

# KENT VOICE

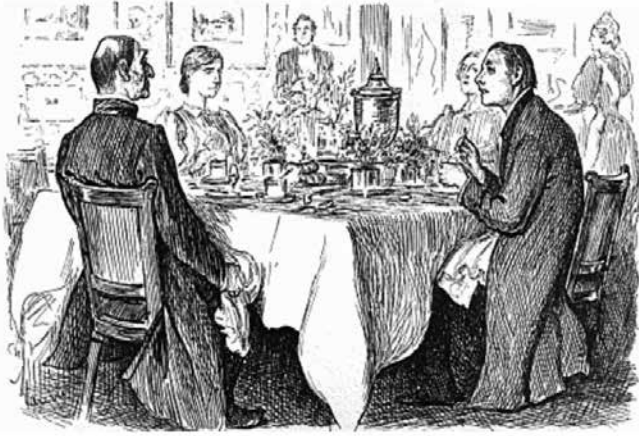
Protecting Kent's Countryside  
SPRING/SUMMER 2017

**Kent's orchid treasures**

**Delivering housing:  
the challenges and  
dilemmas**

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





*Bishop: “I’m afraid you’ve got a bad egg, Mr Jones’*

*Curate: “Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent!”*

“True Humility” by George du Maurier, originally published in Punch, 9 November 1895.

# Fixing our broken housing market

After many delays, the Housing White Paper was published at the beginning of February. Like the famous curate’s egg, it is good in parts. It contains interesting ideas about how to encourage the delivery of housing. It appears to reinforce Green Belt protection, but this will need to be carefully scrutinised: it seems that unless a planning authority has demonstrated that it has done all in its power to deliver its housing targets on other land available to it, then Green Belt may have to be released. The white paper is, however, silent on the significant number of homes already granted planning permission on Green Belt land – nationally, well over a quarter of a million.

One of the paper’s more welcome provisions is a firm emphasis on brownfield land regeneration. But perhaps most importantly, it seems that Government finally recognises that it is not a broken planning system that is preventing the homes that we need from being built, but a broken housing market.

Too much of the country’s supply of new homes is delivered by a very small number of major building companies, who have little interest in ‘piling high and selling cheap’ – their profits rely on keeping house prices buoyant. Those priced out of so-called market housing suffer from the devolution of social housing to a private sector which has little incentive to deliver the real step change that is needed to provide decent, affordable homes accessible by those on low incomes.

More worrying is the requirement for every planning authority to set ‘ambitious’ targets for new housing, and an as-yet unspecified delivery test with sanctions against local authorities failing to meet those targets. Here is the real cause for concern; planning authorities need to be able to set achievable, deliverable housing targets which reflect genuine need, if they are to carry the support of local communities. There is a big gap between genuine need and aspirational demand; the former is finite and measurable, while the latter is limitless as long as there are those with deeper pockets and few other attractive options for investing their money.

The proposed sanctions will only harm communities, with local authorities forced to allocate more and more land in locations that would never normally pass the tests of sustainable planning. We need community buy-in to deliver the homes that are genuinely needed, not the battleground that the planning system has become. We look forward to helping shape the national CPRE response to this consultation over the coming weeks.



Photos: CPRE

# Director's Introduction



Hilary Newport

Litter regularly tops public polls as one of people's greatest annoyances. It's a needless nuisance and cleaning it up is a significant cost to our local authorities. It's heartening to know that simple things can be done: policy changes work, such as CPRE's campaign to stop most shops giving away free carrier bags. The 5p charge imposed on carrier bags in 2015 means that collectively we now use 85% fewer bags. Design changes help too: just think of the old-fashioned ring pulls that were so easy to detach from drinks cans. The drinks packaging industry re-designed the cans so that the ring pulls now stay attached when the can is opened – so they are far less likely to become litter.

But there is still so much more that could be done. In the next edition of Kent Voice, we will be featuring more of CPRE's work with the Litter Action coalition. Flushed with the success of achieving such a significant drop in the number of bags being used and discarded, we are turning our attention to reducing the number of plastic and glass drinks bottles that litter our environment through supporting deposit schemes which will encourage people to return empty bottles to shops or recycling centres to receive a refund. When bottles have a value, they are far less likely to become litter. And encouraging a step change in the way people think about packaging items might be the step forward that we need in changing people's thinking about litter.



Would you like to get involved in our work on litter? We are looking for someone to co-ordinate litter picks as well as volunteers to help. Please contact the office if you would like to know more.



Photo: Litter Action

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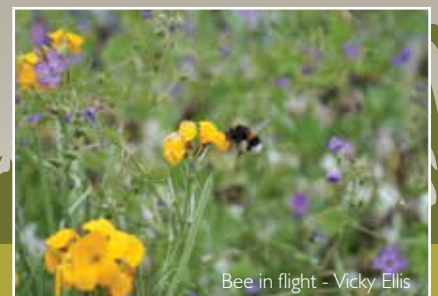
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Hare - Natural England



Lady Orchid - Keith Wilson



Bee in flight - Vicky Ellis



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# Farming with wildlife in mind

Photo: Vicky Ellis

How farmers are protecting the environment, habitats and wildlife  
By Paul Cobb



Paul Cobb

**For more than four decades the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) has provided environmental advice to the farming community. With a reputation for its ethical ethos and high standards of service, it helps farmers understand the environmental value of their land and make the most of the agri-environment options available.**

**Paul Cobb is an independent environmental management adviser who works with farmers and landowners in managing land in stewardship schemes and advises them on soil and water protection. He is Campaign for the Farmed Environment Kent coordinator. Here, Paul explains the important role FWAG plays in Kent.**

When FWAG launched in 1969 the ground between farming and conservation interests was a no man's land, open to hostile fire from either side. Operating first on a voluntary basis, then by employing county based professional advisers to work with farmers and spread the message through meetings, farm walks and other events, FWAG was able to demonstrate that at a practical level you could farm successfully and leave room for nature. If FWAG has achieved anything in its 47 years, it is to have made farming with the environment in mind simply 'what you do' as a farmer.

## **Farming pioneers**

In case you think it was easy by the time I started in Kent in 1984, let us remember grants for taking out hedges had only just gone, and there were no agri-environment ('stewardship') schemes. But all over the country FWAG groups such as Kent were raising funds



Brown hare: Natural England



to employ advisers like me, and being well supported by the farming industry. With match funding from the Countryside Commission, we were well underway. It is a great satisfaction to me that I am still visiting some of the farming families I first saw in 1984, though now sometimes it is the next generation. The real pioneers and enthusiasts like David and Robert Page at Scords Farm made everyone take notice; farming with wildlife worked, and it made sense.

### **Healthy soil and clean water**

Fast-forward to 1992, and the birth of the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS). The idea of paying farmers and landholders for 10 years for positive countryside management was novel, and the envy of our European neighbours. Grasslands and wetlands could be managed and field margins created for the long term under CSS, with suitable recompense and backed up with capital works payments. Landscape and historical features could be protected and managed. FWAG advisers were well placed to work with farmers to draw up applications to CSS and get the best for the farm and the countryside. Gradually we extended our idea of what farming for wildlife means into the cropped area, with the recognition that only by manipulating the way we manage some crops and providing areas, for example for birds to feed, can we really get results. Drawing on the work of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, FWAG staff integrated these vital messages into their work about taking up these 'in-field' options. The next step came in 2005 with the successor to CSS, Environmental Stewardship (ES). By this time, we had realised that the farmed environment includes the very resources on which agriculture depends - healthy soil and clean

*“in 1969 the ground between farming and conservation interests was a no man’s land, open to hostile fire from either side”*

water. While the innovative Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) initiative provided capital payments for improving farm infrastructure and avoiding pollution, ES integrated 5- or 10-year payments for suitable land management practices. Once again FWAG advisers stepped up to the mark, adding qualifications in resource management to go with our other skills, or employing staff with agronomy backgrounds.

