would always want CPRE to represent the views of all our members, in practice this is sometimes difficult to achieve. In considering an application to build a Doctors' Surgery on part of the Gypsy Field site at Stow-on-the-Wold, the District

Committee recognised that the background was highly complex and that local residents, including CPRE members, would hold a wide range of views about development on this site. We considered the application on its own merits: in particular, the scale of the building, the impact on the local landscape, the historical nature of the site and its planning history. After careful deliberation, the Committee decided that CPRE should object to the application. The application has since been refused by CDC.

South Cotswolds

Nicholas Dummett, Chairman

“*Examination of Cotswold District draft local plan will start on 10th October*”

WE ARE very happy to report that in July the Cotswold District draft Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State and its examination is scheduled to take place over 4 weeks in October and November starting on 10th October. The Inspector has

published the programme. We have been invited to all the sessions in the first two weeks, on strategy, housing numbers, allocated sites and infrastructure. In the second two weeks we have been invited to the sessions on affordable housing, the economy and

employment and the natural environment. In all these sessions the development industry will be out in force and we will be a lone voice calling for restraint on housing numbers and the importance of protecting our villages against excessive development. If any

members think there are issues on the policies or the sites allocated in the Local Plan which we should be raising at the examination please contact either myself or your own district chairman.

Because the plan is now subject to examination there has been a dramatic reduction in applications for major development – a period of calm before the onslaught at the examination in public. As a result there have been few planning applications to which we have objected. The main one continued to be the over development of the Hare and Hounds pub which was due to be considered by the Planning Committee on 13th September. All the indications were that the planning officers were recommending approval despite opposition from the parish council, local people, ourselves and the Cotswolds Conservation Board, not least because the exit from the much expanded venue onto the Fosseyway would have been dangerous. However, much to everyone's surprise, the application was withdrawn at the last minute – as this goes to press we have no idea why.

Unfortunately our final event for members was cancelled by the owners of Farmington Quarry on safety grounds. This was a pity and we have ended the year with just one visit. This was our AGM at Chavenage in June – an eccentric but roaring success. About 30 members attended and were charmed by the family's mixture of anecdote and history of the building followed by a delicious tea.



South Cotswolds members being shown round Chavenage

Stroud

*Pippa Schwartz,
Secretary*

ON A warm evening in June, the committee hosted a walk in Cranham, where Chris Uttley of Stroud District Council showed us the sustainable drainage scheme that he had masterminded in the area. The scheme had been the recipient of a CPRE Gloucestershire Award the previous year and was a fascinating and heart-warming undertaking which – unusually – combined effectiveness, cost efficiency and tremendous environmental credentials. We are very lucky to live in an area where such a scheme is possible and among people who care sufficiently to make it happen.

The committee also had a stand at the Stroud Show in July. Thank you to those who came to visit us.

On the planning front, we are awaiting news of the application for 95 houses on the former Forest Green Rovers site in Nailsworth for which there is no decision as yet. There is also concern about a retrospective application for a mobile home and driveway off Folly Lane, within the AONB. The committee is particularly aware of the need to be

vigilant for applications within or adjacent to the AONB which is increasingly under threat as the pressure grows to build more and more houses.

The committee urges members to contact them regarding any application.

“the need to be vigilant for applications within or adjacent to the AONB”

Geof Murray, former chairman of Stroud District, and Margaret Fedrick, Treasurer, at Stroud Show

Elisabeth Skinner



Tetbury

*Jeremy Lodwick,
Chairman*

“Tetbury Neighbourhood Plan should now proceed to a referendum”

THE TETBURY Neighbourhood Plan underwent independent examination over the summer. The examiner decided that there was no need for a public hearing, acknowledging that public consultation had been robust and that residents had had significant and appropriate opportunities to have their say. The plan met the basic conditions with a small number of modifications. Its policies cover a range of issues including open spaces, green spaces, community

facilities, town centre enhancement and support for the development of a cycle link to Kemble train station (but not the allocation of housing sites which is outside its scope). The inspector recommended to Cotswold District Council (CDC) that the plan should now proceed to a referendum which we hope takes place without delay. On a related note, the dates have now been set for independent examination of Cotswold District Local Plan, in which our participation will be co-ordinated by Nick Dummett of CPRE

South Cotswolds District (see more details in the South Cotswolds District Report above).

The pace of the construction of the various housing developments in Tetbury and in Kemble does not let up, with the inevitable consequence of traffic delays and congestion. Despite the obvious over-build, further sites still come up for consideration. At a CDC panel meeting in April two sites in Tetbury (one of which had previously been turned down for development) and three in Kemble were put forward as provisionally deliverable for further consideration, thus demonstrating the need for

CPRE to remain vigilant.

We held our AGM and summer supper on a glorious summer's evening in the beautiful grounds of Long Newnton House by kind permission of Sir Martin and Lady Elise Smith. The event was well attended. Martin Kingston QC gave a very thought-provoking and challenging talk on the failure of housing policy in the district. I must thank the committee for preparing and laying on an excellent buffet. Our membership is not large in Tetbury and Kemble, nor is it growing, but the turnout was good and our members enjoyed a memorable evening.

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