

Autumn-Winter 2021/22

Kent Countryside

Voice

Thought it was
safe to go back
in the water?

The polluting hormones
playing with nature

Coast with
the most

The glorious walks
on our doorstep

Fantastic fungi

An intriguing world
above and below ground



The countryside charity
Kent



The nights are drawing in and that can sometimes make us feel a little gloomy as autumn gathers pace, but every season has its moments... (Julie Davies)

Cover: Samphire Hoe is a 30-hectare country park reclaimed from the sea using chalk marl extracted during the excavation of the Channel Tunnel - it is one of the many sites enjoyed by walkers on the England Coast Path (Explore Kent)

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contact us

www.cprekent.org.uk



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

Director
General Manager
Planning team

Dr Hilary Newport hilary.newport@cprekent.org.uk
Vicky Ellis vicky.ellis@cprekent.org.uk
Paul Buckley paul.buckley@cprekent.org.uk
Julie Davies julie.davies@cprekent.org.uk
Richard Thompson richard.thompson@cprekent.org.uk
David Mairs david.mairs@cprekent.org.uk

Campaigns and PR Manager





Hilary Newport

Director's Introduction

It's over a year now since the government published *Planning for the Future*, its consultation White Paper on the reforms proposed to the planning system.

CPRE has been deeply involved with the development of the planning system since its foundation in 1926 and we were among the first organisations to express our concerns at the proposed changes. At the heart of the White Paper was the government's commitment to delivering 300,000 new homes every year, coupled with the presumption that the planning system was not fit for purpose and we should 'tear it down and start again'.

We know that the planning system is not perfect; it can be cumbersome and is often difficult for lay-people to engage with. The current system has been weakened over successive amendments in recent years; it is not allowing us to build enough genuinely affordable homes and all too often is failing to protect green spaces. But since its origins in 1947 it has helped to protect the precious landscapes of this small and densely populated country, and through its support of principles such as National Parks and Green Belts CPRE has helped shape this system.

The changes proposed last summer would have drastically changed the way we can plan for the homes that we need. It would have channelled the majority of housebuilding into those areas that have seen the sharpest rises in house prices over the last decade but, far from producing the affordable homes that are so desperately needed, it would have meant more and more expensive executive homes being built on green fields with little regard for sustainability. It would also have drastically reduced the opportunity for people to engage with the decision-making process for many damaging developments, with the whole country divided into zones where planning permission for designated development would be nodded through with no public scrutiny or engagement.

CPRE galvanised its members across the nation and worked with other environmental protection groups to coordinate the widespread unease at these proposals. In October 2020, almost 50 MPs spoke up at a parliamentary debate against these proposals, after being flooded with messages from CPRE members asking them to attend. In December, more than 2,000 councillors signed an open letter to the Secretary of State warning that the proposals would hugely undermine the trust that the public hold in the planning system and risk needlessly sacrificing green spaces.

As the result of these and many other actions, over the course of the last year we have seen some softening of the severity of these proposals. The draconian 'top-down' housing targets that would have concentrated housebuilding in the south of England while reducing investment in run-down northern areas have been altered in favour of a greater emphasis on urban regeneration.

The promised planning bill that will bring these changes into force is delayed as a result of the pressure we have created and, early in September, then-Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick gave the clearest signals yet that the proposed reforms would be watered down to retain more democratic participation in planning decisions.

But there is still a long way to go before the bill becomes reality. CPRE remains tireless in calling for a planning system that respects democracy, putting people and communities first; that delivers enough affordable housing; that promotes zero-carbon homes as soon as possible; and that provides access to the countryside for all. We can only do this with the support of our members and benefactors and we thank everyone who makes our work possible.

Since its origins in 1947, CPRE has helped protect the precious landscapes of our small and densely populated country

Discover the treasures of the England Coast Path on your doorstep



[EXPLOREKENT.ORG](https://www.explorekent.org)

Pippa Silver of Explore Kent celebrates some of the wonders of the tremendous coastline that our county can offer



South Foreland lighthouse looks over one of the most famous stretches of coastline in the country (Explore Kent)



The cliffs between Dover and Folkestone attract many keen walkers (Explore Kent)

Do you love the smell of the sea air? Long to gaze out to sea at the endless horizon? If so, try walking along the England Coast Path. From the wilderness of Dungeness to the historic White Cliffs of Dover, the England Coast Path is spectacular to walk, full of wildlife and bursting with heritage sites.

If tackling the whole 66 miles of the coast path from Dungeness to Ramsgate seems a little daunting, then Explore Kent has just the solution. The entire route has been split into eight smaller sections, enabling you to enjoy the England Coast Path at your own pace.

The eight sections are short linear walks that are well connected by public transport. Most of the finishing points connect with the starting point of the next walk, so it is easy to complete the entire Kent route. Each section has differing views, points of interest and aspects, enabling the England Coast Path to genuinely offer something for everyone, from heritage to all things nature.

Delving deeper into what some of the walks can offer, the Folkestone to Dover section is ideal for those who are keen walkers and have sturdy footwear. It's a nine-mile (14.5km) walk along the cliff-tops, climbing up steps and wandering past historical gems. Allow up to four hours to complete this section, which starts from Folkestone harbour, once the railway terminal and departure point for soldiers on their way to the Western Front. The station and rail bridge have been regenerated and this is now a very popular spot.

The walk is dotted with historical treasures, from a privately-owned Martello tower, one of the 16 remaining of these Napoleonic forts, to an intriguing sound mirror perched on the cliff edge at Capel-le-Ferne. A once-integral part of the British defence strategy, it was used to listen out for approaching enemy aircraft.

You can take a detour to hunt for fossils at the Warren Country Park, an important geological site. As the walk continues to Dover, discover Samphire Hoe, a man-made 30-hectare park that is now a model of biodiversity teeming with wildlife.

Fancy a more relaxed walk? Try the Hythe to Folkestone section, a tranquil six-mile (9.6km) stretch along the coastline. With no steps, gates or stiles to contend with, this

section is ideal for those with pushchairs or wheelchairs or just those who fancy a slightly more comfortable wander.

Begin at the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway, a part of the Romney Marsh landscape since 1927. Spot the tiny stone castle in Sandgate and guess which king built it!

Start this walk along the Royal Military Canal, once another important Napoleonic defence but now a corridor for wildlife and flora. From blue tits to bats and even the lesser spotted woodpecker, there is plenty here to watch out for. Also keep your eyes peeled for the shrill carder bee, found on coastal grasslands.

If flora and fauna is what you seek, the Dover to Deal stretch of the England Coast Path is the one for you. The White Cliffs of Dover mark the site where the North Downs meet the English Channel - the chalk grasslands behind the cliffs are a treasure trove of flora and fauna.

Fields have been sown with wildflower seed to provide food for birds and pollinators; in early summer you can cast your eyes over a sea of red poppies, bringing a delightful burst of colour to this stretch of coast. Don't forget to look for the petite Exmoor ponies on the cliffs, an integral part of encouraging biodiversity.

Listen out for the sounds of birdsong, while the cliffs are home to that master of the skies, the peregrine falcon. Between March and July, a range of ground-nesting birds call this area home; if you're walking dogs, please them keep on a lead during these months to protect the birds. There is plenty of signage to tell you where the birds are nesting.

Anyone walking and enjoying these walks will know how precious they are and that's why we all have a responsibility to look after them. Litter left in the countryside is a huge and devastating threat to wildlife, as well as being an eyesore. Footpaths are to be walked on, so sticking to them really helps protect the surrounding flora and fauna.

For more on walking the England Coast Path in Kent, visit <https://explorekent.org/exploring-kents-coast>



This sound mirror was used to listen out for approaching enemy aircraft during wartime (Explore Kent)

The joy of SuDS!

No, he's not splashing around in the hot tub... rather, **David Morrish** is examining Sustainable Drainage Systems, an increasingly important element of urban design and an important tool in the battle against climate-change events

When training as a civil engineer, I helped supervise drainage works at Telford new town, where all fresh development was on a plateau 100 metres above the River Severn.

Before a house or a factory was built, a network of surface-water sewers and balancing lakes or storage systems had to be built to ensure that during storm conditions the flow of surface-water run-off into the Severn Gorge could be controlled. Even with such control measures in place, the final culvert taking water down to the discharge was two metres wide - enough for me to drive my dumper truck through.

My interest in drainage was recently rekindled by some highway and environmental works incorporating a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) carried out near our home in Westgate by Kent Highways with the support of local groups. The result has been the transformation of a barren dog-walking field into an oasis of greenery.

I have recently embarked on a personal journey into how drainage design and sustainability is, or should be, approached in an era of increasing climate-change events.

Often the willingness to integrate a sustainable system into a design has been held up by site constraints or 'stakeholder pressure', ie developer reluctance. Yet there are simple ways to approach a drainage design differently and provide many benefits without increasing financial cost or build complexity.

A rainwater pipe, for example, can discharge into a small, vegetated planter, with clean stone and a partial pipe on the outfall. This will now provide advantages on all four principles enshrined in The SuDS manual (published in 2007 by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association) with relatively little space used and minimal construction and maintenance costs.

A conventional system of pipes and chambers at the side of an access road could be enhanced with swales (shallow, wide, vegetated hollows that store or carry run-off and remove pollutants), filter strips or tree pits. A swale and headwall system can be run shallow and flat, solving problems on sites with tight vertical levels and providing a range of benefits.

Green roofs have advanced significantly and can now be installed as intensive or extensive systems on pitched roofs and provide significant biodiverse living spaces as well as perform their standard function of slowing and filtering rainwater. With the addition of blue roof systems, which provide initial temporary rainfall storage before gradually releasing it, they can become a complete surface-water solution.

Space does not need to be at a premium when considering a green or blue solution. Rain gardens have progressed to compact engineered trenches that can be fitted along the back of footways for water conveyance. Tree planters are a more advanced variant of this system and can offer additional benefits of urban cooling and water absorption and retention as well as those normally offered by a planted rain garden.

The 2012 version of the National Planning Policy Framework created a policy requirement for SuDS and this was strengthened in 2018, with the consequence that all Local Plans must have a SuDS policy - indeed, it is a requirement for all major development via the NPPF regardless of the Local Plan policy position. Some 90 per cent of all developments now incorporate SuDS and that figure is increasing.

Kent County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) here and as such the statutory consultee in the planning process to require and oversee the provision of SuDS for major development.

A maturing asset

An example of early ad hoc schemes (pre-2010) is a small estate in Thanet built 20 years ago comprising 42 freehold houses abutting arable farmland to the south and an 800-house mixed development to the north, with the general topography dropping from south to north. Flash-flooding in 1953 had caused fatalities along the primary route to the north.