### **Old wisdom and hi-tech solutions**

So where is FWAG at the start of 2017? There are nine of us in the south east, the range of what we do is huge, and we have never been more in demand. From

long term farm plans to facilitating farmer groups, from species surveys to soil sampling, we are skilled and versatile. There is a new Countryside Stewardship that combines the options in ES with those in CSF, and has integrated all the forestry grants as well. Of course, with Brexit, we need to be looking at the next agri-environment scheme well before 2020, and it will not be part EU funded. But this is an opportunity to rethink our approach to schemes. Could the 'whole farm plan' – in which FWAG was a pioneer – provide a model? Our work on water and soil quality issues has become as important as looking after the wildlife in our title. In our region, we are working with Natural England, water companies and farmers to tackle issues like nitrates and pesticides in groundwater. Lastly, we know that while stewardship has worked, it is the farm system itself that needs to provide for wildlife and protect natural resources. We are working with progressive farmers adapting their systems and marrying the best of old wisdom with the latest hi-tech methods and equipment to do just that. In 2019 FWAG will be 50, and we will be more relevant than ever.



Picture: View of Scords Farm, Toys Hill

# Delivering housing - the challenges and dilemmas



Chilmington Green: Simon Brimacombe



Richard Alderton

**In our third feature on the housing crisis we look at the challenges facing local authorities as they plan development for decades to come; seeking to meet what we consider unrealistic, unsustainable and unachievable housing targets. Susannah Richter talked to Director of Development at Ashford Borough Council Richard Alderton.**

Ashford is unusual in that it has been very focused on the plan-led approach to planning for a long time - council members believe they are elected to take strategic, and often tough, decisions and then stick to them. It has had full local plan coverage for over 30 years – the latest version will go to examination this spring and set out the strategic sites and policies until 2030. Contrast this to the 16% of local authorities with no local plan at all.

“We are fully committed to the local plan but it is a tortuous and over-

complicated process,” said Richard Alderton. “It is almost impossible to do a major update in less than four years.

“Always having a five-year land supply for housing is particularly challenging. This creates unreasonable burdens on local authorities because the way the Government has set the rules means that, if house builders fail to deliver housing at the rate envisaged, it gets added to the requirement which results in a real ratcheting up. It’s a vicious cycle; we have to allocate more and more sites that are easily deliverable - typically greenfield sites.”

Greenfield sites command a higher value and are more attractive to developers. The council is committed to developing brownfield but national planning policy does not allow it to force this.

Richard explained: “It is a cleft stick – we have a moral imperative to deliver on brownfield sites but there is no basis in national planning policy to prioritise brownfield over greenfield. We can understand why the Government is reluctant to change



Ashford College: HNW Architects



Gasometer (now demolished): Christine Drury



this – while our heart says brownfield first, the acute housing crisis and the need for homes probably makes it unrealistic. It is a terrible dilemma.”

However, Ashford is now incentivising brownfield development and, with the arrival of high speed rail access to London, is finally having real success regenerating the town centre. Around six hundred homes will be built on the former Powergen site, 240 at Victoria Way East and 200 at Godinton Way. Add to this a brand-new Ashford College, a new cinema, a brewery visitor attraction, bars, restaurants and shops, including a major extension to the Ashford Designer Outlet.

Ashford’s pragmatic approach to stimulate town centre investment means that brownfield developers on key strategic town centre sites do not have to meet the affordable housing quotas (up to 30% on greenfield sites). “This makes brownfield developments economically viable,” said Richard. “But it is not an easy choice. We know this will not help those in the most acute housing need but the regeneration will bring jobs and better shops and services.”

The council has also worked closely with Kent County Council to accept lower levels of payments towards infrastructure. It has a pioneering ‘district deal’ with KCC which has agreed to compromise on some contributions towards its services.

In fact, it has taken more than ten years to develop these sites, mainly because the market was not interested. This has now improved, stimulated by the high-speed rail services, and the commitment of the council and its partners to rejuvenate the town centre. Development has also been subsidised with support from the Homes and Communities Agency, able to sell land at a realistic price to stimulate development.

Many of the new homes, around 600, will be for the commercial rented sector – serviced



Chilmington Green: Simon Brimacombe

*“while our heart says brownfield first, the acute housing crisis and the need for homes probably makes it unrealistic”*

accommodation with facilities such as concierge, shared meeting spaces, gyms and bars and better security for tenants. They are especially aimed at young professionals working in Kent or commuting to London with the spending power to bring vitality and regeneration to the town centre economy.

So, if the market and viability has caused brownfield development

to take so long, why the delay with major planned greenfield sites such as Chilmington Green? First conceived more than a decade ago, work will finally start this year and will eventually provide 5,750 homes, 1,000 jobs, five new schools, shops, cafes, healthcare and a community hub.

*(continued overleaf)*



Aerial view of Ashford brownfield sites



Chilmington Green: Simon Brimacombe



Ashford Designer Outlet extension: Chapman Taylor



Brewery image: Guy Hollaway Architects



Conningbrook Lake: BDB Design

"It reflects the sheer scale of the development and the complexity of the planning system we have in this country," said Richard. "We have to get it into the local plan, draw up a masterplan with the developers and community, consider outline and detailed planning applications and negotiate legal agreements to provide the £110m infrastructure required for a 25-year build. The land has multiple owners and so this has been tortuously complicated."

However, the Section 106 agreement has now been signed and access works from the A28 are about to start. The services will then go in – roads, sewers, power - then the footings of the first homes by the end of the year. Infrastructure is always a huge challenge with dozens of agencies and companies involved, having to predict need for facilities and services 20 years ahead. Each has their own plan and sets their own budget - local councils have little influence over this. Plus, sufficient land is needed to site the schools, health centres, parks and so on.

Wildlife is another consideration. At Chilmington Green the built coverage is less than 50% which makes it easier to plan strategic areas of open space, wildlife habitats and natural lakes and waterways to provide drainage, thus preventing flooding and aiding wildlife.

There will be affordable homes – Ashford Borough Council (ABC) sets levels of up to 30%, split 60:40 between shared ownership and rental properties. Ashford is also building council houses itself, usually on pockets of brownfield land within existing developments, such as abandoned garage blocks. But there is not the money to deliver large volumes.

In all new homes, ABC sets strict space standards. Richard explained: "The council is genuinely committed to driving up quality and has set interior and exterior space standards such as requiring all flats to have a balcony or private outdoor space and decent space for storage. Councillors are wedded to this - we are not about creating the slums of the future."

However, he is concerned about homes coming online under permitted development rights. Office conversions to flats do not have to comply with the space standards and Richard cites one local scheme with homes half the minimum size they should be.

"These will be seriously sub-standard places to live which is really galling when we are trying so hard to drive quality regeneration," he said.

ABC has worked with CPRE Kent in its bid to drive up quality. Richard explained: "We respect that CPRE will fight on principles and issues and we may sometimes have to agree to differ. But where we can work in partnership is making great places, so, where schemes do go forward, they have the best possible design and layout."

CPRE Kent and the Prince's Foundation partnered with ABC 17 years ago on the first major design workshop in the town - many have followed. The result was the masterplan for the development of the barracks site, now Repton Manor.

"I revisited a few months ago for a community event and met local residents," said Richard. "They told me it is a fantastic community where people enjoy living, with the right local services in place, good public spaces and quality design. CPRE Kent was very much a part of that. To witness these long-term outcomes - strong and vibrant communities with a pride in where they live and enjoying their homes, good facilities and local spaces is about as much as any planner can hope for!"







# Chairman's Update

## Battles ahead...

We continue our insights on the delivery of housing: in this issue, we have the view of a local authority.

Ashford town has a large proportion of brownfield sites as a result of the high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link being built through the town, and from the closure of the Ashford Railway Works. It has taken over 20 years to start to turn these around with a number of previous proposals that were aborted. CPRE has been successful in getting the Government to promote brownfield once again – CPRE's 'waste of space' campaign was a turning point. But, as Richard Alderton points out, the council's own priority to get these sites regenerated has been key. It is good to see a council so determined and organised to incentivise brownfield development, and achieve regeneration.

