

# KENT VOICE

Protecting Kent's Countryside  
SPRING/SUMMER 2015

**Focus on Lenham  
- neighbourhood  
planning in action**

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# Free Biomass Boiler

including installation & servicing for 7 years

The most cost effective renewable energy proposition in the market place today

## Sprint Fuels

Sprint Fuels is a well established, well respected local company that has been supplying renewable energy solutions to clients in both the domestic sector and the commercial arena for a number of years. Having recently partnered with an investment group, Sprint Fuels is now able to offer domestic homeowners not only a free biomass boiler with free installation by a fully skilled engineer, but also free servicing and maintenance for the first 7 years.

## Will my home qualify?

The key to eligibility for this offer is that the boiler must only be heating a single property, have had the Green Deal Assessment (GDA) carried out and been provided with an Energy Performance Certificate - an EPC. Along with this your property needs to have a minimum of 250mm of loft insulation, cavity wall insulation (where possible), and have a minimum energy demand of 20,000kwh/a.

## What's next?

Not sure if your home qualifies? Then simply contact us and we can talk you through the requirements in more detail. If your home qualifies a member of the team will arrange to visit your home to discuss with you possible sites for the boiler and pellet storage. They will also be able to offer you a clear explanation of the potential fuel savings, along with answering any questions you may have.

## 5 reasons why you should consider biomass energy

1 Biomass boilers offer one of the best ways for domestic property owners to significantly reduce their carbon footprint.

2 Wood pellets are significantly cheaper than other, traditional forms of energy. In some instances homeowners have saved up to 50% of their annual fuel costs - on average most properties can c. £400 pa.

3 There are a growing number of sellers of wood pellets; sourcing them from your local area will enable you to boost not only the environmental benefits of your energy choice but also to support your local economy.

4 The installation of a biomass boiler will cause minimal disruption to your home, the boilers are easy to use and require minimal management.

5 Biomass energy is a clean fuel - the ash that is generated can be used as garden fertiliser and the smoke is difficult to see or smell.

# Director's Introduction

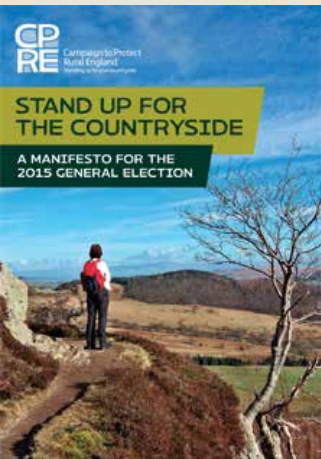


Hilary Newport

As I write this, the country is gearing up for the next general election and prospective candidates of all colours are trying to convince us that their policies are worth our vote. There have been major changes to the planning system in recent years, but these have collectively failed to address the fundamental principles of what we want planning to achieve. Reforms begun under the Labour administration's Sustainable Communities Plan have evolved into the current planning regime, ostensibly intended to ensure that we deliver the 'goods' that society needs while minimising the 'bads'. In fact we are achieving neither; we are failing to deliver the affordable housing that is so desperately needed, and we are also failing to protect some of our most precious countryside. It seems as though recession inevitably leads to the planning system being blamed for holding back economic development.

Achieving this would mean a genuine national commitment to 'brownfield first' policies, allowing planning authorities to direct development to where it is most needed, rather than where it is most profitable for developers to roll out across major greenfield sites. Tax breaks to incentivise the clean-up of brownfield sites might be a simple way to check the outward sprawl of suburbia while our run-down town and city centres are starved of investment.

It would also mean a commitment to smarter planning which will enable people to make more sustainable decisions on transport and energy use. And it might mean a bottom-up review of planning that actually addressed what the planning system is for; making the places where we live **great** places to live.



CPRE's 2015 Election Manifesto makes some simple 'asks' for the better protection of our countryside under the next government:

- the right housing in the right places
- the right infrastructure, for the right reasons
- a beautiful countryside to sustain us all

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Teynham Parish Council



Vicky Ellis



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CPRE Kent is grateful for support from Headley Brothers



The South East is heavily under pressure for airport expansion – at Gatwick or Heathrow – and the impact could be devastating, on the environment, infrastructure, demand for housing and noise. CPRE Kent Director Hilary Newport says we must wake up to this threat to our beautiful and tranquil countryside.

# AVIATION EXPANSION - *a wake up call*



Gatwick airport by Stav via flickr

We heaved a sigh of relief last year when the Airports Commission finally made public its decision not to recommend a new hub airport in the Thames Estuary.

The environmental impacts of an airport, not to mention the transport and housing that would be needed to accommodate the staff and passengers of such a new hub, would be devastating in an area of such significant importance for biodiversity.

## No reprieve

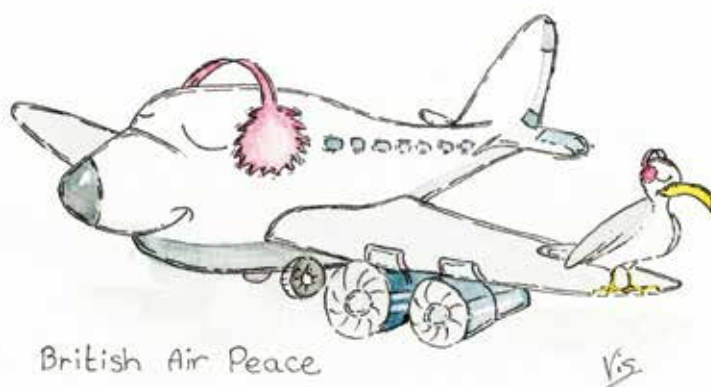
But of course the reprieve for the Thames Estuary came at the expense of increased scrutiny on

expansion at either Heathrow or Gatwick, and, to that end, the Airports Commission opened its consultation on these options in late 2014. Our response, in common with many others, was that expansion at neither of these airports could be justified. More intense use of our existing airspace can only result in an unacceptable increase in noise nuisance.

Recent events have provided a stark example of the potential impact of increased aviation use. The National Air Traffic Services, who control our airspace and oversee the safe separation of airborne planes, began a trial of high-precision navigation systems (known as PR-NAV) last summer. While these provided relief to some people previously affected by occasional aircraft noise from the more dispersed flight paths, the more concentrated flight paths have caused serious visual and noise intrusion to some communities.



Springtime in the Weald - Scott Davies



## Preserve the landscape

The rural context of Kent is important: 85% of the county is classified as rural. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) covers 23% of the county and is 250m above sea level at Toys Hill near Sevenoaks. The High Weald AONB stretches over 1400 sq miles in Kent, Surrey and East and West Sussex. A common feature of both is that a core part of their statutory management plans is to preserve and enhance the beauty and character of their landscape and heritage, with appropriate economic and social development in line with this character.

The visual and noise intrusion of the new flight paths is not only contrary to those statutory requirements; it has made all communities and campaigning organisations

extremely concerned that runway expansion would make this damage a great deal worse and could severely affect people's quality of life. Not only are Kent's tranquil areas under assault; economically important heritage assets such as Hever Castle and Penshurst Place already suffer aircraft noise, sometimes at a rate of one plane per minute, which would be made far worse by any of the plans for runway expansion.

### From west to east

While parts of west Kent suffer the immediate impact of the Gatwick flight paths, the PR-NAV system also affects areas further east, particularly Detling, which is now under a key control path for flights to Heathrow. Detling is 200m above sea level in the Kent Downs AONB. The direct effect of the far more intrusive flight paths

happening now has made CPRE Kent even more certain that the impact of an additional runway at either Heathrow or Gatwick cannot and will not be mitigated adequately, and therefore should not be built.

We believe that it is possible to evolve aviation operations in ways that release capacity which should be shifted to high speed rail, or larger aircraft and more point-to-point journeys.

