

# OUTLOOK

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Online [www.CPRENorthants.org.uk](http://www.CPRENorthants.org.uk)

## CPRE on Housing

### Paul Hayter has coordinated our contribution to national policy

CPRE is reformulating its housing policy nationally and CPRE Northamptonshire has commented on its draft. We welcome the draft in general terms and have put forward three points for emphasis:

- It should support thriving rural communities. Everything that can add to the vitality of the countryside is to be supported, and this must include sufficient new housing in villages to make local schools, shops, pubs and Post Offices viable
- Infrastructure must be provided in step with housing. We cannot afford to let developers propose that roads, sewers, schools and services are all built after their houses. The infrastructure must be supplied in tandem with house building and before the developers walk away with their profits
- New homes should be designed to respect the local vernacular style and where possible make use of local materials. Using design in this way can help new buildings to enhance rather than detract from their context. Indeed these words appear in the draft policy, as a result of pressure from us and other county branches. It is essential to avoid new developments that have no affinity with the neighbourhood in which they are built - and which could look equally out of place in Suffolk, Manchester or Northants.



The draft policy contains much else beside these three points, including the need for a democratic plan-led system of approvals for new building; phasing policies to ensure that brownfield sites are used before greenfield ones wherever possible; and a requirement that new development should be sustainable, as specified in the National Planning Policy Framework.

## High Speed Two, Part Two

### Paul Hayter summarises our approach

The Government has now announced the route it proposes for the continuation of high speed rail north of Birmingham. As expected this is in the form of a Y, passing Manchester in the northwest and Leeds in the northeast. Significantly the announcement was well received by the House of Commons, confirming the likelihood that the lines will eventually be built.

The shock felt by local communities that will be directly affected will be as painful in the north as it was in Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire (for example), but opposition to the overall concept is more muted as the country gets used to it. CPRE Northamptonshire's approach has been pragmatic, seeking (successfully) to reduce local damage to the environment while recognising that HS2 is likely to bring long-term benefit to the regions and may be genuinely beneficial to rural England as a whole, by providing extra capacity to the transport network without another north-south motorway.

## App, App and away!

### Robin Jones gets into apps - and counts stars

There's nothing more relaxing than a walk through the beautiful English countryside - wherever you are, whatever the weather. Nevertheless it is possible to introduce stress into the occasion if, like me, you combine a deep ignorance of fauna and flora with a burning desire to put a name to what you see. While others relax over a pot of tea after a country walk, I feverishly scour books on birds and flowers trying hard to distinguish pipit from pipit, buttercup from buttercup.

We are told that Shakespeare mentions more than 150 flowers and over 60 birds in his plays and poems and appears to know rather more than just the names. How did he do it? I know he was a genius but for goodness sake! And he didn't have the plethora of books to help him that we have. Or is that the root of my problem - too many books?

**Star Count 2013** - a cosmic census that will help map light pollution across the country - is taking place as we go to press. Stargazers have been asked to count the number of stars they can see (with the naked eye) within the constellation of Orion.

CPRE President, Sir Andrew Motion, has said: 'Reclaim darker skies! They are within our reach, and the growing awareness of thousands of people who value the night sky means we can halt the blight of light pollution. It may not seem the most serious environmental issue, but it has a range of significant impacts. It damages the character of the countryside, blurs the distinction between town and country, and denies people the experience of a dark, starry sky. Light pollution can disrupt wildlife and badly affect people's sleeping patterns. Excessive lighting isn't just an extravagance; it's colossally wasteful.'

Talking of which, one evening last summer I was relaxing over a beer in the garden admiring the night sky and bemoaning my ignorance of that too (about three constellations identified, after three score years and ten). A friend drained his glass and told me my astronomical problems were over. He proceeded to point his mobile phone at various starry clusters in the sky and the constellation names appeared on the screen. Truly amazing. It only remains for me to learn how to use a smartphone and I could be in business!

I like to think that even the Bard would have had trouble with smartphones. So help is at hand for those of us shamed by our ignorance during CPRE's recent Star Count Week. There are lots of apps to choose from (often free!) and we have plenty of time to learn the ropes before next year.

*When it comes to the natural world, what is your favourite app? Please send your suggestions to [info@CPRENorthants.org.uk](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org.uk).*

### 50/50 is running again in 2013

Many supporters and their friends have participated in our 50/50 draw each month over the last couple of years. Half of each £1 per month stake is returned in prize money, and the remainder helps to fund CPRE Northants.