When the estate was built, a drainage restriction to minimise run-off and a soakaway system of 16 linked soakaways was established in landscaped areas.

All surface water is retained on-site and the public open space planted with shrubs, bushes flowers and small trees.

The 'new' landscape has achieved such a degree of maturity that it hosts a wide range of insect and birdlife.



KCC prepared a Drainage and Planning Policy Statement in September 2015, containing guidance on how to integrate SuDS into the masterplans of large and small developments.

Surface-water drainage design should be developed in line with KCC Drainage and Planning Policy Statement (June 2017), while it should use a 40 per cent climate-change allowance as required by the Environment Agency.

Despite the legislation and volumes of advice, there often remains the vexed issue of maintaining systems that involve multi-authority support but not necessarily funding.

The UK has not, historically, put a lot of focus on sustainable design. Underground infrastructure and existing buildings would often be deemed unsuitable had they been built today under current regulations. Even if all new developments were fully sustainable, they would only account for some 20 per cent of the UK's surface water from developed areas. Retrofitting sustainable drainage may become inevitable if we are to meet future environmental targets, in the same way that we will have to install new heating systems in existing houses.

Starting from the example of small housing estates and in response to the experience of flash-flooding of the past 20 years, the whole process of surface-water drainage is being rethought to address the problems of run-off caused by high-intensity storms and lack of capacity in conventional surface-water sewers.

SuDS principles are not reliant on specific local conditions but rather are part of an interconnecting system where water flows slowly from where it falls to a soakage area or discharge point through a series of features that help to treat, store, re-use, convey and actually celebrate water.

An important concept for the SuDS designer to follow is the 'treatment train'. By passing water through several stages ▶



The swales at Castle Hill, Ebbsfleet, are not always filled with water and can sometimes look a little unattractive, but that does not detract from their importance in collecting surface-water (Paul Buckley)

What is sustainable drainage all about?

SuDS are drainage systems that are environmentally beneficial, causing minimal or no long-term detrimental damage. They are often regarded as a sequence of management practices, control structures and strategies designed to drain surface-water efficiently and sustainably while minimising pollution and managing the impact on the quality of local waterbodies.

The Association of SuDS Authorities defines the purpose of sustainable drainage planning as the delivery of systems that contribute to sustainable development and improvement of the places and spaces in which we live, work and play.

Although the principles have been recognised for many years, pressure to deal with climate change and the increasing incidence of flash-flooding, with all the economic, social and political concerns it entails, has caused drainage authorities to rethink their approach to disposal of surface-water run-off rather than simply passing it downstream.

Detailed techniques to manage surface-water that take account of water quantity (flooding), water quality (pollution), biodiversity (wildlife) and amenity are collectively referred to as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

SuDS are intended to mimic nature and typically manage rainfall close to where it falls. Systems can be designed to transport surface-water and slow run-off, ideally attenuating it even before it enters watercourses.

They provide areas to store water in natural contours and can be used to allow water to soak (infiltrate) into the ground or evaporate from surface-water or be lost or transpired from vegetation.

The Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) has produced a SuDS manual, which is used throughout the UK. There are four main categories covered by SuDS design, referred to as 'the four pillars of SuDS':

- Water quality
- Water quantity
- Amenity
- Biodiversity

of treatment, sediment and other pollutants should be removed more effectively and maintenance costs reduced as this minimises the risk of downstream drainage features becoming clogged.

Designers are also extending that treatment train to create green corridors and links, add opportunities for engagement and education and to match delivery of SuDS to phasing of development.

Some politicians and the Association of SuDS Authorities now recognise that a substantial change is needed in flood-risk management, utilising natural flood management and starting from small-scale interventions, including tree-planting (roots allow more water infiltration into the ground and evaporation through the leaves) and

enhancement with swales, filter strips or tree pits.

This should also reduce the role of hard engineering.

The policies of KCC in the past six years have meant that more land must be provided to accommodate run-off on new development sites; consequently, developers are being encouraged to create more green space as part of their masterplanning. A recent proposal for 450 houses near Margate included almost a third of the 20-hectare site dedicated to a combination of green play space and retained tree cover with sustainable drainage, retaining all surface water on-site.

Greater recognition of SuDS principles in planning will mean that in new developments a greater proportion of land will have to be allocated for blue and green infrastructure.

George Park, Westbrook, Margate

Work was carried out here by the county council aimed at cutting flood risk and heat stress. The scheme diverts surface water from neighbouring roads that would previously have entered the sewer system and could have caused flooding. Now, new ponds and swales in the park provide natural storage for 800 cubic metres of surface-water; this can filter slowly through the planting and back into the ground, increasing the capacity of the sewer and supporting sustainable water management.

Associated landscaping provides flood and temperature mitigation, as well as a more attractive environment and a network of footpaths. The Isle of Thanet Tree and Woodland Initiative was involved with the project and an extra 42 trees were planted in the park by the group.

Further work is planned on nearby roads that suffer from summer heat stress and form part of the catchment that in heavy rain experiences flooding.

More than 30 trees have been planted along two roads, 11 of them in tree pits that will also help manage surface-water by collecting and infiltrating the water back into the ground.

The species of trees were selected for their canopy size to generate shade and for their ability to withstand drought and heavy rainfall, while they are also healthy for biodiversity and improved air quality.

The work was funded by two EU North Seas Region projects - Blue Green Infrastructure with Social Innovation (BEGIN) and the EU Seas project, Cool Towns - with the Defra Urban Tree Challenge Fund.



Hannah Scott



Hannah Scott

Green and blue infrastructure strategy

The four important ‘pillars’ of sustainable drainage are set out in the 400 pages of The SuDS manual.

More importantly, greater attention should be placed on the principle that designers of new sites should aim to “create and sustain better places for people and nature” as part of green and blue infrastructure is the green space and water environment essential to the quality of our lives and ecosystem.

It is referred to as ‘infrastructure’ as it is as important as other types of infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals.

It is taken to mean all green space and water of public and natural value.

Looking deeper into the benefits of sustainable drainage, systems promoting green or blue infrastructure can also provide other significant advantages. Green planning-based SuDS are widely considered to offer:

- Enhanced biodiversity (with targets for biodiversity net gain)
- Increased amenity value and creation of a pleasant and interactive space



The recently-built Ebbsfleet Green development incorporates swales, showing just how important they can be for people and wildlife alike (Paul Buckley)

- Pollution control
- Carbon reduction, embodied energy and footprint offset (looking forward to net-zero 2050)
- Life-cycle cost savings
- Nutrient and water demand balance in areas with sensitive soils and aquifers
- Additional resilience against climate change
- Physical and mental-health benefits for occupants
- Reduced impact on an area in the event of system failure

More local authorities, as part of their Local Plan preparation, are addressing the concept of designing around the need to manage water and encourage more green areas, using the SuDS treatment train requirements and creating green corridors and links, adding opportunities for engagement and education and matching delivery of SuDS to phasing of development.

By doing so, they are facing up to climate-change priorities by focusing on four priority action areas:

- 1** Effective water management and flood-risk reduction - developing natural flood-management programmes and drainage solutions
- 2** Building green and blue infrastructure into physical development and housing - creating vibrant, healthy and inspiring places where people want to live, work and invest
- 3** Enhancing green and blue corridors and networks - improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and creating greener, even more attractive, localities
- 4** Recognition that green and blue infrastructure is the green space and water environment essential to the quality of our lives and ecosystems

Conclusion

I have concluded that SuDS principles are important design tools that might not initially have been obvious to non-professionals.

Further, green and blue strategies arising from SuDS might be key to ensuring local planning authorities carry out their planning and drainage roles to deliver ambitious, climate-friendly and sustainable development and play a part in accelerating climate action to meet the UK's and UN's sustainable development goals.

Moreover, green and blue strategies can help enhance biodiversity and nature's recovery by providing fit-for-purpose contributions towards nature in all developments.

It is to be hoped that CPRE members and branches can play their part, firstly by engaging in consultation on masterplans to encourage a more enlightened approach to climate change as an essential part of planning to be considered at every stage of Local Plan development.

Secondly, we should be encouraging recognition of green and blue infrastructure as just as important as other types of public infrastructure.

This should include all green space and water of public and natural value, with recognition of SuDS principles meaning that in new developments more land will have to be allocated for it.

Finally, in the longer term, such engagement might help encourage more volunteers to get involved in the creation and maintenance of such systems that are so vital for us all.



Chairman's Update

John Wotton

Moving on through the struggles of the pandemic

I am writing this just after the most unexpectedly glorious spell of summer weather in early September, which put a gloss on an otherwise mostly cool and overcast summer in the South of England. Of course, good weather for summer holidays has its downsides in brown lawns, shrivelled crops, wildfires and high water consumption.

We are increasingly aware that conserving water resources and preventing the pollution of rivers and beaches around Kent are vitally important and we will make these issues a high priority of our work over the coming year.

Sadly, our outstanding expert on the water industry, Graham Warren, has died and we have also recently lost another committed and long-serving member, Tim Reader. Tributes to their dedicated work for the Kent branch appear elsewhere in this issue.

The past six months have been no more 'normal' than the previous 12 as British society continues to grapple with the Covid-19 pandemic, but we have made the most of our resources and opportunities. Some live events have taken place, at which Vicky Ellis and others have promoted CPRE Kent, raising money and recruiting new members with some success, and more events are scheduled.

Since July, we have held some board and committee meetings in person and, thanks to the foresight of Hilary and Vicky, have recently installed an excellent (and not too expensive)

system for so-called 'hybrid' meetings at our Charing office. Those who attend by Zoom appear on a large screen on the wall and can see on their own screens everyone in the room, with high-quality sound to match, so they can participate fully in the meeting.

We expect to make much use of this arrangement in future, for the flexibility and time-saving it offers, and we will make the facility available to other local organisations.

I am especially looking forward to seeing you all at our AGM on Friday, November 19, in Lenham Community Centre. As most of you will know, it is a large venue in which we can spread ourselves out and the AGM provides the perfect occasion for us to get together to celebrate the achievements of the Kent branch over the past year.

Planning work has dominated our agenda in recent months. [Hilary reports in this issue on CPRE's campaign against the more damaging aspects of the government's planning reforms, which appears to have been largely successful.]

We have continued to oppose the London Resort proposed for the Swanscombe peninsula and were delighted that the campaign to have the site designated as an SSSI was successful. Further developments are now postponed until next year.

Also in north Kent, we have continued our campaign against the environmental harm that would be caused by the Lower Thames Crossing and submitted

a detailed response to the most recent consultation in September.

