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Towcester Food and Drink Festival

CPRE attended the Towcester Food Festival for the two days of 6th and 7th June. The festival had over 100 food and drink stalls, a street food market, wine tasting and afternoon tea, to mention a few. The festival was very well attended with over 2000 people each day enjoying the early summer sunshine.

William Sitwell, Masterchef judge, food critic and CPRE supporter opened the show and then toured the stalls, seeking out the best local producers.

Warner Edwards carefully and lovingly create beautiful artisan spirits.



OUTLOOK

July 2015

The newsletter of the Northamptonshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England

Winds of Change for Renewables Developments *Brian Skittrall*

There have been some dramatic changes since the election which could signal an end to unwanted wind turbine developments and large scale solar farms. Changes to planning guidance and subsidies have been announced that make large scale developments far less profitable and should give communities a real voice in decision making for wind turbines.

The generous subsidy scheme that brought so many windfarm developers to our county has been brought to an abrupt halt. Unless schemes already had planning permission, a grid connection offer and land rights on 18th June they will not qualify for Renewables Obligation subsidies. The Feed in Tariff subsidy scheme for the smaller single or two turbine applications is unaffected but this too is under review.

Perhaps more dramatic are the changes to planning guidance for wind turbines. If affected communities raise planning issues in their objection to a proposal (such as landscape and visual impact) it should be turned down unless those concerns have been fully addressed to the satisfaction of the community.

The changes for solar farms mean that schemes should no longer be allowed on high quality arable land (Best and Most Versatile Land or Grade 1, 2 or 3a land). The National Planning Policy Framework already required that this land should remain in agricultural use but the new guidance makes it clear that low intensity grazing between the panels is not sufficient justification to take such productive land out of use. When this is combined with earlier limits on solar subsidies and planning guidance, we should see far fewer harmful proposals in the future.

On the face of it these changes should afford far greater protection for the countryside and rural communities. However, the renewables industry is unlikely to go down without a fight and could well mount legal challenges to delay the changes if they are not watertight. After many years the end should be in sight for harmful large scale renewable schemes.



Local Food Hero 2015/16

CPRE Northamptonshire recognises the importance of local foods to the rural economy in the county. We are again joining with commercial sponsor Weetabix to endorse the Local Food Hero category of the Northamptonshire Food & Drink Awards. Please think about who you will nominate this year - a business or person near you who has done more in the last year to promote local food than anyone else. One who deserves wider recognition for their efforts as a producer or retailer or server of fine local food or drink? Details and the nomination form are on our website. You have until 10th August 2015 to submit this year's nomination.



Made In Northamptonshire

Anna Murby

Brewers, cheese-makers and a paté producer were just some of the county's thriving food and drink artisans to be given a business boost, thanks to the latest 'Made In Northamptonshire' (MIN) meeting.

MIN, the free networking group which was established in January 2011 by Rachel Mallows of The Mallows Company to support Northamptonshire's food and drink sector, staged its first 'meet the buyers' event last week, appropriately at The Artizan in Northampton. It saw around 15 buyers 'speed-date' their way through the pub which was overflowing with tasty treats!

Among those invited to sample, with the prospect of stocking everything from

a major food wholesaler.

For Phil Saxby, of Saxby's Cider in Irchester, the event was a real benefit; "As passionate artisans, we dedicate much of our time to producing. Then finding those to actually buy is another challenge," explained Phil. "To have an event like this where we could meet so many potential stockists under one roof has been great. I've got a number of leads and I think most people in the room had the same experience," he added.

Meanwhile Freddie Warren from Bell Plantation in Towcester was one of those looking to

cured meats to spice blends to salad dressings, were representatives of local restaurants, farm shops, hotels and

source from the group; "We know that our customers love to buy local. To be able to fulfil that demand by coming to such a brilliant meeting and discover that our county has so many talented producers is great."

For more details about 'Made In Northamptonshire', please call Rachel on 01933 664437 or email rachel@rachelmallows.com or find the group on Facebook at [Facebook.com/MINfoodanddrink](https://www.facebook.com/MINfoodanddrink)



Championing Good Design in Northamptonshire

Alan Mayes

What is good design? That is quite a leading question. We all know what we like in terms of the environment around us. So why not take part in this year's Town and Country Design Awards and nominate your favourite new building?