The South East has excellent rail and ferry links to the continent and use of these should be maximised. We also believe that to focus aviation growth on London, which already has so many runways, is wrong for the UK. It will cause great pressure to build on greenfield sites and reinforce the north-south divide.



Image - CPRE



# The answer always lies in the soil

## Whither Farming in the 21st Century

Drill rear  
© Frontier Agriculture



by **Robert Boyd-Howell**

Farming is in a state of flux, under pressure to grow more to feed an expanding global population while productive land is covered by houses and solar farms. Knowledgeable farmer Robert Boyd-Howell reviews the state of agriculture in Britain and Kent, and ponders what the future holds.

After 50 harvests, the basics of production have changed little - seedbed prepared, seed sown, fertilizer applied and weeds controlled, crop harvested.

However, the methods have undergone the fastest changes in the history of farming.

Plant breeding has been one of the main drivers of increasing yield and disease resistance - in 1965 the average wheat yield was 3.3 tonnes a hectare; today, some farmers produce 14t/ha on their best land and the average is fast approaching 8t/ha.

This trend reached a plateau in the 1980s despite new and better fungicides, higher yielding varieties and precision farming methods.

Harvest 2014 was one of the best

for years – on my farm I achieved 10t/ha of winter wheat. The simple reason is weather. Despite technical advances, field crops still need a benign climate.

### **iPads**

I now have a computer program that records via iPads every operation from sprayer, drill, fertilizer distributor or combine harvester.

The precise levels of potash, potassium, magnesium and the PH level of my land - ascertained by a quad fitted with GPS - are also in the system.

Information on produce taken off the field is sent to my computer by the combine harvester, the programme then calculates the nutrient requirements of each field and creates a map showing where



the product is required, which is then delivered and spread via a tractor computer.

The same technology is used to alter the rate seeds are sown, as more fertile and loamy soils need fewer than heavy clays.

Similar programmes are used to apply nitrogen fertilizers in the spring, involving infra-red photographs from a satellite at 10-day intervals.

### Resistant

Fungicides used to treat the main yield-robbing diseases have improved. But efficacy fades after years of commercial use. Pathogens become resistant and results can be disappointing.

Some varieties of cereals, beans and oilseeds have better natural resistance to diseases - this helps, but ALL need a robust fungicide programme to perform to their best.

An agrochemical distributor used some of my plots of winter wheat to assess the effectiveness of fungicides. Plots that received none, even on varieties resistant to fungal diseases, looked sick by the end of June.

GM crops are not allowed in the EU, but hybrid barleys and wheats



Quad and worker © Frontier Agriculture

are. I grew 20 hectares of the latter this year and achieved a remarkable 10.87 t/ha, whereas a conventional crop did just 9t/ha. However the hybrid needed much closer management.

One of the major problems combinable crop farmers face is resistance of weeds to herbicides. Blackgrass can decimate wheat yields - it is peculiar to the UK, and will be an ever-increasing challenge as the cost of developing new products is prohibitive with the relatively small market.

*One of the major problems combinable crop farmers face is resistance of weeds to herbicides.*

### Guesses

What will not help is the EU's possible withdrawal of two of the most effective chemicals we have used for years. If this was based on science rather than political whim, there could be a reasoned debate. But that does not seem an option.

### There are other big changes.

**1** The sheer size and technology of the machinery fitted with GPS and telematics - the combine harvesting on my farm can cut 600 tonnes of wheat a day. Telematics warn of any faults, advise the best settings for moisture and yield and know the field weather conditions. The operative still has plenty to do managing the computerised systems, and flat crops still need a skilful operative to rescue them.

**2** The days of a "farm labourer" in a tied cottage are long past - operatives legally need high levels of knowledge and qualifications before they can operate machinery and apply fertilizers and chemicals. They command high salaries and benefits.

**3** Compliance and regulations - I employ a specialist company to check this. I have to record seed rate, chemical dressing, type of crop, variety, where the seed was sourced, royalties paid and dates drilled.

Crop spraying - I record date, time, weather, reason for using a product, where purchased, chemicals used and rates applied, watering, operator's name and qualifications, and disposal of residues. All this has to be approved by a qualified agronomist.



© James Waghorn, flickr



Main drill © Frontier Agriculture

Fertilisers - N Max and nutrient management plans, soil analysis, product type and rate, reasons and, again, approved by a qualified agronomist.

**4** Size of Farms - most farm sizes are increasing because of economies of scale, especially on combinable cropping farms where one combine can harvest 1,500 ha in a season and a 36-metre crop sprayer can cover 400 ha a day.

The rising cost of buying and maintaining machinery on traditional 400/600 ha cropping farms means farmers either share costs by joining together or employ a contractor. Average farm size will increase - a 1,600 ha combinable cropping farm can now function with just three full time employees, plus extra drivers at harvest.

**5** Farm Support - All farms over five hectares were eligible for the Single Farm Payment, now replaced by the Basic Payment Scheme. I estimate it will be worth £200/ha. Under the scheme, 5% of the land will have to be in "greening" options and at least three crop types grown. This side of farming is getting unnecessarily complicated.

### **Thanet Earth**

Thanet Earth and the polytunnel fruit industry are examples of the future for certain crops. They require eye-watering capital investment and are at the cutting edge of plant technology and hydroponic growing methods. They also need large numbers of crop-pickers.

There is a myth that people from Eastern Europe are badly paid. I grow raspberry canes and know workers can earn up to £120 a day. It seems these jobs are not wanted by our own citizens.

This, coupled with supermarkets dictating prices and cutting producer margins, has drastically reduced the number of soft fruit producers.

Dairy farmers face a similar squeeze. Herds of more than 500 cows are commonplace and many are 1,000+. I fear the days of 100 or fewer will soon be over, a number that in 1965 was considered large.

### **Middle classes**

The rise of the middle classes, and adoption of western diets in China, India, South East Asia, South America, the Middle East and parts of Africa has transformed the market.

A recent example is the explosion of sales from nothing to millions of tortilla chips and wraps in South America in just a few years.

As the world population grows and becomes more affluent, it will be difficult to keep pace with demand using traditional farming methods.

However I am confident that mankind's inherent ingenuity will resolve problems and the world will never starve - providing the new methods and technological advances are embraced in the EU with the same enthusiasm as developing nations.

### **Good news for the environment**

One of my environmental areas is now full of traditional wild flowers and grasses in summer. After years of arable cropping, I left the field fallow and mowed it, regularly at first and now annually. I did not reseed it. This year the area was full of small saplings, which I will cut, in agreement with Natural England.

However, it just shows that if land is taken out of production, it soon reverts to natural woodland. A small area adjacent to one of my fields was left fallow in 1970. It is now woodland. You would assume it had always been there.







# Chairman's Update

Christine Drury

Back to normal this winter? Perhaps, although there was a brief sharp reminder in January as some streets became rivers. Adapting to climate change is becoming part of everyday life: emergency planning in rural parishes and towns; LED light bulbs at home. Solar panels appearing on many more new homes: so much better than precious agricultural land being used as energy factories.

It is good to be able to welcome housing that is sensitive to energy prices and climate change, and we undoubtedly need to build more homes in Kent. But the scale of the housing planned in some Kent boroughs is grossly inflated by the unconstrained housing need assessments required under planning law. They are generating crazy numbers, and more sites than will ever be built on. Neighbourhood

planning was meant to be a way to share the burden and the benefit with local communities but we are a long way from having a localised planning system that works well. CPRE does keep talking to government and it has listened on brownfield first – thank you for signing the charter.

Planning cannot do it all. The countryside itself also needs a voice: to stand up for tranquillity, for the visual beauty of landscape, for the regenerative benefits of a walk in spring woodlands or the hidden valleys of the Kent Downs AONB.

