

# KENT VOICE

Protecting Kent's Countryside  
AUTUMN/WINTER 2017



**Tackling litter  
together**

**Christmas cards  
- available now**

[www.cprekent.org.uk](http://www.cprekent.org.uk)



# Director's Introduction

Hilary Newport



It's five years now since the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was put into place. It was billed as a simplified, streamlined process which would put the focus on clear and up-to-date local plans and restore planning to local communities.

In the words of the NPPF itself, 'Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities'. Meanwhile the 2011 Localism Act already sought to put right the apparent deficiencies of the previous planning system, recognising that 'Planning did not give members of the public enough influence over decisions that make a big difference to their lives... The result was a confrontational and adversarial system where many applications end up being fought over'.

Five years on, I would have to contend that the planning system is far from 'fixed'. A streamlined and simplified planning system, relying on up-to-date plans and offering certainty to communities, planners and developers while enshrining the protection of the environment still seems a long way off. Communities in areas without an up-to-date Local Plan are under attack from unscrupulous land agents who harvest planning permission on sites that would never be permitted through a properly-tested Local Plan (and this situation currently applies to many districts in Kent and to Medway). Meanwhile, those communities in areas which do have the benefit of a Local Plan are angry and bewildered at the high and rising housing targets that are imposed within those local plans -

targets which central Government will tell you are derived locally. These targets are nevertheless the result of complex calculation methodologies which are set by central Government, and which do not distinguish between housing 'need', which is demonstrable and quantifiable, and housing 'demand', which is limitless in a market where houses are treated as an investment rather than a secure and affordable place to live.

The result is that many of the decisions being taken under the NPPF, from individual planning application determinations to the approval of whole Local Plans,

are being held up to scrutiny by the Planning Inspectorate and the Courts of Justice, as communities are challenging the drive to provide ever-more houses on the grounds of serious deterioration to already poor air quality, worsening traffic congestion, harm to significant heritage assets, or damage to valued and protected landscapes.

**Check our Campaigns Overview on page 14, and our Local Plan round-up on page 20 for more detail about many such challenges taking place across Kent.**



Meanwhile in council offices all over Kent CPD was well under way.



# Chairman's Update

Christine Drury

Many of you have shared your indignations and passion about the litter problems that deface the countryside and do much wider damage in our oceans and food chains. I am delighted that in this issue of Kent Voice, which Susannah gathered together and Vicky has completed, we have been able to assemble several aspects of litter campaigning.

Like so much of what CPRE does well, it is a combination of energy and organisation at local level, as Stuart and Anne Olsson describe, and the willingness to work in alliance with others to get government policy and regulations changed at national level, as Sam Harding is doing. It was Bill Bryson who said so clearly that the litter problem was to be his focus when he was CPRE's President; we should thank him, too. Each step makes the task of achieving a litter-free countryside a little less impossible.

I wish the same could be said of the planning system. Hilary's report sets out the challenges of ever-higher housing targets. CPRE is not nimby; we want to be able to support plan-led development, and we much prefer to be able to work with rather than against local authorities. We can then focus on getting good design, community facilities and development that respects the environment. At the moment this kind of conversation is rare as local authorities struggle to meet the housing site requirements imposed by the planning rules, and sites are proposed that on any good planning criteria should be dismissed as unsustainable. The glimmer of hope with the Housing White Paper has faded and although revisions of the NPPF are still promised, the lobbying battle is as tough as ever. And the housing permissions that are in line with approved local plans need to be built out - brownfield sites first of course. This means resolving the funding and contribution agreements that are delaying them. Too often it is these delays that are triggering the random sprawl out into land that we should be keeping in agricultural production. New angles such as the emerging discussion about how farming will be funded after CAP may help in giving proper weight to landscape and agricultural land use.

Thank you all for your energy and contributions support as volunteers and supporters. I hope you always find your involvement with CPRE interesting and worthwhile, as we can together always do better. Do write with your ideas and suggestions.

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# Hello and goodbye!



## Alan Holmes OBE

One of CPRE Kent's most valued and committed members, Dr Alan Holmes, passed away in June at the age of 89. He joined the charity in 1999 and served as Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer, Trustee, Vice President, South East Regional Treasurer and finally as Chairman of the Canterbury Committee.

Alan was awarded an OBE for services to the food industry.

He undertook many voluntary roles with organisations including Citizens' Advice Bureau, the Rotary Club, the Canterbury Credit Union and the Westgate Hall Conservation Trust.

We will remember Alan for his passion for the countryside, his expert chairing of so many meetings, his dog Buddy who accompanied him to all those meetings and for his down-to-earth approach to planning and outspoken views on some of the major issues in Canterbury.

And finally, in Alan's own immortal words:

*"Be sure to offer quiche to those who don't like it. Pretend that you didn't know."*

*"Sex in public is highly appropriate – when used as a high scoring scrabble word of course".*

*"Never mix friends and family, except perhaps at your funeral. Even then try to avoid it."*



## Susannah Richter

Communications and PR Manager Susannah Richter has left after nearly three years. She said: "It has been great working with such committed and talented staff and volunteers, campaigning to save the Kent countryside we love so much. I am pleased that our social media influence has increased greatly and Kent Voice has gone from strength to strength while I have been with CPRE Kent."

We would like to thank both Jillian and Susannah for all their hard work and dedication they have put into CPRE Kent in the time they have been with us.

**And finally, nationally we have a new Chief Executive, Crispin Truman, who has led The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) for more than a decade.**

Crispin has been Chief Executive of the CCT since 2003. His love of the countryside and experiences working with rural conservation groups drove his enthusiasm for CPRE and we look forward to getting to know him and working with him.



## Jillian Barr

Planner Jillian Barr left after nearly two years with CPRE Kent. She said: "I have really enjoyed working with CPRE, which actively campaigns to make sure the environment and local communities are represented as part of the planning process. I would encourage more people to volunteer in their local committees to comment on planning applications and local plans; local expertise is incredibly important. I will really miss working with staff and committee chairmen that work so hard to support the CPRE presence across Kent."





# Housing series

Kent Downs AONB Unit

## What's it like being a District Chairman on the frontline?

Vicky Ellis chats to Nigel Britten, Chairman of Sevenoaks committee

*How many members do you have in your committee?*

Eleven

*Roughly what percentage of Sevenoaks District lies in Green Belt (GB)/AONB?*

93% GB and 60% - Kent Downs to the north and High Weald to the south.

*Approximately how many planning applications in and around Sevenoaks do you manage to scrutinise a month?*

We allocate the District's parishes to committee members, ideally those closest to where they live. We all receive the weekly planning list and it's up to each of us to spot applications of concern.

*You can't comment on every planning application. So how do you choose?*

Simply those showing the worst potential impacts on the countryside. But we also want the best possible urban development, such as the most efficient use of land.

*Do you think Local Plans (LPs) are effective?*

Getting the right policies into the LP is crucial because planning is our main tool for protecting the

countryside. So yes, they can and should be effective.

*Do you think the community infrastructure levy (CIL)/Section 106 agreements are effective in reaching the communities that need them, and are they honoured by the developers?*

Early days but potentially a CIL is a major improvement on S106, and DC reports do show that significant amounts are going to local communities.

*Roughly how much time per week collectively do you and your committee spend on responding to planning applications?*

Difficult to say but there is also reading, researching and



Kent Downs AONB Unit

site visiting before drafting our responses. A major planning consultation can be very time consuming. Committee responses must be written by the Chairman so inevitably I spend most of my time on planning.

*What makes a really bad application?*

The detrimental impact on the countryside.

*What makes a really good application?*

Real sustainable development that respects planning policy and the context of the site.

*In one sentence, how would you sum up the situation with the planning system currently?*

One sentence! It is evolving - we miss the 'middle tier' between national and local, such as regional or county, because the NPPF is a blunt instrument for putting the right development in the right place.

*And finally, what's your one favourite part of Sevenoaks District in terms of landscape, biodiversity or green space?*

The Darent Valley and the marvellous landscapes around Shoreham, where I live.



# Tackling litter together

by Susannah Richter



Street cleansing alone costs taxpayers almost £1 billion a year in England. Kent councils dealt with almost 20,000 incidents of fly tipping in 2016-17. These statistics are shocking but don't even take account of the social and environmental costs and the costs to business and tourism. In this issue of Kent Voice, we focus on litter and some of the positive campaigning of our members.

Many people complain about litter but only a few do anything about it. Stuart Olsson, active member of the Tonbridge and Malling Committee, is one of the few and has persuaded 30 businesses in Larkfield, East Malling, Snodland and Ditton to sign up to a Voluntary Litter Code. They pledge to keep their areas completely clear of litter - providing the right bins and cleaning up any packaging, food, cigarettes and bottles that are dropped by customers. He is now trying to get the litter code adopted in other parts of Kent and is campaigning for it to be a nationwide policy.