Local planning authorities are at the frontline of the pressures of a planning system that allows developers such as Gladman and

Richborough Estates to unashamedly exploit undeliverable housing numbers and target local authorities that cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. The sites that developers get permitted by this ruse are the financially juicy green fields on the edge of villages: easily saleable, but often at a scale and design that is thoroughly and correctly opposed by parish councils and community action groups. When these applications go to appeal, they are a huge burden for local authorities to defend their planning refusals at inquiry, diverting planning resources needed to progress the local plan, and dwindling financial resources into legal costs. When CPRE can participate, it may help to achieve a win: as at Newington in Swale. There are two appeals coming up in Ashford district: CPRE will participate in the one at Brabourne Lees.

The latest on Farthingloe is that, as expected, Dover has appealed to the Supreme Court to try to get the planning permission for 600 houses in the AONB reinstated. CPRE was successful at the Appeal Court in getting the permission quashed. The Supreme Court's terms for the hearing are as favourable as they could be to us: we will not be liable for the other side's legal costs, and the costs awarded to us at the Appeal Court are safeguarded. This is a long road. We are unlikely to be in court before the autumn: so as last time there will more news in the next issue.

Thank you all for your support: your subscriptions and donations and your volunteering time. Keep the letters and emails coming: it is always good to hear your views, and do come and say hello at our events.

**Do send me your comments:**  
[christine.drury@btopenworld.com](mailto:christine.drury@btopenworld.com)



Ashford by Judy Martin



Mersham le Hatch deer park by Angus Willson



# Graham Clarke - a Kentis

**The artist and author Graham Clarke has been president of CPRE Kent since 2000. His art reflects his passion for the Kent countryside and the delight he takes in observing rural life in our historic county. Here, Susannah Richter chats to Graham about his life and work.**

Graham was born in rural Oxfordshire - his mother had been evacuated there during the war. But his roots are in Kent where he grew up in the family home in Bromley, attending the local primary, Beckenham grammar, then Beckenham art school and finally the Royal College of Art.

"I knew I was an artist before I went to primary school," said Graham. "My first teacher told me 'you are very good at art' and I told her 'I know that of course!'. I was selling pictures to old ladies by the time I was nine. The first was of a bird sanctuary near where I lived and I earned 20 weeks' pocket money - 10 shillings."

At the Royal College, the war artist Edward Bawden taught him the technique of lino printing. He started to get large commissions for advertising posters, such as from the London Transport Museum. However, Graham wanted to get

more detail into his work - "every picture must tell a story" - so turned to etchings. He has completed more etchings than anyone else alive, more than 500, using Rembrandt's techniques from hundreds of years ago. The process uses copper plate; the cost is prohibitive for many and the technique is not taught in art school for health and safety (using acids and other chemicals) and cost reasons.

"I'm resistant to change so everything is 200 years out of date, but that's what works," said Graham.

It is time consuming - Graham is always thinking of ideas and characters for his unique pictures which mainly depict Kent rural life. The creation of the plate takes at least six weeks.

Graham has been married to Wendy for 52 years (they met at a youth club) and has lived in the village of Boughton Monchelsea since the late 1960s. It's an idyllic life, with

his quirky studio and his beloved village life with its pubs, churches and characters right on the doorstep.

The beauty of the Kent landscapes, its traditions and country folk, remain his greatest inspiration: "I'm getting more Kentish as time goes by. I love the countryside. I love ancient churches and listening to old boys in pubs, I love the people and their tales. Kent is beautiful and so rich in history. I try to tell these stories in my work - sometimes in a humorous way but always depicting the wonderful county we live in. I like to make people smile."



All photos by Abi Clarke  
Etching (right): Golden Vale



# sh Artist



Graham also writes poems, told in humorous fashion at CPRE Kent AGMs and get-togethers.

Here is an extract from 'Don't look behind you Grandpa':

My grandsons and I stood on a hill  
 Admiring the farmlands below  
 Green as green as green can be  
 Except in the winter snow  
 "You really love it Grandpa" they said  
 "Indeed I do" says I  
 The farms, the churches, the castle, the woods  
 All 'neath our Kentish sky  
 "Then don't look behind you grandpa" they said  
 "There's a sight to make you cry  
 Ugly red houses row upon row, all concrete and hardly a tree  
 Villages lost beneath tarmac and transport  
 And you said you were CPRE"  
 How guilty felt me to lose the Green Belt  
 And for grandsons to blame it on me"

Graham's work hangs in galleries and homes across the world, including Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle (he was a great favourite of the late Queen Mother). He is considered Japan's favourite English artist, exhibiting in the country many times, and is also popular in Norway. His work captures the essence of England and Kent and you can spot something new each time you look at one of his prints.

Graham supports the charity the Canterbury Oast Trust, which runs the Rare Breeds Centre near Woodchurch, and is also a Kent Ambassador but says the Campaign to Protect Rural England is the cause closest to his heart.

Summing up what the Kent countryside means to him, he said: "It's been my life's work really. It's provided me with a more than adequate living and inspiration. I depict how lovely it is and most of it still is and that's what I care about, preserving that for the future."





Dartford crossing: Highways England

## Thames Crossing

We still await a decision on the location and specification of additional road capacity crossing the Thames; Highways England has indicated that its preferred choice is a tunnel running between Gravesend and Tilbury, but acknowledges that even when complete this would only divert some 14% of the traffic that uses the existing crossings at Dartford. It's undeniable that the congestion and air pollution at Dartford is intolerable, but we question whether such a limited improvement is worth the damage to ancient woodland and Green Belt land – and even more so when that additional capacity will be wholly road capacity, without any provision for rail transport.

# headlines

*from the campaigns frontline*

Hilary Newport updates us on the latest campaigns



Heathrow landing by Adrian Underwood

## Airports policy

The draft Airports National Policy Statement is out for consultation. This focuses on the expansion of Heathrow with a third runway. We believe that a better environmental option would be to spread the burden of aviation expansion amongst other airports, where additional capacity is available, rather than pulling in more and more passengers and employees to an already overcrowded south east.



Richborough Castle fort view by Robert

## Richborough masts

Last time we reported on the prospect of two enormous communication masts proposed for Richborough, intended to bolster the communications network used for high-speed financial transactions. At around 320 metres high, each of these would have been the tallest structures in Western Europe and a glaring intrusion into the open, sweeping landscapes of the Wantsum Channel. That intrusion into the landscape was recognised by Dover's planning committee who turned down both planning applications in January.

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

## Freight consultation

Kent County Council has been consulting on the management of freight vehicles in the county. A huge and growing proportion of the goods that we trade with mainland Europe travels through the county by road on its way to and from the channel crossings, and we believe that over-reliance on this narrow route is not in Kent's best interests. Better use of other ports of entry and exit, and especially better use of other modes of transport, such as rail freight, would offer more resilience and be less environmentally damaging.



HGV selection by Barry W



# Housing Foresight

CPRE sometimes has an undeserved reputation for wanting to stop anything being built, anywhere.



Photo: Peter Astles

It is a shame that some people think this; it is self-evident that, if we object to everything, then we may as well comment on nothing. We don't want our carefully crafted arguments against hugely inappropriate and unsustainable projects to be dismissed with cries of "CPRE would say that, wouldn't they?".

So, we are proud to be able to commend to our members a series of excellent publications that CPRE's national office has been publishing since 2014. They are not manifestos of CPRE policy, but intelligent, thoughtful discourses on how to deliver the homes that people need. Subjects include better delivery methods for brownfield sites; provision of rural affordable housing; and ways to increase build-out rates by encouraging diversity in the house building sector.

The importance of this series of publications can be seen its echoes in the Housing White Paper (see page 2); better brownfield re-use and encouraging more SME builders are policy directions that could have been (and indeed were) written by CPRE. It's a tremendous accolade to colleagues at CPRE's national office that so much of this work has been acknowledged and taken forward by this government.