We have a great team of staff and volunteers. Sadly there are always egregious planning situations to fight, many of which are long haul such as the 500+ homes proposed in the AONB at Western Heights and Farthingloe. We also have to



Kingsland Lane in the Kent Downs AONB, photo by Rosie Canney

try to get at least some of the new Richborough mega powerline put underground. As the skies over Kent are overflowed by aircraft using new "sat nav" flight paths, CPRE's leadership on tranquillity needs refreshing. If you would like to help with these campaigns or any other aspect of CPRE's work you read about in this edition of Kent Voice do get it touch. We are always delighted to hear from our members and new people who would like to get involved: it is fascinating work and CPRE does make a difference.

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Bluebell Wood © Jeremy Sage

# what is the point of a Local Plan

GPRE Kent senior planner, Brian Lloyd considers the conflict between local plans and national policy.



Both parties of the coalition government are signed up to 'localism', though it has never been clear what it actually means and how far communities can really influence what happens locally. In planning, though, we have a planned system, which the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) tells us is about "empowering local people to shape their surroundings." That at least sounds like 'localism'.

## Vision and aspirations

Planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan - the district local plan provides the heartbeat of the planning system and is, says the NPPF, "the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities". It is supposed to decide how much development will happen, and where. Equally important, the local plan says where development will not happen. The outcome should provide certainty for both local people and investors.

But is this really the case? Do local plans provide the certainty that development will actually happen where they say it should? Research undertaken for the National Trust suggests this isn't so because of other clauses in the NPPF. In particular, the requirement for local authorities to identify a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites means that, up and down the country, planning permission is being given for sites outside of local plans.

## Under pressure

The research, by consultancy Green Balance, looked at 27 local authorities with an adopted local plan. Sixteen of these were under pressure from speculative planning applications on sites not identified in the plan. It found that local authorities were failing to comply with the five-year requirement for a variety of reasons, but essentially it was a failure of the market to deliver houses rather than a lack of supply of land. In particular this was put down to:

- The after effects of the economic downturn and the need to provide for the housing backlog in the assessment of housing need;
- A reliance by some authorities on a small number of large allocated sites, making them vulnerable to delay in delivery;
- Some authorities setting unrealistically high housing targets to start with; and
- More recent assessments of housing need.

*"Sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities"*

Kent has not been immune from such speculative development proposals. Over the last year a number of large development applications have emerged, including:

- The former Herne Bay Golf Course (Canterbury): 572 dwellings and 60-bed care home – refused and going to appeal;
- Land at Cockerling Road, Thanington (Canterbury): Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping request for 850 dwellings – application expected;

- Western Heights/Farthingloe (Dover): 521 dwellings and 90 dwelling retirement village in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - approved;
- Discovery Park (Dover): 500 dwellings - approved;
- Land at Gibraltar Farm, Capstone Valley (Medway): 450 dwellings - pending decision;
- Land at Perry Court Farm, Faversham (Swale): 315 dwellings – refused;
- Land at Lady Dane Farm, Love Lane, Faversham (Swale): 196 dwellings - approved;
- Land off Swanstree Avenue, Sittingbourne (Swale): 580 dwellings – pending decision;
- Land at Pond Farm, Newington (Swale): EIA scoping request for 300 dwellings – application expected;
- Westwood Cross (Thanet): 550 dwellings on designated employment land – refused but allowed on appeal; and
- Kings Hill (Tonbridge and Malling): 635 dwellings on designated employment land – approved.

Altogether these proposals amount to over 5,600 dwellings in addition to those included in adopted plans - about the same number of houses planned for the whole of Tunbridge Wells Borough to 2026. This is a significant amount of development coming forward outside of the plan making process, which poses the question – what is the point of a local plan if it can be so easily overridden?

### Local plans should be sovereign

If, as the NPPF states, the local plan is about empowering local people to shape their surroundings, why should house builders be allowed to promote extensive additional sites simply because their industry has failed to develop those sites included in the local plans? Of course we need more housing, but we also need to have confidence that the planning system works as intended. The opportunity provided in the NPPF for speculative development needs to be removed so that we genuinely have a plan-led



Western Heights - Vicky Ellis



system people can have faith in. To this end, CPRE Kent endorses the National Trust's call to government that local plans should be sovereign, and that housing need and land supply should only be reassessed when local plans are reviewed, not on an ad hoc basis in response to individual applications.

The National Trust research 'Positive Planning' can be viewed at: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/article-1355874221282/>

# headlines

*from the campaigns frontline*

It has been a busy few months on the campaigns front – you only need to look at the press cuttings and media interviews to see how active CPRE Kent has been on issues ranging from brownfield first to local plans, fracking and flooding. Here, Director Hilary Newport updates members on the latest hot topics in the county.



Solar Farm Ramsgate - Vicky Ellis

## Renewable energy

As the deadline approaches for a change in the feed-in tariffs available for ground-mounted solar power generation, a flurry of construction projects is under way. We welcomed guidance that seeks to direct solar farms away from the best and most versatile agricultural land, but this has come too late to safeguard some of the best of Kent's growing land.

## Western Heights/Farthingloe

Negotiations continue into the S106 agreement which will accompany the planning permission when it is issued. Amongst other things, this agreement locks the developer into the financial contributions which will support the improvements to the Western Heights heritage assets. We continue to question whether the payment of £5m for heritage assets can possibly justify the damage caused by building over 500 homes in the AONB.

## Tranquillity

A recent trial of changes to the system of air traffic control at London's airports has already led to a huge increase in noise nuisance for some areas of west Kent. This sobering example highlights how damaging airport expansion anywhere in the south east would be to the precious tranquillity of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the National Park



Dover Pylons - Vicky Ellis

## Non-renewable energy

National Grid is consulting on its plans for a new pylon line which will connect the Belgian national grid to the UK's, via a new pylon run (with much taller pylons than the existing route) from Richborough to Canterbury. We are urging them to take full account of the impact on the landscape of these 50m high pylons, and to run cables underground wherever possible.



## Local Plans, Local People

As the work of drafting, consulting and examining local plans carries on across district after district, it is heartening to see so many public meetings attended by people who are clearly passionate about protecting the places that they hold so precious.

## Ebbfleet Garden City/London Paramount

The promoters are beginning their consultation on the entertainment resort with local communities on a wide range of important issues – including transport, ecology, heritage, tourism and business as well as masterplanning and infrastructure. The entertainment resort will be a major driver for investment and development within the Ebbfleet City Urban Development Corporation's boundaries and we are keen to see some strong safeguards to create a genuinely sustainable development.

## Fracking

The Infrastructure Bill has now received Royal Assent and is an act which will have profound implications over major processes. We are concerned that last-minute amendments to the bill eroded some of the strong protections to landscapes and the environment that had been promised.

## Housing numbers

The article on localism and local plans (see p10-11) demonstrates the inexorable pressure on planning authorities to allocate spaces for significantly increased housing numbers. Some recent guidance from the Minister of State has proved promising in this regard, reminding planning inspectors that legitimate constraints to housing demand – such as Green Belt designation – should be taken into account to reduce numbers when setting targets.

## Brownfield first

Recent research identified that there is enough previously-developed land in England to build at least one million homes, much of it in the South East and London where development pressures are strongest. We estimate that Kent has enough brownfield land for 7,000 homes, and we are taking every opportunity to call for government to change its policy and firmly prioritise brownfield development to protect greenfield sites.

## Water, water everywhere

The south east of England is officially recognised as being in a state of water scarcity, with less rainfall per capita than the Sudan. Nevertheless the winter of 2013-14 saw some of the worst flooding in memory, and our conference in February highlighted some of the important lessons learned by the many agencies and communities that came together to respond to the challenges and help restore homes and livelihoods.