One of Stuart's success stories is a layby on the A228 where the snack bar owners signed up to the Code,

pledging to keep the area around their vans litter free. Lorry drivers were then motivated to also do their bit and use the council provided bins - the result, no litter.

"We should take pride in our country," said Stuart. "The throwing of rubbish from vehicles either whilst travelling or in laybys is totally reprehensible and those coming into this country through the ports need to be told that it will not be tolerated."

His team carry out random inspections of the takeaways, shops and layby snack bars to ensure they abide by the Code - they will only receive a gold award if they are continuously litter free for 12 months.

"It's the power of persuasion that works best," said Stuart. "It is in the interests of these businesses to keep their premises clean and their environments pleasant and it could prevent them, or their customers being prosecuted or fined for causing litter nuisance. No-one wants to shop or buy food from somewhere dirty and scruffy. It's everybody's responsibility."

Stuart's wife Anne also works on the scheme. She said: "People who drop litter are lazy, it's so unattractive and causes health and environmental damage and yet it's so easily solved."

Stuart added: "Litter has a serious impact on the environment. Discarded plastics find their way into

rivers and oceans thereby damaging aquatic life. It does not stop there because micro plastic particles find their way into the food chain of the fish which we then eat, and it endangers our own health.”

The scheme is supported by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Street Scene Manager David Campbell-Lenaghan said: “In Tonbridge & Malling alone, cleaning the streets, emptying litter bins and tackling fly tipping costs in the region of £1.3 million each year, money which we’d all agree, could be spent on other services and facilities for our residents.

“The initiative has helped engage with both businesses and local residents and exemplifies what can be achieved through relatively low-cost actions such as displaying anti-litter posters, providing litter bins and cleaning up the outside of each premise. This engenders a sense of civic pride in the community and helps to make littering the exception rather than the rule.”

Indeed the Government’s first Litter Strategy for England, announced this year, proposes new measures where the most serious litterers



*“It’s the power of persuasion that works best,”*

Stuart Olsson

could be hit with £150 fines, while vehicle owners could receive penalty notices when it can be proved litter was thrown from their car – even if discarded by a passenger.

Plus, there are plans to improve bins, stop some councils charging people for disposing of household waste at local rubbish dumps; get offenders on community sentences, including people caught fly-tipping, to help councils clear up litter and fly-tipped waste, and educate children to lead

the fight against litter. The strategy aims to build an anti-litter culture making it easier for people to dispose of rubbish, and hitting litter louts in the pocket.

**It’s good that litter is finally on the agenda – nationally and locally. Stuart and Anne have made a small but significant start in Kent - let’s hope other takeaways, shops and burger vans follow suit and keep our villages, towns and countryside clean and beautiful. And let’s hope that the messages reach current and future generations that litter is not acceptable, and it is in everyone’s interest to prevent it.**



Photos by Susannah Richter



# CPRE'S own litter champion



**Sam Harding has been CPRE's national litter programme director since 2012. Here she talks about some of CPRE's recent achievements and the challenges ahead.**

One of the biggest litter reduction successes has been the 85% reduction in carrier bag usage in just six months following the introduction of the 5p charge.

"It was something we had worked on for a long time," said Sam. "However, I was pleased and surprised at just how big an impact this had. Key to the success was working positively together with Keep Britain Tidy, the Marine Conservation Trust and Surfers Against Sewage and we are taking this collaboration forward in our future campaigns.

The group is now working towards a bottle deposit scheme – simply meaning that when you buy a drink, you pay a small deposit (10-20p) and then, when you take the container back, you get your deposit back. Thanks to the monetary incentive, an unrivalled return rate of between 70-98.5% is expected – this would be phenomenal as 24 billion drink containers are sold every year in the UK.

Sam believes ultimately this will happen: "The argument will be won on resources, not just the litter message, and we are changing our campaigning to reflect this. We need to get the narrative right between litter, recycling and resource efficiency. This is a move away from the perceived wisdom of 'put it in the bin' to a much more complex understanding of resources – which of course are limited and costly. We don't want to antagonise soft drink manufacturers. Our message is not to reduce consumption but to reduce litter."

Sam is also rightly proud of the Litter Action community which provides personalised support to people across the UK who want to do something about litter in their community. This 'parish experience' informs CPRE of people's opinions and motivation to tackle litter which CPRE uses to inform Select Committees and to influence politicians at local and national level. CPRE was part of the core group which advised DEFRA in drawing up the recent Litter Strategy and has become very effective at lobbying, for example over roadside littering.

"People really care and our job is to help them take action. I see our influencing role as being disruptive in the debate, raising the questions that other people haven't thought of. We need to think about packaging as money/resource not litter. We can't just throw it away, we are running out of landfill space. We need to find the systems to capture these resources."

<http://www.litteraction.org.uk/>





# Protecting our heritage a new guide



Kent is blessed with an exceptional wealth of historic buildings and structures, and archaeological sites – from our cathedrals of Canterbury and Rochester and great houses, like Knole, to tiny cottages and barns, and from well-known sites like Richborough and Kit's Coty to medieval hedgerows, ancient trees and field boundaries. This rich heritage is under severe threat from intense development.

CPRE Kent has produced a new guide to protecting that heritage. **“Looking after heritage through the planning system”** deals in turn with listed and unlisted historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and archaeological sites, parks, gardens and battlefields and heritage landscapes. It sets out as simply and briefly as possible the legal protections which apply and the procedures to be followed by developers and local planning authorities in addressing them.

We hope people will find it both of interest and of practical use in engaging with the planning process, when Kent's precious heritage is at stake. To obtain a copy of this guide visit CPRE Kent's website or contact us on [info@cprekent.org.uk](mailto:info@cprekent.org.uk) if you require a printed copy (donations requested to offset our costs).

Our sincere thanks to Rose Lister and Jillian Barr for their hard work on this great project.



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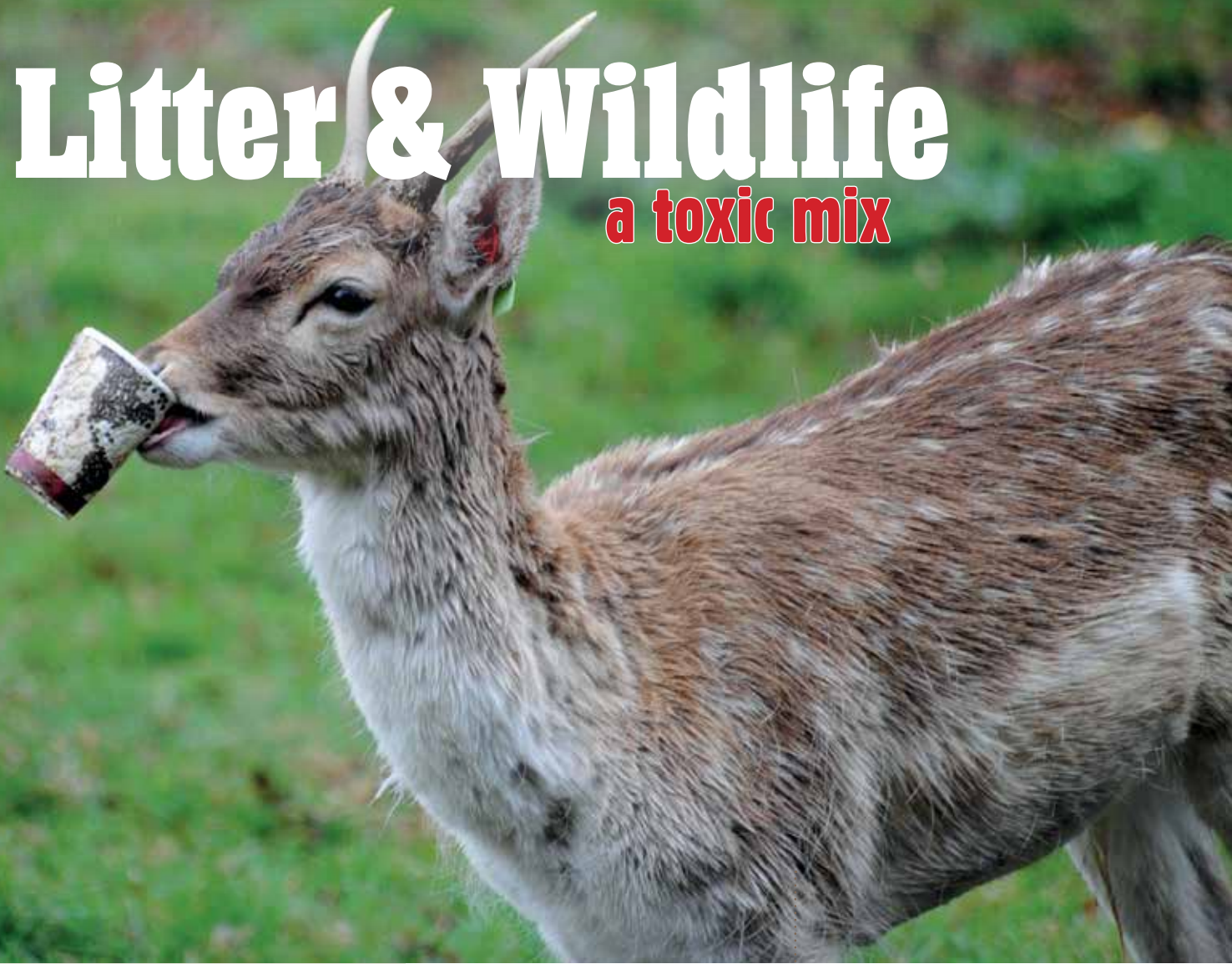