**Do take a look at this excellent series via the CPRE web site – search for 'CPRE Housing Foresight'.**

All photos are covers of the CPRE Housing Foresight papers



Photo: Vauban Freiberg



Croydon photo: Alamy



Hemyock, Devon, photo: Hastoe

**Local food**  
Do you buy local food?  
In Kent, we have some amazing produce – from strawberries to cauliflowers, pies and sausages to beers and bread. Want some tips on where to find it and ways to support our local farmers and producers? CPRE has produced this handy guide – available on the national website. We will be giving out copies at our summer events.

# Kent's Orchid Treasures



**Kent boasts some of the most beautiful, iconic and rare orchids in Britain. With around 56 terrestrial species across the UK, a massive fifty percent of these wonderful flowers are found here in Kent.**

**by Vicky Ellis**

Top - Lizard Orchid: Bjorn Sothmann  
Above - Military Orchid: Bjorn Sothmann

Although orchids are protected, they have very specific environmental requirements, found in either woodland, dune slacks or chalkland. Threats, such as habitat destruction and lack of specialist knowledge resulting in orchids being overlooked in scoping surveys, have led to the rapid decline of species and some even being recorded as extinct.

The word orchid is from the Greek word orchis, which describes the shape of the tubers of several species. All orchids share similar interesting characteristics, for example they all have one leaf with no stalk rather than leaflets, they do not have any woody stems and the flowers' male and female parts are fused. Orchids can be deciduous, parasitic or semi-parasitic and perennate via rhizomes or tubers, with the last season's tuber feeding the next.

Some of the orchids to be found in Kent include the Monkey Orchid (*Orchis simia*), present in only three sites across Britain, two of which are in Kent. The seeds of this pretty little plant were sown at Park Gate

Down, but there was no official recording until eight years later! Also in Kent is the Lizard Orchid (*Himantoglossum hircinum*) which can be found at Sandwich Bay and, surprisingly, Royal St George's golf course, near Ramsgate. This orchid seems to grow happily amongst the man-made sand dunes, demonstrating that not all species obey the preconceived idea of what would be their natural habitat. Still, this is unusual and

*"Kent is also the exclusive home of the Lady Orchid."*

should not be regarded as the norm. The Military Orchid (*Orchis militaris*), once thought extinct in Britain, was allegedly rediscovered by an amateur botanist in Kent. However, he refused to divulge its whereabouts. Kent is also the exclusive home of The Lady Orchid (*Orchis purpurea*).

The Early Spider Orchid (*Ophrys sphegodes*) grows in chalk grassland and can be found at Samphire Hoe and Castle Hill. There are historical records of the Early Spider Orchid at Farthingloe, Dover, a site currently under threat of development. Sadly, due to lack of habitat management, it's likely the seeds are unable to germinate. But, if habitat management was to one day be practised on this site, then it is likely this rare and beautiful orchid would blossom once more.

Monkton Nature Reserve, Thanet, which is nestled inside an old chalk pit quarry, boasts no fewer than nine orchids including either the Lesser or Greater Butterfly Orchid (*Platanthera bifolia* or *chloranthawhich*), spotted for the first time last year. Fingers crossed it reappears this year and can be correctly identified as Lesser or Greater. The success of this small reserve demonstrates how careful we must be when classifying brownfield land as suitable for development.

This county is the UK stronghold for orchids especially rare

**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




specimens, partly due to its chalk grasslands and warmer climate. With all the development pressures that we are currently facing in Kent, we are in real danger of losing more and more rare species of

orchids to the bulldozer; if we fail to protect the special places where these wonderful and important plants are found, that would be nothing short of vandalism.

**If you spot an orchid**, or any flora whilst out and about, don't forget to record your findings with the Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC).

Not only will you be protecting the flora but you may also help preserve the site.

[info@kmbrc.org.uk](mailto:info@kmbrc.org.uk)    (01795) 532385    [www.kmbrc.org.uk](http://www.kmbrc.org.uk)




Greater Butterfly Orchid: Bjorn Sothmann



Lady Orchid: Keith Wilson



Early Spider Orchid: Ferran Pestana



# The planning decisions protecting our heritage

CPRE Kent sometimes feels it is fighting a losing battle against the speculative planning applications and appeals for inappropriate and harmful development across Kent. However, there is hope fighting some schemes - the protection of heritage is being taken seriously by the courts, as Hilary Newport explains.

Photo: Lyveden New Bield, Lee Morley



Wind turbines by Paul

*“Our current planning system is deeply flawed”*

Successive planning reforms have caused CPRE and its members increasingly grave concerns. The controls set in place by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act have become incrementally eroded, making it harder and harder for local planning authorities to resist inappropriate, speculative planning applications.

The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires all local authorities to plan for their full housing needs; all too often this leads to local plans setting impossible housebuilding targets. Each local planning authority must demonstrate that there is enough deliverable building land always available to allow five years'-worth of houses to be built.

Even when planning permissions

for enough new homes to meet the targets are granted, developers often fail to deliver those homes. The NPPF wrongly assumes that the shortage in delivery is due to an insufficiency of land. Since the original land allocations will have been the most sustainable locations for housing growth, it is inevitable that extra allocations will be in less sustainable sites. When there is less than five years' land supply, the NPPF directs that there must be a strong presumption in favour of granting permission for planning applications - even speculative applications for inappropriate development that would struggle to find support in a properly tested local plan. Many such applications are granted at appeal, even if the local planning authority has been brave enough to refuse permission.



Our current planning system is deeply flawed.

Although the presumption in favour of development remains strong, three important judgments in 2014 and 2015 in heritage-related cases began to challenge that presumption, and sparked huge debates in planning circles.

The first of these concerned Lyveden New Bield, an unfinished lodge in Northamptonshire, Grade I listed and now owned by the National Trust. Construction of the lodge stopped in 1605 when its owner died, and today it still looks much as it did in the early C17.

But, if the Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Company had had its way, and succeeded in its attempts to site four large wind turbines just 1.7km from the lodge, it would have looked very different.

The energy company went to appeal on the grounds of non-determination of their planning application. The inspector concluded that, while the visual impact of the turbines would clearly cause harm to the setting of the lodge, that harm was not sufficient to justify refusal, and granted

planning permission in 2012. At that point, East Northants District Council, the National Trust and English Heritage came together to challenge that decision by judicial review. The High Court judgment which resulted overturned that planning permission in 2013.

The judgment made it clear that, although the harm to the setting of the lodge was 'less than substantial' (see para 134 of the NPPF), the inspector had failed to give that harm adequate weight in balancing it against the renewable energy benefits of the wind farm. The Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Company challenged that judgment at the Court of Appeal in 2014, but it was upheld and the planning permission remains quashed.

This set an important precedent. In the months that followed, the (then) Secretary of State Eric Pickles turned down several applications for onshore wind farms, in some cases doing so against the advice of planning inspectors, ruling that inadequate weight had been given to the harm to heritage assets.

The second important judgment related to the granting of planning permission for six affordable homes



in Penshurst, Sevenoaks in 2012. Locals - including the Forge Field Society - sought judicial review and planning permission was quashed in 2014, with a judgment that cited the weight that needed to be given to the harm caused to the setting of listed buildings and a conservation area in an AONB.

In the third case, in 2015, Forest of Dean District Council refused a speculative application for 85 homes on a greenfield site on the edge of Newent, adjacent to a Grade II listed farmhouse. The applicant appealed because the council could not demonstrate that it had a five-year supply of housing land. The appeal was allowed, but when the council challenged the inspector's decision in the High Court, the permission was quashed. The judgment explained that the inspector had given inadequate weight to the degree of harm to the heritage setting in balance against the benefit of providing housing, even in a borough without a five-year land supply.