Elsewhere in the county, much work has been done on the local planning process. In my own district of Tunbridge Wells, a rigorous and detailed response to the Regulation 19 consultation was made, the fruit of the collective efforts of the district committee and the highly professional planning team at Charing. A similar exercise was undertaken on the far-reaching review of the Swale Local Plan. A campaign by the Thanet district committee to oppose a Gladman housing development outside Margate was successful.

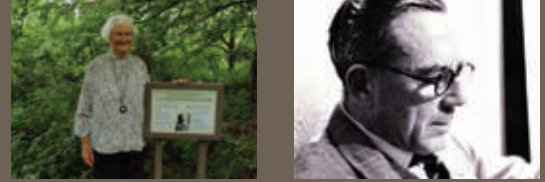
We face an unusual planning inquiry, resulting from the Secretary of State 'calling in' an application by Berkeley to build a housing estate on a greenfield site in the High Weald AONB, which had been approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

This case is providing me with an insight into the enormous private and public resources that are dedicated to planning inquiries. Frankly (having chaired many inquiries myself in another field), I find the process antiquated, inefficient and calculated to serve the interests of developers and professional advisers, to the detriment of the local community. However, we must work with the current system as effectively as we can.

The threats to our countryside don't abate, but CPRE's efforts, nationally as well as in Kent, are continuing to bear fruit. I hope you will continue to support us in our work.

Right: Dr Susan Pittman, CPRE Sevenoaks secretary, researched and designed the new memorial

Far right: Cyril Chettoe is credited with the revival of CPRE Kent



The original plaque was showing signs of wear



A tribute stone to our former chairman, **Cyril Chettoe**, had been obscured by the advance of time, but at a ceremony during the summer a new plaque was unveiled to pay due respect to a man who did so much for this organisation

Back into the light: the memorial to a CPRE Kent champion

One of the Kent countryside's greatest champions has been honoured through the unveiling of a new memorial.

Cyril Chettoe was chairman of the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural Kent - a forerunner to CPRE Kent - and a memorial in the form of a tablet on a stone with trees planted around it had been placed at Hubbards Hill on the Greensand Way overlooking Weald village after his death in 1963.

With the passing of the years, the stone became almost hidden by surrounding undergrowth and the Sevenoaks committee took on the task of creating a more permanent memorial.

With the help of Weald Parish Council, undergrowth was cleared, a new plaque was erected and on Wednesday, July 7, a ceremony took place where John Wotton, chairman of CPRE Kent, unveiled it.

Nigel Britten, chairman of Sevenoaks CPRE, described how the right solution had been found, for which he thanked Dr Susan Pittman, the committee's secretary, who had designed the memorial. He then introduced the CPRE Kent chairman, who

paid warm tribute to Cyril:

"He was a dedicated supporter of CPRE, chaired the Kent branch and is credited with its revival. Whether he was one of our founding members in 1929, when he was in his mid-30s, is not recorded in our archives, but if he was living in Kent at the time it is quite likely that he was.

"He evidently had broad historical and environmental interests, as the list of his activities on the memorial demonstrates, reflecting the range of considerations we have to bear in mind when we seek to protect the countryside.

"These include landscape and natural beauty, archaeology, the historic built environment, care for our country towns and rural villages, the natural environment and biodiversity, housing, infrastructure, sustainable transport and combatting climate change.

"Cyril Chettoe concerned himself with many of these issues, through the organisations he supported, in particular CPRE Kent.

"If he is to be credited with our revival under his active chairmanship, then we

indeed have cause to be grateful and I hope that, if he were to see CPRE Kent at work now, he would be gratified and feel that his efforts were worthwhile."

Cyril was a busy man and, aside from being heavily involved in CPRE, was also founder of the Sevenoaks and District Civic Society (later to become the Sevenoaks Society) and chairman from 1945 until he died. David Green, the present chairman, was present at the ceremony and also paid tribute.

A civil engineer by trade, with special talents in bridge-building, Cyril had worked for both the Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health, while he was involved in the routeing of the Sevenoaks bypass, which you might know better as the A21.

It was perhaps in the 1950s that his contribution to planning in his hometown of Sevenoaks was most marked as he battled to ensure protection of its most historically and architecturally valuable buildings.

While that town has special reason to celebrate Cyril Chettoe and his work, his love of Kent - its countryside and built environment alike - gives us all reason to be grateful.

Tim Reader



Tim was one of those increasingly rare countrymen who stayed true to his home turf, spending almost his entire life within a few hundred yards of the family farm of Uptons, between Yalding and Laddingford.

His interest in all aspects of country life and the environment proved invaluable to CPRE Kent,

where he was an active member of both the Maidstone district and environment committees for many years. His knowledge of farming was particularly appreciated.

Born in 1946, Tim's love of the outdoors began early, with school holidays spent helping on the farm, which had

such animals as horses, bullocks and dairy cows, while hops were still picked by hand. After school, he studied agriculture at Hadlow College.

Six months travelling and working on farms in Canada broadened his experience before returning to join father Jack and cousin Peter at Uptons.

He accumulated huge knowledge and experience as the fruit and hop industries developed through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, with increasing mechanisation, pest control and developments in cold storage and packaging.

Sadly, in the late 1980s, structural changes in first the hop industry and then fruit led to the farm becoming unviable. This, combined with ill-health, saw Tim retire from active farming after almost 30 years in the job he loved.

He later became a volunteer member of the Upper Medway Drainage Board and served on Yalding Parish Council, where he kept watch on development proposals.

Tim leaves behind wife Ann, to whom he was married for 43 years.

Goodbye and thank you for everything

CPRE Kent has in recent months lost two of its most gifted and passionate supporters - here we pay tribute to men who helped make our organisation what it is today



Graham Warren

With the passing of Graham Warren, CPRE Kent has lost not only one of its most knowledgeable members but a true gentleman.

Graham's experience and understanding of the water industry was immeasurable and we were blessed to be able to draw on his vast reservoir of expertise.

Whether it was working as the resident geologist during Channel Tunnel site investigations in the mid-1960s; sharing his skills as a hydrologist in countries such as Iran, Greece and Zambia (where he was principal hydrologist and head of the country's hydrological survey); or Kent area water resources manager with the Environment Agency, Graham enjoyed a stellar career in his chosen profession.

Just a week after retiring from the EA, Graham was at Ashford Wool Growers, where he bumped into Hilary Moorby, then CPRE Kent chair, who persuaded him to bring his talents to us.

His contribution was immense, writing influential papers on Kent's water crisis, appearing as an expert witness on both hydrology and geology at planning inquiries and taking on a fracking brief that covered much of southern England. And he was never going to escape the job of chairing our environment committee!

Graham leaves wife Patricia, who he married in 1964, having met her at a jazz club four years earlier, and son Simon.

Graham's advice was telling in the protection of so much of Kent, but for a moment of reflection you might like to walk in West Wood, Lyminge, the destruction of which by a proposed 'holiday village' he helped thwart. There could perhaps be no finer tribute.

Why?

join CPRE Kent

CPRE Kent is the only charity that fights for the wider countryside in our county. We don't just battle to protect trees, birds, wildlife or open spaces - we seek to protect the countryside itself.

Without the wider rural environment that we hold so dear, not only do we lose our nature but also what makes Kent special.

No one has fought harder for the countryside with its people, villages and wildlife than CPRE Kent. We are now into our 10th decade - we could of course not have lasted that long without our supporters, but similarly we have proved our right to be here through the passion, care and professional expertise of our staff and volunteers.

No one knows the crazy levels of pressure from urban sprawl weighing upon Kent as much as the people who live here - and suffice to say all who represent or work for this organisation live within its borders.

We want to bring people together in connecting with the nature in our downs, woods, marshes, farms and coastline with which we are blessed... we still have much to celebrate.

Nationally, CPRE, the countryside charity, has been engaged at the highest level in consultations on

proposed changes to the planning system that could have been disastrous for our rural environment.

And over the last year, there has been some softening of those proposals. Stark 'top-down' housing targets that would have concentrated housebuilding in our region have been altered in favour of a greater emphasis on urban regeneration.

CPRE was not alone in challenging the initial proposals, but we played a full and important part - as ever, our charity's combination of local and national knowledge proved its strength.

While CPRE Kent is far from opposed to all development or to all change, there are cases where we believe we have a duty to challenge what is profoundly wrong.

Sometimes that duty drives us to seek protection for the countryside through court; it is an expensive option and one taken only as a last resort, but if we don't do it, who else will?

CPRE Kent leads the fight for our beautiful county in a way no one else can, holding developers and the people that represent you to account. Please join us - as together we are stronger.

Write to us at: CPRE Kent, Queen's Head House,
Ashford Road, Charing, Ashford, Kent TN27 0AD

email info@cprekent.org.uk
or phone us on 01233 714540

Why fungi matter... possibly more than you think

As nature's recyclers, fungi are everywhere, largely invisible but busy decomposing organic materials so they can grow and reproduce.

Feeding by secreting enzymes from their fine penetrating threads or hyphae, assorted fungi break down the complex molecules found in fallen leaves, branches, standing dead wood, fur and dung. Some are parasitic on living plants or animals.

Assorted fungi provide food for a varied range of animals.

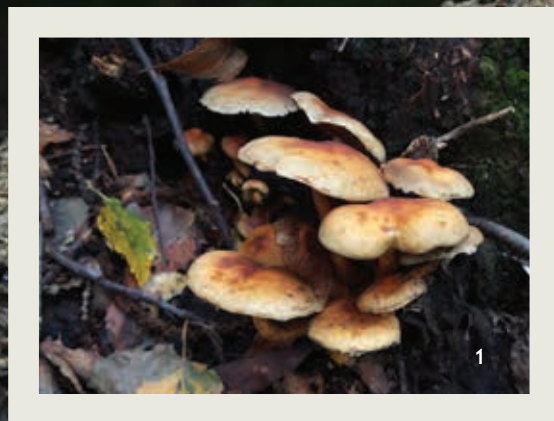
Many reproduce in the autumn, forming beautiful and colourful fruiting bodies of varied forms: toadstools, brackets, puffballs, earthballs, earthstars, earthtongues and spindles. Some of these can be confidently identified by these fruiting bodies, even from a photograph, but other species require close examination by those with skills in microscopy and laboratory analysis.

Certain species are more commonly noticed than others, for example the fly agaric and sulphur tuft. Some even glow in the dark, such as the honey fungus - possibly the origin of many ghostly tales!

Fungi play a crucial role in the functioning of all Kent's ecosystems as their combined activities underpin and shape the nature of habitats occupied by other organisms.

Vast numbers of fungal species are present in the upper portion of a healthy soil, many unidentified, where their actions release nutrients for reuse by plants or to feed innumerable soil bacteria. Their hyphae help to retain moisture and reduce erosion by binding the mineral particles together. They ensure that soils store carbon derived from dead organic matter and maintain the ideal conditions for a thriving underground microbiome.

