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OUTLOOK

November 2015

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

Have you heard of Natural Capital? - *David Montagu-Smith*

The term "Natural Capital" is increasingly being used by Government and environmentalists to mean the aggregate of all the natural resources, finite and renewable, on the planet.

In 2012 the Government set up the Natural Capital Committee (NCC), fulfilling a commitment in a 2011 White Paper, to address the scale of existing and likely future environmental loss in England. The NCC is to advise the Government on how to ensure that England's "natural wealth" could be measured, valued (in economic terms) and managed efficiently and sustainably, working towards the stated aim of the White Paper that ours would be "the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than it inherited".

The Committee published its third State of Natural Capital report in January 2015, recommending that Government, with the private sector and NGOs, should develop a comprehensive 25-year strategy to protect and improve natural capital.

The report presents a series of potential environmental investments that offer good economic returns, such as peatland restoration and woodland planting. The Government has broadly accepted the recommendations of the NCC and will produce a 25-year plan for the defence and enhancement of the natural

environment in England. This is likely, in due course, to translate into planning policies and guidelines which could affect everyone working to defend the countryside.

Natural Capital assets - the earth's natural resources - can be broadly categorised as either renewable (e.g. agriculture, forestry, fishing) which can be put at risk by over-extraction or mismanagement, or non-renewable (e.g. minerals, hydrocarbons) which, once depleted, cannot be replaced. Human mismanagement can destroy some renewable assets (rain forest, North Atlantic cod, natural aquifers) and these are thus potentially also finite.

The NCC argues that the economics of measuring and accounting for Natural Capital should become incorporated into the broader management and accounting of the UK economy as a whole. The Government agrees and will set out to do this by 2020. To some extent this is easy - the value of proven, undeveloped oil and gas reserves can be given a current worth; but valuing other assets, such as greenbelt land, animal species, landscape, is much harder. Saving moorland may seem to have little economic value but protecting it may prevent more river flooding, with all the associated future flood defence costs.



The NCC suggests that every loss of a Natural Capital asset, however marginal, should be counter-balanced in some way - by compensation, or by substitution or replacement. Thus, in Norway, the Sovereign Wealth Fund set up in the 1970s to save taxes from oil production will be worth \$1 trillion by 2020. HS2 has agreed that it will replace some ancient woodland by planting, not just

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Litter Hero Awards 2015

The first prize of a cheque for £500 was awarded to Kilsby Parish Council who involved many of the parishioners of Kilsby and the local primary school.

The runners up were the 55th Little Billing Scout Group and Warmington Parish Council who each received cheques for £150. The scouts spent a day litter picking with local residents and the Warmington team collected a huge amount of litter from the verges around the village.

The successful groups attended an event after the CPRE Northants AGM held in the Great Hall at St Andrews Hospital.



55th Little Billing Scout Leaders receiving their award from David Laing

Reception at Great Oakley Hall – David Charlton-Jones

Ninety members and supporters gathered at Great Oakley Hall, near Corby, on 20th August at the kind invitation of Mrs Hugh de Capell Brooke. Pimm's and canapés were served against a background of gentle music from the John Clare String Quartet as guests strolled between the stately ground floor reception rooms of the Hall, which has been in the Brooke family since the 15th century. In the billiard room we saw memorabilia of Sir Arthur de Capell Brooke, the 19th century explorer who wrote many important foreign travel books.

The 13th century St Michael's Church in the grounds of the Hall, with its monuments and interesting medieval red clay tiles, attracted the attention of many of the guests.

Together with our now traditional raffle of a hamper of good things to eat and drink, the evening raised almost £2000 of much needed funds. Our sincere thanks go to Bianca de Capell Brooke for so generously hosting the evening and those volunteers who provided the wonderful canapés and the musical entertainment.



Recent prize-winners

July:	Jane Kimbell of Grimscote £30	Wendy Turner of Desborough £20
August:	John Baylis of Cazals, France £30	Susan Stevens of Sudborough £20
September:	Brian Worton of Hollowell £35	Peter Pollak of Sulgrave £25

Have you heard of Natural Capital?

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screening trees, but additional natural woodland on land to be acquired.

Relevance for CPRE

Some of the elements of NCC thinking are already part of the current planning system. Section 106 agreements bind developers into providing additional works for the benefit of the community. But the NCC would extend the concept

far more widely - every parcel of countryside taken for development, housing, industry, renewable energy, should be counter-balanced by some sustainable means; there should be compensation for every activity which has a polluting impact (inefficient waste management, construction works, even farming) or which depletes a natural asset (mineral extraction, over-fishing).

The concepts of Natural Capital protection could come to play a part in

every local or community planning policy and in the planning process itself. The aims of the NCC - the valuation and protection, in an economic context, of landscapes, flora and fauna as well as endangered species and rural communities - would seem to lie comfortably with the aims and objectives of CPRE. We will be following the progress of this Government initiative carefully to be sure of understanding how it could affect the work of the branch in future years.

A book celebrating the unique treasures of Northamptonshire has reached its first birthday. *Icons of Northamptonshire* is published jointly by Northamptonshire County Council and CPRE Northamptonshire.

Icons of Northamptonshire book celebrates its first birthday

—Sir Paul Hayter

The County Council presented CPRE Northamptonshire with a cheque for £2,000 - a proportion of the profits raised from book sales since it was launched in October 2014. Cllr Jim Harker, leader of the County Council, said: "This is a wonderful record of the many, many things for which the county is renowned and I'm delighted that they have been brought together in this compilation. One of the attractions of the county is that we have so many unheralded treasures that many people feel a genuine sense of discovery when

they encounter what we have to offer. I take terrific pride in being Northamptonshire born and bred and I feel this volume is a fitting tribute to our wonderful county."

