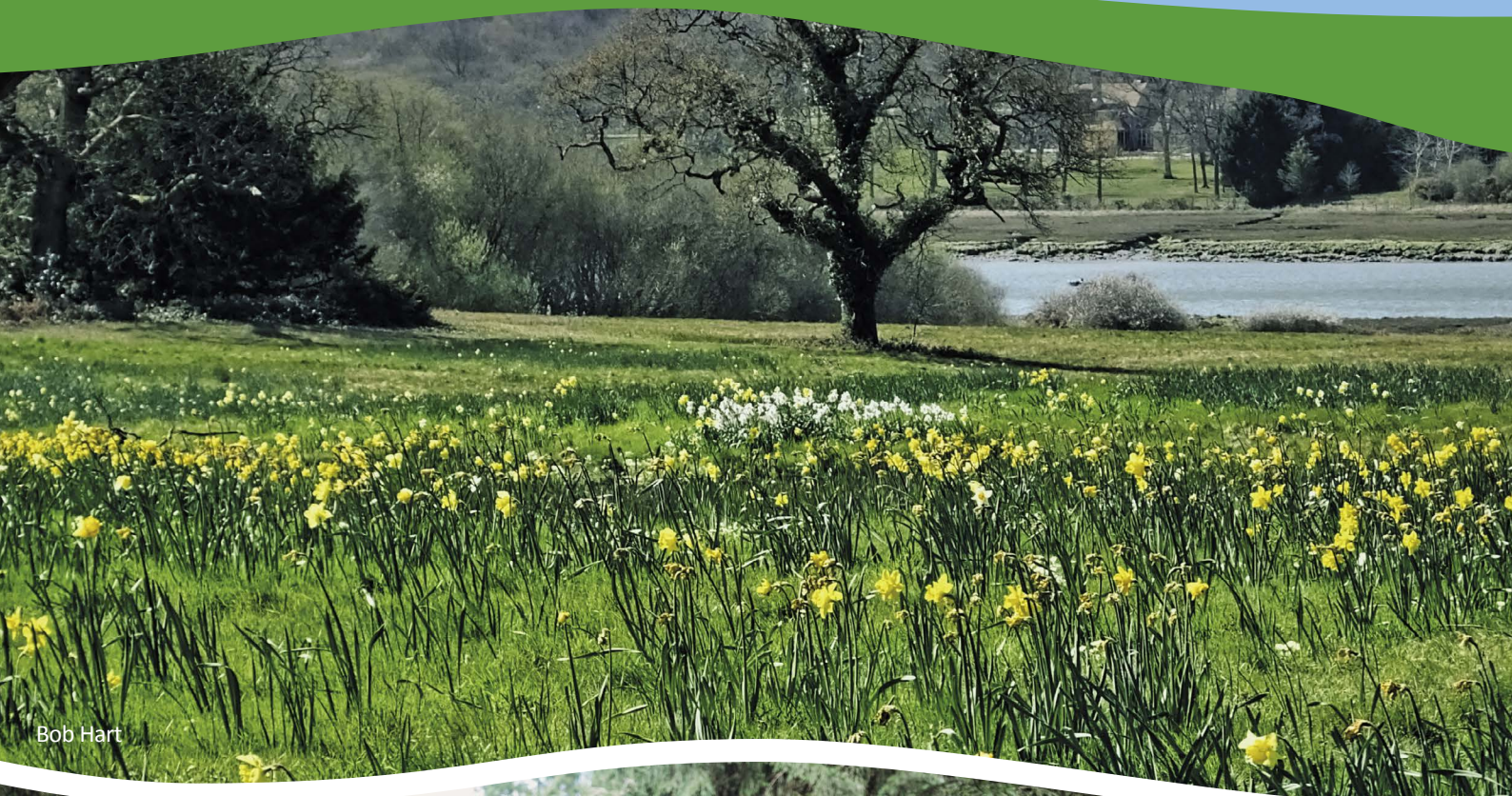




The countryside charity
Hampshire

Hampshire Views

Issue 20 | Spring/Summer 2021



Bob Hart



Abigail Oliver

In this issue:

Over £18,000
raised

Welcoming
new volunteers

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your area

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rural life

Welcome to this edition of Hampshire Views!



It has been a challenging time for us all through a winter lockdown, unable to see friends and family unless through a computer screen. I hope you have all survived this experience and have been able to get out into your nearest green space or countryside for the government approved exercise.