*(continued overleaf)*





Photo: Leeds Castle

In these three cases the High Court has been alert to NPPF policies which are more demanding than many applicants and authorities appreciate. Planning authorities must “identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal”, including their setting, which is not always done. They must then decide whether a proposed development would cause ‘substantial harm’ or ‘less than substantial harm’ to the significance of a designated heritage asset (through destruction, alteration or development within its setting). Substantial harm should only exceptionally be allowed. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal. In any scenario, ‘great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’, and it was the lack of such ‘great weight’ which prompted the court rulings.

In our experience, consultants acting on behalf of developers can be keen to downplay the significance of heritage assets. We saw one such example at an appeal for non-determination of a major industrial warehouse development in Kent (Waterside Park at Junction 8 of the M20) that would have had negative impacts on the setting

of Grade I listed Leeds Castle in a Grade II\* registered park. Leeds castle is one of the county’s principal tourist attractions with an astonishing and illustrious history; it was a favoured residence of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor of Castile, and, later, home to Catherine of Aragon. Yet the promoters tried - without success - to downplay its significance by describing it as a ‘picturesque nineteenth or early twentieth century faux-Castle’.

The NPPF puts local authorities in a good position to protect heritage, as Medway Council has demonstrated in a case at Rainham in Kent. Here, a speculative application for 200 homes was

refused on a greenfield site by this unitary authority which does not have an up-to-date local plan. The applicant appealed that decision, but the inspector upheld Medway Council’s decision. Despite the council not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing supply, the inspector ruled that this was not sufficient reason to accept the damage to the setting of listed buildings and a conservation area.

Clearly, the harm to the setting of heritage assets will not always outweigh the benefits of good, genuinely sustainable development. The NPPF makes provision for this to happen (paragraphs 65 and 132-134), but only where it can be clearly justified. But where some would-be developers are seeking to ride roughshod over the principles of good planning, forcing through hugely inappropriate developments, the protection of the setting of heritage assets should be carefully considered. Britain is a country steeped in history, the evidence of which surrounds us, and who better than grass-roots members of CPRE to bring their local knowledge of these gems to the attention of local planning authorities, planning inspectors, and even, where necessary, the highest courts?



Lyveden New Bield, Howard Chalkley

# Your feedback...



**We were pleased to receive so much feedback over the last few months: here is a snapshot of what you have been saying.**

## **On Pond Farm, Newington:**

"I would like to thank you (Peter Blandon) and your colleagues for your sterling work in objecting to Gladman's planning applications and for your work and attendance at the subsequent appeal. The detailed submissions and representations were pivotal in the rejection of the development. Thank you for your help in ensuring the right decision was made by the planning inspector." Debbie Haigh, Chair of Newington Parish Council.

"Excellent news, how many more battles to be won I wonder?" Sue Butler on Facebook

"Thank you for all you do! Brilliant result. Now for all the others!" Lyn Smith Dennis on Facebook

## **On Mountfield Park, south Canterbury:**

"Far too many developments nowadays are greenfield. I'm sure it is cheaper and easier to solve the housing problem with a clean plot to work on, but driving through larger towns and cities or viewing land from a train, you see so many potential sites begging for development and they are so much nearer to services. Would developers view land differently if they had to convert an equal area of neglected brownfield back to something natural as a compensation? Of course not, it would be too expensive." Gillian Ingram

## **On brownfield first and protecting the Green Belt:**

"Thank you for championing this issue." Tracey Bower on Facebook

## **On CPRE Kent, a re-joining member from Pluckley commented:**

"CPRE cannot be (party) political but probably can do more to promote criticism and awareness. There is huge anger and resentment at the dismal standard of planning and the destruction of countryside. How best to direct that energy from frustration to fruition seems a massive agenda."

## **On Kent Voice, Anne Rillie made the following suggestion:**

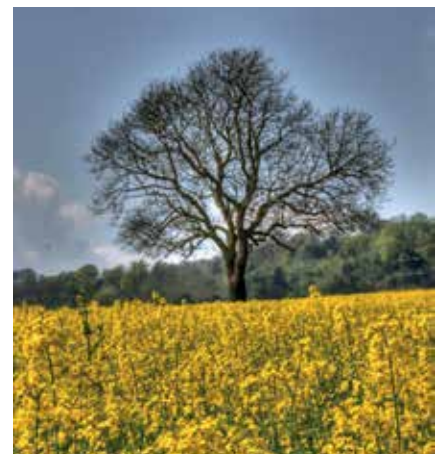
"Why not put Kent Voice into your dentist's or doctor's waiting rooms – a good way of spreading our messages and reaching potential new members and supporters."

**If you have any comments or suggestions, please email [susannah.richter@cprekent.org.uk](mailto:susannah.richter@cprekent.org.uk)**



Main photo - Pond Farm, Newington: Vicky Ellis

Cute lamb: Su-May



North Downs: Brian Fuller

**A quick catch-up with our district committees - don't forget if you would like to become more involved with CPRE Kent in your local area please contact us in the office and we will put you in touch with your district chairman.**

# Around *the districts*

Chilmington Green: Simon Brimacombe

## **Ashford – Hilary Moorby**

- The large AXA site at Sevington, next to the M20 J10a, has been sold to Aviva. The plans have been permitted but building will depend on J10a. Consultations have finished and we await the outcome of our comments concerning the exit/entrance to Barry Road on to the A2070 and the layout. The Development Consent Order planning process for J10a has started.
- Chilmington Green – part of the 106 agreement has been signed off at last and development on site may start this spring, with 2,500 houses scheduled by 2030. An archaeological dig has taken place: I wonder if anything exciting has been found?
- Gladman developments in Smarden and Brabourne were refused. In Smarden 25 houses were permitted, but Gladman is appealing the refusal of 50 more on the same site. A second developer has applied for permission to build another 25. We will be taking part in the Gladman appeal in Brabourne in June. Gladman now has four applications in Ashford borough with another expected in Charing. This aggressive developer is jumping on the bandwagon following an appeal in Tenterden which decided Ashford does not have a five-year plus 20% supply of housing sites.
- The draft Local Plan was published for consultation last June; because of the supposed lack of housing sites many new sites were put forward by developers. Meanwhile, development in the town centre is going ahead quickly with new houses and apartments, work on the mini brewery starting soon and the new college almost finished and due to open in September.
- Villages south of Ashford are concerned about the traffic problems when work starts simultaneously on the dualling of the A28 from the Matalan roundabout to the Drovers roundabout, the new access to Chilmington Green and the J10a slip road. Has sufficient thought been put in to prevent chaos on the country lanes? Parish councils are asking KCC and the Highways Agency to protect the villages from traffic and rat running.

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## **Canterbury – Alan Holmes**

- The problems of Canterbury continue unabated with no relief from the planners. After a long debate, outline permission for the massive Mountfield development was passed with no regard to the traffic or pollution problems it will cause. There was immediate approval for 1,400 houses - these will do little to help those wanting to get on the housing ladder. Local amenity groups are seeking funds for a judicial review but the grounds are far from obvious.
- It seems there is movement on the 1,000 houses in Thanington and recognition of the need to address the extensive traffic jams at Wincheap. But will fiddling with the A2/A28 interchange solve it? I doubt it – it needs a radical rethink or better still no houses.
- Meanwhile, the Kentish Gazette (Canterbury) recently reported that the Highland Investment Company intends to seek planning permission for a retirement village, a 50-acre business park, a food and drink hub, a health club and a spa in part of the AONB near to Bridge. None of this is in the local plan so we may stand a chance in fighting it.