Flooded fields, Ickham - Jacqueline Grimsley

# Flooding: fears, facts & the future

**CPRE Kent Vice President Richard Knox-Johnston presents the highlights of CPRE Kent's major conference on flooding.**

One hundred delegates, two MPs, experts from Kent County Council, the Environment Agency and the influential Committee on Climate Change and members of CPRE Kent attended our very successful conference at County Hall, Maidstone in early February. Jointly organised with Kent County Council (KCC), the conference aimed to draw attention to the threat of flooding to the county and to consider lessons learned from the devastating floods of Christmas/New Year 2013-14. Speakers sought to explain how it happened and what action is being taken to address future risk. Were communications adequate? Did the agencies work together successfully? Were insurance claims handled fairly and was there adequate support for people forced to leave their homes?

CPRE Vice President and MP for Ashford, the Rt Hon Damian Green, told the conference: "Flooding has long been recognised as the greatest natural threat the UK faces."

Two million homes in England and Wales are at flood risk from rivers and sea, and 2.4 million from surface water. This problem is worsening due to climate change, increased building, higher population density, and rising sea levels. Estimated annual flood damage costs could exceed £27 billion across the UK by 2080.

He pledged: "Flood defence and maintenance funding must be seen as a vital part of our national interest by all future governments."

David Thompson, Senior Analyst at the Committee on Climate Change, said 214,000 properties were built on the floodplain between 2001 and 2011 (9,000 in Kent) - the rate of development being higher on the floodplain than outside it, a difference even more marked in Kent. Particularly worrying was that 37% of floodplain development was in areas of significant risk.



Andrew Pearce



David Thompson

The Committee analysed planning decisions on flood plain developments and found that in 40% of applications there was no Environment Agency advice, mainly due to budget cuts.

## **85,557 Kent properties at risk**

Andrew Pearce, Area Manager, Environment Agency talked of improvements to flooding response over the last 20 years and further measures taken since last winter.





Floods of 2013/14 Appledore - Brenda Hedley

Currently Kent has 85,557 properties at risk of river or sea flooding. The county has 9,700 flood management assets which must be maintained and replaced.

He stressed the importance of community involvement and resilience and effective warning systems. Since last year 100 flood wardens have been trained and all flood defences inspected.



*“Flooding has long been recognised as the greatest natural threat the UK faces.”*



Leader of KCC, Paul Carter, described the successful partnership with the EA, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the private sector (Pfizer), in providing flood defences for Sandwich. He hopes for more partnership schemes in the future.

### **Volunteers mobilised**

Paul Crick, KCC Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement, spoke of the major effort to deal with last Christmas's floods, with staff working 120 hours a week. Dozens of volunteers were mobilised to help people escape flooded homes. However, he recognised people were stood

down too quickly before recovery was properly underway and power restored. The Kent Resilience Team (including Kent Fire and Rescue, Kent Police, KCC and the EA) was established in April 2014 to improve efficiency and communications.

Max Tant, KCC Flood Risk Manager, explained the situation in the Nailbourne and Little Stour valley where villages are at risk of flooding when the river floods during periods of prolonged rainfall.

### **Community spirit**

The chairman and clerk of Yalding Parish Council, Geraldine Brown and Angela Gent, spoke of the outstanding community spirit in the village over Christmas 2013-14, with everyone rallying round to help the most vulnerable. Mrs Brown gave practical advice about battery phone chargers and analogue phones to keep emergency communications open.

In the aftermath, Yalding hosted visits from the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall and the Prime Minister David Cameron, high profile events which helped secure promised funding for flood defence work.

There was a fascinating outline of plans to build “can-float” houses and artificial lakes to take overflowing river water by Espen Østbye-Strøm, Chief Operating Officer of Floodline Developments. Already being built in Holland, these



Left to right - Angela Gent, Geraldine Brown, Richard Knox-Johnston, Helen Grant, Espen Østbye-Strøm

houses can offer a solution in flood risk areas with a housing shortage.

### **Working together**

Helen Grant, MP for Maidstone and the Weald, stressed the importance of communities working in partnership with the EA, KCC and private sector. She said sensible plans showing collaborative working and strong leadership would be more likely to receive government funding.

CPRE Kent Chairman Christine Drury spoke of the Romney Marsh Challenge and the impact of flooding on farming in this important and iconic landscape. The 100 square miles of Grade I farmland is a vital resource and should be protected.

Thanks are due to all the speakers and to the teams at CPRE Kent and KCC for organising the event. It was a very successful conference which merited media interest from TV, radio and the press.



2013-14 Yalding floods - Nick Blackman

# focus on **LENHAM**

**Neighbourhood planning in action**

**CPRE Kent Chairman  
Christine Drury puts  
Lenham in the spotlight  
in her account of  
neighbourhood planning in  
this thriving market village.**

If you have attended one of CPRE Kent's AGMs in recent years, you will know Lenham and its historic market square: among other gems it has a real baker. Behind the church is the magnificent grade I listed Tithe Barn, still part of Court Lodge Farm. Its 14th century crown post trusses support a roof that hosts a vibrant autumn market: perfect for early Christmas shopping.

## **Heart of Kent**

This is an energetic market village nestling at the southern side of the Kent Downs, along the Winchester to Canterbury Pilgrims' Way, with good road and rail access. This is historic much-travelled landscape, now farmed as open highly-productive arable countryside with scattered farmsteads of medieval origins. The parish is roughly 5km square incorporating the market village of Lenham of around 3000 residents and the smaller settlements of Lenham Heath and Platts Heath. The village of the Len is so-called because just beside the village is the important watershed from where the Len flows west into the Medway through Maidstone and north past the Hoo peninsula to the Thames Estuary, and the Stour flows east through Canterbury across the Minster marshes to Pegwell Bay. This is in every sense a village in the heart of Kent.

A few years ago Lenham Parish Council embarked on an ambitious project to provide a new community centre on land it owned. A large loan – now repaid – financed the project and the transformation has provided the community centre, where we hold our AGM. It also provided a health centre, affordable housing for local people, a shared car park area and a small development of 12 executive homes.

## **Power in the hands of local people**

The experience of this complex but highly successful project undoubtedly helped Lenham find the capacity and appetite to take on the challenge of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Neighbourhood planning is a flagship policy introduced as part of the Localism Act. It is "intended to put power into the hands of local people to plan positively their communities and set policies that will determine planning applications"..... "supporting people who care about their communities and want to get involved in improving them".

This is localism in action. Many parishes previously produced Village Design Statements and Parish Plans which involved a lot of work by the community to describe the character of the village and identify what was needed in the parish. The key difference is that parish plans and village design statements can be ignored in planning decisions - and many are, to the frustration of those who spent time producing them – but neighbourhood plans are statutory documents which carry equal weight to the local plan.



Lenham © Jeremy Sage





Tithe Barn by Roger Buchanan

### Equal weight but at a price

This equal weight comes at a price. Neighbourhood plans have to add detail to the policies in the local plan, for example proposing where houses should be built and what types, and they need an evidence base to support this. To become statutory, the plan has to undergo formal consultation and a public examination - a process similar to that for a local plan; and achieve a majority in favour in a local referendum. When the government introduced neighbourhood planning, it was assumed that local plans would quickly be up to date so that neighbourhood plans could follow their lead. In practice, the process is more tortuous because so many local plans have still not been updated, which is exactly the case with the Maidstone Local Plan.

What this means for Lenham is that their neighbourhood plan is being developed on the premise that 245 additional homes is a sensible and achievable number that could be delivered, while maintaining the character of the village and meeting infrastructure needs such as water, sewerage, schools, surgery and dental facilities and local shops.