At CPRE Hampshire it is always busy, and I want to thank our hardworking team of staff and volunteers for everything they do to further the cause of protecting the beautiful Hampshire countryside. Early this year, we welcomed four new Trustees who are already getting stuck into CPRE Hampshire life. On the staff team, Mandy Roberts has joined us in the role of Administrator, and I hope that as the lockdown eases, the familiar buzz of teamwork will be back at CPRE Hampshire HQ!

The plight of the environment has climbed the agenda as the climate emergency bites and we understand more about the role of the countryside in mitigating the effects of

climate change – flooding, biodiversity, food security, clean water to drink and clean air to breathe. In addition, our mental and physical health can benefit from getting out into the countryside for exercise and a well-earned break from our computer screens.

To be the most effective team we can be, we continue to make sure that our priorities are clear, our governance is well taken care of and our teams well organised. We met to consider our strategy and priorities for this year at the end of 2020 and these will guide our work through 2021. As always, there is an emphasis on our important planning work, with a fighting fund reserved for large scale threats. In addition, we are pulling together some exciting projects connecting people to the countryside through physical activities such as litter picking, walks and hedge planting.

Our campaign to get 'Valued Landscapes' as defined under the National Planning Policy Framework recognised by local authorities is gaining strength with several local authorities incorporating Valued Landscape assessments in their local plan work. We have been invited to participate in a DEFRA test and trial project looking at Environmental Land Management, involving public, private and voluntary sector participants. You can read more about this work on page 8.

For now, fundraising events will be off the agenda, including the Countryside Awards but I sincerely hope that 2022 will see a return for this exciting event as well as other opportunities to get together with fellow supporters of CPRE.

This year's AGM is scheduled to be on Saturday 24 April by Zoom and we are lucky to have secured the new Chair of national CPRE, Simon Murray as our speaker- come along and hear more about our activities locally as well as nationally. There will be an opportunity to ask questions too. I hope to see many of you there!

Dee Haas,

CPRE Hampshire Chair
chair@cprehampshire.org.uk

 @DeeHaas1

CPRE Hampshire, Winnall Community Centre,
Garbett Road, Winchester SO23 9NY
01962 841897, www.cprehampshire.org.uk

Natalie Hargreaves,


Membership and Volunteer Coordinator –
hantssupportercare@cprehampshire.org.uk

Mandy Roberts,

Administrator
admin@cprehampshire.org.uk

Nicola Revolta,

Communications Manager –
comms@cprehampshire.org.uk

 cpre_hampshire

 cprehants

 countrysidecharityhants

Charity number: 1164410

CPRE's virtual volunteer awards

CPRE volunteers and staff from across the network of local groups joined our online two-day annual conference in October 2020. The virtual volunteer awards were held during the conference to celebrate the achievements of the year's award nominees.

Our very own Caroline Dibden, who has been volunteering for over 26 years with CPRE Hampshire, was recognised for her Special Contribution.

Caroline has been a Trustee for 9 years and is now Vice President. Our Chair, Dee Haas, nominated Caroline, and says: 'Caroline works incredibly hard, has a lively intellect and is a reliable, dedicated volunteer colleague who has contributed hundreds of hours to CPRE both locally and nationally. I feel that she deserves the highest award possible.'

Caroline has become our expert in housing numbers and has worked both within Hampshire and nationally to demonstrate that

the housing targets are not based on up to date population projections. Caroline is also leading the campaign for a new Green Belt in South Hampshire.

Of Caroline's many achievements and successes, the Eastleigh Local Plan campaign win stands out. Caroline has worked alongside the action group ADD (Action Against Destructive Development, which she helped to set up) to successfully campaign for a more sustainable siting for housing within the local plan. Eastleigh's preferred option for 5,500 homes, industrial space and a new road with bridge over the River Itchen, was deemed unjustified by the inspector. This constitutes a major win for the countryside in South Hampshire.

As leader of the South Hampshire District Group, she covers a massive area and several boroughs including Fareham, Portsmouth, Southampton, Gosport, Eastleigh and Havant. Caroline is also Vice Chair of CPRE's County Branch Forum.

Congratulations and huge thanks Caroline from all of us at CPRE Hampshire!



Caroline Dibden's special contribution was recognised at CPRE's virtual volunteer awards 2020

You have helped raise over £18,000 for the Hampshire countryside

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity and support of CPRE Hampshire members to **last year's appeal** which has raised just over **£16,500** to help protect the Hampshire countryside - thank you!



