

KENT VOICE

Protecting Kent's Countryside
SPRING/SUMMER 2018



How the Battle of Farthingloe was won

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Hello! *some new faces at CPRE Kent*



Julie Davies

Julie joined us at the beginning of January, taking over Jillian Barr's role.

She has lived in Kent since 1990, having moved here from Mid-Sussex District Council to start work in the Local Plans team at Canterbury City Council. After several years at Canterbury (and a transfer into what was then known as Development Control) she moved on to Shepway District Council and then became team leader at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

After a short spell in the private sector, processing planning applications on behalf of councils across the county, she returned to local government and took a job much closer to home, at Swale Borough Council. After the birth of her daughter Sasha, Julie went back into planning policy and comes to us after a 10-year spell of working on the recently adopted Swale Borough Local Plan.

David Mairs

Thanet boy David joins CPRE Kent as communications and PR manager, having spent most of his professional career as a journalist in both national and local newspapers and magazines. He has worked for publications as varied as Kent on Sunday, YourThanet, Birdwatch and The Sun, while he played an integral part in the development of multimedia news services across the county. No stranger to CPRE Kent, David was Thanet district chairman for some four and a half years at the turn of the century(!), while he also served on the committee of Manston Airport Group and is on the Pegwell and District Association committee. He has had a passion for wildlife since childhood, travelling to some of the world's remotest places seeking out the rare and the wonderful; the



above picture was taken in Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable Forest after an encounter with mountain gorillas. David has high hopes his 12-year-old son Edward might one day be a leading light for CPRE Kent...



David Morrish

David was born and bred in Birmingham and had his epiphany in 1959 when despatched for a three-day Scouts expedition through the 'Blue Remembered' Shropshire Hills, where began his love for the tranquility of the English countryside. He enjoyed a successful career in civil engineering, with an emphasis on transport planning, winding up with

"a proud 10 years as chief technical officer for Stafford Borough Council". In 2015, David and wife Pat moved to Thanet because "it has the best coastline in the South East and a relaxed lifestyle".

David soon became embroiled in protests against the draft Local Plan; looking through the groups involved in consultative planning, he realised CPRE Kent offered the most cogent support and professional advice and made the decision to join. It wasn't long before Thanet had its own CPRE committee, with David elected as chairman. "It has been a pleasure to have the opportunity of meeting fellow CPRE members from across Kent and to be made to feel so welcome," he said. For more on David Morrish's route to becoming Thanet chairman, visit the CPRE Kent website.

Director's Introduction

Hilary Newport



Having been involved in two recent public inquiries into refused planning permissions, the CPRE Kent director outlines her growing concerns that we are living in an era of planning by appeal

I've written many times here about the failings of our planning system, which increasingly leaves local planning authorities powerless to direct the development they need to the right places.

Planning authorities are required to continually identify and allocate enough sites to deliver at least five years' worth of their annual housing targets; in those cases where they can't demonstrate enough available sites, 'the presumption in favour of sustainable development' that runs through national planning policy takes hold.

In simple terms this means that a speculative housebuilding application will be far more likely to succeed, even on a site that might have been rejected comprehensively for inclusion in a Local Plan.

This has not gone unnoticed by land agents and major housebuilders, who know that if a speculative application is refused they can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate for an independent decision.

We have taken part in two such inquiries in just the first three months of this year, giving evidence in support of Ashford Borough Council's rejection of unsustainable applications for housing in the countryside.

We've seen first-hand the extraordinary (and expensive) lengths that land agents will go to in justifying the need for their development above all others, and in challenging the complicated mathematics that goes into the calculation of a five-year housing land supply.

This so-called 'planning by appeal' is time-consuming and it ties up the resources of council planning offices.

The sooner this loophole is closed, the sooner we can regain our confidence that planning decisions will respect valued landscapes and deliver sustainable solutions.



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Reasons to be cheerful

On one of the most momentous days in CPRE Kent's recent history, the Supreme Court confirmed in December that planning permission for more than 500 houses in the Farthingloe Valley, in the Kent Downs AONB, remains quashed. Here our director Hilary Newport relates what happened over a long-running, and ultimately successful, saga

We make no apologies for revisiting the longest and most significant campaign CPRE Kent has ever fought: the saga of Western Heights and Farthingloe.

It began in 2012, when we were alerted to an application for more than 500 homes, plus a 90-apartment retirement village, in the Farthingloe Valley in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), together with associated development at the nearby Scheduled Ancient Monument that is Western Heights.

Alarm bells began to ring immediately; we were pretty certain there had never been an application of this scale for development in an AONB.

The designation of AONB does not mean there can never be any development but, to succeed, an applicant must demonstrate three tests are met:

- **There must be pressing national interest**
- **There must be no possible alternative site**
- **Every step must be taken to limit any harm to the landscape**

We were equally certain this application failed to pass any of those tests and we put in a strongly-worded objection to Dover District Council (DDC).

We also wrote to officers in the Department for Communities and Local Government to alert them to the application and to request that they 'called in' the plan for then-Secretary of State Eric Pickles's consideration if Dover were minded to permit it.

Unfortunately, the SoS declined to call in the decision (and we found out much, much later that this was contrary to the advice he was given).

The council's planning officers must be applauded for the hard work they went to in order to suggest changes that would limit the harm to the landscape this development would have caused.

They suggested that cutting the number of homes in the scheme, reducing the harm to the most sensitive part of the landscape within the site, would still result in a financially viable scheme that would secure the £5 million the developer promised towards the stabilisation of the Napoleonic fortifications at nearby Western Heights.

However, the developer rejected those suggestions and the planning committee resolved by a majority to grant the original application.

This is where the legal challenge began.

After lengthy negotiations with the applicant, Dover District Council issued the planning permission on April 1, 2015.

We could not agree that it was acceptable to despoil a nationally designated landscape for profit when so many other and more sustainable sites were available locally, and when nothing at all had been done to limit the harm to the landscape... in other words, spectacularly failing all the tests necessary to make development in an AONB acceptable.

A legal challenge to a planning decision can only be made once the permission is issued and, with no call-in from the SoS, that remained the only option left to us.

The legal challenge was a lengthy and bumpy ride.

(continued overleaf)



The message from the Supreme Court is clear: our solicitor Kristina Kenworthy and CPRE Kent chairman Christine Drury show their delight after the announcement of the judgment on the Farthingloe Valley



At the first stage, the Judge at the High Court rejected our challenge in December 2015, ruling that the planning committee had given adequate weight to the planning balance and that the benefits of the development outweighed the harm to the AONB.

Our legal team did not believe this ruling could possibly be 'sound' and together we began to draw up the evidence we needed to test this judgment at the Court of Appeal.

That case was heard in September 2016 and overturned the High Court's decision in an elegantly

written judgment that concluded the committee had "failed to give legally adequate reasons for their decision".

DDC rapidly sought permission to take the case to the Supreme Court, seeking to overturn the decision of the Court of Appeal.

The Supreme Court ordered that the case could only be heard under the condition that, regardless of the outcome, no order for costs could be made against CPRE Kent by DDC.

We defended our case before a panel of five senior judges and, at the beginning of December 2017, they handed down their judgment

supporting the Court of Appeal's decision. The permission remains quashed.

This case has been followed avidly by commentators in the planning and legal professions, and much discussion can be found online.

It is an important ruling because there is no general duty on a planning committee to give reasons for granting permission.

However, Lord Carnwath at the Supreme Court said that in some cases there are circumstances when that requirement must be fulfilled: (see below)

Our determination to fight for this site has not been without criticism from a handful who dub us 'nimbys' and claim we are meddling in the process of providing the homes that Dover needs.

However, let us not lose sight of the fact that not one single home in this scheme would have been so-called 'affordable', and the site had already been judged unsustainable and excluded from Dover's own Local Plan.

Its benefits would have been wholly economic, and at horrifying expense to the environment. Indeed, Dover has now published its register of brownfield land, indicating space for more than 2,500 dwellings on previously developed sites.

I will forever thank the colleagues, volunteers and trustees who maintained unwavering conviction, commitment and indeed bravery to see this challenge to a close, and of course our amazing legal team for their expertise and commitment to this case.

But as a parting thought: in this David-and-Goliath case, it is a shocking

indictment of the planning system that betrayed the protections that should have been sacrosanct for a site as important as this, both by the local authority and by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

It means it is ever more important that CPRE remains vigilant in the face of these challenges.



“Typically they will be cases where... as in the present case, permission has been granted in the face of substantial public opposition and against the advice of officers, for projects which involve major departures from the development plan, or from other policies of recognised importance...”