These contributions have helped us in our work with local planning authorities, parish councils, High Speed Two community forums and at wind farm enquiries. They have enabled us to work with primary schools and village groups on the menace of litter in the countryside and with County Highways on unsightly roadside clutter. They have assisted us when we again encouraged small rural businesses with our local Food Hero Awards.

Since funding is now even more difficult to find, these contributions will help us greatly this year. Each month randomly selected stakeholders receive money prizes, such that half of all receipts are returned. Please think about taking stakes for yourself and your family this year. You can do this by either:

- posting your cheque for £12 per yearly stake to CPRE Northamptonshire, Orchard Cottage, Church Road, Brackley NN13 7BU
- or, making an electronic bank transfer for this amount to: account name "Northants CPRE 5050", account no. 00020535, sort code 40-52-40 - giving your name as a reference.

Either way, please let us know your name and address (preferably your email address: postage is now very expensive), and the names you want on each stake. Remember, we need to be able to tell you when you have won!



#### 50/50: autumn prizewinners

**October:** Alasdair Charlton-Jones of Geddington £25, Brian Skittrall of Bozeat £15, Paul Hayter of Charlton £10

**November:** Clare Pollak of Sulgrave £25, Alasdair Charlton-Jones of Geddington £15, David Banner of Upper Heyford £10

**December:** Alan Mayes of Irthlingborough £30, Jean Valentine of Holcot £20, Christopher Hart of Cotterstock £10



## Lampport Hall on Sunday 9th June

David Charlton-Jones looks forward to a summer treat



For our early summer garden event we are very fortunate to have been offered a private visit to Lampport Hall, the home of the Isham family for over four centuries. Beginning life as a Tudor manor, the hall is now best known for its classical frontage, which was started in 1685 and completed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

We will be able to tour the ground floor rooms, including the Library, the 17th century Oak Room, the Drawing Room and the High Room with its magnificent ceiling dating from 1740. The Hall contains a wealth of outstanding furniture, books, china and paintings collected by the Ishams, mainly during the third Baronet's Grand Tour of Europe in the 1670s.

The gardens have been restored over the last two decades and now extend to nearly seven acres. There are extensive borders and in the walled garden the largest cutting garden in the country, with many unusual herbaceous plants. This is before you have enjoyed the small Italian garden and the remarkable rock garden housing the first garden gnomes in England.

As usual we shall be providing light refreshments, wine and soft drinks to help you enjoy the day to the full. There will also be a presentation of the 2013 CPRE Northamptonshire Litter Heroes Awards, celebrating those villages that are making a stand against the insidious problem of litter. Please put this date on your calendar now and, to ensure a place, return the application form enclosed with this edition of Outlook.



*We are indebted to Gayle Robinson and her co-trustees for this unique opportunity to enjoy Lampport Hall and gardens.*

## Media spotlight on housing in West Northants

### John Day's experiences with the Beeb

The edition of BBC One's Inside Out East that was broadcast on February 11 featured 'housing pressures' in West Northamptonshire, and in particular how the plethora of recent large scale planning applications will impact upon the open countryside of the area. It also focussed on first-time buyers, affordable housing and greenfield vs. brownfield development.

CPRE West Northants was approached for an interview, as Moulton Parish is an area of some concern. I offered to comment and duly attended at interview at Moulton on a cold Monday in January - being obliged to stand in a field, up to my knees in snow! I understand that Moulton Action Group were also involved.

The producer was keen to emphasize that the programme was not intended to be 'technical' and complex planning issues were to be avoided. I focussed much of my comment on two significant recent planning applications for housing development at Moulton, which Daventry DC have refused ... the planners relying in substantial measure upon 'retained policies' whilst the new local plan is in preparation. Both applications went to appeal and both were duly approved by the Secretary of State.

I attended both public enquiries and in each instance the Inspector in principle dismissed 'the retained policies' case and paid particular regard to a principal provision in the new National Planning Policy Framework ... that each planning authority should have a five year land supply, which as yet Daventry does not.

I mentioned that, notwithstanding the new mantra of 'localism', local concerns are now routinely being set aside ... and no allowances are being made for a structured transition to implement the new NPPF. I also spoke of two very recent planning applications, each for 150 new dwellings, at Long Buckby ... both of which had now received approval on appeal. However, unfortunately, these comments were edited out! At least CPRE was featured and some of our local concerns were given airtime.