The historical county list of fungi noted the names of some 3,300 species. This should come as no surprise as Kent has the largest amount of ancient woodland



Toadstools, brackets, puffballs, earthballs, earthstars... they come in an astonishing range of shapes, sizes and colours, but their importance to the natural world often goes unheralded.

Tricia Moxey sets the record straight.

in England, as well as other plant-rich habitats, where fungal species outnumber green plants. This means that there are many locations in the county with special assemblages of fungi, some common, some less so. The richer areas are the mixed coniferous and broadleaved woodlands, historic parks and fragments of unimproved chalk grasslands, but an unexpected fungal fruiting body can suddenly appear in a garden, churchyard or roadside verge, too.

The association of certain fungi with specific trees has been known for some years, but recent research shows that 80 per cent of trees and other plants share and trade food via the symbiotic or mycorrhizal fungal networks that connect their roots.

The term the 'wood wide web' has now become widely accepted as it describes the vital interconnectivity between trees and other plants to supply synthesised food materials via the associated fungi in exchange for water and minerals.

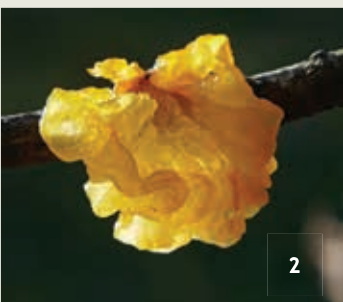
Acute pressures from pollution and built development threaten many sensitive habitats with the potential loss of species, including fungi. The methodology for biodiversity offsetting has yet to take any fungal associations into account, a serious omission.

Information about the role of fungi in underpinning all ecological systems and the need for their protection must be highlighted so that this can be better understood and integrated into policy decisions, especially around the development of new woodlands, changing farming practices and urban design for green spaces, where such plantings also require the support of mycorrhizal fungi.

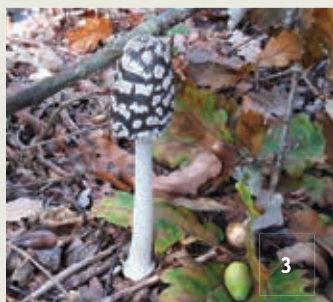
Although largely hidden from view, fungi also have a significant role to play in the proposed natural mitigation strategies to deal with climate change... and in these times few things matter more than that.



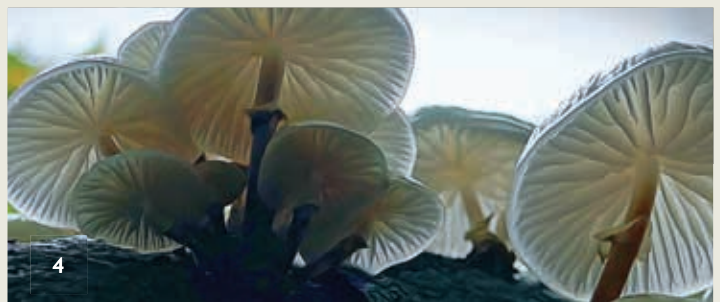
Burgundydrop bonnet... what a name, what a look! (Tricia Moxey)



2



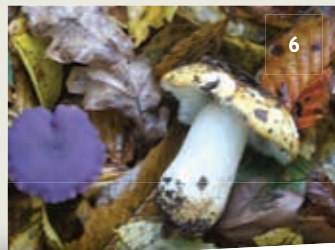
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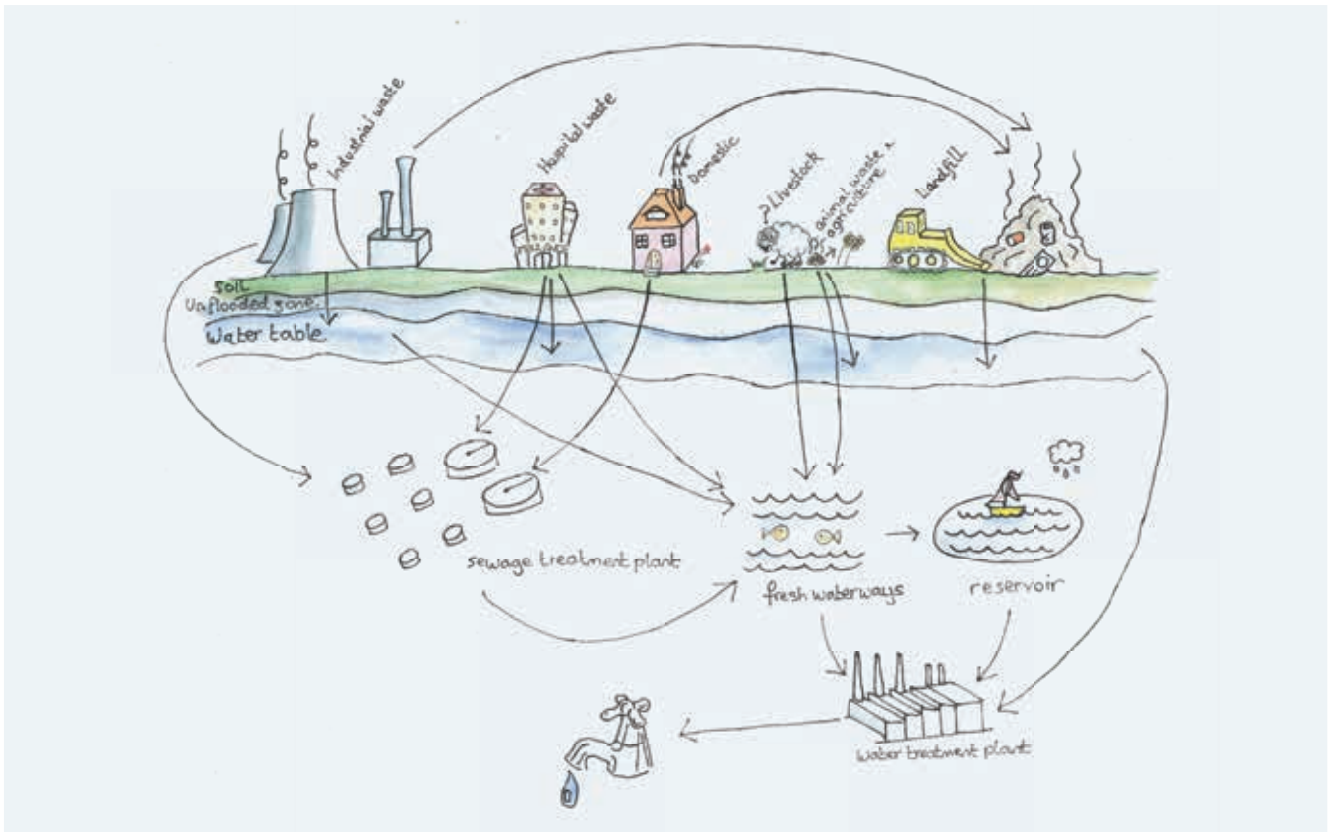


1 Sulphur tuft is a common inedible fungus feeding on rotten wood in gardens as well as woods (Julie Davies) 2 Yellow brain fungus grows on dead oak twigs high in the canopy but is usually found on the ground after high winds (John Skerry) 3 The poisonous magpie ink cap is a leaf-litter decomposer of beech woods (Julie Davies) 4 Porcelain fungus is associated with dead branches on beech (John Skerry) 5 The hare's foot ink cap is an inhabitant of shady beech woodlands (Julie Davies) 6 The amethyst deceiver (left) is edible but prone to absorbing arsenic from the soil (Tricia Moxey) 7 Fly agaric and yellow brittle gill are two of the many mycorrhizal or symbiotic fungi found in mixed woodlands, especially those with birch (Susan Warner) This image Oak mazingill... a bracket fungus that can be seen all year round on fallen or cut oak logs (Julie Davies)



The devil is in the water

They're not visible to the human eye, but sinister pollutants in the form of female sex hormones are frighteningly common in our waterways... and that is bad news for people and wildlife alike. **Vicky Ellis** investigates.



We have something sinister wreaking havoc in our waterways that we can't see or smell and that has a direct effect on our physiology: female sex hormones - natural oestrogens and synthetic chemicals that imitate oestrogens. This invisible pollutant is penetrating all our natural waterways and entering our drinking water supply chain.

Research by Brunel University and the University of Exeter has found these pollutants are entering the water via our sewage systems, leading to reduced fish-breeding and feminising of fish and other aquatic organisms. Other studies have found a causal link between hormones in water and an increase in human male infertility, low sperm counts and testicular dysgenesis syndrome (a male reproduction disorder).

What are hormones?

Hormones are signalling molecules, otherwise known as chemical messengers, that are present in all multicellular organisms from humans through to fungi. In humans and other animals, hormones are produced in the endocrine gland and carried around the body via the vascular system to all organs and tissues to regulate physiology and behaviour such as development and growth, metabolism, sexual function and reproduction, cognitive function, mood and much more. Hormones influence who we are as people.

So, apart from in nature, where else are hormones used?

Humans also use hormones to manipulate nature, such as in animal agriculture to muscle up cattle; in the gym for bodybuilders to bulk up, where they are referred to more commonly as steroids; for contraception; and to help with symptoms of the menopause, along with other pharmaceutical uses.

Animal agriculture

Animal agricultures use a synthetic hormone version of oestrogen, testosterone or progesterone, which are utilised to increase growth speed, thus using less feed and saving money. However, in the UK, using hormones for dairy cattle has been banned since 1990 due to animal welfare implications. The UK also has a ban on importing all hormone-treated beef and other meats. However, this may be under review since leaving the EU.

Oral contraception

The UK's first oral contraceptives, using synthetic hormones, became available in 1961 and since then their popularity has grown considerably. From 1962 to 1969 the number of women taking 'the pill' grew from an estimated 50,000 to one million, and in 2000 the numbers had risen to more than three million, making the birth-control pill the most popular form of contraception in the UK.

Synthetic hormones

Synthetic hormones lack a chemical structure that matches a woman's biological hormone structure. They are produced by synthesis - oestrogen and progesterone are synthesised from other sources such as pregnant mares (a highly controversial source of extraction).

Synthetic hormones have several uses, from the contraceptive pill through to cancer treatments. Diethylstilbestrol is a synthetic oestrogen first synthesised in 1938 and prescribed to many women between 1940 and 1971 for the prevention of miscarriage in the first trimester. Due to unforeseen side-effects, it is no longer prescribed. ▶

All the metabolites from this hormone and others are then released into the environment via urine and faeces from users. According to the Daily Mail article 'Fertility timebomb found in drinking water', synthetic oestrogens are 50-100 times more potent than natural oestrogens.