“Such decisions call for public explanation, not just because of their immediate impact; but also because... they are likely to have lasting relevance for the application of policy in future cases.”





Air air!

Air quality proves critical in High Court

It's business as usual at Newington's Pond Farm after the High Court judgment

Air quality matters!

That is surely obvious enough to most of us, but now we have backing from one of the highest courts in the land courtesy of a landmark legal case and a decision that is potentially tremendous news for environmental protection.

The dismissal in the High Court of a developer's appeal against an earlier planning decision is the first instance of air quality proving a critical factor in such a judgment.

CPRE Kent had been in the High Court in November last year giving evidence as the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government defended a planning inspector's dismissal in January of two linked appeals made by Gladman



Developments Ltd against the local authority's refusal of planning permission for its scheme at Pond Farm, Newington, near Sittingbourne.

The whole saga had started with Swale Borough Council's refusal of Gladman's plans for up to 330 homes and 60 residential and care "units" at Pond Farm on the grounds of harm to the landscape and increased air pollution, the latter factor relating specifically to the impact on the council's Air Quality Management Areas at Newington and Rainham.

Gladman subsequently challenged that decision, but the Secretary of State's inspector dismissed both of its appeals because of "the substantial harm that the appeal proposals would cause to the character of a valued landscape and their likely significant adverse effect on human health".

Not content with that, Gladman then contested that dismissal on the grounds of the inspector's treatment of future air quality and mitigation; the decision in relation to the Newington air quality action plan; and the decision's claimed conflict with the emerging development plan for the village.

However, at the High Court, Mr Justice Supperstone ruled that none of Gladman's grounds of appeal had succeeded and dismissed its latest challenge.

Richard Knox-Johnston, CPRE Kent vice-chairman, said: "This is the first time air quality has been considered as a factor in determining a planning decision.

"It had been put forward as a reason for turning down planning permission in the first instance – and that has now been vindicated further.

"Although the developer was happy to provide mitigation, the court was not convinced that that mitigation would work.

"This is an important decision as it means that air quality is something that must be considered seriously when considering planning permission in polluted areas."

Hilary Newport, CPRE Kent director, added: "Special congratulations are due to Richard Knox-Johnston, who pressed the issue of air quality in this case.

"It is now rising up the wider agenda, leaving the planners scratching their heads about the way ahead!"

CPRE Kent, which was an important participant in the initial planning inquiry in November 2016, was present in the High Court as an Interested Party.

"This is the first time air quality has been considered as a factor in determining a planning decision"

Hilary Moorby

an appreciation



One of CPRE Kent's most passionate and devoted campaigners passed away in March. Here chairman Christine Drury remembers a true champion of our organisation

Hilary Moorby died on March 8. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in January and with typical indignation her first action was to write a letter to her MP complaining about hospital procedures.

Hilary joined CPRE in 1987 shortly after she and husband Jeff came to work at Wye College and live in Kingsnorth.

Already a parish councillor, Hilary became a member of the CPRE Ashford district committee and showed how parish council and CPRE work could be combined to great effect.

As an ecologist she brought a clarity and energy to every discussion of green spaces and buffer zones as well as to protected species, from bats to great crested newts to water voles.

As a campaigner she always adopted an approach of constructive criticism that was welcomed and greatly respected by planning officers and colleagues.

Her evidence-based argument and well-crafted, clear writing fitted comfortably with CPRE's way of working, her energy making her a very effective campaigner.

In 1998 Hilary took over as chairman of the Branch from Charles Oliver and soon afterwards heard the news of the large Arthur Ivor Read legacy. She recognised immediately how transformative it would be for campaigning capacity and governance responsibilities.

She probably did not foresee 10 years of work ahead to manage and sell more than 100 properties and the expertise and teamwork that developed with the other three beneficiary charities.

The team became known as the Gang of Four and it was Hilary who arranged their final lunch when the task was completed in 2015.

The other considerable challenge Hilary had to take on was the Ashford Growth Plan, imposed by central government in 2003 to double Ashford's size. It involved serious master-planning and eventually a compact spatial strategy for the Local Plan that included a large urban extension at Chilmington Green.

It was controversial because there was still brownfield land in Ashford after the building of the high-speed rail link, but Hilary was resolute that as the Plan was properly consulted upon, examined and adopted it was Plan-led development and the issue was not whether, but how, Chilmington Green was to be delivered.

She stood firm for CPRE against action groups and personal attacks of the kind that social media has now sadly made commonplace.

The shape of CPRE Kent today and the shape of Ashford today owe much to the clarity and energy Hilary brought to each task, both in CPRE and as a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council, serving as chairman of both.

Hilary will be missed as a CPRE Kent trustee, as a member of the environment committee and as an indefatigable chairman of the Ashford district committee – her dedication to which resulted in her being one of the first to be awarded the CPRE medal, in 2015 – but most of all as a friend and colleague to so many of us.

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 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 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, flytipping 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 becoming 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

Most of us suffer light pollution to some degree, but how well do we know the subject?

Tessa Woodward

- 1 If we think of light pollution as artificial light that shines where it is not wanted or needed, can you guess what these different forms of light pollution are?
 - a) Sky glow
 - b) Glare
 - c) Light intrusion
- 2 Are you causing any of them?
- 3 Apart from preventing us seeing stars, do you know what impact light pollution has on...?
 - a) Wildlife
 - b) Humans
- 4 Do you know where to find night-blight maps so you can see where the Kent hot-spots and dark skies are?
- 5 When do you think the idea of light pollution got into the law books?
- 6 Do you know what a Dark Sky Reserve is?
- 7 Which is our nearest Dark Sky Reserve?
- 8 Which issue of Kent Voice had a great article on light pollution?

Answers on page 31

Insect hotels, bird boxes and welly-boot planters!



Yes, you can bring the countryside into your garden and help raise funds for CPRE Kent by buying some of our nature-friendly merchandise.

Each item is priced at just £10, representing fantastic value for money.

All are available online, at our AGM or by calling us on 01233 714540.



And why not give the gift of the countryside and buy a gift membership for a loved one? 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!

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Buy from us



The dark side of the sun

Developers are targeting the North Kent Marshes for the largest solar farm in the country

The scheme, named Cleve Hill Solar Park by developers Hive Energy and Wirsol would, if built, cover an eye-watering 890 acres of Graveney, Nagden and Cleve Marshes.

The developers say their scheme would provide power for some 110,000 homes. This would be “roughly the equivalent number of households for the Swale and Canterbury Districts combined”. If that’s the case, it might be salient to ask where all that energy from the nearby Kentish Flats wind farm is going!

A possible capacity of 350 MW would be five times that of the UK’s current largest solar park, at Lyneham in Wiltshire, which produces 69 MW.

The colossal size of the Cleve Hill application (it’s about the size of nearby Faversham) makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), meaning the decision on whether it goes ahead will be made by the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, currently Greg Clark.

It is economies of scale and the

falling costs of technology that, according to the developers, who have formed the company Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd, mean the solar farm would not need public subsidy.

It is expected that an application for a Development Consent Order will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in the summer.

The North Kent Marshes are internationally important for birds and the area being targeted by Hive Energy and Wirsol borders an extensive Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar-designated site.

This runs contrary to what Hive Energy states on its website: *“In order to proceed with a [solar farm] site we would usually ask that the land is: Well screened from visibility to people in the local area Grade 2/3 or poorer – we don’t use land that would be better suited for growing food and other crops Not in or next to a designated protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient Woodland, National Park, World Heritage Site or Scheduled Ancient Monument Well drained, with no flood risk”*

Aside from the fact it neighbours an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site, it is also

classified on the Kent Landscape Information System map as ‘good’ agricultural land.

Further, the topography of the area means it is not possible to screen such a vast development “from visibility to people in the local area”.

Anyone travelling, for example from nearby Whitstable on the A299 would not fail to see the sprawl of solar panels stretching out before them.

As for people walking the Saxon Shore Way, which runs to the immediate north and west of the site, the ‘Cleve Hill Solar Park’ would effectively destroy any enjoyment of what is today a rural, beautiful and tranquil area.

It is difficult to quantify natural beauty, but it is salient to note that the site was included in a designated Kent level area of high landscape value in Swale Borough Council’s adopted Local Plan, 2017.

Finally, as we consider some of the conditions for which Hive Energy

“would usually ask”, an Environment Agency map states the “proposed development is in an area with a high probability of flooding”, benefiting from flood defences.