Countryside saved at Bishopstoke, Eastleigh (Caroline Dibden)

The pandemic has hit our ability to hold fundraising events hard. The amount raised will enable us to carry out more work to protect beautiful and valued landscapes and green spaces that are threatened by unsustainable development.

It will also support our voluntary district groups with important planning issues in their local areas. For example, by enabling professional advice to be obtained where needed and helping us respond to the government's damaging changes to the planning system.



Dee Haas with Robert Jamieson drawing the raffle on a public bridleway in Ellisfield because of the current Covid rules

We sadly had to cancel our two **quiz nights** last year due to coronavirus restrictions, however, not to be outdone our South Downs and Central District Group came up with the idea of holding a **raffle** in its place which has raised almost **£1,000** to support our work.

Robert Jamieson co-organiser of the quiz nights usually held in Itchen Abbas and East Meon, says: 'As it was a raffle, we asked for a donation to enter. We're delighted to say that we sold 70 tickets and the raffle raised almost £1,000 to support our work helping the Hampshire countryside to thrive.

In November, our Chair, Dee Haas drew the winning ticket which belonged to CPRE Hampshire members, Hugh and Sue Sandars of Micheldever, whose prize was a case of Hampshire sparkling wines.

We intend to hold the quiz evenings again this year when we sincerely hope that all the current troubles will be behind us. It is always a great evening and enjoyed by everybody. We need to raise funds for CPRE Hampshire as it keeps the charity doing its job, protecting our countryside at these difficult times.'

We are very grateful to the quiz nights voluntary organising team - Robert Jamieson, Christopher Napier and Peter Lindon.



Mandy Roberts, Christmas cards coordinator

We also want to thank all of you who purchased **CPRE Hampshire Christmas cards** last year. We sold 533 packs and raised just over **£700** after costs!

Mandy Roberts, our volunteer Christmas cards coordinator, says: 'I just wanted to send a great big 'Thank You' to everybody who has supported us with the purchasing of Christmas Cards in the past and especially last Christmas.

2020 was a tricky year with the restrictions imposed on us by Covid-19 and, I won't lie, I was a bit worried about selling all the cards without the help of an outlet, but you all stepped up and bought your cards from us which was just brilliant.

We started off with 619 packs to sell and sold 533 packs!! This raised just over £700 for CPRE Hampshire after costs!

At this moment we do not know if the Tourist Information Centre at the Guildhall in Winchester will be open for us to sell our cards in this year. However, on analysis of past sales, we sold a very similar number of packs of cards last year from direct postal sales as we did to the number that we sold from the Guildhall the previous year.

Therefore, I would be very interested to know which way everyone prefers to buy their Christmas Cards. Do you like to order from the comfort of your own home and have them sent direct to your door or would you prefer to purchase them from the Christmas shop at the Guildhall? If you have a couple of minutes to spare, I would be very grateful if you could send a quick email to admin@cprehampshire.org.uk letting me know. I look forward to hearing from you.'

Thank You!

Introducing our new trustees

CPRE Hampshire is led by a group of volunteers, who sit on our Board of Trustees. Their responsibilities are to help set the strategic direction of the charity and to ensure that it is well governed and has a sound financial base. Each trustee is appointed for three years and can sit for a maximum of nine years.

Following on from our last update, you may recall that over the last few months we have been carrying out a recruitment drive looking for new trustees to replace two of our long-standing trustees, Caroline Dibden and Robert Jamieson who stepped down at our last Annual General Meeting in September after completing their term.

We also took advantage of the opportunity to fill skill gaps in our current structure and are delighted to announce that, after an extensive recruitment process, the Board of Trustees has appointed four new trustees.

Our new trustees are:

Neil Henderson,

Secretary to the Board and Governance Lead



Neil Henderson, a barrister of 15 years' standing, who is currently studying for an executive MBA at the University of Surrey. He has a long-standing interest in the environment and the protection of the countryside. Neil takes on the role of Secretary to the Board of Trustees and Governance Lead.

Neil says, 'I joined as a trustee of CPRE Hampshire in 2020 after being inspired by the ADD (Action Against Destructive Development) campaign against Eastleigh Borough Council's proposed development of 5,500 houses almost on my doorstep. I live in a small hobby farm near Bishops Waltham with my family, Wiltshire Horn sheep, Tamworth pigs, and rescue battery hens. I have been encouraging wildlife to re-establish itself in my fields by planting trees, hedges and not actively discouraging nettles, thistles, brambles and docks from thriving.