Hormones are in such wide use now that they pose a serious threat to the natural environment, from soil to water resources, and biological organisms such as fish and humans.

However, this is not new news: in 2010 Susanne Goldenberg wrote a report detailing that "more than 80% of the male bass fish in Washington's major river are exhibiting female traits such as egg production because of a 'toxic stew' of pollutants", while in 2012 The Observer reported on how "Britain faced a £30bn bill to clean up rivers, streams and drinking water supplies contaminated by synthetic hormones from contraceptive pills". In 2014, the BBC produced an article entitled 'How drugs are entering UK water systems through urine' and in 2016 The National Geographic wrote an article with the headline 'Why are these male fish growing eggs?'. Hormone pollution is not just a UK-wide issue but a global one.

Oestrogens in water courses and how they got there

Back in 1999, the Environment Agency produced a report entitled 'Fate and behaviour of steroid oestrogens in rivers: A scoping study'. This was a 94-page research report focusing exclusively on three oestrogen compounds: two natural oestrogens - oestrone and 17 β oestradiol - and one synthetic hormone, ethynyl-oestradiol. This research, financed by Defra and the Natural Environment Research Council, concluded that half of all male fish in our rivers were changing sex because of pollution by these three hormones.

Natural hormones are generally inactive, or if active only at high doses due to the body's ability to metabolise them rapidly. Synthetic hormones are more stable and remain within the body long enough to be utilised as contraceptives. This increased stability results in up to 80 per cent being excreted in conjugated form.

According to the report, all three hormones are excreted in a relatively stable and inactive form, so an adverse effect on the watercourses would seem unlikely. Therefore, something must occur to destabilise these hormones in the sewage treatment works. It was discovered that large quantities of active, unconjugated oestrogens were indeed present in treated sewage.

The same principle would apply to animal agriculture, only the animal excretes on to the ground and the hormones then seep into water courses and may even be spread during muck-spreading.

The effects on fish and other organisms

Vitellogenin (a protein found in the blood stream synthesised by female fish to produce egg yolk) is used as a biomarker and has been observed to be produced by both male and juvenile females, with increased levels in mature females along polluted stretches of rivers, with some fish being reported as hermaphrodites. The danger with steroids, in comparison with other pollutants, is that the nature of sex hormones is such that even at low levels they can still have a profound effect on an organism's physical development.

Synthetic oestrogen, found to be present in all lowland rivers in the UK, led to male fish developing female characteristics, with 50 per cent producing eggs in their testes; one in 10 were

sterile and a quarter had damaged sperm, according to the company Pure Water People.

The Independent reported that all rivers, including the Lea in Hertfordshire, which supplies London with drinking water, and the Avon in Bristol, had male fish that had become feminised.

According to Adeel *et al*, as well as disrupting fish physiology, polluting oestrogens also negatively affect the development in both domestic animals and wildlife, and treatment of oestrogen was found to have affected root and shoot development, flowering and germination in flora.

Lab rats and mice when exposed to oestrogen were found to be adversely affected by increased sexual behaviour, greater weight of the placenta, increased litter numbers and size of pups for gestational age in mice, higher abortion rates and changes of maternal behaviour in rats and advanced puberty.

In humans, women in Spain exposed to exogenous oestrogens were found to have an increased risk of breast cancer. In China, urinary phytoestrogen levels were associated with idiopathic infertility in men. Obesity has also been cited as an adverse effect, so could drinking water be inadvertently contributing to obesity?

How many oestrogen pollutants are in our drinking water?

Pure Water People claims it is hard to quantify how much oestrogen is present in drinking water as it's difficult to measure at low concentrations. The American Chemical Society says that the contraception pill accounts for less than 1 per cent of the oestrogens found in the nation's drinking water, concluding that hormones enter drinking water from other sources. However, 1 per cent of a massive data set amounts to quite a considerable percentage; furthermore, oestrogen has been found to be harmful at even very low doses.

Solutions to a man-made pollutant problem

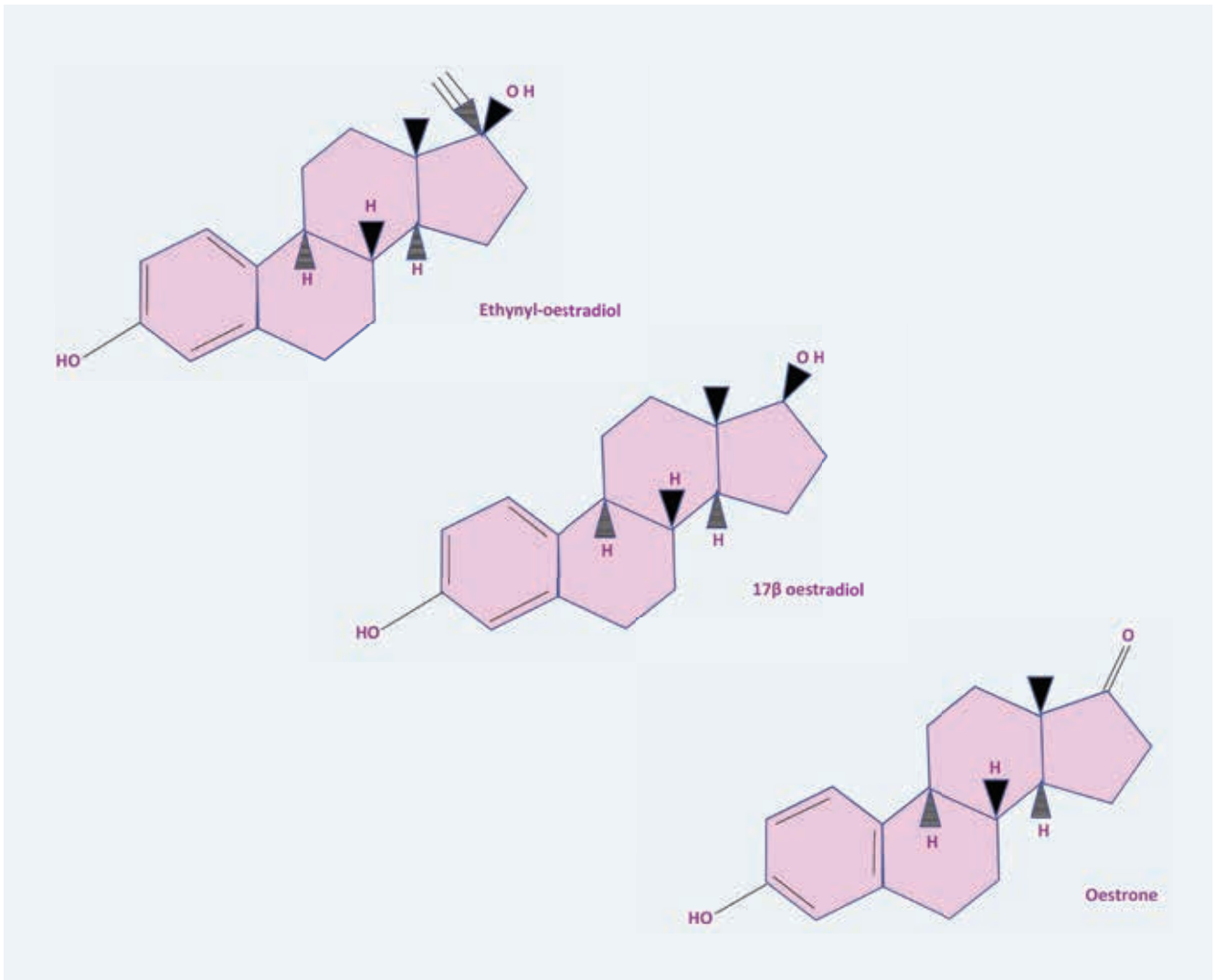
So now we have created this problem for us and the natural environment, how can we best solve it?

Researchers are looking to neutralise these oestrogens in several ways before they enter the environment. One such idea is to use activated carbons in much the same way as a domestic water filter works. The active carbon hoovers up the oestrogens, allowing pure water to flow through.

Another method being tested is the use of ozone gas as a means to treat wastewater. Ozone works by splitting the molecules into less active biproducts. However, the downside and consequence of this method is that ozone can create toxic by-products such as bromate, which is considered carcinogenic, so then a further treatment would be required to remove this carcinogen.

Both these methods work small-scale but would take some thinking to scale up for use in industrial-sized sewage plants. Some water-treatment plants such as that at Bewl Water have the facilities for ozonisation followed by active carbon treatment. Switzerland's recently introduced regulations aim to lower hormones in the environment by upgrading sewage plants and it is using ozone and/or activated carbon. However, researchers estimate the costs of running the water-treatment plants will increase, along with energy consumption.

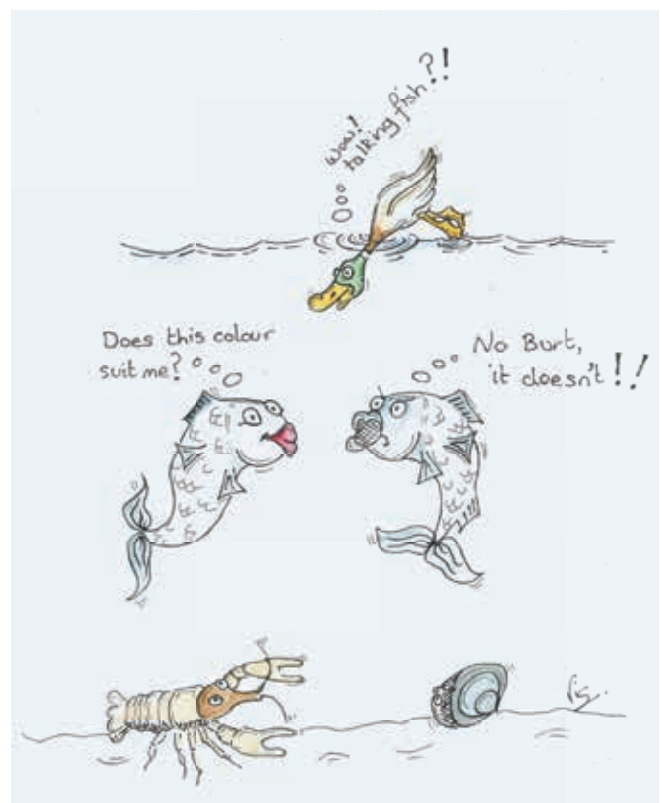
Another viable alternative is peroxide. Researchers from Carnegie Mellon University and Brunel University have worked



together and claim this method is “promising”. They used a concentrated type of hydrogen peroxide alongside bespoke catalysts that act similarly to enzymes to accelerate the chemical reaction and denature synthetic oestrogens in water, urine and wastewater. They also tested this cleaned water by placing feminised male fish in a tank and found the male fish made less vitellogenin.