### Unconstrained housing numbers

But, while this is being worked through in Lenham and the evidence and local involvement is being accumulated, different work by Maidstone Borough Council is coming up with new, much higher unconstrained numbers. It is now proposed that Lenham should be the location for an additional 1500 homes in the latter phases of the plan because they "can't go anywhere else". Such a level of development would entirely smother Lenham and destroy its character within months of the work starting. The scale and location of development would see the near merging of Lenham with Harrietsham, destroying the character and coherence of not just one but two village communities. It would also result in the loss of highly productive and environmentally sensitive agricultural land. It would clearly not be sustainable development by any definition.

It is essential that the flaws in the planning system that have led Maidstone Borough planners to make such an unsustainable proposal (cont'd P19)



Tithe Barn by Roger Buchanan



Old Mill Pond, Tanyard Farm © Mike Cockett



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# focus on LENHAM

continued...



Aerial view, Lenham - by Peter Bailliey

must be addressed. The Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Brandon Lewis, made it clear in December that local planning authorities need to take more account of constraints, such as the Green Belt and environmental designations, in setting housing targets. The Maidstone planners need to pay attention to the minister's advice. In particular, they should include an allowance for windfall sites in their plan: this could avoid the need for the extra 1500 homes and would ensure that brownfield sites were considered before the unsuitable landscape sensitive sites proposed by developers. Maidstone issued a call for sites without even consulting the team working on the neighbourhood plan - another flaw that the minister needs to address to make localism real.

## Parallel plans

The Lenham community, led by the parish council, is pressing on undaunted. Working with a

consultant, they have produced a landscape appraisal and an urban design assessment. A key planning point is that any development in Lenham directly affects the setting of the protected landscape of the Kent Downs AONB. Working groups of residents are also working on Housing, Infrastructure, Village life and Economy. The work of these HIVE groups will be brought together with the policies already drafted in the Interim Report. The result, in the next couple of months, will be the draft Lenham Neighbourhood Plan which will then go through a series of consultation, examination and referendum processes with amendments en route. It

is CPRE's fervent hope that the Maidstone Local Plan will evolve into something more sustainable in parallel so that the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan exists alongside as an approved part of the strategic plans for the borough. That will be as great a day for celebration as the opening of the Lenham Community Centre. It will establish the power of local people in Lenham to influence planning decisions for Lenham even when those decisions are made in Maidstone.



The Lenham Cross - by Peter Bailliey



Old Mill Pond, Tanyard Farm © Mike Cockett

# Local Plan *round-up*



**CPRE Kent's Senior Planner, Brian Lloyd, reviews the latest situation with local plans in Kent and what has happened since the last issue of Kent Voice.**



Western Heights - Vicky Ellis

## **New plans adopted**

**Gravesham Core Strategy**, adopted by Gravesham Borough Council, September 2014. The council now has an up-to-date plan compliant with national planning policy. The next priority is to prepare the site allocations and general planning policies. Initial consultation will take place in the autumn.

**The Dover Land Allocations Plan** and the **Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management Plan**, both adopted early 2015. These will sit alongside the core strategies adopted in 2010 and 2011 respectively. With regard to the Sevenoaks plan, we were disappointed the inspector accepted the council's modification for 450 homes at the Fort Halstead site. We will try to ensure that the proposed development respects its location in the Kent Downs AONB and the Green Belt.

## **Brownfield welcomed, but still too much greenfield**

**The Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1**, issued just before Christmas by Swale Borough Council. When adopted, this will replace the current Swale Local Plan and will cover the period to 2031. Part 2 will deal with site allocations for gypsies and travellers.

We generally support the plan strategy, which focuses development in the Thames Gateway part of the borough (Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey) taking advantage of brownfield opportunities in Sittingbourne town centre and at Queenborough/Rushenden. We accept the proposed housing target of 10,800 new homes and support the council's reasons for rejecting an even higher target. This will undoubtedly be challenged by house builders. But, even in meeting this target, we believe the council has underestimated existing and proposed housing supply, meaning some of the greenfield sites proposed should be deleted from the plan.

We object to the plan's target of providing 7,000 new jobs by 2031 which we believe is unachievable and only serves to increase pressure to raise the housing target. We suggest a more realistic target of 4,000 jobs, which will meet local needs rather than rely on in-commuting or in-migration. This would also mean that a number of sensitive greenfield sites proposed for employment development could be removed from the plan.

## **Concern about future proposals**

One of our main concerns is the continued commitment to the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. Although the council accepts that it is not needed to support the proposed development, it has defined an 'area of search' around Bapchild for the final leg of the road. We do not believe that this section of the road is needed or justified and the area of search will cause long-term blight to the area. We also strongly object to the identification of 'longer term development opportunities' at Sheerness Port, the Kent Science Park and for the Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road. We believe this approach is seeking to get agreement in principle for these projects now, without any specific proposals or evidence.

## **Recognition of tranquillity welcomed**

We support most of the general policies, in particular the recognition of tranquillity, making this the first plan in Kent to refer specifically to CPRE's pioneering work, and the designation of a number of Local Green Spaces.



## We must protect our best agricultural land

**Thanet Local Plan**, consultation published by Thanet District Council January 2015. It will cover the period to 2031 and, when finalised, will replace the current local plan, adopted 2006. Our principal concern with the plan is that the housing target of 12,000 homes is too high. This has resulted in the identification of a swathe of greenfield sites that will see the urban area from Birchington to Ramsgate creep ever further into the countryside. Furthermore, the greenfield sites are mainly Grade 1 agricultural land. Thanet district is rich in high quality farmland and the council has a responsibility to retain it in productive agricultural use as a national resource. Simply because such land is locally abundant does not lessen that responsibility, and we believe protecting this precious land should be a major constraint to accommodating growth. We also consider that a target which requires house builders to deliver 600 new homes every year is over ambitious, being 34% higher than the rate over the last five years and 20% higher than over the last 10. We also consider the employment target of 5,000 additional jobs unrealistic and serves to artificially inflate the housing target and should be reduced to 3,100. At this level we believe the housing target could be reduced to 9,500 homes.

We are concerned that the plan remains quiet on Manston Airport, which is deferred to a further plan in the future. For a plan, which seeks to comprehensively set out the council's development strategy, to exclude this major site is a serious omission. If, as we understand it, the new owners intend the site to be redeveloped, then many greenfield sites proposed in the plan would be unnecessary and profligate.

## Questions posed

**Shepway Places and Policies Local Plan**, consultation by Shepway District Council began January 2015. Following on from the Core Strategy adopted in 2013, this plan will present the sites needed to deliver the development strategy and the planning policies used to assess proposals. At this stage, issues and options are considered and questions posed. The key questions we have commented on are how new housing should be distributed in the district and whether junctions 11 and 13 of the M20 are appropriate for major employment development. We agree that development should be focused at Folkestone but are concerned about the way in which new housing is proposed to be split between the villages.



Farthingloe from Mount Road - Vicky Ellis

# POLLING STATION

**Important date for  
your diary:  
Any Questions:  
Maidstone & the Weald  
General Election 2015**

**7-9pm**

**Tuesday 28th April  
Oakwood House, Maidstone**

*The General Election is looming and CPRE Kent is hosting a debate in Maidstone where people can quiz the seven prospective parliamentary candidates about their policies on housing, planning and protection of the countryside.*

**Attendance is free  
but pre-registration is essential via:  
[https://eventbrite.co.uk/  
event/16142760431/](https://eventbrite.co.uk/event/16142760431/)**

## Green Belt safe

**Tunbridge Wells Site Allocations Development Plan Document**, draft submission published by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, February 2015. This follows the Core Strategy, adopted 2010, and consultation on draft proposals in 2010 and 2013. We are reviewing the plan. The good news is that, contrary to what is proposed in the Core Strategy, the council has not considered it necessary to review the Green Belt to accommodate development targets. However, three of the six previously 'safeguarded' rural fringe sites at Tunbridge Wells and Southborough are now formally allocated for development. These sites were removed from the Green Belt in 1988.