The agency has also highlighted the site as one of the few available for legally required mitigation against coastal squeeze (loss of habitat to sea-level rise). This mitigation, known as managed retreat, would entail breaching the sea wall and allowing the land to revert to saltmarsh.

Much of the targeted site itself lies within the Natural England-designated Greater Thames Estuary Natural Area and Character Area, while almost all of it is noted as an Area of Greatest Habitat Opportunity (enhancement) and as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area.

That’s an awful lot of titles and designations, demonstrating how important this area is to wildlife... and of course for the many people who use it for walking and so many other recreational activities.

Hardly the place for the UK’s largest solar power station, you might think!

This very special landscape is enhanced by an incredible array of birdlife, particularly wildfowl and waders, while numbers of marsh harriers – a bird of prey on the brink of extinction in this country not so very long ago – are high.

Furthermore, the Cleve Hill site adjoins two Kent Wildlife Trust reserves – Oare Marshes and South Swale – while the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds manages large chunks of the nearby Seasalter Levels.

We’ll end, for now, where we started: with Dr Newport, who said: “We absolutely support the provision of renewable energy, but solar panels should be on roofs, not trashing landscapes in an astonishingly beautiful part of the North Kent Marshes.”

How many of us would argue with that?

“If I was to think of the worst possible place to put a solar farm, it would be here”...

the words of CPRE Kent director Hilary Newport after plans were unveiled for the country’s largest solar farm on the North Kent Marshes, an area of international importance for wildlife.



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From the Frontline

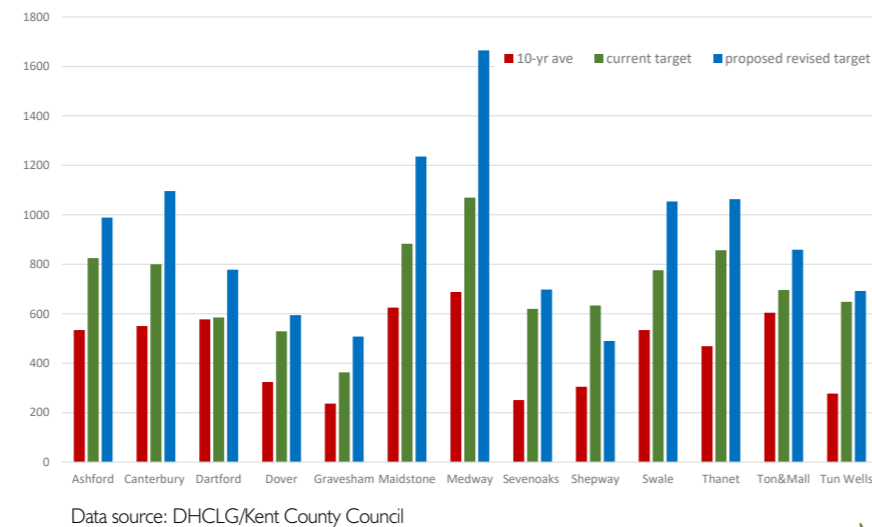


Hilary Newport updates us on the latest campaigns

In the run-up to proposed reforms to the planning system, we (along with every other CPRE branch, co-ordinated by National Office) took part in a government policy consultation called Planning For The Right Homes In The Right Places. The title is quite engaging: it sums up in a nutshell what CPRE wants. But the scope of the consultation was on proposed reforms to the way housing targets are calculated in Local Plans, using data that include median salaries and house prices within a district.

The consequence of this for Kent would be a hugely disproportionate rise in targets, greater than any other county in the South East, while in some regions that should be benefiting from their 'Northern Powerhouse' status the housebuilding targets would, extraordinarily, be cut.

The graph below shows the effects for Kent; only in Shepway would the proposed targets fall under this new method of calculation, but in every borough (including unitary Medway) the 10-year average of housing actually delivered falls short of the existing targets, let alone the proposed ones. Forcing local authorities to keep raising already impossible housing targets is the very antithesis of good planning and we hope that our One CPRE consultation response will see some sensible changes to the proposed calculations.



Garden cities

Kent's principal 'garden city' of up to 15,000 homes and 30,000 jobs is finally taking shape at Ebbsfleet on brownfield sites in Dartford and Gravesham boroughs.

The first planning permissions were granted more than 10 years ago, but the crash in the housing market and the disappearance of government funding to support regeneration of the Thames Gateway brought any real progress there to a halt.

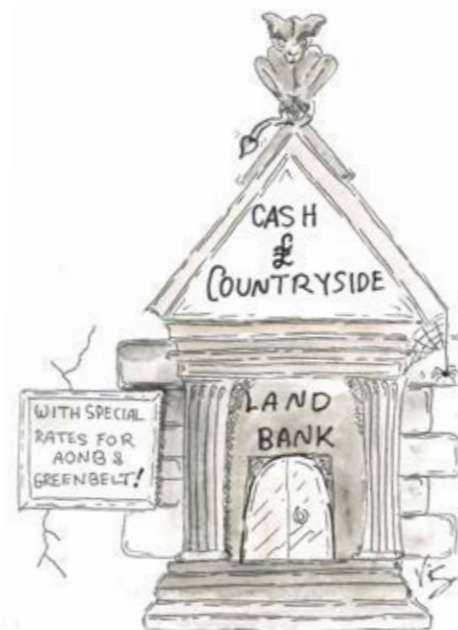
Ebbsfleet is well placed for transport links; it is already served by buses and this infrastructure will be enhanced further by Fastrack buses, while trains to London take as little as 17 minutes. In this regard, it scores well for sustainability.

Less appealing are the proposals for Otterpool Park, a stand-alone garden city being promoted by Shepway District Council on land it owns near the Folkestone racecourse at Westenhanger.

There is much to support in the garden city principles of positive planning and place-making, but we fail to understand the merit of attracting an additional 12,000 households – almost double the housing targets in the current Shepway Plan – to an area already subject to traffic congestion and acknowledged to be under severe water stress.

Otterpool Park is also in an environmentally damaging location, lying in the setting of the Kent Downs AONB.

We have similar misgivings over the proposals emerging for an 11,000-home extension to Sittingbourne, supporting the creation of a link road that will open up access between the M2 and A2, congesting further a stretch of the motorway, which is already under severe pressure at junction 5.



Air quality

In November, the High Court dismissed a challenge by Gladman Ltd to an inspector's decision that cited the harm to Air Quality Management Areas that would be caused by the proposed building of up to 330 homes on the A2 at Newington, which suffers badly from congestion and pollution from HGVs.

CPRE Kent was involved with this case from the start, objecting to housing in an inappropriate location and taking part in the inquiry that followed Swale Borough Council's refusal of permission.

We were represented in the court case that Gladman brought against the inspector's decision.

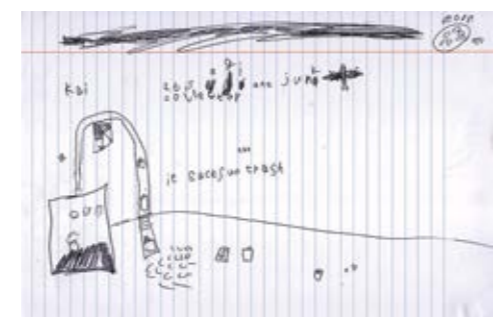
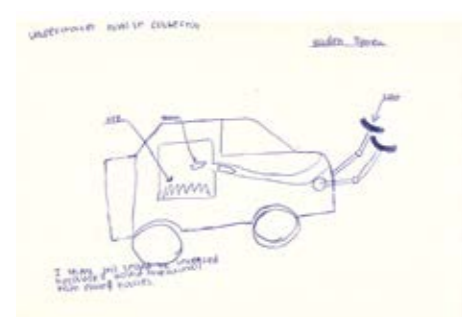
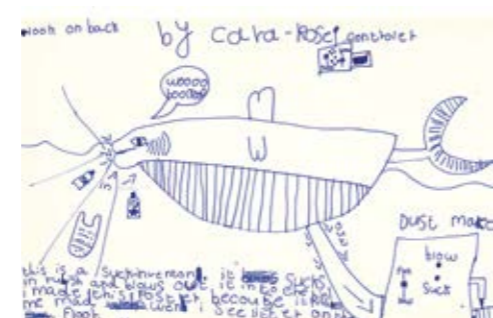
This was an important decision; the applicant argued it had agreed to payments that would lessen the reduction in air quality in the protected areas, but the judgment made it clear there was no evidence that the proposed mitigation payment would actually reduce the use of petrol- and diesel-powered vehicles.