The most recent paper on the subject, ‘Water treatment: Removing hormones with sunlight’, published in 2021 by the KIT institute, acknowledges the issues surrounding scalability with the other methods and has come up with the idea of utilising photocatalysis, transforming the hormones into benign oxidation products and consequently reducing the concentration of oestradiol by some 98 per cent by filtering 60-600 litres of water per square metre of membrane in one hour. This would make this method more easily scalable but is still not without its challenges. So, you can rest assured there are scientists who recognise the seriousness of this invisible pollutant and are working hard on a solution to help not just us but the natural environment.

If hormones in our water teaches us one thing, it’s how intrinsically linked we are to the health of the natural environment around us and that how we treat this natural environment can impact directly on our own health. A lesson, perhaps, to take note.



Christmas Cards

Help to raise funds by buying CPRE Kent's charity Christmas cards. We have three designs: barn owl, robin and long-tailed tit.

They cost just £3.50 for a pack of 10... which is excellent value for money.

They are available by calling the office on 01233 714540.

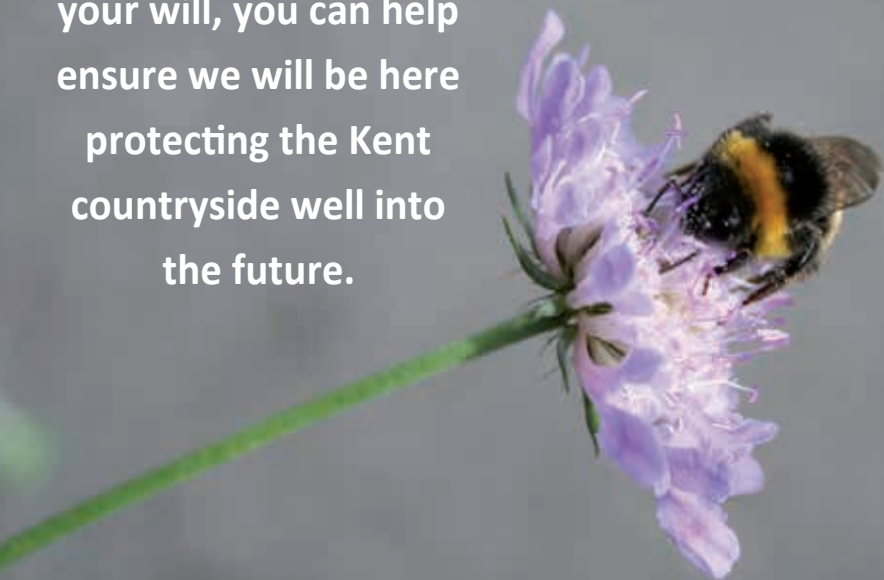
And why not give the gift of the countryside and buy a gift membership for a loved one this year? Also available online or from the office.

If you tell us it's for a gift we will even throw in a few goodies to make it extra special!



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

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



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

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

A costly business

A decision by the Supreme Court relating to a legal challenge by CPRE Kent is disheartening for those seeking to protect our natural environment, writes
Hilary Newport

Supreme Court ruling confirms cost risks faced by people who challenge planning decisions... this was the headline in one of the most widely read professional planning journals last month. It's not the sort of story that attracts much attention outside the planning profession, but it is one that could have severe repercussions for environmental protection.

If you - or any would-be developer - make an application for planning permission that is turned down, you have the right to appeal that decision. However, in UK law, there is no third-party right of appeal once a planning decision is made (we think there ought to be, but that is a story for another day).

If you believe that a grant of planning permission is just plain wrong, the only recourse you have to challenge it is to take it to the courts and ask for permission to have the decision independently scrutinised - in other words, a Judicial Review (JR).

Permission for a JR won't be granted if you simply don't like the fact that planning permission was granted; to successfully take a decision to JR you must be able to demonstrate that the decision, or the manner in which it was taken, was flawed.

We used this principle when in 2017 we challenged the grant of planning permission for more than 600 homes in the Kent Downs AONB at Farthingloe, near Dover.

Although we were unsuccessful at the JR stage, we believed so strongly that the decision process in this case was flawed that we took the case to the next step of the legal process, the Court of Appeal, where eminent judges agreed that a planning decision that would clearly cause substantial harm to a protected landscape must be accompanied by substantial reasons to justify that harm and, since these were lacking, they quashed the permission. The local authority then appealed the case to the Supreme Court, where we were again successful.

Embarking on a JR process is daunting, and expensive; it's something that we would never take on lightly, but where such important principles are at stake we will do all we can to uphold them.

One of the reasons we felt able to take on the challenge was the Aarhus Convention: it establishes the right of the public and organisations to challenge legal decisions that cause harm to the environment and, in doing so, it places a cap on their financial liability for legal costs should their challenge fail.

Another such example was our challenge to the legality of

Maidstone Borough Council's decision to include in its Local Plan in 2017 a policy that allocated a greenfield site near J8 of the M20 for warehousing. That site and another nearby had already been the subject of planning appeals brought by applicants wishing to build there; in both cases, the appeals were soundly dismissed by independent inspectors who drew specific attention to the harm that would be caused to the important landscape qualities of the area.

So when a large part of one of these sites was subsequently allocated in the 2017 Local Plan we took the difficult decision to challenge the inclusion of that policy; nothing had changed to make the landscape less special, and the harm to the landscape would have been no less significant.

Unfortunately, this time the courts did not agree and judged that the policy was sound. We were protected under the Aarhus Convention, which capped our legal liability to the defendants, but the judge ruled that we should pay the costs not only of the first defendant - in this case the Secretary of State - but also the second defendant, Maidstone Borough Council, and an interested party (the site promoter).

Under normal circumstances a claimant would expect only to pay the costs of the principal defendant, and our legal team believed this was fundamentally unfair - so much so that they took on an appeal against the costs order at their own risk, first to the Court of Appeal and then to the Supreme Court.

It is highly unusual for the Supreme Court to take on a costs appeal such as this, and the fact that it agreed to do so means the court believed it raised a principle worthy of examination.

If we had won this case, it would have made a real difference to increasing access to justice for claimants on environmental grounds, removing some of the uncertainty about costs.

In the end, though, the Supreme Court decided that such a matter is, in fact, properly dealt with by the Court of Appeal.

Sometimes, it is necessary to take legal action to protect the environment. We will continue to choose carefully the cases we fight and we don't expect to appear in the Supreme Court as often as we have in recent years! We won't win every battle, but we also won't give up on our determination to protect Kent's landscapes by whichever legal routes remain open to us.

Local Plans: an overview



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

Ashford

- The current Local Development Scheme (May 2021) sets out that Regulation 19 consultation on a new Local Plan will take place at the end of this year, with examination in summer 2022 and adoption in autumn 2022.

Canterbury

- Regulation 18 consultation (preferred option) took place over the summer. Regulation 19 consultation is expected take place at the end of 2022. It is anticipated that the examination hearings will take place in summer 2023, with adoption by the end of that year.

Dartford

- Regulation 19 consultation took place in the spring. Representations are being reviewed, pending submission of the Plan. Adoption is anticipated in 2022.

Dover

- Regulation 18 consultation on the draft Dover District Local Plan took place in the spring. It is expected that Regulation 19 consultation will take place in the autumn, with examination hearings commencing in June 2022 and adoption by February 2023.

Folkestone & Hythe

- The Core Strategy Review (2020) examination hearings reopened (online) on June 29 to discuss transport matters in relation to the proposed new garden settlement. The inspectors have advised the council in writing of the main modifications to make the Plan sound. Consultation on the main modifications is expected to take place this autumn.

Gravesham

- A partial review of the Local Plan Core Strategy, Site Allocations and a Development Management Policies Document is being undertaken. Regulation 18 consultations (issues and options) took place in 2018 and (preferred approaches) at the end of 2020. Regulation 19 consultation is likely to take place this autumn.

Maidstone

- Regulation 18 (issues and options) consultation took place 2019, with a further Regulation 18 consultation (preferred approaches) at the end of 2020/early 2021. It is expected that Regulation 19 consultation will take place October/November this year, with examination hearings in the summer of 2022 and adoption in January 2023.

Medway

- The Medway Local Plan (2037) has been subject to three rounds of Regulation 18 consultation, with the most recent taking place in summer 2018. Regulation 19 consultation took place this spring. Adoption is expected by December 2022.

Sevenoaks

- The inspector suspended the Local Plan examination hearings at the end of 2019 and advised the council to withdraw its Plan as it was considered unsound (failure to comply with Duty to Cooperate). In December 2020 the council lodged an application to appeal against an unsuccessful Judicial Review in the High Court. The Court of Appeal refused the council permission to appeal. An updated Local Development Scheme is awaited.

Swale

- Regulation 18 consultation (scoping issues) took place in 2018. This was followed by a Regulation 19 consultation this spring. Quinn Estates has sought a Judicial Review of the Local Plan, which will be heard in late November. A further Regulation 18 round of consultation will take place this autumn to take account of the recently revised NPPF and provide an additional opportunity for participation.

Thanet

- A Local Plan review started this spring, with a call for sites. The Local Development Scheme sets out that Regulation 18 consultation will take in October, with adoption by 2023.

Tonbridge and Malling

- Examination hearings due to recommence in November 2020 were cancelled because of the inspectors' concerns in relation to legal compliance of the Local Plan and in particular the Duty to Cooperate. The council officially withdrawn its Local Plan on July 13, 2021.

Tunbridge Wells

- Regulation 18 consultation on a draft preferred Local Plan took place in autumn 2019. Regulation 19 took place this spring. A further round of consultation is due this autumn. Examination hearings are expected to take place in November, with adoption in June 2022.