## Where the plans are

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.



Ide Hill - CPRE

### 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
- The council is reviewing the Core Strategy which will be presented as a Local Plan covering the period to 2030. The pre-submission plan is expected autumn 2015.

### Canterbury

- Herne Bay Area Action Plan adopted April 2010
- Consultation on the pre-submission Canterbury Local Plan was undertaken June/July 2014. In November the plan was submitted for examination, which is likely to take place in spring/summer 2015.

### Dartford

- Core Strategy adopted September 2011
- Consultation on the draft Site Allocations and Development Management Plan undertaken over the Christmas period 2014/15 and the pre-submission plan is expected to be published summer 2015.

### Dover

- Core Strategy adopted February 2010
- The Land Allocations Plan adopted January 2015
- A draft of the Gypsy & Traveller Plan is expected to be published for consultation spring 2015.

### Gravesham

- Core Strategy adopted September 2014
- Work on the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan is underway, initial consultation scheduled for October 2015.

### KCC

- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan pre-submission plan, which sets out strategy, was published for formal consultation July 2014, submitted for examination November 2014, the examination is scheduled to open 14 April 2015.
- The preparation of Mineral and Waste Sites Plans will re-commence after the strategy is adopted, probably next year.



Hemhill - Vicky Ellis

## Maidstone

- Affordable Housing Plan adopted December 2006
- Open Space Plan adopted December 2006
- A draft new Local Plan was published for consultation March 2014. There will be further consultation on proposed sites in spring 2015, and the pre-submission plan is expected summer 2015.

## Medway

- The proposed Medway Core Strategy was formally withdrawn by the council November 2013. In June 2014 the council agreed a timetable to prepare a new whole local plan, which would see a first stage consultation in summer 2015. In the meantime, the council has agreed an interim housing needs target of 1,000 dwellings per year, pending a comprehensive assessment of housing and economic needs in 2015. This is an increase from 815 dwellings per year in the abandoned Core Strategy.

## Sevenoaks

- Core Strategy adopted February 2011
- Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adopted February 2015
- Additional consultation on sites in the Gypsy and Traveller Plan undertaken at the end of 2014. The pre-submission plan is expected in summer 2015.

## Shepway

- Core Strategy adopted September 2013
- Consultation on the Allocations and Development Management Plan undertaken January–March 2015.

## Swale

- Formal consultation on the pre-submission Local Plan undertaken Christmas 2014/15. It is expected to be submitted for examination in the spring with the examination in the summer.
- Consultation on a Gypsy and Traveller Site Plan undertaken February 2014, it is unclear when this plan will be progressed.

## Thanet

- Cliftonville Plan adopted February 2010
- Consultation on strategy options for the Thanet Local Plan undertaken summer 2013, and consultation on a draft Local Plan undertaken January–March 2015.

## 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, initial consultation is expected autumn 2015.

## Tunbridge Wells

- Core Strategy adopted June 2010
- Consultation on the pre-submission draft of the Site Allocations Plan commenced February 2015. The plan is likely to be submitted for examination in the summer, to be held in the autumn.
- The council also proposes to prepare a Development Management Policies Plan and a Travellers Plan, but no timing is available.





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# Discover your countryside

CPRE members are entitled to half-price or two-for-one admission to many gardens and historic attractions in Kent and beyond. We have decided to feature some of the wonderful places on offer, starting with Chiddingstone Castle.



Photo - Paul Meyer

## Chiddingstone Castle

Chiddingstone Castle, whose history can be traced back to the early 16th Century, is a unique country house in the historic village of Chiddingstone in west Kent. The original Tudor dwelling was first replaced in the 1670s as High Street House and went through another transformation in the early 1800s to resemble a medieval castle, as was fashionable at the time – Chiddingstone Castle was born!

Between 1955 and 1977 the Castle was home to the late Denys Eyre Bower, a gifted antiquarian who devoted his life to collecting art and artefacts. His home is now open to the public. The stately rooms exhibit over 4,000 objects from Denys' collections, including Japanese lacquer, Samurai armour and swords, ancient Egyptian antiquities, Royal Stuart portraits and Jacobite memorabilia, and Buddhist artefacts.

As well as learning from these remarkable and unique collections, visitors can enjoy exploring this fascinating house with rooms such as Denys' study where one can piece together his eccentric and complicated life, which featured failed marriages and a notorious scandal. A number of Victorian rooms are also open to visitors, including the castle kitchen, the scullery and the housekeeper's room. From the servants' hall one can climb the secret back stairs and discover the servant's bedroom in the attic – a real 'upstairs downstairs' experience.

In 2014 a new exhibition room opened featuring the history of the castle and the local area; and this year the library will be opened to visitors for the first time.

The beautiful 35 acres of informal grounds which surround the castle include a lake, woodland, a rose garden and a Victorian orangery. In 2014, a wild meadow maze garden was created - the 'Fields of Eternity' – a microcosm of ancient Egypt where visitors can learn about life and the environment in 2000BC.

No visit would be complete without sampling a traditional cream tea in the Castle's Tea Room in the former buttery, with its sunny, sheltered courtyard.

**Open April-October, Sunday-Wednesday only, 11am - 5pm.**

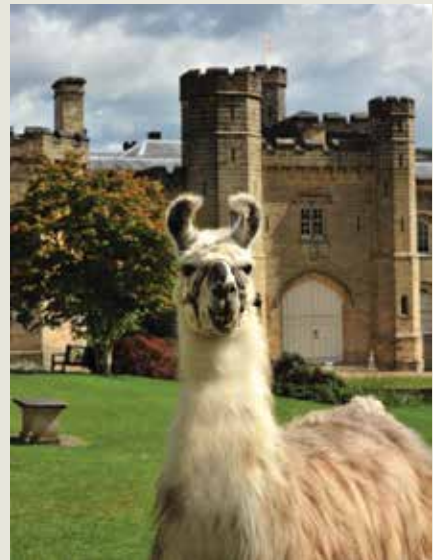


Photo - Darryl Curcher



Photo - Darryl Curcher



Photo - Paul Meyer



# Around *the districts*

Devil's Kneading Trough, James Waghorn, flickr

## Ashford

- Solar farms: Pluckley, refused by Ashford Borough Council (ABC), sent to appeal, awaiting a site visit from the inspector; Kenardington, refused by ABC, allowed on appeal and being built; Hothfield, permitted and built, second site refused as the grid cannot take the extra electricity; Aldington, refused by ABC, appeal pending; Warehorne, environmental assessment required, no further information.
- The large AXA site at Sevington, next to the M20 J10a has been sold to Aviva. English Heritage has come out strongly against the plans. Junction 10a itself is being progressed by the Highways Agency.
- Chilmington Green 106 agreement should be signed by April.

## Canterbury

- Canterbury City Council's Planning Committee granted an enormous solar array at Owl Hatch Farm, Herne Bay, despite officers advising there were grounds for refusal. The 215 acre site contains several fields which should be retained for food production.
- Bridge, near Canterbury, has produced an excellent, readable draft Neighbourhood Plan after consulting with residents. Canterbury Chairman Barrie Gore said: "This is true localism working well - we only wish the same were true of our city council."
- We are concerned about the tendency to grant consent for ever taller buildings close to Canterbury's historic centre. A recent proposal within the city walls shows a building completely out of scale with those around it in St Margaret's Street. We hope the city council will take note of an English Heritage report expressing concern that planning laws give no protection to cathedral cities and historic towns.