Don't forget to keep up with our campaigns news on our website and via Facebook and Twitter @cprekent

A little look at laying out litter

Our previous edition's focus on litter and the many problems it causes struck a chord with children visiting Monkton Nature Reserve in Thanet. The home-educated youngsters were shown the articles and responded with ideas to tackle the issue – we are delighted to publish them here...



"Produce more paper bags than plastic bags"

To vicky, **CPRE**
My idea is to stop using so many plastic bags and use paper bags. Paper bags are bio-degradable, so they will rot away quick however plastic bags do not rot away quick it can take years to rot away.
by ~~Katie~~ Katie

To vicky kezi
Produce more paper bags than plastic bags.
Increase the price of baskets. Make paper baskets less. Sell pot baskets at a very low price.
Make more cleaning machines for the sea, so when boats go out they can clean up the sea. Put it all the back of boats.

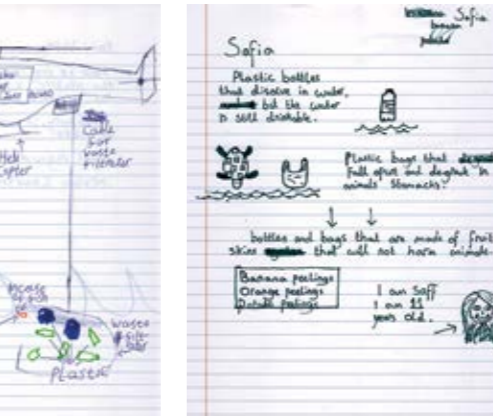


To Vicky
My idea is to make pet toys out of wood and natural fibers rather than plastic or other harmful materials. And plastic can be turned into other things, like making furniture and other things.
Thank you!

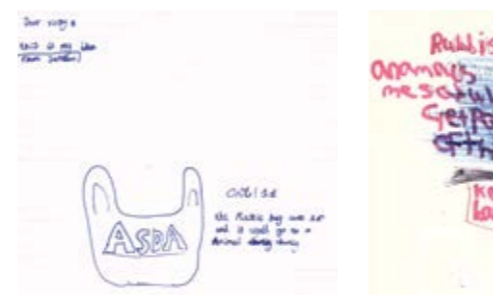
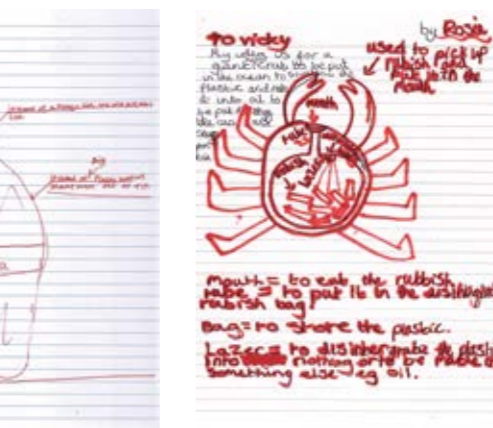
Dear Vicky
Here is my invention to help with the plastic waste problem in the oceans.
Hopefully, it won't be too difficult to make.
Kind regards
Jevan Lawrence

Vicky,
Most plastic bottles or other plastic things get broken and they are everywhere. I have an idea for a robot that can clean up the sea. It can clean up all the plastic and other things that are in the sea. It can clean up the sea and make it clean again.

"A car that runs on plastic"



To Vicky, My idea **CPRE**
to save the planet is a moving Robot that eats plastic and turns that into oil to run.
Phoebe



"Maybe wooden cups & plates would help too"



Christine Drury

Chairman's Update Why we're here...

... and why you're so important

If you ever asked the question 'Why does CPRE exist?', articles in this edition give a pretty good answer. When others want to trash the countryside, CPRE stands up and points to the folly and irresponsibility of what is being proposed. There are always better alternatives: brownfield rather than greenfield agricultural land is just part of getting homes built in the right places and not in the wrong places. The government issues reassuring statements about protecting the Green Belt and AONBs, but in practice these designations are too often compromised for ever-higher housing targets. Kent has been particularly hit in the latest version of 'How to calculate housing numbers'. Even the housebuilders are beginning to say they are not sure they have the materials, skills or market capacity to deliver such numbers.

If the housing situation is nudging towards a little realism, maybe CPRE's work will also be able to focus more on promoting the good development that rural communities are calling for in their neighbourhood plans – and getting houses built rather than having to stand alongside them against unwanted urban-scale allocations that are outline permissions for which the alien visual detail only emerges later. For those of you who like to delve into these issues in more detail, I can recommend Shaun Spiers's just-published book from Policy Press: *How to Build Houses and Save the Countryside*. Shaun was CPRE's national chief executive until May last year. It is great that he has found time to write this alongside his new role as head of the Green Alliance. It isn't often that future campaigns map out so clearly. As we close out on an important win for the

Farthingloe Valley, the next challenge is the outrageously oversized solar farm at Cleve Hill. I have heard farmers deeply shocked at what is proposed. Despite the stumbling progress of Ebbsfleet garden city, there are now another two large garden towns being proposed – near Sittingbourne and at Westenhanger near the M20. Where is the appetite and the capacity to consider properly whether these are sensible places to deliver the homes and future businesses for Kent? And can constraints including air quality and AONB setting be properly acknowledged, let alone the impacts on nearby countryside, communities and infrastructure? So many questions to ask and so many communities to help. Thank you to all of you who already help CPRE in so many ways by your membership, your time, your purchase of Vicky's Christmas cards, your help at events and spreading the word. Thank you also to those who have retired from active volunteering, and our deep thanks to the families of those who are no longer with us. Whether you are an interested supporter, an active or retired volunteer or a member of staff, thank you for helping our work to champion a vibrant, vigorous and beautiful countryside, whatever the challenges.

Do send me your comments:
christine.drury@btopenworld.com



Your feedback...



Letter: Shooting back

Dear Editor,

The element of the article Litter and Wildfowl: A Toxic Mix as it related to the shooting of wildfowl was unnecessarily emotive and misleading. It was also factually incorrect.

Since 1999, the use of lead shot for all wildfowling has been illegal in England and Wales. In England lead shot regulations ban the use of lead shot over all foreshore, over specified Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and for the shooting of all ducks and geese, coot and moorhen wherever they occur.

Scotland's regulations came into force at the end of March 2005 and Northern Ireland came into force in September 2009.

The current laws in the UK are in accordance with the country's treaty obligations under the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

You also refer to the Convention for Migratory Species having "now passed a resolution for member countries, including the UK, to phase out lead ammunition by the end of this year".

This is categorically incorrect; we can confirm that no such resolution has been passed.

Dr Matt Ellis, BASC's scientific advisor, took part last month in the Avian Working Group at the 12th Conference of Parties for the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP 12) in Manila, Philippines.

The interpretation of CMS resolution 11.15 is wrong. The CMS resolution calls for governments to phase out lead ammunition in areas where there is still risk, recognising that it is up to each country to determine whether or how to implement the recommended actions.

The UK government commissioned the Lead Ammunition Group to review the risks from lead ammunition and in 2016, after a three-year review process, decided there was no need for any additional action on lead. This satisfies the UK's obligations under CMS.

Garry Doolan, British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Vicky Ellis responds:

The piece was emotive but not unnecessarily so. It depends on whether one thinks it's acceptable to leave lead shot lying around to be inadvertently ingested by unfortunate wildlife. As for misleading, all the facts were researched.

The article does not refer to wildfowling in any way, so I am at a loss as to why it was mentioned by Mr Doolan. Further, why would I write about something that is illegal? That would be pointless (especially as the article was about legal forms of littering).

I clearly stated that "toxic lead shot from shooting can get ingested by wildfowl feeding in the area, resulting in lead poisoning". If one reads the whole paragraph, it uses the word 'ingested' every time wildfowl is mentioned and uses the word 'prey' when talking about being shot.

We are CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England), so Scotland and Northern Ireland need not be mentioned here.

Mr Doolan writes: "You also refer to the Convention for Migratory Species having 'now passed a resolution for member countries, including the UK, to phase out lead ammunition by the end of this year'".

"This is categorically incorrect; we can confirm that no such resolution has been passed."

The following is a quote from the RSPB: "An international agreement, the Convention for Migratory Species, has also passed a resolution for member countries – including the UK – to phase out lead ammunition by the end of 2017."