District	Plan	Jul-Sep 2021	Oct-Dec 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Apr-Jun 2022	Jul-Sep 2022	Oct-Dec 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Adoption
Ashford	Local Plan 2040		Consultation			Examination	Adoption		Adopted February 2019
Canterbury	Local Plan 2040	Consultation				Consultation			Adopted 13.7.17
Dartford	Local Plan 2036						Adoption		
Dover	Local Plan 2020-2040		Consultation		Examination			Adoption	
Folkestone & Hythe	Places and Policies Local Plan								Adopted 16.9.20
	Core Strategy Review 2020			Adoption					
Gravesham	Core Strategy Review and Allocations DPD 2036		Consultation						
Maidstone	Local Plan 2022-2037		Consultation			Examination		Adoption	Adopted 25.10.17
Medway	Local Plan 2019-2037					Examination	Adoption		
Sevenoaks	Local Plan 2015- 2035								
Swale	Local Plan 2022-2038		Consultation	Consultation		Examination		Adoption	Adopted 27.7.17
Thanet	Local Plan 2020-2031		Consultation		Consultation		Examination		Adopted 9.7.20
Tonbridge & Malling	Local Plan 2031								
Tunbridge Wells	Local Plan 2033		Examination		Adoption				

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

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

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

KEY

- Regulation 18
- Regulation 19
- EIP
- Adoption

Around the districts

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

Ashford - Christine Drury

- The light pollution from the Inland Border Facility at Sevington is the most urgent issue to keep campaigning about as the nights get longer and the lighting is more intrusive and disruptive. Improvements are promised, with down-shielding. The most important aspect will be for the external lighting system to 'not be on everywhere all the time' – that is also promised. This is an exposed site on high ground and the light pollution impacts a wide area as well as nearby residents. Ashford's commendable dark-skies planning policy carries less weight when the decisions are all within government. Not a reason to stop campaigning!
- Ashford Borough Council now has a nutrient-neutrality strategy in response to the Stodmarsh NNR problem – the strategy is to create wetlands. Larger sites in the Stour catchment might be able to do it on-site – this means fewer houses. The expectation is that smaller sites will buy credits in wetland created on special sites – either on land bought by the borough or other direct arrangements with landowners. This would be by Grampian conditions, *ie* the wetland being in place before the first occupation. Planning applications are starting to re-emerge with this approach; one of the first on-site is for the next stage of build-out of the Eureka Park just north of M20 junction 9. There is a lot of comment about why Ashford taxpayers and developers should be paying for a problem they don't see as theirs, being outside the borough. Catchment management is not yet an accepted reality.
- The South Ashford Garden Community is moving slowly forward: Chilmington Green (CG) plus two large sites to the east are still at the planning stage. It is good to see work on creating a community by involving residents moving into the garden city. Negotiating pedestrian routes through the development as it is built is just one of the practical problems.

Canterbury - Nick Blake

- Much of the recent planning controversy has revolved around the city council's suggestion for east and west bypasses for Canterbury. Some people question whether we should be building roads such as these. That thinking is based on the idea that new roads, rather than just relieving existing traffic, generate new vehicle movements. If it was as simple as that, we would have never built some of the turnpike roads back in the 18th and 19th centuries or the Canterbury bypass in the 1980s. It is said by some that the proposed bypasses around Canterbury would not help traffic as virtually all the vehicle movements are to and from the city. This, however, assumes the city is a homogenous place. What the bypasses would do is remove from the existing ring road vehicles serving the non-central parts of the city, such as the university and businesses at Wincheap and Sturry Road. Currently we have car-transporters and similarly large trucks skirting the central historic core of the city by using the ring road, which of course they have no wish to do. They cannot be removed because there is no alternative. However, the council has issued very vague sketches, unconnected to its previous suggested eastern route and not coordinated with the 4,000-house development south-east of the city. The western route is an entirely new suggestion. Both these routes would be damaging to attractive countryside near the city, especially because of the challenging topography. New roads have a maximum permitted gradient of 1:12, which means massive intrusive excavations.
- The other controversial aspect of the bypasses scheme is that its financing is proposed to come from Section 106 money from thousands more new houses than even the government requires... so yet more damage to countryside and pressure on local roads. Finance for new roads should surely be provided by putting a charge on those who benefit from easier movement: the owners of motor vehicles. To take Section 106 cash means little or no money left for so-called affordable housing. In effect the cost is falling on those on lower incomes who must pay market prices for private rented housing. Not content with the continual sale of council

houses, this policy makes those on lower incomes wait even longer for suitable housing. The policies on housing for lower-income families have been lacking for 40 years and the council seems content to continue the trend and damage countryside. There will be more battles ahead.

Dartford and Gravesham - Alex Hills

- We have been focused on the Lower Thames Crossing consultation, as we have since 2013. With 3,000 pages in 15 documents, we have had a lot of reading! The documents were not user-friendly, with key information being well hidden - our thanks go to CPRE Kent planners Richard Thompson and Paul Buckley for their work. We have been working with several organisations on the consultation as together we are stronger. We said back in 2016 there was not enough room to create a safe junction where proposed and a diagram of the junction produced by Robin Bull shows we were correct. The map of the junction is incredibly complex - everyone we spoke to could not understand it. The loss of two lanes in each direction on the A2 will increase congestion and air pollution in the area, yet it was not made clear how to find this key piece of information in the documents. Even more annoying was that despite Meopham facing a 40 per cent increase in traffic on the main road through it, neither Meopham nor Vigo wards were mentioned in the documents. All the communities south of the A2 would be affected by the new crossing, yet there were no consultation events for them, so we ran two drop-in events ourselves where we were able to explain there were alternatives to the crossing that would solve the problems at Dartford without increasing air pollution and the destruction of environmentally sensitive areas. Building a new Thames crossing at this location makes no sense at all!
- As a government agency, National Highways (formerly Highways England) should follow government design guides. However, when it comes to non-motorised user routes (NMU covers pedestrians, equestrians and people who cycle), National Highways is refusing to commit to doing so. The proposed routes involve all three groups using the same routes, which, if widths, surfaces, segregation and junctions are not done to government guide standards, will put lives at risk. What is the point in design guides being produced by the government if even its own agencies do not follow them?

Dover - Derek Wanstall

- There is no further news on the Dover District Local Plan.
- As to the proposed Customs holding and checking facility at Guston, the site layout has been altered and lorry capacity reduced from 1,200 to 96, taking the parking area away from people's homes. It remains too close, however, especially when lorry lights are on, while floodlights for the site could be annoying.
- Planning applications are still being supported by KCC Highways, with its comments not up to date with the increase in traffic and parking - residents are not being listened to in the Deal, Sholden and Walmer areas, which come under Dover District Council. With ambulance services coming from Thanet, plus hold-ups on the roads, people's lives can be really affected. New infrastructure in conjunction with the increase in vehicles and population is needed badly.
- Quinn Estates is proposing 975 properties close to Betteshanger Country Park, with a park-and-ride and electric-bus service to Deal, which would need a road across marshland. This road does not seem to be designed for any other vehicles.
- A proposal for 117 homes at Sandwich Road, Sholden, was refused by the district council's planning committee. The reasons will be confirmed in due course.
- Sadly, we have lost a great CPRE Kent member in Graham Warren. Condolences to all his family (see page 14).
- If any member is available to join our committee, they would be most welcome.

Folkestone & Hythe - Graham Horner

- Examination of the Folkestone & Hythe Local Plan Core Strategy Review concluded in July, with inspectors saying the document could be made 'sound' with modifications. A public consultation on the modifications is expected shortly. The principle of developing Otterpool Park was not challenged, but the inspectors had a lot to say about deliverability and did listen attentively to what we had to say. Otterpool Park LLC aims to resubmit its application for outline planning permission in November, so we will be looking carefully for the necessary improvements to the proposals.
- Strong opposition to the Princes Parade development continues. The latest chapter involves the application to move part of Princes Parade (the road) from the waterfront to the back of the site along the canal. CPRE Kent supports Save Princes Parade in opposing this vandalism of urban green space and is making a representation to the public inquiry.
- Some members have asked about our position on the Folkestone Waterfront development. I think we can all agree it's an eyesore in the making, but as it is on brownfield land we feel it's not really part of our brief (as 'the countryside charity') to oppose it.

Maidstone - Henny Shotter

- The review of the Local Plan has been postponed until the end of this year or early next year.
- We were alerted by Boxley Parish Council to a planning application for 450 dwellings at Gibraltar Farm, Gillingham. With some of the site falling within Maidstone district, we have commented.

Sevenoaks - Nigel Britten

- First some good news: the Chevening Estate's planning application, reported in the previous issue, has been refused permission. The most contentious part of it was the building of four 'mounds' up to 12 metres high, ostensibly to screen views of the M25, although the motorway is not visible from the house itself. Material to create them was said to require about 150,000 lorry movements over more than five years. Although recommended for approval by the planning officer, not one of the councillors considering the application was in favour of it. Our committee thought the mounds would look unnatural at the foot of the downs and that, at a time of climate emergency, five or more years of highly polluting HGV traffic was unjustifiable.
- The Local Plan update published in July tells us the council will be meeting the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Planning Inspectorate, aiming "to secure agreement with MHCLG of our route to achieve the 2023 deadline". Having had the previous draft Plan thrown out because of the alleged failure to comply with the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) with neighbouring authorities, the council says "further public money would not be risked until there is assurance that we can move forwards with confidence, particularly now the government appears to believe the DtC is not fit for purpose". Word has it that the government is having a rethink about other proposals in the Planning White Paper published earlier this year - if so, more good news.
- Our committee is looking for a meetings and minutes secretary to relieve our present and very long-serving secretary, Dr Susan Pittman - and, needless to say, volunteers to join the committee would also be extremely welcome.

Swale - Peter Blandon

- We have objected to a vast housing scheme - effectively a new town - of more than 9,000 properties south-east of Sittingbourne. Quinn Estates has submitted two outline planning applications for what is collectively being referred to as Highsted Park. One comprises a scheme for 1,250 homes and other uses, including completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, while the other is for 8,000 homes and other uses, including a new M2 junction south of the A2. The application conflicts with the adopted Local Plan and we believe there are no material or exceptional considerations why the Plan should not be followed. Among a range of issues, the site lies in countryside and within a designated Local Countryside Gap, while the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an Area of High Landscape Value and ancient woodlands and Local Wildlife Sites.

Thanet - David Morrish

- Southern Water was fined £90 million at Canterbury Crown Court in July for widespread, and deliberate, breaches of environmental law between 2010 and 2015. The judge said the company's offences had shown "a shocking and wholesale disregard for the environment, for the precious and delicate ecosystems along the north Kent and Solent coastlines, for human health and for the fisheries and other legitimate businesses that depend on the vitality of the coastal waters".
- In November 2020 we objected to the proposal by land agent Gladman for 450 houses at Shottendane Road, Margate. Gladman pronounced that the 30 per cent allocation for affordable housing required by Thanet District Council was not viable for a prospective developer and tried instead for 10 per cent. We took the view that, if Gladman got away with minimising affordable housing at this site, then every other consequent developer would use that precedent to chip away at its own commitment. Despite officers recommending approval, the application was refused by the planning committee due to that lack of affordable housing. Gladman returned with another application, this time with an increased affordable-housing figure of 15 per cent and this was again refused. Back came Gladman! This time it offered 68 properties as affordable housing on an 80 per cent affordable rent and 20 per cent shared-ownership mix. It also claimed it would make almost £5 million in contributions to community and highways infrastructure. However, this was not enough to convince councillors, who in July turned down this third application. It is admirable that they were not cowed by 'advice' from officers threatening dire problems should they turn down the application. We are delighted the planning committee stuck to its guns and defended Local Plan policy to ensure 30 per cent of housing on major developments is genuinely affordable. Gladman has since appealed to the Secretary of State against the refusal.
- Kent Highways will no doubt continue to support proposals such as that at Shottendane to ensure financial contributions to its proposed inner circuit. It appears that officers of both the county council and district council have worked together to produce a Local Plan dominated by a highways policy totally at odds with national planning advice.
- Despite the quashing of a Development Consent Order allowing Manston airport to be reopened as a freight hub, site owner RiverOak Strategic Partners is pushing on with its plans. However, it has now failed twice to meet criteria necessary for the Civil Aviation Authority to approve its Airspace Change Proposal, which would be necessary for the airport to become operational again.