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# Litter & Wildlife

## a toxic mix



**Litter is not only unsightly, it can pose a very real threat to wildlife, pets, livestock and the environment. Put simply: litter and animals don't mix, and what's sad is that this threat is completely avoidable.**



by Vicky Ellis

There are many forms of littering that people do not regard as littering in conventional terms. For instance, we all agree that dropping a crisp packet is littering and if caught will quite rightly carry a fine; however, how many of us would regard Chinese lanterns as a form of littering or letting go of a helium balloon or even going on an organised shoot? All perfectly legal but all result in some form of littering - responsible for maiming and killing wildlife, sometimes resulting in prolonged suffering.

Balloon releases for special events and Chinese lanterns look amazing for about five minutes while they float up into the sky, but after that people walk away and forget about them. However, the aftermath of devastation they can cause can last for weeks, months and even years. Balloons and lanterns regularly get

caught in trees and bushes, or land in fields and streams. Chinese lanterns can land still lit on thatched roofs, farm buildings and dry fields. The RSPCA has had reports of goats, cows, sheep, horses and marine mammals all having either choked to death or died from ingesting a deflated balloon, barn owls dying after becoming entangled in Chinese lanterns, habitats and crops destroyed by fire, and birds and other wildlife becoming entangled in the string or ribbon attached to balloons.

Enjoying pastimes such as fishing and shooting can also have horrific consequences for wildlife and its surrounding habitat. Often dubbed the 'invisible killer', toxic lead shot from shooting can get ingested by wildfowl feeding in the area resulting in lead poisoning. According to the British Birds Rarities Committee



(BBRC) in 2015, 2,000 tonnes of toxic lead shot, equivalent in weight to two million bags of sugar, was used to shoot live prey in the UK annually, with a further 3,000 tonnes deposited on clay shooting grounds. Approximately 100,000 wildfowl (swans, ducks and geese) die every winter directly from ingested lead shot, with lead poisoning accounting for a quarter of all recorded deaths of migratory swans.

**The Convention for Migratory Species has now passed a resolution for member countries, including the UK, to phase out lead ammunition by the end of this year.**

Between 2005 and 2013 the RSPCA had over 1,000 wild birds admitted due to fishing line entanglement; 57% of these casualties were swans. These rescues are the fortunate ones; how many were not so fortunate? Fishing tackle injuries, such as impalement from hooks, were estimated to be a staggering 3,000 a year just for swans.

Roadside litter, fly tipping and picnic/beach littering all threaten our environment in different ways. Domestic pets and wildlife end up with their heads stuck in bottles and cans, feet lacerated by broken glass, the plastic rings that hold six-and-four

packs of canned drinks together can end up strangling both marine and terrestrial wildlife. Discarded plastic bags have been responsible for chokings - plastic floating in the sea gets mistaken by turtles and whales for jelly fish and plastic single use straws have been found up turtle's nostrils.

There are actions we can take now. The obvious is to dispose of all litter responsibly but we can preferably have no packaging or use biodegradable wherever possible, use static candles instead of lanterns, shoot using non toxic shot, use reusable shopping bags or paper bags, buy loose fruit and veg rather than pre-packaged, cut rubber bands and plastic can holders up and support an anti-litter campaign such as the 'Don't Let Go' and 'The Last Straw' campaigns. All it takes is a little forethought and responsibility to save lives and prevent unnecessary suffering.

**Out of 12 councils in Kent only three support the 'Don't let go' campaign banning balloon releases and Chinese lanterns: Canterbury City Council, Thanet District Council and Tonbridge & Malling (balloon releases only).**

**10,545 miles – this is the distance covered by a balloon released by a schoolboy in Alvaston, UK, and eventually reaching East Kurrajon, Australia. Of the 300 balloons released at the same time others reached Denmark and the Netherlands.**



Photos courtesy of RSPCA





# Don't block our drains and sewers!

Each year there are more than 23,000 blockages on the 39,600 kilometres of Southern Water's sewer network, which serves nearly two million homes across Kent, Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.



The most shocking thing is that nearly two-thirds of these blockages are preventable, caused by people flushing the wrong things down their toilets, or washing fat, oil and grease down their kitchen sinks.

## National problem

But it's not just Kent behaving badly: this is a national problem, as you've

probably already seen from the TV coverage about the unflushable nature of wet wipes. Southern Water removed 2,652 tonnes of unflushable items from wastewater sites in Kent alone last year; that's the equivalent weight of 209 double-decker buses.

Putting unflushable items such as wipes, tampons, condoms, cotton buds and nappies down your toilets, or pouring leftover cooking oil, fat and grease down your sinks causes a build-up in sewers and can create blockages – which result in sewage backing up and coming out of your toilet, into your home.

## But what's the problem?

"Sewer flooding can be a really upsetting experience for our

customers," Tim Bagnall, Southern Water's Waste Services Manager, explains. "Everyone in the water industry knows that fat, oil, grease and unflushables are one of the biggest causes of internal flooding, but it's amazing how few of our customers, business and residential, make that link between what they flush down toilets and pour down sinks if they're unlucky enough to experience a sewage flood. At least 95% of wipes are not designed to be flushable, and even those labelled as flushable can cause blockages which can cause sewage to flood homes and gardens.

"It's something that people really need to be aware of and help take responsibility for," said Tim. "Apart

from anything else, there's the cost to home and business owners. The average cost to clear a blockage is around £85 but can vary depending on the work required, and complex jobs can easily run into hundreds of pounds."

### Stop it happening to you

And it really isn't a difficult thing to help prevent; simply put all your unflushable items in the bin instead of down the toilet. Cool leftover cooking fat, oil and grease and then either scrape it into a container, such as a used yoghurt pot and throw it in the bin or put it in your waste food caddy.

These few small steps can make a huge difference to sewer pipes which, in reality are very small – only about 10cm in diameter.

"Contrary to popular belief, mixing fat with hot water and washing up liquid doesn't help it disappear from your pipes!" says Tim. "The only three things that should go down the toilet are the three Ps – pee, poo and paper."

### What Southern Water is doing

It's a huge problem for all water companies and needs real investment and commitment to tackle the issue. In 2015, Southern Water established a five year, £1.4million investment program to reduce blockages and help customers understand how they can prevent flooding.

Two teams visit food establishments like cafés and restaurants, as well as areas where repeat blockages occur. They go door-to-door, offering advice and tips and giving away free items that can help households manage how they dispose of cooking oil and unflushable items.

### Fat, unflushables and the environment

Tim also explains that incorrect disposal of fat, oil, grease and unflushable items can have a huge impact on the environment.

"Sewers and drains blocked by rubbish can create a build-up of fat, oil and grease, and will eventually

**Did you know that in the last year, Kent residents experienced 8,375 blockages?**

**Sewer pipes are smaller than you think...**

Even a small blockage could cause sewage to flood your home



**Put these items in the bin and not down the sink or toilet**

For more information  
[southernwater.co.uk/keepitclear](http://southernwater.co.uk/keepitclear)



overflow. If this happens in gardens, or in areas close to water, it risks the pollution of those water courses and is a danger to wildlife."

The teams work across the south, with the field officers giving talks to residents' groups, university students, community groups and customers and work hard to build relationships at a national level with chains such as Greene King, Prezzo, Harry Ramsden's and Sainsbury's.

"We're making really good progress," enthuses Tim. "In the past year, we've seen a decrease in blockages due to fat, oil, grease and unflushables in nearly every historic hotspot we've visited."