## Dartford and Gravesham – Alex Hills

- The Ebbsfleet garden city project is ongoing with concern about the strain the extra people will place on the overstretched local hospital and transport. I am afraid this bland large-scale development is not living up to its hype and could have been much better.
- We are waiting to hear the Government's decision on the new Thames crossing. It has been proven that Highways England's (HE) preferred option, which involves destroying Green Belt land between Gravesend and Medway, will not solve Dartford's congestion problems.
- There has been a consultation on the HE proposed changes to the Bean interchange – these are not the best option. The new slip road on to the A2 would cause tailbacks to the Dartford crossing. We desperately need a proper national integrated transport scheme.
- In Istead Rise I objected to the use of farm buildings in a residential area in the Green Belt for a 24-hour vehicle recovery operation. In Meopham, I (and 173 others) objected to a bottling plant at a vineyard in the Green Belt - Gravesham Council has now rejected this.
- Updating the Highway Code, as proposed by British Cycling, would improve the safety of cyclists at junctions. As a long-time campaigner for pedestrian and cycle safety I welcome this.



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## Dover – Derek Wanstall

- Dover District Council recently highlighted that the delivery of new homes had reached a 15-year high in 2015/16, with 726 homes built (the fourth highest in Kent, after Dartford, Tonbridge and Malling and Ashford).
- Developments now progressing include the Waterfront and the St James Shopping Area; Connaught Barracks (after long delays) and the Whitfield site, with new schools and swimming pool; Buckland Mill and the Eastry Hospital site. There is still a need for lower cost housing for younger people and properties for residents wishing to downsize.
- Infrastructure provision is an issue with complaints about traffic congestion, parking problems and concern about healthcare and school places. Sadly, some villages are losing their identity as building encroaches into the countryside.
- In highways issues, we still have the Dover Traffic Assessment Project, which segregates HGVs on the inside lane of the M20 between Capel and Aycliffe to prevent congestion at the Waterfront. Highways England has dragged its heels over restoring normal speed limits.
- Residents still face noise disturbance and annoyance near Lydden Race Circuit, which seeks to expand despite its inappropriate location in the Kent Downs AONB.

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## Maidstone – Gary Thomas

- For an update on the Maidstone Local Plan see p25. Just before the examination, a planning application was submitted for warehousing and offices on Woodcut Farm. This was refused by Maidstone's Planning Committee and will be the subject of a public inquiry. We will be heavily involved.
- The very large number of houses at Langley will cause huge traffic congestion going towards the town centre as well as further deterioration to the already bad air quality. The council's solution of modal shift towards more cycling, walking and bus use does not seem likely to occur to a high enough level, and we agree with KCC that this is impractical.
- We are objecting to a huge warehouse for fruit storage and packing on agricultural land on a narrow rural road in Linton, particularly as most of the fruit is imported from abroad.
- Applications for solar farms continue to come forward, and although we support renewable energy it needs to be in the right place. We have objected to one on Tong Farm near Headcorn (the application is currently withdrawn), and took part in the public inquiry on one on Great Pagehurst Farm. Both would have strong adverse effects on the landscape.



## Medway – Hilary Newport

- Despite Lodge Hill being confirmed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Medway Council approved outline planning for the site in September 2014. In February 2016, the Government announced that the application would be called-in, so a public inquiry will be held, likely to be in 2018. Meanwhile, Land Securities, which had been backing the proposal, has pulled out. The draft Local Plan Development Options include Lodge Hill in a 'Hoo Peninsula Focus' option. The council seems to support it, but, given the uncertain planning status, signals that development would be phased to the second half of the plan period.

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## Sevenoaks – Nigel Britten

- Finally, some good news for the Green Belt: we have been gearing up to campaign against a 'garden village' of 3,000 homes close to Swanley, but, after lengthy debate, Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) decided against it. The development would have been entirely in the Green Belt, on the best agricultural land and explicitly against Government guidance on the siting and purpose of garden villages.
- The garden village was part of consultants' proposals to regenerate that area in the Swanley and Hextable Master Vision. SDC has abandoned other contentious elements of the Vision – also good news.
- There are plans for a possible new relief road to the north of Westerham, financed by the release of Green Belt land for 600+ homes. Local opinion is strongly divided.

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## Shepway – Val Loseby

- Stanford Parish Council has launched a judicial review (hearing date in June) to challenge Highways England as to whether it can build the lorry park without a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The owner of Westenhanger Castle has launched a separate judicial review on the positioning of the overnight parking area, very close to the castle and damaging to its wedding venue business.
- No further news from Shepway District Council (SDC) on Otterpool Park since the public consultations at the end of 2016 which did little more than introduce the project's consultants and designers. Five local parishes are to present a joint case to the Government objecting to both the lorry park and the Otterpool Garden Town.
- Lydd Airport expects a new passenger terminal building to be completed sooner than expected. It is negotiating with local landowners to secure an area of land to complete the 294-metre runway extension and expects to start work in summer 2018. SDC approved the runway extension and a new terminal capable of taking 500,000 passengers a year in 2010.



Photo: No Otterpool New Town

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## Swale – Peter Blandon

- For an update on the Swale Local Plan see p24. The main arguments were: should Sittingbourne take the lion's share of housing or should Faversham's allocation be increased (probable answers - yes then no); should Sheppey take more housing despite the transport problems (probable answer yes); and should SE or SW Sittingbourne have a new large allocation (probable answer SW).
- Looking at road capacity and air quality, Highways England said at the EiP that road network improvements would begin in 2021, by which time research suggested that congestion in Swale would have become 'unacceptable'.
- Meanwhile, the CPRE was crucial in getting appeal by Gladman Developments refused for a large development on the A2 in Newington. An important reason for the decision was air quality - CPRE strongly argued this point at the hearing.

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## Thanet – Hilary Newport

- Consultation on proposed revisions to the Thanet Local Plan closed on March 12th. It includes an allocation of 2,500 homes at Manston Airport, but the future of the site remains unclear. Would-be airport operators RiverOak want to revive freight operations, but a report commissioned by Thanet District Council confirmed the site is not viable as an operational airport. Meanwhile, the new site owners are master planning a mixed-use development on the former airfield, now dubbed Stone Hill Park, to include housing, employment, heritage and leisure use.

## Tonbridge and Malling – Mike Taylor

- The villages of Ightham, Borough Green, Wrotham and Platt lie along a chain of historic and working sandpits, quarries and landfill sites in a valley at the foot of the North Downs. The owners of these sites joined together some years ago, to propose an alternative to the Kent International Gateway Railfreight Depot. CPRE helped local people to get this scheme quashed, so we thought our valley was safe.
- Then, with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's call for sites, the "Sand Mafia" popped up again with a proposal to build 3,500 houses stretching from Darkhill at Ightham to the A20 at Nepicar. This would dwarf existing villages, create a conurbation close in size to Tonbridge and severely impact the Green Belt and AONB.
- We thought the obvious constraints on this land, and the traffic impact, would get it rejected, so we were stunned when TMBC's own 'Roadshow' banners carried the plan of Borough Green Garden City long before any decisions were made.
- What worries me most about the whole push for housing is the statistics used. Planning authorities base their housing needs on figures from the Office of National Statistics, which TMBC convert into 650 houses pa. The ONS says we need 5% for international migration, 45% for new home owners, affordable housing and getting people out of substandard houses - all very laudable. But the other 50% is for "internal migration", i.e. someone who wants to move. But they are moving out of a house so why do we need to build one to replace it, it hasn't gone? Why do they want to attract even more people into an area already bursting at the seams?

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## Tunbridge Wells – Peter Tavner

- A developer sought a judicial review of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's decision to adopt the borough Site Allocations Development Plan document. We await the judgment.
- Meanwhile, the council has completed a 'Call for Sites'. The possible areas for development proposed include many unsuitable sites within the Green Belt or AONB. Despite this, even if every proposed site was allocated, it is still unlikely the council would meet its housing targets. The council has taken the unprecedented step of scheduling a second Call for Sites in the spring. Public consultation on 'Issues and Options' surrounding the local plan review is due in May.
- We await the decision on a major application to erect up to 180 homes at Brick Kiln Farm in Cranbrook, on a greenfield site of historic landscape importance in the AONB. CPRE Kent has objected but we fear it will be approved as the inspector has already agreed the site allocation. We also understand that an application for an anaerobic digester at Forest Farm in Benenden has recently been approved.