You can read more at: www.rspb.org.uk/groups/southwiltshire/news/410816/#gq8Du61E3gxe4b64.99

I cannot comment on the interpretation of CMS resolution 11.15 as I have not read the entire resolution.

Finally, Mr Doolan writes: "The UK government commissioned the Lead Ammunition Group to review the risks from lead ammunition and in 2016, after a three-year review process, decided there was no need for any additional action on lead."

I would say that clearly there is action to be taken on lead when you look at the figures supplied by the RSPCA and RSPB.

I stand by my article and have the research to back it up (see, for example, the proceedings of the Oxford Lead Symposium, oxfordleadsymposium.info).

The fact that lead shot was still legal was the whole point of my article and it would be a little pointless if it was a) illegal and b) did not cause so much damage and suffering to wildlife.

Readers' views are always welcome; please email david.mairs@cprekent.org.uk



Defender of her realm

Eileen tackles a pumpkin, January 2010

In a previous life as chairman of CPRE Thanet, writes David Mairs, I was supported by a small but stoic group of volunteers who battled all weathers and circumstances to help keep the district group alive. One of them was Eileen Randall, who also helped create the Pegwell & District Association, a member of CPRE Kent. This piece pays tribute to the kind of volunteer so important to what we do.

It might seem an irony that the founder of an organisation devoted to the protection of arguably Thanet's finest stretch of coastline hails from somewhere about as inland in this country as you can get.

But when you learn a little of the family background, everything falls into place.

Eileen Randall was born in St Albans, Hertfordshire, and educated in Bedford, but it was her father's love of the sea that brought her to east Kent.

"My father was an old sailor in the Merchant Navy and he had always wanted to live by the sea," said Eileen. So for William Pangbourne and wife Emily life was about to take a sharp turn as they moved to Ramsgate in 1946, taking on a guest house.

Living the dream certainly, but the lure of nearby Pegwell was strong and the family's association with the bay was set in train when the property that was ultimately to evolve into Eileen's Driftwood home came on the market.

"The coastal areas that had been closed to the public during wartime were opened up again," said Eileen, now 88. "Land was being released by the Army and being put up for auction through Daltons Weekly.

"The building we're in now was built on the ruined foundations of the old coastguard station. The blockhouse next door was the armoury, with 2ft-thick walls with slits you could just about peep out of. There were rolls and rolls of barbed wire and deep slit trenches – it took about a year to clear it all."

Eileen sold teas and cakes on the lawn and with help from her father saved enough for a deposit on the building of a bungalow. She slept in an old army pillbox during the ensuing work.

"We called it Driftwood, which was appropriate because we used to get wood washed up at the bottom of the cliff."

Work began on the bungalow in 1960, but other aspects of Eileen's life had also been moving apace: in December 1951 she married Derek, recently demobbed from the Household Cavalry.

Sons Christopher and Julian duly arrived and everything seemed rosy in the garden, but there were dark clouds on the horizon.

In the late 1980s plans were revealed for a railway line cutting through Pegwell Bay and the West Cliff foreshore to Ramsgate harbour.

Linked with the expansion of the harbour and construction of a new port, the line would cross fields and break through the cliffs in a cutting.

"People were up in arms about it," said Eileen. The fight was on...

The first move was the creation in April 1987 of the Pegwell & District Association, of which Eileen was the principal driver.

The plans for the railway line were beaten off as Pegwell residents flexed their muscles as well as their powers to have fun... for this was no collection of hatchet-faced moaners with a taste only for gloom and doom.

Instead, as the association raised both funds and awareness, Driftwood hosted garden parties and meetings, along with outings and summer fairs throughout the '90s. If there was an upside to the battle, it was the bonding between people brought together in a common cause.

It is, sadly, a fact of life in our part of the world that the savouring of any victory for the environment is rarely long-lived – and, sure enough, a new road was now proposed, to be built in a similar cutting.

Another fight, another victory, this time a government inspector

throwing out the plans at public inquiry, encouragingly on the grounds of nature conservation.

Encouragingly... and remarkably, as it was the discovery of a rare algae on the cliffs that won the day. Needing the sea splashing on it to ensure its survival, a new road would have jeopardised that process and the future of this little-known species.

"It is, sadly, a fact of life in our part of the world that the savouring of any victory for the environment is rarely long-lived"

Again, though, there was soon another plan to be fought, this time for a road tunnel emerging on the lower promenade. The association fought it, but this time a public inquiry concluded that a publicly funded tunnel and road to the harbour was to be built.

It was, in a way, a defeat, but the general feeling among residents was that the newly accepted scheme represented the best of a bad job... Pegwell had escaped the horrors of a road or railway line wrecking its fragile environment.

"It's a very special place," said Eileen. "The wildlife that's here and the fact that we have one of the few unspoilt cliff-faces in Thanet... it gives great pleasure to many people.

"The thought of a railway or a road along the bottom of the cliff was dreadful. It wasn't ideal itself, but we preferred the idea of a tunnel and in the end had to go along with that.

"We weren't against the port, but we were against developing the bay."

Today Eileen's health doesn't allow her to be involved with the association, but son Chris has inherited her love of Pegwell and an awareness of the fact that its beauty can't be taken for granted.

"There's a constant threat," he said. "There are so many people wanting to do something to the place, wanting to develop it.

"I remember two of our neighbours getting very ill fighting the threat of development – one of them died as a result of the stress of it all."

Eileen lost Derek in February 2015 at the age of 88, but her love and passion for Pegwell remains undimmed.

One of the bay's most important visitors was Winston Churchill, who in September 1940 arrived with military chiefs to inspect the Pegwell battery during his tour of coastal defences.

What this country's arguably most famous Prime Minister could not have known was that a defensive HQ of a very different kind would one day be established nearby.

It was of course from here that Eileen led the fight against the ravages of developers who seemingly knew the price of everything and the value of nothing.

Those who love Pegwell owe Eileen Randall a lot.



Eileen and Oggle the goose, Christmas 1980

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.

Around the districts

Westbere (Richard Brooks)

Ashford – Christine Drury

- The draft Local Plan will be examined by two inspectors between April and June and, with whatever amendments that result from this Examination in Public, it is likely to become the adopted Local Plan before the end of 2018. It will replace the old Local Plan approved in 2008, when Ashford was still designated as a Growth Area and had very high housing targets but with a compact strategy focusing development in and around the town of Ashford. Since the NPPF was published in March 2012, the borough has been under increasing pressure to accept less constrained development.
- Recently, when Ashford could not demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, many villages in the district were besieged with housing proposals not in the Plan and at an entirely unsympathetic urban scale. The planning inquiries that follow are a huge diversion for the borough council and for CPRE Kent, but at Brabourne and Charing we have been there as a participant to fight alongside the council against this unsuitable type of development.
- The engagement the committee has with the council and the clarity of CPRE's campaigning owes a great deal to the work of Hilary Moorby over so many years. We shall miss her greatly (see obituary on page 9).

Canterbury – Barrie Gore

- Canterbury City Council has invited us to join its new District Heritage Forum, which has been tasked with producing a heritage strategy for public consultation. Other amenity organisations (including our Historic Buildings Committee) have also been invited. The forum is chaired by Cllr Robert Thomas, who has been appointed Canterbury's heritage champion. The forum will hopefully alter planners' perception of the pecking order for heritage.
- An independent volunteer Clean Air Action Group has been formed and, subject to formal approval by the council's policy and resources committee, the director of transport has agreed to invite Professor Stephen Peckham from that group on to the council's transport forum. Stephen has expertise and practical experience that will be invaluable in connection with transport and air pollution.
- We have commented on the proposed change of use of a lovely pub to residential, accompanied by three houses, a micro pub and some tourist "pods" all in open countryside on unallocated land near the hamlet of Chartham Hatch. There is an application for more houses, highways proposals and sundry development at Cockering Road, Canterbury. We are concerned that the cumulative effect of the Thanington changes is not being considered.

Dartford and Gravesham – Alex Hills

- Green Belt boundary review papers were due to go to the Gravesham Borough Council cabinet in February, with consultation due to start in April. Gravesham Rural Residents Group (of which CPRE is a member) have been gearing up for this campaign; the plan is to use social media extensively. We are confident we can reach at least 26,000 people directly. GBC is looking to allocate 2,000 homes in the Green Belt, so it is going to be a big fight. We believe the council should do much more to get the housing target reduced and increase housing density in the urban area.
- Consultation on the Bean interchange started on February 26.
- Consultation is under way on a new cycle route between the Cyclopark and Gravesend train station. We support the scheme, but improvements will be needed.
- As CPRE Kent representative on the Gravesend and Dartford Cycling Forum, and its chairman, I have meetings coming up with the Bluewater community body and consultants working for Ebbsfleet Development Corporation on developing new cycling routes. The corporation is working on routes in the garden city and leisure routes out of it.