Sir Paul Hayter, chairman of CPRE Northamptonshire and editor of the book, received the cheque and said: "This venture has been a great

pleasure. We share a deep love of the county, and the sale proceeds of the book will support CPRE's work to protect its countryside for the benefit of all."

In the book 70 contributors - including broadcaster Sir Terry Wogan, explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, and parish priest Richard Coles - pay homage to their favourite iconic places, buildings and events in the county.



A Beautiful Christmas Present

The book is on sale in Northamptonshire's county libraries, price £17.50

Althorp Food and Drink Festival

The inaugural Food Festival was held on 25th and 26th September in luxury marquees set in and around the Stables Courtyard of the magnificent Northamptonshire stately home that is Althorp House, by kind permission of The Earl Spencer.



Thousands flocked for the chance to sample and buy tasty treats from over 30 local producers - everything from cheeses to chocolates, pies to pickles, beer and gin. They also enjoyed cookery demonstrations and heard from award-winning writer, broadcaster and *Masterchef* judge William Sitwell in a talk based on his book, 'A History of Food in 100 Recipes'.

Also on hand were a wide range of stallholders selling kitchen gadgets and outdoor cooking equipment and offering advice on how to become a beekeeper, while the little ones were kept entertained with falconry displays, cake decorating and face painting!

The Festival, whose beautiful setting was matched by equally glorious weather, was a great success and has already been confirmed for 2016!

Carlsberg UK Food and Drink Awards 2015/16



Held on the 15th October at the Royal & Derngate, the Awards celebrate the excellence of the county's local produce and drink.

The Local Food Hero Award, sponsored by Weetabix and CPRE Northamptonshire was won by Good Loaf of Northampton. The runners up were Crispin Slee, Towcester Food Festival and Elsie's Pay as You Feel Café, Northampton.

For more details about the awards, including the full 2015/16 results please visit www.northamptonshirefoodanddrink.co.uk



As long time Outlook readers will know, the fight against litter and litter louts seems never-ending. We have seen from our Litter Heroes Awards that there is now a lot of community involvement in picking and persuading people to think before they toss their snack packaging through their car and van windows. But while many years of Stop the Drop campaigning have seen great improvements in some areas, elsewhere there is as much, if not more, litter than ever.

- The council or its contractors have to notify Highways England when road or lane closures are required to protect their workforce. Highways England contract out their litter picking responsibilities principally to Aone+, which in total has contracts worth hundreds of millions of pounds with them. Aone+ requires 14 weeks advance notice for litter picking work, which of course leads to coordination issues.

Litter Survey

- Peter Hopkins,
based on work done by Bob Lock

amount of litter - perhaps the majority of that collected from the sides of major roads - is not food or drink packaging. It is a sometimes gruesome miscellany of objects and materials that were being carried along the road on an open lorry, whose load had been ineffectively secured. Often the truck



The countryside areas that suffer most from litter blight are probably our rural roadside verges. CPRE volunteer Bob Lock has been surveying the county's local authorities to find out how they schedule roadside litter clearing in their respective areas. We guessed that the picture might be complicated - it certainly is.

Bob asked all seven district and borough councils to tell him their litter clearing timetables for the verges of major trunk roads, whether these vary according to the volume of litter and whether the work involves carriageway closures requiring consultation with other agencies. He received written replies from all seven. In summary:

- Most councils use both their own workforce and contractors for litter picking - companies such as Kier, Enterprise and Wellingborough Norse. Perhaps inevitably, there is therefore scope for coordination problems.
- The number of litter picks undertaken varies considerably - major routes are cleared between twice and twelve times a year.
- In general, bins in lay-bys are emptied weekly.

- Traffic management is required for safety reasons; full carriageway closures and night-time working are often necessary.

In an ideal world, roadside verge litter clearance would be coordinated with seasonal mowing. It seems pretty stupid to run expensive mowing machines over bottles and cans, and trying to find litter in long grass is a difficult job. So scheduling the two tasks carefully would seem to make good sense. However, the practicalities are that up to four agencies - local and national, public and private sector - may be involved, and each one wants to schedule for their own convenience. And when major trunk roads are involved, the financial cost to taxpayers and the inconvenience and cost of delaying vehicles with road or lane closures are significant.

So it all comes down to the same old question: how do we stop people throwing litter in the first place?

Most of us get annoyed when we see vehicle occupants discarding their waste on the move, rather than taking it with them until they can dispose of it appropriately. But both councils and litter-picking groups report that a large

Photos from Jane Bembridge

was on its way to a waste disposal site - this is why the verges near to landfill sites are particularly bad.

CPRE Northants encourages everyone to report not only intentional fly-tipping and thoughtless littering, but overflowing lay-by litter bins and ineffectively sheeted builders' trucks and the like as well. If councils have less mess to clear up, then everyone wins.

Dates for your diary

Autumn Roadshow 2015:

12th November, 6.00 pm
Great Houghton Village Hall

Tickets available from Sue Baylis
Sue.baylis@CPRENorthants.org.uk

Carols by Candlelight and the Town and Country Design Awards:

Thursday 10th December
See insert for details

Minutes of the **AGM** which took place on the 2nd September 2015 can be found on the website.