When at work, I'm a commercial barrister with a London Chambers specialising in shipping and international trade. Aside from the contractual side, I have been increasingly engaged with the regulatory and environmental side of the shipping industry.'

neilh@cprehampshire.org.uk

John Lauwerys



John Lauwerys worked for many years in university management, including as Secretary and Registrar of the University of Southampton. Following his retirement John acted as a consultant in the higher education sector. John lives in Brambridge and was recently elected as Chair of Hampshire Beekeepers Association.

Meet John, 'Our family moved from London to Hampshire 25 years ago and what a good move it has been. We are lucky enough to have a beautiful house and garden which we have worked hard to restore. And it has room for my bees which enjoy the wonderful flowers raised by my wife Paula who is a very keen gardener.

Before retiring from full time work, I held senior managerial roles in a number of universities, latterly at the University of Southampton. For five years from 2016 I have chaired the ADD (Action Against Destructive Development) campaign which successfully resisted the building of 5,500 houses on the finest remaining countryside in the borough of Eastleigh.

johnl@cprehampshire.org.uk

Liz Michel,

PR and Marketing Lead



Liz Michel, a geology graduate turned senior marketing executive, with extensive experience in banking, telecoms, healthcare and retail. Liz believes passionately in the importance of people getting out and spending time in the countryside or in green spaces. She takes on the role of trustee responsible for PR and Marketing.

Liz says, 'I live in Kings Worthy near Winchester, with my two sons and husband, having moved to the area 10 years ago. One of the main reasons for choosing to settle in Hampshire was the beautiful countryside, which I enjoy exploring on days out with my family. In my spare time I am a passionate organic gardener and enjoy running and walking.

I have always had a strong interest in the natural world, completing a Geology degree and spending the early years of my career in engineering geology. Following a career change into marketing, I have spent the last 20 years working in a variety of marketing roles for well-known brands across banking, insurance, telecoms and retail sectors.'

lizm@cprehampshire.org.uk

John Rosling



John Rosling, an experienced business leader, director, academic and author, with a background in marketing, but now specialising in governance and ethics. A graduate of Geography with Business, John lives with his family in Bishop's Waltham and is strongly committed to the preservation of the countryside and took the lead in opposing plans for a major new power station on farmland near his home.

Meet John, 'I've lived in an ancient, and increasingly dilapidated, farmhouse in the Hampshire countryside for over 20 years, sharing it with various dogs, chickens, occasional sheep, as well as three, now teenage, children and Emma my long-suffering wife. The whole family actively enjoy the countryside on foot, bicycle and under paddle and sail. Wild swimming in the Hamble is a new lockdown activity enjoyed more by some than others.

I run a small business consultancy based in Winchester with offices also in Australia.'

johnr@cprehampshire.org.uk

We are very pleased to have such an experienced and talented group of new trustees to take forward the work of the charity and hope you will have an early opportunity to meet them, if only virtually.

Update on activities in your area

New Forest

Following the adoption of the New Forest District Local Plan in July last year, outline planning applications for some of the 18 strategic housing sites allocated in the plan are beginning to come in across the district. One feature they have in common is a significant increase in the number of dwellings being applied for in excess of the levels allocated in the adopted plan. Whilst most controversial sites highlighted in previous reports remain in a state of stasis and still await final decisions from, notably the New Forest District Council, two egregious developments have very recently come to the fore.

Land to the north of Hightown Road, Ringwood was allocated 270 dwellings in 2019 but the developers, Taylor Wimpey, have submitted an application for up to 400 homes plus three hectares for employment purposes. (This site is close to Beaumont Park where 175 dwellings have been built).

Such significant variation in allocation numbers questions the reliability of the Local Plan itself if the development capacity has been seriously underestimated. An official objection from the group has been lodged pointing out that the creation of another 'suburb' will transform the compact market town out of all recognition, i.e., developers should not be given carte blanche to urbanise a hitherto tranquil greenfield area.

Other objectors have also highlighted the inadequate infrastructure, that the land is low lying and susceptible to flooding and totally missed at other applications, that there are still only two NHS surgeries which will fail to cope with ever an ever-increasing ageing population. A decision will be made on the future of this site by the council on 3 May.

In Fordingbridge applications have already been submitted for 240 homes on land north of Station Road and 63 homes at Burgate Acres, Salisbury Road, which seems the most environmentally favoured site. However, a private couple have just submitted a plan for 78 houses, 20 retirement apartments, a village hall etc at St John's Farm, Stuckton Road. A CPRE member has lodged an objection on the grounds that the site is close to



New Forest National Park (Annie Spratt/Unsplash)

the boundary of the National Park, has few dwellings amidst a quite rural area, gets extensively flooded and would impede access to the Forest via footpaths. The other proposed facilities are already well catered for in Fordingbridge itself and to enhance vehicular access would compound the dangerous state of the roads in and around the town.