So, if you're planning a few roast dinners over the winter... remember how to get rid of your leftover cooking fat, won't you?

**For further information see [www.southernwater.co.uk/keep-it-clear](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/keep-it-clear)**



Put in the kitchen bin or food waste caddy, <b>NOT</b> down the sink!	Put in the bathroom bin, <b>NOT</b> down the toilet!
Cooled fat, oils & grease Leftover food & vegetable peelings Leftover sauces, milk & yoghurt	Nappies, cleansing wipes, tampons, sanitary towels, panty liners, cotton pads, earbuds, dental floss, plastic razors, colostomy bags & condoms



# Headlines

*from the campaigns frontline*

Hilary Newport updates us on the latest campaigns



## Western Heights and Farthingloe

Our challenge to the unprecedented granting of planning permission for 500+ homes in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty at Farthingloe succeeded in September 2016, when the Court of Appeal quashed the permission, stating that the planning committee had failed to give legally adequate reasons for its decision to grant permission (‘A local planning authority which is going to authorise a development which will inflict substantial harm on an AONB must surely give substantial reasons for doing so’). This judgement is more significant than it might immediately seem: in 2013, legislative changes removed the statutory requirement

on local authorities to give reasons for granting planning permission. Dover District Council has applied to Supreme Court in the hope of reversing the decision of the Court of Appeal, in a hearing scheduled for October, when the Lords Justice wish to consider ‘... the source, nature and extent of a local planning authority’s duty to give reasons for a grant of planning permission’. We await the outcome with a great deal of interest. This is a very particular case which has arisen from the issue of unprecedented harm in a designated landscape, but could prove to be a judgement which may well have significant implications for future planning decisions.



Photos Vicky Ellis





UK Supreme Court

## Court Challenges

Early critics of the NPPF predicted that far from 'simplifying and streamlining' the planning system (see Director's report, page 2), the slimming-down of detailed policy guidance would result in the complex nuances of many planning decisions having to be referred to the courts for further scrutiny. This certainly seems to be the case in Kent, where besides the Farthingloe judgement, we are involved with or aware of some potentially very important decisions which are seeking or awaiting the outcome of a Judicial Review.

Here are a few:

- **Mountfield Park:** Planning permission is pending for a mixed development including 4,000+ homes south of Canterbury city centre. This is the principal strategic development site in the council's recently-adopted Local Plan. Local campaigners are awaiting judgement on the failure of the Secretary of State to call-in the decision to grant permission, on the grounds of harm to already-severe air pollution and the development's impacts on the internationally important world heritage sites.
- **Newington, Swale Borough:** Two applications for housing on a site fronting the A2, adjacent to stretches of busy road already subject to air quality management measures as the result of traffic congestion. Both applications were refused by the Borough Council, a decision which was upheld by the Inspector at appeal. The applicant has been granted a Judicial Review of that decision, in a hearing scheduled for October.
- **Operation Stack Lorry Park:** The decision to site this major piece of highways infrastructure at Stanford West was announced in July 2016. However, all work on masterplanning the site is currently on hold until a Judicial Review makes a decision on the legality of taking that decision in advance of the findings of a full Environmental Impact Assessment.



UK Supreme Court

## Pylons

We have reported in earlier issues of Kent Voice our objections to the Richborough line, a 20km stretch of overhead power line which will run between the Nemo connector at Pegwell Bay and the connection to the National Grid at Canterbury. Its purpose is to inter-connect the electricity networks of the UK and Belgium, to enable sharing of energy and support improved resilience. The project was referred to the National Infrastructure Planning Unit for determination, and on August 3rd the Secretary of State announced the Development Consent Order. Construction could begin as early as September. Much of the run will be supported on 50m high pylons, although in recognition of the impacts on wildlife and landscape the stretch across the Ash Levels will be reduced to 35m height. Although we recognise the importance of improving energy security, it is a shame that more could not be done to limit the impact of pylons on the open, sweeping landscapes of north-east Kent.

Vicky Ellis, Canterbury



# Why I have written a legacy to CPRE Kent in my will!

A personal perspective from one of our members

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

Planet Earth is our support system. When we have clean air and clean water, good land to grow crops on, healthy seas to fish in, good neighbourhoods and green spaces to exercise and relax in... then we, our friends and family can thrive. When natural habitats are preserved and enhanced, our fellow bird, animal, insect and plant species can thrive too. We need dark skies to see the stars. We need nettles and bushes to see the butterflies. We need the blessed English countryside with its tremendous variety of landscapes, so useful, so beautiful and so productive.

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

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

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

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

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

## 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 to CPRE Kent.

Kent law firm Whitehead Monckton will donate £50 for every will or, for a couple, a pair of wills.

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





# Kent Quiz

Tessa Woodward

Do you know the six main rivers draining Kent?

The rough number of miles of coastline in Kent?

How about the name of Kent's only chalk ridge?

For gardeners: what are Kent's main soil types?

Name three types of habitat for local flora and fauna.

Past economic activity, such as mining, has left marks on the county. Can you think of other examples?

Of the 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Britain, can you name the two that are in Kent?

There are seven towns in Kent (excluding the Medway Towns) built on chalk, name three of them.

And where is our nearest Dark Sky Reserve?

Answers on P31

## Christmas Cards



Help to raise funds by supporting CPRE Kent's charity Christmas cards. We still have some of the donkey design left at £2.99 for a pack of 10 and this year's slightly larger card of a robin, painted by Vicky Ellis, is £3.50 for a pack of 10. Both are excellent value for money. Available online, at our AGM or contact the office on 01233 714540.



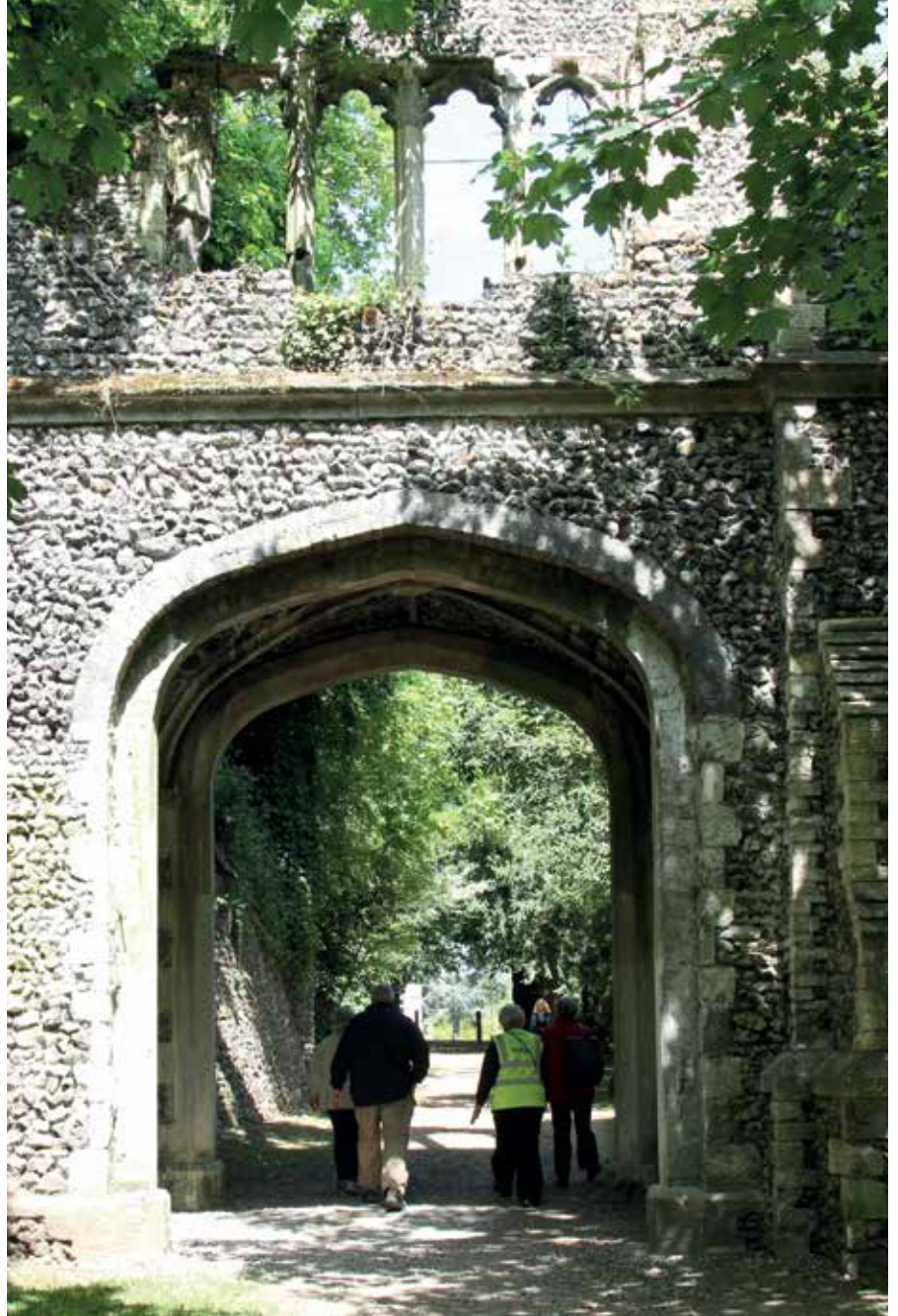
And why not give the gift of the countryside and buy a gift membership for a loved one this year? Also available online or from the office. If you tell us it is for a gift we will even throw in a few goodies to make it extra special!