Tonbridge and Malling - Mike Taylor

- Planning inspectors have rejected the council's Local Plan, citing lack of cooperation with Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells councils. The council has since decided to redraft the Plan - rather than to take the inspectors' decision to Judicial Review. In the meantime, developers are pushing planning applications forward in the knowledge that TMBC doesn't have a five-year land supply. There is concern locally that the proposed allocation of land at Borough Green for a new garden settlement has many unresolved issues, not least that the site is waste-filled and sits above an aquifer. Furthermore, the £150,000 government funding behind the project is earmarked for design work - leaving the development itself to fund the £100 million relief road within the Green Belt. Even at this late stage it is believed that not all the affected landowners agree with the scheme.

Tunbridge Wells - Margaret Borland

- At the start of May I took over as chair from Liz Akenhead, who is a very hard act to follow! Liz's depth of knowledge about both the local area and planning regulation is incomparable, so I'm fortunate she is still an active member of our district committee and providing invaluable advice and support.
- It's been a busy period for the committee, responding to the consultation on the pre-submission draft of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2020-2038 and preparing for a couple of major planning inquiries scheduled for this autumn, in addition to tackling the usual planning applications.
- Responding to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan Consultation was a major piece of work in April and May, during which we were brilliantly supported by Julie Davies at Charing. Lockdown restrictions meant all our discussions were via Zoom or email, but we still submitted 118 representations, ranging from the vision and strategy to individual allocations, ahead of the deadline. While questioning the council's decision to meet its Objectively Assessed Need, when 75 per cent of the borough is AONB and/or Green Belt, the underlying theme of our response was to challenge ineffective use of land, with very low housing densities proposed on AONB, greenfield and brownfield sites. We quoted the example densities set out in the government's draft National Model Design Code to support our comments. Our response also continued to strongly object to the proposed 'garden village' at Tudeley and the associated release of a large area of Green Belt. We await details of the examination, expected to start in November.
- The Cedardrive appeal on grounds of non-determination (concerning its hybrid application for a new relief road and outline planning permission for up to 417 dwellings, a care home, community facilities and various works) at Hawkhurst Golf Club was due to begin in September. The planning application was submitted in 2019 and the site provisionally allocated in the Reg 18 Local Plan but removed from the Reg 19 version due to concerns about impact on the AONB. CPRE Kent is not a Rule 6 party for this; however, we have submitted further comments and plan to attend the virtual inquiry.
- We then moved on to the planning inquiry into 165 new dwellings at Turnden, Cranbrook, where a Secretary of State call-in was secured by Natural England. This inquiry is likely to be of much wider than local significance. The site remains an allocation in the draft Local Plan and the council's planning committee resolved in January to grant the Berkeley Homes planning application, so we will be opposing the council's decision rather than supporting it as we would for a developer's appeal. John Wotton, with support from Richard Thompson of the Charing planning team, prepared the CPRE Kent statement of case and will be a Rule 6 representative at the hearing.
- We have been contacted by Hill Homes, the new owner of the adjacent site in Cranbrook, Brick Kiln Farm, for which a reserved matters application for a development of 180 dwellings was granted this year despite strenuous local objections, including from CPRE Kent. Hill Homes claims it will deliver a "stronger landscape-led layout which adheres to the site parameters" and is proposing a public consultation on its proposals. We hope to have the opportunity to talk to the developer before any consultation.
- There has been a number of planning applications, some retrospective, for new and extended gypsy/traveller sites in addition to those set out in the draft Local Plan.
- The council has published its five-year housing land supply statement as of April 1, 2021, showing increases in supply to 4.93 years and delivery to 688 dwellings (from 4.83 years and 474 dwellings in 2020). Additionally, the draft Plan meets in full the housing need assessed using the standard method and the council expects that a revised land-supply statement before adoption (targeted for summer 2022) will demonstrate the five-year supply requirement is being met. Several applications for housing in the AONB (to which we had objected) were refused in May, so we are hopeful these figures have given the council more confidence that rejecting inappropriate development will not simply lead to costly appeals based on the 'tilted balance'.

Historic Buildings - John Wotton

- The committee met in April and July. Our July meeting marked 60 years since the committee was founded and I was delighted to host the meeting at my home (a clothier's hall), followed by a little celebration and a tour of the house. In September, Dr Susan Pittman, a member of the committee, arranged a fascinating visit to Lullingstone Castle, Eynsford, kindly hosted by the Hart-Dyke family, who have owned it for several centuries. We were the first group of visitors to enter the house since before the pandemic and were also shown some historic structures in the grounds.
- We received submissions in electronic format by undergraduates at the Kent School of Architecture and Planning for the delayed Gravett Architectural Drawing Award 2020. The judges reviewed the submissions and concluded that assessments of the work of the short-listed candidates were essential. They plan to do this during the current academic term.
- We have continued to review threats to heritage assets around the county, commenting ourselves or providing advice and assistance to district committees.
- We have been pleased to welcome a new member of the committee, Paul Townson, who is the owner of a fine listed building near Faversham that he is in the course of restoring. We look forward to learning from his experience. We nevertheless remain in need of new members, especially to cover Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Gravesham and Ashford.

From the Frontline



Hilary Newport with the campaigns update

Swanscombe peninsula

The peninsula's importance for wildlife was recognised by Natural England in March, when it notified this wildlife haven - threatened by plans for the country's largest theme park - as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The welcome news came after the government body had reviewed its notification of Bakers Hole SSSI, expanding its boundary to include more land of special interest; the enlarged site is known as Swanscombe Peninsula SSSI.

Although this legal protection took effect immediately, there followed a four-month consultation on the proposed designation, made because of its "nationally important invertebrates, breeding birds, plants and geology".

Despite the announcement, the developer behind the proposed London Resort has ploughed on with its scheme, although it is changing its plans.

London Resort Holding Company was granted an extra four months to submit revised documents in its bid for a Development Consent Order from the Planning Inspectorate. It was reported that LRCH did not intend to make any "material" changes - despite looking to amend almost half of its 460 submission documents.

LRCH's proposals fall very far short of meeting an appeal by CPRE Kent and three other conservation charities, who said in a joint letter to the Planning Inspectorate that LRCH "should have sought to withdraw their existing application and restart the pre-application process" after the SSSI designation.

Examination of the DCO application had been expected to begin in September, but this has been stalled twice by LRCH failing to produce the documents required by the inspectorate, which has said the examination's preliminary meeting is "unlikely to be held before April 2022".

CPRE Kent has made substantial representations to the examination process.

Light pollution

CPRE Kent has been working with a range of groups - notably 'lead sponsor' Buglife - to get the subject of light pollution debated in the House of Lords.

A proposed amendment to the Environment Bill would have resulted in the government having to produce targets to cut light pollution in England.

The debate was strongly in favour of addressing the issue, with no member speaking against it, but there was an inclination that the government should tackle it under the bill when secondary legislation came into play.

The minister provided a more in-depth response than he had at committee stage and almost committed to a review on light pollution, which would help determine if secondary legislation was the correct way ahead.

He also committed to pushing harder on other departments to tackle the problem (Defra is the responsible and coordinating department for light pollution).

Although disappointing that the amendment did not go to vote, especially given the feeling within the chamber, progress has been made and there is a platform for continued work, principally to secure a review and help influence the next round of target-setting under the bill. Certainly, there has been increased exposure of the issue to an influential audience.

Events 2021 Where we've been... and where we're going to be

AgriSouth, Faversham Showground	Thursday, May 20
Kent Garden Show, Detling	Friday-Sunday, May 29-31
Whitstable car park	Saturday, June 12
Kent mini show, Detling	Saturday and Sunday, July 10-11
Whitstable car park	Sunday, August 8
WKPM, Pluckley	Saturday, September 18
EKPM, Shepherdswell	Wednesday, September 29
Whitstable car park	Wednesday, December 22
Green Christmas Fair, Faversham	TBC



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We would like to thank the following businesses for making CPRE Kent collection boxes available to their customers:

The Charing Stores
4 High Street, Charing TN27 0HU

Perry Court Farm
Canterbury Road, Wye TN25 4ES

The Four Horsehoes
Head Hill Road, Graveney ME13 9DE

If you would like to have a collection box on your premises, or know of someone who might, please let us know at info@cprekent.org.uk Otherwise, do please feel free to patronise the above businesses... and you can drop in a few pennies while you're there.



Gift of Membership

Have you considered the gift of CPRE Kent membership?

CPRE Kent's membership is in serious decline.

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

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

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

You can write to us at:

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

email info@cprekent.org.uk;

or phone us on 01233 714540.



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Each item is priced at just £10.

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Lottery results



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

April 21

Mrs M Sargison £50
Mr & Mrs P Harvey £30
Mrs A Reader £20
Mrs L Dowding £20

May 21

Mr J Gandon £50
Mrs M Palmer £30
Miss J Lushington £20
Mr K Dare £10

June 21

Mrs P Darby £150
Mrs M McFarlane £50
Mrs I Pearce £30
Ms M Allison £20

July 21

Mrs P Pollock £50
Mr L Wallace £30
Mr L Wallace £20
Mrs M Davis OBE £10

August 21

Mrs A Reader £50
Mr A White £30
Mrs G Scales £20
Mr & Mrs J Mercy £10

September 21

Mr L Wallace £50
Mr J Baxter £30
Mr R Stickland £20
Mr P Stevens £10

CPRE Kent (the Kent Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England, number 4335730, registered charity number 1092012.

CPRE Kent,

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

T: 01233 714540 F: 01233 714549 E: info@cprekent.org.uk

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

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



The countryside charity
Kent

Please join us to help protect the countryside we all love
CPRE membership starts at just £3 per month

Title	Full name		
Address			
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Telephone		Email	

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

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

Title	Full name	Age (under-18s)

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

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Name(s) of account holder(s)

Bank/building society account number

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Date	<input type="text"/>

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