Dover – Derek Wanstall

- With the Supreme Court ruling on Farthingloe and Western Heights going in CPRE Kent's favour just before Christmas, the year ended on a high. Many thanks to our legal team and those at CPRE Kent who worked so hard. Well done!
- There is the ongoing issue of the Lydden Hill race circuit and its proposed expansion, which can only bring more noise and traffic problems to

the village, plus the site is in an AONB.

- What an excellent idea to have a war memorial on the Western Heights. It should encourage tourism – across Europe there are several such memorials.
- Developers at Connaught Barracks and the Eastry hospital site are still dragging their heels with regard to any progress.
- The massive development at Whitfield is taking shape and some infrastructure has been agreed.
- The St James shopping area in Dover is nearing completion. This will improve the area; however, much work is needed in raising environmental standards at Tower Hamlets and Buckland.
- Dover CPRE committee meetings take place every two or three months from 10.30am to midday. If any parish councils would like to send representatives who are CPRE members, they would be welcome. I can be contacted on 01304 363610.

Maidstone – Gary Thomas

- We are extremely disappointed at the dismissal of our attempt to get a judicial review of the inclusion in the Local Plan of industrial and commercial development at junction 8 of the M20, otherwise known as Woodcut Farm. The challenge was not allowed to go forward on the basis that there were no significant procedural errors made by the examiner in approving the Local Plan. The planning issues were not seen as relevant in this context. This was despite the information given to the examiner often being less than satisfactory. The key point was that he felt able to accept the borough's statements and included this site in the Local Plan.
- It is unfortunate that a planning application for a 13-house development in the conservation area of Linton, which was not identified for development in the Local Plan, was approved. The site comprises a field that is half in the conservation area and the other half in the process of being included. The case officer made a strong case against the development, but the planning committee took a different view based on grounds we find difficult to support. These were:
 1. It would not harm the conservation area, although it was clearly contrary to the 1990 (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act
 2. It would assist in getting a pedestrian crossing in the northern part of the village – already ruled out by the county council
 3. It would be a windfall site. In our opinion this argument doesn't make any sense: all land not identified in the Local Plan for development has the potential to be a windfall site. The fact that a site is 'windfall' cannot in itself be a reason for approval.
 4. A large house in the AONB on the site of a modest Edwardian dwelling (to be demolished) was granted permission in 2015 in Lenham. The design was for a massive house with very large windows that make use of solar gain. During daylight this area of glass sometimes reflects light like a mirror and at night allows much light to illuminate the otherwise dark escarpment. The applicant has now submitted an outside lighting scheme that includes 87 lamp positions. We have submitted objections.
- A huge warehouse and packing shed in the countryside, not in the Local Plan but allowed anyway, is under construction in Linton and is as damaging as we feared. The promised studies of traffic movements have not been carried out and the road improvements, including Linton crossroads, appear not to have been progressed.
- A landowner has applied to build eight large barns in the AONB in Lenham, to which we have objected. A response has been submitted on our behalf.
- Maidstone Borough Council is looking to introduce charges for the park-and-ride (currently free) while greatly increasing charges for parking in town. We object to these changes as they will deter people from outside the urban area visiting town and affect the elderly disproportionately.
- Maidstone CPRE is looking to involve more people in monitoring planning applications and in preparing for the review of the Local Plan.

Medway – Hilary Newport

- Medway Council's cabinet met on March 6 to agree the publication of the draft Medway Local Plan Development Strategy, which is open for consultation until May 11 this year. This document sets out the options for the most sustainable strategy for managing Medway's growth up to 2035.
- These options include consideration of the government's proposed new housing trajectory for Medway, which would see the already challenging housing targets escalate considerably. It also includes consideration of a new 'rural town' at Hoo or a return to the plans for development at Lodge Hill – despite its designation as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a nationally important breeding site for nightingales.
- Plans for Lodge Hill continue to evolve. Earlier development proposals from Land Securities and, more recently, the Ministry of Defence, were withdrawn, while the site has been passed to Homes England, a government agency charged with delivering the country's housing needs.

Sevenoaks – Nigel Britten

- A technical exercise has indicated the district needs 12,400 new dwellings over the next 20 years – almost four times the target of the previous period – and the question is where they can be built without covering our beautiful landscape with bricks and concrete. Last summer the district council consulted on the 'issues and options' for the next Local Plan, showing possible approaches to meeting housing demand. Brownfield land in the urban areas is always the first choice. Then, one 'option' is to use previously developed Green Belt land. Another, and very contentious, option would be using Green Belt land for large-scale housing development in "exceptional circumstances". Examples would be 600 houses under the Which Way Westerham plan, 600 on the Tarmac site north of Sevenoaks, an 800-house 'garden village' on the former Broke Hill golf course at Halstead and several smaller sites around Edenbridge.
- The draft Plan will be published in June and will be keeping the Sevenoaks committee busy!

Shepway – Val Loseby

- Shepway District Council has published A Charter for Otterpool Park Garden Town. It builds on the Development Principles for Otterpool Park published in the Expression of Interest submitted by SDC to the government in June 2016. The charter was published in draft in September and now incorporates revisions after public consultation and consideration by the council's cabinet. The Framework Masterplan for Otterpool Park is being worked on by council officers with consultants.
- Princes Parade, Hythe, is a planned development of 150 dwellings, a leisure centre and swimming pool next to the Royal Military Canal, which is a Scheduled Monument. Historic England has come out strongly against this development, citing the harm it will cause the canal, which dates back to Napoleonic times. Shepway district committee has also objected to the development, which would mean the loss of an open space much used by the local community and wildlife. Vicky Ellis of CPRE Kent submitted an excellent critique of the environmental report submitted to the council by its consultants, pointing out that the methodology was flawed and the data unreliable.
- SDC has published the next draft of the Places and Policies Local Plan, which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate prior to its Examination in Public. The district committee submitted comments on several sites, including Princes Parade, which is still in the Local Plan despite strong local opposition. The planning application for this site was not expected to be determined by the local authority until after the consultation on the Local Plan.
- The Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan 2013-2030 consultation concluded at the end of March. The district committee commented on the already extensive Lydd quarry at Dengmarsh and Allen Banks, which is proposed to be extended even further into the surrounding SSSI. We are objecting due to the loss of agricultural land as well as harm to the SSSI.

Swale – Peter Blandon

- There was relief when Swale Borough Council adopted its Local Plan. The feeling was that it would be possible to combat more easily speculative planning applications. However, it seems such relief was misplaced. An EIA Screening Opinion has appeared for a development of 11,250 dwellings with new junctions on to the M2 and A2 to the south and east of Sittingbourne. The junctions are near Kent Science Park and the development would effectively engulf Bapchild and Rodmersham. This 'ticks all the boxes' for SBC as it is keen on a southern relief road and development of the science park. Cynics might argue the houses are needed to pay for the roads that are needed to mitigate the effects of the housing... and so on.
- The inspector had only qualified support for the adopted Local Plan and required an early review. A subsequent report proposed a number of scenarios:
 1. Incremental growth on the periphery of existing settlements
 2. Two new villages or one new town – a total of 10,000 houses – around Kent Science Park
 3. An extension of Faversham with new villages or a town to the south, containing 5,000 to 10,000 dwellings
 4. Building around Upchurch and/or NewingtonThe emphasis seems to be on 'garden villages/towns' as it states early in the report that "pressing sequential development into and up against existing communities drives high densities and low quality".

Thanet – David Morrish

- Thanet has a CPRE district committee again, with the first meeting held on November 27, 2017.
- Thanet District Council was highlighted as one of 15 local authorities without an up-to-date Local Plan. In January many councillors revolted against officers' proposals for 17,000 houses unaccompanied by new employment; the proposals were thrown out by the full council. The council has seen a change of leader and change in administration, but Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, is now sending the government's chief planner to decide whether it should take control of the authority's Local Plan.
- Plans for a Development Consent Order for a 'freight-only' airport on the Manston airport site went to public consultation. The CPRE Thanet committee concluded the proposals were generally aligned with Thanet's 2006 Local Plan. We await government's response to the DCO proposal.
- Our working committee started in earnest in January, considering the work ahead on the draft Local Plan.
- We have resolved to press the incoming council administration to adopt the principle of the Community Infrastructure Levy as a way to secure speedier delivery and sounder infrastructure provision and payment.