## Dover

- The Land Allocations Plan was adopted January 2015 and Dover now needs to look to improve infrastructure. Dover Chairman Derek Wanstall said: "Increased housing means more traffic, parking issues, demand for school places and health provision. Developers know there are infrastructure problems, though they say there are not, and we fear local parishes and residents are not being listened to."
- Operation Stack is a concern with lorries causing gridlock in Dover before holding areas are organised.
- Fracking remains high on our list of concerns - even though the government has pledged not to allow fracking within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, it could be allowed below them!



## Gravesham

- Gravesham Borough Council is revising its Green Belt boundary as part of its housing delivery review. CPRE Kent and the Gravesham Rural Resident Group (GRRG) are opposed to any erosion of the Green Belt and met with Minister of State for Housing and Planning Brandon Lewis in February.

Gravesham Chairman Alex Hills said: "He made it absolutely clear that Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs) should regard the Green Belt as an environmental constraint and housing supply figures must be adjusted accordingly. He also stressed councils behind on delivering their five year housing supply target should not use that as an excuse to build on the Green Belt."

Mr Lewis also called on all rural areas to form their own neighbourhood plans.

- We remain totally opposed to any new Thames crossing (announcement expected) as it would be environmentally damaging and not solve the problem. The free flow tolls are working well as we predicted.



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## Maidstone

- Our most significant concern is the huge number of proposed housing developments. The draft local plan's target is 18,600 homes by 2031, this totally disproportionate amount equals 28% of the current stock in the town and villages. Maidstone Chairman Gary Thomas said: "Because the plan is not yet agreed, developers are putting in other applications – it is a sort of feeding frenzy. The transport input from Kent County Council is unclear, but an initial report suggests it will take 40% longer to travel through the town, few improvements can be made and finance is not available anyway."
- The second major concern is the proposal to build industrial units at junction 8 of the M20. Two applications have been refused and go to appeal in May, but pressure is being applied within the council on the grounds of necessary economic growth.
- Thirdly, we are trying to stop a motocross track in the countryside near Harrietsham, on which Maidstone Borough Council served a faulty enforcement notice and were dilatory in taking further action.

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## Medway

- Good news over Lodge Hill, where the application for 5,000 homes and other facilities has been called in for a final decision by Brandon Lewis, Minister of State for Housing and Planning. The application was approved last year despite the area being designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its internationally significant population of breeding nightingales. An independent inspector will now examine the proposals and make a recommendation to ministers.



Ancient woodland, Waterside Park - Stephen Sutherland

## Sevenoaks

- The pressure to find housing sites in this Green Belt district, two thirds of it AONB, cannot always be resisted. Part of the huge expanse of Fort Halstead, the secret defence site being redeveloped, was identified exclusively for employment. CPRE Kent and the Kent Downs AONB Unit fought to protect it but the planning inspector backed the developers, who now have the go-ahead to submit plans for 450 homes across 15.5 hectares of land, leaving just four hectares for employment, all in a remote area with no services.
- Sevenoaks Chairman Nigel Britten said: "One of the countryside's most valued qualities is tranquility. Ours faces a major challenge from aircraft noise and there could be worse to come. The flight path into Gatwick narrows the approach for all incoming aircraft so that residents in parishes in the High Weald AONB live with serious noise disturbance."

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## Shepway

- An application has arrived for a 40MW Biomass Plant at Lympe Industrial Estate. Some 63 lorries a day will take chippings and wood from all over the country in and out. With sites nearby there could be 140 lorries per day, putting enormous pressure on local roads.
- We are waiting on three wind turbine applications. Shepway Chairman Paul Smallwood said: "People are at last waking up to the fact that very cold weather is often accompanied by no wind. Often turbines only produce about 1% of the grid rather than their rated 5.5%."
- A substantial development at Cockreed Lane at New Romney involves 300 houses. As there are three developers involved it will be a long drawn out situation.

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## Swale

- Swale Borough Council's draft Local Plan is (at last!) set to go to independent examination. We fear the planning inspector will demand it is re-drafted because it fails to deliver enough sites for the objectively assessed housing need of 604-890 homes per year - this is certainly what developers will argue for. We have serious concerns about deliverability of even the 540 target proposed in the plan. Swale Chairman Peter Blandon said: "Our statistical work suggests that, unless there is a significant increase in the capacity of the local building industry, the probability that 540 new dwellings a year will be achieved over the 20-year planning period is less than half." We fear if Swale is unable to deliver its housing target, under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it will be interpreted as an insufficient allocation of suitable sites which will lead to developers being offered more greenfield sites.
- We are worried that new permitted development rights for the conversion of disused barns to homes could represent unregulated, haphazard development in rural areas. A flurry of notifications has appeared but, so far, they have not met the conditions required and planning permission has been required.



Manston airport, by Simon Moores, flickr

## Thanet

- Consultation on the Thanet Local Plan closed early March. It includes a target of 5,000 new jobs and 12,000 new homes by 2031. Numerous local groups have protested about the major 'strategic sites' for housing that threaten to swamp places like Westgate and Birchington. Meanwhile, the future of the Manston Airport site remains unknown, leaving significant uncertainty over the whole local plan.

## Tunbridge Wells

- A six week consultation period on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Site Allocations Development Plan, February 2015, closed on 23rd March.
- We are looking for anyone with local knowledge and an interest in historical research to help compile a Local Heritage List of our many valuable buildings. This follows applications to demolish a coaching inn and a toll house locally, which show the importance of getting buildings listed before a planning application is received.



## Historic Buildings Committee

- We have been promoting 'local listing', encouraging everyone to recognise valuable local buildings. There are 5,000+ historic buildings in Kent and Medway not listed as of national importance. Without statutory protection they are at risk of demolition or inappropriate alteration. To tackle this, we are trying to get Local Lists revived, and hope knowledgeable volunteers will help resource-strapped councils to achieve this. We can provide extracts from Ken Gravett's Kent Historic Buildings Index as a starting point
- At our workshop, 'Your Built Heritage', the Sevenoaks Society described their efforts to produce a Local List which will be adopted by Sevenoaks District Council and referred to in planning decisions. The next workshop, hosted by the Margate Civic Society, was due on 17th March at the Turner Centre and aimed to encourage similar projects in east Kent.

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# News Round-Up

*There is a lot that's happened since the last Kent Voice.*



*Pieris brassicae*

## EVENTS

2015 is proving to be a busy year for CPRE Kent. We will be out and about at seven events (the first having been Agri Expo on 4th March). It would be great to meet our supporters so please come and visit us, or even better, if you have time, we always appreciate volunteer help.

We will attend the following events. If you would like to volunteer please contact Vicky Ellis on the office number (we will pay your expenses and entry fee).

- **June 6th** **Equi Expo** **Detling show ground**
- **July 10th, 11th, 12th** **Kent Show** **Detling show ground**
- **August 22nd, 23rd** **Tractor Fest** **Biddenden**
- **September 19th** **Weald of Kent Ploughing Match**
- **September 30th** **East Kent Ploughing Match**

**Equi-Expo**  
**ANNUAL MASTER CLASS DEMONSTRATIONS & RETAIL SHOW**  
"THE show for everyone whose lives involve horses!"  
**Saturday 6th June 2015**  
Kent County Showground, Detling, Kent ME14 3JF

### Fundraising

**There are many ways to help CPRE Kent:**

- If you work, payroll giving is an option as anything you give gets tax relief
- Buying through Easyfundraising raises funds at no cost to you, but big names such as John Lewis, M&S and Tesco all donate
- Joining our lottery club is a fun way to support us with a good chance of winning. At £12 per share for a whole year it is excellent value for money. For information on any of these please contact Vicky.



**easyfundraising**  
.org.uk

### Merchandise

We have a great choice of merchandise this year from wheelie bin pencil sharpeners and wellie boot key rings in an array of colours to books, pads and our very own bee and butterfly friendly seeds (in partnership with the NFU).