*The topic is covered on the BBC website at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-northamptonshire-21376499>*

## Should supermarkets do more to help farmers? Sally Hanrahan reports

CPRE has called on managers of the 'big seven' supermarkets to promote more foods that help to protect our landscape and wildlife. CPRE are suggesting that at least ten per cent of the food on supermarket shelves is local produce.

Ian Woodhurst, the senior farming campaigner from CPRE National Office, has said that the countryside depends on farmers. Supermarkets should provide farmers and food producers with a fair price that takes into account the costs of production. At least ten per cent of the food sold in supermarkets could be sourced and supplied from within a 30 mile radius. For centuries, farming has produced our food and created the unique look of our countryside. Supermarkets have improved their environmental performance, particularly in terms of energy use, but there are other areas where CPRE believes they could do more - for farmers and the countryside.

Did you know that: Tesco pays more than 700 dairy farmers on direct contracts 31.6 ppl (pence per litre). Asda buys fresh milk from 300 farms through a processor, paying farmers 29.5 ppl. The Co-op pays 225 dairy farmers a 'market price plus premium', currently 30 ppl and Marks and Spencer pays more per litre than any other food retailer through its Milk Pledge Plus Payment System, developed with farmers. (Source: Country Living, Feb 2012.)

What are your thoughts? Email [sally.hanrahan@cprenorthants.org.uk](mailto:sally.hanrahan@cprenorthants.org.uk).

## Spring cleaning time: CPRE litter campaign

Again this year, springtime means the CPRE Northamptonshire litter campaign, which we will be running from April 5 - 14. We encourage all village and other groups thinking about a litter pick to hold it during this time, so that we can maximise local publicity on the topic of litter. And if you were not planning one - why not consider it? It's a good way to get people thinking about litter - the first step in changing habits - and it's always surprising how much you find. Everyone who takes part tells of the fun they had.

Last year, three villages and rural community groups won **CPRE Litter Heroes Awards** - cash prizes that enabled them to spend money on their community litter projects. **This year there will be a main prize of £500 and two runner-up prizes of £150.**

Every group in the county that holds a litter pick - ideally during our campaign, but at least between now and midsummer - is eligible. To enter, email the best two or three photographs of the event to us ([info@CPRENorthants.org.uk](mailto:info@CPRENorthants.org.uk)), with a few sentences telling us what happened at your litter pick. We always like to hear about people of all ages waking up to the evils of littering and showing that they want to do something as a community to address the problem. There is no entry fee.

## News in Brief

**Primary Schools litter poster competition:** we are again inviting entries for our spring term competition, which has a closing date of May 31. Winning schools will receive a **cash first prize of £500 or second prize of £250**, to be spent on educational resources, at the discretion of the Head Teacher. Winning pupils in each age category will receive **£25 Amazon gift vouchers**, with runners up getting **£15 vouchers**.

**South Northants Council's legal challenge to the Spring Farm wind farm proposal was upheld:** SNC were successful in getting the decision of the Secretary of State overturned in the High Court. CPRE members gave evidence in the proceedings at the Royal Courts of Justice.

**Town & Country Design Awards:** This biennial competition will run again this year. Details are on our website [www.CPRENorthants.org.uk](http://www.CPRENorthants.org.uk).

**Brackley Network 401 development:** a Sainsbury's supermarket with filling station, health care campus and hotel, together with production, warehouse and R&D facilities are planned for a greenfield site inside the town's A43 by-pass. We consider the proposal to be generally benign, apart from some concerns about road access from the town centre.

## Spring & summer dates for your calendar

**Events:** [Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org.uk](mailto:Sue.Baylis@CPRENorthants.org.uk) or 01858 433136

### Friday April 5 to Sunday April 14

CPRE Northants Spring Litter campaign

### Wednesday May 1

Planning Roadshow at Great Houghton Village Hall, 6.00 for 6.30 pm start.

### Sunday June 9

Visit to Lamport Hall & Gardens and presentation of Litter Heroes Awards. 11.00am to 2.00pm. Tickets £15, free for children under 16

### Saturday June 22

Supper party and concert at the Old Rectory, Farthinghoe, featuring the choir Andante

### Tuesday July 9

5.00pm CPRE Northants AGM at the Wildlife Trust, Billing Lings, Northampton 6.30 pm - Presentation of prizes to winners of 2013 Primary School litter poster competition

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