The Town and Country Design Awards are organised every two years by CPRE Northamptonshire as a way of promoting good design within our county. There are a wide range of categories including new buildings, restored buildings and new and restored areas of landscaping. Full details with an entry form are available on the CPRE Northamptonshire website or you can email me giving a few details on alanmayes123@gmail.com.

Over the years, a wide range of projects have been given awards including Woodford Mill Tea Rooms, the Errol Flynn Cinema and the Avon Building in Northampton, Rushton Hall Hotel, the Four Pears public house at Little Houghton, a number of private houses and the restoration of Delapre Abbey gardens.

The closing date for entries is 30th September. Our judging team is made up of CPRE members and an external judge who is also an architect. The awards will be presented at the CPRE Carol Service and Supper at Cranford Hall, which has been a delightful event in past years.

Summer Quiz

"Find the Flowers"

Our quiz clearly brought many happy and perhaps leetle-grey-cell-taxing hours to members and their friends around the globe. We had a lot of people interested, but somewhat fewer arrived at the correct answers.

If you want to see the questions and answers in full, please visit the "What's going on" page of our website.

First prize of £50 - Christine Russell of Eastcote near Towcester.

Second prize of £25 - Alan Rudge of Corby.

CPRE Northamptonshire Town & Country Awards 2015

This year we are again inviting nominations for landscape and other projects. In addition to new and refurbished buildings. We welcome nominations from members and non-members.

The photographs show previous nominations:



Recent prize-winners

March:	Paul Gifford of Denton £30	Martin Gaskell of Kettering £20
April:	Max Nicholls of Geddington £30	Robin Jones of Brixworth £20
May:	David Banner of Upper Heyford £30	Adrian Hanrahan of Holcot £20
June:	Alexandra Wiffill of Maidford £30	Nigel Earle of Northampton £20

At our Planning Roadshow in June about 70 Parish Councils gathered to hear Paul Miner from CPRE National Office give some guidance on making effective representations to local planning issues.

Paul started off the evening with a résumé of the planning system to date. He highlighted some of the positive issues set out in the new Government's Queen's Speech such as the greater inclusivity of local views in planning decisions, including large onshore wind farms and the establishment of a national brownfield land register. He also highlighted some less positive statistics since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012; in particular, out of 59 major housing schemes that had been taken to appeal, 39 had been allowed - a statistic sadly reflected in a number of recent Appeals allowed in the Northamptonshire countryside.

"Are we defenceless because we have no nationally designated countryside in

Northamptonshire?" is a question upon which Paul Miner reassured us that we are not. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has policies on the intrinsic value of the countryside which have teeth. Local protective

number of Northamptonshire authorities still have not adopted local plans and are relying on old policies.) He also restated the value of Neighbourhood Plans which are a longer term and more inclusive means of addressing local

Making Effective Responses to Planning Issues

Alan Mayes

designations and local listing of buildings are also a "material consideration" in the NPPF. He also pointed out that local distinctiveness and character can be promoted through Neighbourhood Plans.

In terms of what we can do to make effective responses to individual local issues Paul highlighted the value of making best use of the policies in the NPPF relating to the countryside and quoting relevant local plan policies, particularly when and where Local Plans have been fully adopted. (Sadly a

issues as they arise. The use of well constructed letters of objection was highlighted by David Edsall, who gave a short presentation on the value of individually written responses over multiple letters. The evening concluded with a case study in terms responding locally to a planning issue by Brian Skittrall.

If you are a Parish Councillor or would just like to be more aware of the planning system, look out for our next Roadshow in the autumn.

David Charlton-Jones retires as Chairman

Martin Gaskell



Prior to its meeting on Monday 29th June, North Northamptonshire District held a reception to mark the retirement of David Charlton-

Jones as its Chairman. Thanks to the hospitality of Lady Robinson, we were able to gather for drinks on the terrace at Cranford Hall on a perfect summer's evening. Proposing a toast to David and Jane, Lady Robinson recalled David's commitment over the past six years, and said how much that had been appreciated. Members presented David with wine vouchers, and Jane with a bouquet in recognition of her support and tireless contribution to fundraising for CPRE.