### Marketplace

We hope to run a regular feature in this magazine promoting local producers in Kent so please support them and don't forget to say where you saw their advert. If you know of a small business or local producer who may be interested (or indeed you may be one) in advertising in Kent Voice, contact Vicky for more information.



# Help protect the future of Kent's countryside by helping us today

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 writing a will or have already had a will written, please think about leaving a gift to CPRE Kent.

Whitehead Monckton Solicitors is delighted to support CPRE Kent by donating £50 for every will made by CPRE Kent supporters.

You can find out more about CPRE Kent and how you can support us by visiting [www.cprekent.org.uk](http://www.cprekent.org.uk)



To talk to someone about leaving a gift to CPRE Kent please contact Vicky Ellis 01233 714540 or email [info@cprekent.org.uk](mailto:info@cprekent.org.uk)

## 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.

### Office Contacts

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## 400 CLUB



Here are the winners since the Autumn/Winter edition of Kent Voice:

### Oct 14

Mr J Bunton	£40.00	(20)
Mr N Pearson	£30.00	(209)
Mr C Parkinson	£25.00	(201)
Mr B Blacklock	£15.00	(12)
Mr C Mackinlay	£15.00	(178)
Miss J Lushington	£15.00	(177)

### Nov 14

Miss J Lushington	£40.00	(174)
Mr N Pearson	£30.00	(203)
Mrs E Knowler	£25.00	(141)
Mr H Fox	£15.00	(294)
Mr C Hayman	£15.00	(111)
Mr M Loveday	£15.00	(166)

### Dec 14

Mr M Loveday	£15.00	(166)
Mr C Daniel	£50.00	(62)
Mrs A Hone	£30.00	(125)
Rev'd Fenton	£25.00	(89)

### Jan 15

Mrs S Morehead	£40.00	(155)
Mr N Pearson	£30.00	(117)
Mr M Loveday	£25.00	(199)
Mr J Gandon	£15.00	(260)
Rev'd Fenton	£15.00	(266)
Mr L Wallace	£15.00	(22)

### Feb 15

Mr J Gandon	£40.00	(260)
Mrs J Claburn	£30.00	(335)
Mr A Edwards	£25.00	(280)
Mrs E Knowler	£15.00	(213)
Mr Mrs Mercy	£15.00	(161)
Mr Mrs Thorpe	£15.00	(42)

### Mar 15

Mrs M Fox	£40.00	(261)
Mr J Osborne	£25.00	(1)
Mrs A Reader	£15.00	(86)
Mrs M Owlett	£15.00	(130)
Mr G Meaden	£15.00	(167)

# Social Scene

**CPRE Kent members can join a fascinating variety of outings organised by volunteer Margaret Micklewright.**

These often include unusual places the public don't normally get to see - activities as diverse as the sewers beneath Brighton, the Royal Mail sorting office at Tonbridge and brick making at Chiddingstone, as well as traditional tourist attractions like Bodiam Castle, a cruise on the River Thames and Christmas lunch at Sissinghurst.

## **Security rules supreme**

Mick Wise, joined the tour of Dungeness power station late last year and reported back:

"The safety aspect of the operation is second to none. If anyone is worried about this method of energy generation they needn't be, there's back-up of back-ups in all key areas and site security rules supreme. Rising sea level fears are also factored in with massive sea walls already in place post Fukushima."

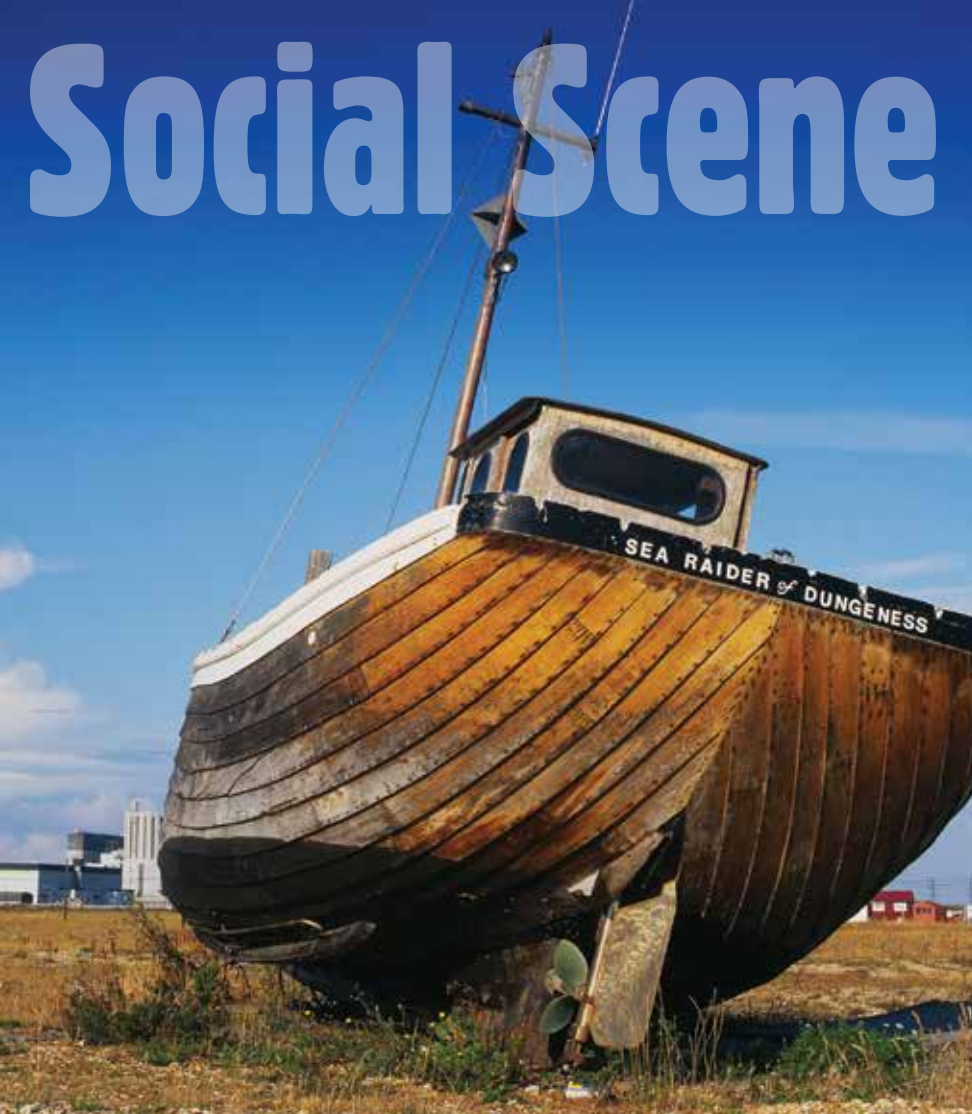
Mick also commented on the apparent lack of people, even in the reactor rod changing area and said members were fascinated to watch the seagulls feeding off fish churned out by the rotating screens of the seawater filters. Following an excellent fish and chip lunch at The Pilot, Mick concluded: "A good day, out, well done Margaret."

## **FORTHCOMING TRIPS**

Next up on the social calendar are spring visits to **Eltham Place** and the **Wetlands Bird Trust** at Barnes. During the summer there will be trips to **Peacehaven Waste Water Treatment Plant**, by popular demand a repeat visit to the **Olympic Park** and a tour of **Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre** in Sussex. For details of forthcoming trips see the leaflet enclosed with this magazine and our website.

## **KEEP IN TOUCH**

CPRE Kent regularly posts on Facebook and twitter – keep up to date with what is going on by following us @CPREKent or logging on to Facebook or our own website.



Dungeness boat and power station - CPRE



Photo - EDF Energy



Margaret Micklewright