Tonbridge and Malling – Mike Taylor

- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has deferred publication of its draft Local Plan for the third time. It is still assembling the evidence base.
- Because the borough has large tracts of Green Belt that have been 'temporarily' released for mineral extraction, we have constant battles to stop the local planning authority treating this land as 'brownfield'. We will engage in the Local Plan process, not just on specific site issues but also to ensure it contains unequivocal rules and not the vague suggestions contained in the Local Development Framework, with particular reference to contaminated land and landfill sites.
- Contaminated land: on sites with known contamination there must be unequivocal distinction between remediation and construction, with a conditioned requirement for validation that the site is clean and safe before permission for construction is given. Many of the problems we have experienced are caused by builders treading on the heels of the remediation team, or, worse, a site where the two processes are mixed. The simple process of earth-moving can mix high levels of contamination with clean soil, creating the statistical illusion that the site is now clean.

On sites of known contamination, the developer must provide a comprehensive contamination survey prior to application, and any permission conditioned to ensure the developer cannot later claim lack of viability due to 'new-found' contamination, particularly if that loss of viability results in loss of affordable housing or other benefit. For its part, the planning authority must have a clear oversight of the process – we must have assurance that the sites approved are safe for residents.

- Landfill sites: TMBC has allowed two housing developments on general waste landfill sites (176 and 43 houses), but in recent weeks Joco Pit, where 48 houses were built in the 1970s, has produced an alarming increase in landfill gas, including methane. TMBC largely dismisses concerns that the same will happen at the new sites, claiming houses have gas-proof membranes and that methane coming up in gardens will simply disperse in the air.

This stance neglects two important facts:

1. Methane is a greenhouse gas of an order of magnitude worse than CO₂
2. Methane is generated when oxygen ingress allows buried organic matter to rot. That putrescence will leave a void, leading to subsidence. The fact that these sites are deep-piled and use vertical band drains to manage drainage and release methane also provides new pathways for oxygen to reach buried organic matter.

Tunbridge Wells – Liz Akenhead

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is continuing to work on producing a new Local Plan. We had expected to see the first draft of this published by now, but the latest information we have is that the Local Plan (preferred option) will be consulted on this summer, with pre-submission consultation from November 2018 to January 2019 and Examination in Public from April to June 2019, leading to adoption in October 2019. The two Calls for Sites conducted by the council have resulted in a range of submissions, including some for 'garden villages' of about 6,000 houses. Many of these are in the Green Belt and/or the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The council tells us it is engaged in analysing sites and options for the development strategy; we feel this is a better way forward than choosing a strategy without first analysing available sites.
- The borough's Brownfield Register shows room on Previously Developed Land for some 900 homes (a little more than one year's worth of the housing requirement for the new Local Plan period), which appears to leave a very large housing requirement to be filled via greenfield sites. It is essential that where new housing goes on greenfield sites, its density should be increased from the relatively low densities currently being achieved.
- The borough's first Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), for Hawkhurst, passed its referendum on February 8 and will soon be adopted by the borough council. Other parishes are at early stages of producing NDPs.
- We need more committee members. If you can spare a few hours a month to help monitor planning matters in your parish, please contact Elizabeth Akenhead on 01892 723920 or at liz@akenhead.plus.com

Environment – Graham Warren

- A winter of below-average rainfall and higher-than-average temperatures has left Kent with water-table levels in the North Downs (our major public supply resource) still relatively low, and a warm, dry spring could see groundwater levels falling back into the 'red'.
- The water companies have produced their public consultation documents for the next 5- to 25-year Water Resource Management Plans, this time with an emphasis on more flexible strategies to meet the increasingly fragile balance of supply and demand, and the challenges of climate change, population growth and pressures on the environment. And who knows what, post-Brexit?
- 2018 looks like being the year that produces the first UK land-based shale gas/oil operation, most probably in northern England but Surrey and Sussex are also looking to us to support their opposition to the granting of licences for fracking operations. Expert opinion is that the UK already has twice the hydrocarbon reserves it will ever need, assuming we stay within the 1° global temperature increment adopted under the Paris Agreement.
- It is a good time, we think, to make clear our support for local community initiatives for small-scale solar and windpower generation schemes, so long, of course, that due regard is also given to the equally important challenge to conserve reserves of productive agricultural land.

Historic Buildings – John Wotton

- The Kent Historic Buildings Committee has supported the Tunbridge Wells committee in relation to the continuing deterioration in the condition of the partially demolished, listed Blue Boys Inn near Matfield.
- We have advised residents in Nonington about a possible residential development that would involve the demolition of a 19th-century cottage of historic interest.
- We have been approached by residents in the Ightham Court area who have made an application for judicial review of a decision by Historic England in 2015 to de-list part of a historic park and garden.
- We have endorsed a donation of £250 by the branch to Canterbury Heritage Forum.
- We have objected to a major proposed development in the setting of the Royal Military Canal at Hythe, as has Historic England.
- We have recently been consulted about plans for redeveloping the Hextable Heritage Centre and the proposed demolition of a toll-gate cottage at Brenchley.
- We will again sponsor the Gravett Award for Architectural Drawing in 2018 in partnership with the Kent School of Architecture. We next meet on Friday, April 20, and continue to seek additional members to cover Maidstone and Ashford districts.

Local Plan: 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.



Ancient barn roof, Chiddingstone (Andrew McClintock)

Ashford

- The Local Plan 2030 was submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on December 21, 2017. Examination by two independent inspectors will take place from April 11.

Canterbury

- Canterbury District Local Plan was adopted on July 13, 2017.

Dartford

- Development Policies Local Plan and Policies Map was adopted on July 17, 2017. The council is also preparing a new Local Plan reviewing the Core Strategy. The first round of public involvement will commence this year.

Dover

- Regulation 18 consultation was undertaken in autumn 2017 on the key issues the new Local Plan will cover. Regulation 19 consultation is planned for this autumn.

Gravesham

- Stage 2 Preferred Approach consultation took place on a Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Document late last year. This will review the strategic policy on the scale and distribution of development, allocate sites and set out detailed policies to guide decisions on planning applications. Once adopted, it will replace the remaining saved policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review.

Maidstone

- Local Plan was adopted October 25, 2017. CPRE's application for a judicial review of policy EMP1(4) relating to Woodcut Farm was dismissed in the High Court.

Medway

- Regulation 18 Development Strategy documents has been published for consultation until May 11.

Sevenoaks

- Draft Local Plan consultation is expected this spring.

Shepway

- Submission draft of Places and Policies Local Plan has been out to public consultation. A review of the Core Strategy has also been started.

Swale

- Local Plan adopted July 26, 2017.
- A report on high-level strategic options for housing growth and its implications on the Local Plan review were reported to committee on February 8, 2018.



Shorne Wood (Visit Kent)

Thanet

- Draft Local Plan was reported to an extraordinary meeting of Thanet District Council on January 18 seeking authorisation to proceed to publication stage. Councillors voted not to progress with the Local Plan (by 35 votes to 20). As this decision means the council has not complied with the Local Development Scheme timetable, the council will now liaise with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). A Call for Sites has been issued.

Tonbridge and Malling

- Regulation 19 consultation on publication draft of the Local Plan is scheduled for early this year. In the light of Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on planning for the right homes in the right places, it was envisaged a revised timetable for the Local Plan would be reported to committee in January, but this meeting was cancelled.

Tunbridge Wells

- Issues and options consultation closed on June 12, 2017. Revised Local Development Scheme will be published early this year. It was anticipated that the council's preferred option would be reported to committee on February 5, but the meeting was cancelled.



Early spider orchid (Bjorn S, flickr)



Konik horses, Whinless Down (Paul Sampson)

Cross purpose

Henny Shotter tells how villagers secured national recognition for a cherished monument paying tribute to those lost in wartime



Photos: Henny Shotter

Many of us are familiar with the Lenham Cross, carved into the North Downs chalk a mile or so north of Lenham and a prominent feature when we're either driving the A20 or walking the North Downs Way.

Built in 1922 through money given by the people of the village, it originally commemorated those who had been lost in the First World War. Sadly, of course, not so many years later it was also serving as a tribute to those killed in 1939-45.

The cross has a deep intrinsic value due to its historical and indeed emotional importance and its widely welcomed, belated recognition reflects the importance of Neighbourhood Plans.

That the cross lacked official recognition became apparent in 2014 during preparation of the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan, and parish councillor Mike Cockett was given the job of tackling the issue with Historic England.