Writing to members subsequently, David thanked them for their kind thoughts and generosity. Modest as always as to his own contribution, he acknowledged the tremendous support he had received from the membership generally and from certain key individuals.

We are delighted that David and Jane will continue to support the District and will be involved with the new fundraising group.

Geddington Flower Festival

- Icons in Flowers *Jane Charlton-Jones*

The Annual Flower Festival at St. Mary's Parish Church in Geddington is always based around a chosen theme. This year the recent CPRE/County Council publication "Icons of Northamptonshire" was chosen by the organisers.

The standard of the arrangements is always high and this year was no exception. The entries ranged from the abstract to the realistic, from old to modern. "Adrenaline Alley", including a skate board was placed near "Fotheringhay", a dramatic still life in red, complete with chopping block and executioner's axe! "Corby Candle", dramatically on view in the King's door contrasted with "Tresham", a stunning display based on the Tresham theme of the Trinity. The altar was nearly obscured by a beautifully composed representation of the 11th century pack bridge over the Ise and naturally Queen Eleanor had a dedicated display.

The photograph of "Kirby Hall" gives an indication of the standards achieved by the talented flower arrangers of Geddington.





Update on Superfast Broadband and Mobile Phone Connectivity

Steve Batterby

Earlier this year, CPRE Northamptonshire sent a questionnaire to parish councils asking for their experience of superfast broadband and mobile services. We received responses from over 40 communities and all agreed that these services are vital for businesses and for enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Over 70% said that there was no superfast broadband service at all in their communities and nearly 80% of those currently without superfast broadband had no confidence that they would receive the service by the end of 2017 (which is the target date for roll-out of the service throughout the county). Those that had the service gave mixed reports, with some being

happy but others complaining of continuing poor broadband speeds and high costs.

I met the Superfast Broadband Northamptonshire team to discuss the results of the survey and to find out what is being done to deliver the service to all communities. The team assured me that the target remained for availability of superfast broadband for all premises within the county by the end of 2017 although one provider may not be able to complete the work until September 2018. They have a lot of information on their website (<http://superfastnorthamptonshire.net>) but I was concerned that many people clearly do not know where to look for information relevant to them. I believe

it would be best for members of each community to appoint a “superfast broadband champion” who could keep an eye out for progress and information affecting them and who would give relevant updates.

I have prepared a fact sheet which I will circulate to parish councils or you can contact me at steve.batterby@CPRENorthants.org.uk.

Of those who commented about mobile phone services, 97% were unhappy with the service provided by all or some of the providers. I have contacted the Mobile Operators Association and hope to be talking to individual operators shortly.

Social Events in North District

Pimms Party

Mrs Hugh de Capell Brooke has invited all CPRE members to a summer Pimms party at Great Oakley Hall, near Corby, on Thursday 20th August.

Great Oakley Hall has been in the ownership of the Brooke family since the 15th century and ranks amongst the best of Northamptonshire’s wonderful heritage of fine country houses. Within the park stands St Michael’s Church, parts of which date from the late 13th century. Guests will be able to explore the many interesting features of the church which is not normally accessible to the public.

We anticipate a strong demand for this event and an early reply is recommended.

Bridge Drive

Looking further ahead we have a date for the county’s bridge players. We will be holding a bridge drive at Cranford Hall (by kind permission of Lady Robinson) on Wednesday 4th November which will include a two course lunch. The format will be “Chicago” and the day will be directed by Peter Murdin. We anticipate a relaxed and enjoyable day and look forward to welcoming players from all parts of the county.

Numbers will be limited so don’t delay in replying.

Carols by Candlelight

Lastly, make a note that we shall be holding the wonderful “Carols by Candlelight” at Cranford Hall this year on Thursday 10th December. Full details and a ticket application form will be in the next newsletter.

Dates for your diary

Events:

Sue.baylis@cprenorthants.org.uk

Local Food Hero:

Final submissions 10th August

Pimms Party:

Thursday 20th August, Great Oakley Hall

AGM, and the Litter Heroes Awards:

Wednesday 2nd September

Food & Drink Festival:

Fri/Sat 25/26th September, Althorpe

Bridge Drive:

Wednesday 4th November, Cranford Hall

Carols by Candlelight:

Thursday 10th December, Cranford Hall