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## Environment Group – Graham Warren

- Most of Kent has recorded below normal rainfall for the 12 months to January, with exceptionally low totals (60-70% of normal) for the last six months. Coupled with relatively high temperatures, this has produced a winter total less than half the average. Groundwater levels in the North Downs are below normal and recovering slowly, and our major reservoirs are also recovering.
- We continue to provide technical support to Surrey and Sussex in the assessment of the impact of fracking operations on groundwater quality and public supplies.
- National Office has confirmed it will not be updating its November 2015 Energy Policy Guidance Note; this has prompted calls for a Kent strategy document aimed initially at supporting the promotion of local community self-sufficient electricity generation.
- Air pollution is an increasingly important environmental and public health issue, and we are concerned about the adequacy of the monitoring systems operated by local authorities. Some urban areas in Kent already exceed the maximum acceptable concentrations of NO<sub>2</sub> and particulates: this must be recognised in planning the location and scale of new built developments.
- The Government wants to double UK food production to reduce our dependence on imports, yet large areas of farmland are being lost to development. The Environment Committee was worried about this and is now working with the Department of Agriculture at Leeds University to map how much land is being lost in Kent.
- We take part in the technical/focus groups set up by South East Water and Southern Water, to formulate the next 5-year and 25-year Water Resource Management Plans. A draft plan incorporating drought management options is due late autumn.



Nightingale by Kev Chapman

# Local Plan *round-up*



**The CPRE Kent planning team, Jillian Barr and Paul Buckley, review the latest situation with local plans.**



## **2017 Deadline**

We understand the Government's 'early 2017' deadline for producing a local plan is still in place, despite it not being mentioned in the 2017 Housing White Paper. Not all planning authorities in Kent (including Medway and Thanet) have met this deadline, which could only have been achieved by reducing community involvement in local plan preparation. We are pleased to see that local authorities in Kent do not underestimate the importance of early meaningful engagement. Thanet and Medway councils have recently published Regulation 18 consultations on their draft plans. We believe they can demonstrate determined progress and hopefully they will be able to publish local plans later this year.

Ashford Borough Council did publish their local plan without (in CPRE's view) adequate consultation, but we understand they are likely to re-consult on the published local plan. We hope they are able to take community views into consideration so that the plan is as effective as possible.

Numerous planning authorities, including Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Gravesham are actively reviewing their 'early' Core Strategies.

## **Examinations of Local Plans**

The **Swale Local Plan** Examination was reconvened in January 2017, following a consultation on Main Modifications. This consultation proposed new sites in response to a revised local plan housing target of 776 homes per year. While CPRE Kent was pleased that a 'two planning areas' approach remained, we are concerned about some of the sites chosen to meet the target (including sites at South West Sittingbourne, Preston Fields, Faversham and Barton Hill Drive on the Isle of Sheppey). In particular, it became clear that the plan needs to be supported by more detailed evidence that demonstrates sites are sustainable and the plan is deliverable. Local congestion and air quality were key concerns and we urge the council to ensure the evidence base is developed so that it can recommend a suite of sites in the emerging local plan that can deliver sustainable development and protect the quality of life of residents.





The **Maidstone Local Plan** Examination started on 4 October 2016 and ran until 24 January 2017 and CPRE Kent and the Maidstone Committee participated at many sessions. The inspector has published his interim findings. He considers the Spatial Strategy for housing to be consistent with national policy. The objectively assessed housing need is reduced by 900 and some small housing sites deleted. At Invicta Park Barracks and Lenham the anticipated number of dwellings expected to be delivered in the plan period are reduced. He considers the need to address poor air quality within the Air Quality Management Area would not justify a moratorium on development although it does emphasise the need for mitigation measures for individual developments. He suggests consideration be given to safeguarding part of Woodcut Farm or other sites suitable for office development from other uses pending a recovery of office development values.

The proposed main modifications are likely to be going out for consultation in late March and the Inspector's Final Report is likely to be published early summer.

The second stage of the **Canterbury Local Plan** Examination was held in July and September 2016. CPRE Kent participated at many sessions. Canterbury City Council published its main modifications, including site boundaries, for consultation which ended on 24 March.

## Green Belt

2017 will be an interesting year for Green Belt assessments/reviews which have been (or will be) completed to support local plan preparation by Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Gravesham councils. Green Belt reviews are an important evidence base document to an emerging local plan and can provide robust evidence for protecting Green Belt. However, given challenging housing targets, Green Belt is under pressure for development land. We are pleased that the Government has renewed its commitment to protect the Green Belt in the Housing White Paper. The Government proposes to clarify the reference to 'exceptional circumstances' in the NPPF. Amongst other things, it will expect planning authorities to demonstrate they have fully examined all reasonable options before considering amending Green Belt boundaries. With this in mind CPRE Kent will expect a proactive search for suitable housing sites to be undertaken, that does not only rely on the call-for-sites process. They should proactively seek to encourage regeneration of underused sites in urban areas, identify suitable publicly owned sites and establish a brownfield register to assist identification of brownfield land. The recent trend towards lower densities may not be appropriate in these local authority areas. One of the functions of the Green Belt is 'to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land' and we look to Kent planning authorities to take advantage of the opportunity of safeguarding the Green Belt to encourage urban regeneration.



All photos: Beccy Smart Photography

# Local Plan Overview

Our list gives the latest situation on local plans throughout Kent. In addition, each local authority has an old-style local plan which has 'saved' policies still relevant when considering planning applications. These will gradually be replaced as new plans are adopted. Details of currently 'saved' policies are provided on local authority websites.



## Ashford

- Core Strategy adopted July 2008
- Town Centre Plan adopted February 2010
- Tenterden and Rural Sites Plan adopted October 2010
- Urban Sites and Infrastructure Plan adopted October 2012
- Chilmington Green Area Action Plan adopted July 2013
- A Regulation 19 publication version of the plan was published in June 2016. It is expected that the council will publish an amended version of the Regulation 19 plan in summer 2017.

## Canterbury

- Herne Bay Area Action Plan adopted April 2010
- The Canterbury Local Plan was submitted for examination in November 2014. Stage 1 of the examination took place in July 2015 and stage 2 took place in July and September 2016. Consultation on Proposed Modifications finished in March 2017 and an inspector's report is expected later this year.

## Dartford

- Core Strategy adopted September 2011
- A Regulation 19 publication version of the Dartford Development Policies Local Plan was published for consultation in January 2016. Examination Hearings were held in October and they recently consulted on post-examination modifications. An inspector's report will follow.

## Dover

- Core Strategy adopted February 2010
- Land Allocations Plan adopted January 2015
- A draft of the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan is expected to be published this year.

## Gravesham

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

## Maidstone

- Affordable Housing Plan adopted December 2006
- Open Space Plan adopted December 2006
- A draft new local plan was published for consultation in March 2014, with further consultation on new sites and policy changes in October 2015. The Regulation 19 Publication Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and examination hearings were completed in January 2017. Draft Main Modifications are expected soon.

## Sevenoaks

- Core Strategy adopted February 2011
- Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan adopted February 2015
- The gypsy and traveller policy and sites will be included in the new local plan
- A new local plan, which will eventually replace the Core Strategy and Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD, is currently at an early stage. Regulation 18 consultation is expected in early summer 2017.

## Shepway

- Core Strategy adopted September 2013. The council has begun a review of the Core Strategy.
- Consultation on the 'issues and options' stage of the Places and Policies Plan was undertaken January–March 2015. A Regulation 18 Preferred Option consultation was published in autumn 2016 and a Regulation 19 consultation is expected to follow in summer 2017.

## Swale

- The draft Swale Local Plan was submitted for examination in April 2015. A first round of examination hearings was completed in December 2015 and a consultation on Proposed Main Modifications ended in August 2016. The examination reconvened in January 2017 to examine modifications and an Inspector's Report is expected soon.