Paul Buckley

# These boots are made for walking

## Walking for health



*It has been said that  
“Walking is the  
nearest activity to the  
perfect exercise”.*

Medical research shows that physical inactivity now rivals smoking as one of the nation's biggest health problems, and is responsible for 17% of early deaths in the UK. Physical inactivity is the principal cause of a huge number

of common health conditions including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and breast cancer. Research also reveals that being inactive can take three to five years off your life.

The UK Chief Medical Officers say that adults should do at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity, like walking, every week.

Walking is already one of the most popular physical activities in the world. It's open to nearly everyone – only 4% of us need help to walk outside our homes or can't do it at all. It is also a normal, everyday activity and

Photos Paul Buckley



can help everyone live happier, healthier lives. Walking is good for us as it can help us stay healthy and watch our weight, help lower blood pressure, and gives us energy. With any kind of exercise our brains release chemicals that make us feel good. It can help us cope with depression, stress and anxiety. People who stay active are less likely to have certain types of cancer, diabetes and heart disease. It also improves the flexibility and strength of our joints, muscles and bones - and it'll reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

One of the simplest, longest-running and most effective interventions to encourage walking is 'Walking for Health' - England's largest network of health walk schemes which was launched in 2000. It was started by Dr William Bird MBE when running a diabetic clinic and did not have any physical activity events that he could refer his patients to, so he started 'Walking for Health' to provide a local, low cost, fun, social method of becoming active. Running the programme has now

been taken over by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support often in conjunction with local authority Health Co-ordinators, Health Trusts and volunteer groups.

It can be hard to start exercising on your own, so walking with a group can help you get started and encourage you to keep going. It is also a way of meeting people and making new friends.

Health Walks are designed to be short walks to help you get active, usually no more than 60 minutes, led by friendly, trained walk leaders. And they are free! You do not need special clothing or footwear



to take part. They are gentle, so you're unlikely to get injured. There is no need to book, just turn up and join in.

I have been a Health Walk leader now for two years. Along with two friends, who are also trained, we have been leading a Health Walk in Greenhithe. We meet every Wednesday morning at the Community Café at St Mary, Greenhithe and go for an hour's walk interspersed with pleasant conversation as well as taking time to watch life on the River Thames over the seasons. In my time I have seen the benefits that Health Walks bring and thoroughly recommend them.

**There are over 100 Health Walks across Kent. You can find the nearest Health Walk to you on**

**[www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/why-walk](http://www.walkingforhealth.org.uk/why-walk).**

**So what are you waiting for?**



# Local Plan *round-up*



**The CPRE Kent planning team review the latest situation with local plans.**

## **Canterbury District Local Plan adopted**

The Canterbury District Local Plan was adopted by the council in July after a lengthy Examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Now, planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the new Plan (and the Herne Bay Area Action Plan if relevant) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

CPRE Kent is still concerned that the Plan relies on large sites that are dependent on enormous infrastructure inputs and resolution of worrying air quality and highway capacity constraints. In an ideal world, an up-to-date local plan has the benefit of providing a strong basis for resisting speculative development proposals. In this case, deliverability and sustainability concerns associated with some key sites means that there is less certainty about the future. This is compounded by a requirement in the Inspector's report to review evidence on demographic change and undertake a partial review of the Local Plan within 2 years of adoption if the assessment indicates this is necessary.

The Inspector considered that there was a shortfall against the housing requirement in the early years of the plan. He accepted a pragmatic approach to resolving this and agreed that past under supply should be shared across the whole of the plan period. It remains to be seen whether planning inspectors will accept this approach when determining planning appeals.

Air quality was a significant concern of CPRE Kent. In this regard, however, the Inspector was "*not persuaded on the basis of current evidence that the overall amount and pattern of development should be changed as a result of air quality considerations. However, there is a need to ensure that particular proposals individually or in combination, do not result in unacceptable air quality.*"

A judicial review on the Council's decision to permit the South Canterbury application was heard in the High Court on 25-26 July. The Council will await the outcome of the JR before signing any planning permission.

The Canterbury District Local Plan has large numbers of policies seeking to ensure good design and protect the environment, including policies in chapters titled 'climate change, flooding, coastal change and water resources', 'design and the built environment', 'historic environment', and 'landscape and biodiversity'. It is important that Development Management Officers at the council make sure they are familiar with the policies in the Local Plan and ensure that decisions respond carefully to the Local Plan objective to protect the built and natural environments in the district.

## **Swale Borough Local Plan adopted**

The Swale Borough Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) was adopted on 26th July. The Inspector concluded the Plan was sound, subject to a large number of Main Modifications. However, as a result of the Plan failing to understand and address impacts of development (and changes to key junctions of the strategic road network), the Plan has been amended to ensure a full review is completed by 2022.

CPRE Kent agrees with the Inspector that it is disappointing that Kent County Council did not reveal the implications of A249 junction changes for congestion on the A2 earlier in the Local Plan preparation process. During plan preparation it was clear to CPRE Kent that the understanding of highway capacity implications of the Local Plan was insufficient. The Inspector decided that the absence of a strategy for transport infrastructure need not prevent adoption of the Plan. She was satisfied that parties are confident that a solution will be



agreed, and was satisfied that 'do nothing' was not an acceptable solution, since strain on the network to unacceptable levels would occur regardless.

We agree that an adopted Plan is important for co-ordinating mitigation, but it would be of great concern if schemes are permitted without adequate evidence that cumulative impact of traffic growth on congestion and air quality are acceptable. Given the lack of understanding of the implications of development on the highway network, it remains difficult to predict the impact on queueing and on air quality at Air Quality Management Areas on the A2. CPRE Kent is pleased to see that Main Modifications do amend Policy DM6 to refer to cumulative impacts of development schemes on air quality.

Despite disappointment about the level of house building supported by the Plan, it is important to remember the detailed and often high quality development management policies in the Plan and the evidence base that supports the Local Plan. The Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, Conservation Areas Appraisals, Kent Downs AONB Management Plan, Rural Sustainability Study, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the keenly anticipated Heritage Strategy will be important tools to resist poorly located speculative development proposals in the future.

### **Maidstone Borough Local Plan Inspector's Report published**

The Borough Council received the Local Plan Inspector's report on 27 July. The report concludes that the Maidstone Borough Local Plan provides an appropriate basis for the planning of the Borough, provided that a large number of main modifications are made to it.

The objectively assessed housing need is reduced by 900 and the backlog is to be addressed over 10 years in order to smooth the trajectory with a further review of housing needs to form part of the intended review of the Local Plan as set out in the submitted plan, but with a target adoption date brought forward to April 2021. As with the Canterbury District Local Plan it remains to be seen whether Planning Inspectors will accept this approach when determining planning appeals.

For the Lenham Broad Location the Inspector concludes that the housing figure should be reduced from 1,500 to 1,000 dwellings to be delivered between 2021 and 2031 to provide a more realistic delivery rate. Their location is to be determined by the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or, by default, the Local Plan Review, as well as addressing any infrastructure constraints.

The Inspector concludes that the public economic benefits of allocating Woodcut Farm for employment uses, outweigh the residual harm after mitigation to the landscape (including the setting of the Kent Downs AONB) and visual amenity and the less than substantial harm to the setting of Woodcut Farm House that could result, depending on the final scheme design.

With regard to air quality the Inspector concluded that the need to address poor air quality within the Air Quality Management Area at the exceedance locations would not justify a moratorium on development. A main modification to the policy is proposed and includes consideration of the potential impacts of pollution from individual and cumulative development, and demonstrating how the air quality impacts of the development will be mitigated to acceptable levels.

The adoption of the Local Plan is due to be considered by the full Council at its meeting on 27 September.