Some three years later, villagers' efforts were rewarded when in December last year the Lenham Cross was registered by Historic England as a Grade II-listed National Monument and War Memorial.

The importance of the cross had figured strongly during the inquiry into the Maidstone Local Plan.

Many individuals and several organisations, among them CPRE Kent, had tried hard to prevent the Tanyard Farm North site in Lenham being designated for housing.

There were many arguments against such an allocation, including underlying aquifers and a history of groundwater flooding. Further, the potential development site was the final one allowing views of the hills when approaching the village, tying the landscape of the Kent Downs to the area of gault clay and the Lenham springs.

Finally, there was the loss of open views to the cross, which it was hoped would be considered an 'unlisted' historic monument.

Allied to the cross are two memorial stones, one with the names of the 42 villagers who died in the First World War and the other remembering the 14 locals who died in the later conflict.

These had originally been placed close to the cross but in 1960 were moved to St Mary's Church in the village. There is, though, a bench, plaque and memorial garden still on site.

It is a beautiful spot to sit, contemplate and enjoy the views over Lenham to the Greensand Ridge and the High Weald beyond.

Mount Ephraim Gardens

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



Mount Ephraim Gardens is a beautiful place to visit, with plenty to offer and delight visitors.

This attraction, which has been home to the Dawes family for more than 300 years, is best known for its spectacular 10-acre Edwardian gardens but also hosts weddings and events, while it has recently opened a bed-and-breakfast in the West Wing, offering fabulous views of the gardens.

Close to the village of Hernhill, near Faversham, Mount Ephraim's 10 acres of gardens are set in the heart of an 800-acre estate and have magnificent views over The Swale and Thames estuary.

The gardens feature a Japanese rock garden and bridge, water garden and lake, arboretum and spectacular grass maze.

The elaborate and unusual topiary with its miscellany of birds, animals and First World War memorabilia, is sited near the main house alongside the Millennium Rose Garden and herbaceous border.

Every season at Mount Ephraim brings its own distinct pleasures. Early spring is fabulous, with daffodils, camellias and spring bulbs; then come the azaleas and rhododendrons in late spring, before the roses bloom in May and June, continuing through to the end of the season.

The unique Miz Maze creation, planted with ornamental grasses and herbaceous perennials and wild flowers, is best seen as the summer draws to a close.

The West Wing Tea Room serves fresh cream teas, home-made cakes and lunches.

Every time of year at Mount Ephraim Gardens brings its own distinctive pleasures and no two visits are the same.

The gardens are open from April to September, Thursday to Sunday and bank holidays (11am-5pm).

CPRE members are entitled to two-for-one admission, with groups welcome by arrangement. Dogs on leads are also welcome.

Mount Ephraim Gardens is about a mile from the eastern end of the M2 at junction 7 and lies between the villages of Boughton and Hernhill. Follow the brown and white tourist signs from the A2 and A299.

More details at www.mountephraingardens.co.uk



Photos: Mount Ephraim



Vicky Ellis

News round-up



As well as joining CPRE Kent as a member, you can also help us through:

- **Events** CPRE Kent continues to attend events around the county. If you have a suitable and busy event near you that you think CPRE Kent would benefit from by attending, or you would like to help at any of the events, then please do let us know in the office. We will need volunteers for the Kent County Show this year. CPRE Kent will meet the cost of entry – all we ask is that you give us two or three hours of your time, either in the morning or the afternoon.
- **Fundraising** You can donate a small amount each month or a one-off payment through payroll giving to CPRE Kent. Donations are deducted before tax so each £1 you give will only cost you 80p (or 60p if you are a higher-rate taxpayer). You save as you are taxed after the deductions, reducing the tax you pay. www.payrollgiving.co.uk
- **Lottery 2018** Our lottery is one of the main ways CPRE Kent raises funds. It's fun, lasts all year and you don't have to be a member of CPRE Kent to participate – it is open to all. If you would like a form, you can download one from our website. Prizes range from £20 to £150.
- **Legacies** CPRE Kent would not be able to function and be as successful as we are at saving our beautiful countryside if it were not for the generosity and thoughtfulness of our supporters. One of the ways our supporters like to help is with a gift. After friends and family, please consider CPRE Kent in your will and help us to continue our vital work of preserving our wonderful landscape for future generations to enjoy and protecting the biodiversity that makes our countryside so vibrant.

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 at which you would like to represent CPRE Kent.

Events for 2018 so far...

Dates for your diary

Spring Fair, Belmont House	Monday, May 7
Taste of Kent, Biddenden Vineyard	Sunday, June 10
Kent County Show, Detling	Friday to Sunday, July 6-8
Biddenden Tractorfest and Country Fair	Saturday and Sunday, August 18-19
West Kent Ploughing Match	Saturday, September 15
East Kent Ploughing Match	Wednesday, September 26
Green Christmas Fair	Faversham, date TBC



Open 8:30 till 6
Monday to Saturday
8:30 till 5 Sundays

Award Winning

Chilham Farm Shop & Plant Centre
Canterbury Road Chilham
& Chilham Post Office
Tel: 01227 730348
www.chilhamshop.com.uk

Light Quiz answers

- a) Sky glow is the pinky-orange light you see from a distance at night over towns and cities
 - Glare is the uncomfortable brightness of a light source (such as a security spotlight)
 - Light intrusion is light that spills beyond the property where its source is located and through windows and curtains
- 2 Only you can answer this question!

3 a) It disrupts wildlife migration, reproduction, feeding and resting patterns

b) It disrupts our sleeping patterns, our body clock regulator, our production of melatonin... and more

4 Type the following into your browser

<https://cprekent.org.uk/environment/new-interactive-maps-offer-detailed-ever-picture-englands-light-pollution-dark-skies/>

5 Light pollution became a statutory nuisance in 2006

6 Public or private land possessing an exceptional quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural, educational and cultural heritage and for public enjoyment. It usually consists of a core area and a peripheral area

7 Our nearest Dark Sky Reserve is the South Downs National Park in Sussex

8 See Light Pollution by Susannah Richter in Kent Voice, Autumn/Winter 2016, pp10-11

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 or call 01233 714540.

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400 CLUB 

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

October 17

Mr K Dare	£40
Mrs M Price	£30
Mrs P Darby	£25
Mrs C Colley	£20
Mr D Gardner	£15

November 17

Mr E Sweeny	£40
Mrs A Reader	£30
Mr J Baxter	£25
Dr F Simpson	£15
Mr D Gardner	£15

December 17

Mr J Gandon	£160
Mr & Mrs Mercy	£150
Mr L Wallace	£70
Mrs J Clabburn	£30
Mr J Proudlock	£25

January 18

Mr & Mrs Williams	£50
Mr M Loveday	£30
Mr J Gordon	£20
Mr M Corfe	£20

February 18

Ms McFarlane	£50
Mrs A Hone	£30
Mr L Wallace	£20
Mr & Mrs M Williams	£20

March 18

Dr F Simpson	£50
Mr N Pearson	£30
Mr D Gardner	£20
Mrs G Scales	£20

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

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

Noise and light pollution are destroying the tranquility 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.



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

Title	Full name		
Address			
			Postcode
Telephone	email		

We would like to update you on our campaigns and fundraising. If you would prefer not to receive any communication then please call 0800 163680 or email supporterservices@cpre.org.uk

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

Phone		Email	
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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)

Direct debit is the easiest way to pay and helps us plan our work. Membership starts at £3 per month but you may like to give more.

I wish to give the monthly amount of £3 £5 £10 I'd rather pay £ per month/quarter/year (delete as appropriate)
Please complete the Direct Debit form below and Gift Aid if applicable.

Boost your donation by 25p to every £1 you donate. Simply tick the box below and complete the declaration below. Thank you!



Please treat as Gift Aid all donations and subscriptions I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Full name	
Signature	
Date	

If your circumstances change, or you want to cancel your declaration, please contact us on 0800 163680

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).

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit

Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

To: The Manager	Bank/building society
Address	
Postcode	

Name(s) of account holder(s)

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Bank/building society account number

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Branch sort code

--	--	--	--	--

Service user number

7	2	4	2	4	5
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Reference (for office use only)

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Instruction to your bank or building society
 Please pay CPRE Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with CPRE and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s)	
Date	

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

Please complete this form & return to **CPRE Supporter Services, Freepost RTCK-UBXX-BBCR, 5 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ.** Campaign to Protect Rural England, a company limited by guarantee, registered in England 4302973. Registered charity number 1089685