## Thanet

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

## Tonbridge and Malling

- Core Strategy adopted September 2007
- Development Land Allocations Plan adopted April 2008
- Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan adopted April 2008
- Managing Development and the Environment Plan adopted April 2010
- The council has started a review of the adopted plans and a Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation finished in November 2016. Further Regulation 18 consultation on the preferred option is expected in spring 2017.

## Tonbridge and Malling

- Core Strategy adopted June 2010
- The Site Allocations Local Plan was adopted in July 2016
- The council has commenced work on a new local plan and is expected to publish a Regulation 18 Issues and Options consultation in spring 2017.

## Medway

- An issues and options consultation on a new local plan was completed in February 2016. Further Regulation 18 consultation on Development Options ended in March 2017 and a Regulation 19 draft is expected to be published at the end of 2017.

## Kent County Council

- The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which sets out strategy for mineral provision and waste management in Kent, was adopted in July 2016
- A Local Development Scheme will be published shortly and will set out the ongoing timetable for the preparation of Mineral and Waste Sites Plans. Call for Sites consultations have been completed.



All photos: Beccy Smart Photography

# Social Scene

Margaret Micklewright organised a wonderful festive lunch in January – this time at Leeds Castle. Margaret organises outings throughout the year – ideas for 2017 include the enormous **Sainsburys distribution depot at Waltham Point** which is the size of 267 tennis courts; a tour of **London’s Supreme Court**; and by popular demand, the **Royal gardens at Highgrove** (pictured below).

Do keep an eye out on our website under events or on Facebook for more details.

**Save the date** Our **2017 AGM** will be held on **Friday November 17th at Lenham Community Centre** – this time we are having it in the morning at 10.30am followed by an optional ploughman’s lunch. This should leave everyone plenty of time to get home in the light.



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# Goodnestone Park Gardens

*In the latest in our series on Kent attractions we visit Goodnestone Park Gardens near Canterbury.*

**Goodnestone has been described as ‘one of the loveliest secret gardens in the country’ with 15 acres of ornamental grounds surrounded by park and woodland.**

It has been in the FitzWalter family for over 300 years, since the estate was purchased by Brook Bridges in 1705. His ancestors include Robert FitzWalter who led the barons against King John, ultimately forcing him to sign the Magna Carta.

Brook Bridges was appointed by Charles II to the prestigious position of Auditor of the Imprest, a post he held for 33 years; on retiring he purchased the estate of Goodnestone, repaired the village church and built the mansion house. His son was created a Baronet by George I in 1718.

Goodnestone was known to Jane Austen as her brother Edward married into the family; Edward and his wife Elizabeth spent their early married life in a house on the Goodnestone Estate and Jane was a frequent visitor. It is perhaps significant that she began writing *Pride and Prejudice* after staying at Goodnestone in 1796. In 2014 the 18th century Serpentine Walk was reinstated and visitors are encouraged to walk in Jane Austen’s footsteps.

Both the house and gardens have evolved over time, the formal gardens fashionable in the 18th century replaced with sweeping parkland, the introduction of the terraced lawn amphitheatre, the planting of an arboretum and the colourful and imaginative cultivation of the walled gardens. After a period of neglect following the second world war, the gardens were restored by the late Brook Plumtre, 21st Baron FitzWalter, and his wife Margaret. The garden successfully marries the modern with the ancient; majestic old trees and mellow brickwork with contemporary features such as the gravel garden and dramatic rill.

The house was nearly destroyed in 1959 by a fire which saw the collapse of the roof and extensive damage to the two top floors, destruction which took two years to restore. 2016 saw the completion of a stunning regeneration project of the Grade II\* listed mansion, orchestrated by the present Lord FitzWalter.

**The garden is open from April to September, on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and the tea room is open from May to August. CPRE members are entitled to two-for-one admission.**



Photos: Goodnestone Park Gardens



Vicky Ellis

# News round-up



## Events

We have already attended several events where we recruited new members. Events are important for CPRE Kent to meet and chat with the public, raise awareness of what we do and increase our membership. CPRE Kent's members are the lifeblood of our organisation, without them we would not have the resources to be able to help as many people as we do and to try and protect our wonderful countryside. To volunteer please contact the office.

## 2017 EVENTS

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

### Dates for your diary

Spring Fair, Belmont House	Mon 1st May
Kent Show, Detling	Fri 7th, Sat 8th, Sun 9th July
Tractor Fest, Biddenden	Sat 19th, Sun 20th August
Wood Fest, Belmont House	Sat 9th, Sun 10th Sep
West Kent Ploughing Match, Marden	Sat 16th Sep
East Kent Ploughing Match, Quex Park	Wed 27th Sep
Green Christmas Fair, Faversham	Date TBC



Buttercups, Capstone Country Park by Trisha



Open 8:30 to 6  
Monday to Saturday  
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**WEALD OF KENT  
PLOUGHING MATCH  
ASSOCIATION**

**Saturday 16th September 2017**

**Gatehouse Farm, Marden, Kent TN12 9SG**

- 9 Modern & Vintage Ploughing Classes • Horse-Ploughing
- ... and many other attractions throughout the day ...
- Gymkhana • Fun Dog Show • Trade Show • Terrier Racing • Steam Ploughing
- Dog Agility Competition • Tug-of-War • Hound Parades
- Birds of Prey Flying Display • Tossing-the-Sheaf Competition
- Farmers' Market • Clay Pigeon Shooting • Bar and Refreshments



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

- **Easyfundraising** helps charities to raise funds every time you shop on line. Many high-street brands such as John Lewis, M&S, Amazon and Sainsbury donate various amounts of money if you shop with them through Easyfundraising at no extra cost to you. Easyfundraising also have a search engine and donate a small amount every time you do an online search. [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)
- **Payroll giving in action:** 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 tax payer). You save as you are taxed after the deductions, reducing the tax you pay. [www.payrollgiving.co.uk](http://www.payrollgiving.co.uk)
- **Leaving a legacy** is probably the most precious and lasting gesture someone can make for a charity. Kent law firm Whitehead Monckton will donate £50 for every will or pair of wills for a couple made. See p15.
- **The Lottery or 400 club:** our lottery is for everyone to enjoy, not just CPRE Kent members, and makes a great gift idea at just £12 per share. A big thank you to all who have joined so far.
- **Boardroom hire:** we have a lovely, modern boardroom at our Charing offices which can seat 15 and is only £35 for half a day and £70 for a full day. Please contact the office for more details.
- **Our sponsors:** you have probably noticed adverts from various businesses in Kent Voice – these sponsors help offset some of our printing costs. Please support them and remember to mention CPRE Kent when you do. Adverts start from just £25.

contact us



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

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CLUB



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

### October 16

Mrs P Pollock	£40.00
Mr L Horscroft	£30.00
Miss H Butcher	£25.00
Mrs J Burgoyne	£15.00
Mrs M Russ	£15.00
Mr D Humphreys	£15.00

### November 16

Mr G Addicott OBE	£40.00
Mr C Mackinlay	£30.00
Mrs J Clabburn	£25.00
Ms C Benfield	£15.00
Mrs J Clabburn	£15.00
Mr C Daniel	£15.00

### December 16

Mrs A Hone	£170.00
Mr B Wilson	£150.00
Mrs G Burgess	£30.00
Mr N Pearson	£30.00

### January 17

Mr N Pearson	£40.00
Mrs A Reader	£30.00
Mrs A Reader	£25.00
Mrs J Drew	£20.00
Mr B Wilson	£15.00

### February 17

Mr Mrs T Croft	£40.00
Mr M Loveday	£30.00
Mr M Pearson	£25.00
Mr J Proudlock	£20.00
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### March 17

Mr G Thorpe	£40.00
Mrs M White	£30.00
Mrs P Pollock	£25.00
Mr Mrs Goddard	£20.00
Mr J Proudlock	£15.00

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

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



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](mailto:supporterservices@cpre.org.uk)

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

Phone

Email

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!

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

Full name	
Signature	
Date	

For more information or to join over 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)

--

Bank/building society account number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

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