# Local Plan overview

Our list gives the latest situation on local plans throughout Kent. In addition, each local authority has an old-style local plan which 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.



Photos Vicky Ellis

## Ashford

- Core Strategy adopted July 2008
- Town Centre Plan adopted February 2010
- Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan adopted October 2010
- Urban Sites and Infrastructure Plan adopted October 2012
- Chilmington Green Area Action Plan adopted July 2013
- A Regulation 19 publication version of the plan was published in June 2016. A consultation on the Proposed 'Main Changes' and the related Sustainability Appraisal was published on 7 July and the consultation ends on 31 August.

## Canterbury

- Heme Bay Area Action Plan adopted April 2010
- The Canterbury District Local Plan (LP) was adopted on 13 July 2017.

## Dartford

- Core Strategy adopted September 2011
- The Dartford Development Policies LP was adopted 17 July 2017  
The document sits alongside the Core Strategy and none of the policies from the 1995 LP remain in force
- A consultation draft Dartford's Statement of Community Involvement was published in June 2017 and a full 'formal' consultation on the draft is expected in early autumn 2017
- The Council is committed to starting a new LP with the potential to review existing planning policy provisions, including the 2011 Core Strategy.

## Dover

- Core Strategy adopted February 2010
- Land Allocations Plan adopted January 2015
- A Regulation 18 Consultation on Key Issues for the LP, including Gypsies and Travellers is being prepared. An updated Local Development Scheme due to be reported to Council in September will set out the revised programme.

## Gravesham

- Core Strategy adopted September 2014
- Work on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan is underway, involving a review of the Green Belt. An *Issues and Options* consultation is expected later this year.

## Maidstone

- Affordable Housing Plan adopted December 2006
- Open Space Plan adopted December 2006
- The Maidstone Borough LP Examination Inspector's Report and Main Modifications were published on 27 July 2017 and the Council will consider adopting the Plan at the Full Council meeting on 27 September 2017.



## Sevenoaks

- Core Strategy adopted February 2011
- Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adopted February 2015
- A LP, which will eventually replace the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Policies (DPD's), is currently at early stages of preparation. A Regulation 18 Issues and Options document, including gypsy and travellers, was published on 3 August and consultation will end on 5 October.

## Shepway

- Core Strategy adopted September 2013
- Consultation on the 'issues and options' stage of the Places and Policies Plan was undertaken January–March 2015. A Regulation 18 Preferred Option consultation was published in autumn 2016 and a Regulation 19 consultation is expected later this year.

## Swale

- The Swale Borough Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) was adopted by the Council on 26 July 2017.

## Thanet

- Cliftonville Plan adopted February 2010
- Consultation on a draft LP was undertaken in January–March 2015. Consultation on proposed revisions to the draft Local Plan ended in March 2017 and a Regulation 19 Plan is expected to be published later this year.

## Tonbridge and Malling

- Core Strategy adopted September 2007
- Development Land Allocations Plan adopted April 2008
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan adopted April 2008
- Managing Development and the Environment Plan adopted April 2010
- The council has started a review of the adopted Plans and a Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation finished in November 2016. Consultation on the Regulation 19 document is expected to start in February 2018.

## Tunbridge Wells

- Local Plan 2006 Saved Policies
- Core Strategy adopted June 2010
- The Site Allocations Local Plan was adopted in July 2016
- The council has commenced work on a new LP. The Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation ended June 2017 and a Regulation 19 Plan is due to be published in spring 2018.

## Medway

- Medway Local Plan 2003 Saved Policies
- An Issues and Options consultation on a new Local Plan was completed in February 2016. Further Regulation 18 consultation on Development Options ended in March 2017 and a Regulation 19 draft is expected to be published January 2018.

## Kent County Council

- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which sets out strategy for mineral provision and waste management in Kent, was adopted in July 2016
- The Minerals and Waste Local Plan Safeguarding Supplementary Planning Document was adopted April 2017
- The County Council has commenced work on the preparation of plans (known as the Kent Minerals and Waste Sites Plans) that will allocate sites suitable for minerals and waste development in Kent. A second call for sites ended in March 2017, and KCC is undertaking the detailed technical assessments on all of the sites to determine what will be considered the preferred options for allocation. Consultation on the Preferred Options document is expected in Autumn 2017.



# Around *the districts*

**A quick catch-up with our district committees - 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 – Hilary Moorby

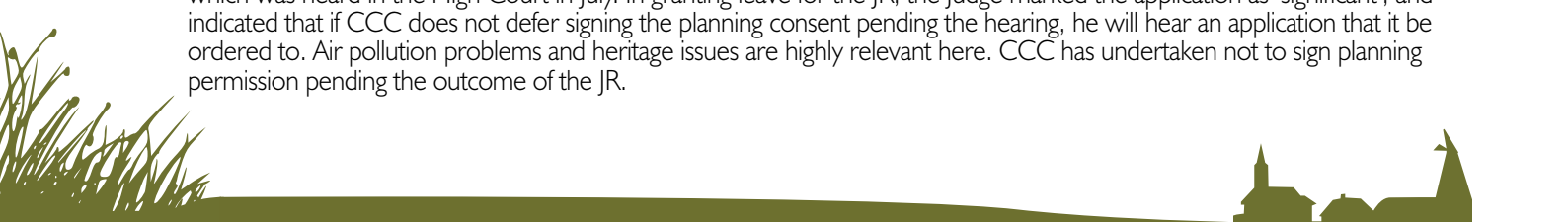
- Chilmington Green. This development has at last been started with new access roads into the site, two from the A28 and one from Coulter Road in Kingsnorth. So far, the lorries are keeping to their designated routes, but with so many sites in the Borough beginning to be developed there are heavy lorries on many rural roads. One of the main developments is in Tenterden known as TENT 1 with the access by the recreation centre.
- Gladman Developments Ltd went to appeal in Smarden, and unfortunately, they won. Now 50 houses will be built in the centre of Smarden instead of the 25 which locals were prepared to accept. The appeal into the Gladman application in Brabourne Lees has now been put back until next January. The latest Gladman application in Charing has been refused by Ashford Borough Council, but we expect them to appeal.
- The second half of the Draft Local Plan is currently out to consultation, which finishes 31 August. The next stage is the final version which will go to the Inspectorate, probably in the spring. We will then only be able to comment on it at the Public Inquiry.



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## Canterbury – Barrie Gore

- Three areas of designated woodland, (Kemberland Wood, Sturry, and Greengate Wood Local Wildlife sites, and Tong Farm, Chartham) have been despoiled by unlawful planning uses, resulting in loss of wildlife, destruction of trees, dumping of off-site spoil, the stumps of trees that have been coppiced (some in breach of the coppicing licence) being covered with spoil plus raising of land to artificial levels. Illegal practices continue despite proceedings in the Magistrates and Crown Courts to ensure compliance with outstanding enforcement notices, and the Ombudsman is considering a second complaint against Canterbury City Council's enforcement failure.
- Piecemeal applications by Mansfields at Nickle Farm, Chartham Hatch, seek to expand the fruit growing and packing operations with caravans for nearly 500 seasonal workers, a licensed canteen/bar, shop and a training centre. The effect will be to introduce residential caravan use, commercial use and business activities into open countryside - all under the protective guise of agriculture. The site contains just a few lovely old cottages; in our view, it should be designated a Conservation Area.
- Major housing growth proposed, allocated or permitted includes South Canterbury (4,000 homes, a 25% increase in population with serious air pollution issues), Sturry/Broad Oak development (another 1,000+ houses) and Thanington (approx. 1,500 units). We await the outcome of a JR of the Secretary of State's refusal to call in the South Canterbury consent, which was heard in the High Court in July. In granting leave for the JR, the Judge marked the application as 'significant', and indicated that if CCC does not defer signing the planning consent pending the hearing, he will hear an application that it be ordered to. Air pollution problems and heritage issues are highly relevant here. CCC has undertaken not to sign planning permission pending the outcome of the JR.





- Outline plans for a proposed holiday village at Highland Court Farm, Bridge, have attracted much opposition. An application is awaited.

## Dartford and Gravesham – Alex Hills

- The Gravesend/Dartford/Lakeside tramline project is progressing well; we are gaining confidence that this will be built.
- The Meopham Community Action Plan questionnaire should be out in September.
- The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) debate continues with a series of meetings between Parish Councils, local residents, LTC Association and Highways England. We maintain contact with residents in Essex, who have had to fight hard to get their councils to help them. We expect more detailed plans in September.

## Dover – Derek Wanstall

- We finally have some good news concerning the speed limit into Dover along the A20, where work to alter the restriction to 'variable' is now progressing. There are also discussions over a lorry park at Whitfield, in conjunction with other lorry parks in Kent. This is preferable to one large lorry park, as control may be generally better.
- Dover District Council is now calling for offers of land to update its Land Allocations Local Plan to 2030. In future, there will be a need to share the load of development throughout the district and consider all infrastructure requirements. Sadly, many residents feel their quality of life is being downgraded by planning decisions: tranquillity and respect for people's wellbeing do not seem to be part of planning decisions. Growth funding and S106 money appear to be top of the County's and DDC's lists.

## Environment – Graham Warren

- Continuing contributions to SE Water draft 5yr/25yr water resource management plan, aiming at a strategy with sufficient resilience to address the wide range of uncertainties influencing future demand in Kent, including climate change, population growth, environmental commitments and post Brexit factors.
- Further progress on a project in cooperation with Leeds University, 'Assessing loss of agricultural land in Kent arising from housing development,' awaits a review of the findings from the initial undergraduate student report.
- Kent is continuing to provide technical support for Sussex and Surrey Branches in representations against applications by oil companies for planning consent for hydrocarbon extraction in the Weald. Current examples include sites near Leith Hill, Dorking, Pulborough and Chichester.
- It has now been agreed that the group undertake a review of local committee micro energy generation schemes in Kent.
- A recommendation of refusal of planning consent for commercial development at Woodcut Farm on the grounds of the threat to the quality of the SE Water public water supply bore hole drawing on the lower Green Sand Aquifer at Thurnham.

## Kent Historic Buildings – John Wotton

- In May, we mourned the passing of Richard Filmer, a long-standing committee member. Richard was a renowned Ashford architect, and was committed to conserving the built heritage of the town and its surrounding villages.
- This year's Gravett Award for Architectural Drawing, sponsored by CPRE Kent, was awarded in June by Chairman John Wotton to Ottavia Profumo of the Kent School of Architecture, University of Kent.
- We have corresponded with Wye and Hinxhill Parish Council, Historic England and Ashford BC over plans to redevelop the historically significant Wye College campus for residential and community use.
- KHBC assisted Teynham Parish Council with the possible listing of the Jubilee Pump.
- We continue to monitor proposals for the Walled Nursery at Hawkhurst, which occupies a fine range of listed Victorian glasshouses.



Photos - Kent School of Architecture

## Maidstone – Gary Thomas

- The LP - following the interim report from the Inspector, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) have issued modifications to many of their policies. We have commented on these in conjunction with the Branch. However, one proposal of enormous importance is a commercial development at M20 J8. A planning application was refused (just) and then appealed: this was followed by a proposal to the Planning Committee (PC) not to defend the appeal, on the grounds that it was likely to fail and result in major costs against MBC. This proposal was rejected by the PC. MBC then referred this to the little-used 'Planning Referral Committee' which, although given the power to set aside the PC view, happily agreed that the appeal should indeed be defended. Meanwhile, the applicant has put in another application, marginally different from that being appealed. There appears to be a desperation to get this through by some MBC officers plus a few councillors. The appeal inquiry is set for February 2018. We carry on fighting!

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## Medway – Hilary Newport

- Lodge Hill, the ex-MOD site on the Hoo Peninsula, remains one of the strategic development sites outlined in Medway Council's draft Plan, despite its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to its important population of breeding Nightingales. The draft Plan remains circumspect, acknowledging the uncertain planning status of the site (its future use was to have been subject to a planning inquiry due in 2018, but this application has now been withdrawn).
- The lack of an approved Local Plan in Medway has meant that speculative applications are being approved on sites which we consider far from sustainable.

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## Shepway – Val Loseby

- The Judicial Review (JR) of the decision to site the Operation Stack Lorry Park at Stanford West has been postponed until December. Nothing can proceed until the JR is resolved.
- Otterpool Park's public consultations, delayed due to the general election, began on 22 June, and we are engaging fully. The Committee Chairman attended a Business and Civic Workshop organised by Shepway District Council and Consultants Cozumel Estates on 14 June.
- Together with the Historic Buildings Committee, we strongly objected to an application at the remains of the 12th Century Hope Church of All Saints, New Romney, which included siting 5 wooden sheds on land adjoining this scheduled monument. Historic England also strongly objected to the proposals. We are relieved that this application has been rejected.

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## Swale – Peter Blandon

- Swale finally adopted its Local Plan on the 26th July 2017. The main points are as follows.
  - 776 dwellings per annum must be 'delivered'. Over the twenty-year plan period this represents an increase of nearly 2,400 dwellings over the original proposals back in 2009. By the end of the Plan it means an increase of around a quarter to one-third in the number of houses in Swale.
  - Kent Highways feel that this level of housing growth can be accommodated on the current road network.
  - About 85% of this increase is to be located in Sittingbourne/Sheppey area, the rest in Faversham.
  - The Government has altered the definition of 'gypsy' and 'traveller' for planning purposes. As a result, Swale need only provide 61 pitches during the planning period instead of the 85 required originally, 51 have already been granted permission.
- The Inspector stated, "I am satisfied that the Plan provides for a 5-year housing supply and that it identifies sufficient deliverable sites."
- The only 'fly in the ointment' is that the Inspector required an early review of the Plan. So, in a couple of years or so the whole process will start all over again.
- Also, the Communities Secretary has approved plans for four wind turbines on the Isle of Sheppey which had been turned down at appeal because of a 'cumulative and demonstrable harm to the landscape'. Swale had identified the site as suitable for such development but now, with other turbines that are springing up, the view north from many parts of Swale has been blighted.



Selling Orchard by Vicky Ellis

## Thanet – David Morrish/Geoff Orton

- The LP's further submissions are being digested; we do not expect a further consultation until the Autumn. We are concerned that the Plan's estimated 30% population increase, derived from the ONS projections, is a significant over-estimate of true trends.
- The future of the Manston Airport site remains unclear, with River Oak having recently undertaken a statutory consultation on the future of the airport as a freight hub in advance of applying for a Development Consent Order. Meanwhile Stone Hill Park, the site's owners, are continuing to progress their plans for a mixed development of 2,500 homes and a business park.

Monkton Nature Reserve, Vicky Ellis



## Tonbridge & Malling – Mike Taylor

- Two main issues causing concern in the developing Local Plan are Borough Green Garden City in the Green Belt (and partially in the AONB), and Broadwater Farm, where the Kings Hill development is edging north. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council are proposing a new area of Metropolitan Green Belt (MGB) to the east of West Malling. There are local fears that Kings Hill will eventually take up the green wedge separating East and West Malling, joining them to the Maidstone urban area. The next phase of LP consultation begins in Autumn, although further delays would not cause surprise.
- Outside the LP we have H+H Celcon commencing an application to open up 9.5ha to the west of their current factory for sand extraction. This is MGB/AONB and impacts two listed buildings. CPRE Kent members are part of a Six-Parish Alliance in discussions with H+H.
- Air Quality Management Areas have been declared right along the A25/A20 corridor from Sevenoaks to Maidstone. This steady increase is caused by ever-increasing development, not least by HGV movements supplying builders. Unfortunately, it seems impossible to get Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to give Air Quality the weight it deserves, probably driven by government's failure to abide by European Air Quality Legislation. LPAs also conveniently forget the 'cumulative impact' clause in AQ Legislation, and assess each individual application as having 'infinitesimal impact'.
- It has become apparent that membership of our Committee has become heavily weighted to the NW of the Borough. We hope to use the driver of the LP to reach out to parishes who have not been involved.

## Tunbridge Wells - Liz Akenhead

- Rural housing planning applications are increasingly being permitted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC), in sites where they would not previously have been permitted (sometimes having been refused permission at appeal) because the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing supply.
- TWBC are consulting on Issues and Options for a new LP 2013-2033, and in turn we've consulted those local CPRE Kent members whom we have email addresses. So far, we have 6 responses: Please get in touch if you wish to respond.
- Five possible options are:
  - Option 1: 'Focused Growth' mainly in and around the towns and Hawkhurst as in the previous LP and Core Strategy
  - Option 2: 'Semi-dispersed growth' mainly as Option 1, but a percentage also to the larger villages (Brenchley, Five Oak Green, Goudhurst, Lamberhurst, Pembury). Limited development within other villages and rural areas
  - Option 3: 'Dispersed growth', with development distributed proportionally across all Borough settlements including villages
  - Option 4: 'Development focused around the A21', close to Royal Tunbridge Wells and Pembury, as a new 'growth corridor'
  - Option 5: 'New settlement growth', a freestanding Garden Village but no location yet identified.

However, as Option 5 involves 5,000 to 7,000 homes, and resembles a town rather than a village, with a population twice that of Paddock Wood or Tenterden, it's very difficult to see where in TW a new town could sustainably be located. However, the time required to build it means it couldn't address current housing requirements.

All other options involve loss of valuable countryside in the AONB and Green Belt. Furthermore, Option 4 may also involve the loss of ancient woodland and/or the new woodland that is being planted as mitigation for the current widening of the A21, including some lowland heathland.



## A date for your diary **Kent Branch AGM**

Our AGM will be held on

**Friday 17th  
November**

10:30 at Lenham Village Hall  
(please note new time)

Details included in this  
magazine.

Guest speaker TBC



Open 8:30 to 6  
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**VOTING CLOSSES  
2ND JANUARY  
2018**

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# Social Scene

## Margaret's outings

These are some outings proposed by me for the coming months, but no precise dates given yet. All confirmed dates to be advised as soon as I receive the usual reply forms, which you'll find are inserted into this Kent Voice.

### September

Visit to Sainsbury's huge depot in Essex. Can only book for 10 people and as several have already expressed an interest, it will be first come, first served.

### October

I am intending to book a day out by coach to see the autumn tree colours (Epping Forest in particular with links to Henry VIII shipbuilding) and other places together with a mid-day lunch somewhere.

### Our Festive Lunch

See insert for details.



# Spa Valley Railway

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



## **A trip on the historic Spa Valley Railway in Royal Tunbridge Wells offers passengers a wonderful nostalgic day out travelling along five miles of beautiful Wealden countryside and it is run entirely by volunteers!**

The history of railways in Tunbridge Wells dates back to 1845 when the town had two stations built by rival companies. Tunbridge Wells Central, opened in 1845 by the South Eastern Railway, is now the sole mainline station, and Tunbridge Wells West, opened by the London Brighton & South Coast Railway in 1866, is now the Spa Valley Railway headquarters. Around 1876, these two stations were linked by a tunnel. Following nationalisation of the railways in 1948, re-signalling and steam finally giving way to diesel, lines began to close all around.

This year, Spa Valley Railway celebrated 20 years of the 3½ mile line to Groombridge re-opening. Since then it has grown into Tunbridge Wells' biggest tourist attraction and is often described as the South East's friendliest railway, with great camaraderie among its members, volunteers and passengers.

It is looking for new volunteers (station masters, catering staff, guards, signalmen, steam engine leaners and locomotive maintenance staff) and holds days where you can find out what it's like to restore steam and diesel locomotives, carriages, wagons and how thrilling it is to help run a real live railway.

The railway's four stations are near attractions including historic Groombridge Place with its walled garden, moat and forest complete with Sky Walk; and the magnificent High Rocks which date back millions of years. The breathtaking sandstone rocks, which were once a stone age camp, are inter-linked with eleven bridges to provide a scenic walk in a tranquil woodland setting.

Spa Valley offers special events including adult driver experiences, afternoon tea, real ale trains, steam festivals, murder mysteries and family character days. The railway is wheelchair friendly and buggies, prams, bicycles and dogs are carried free of charge.

**The 7th CAMRA Real Ale & Cider Festival and Autumn Diesel Gala takes place 20th-22nd October and Family Fun with Chase & Marshall from PAW Patrol 28th-29th October.**

The railway is open every weekend until 2nd November and Santa Specials run from 2nd December. CPRE members receive two-for-one adult tickets (not valid on special events).



Photos: Spa Valley Railway



Vicky Ellis

# News round-up



## Events

2017 has so far been very busy for CPRE Kent, having attended 11 events so far with another three to go! A lovely time was had by all at the Kent Show this year, with the children busy making windmills and our volunteers handing out our Kent Voice alongside free bags from Southern Water to support their unflushables campaign. The weather was kind to us with temperatures soaring at times. We had plenty of merchandise to attract visitors to our stand with many new members joining us to support our countryside.

The three events still to come this year are;

**Chalklands Champions Day project launch; Sun 15 Oct**

**National Fruit Show, Detling; Wed/Thurs 25/26 Oct**

**Green Christmas Market, Faversham Guildhall; 2 Dec**

## Fundraising and support

CPRE Kent exists because of the generosity and kindness of its members and supporters. Without you we would not be able to continue to fight to save our beautiful Kent countryside. Fighting inappropriate planning decisions is not cheap, especially if it reaches the stage of a Judicial Review and all that that entails. Therefore, I would like to ask that you consider leaving a gift to CPRE Kent in your will, after your friends and family. Any gift, no matter how small, goes towards ensuring the continuation and security of the charity ensuring the fight to save our precious countryside continues.

## Other ways you can help

These include a regular donation through our donation button on our website and Face Book page, pay roll giving, joining our lottery (see form on back of address sheet: the more members we have the larger the prizes) shopping through Easyfundraising, a fun way to shop at no cost to you, collecting stamps, volunteering at events and helping to recruiting new members (see membership form on back page).



## EVENTS

Please consider helping out at any of these events - entry fees will be reimbursed. Your support is appreciated. Or you may know of an event that you would like to represent CPRE Kent at.

If you know of an event near you that you think we may like to attend, let us know.

### Events for 2018 so far

Agri Expo, Detling Show Ground	7 March
Spring Fair, Belmont House	7 May
Biddenden Vineyard, Taste of Kent	10 June
Kent Show, Detling	6,7,8 July
Tractor Fest, Biddenden	18,19 Aug
Wood Fest, Belmont House	TBC
WKPM	15 Sep
EKPM	26 Sep
National Fruit Show, Detling	24,25 Oct
Green Christmas Market, Faversham	TBC



## Kent Quiz Answers

Do you know the six main rivers draining Kent?

Answer: The Medway, Stour, Little Stour, Darent, Dour, and Rother

The rough number of miles of coastline in Kent?

Answer: Approx. 350 miles

How about the name of Kent's only chalk ridge?

Answer: The North Downs

For gardeners; what are Kent's main soil types?

Answer: Sandy and clay loams, chalk soils

Name three types of habitat for local flora and fauna.

Answer: Marsh, mudflats or coast, chalkland

Past economic activity, such as mining, has left marks on the county. Can you think of other examples?

Answer: Hop gardens, fruit growing, fishing, chalk pits, brickworks, breweries, Chatham docks, Pilgrim paths and hostleries plus all the old transport links such as Roman roads, used and disused railways and airfields, ferry and hovercraft ports.

Of the 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Britain, can you name the two that are in Kent?

Answer: Kent Downs and High Weald.

There are seven towns in Kent (excluding the Medway Towns) built on chalk, name three of them.

Answer: Dartford, Gravesend, Sittingbourne, Faversham, Canterbury, Deal and Dover.

And where is our nearest Dark Sky Reserve?

Answer: This a trick question designed to get you finding out what a Dark Sky Reserve is, how many there are in the UK and what our nearest one is. The real quiz question would be: would you like to go and visit one?

**Agri-Expo (SE)**

**THE SHOWCASE EVENT FOR AGRICULTURE, PLANT, LANDSCAPE AND AMENITY**

**7th March 2018**  
TO BE HELD AT: KENT SHOWGROUND, DETLING, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME14 3JF  
For details visit [www.agri-expo.co.uk](http://www.agri-expo.co.uk)

Logos for sponsors: Kent County Council, agrana, PitchforkEvents, FCN, and Farmer.

# 400 CLUB



Here are the winners since the Spring /Summer edition of Kent Voice:

### April 17

Mrs A Reader	£40.00
Mrs J Claburn	£30.00
Mr Mrs J Mercy	£25.00
Mr N Britten	£20.00
Mrs D Armstrong	£15.00

### May 17

Mr M Loveday	£40.00
Miss M Cox	£30.00
Mr P Whitestone	£25.00
Mrs A Hone	£20.00
Ms J Kostelnyk	£15.00

### June 17

Mr C Daniel	£100.00
Miss M Cox	£90.00
Mr R Whitelegg	£30.00
Mrs M Russ	£25.00
Mr N Pearson	£20.00

### July 17

Mr M Wheeler	£40.00
Mr O Whitebread	£30.00
Mr L Wallace	£25.00
Dr S Pittman	£20.00
Mr P Stevens	£15.00

### August 17

Mr S Lewis	£40.00
Mr R Champion	£30.00
Mrs A Hone	£25.00
Mr R Hoare	£20.00
Mrs C Colley	£15.00

### Sept 17

Mrs E Knowler	£40.00
Mrs P Pollock	£30.00
Mrs M White	£25.00
Mr J Carr	£20.00
Mr J Proudlock	£15.00

contact us



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 to keep Kent beautiful, then get in touch with us at [info@cprekent.org.uk](mailto:info@cprekent.org.uk) or call 01233 714540.

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