Finally, at Alderholt an increase of nearly half of the agreed 192 homes is being proposed, totalling 300. Worse still, an alternative scheme is on offer - an increase of up to 3,000 homes - which would make this another dormitory town, with the inhabitants obliged to clog the already unsatisfactory road system en route to Fordingbridge for their retail needs. CPRE Dorset will hopefully monitor and tackle the issues head on.

We need to build volunteer capacity in the group - please see the update on page 11.

Russell Webb, New Forest District Group Coordinator – russellwebb@uwclub.net

North Hampshire

In the previous issue of Hampshire Views, we updated on a proposed development of about 2,500 dwellings in open countryside around Upper Swallick. CPRE Hampshire has now prepared a comprehensive report on this scheme and submitted it to the relevant Councillors and Officers at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. There is also a petition whereby the public can make known their concern about the proposal and which can be found by searching online for Change.org Protect the North Hampshire Downs.

We are also responding to a proposal to construct a huge solar farm over about 200 acres of open land near Bramley. Whilst this might be seen as



Peter & Valerie Bedford pictured far right & far left at CPRE Hampshire's 50th anniversary tree planting, Basingstoke War Memorial Park 2016 (Nicola Revolta)

contributing to a national aspiration to combat climate change, it does in this instance contravene a number of local planning policies.

We continue otherwise to respond to individual planning threats and are hoping still this year to be able to engage again in fundraising events as and when current coronavirus restrictions may be relaxed.

Peter Bedford announced his retirement from the group at the end of last year and I would like to take the opportunity to extend my appreciation for all he has done.

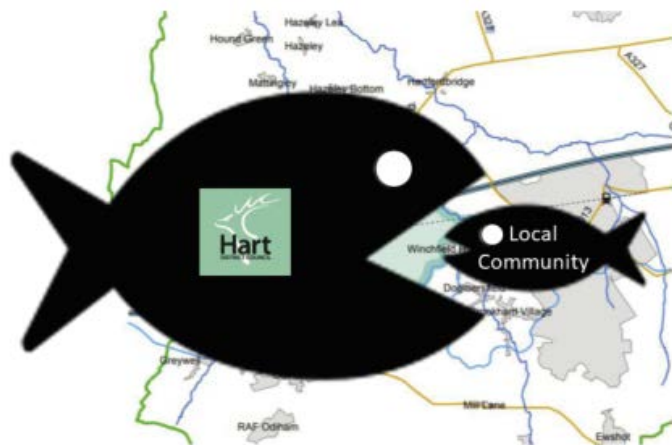
As a dedicated countryman living in a beautiful part of the county near Winslade, Peter joined the North Hampshire District Group in 2007 and became its chairman in the following year, then also becoming a Trustee of CPRE Hampshire.

He has been tirelessly involved in CPRE both in local planning issues and with fundraising events. In the former role he has represented the charity at the local Council planning meetings. For the latter, he has made good use of his considerable contacts in the area to arrange private visits to gardens and, with his wife Valerie, taking a leading role in the preparation of the popular Autumn Supper to which he would also invite a speaker.

He and Valerie furthermore allowed the use of a fine barn at their home for meetings whether for further fundraising or for discussion groups. Peter's considerable knowledge and enthusiasm will be greatly missed and those of us who remain in the group very much hope that we will continue to make ourselves felt within the locality as effectively as he has done.

We are pleased to welcome Beatrice Malama to the group and are looking for other new volunteers to join us - please see pages 10-11.

Peter Prag, North Hampshire District Group Chairman – peterp@cprehampshire.org.uk



Recently Lord Taylor of Goss Moor was employed to give presentations on Garden Villages. This was part of a continuing expenditure on public relations regarding this not needed project, was very superficial and had little or no direct relationship to the planned loss of our green fields.

Following these presentations, the parishes most affected by these plans were invited to propose candidates to join various thematic groups within a Stakeholder Forum that Hart has set up to seek advice from the community about the project.

Guess what, we now find that four out of the 10 places on the Stakeholder Forum Steering Committee are now to be held by Hart Council Officers. In addition, the Hart Project Manager, team members and the joint Chief Executive attend the meetings, giving Hart overall control.

In doing this, Hart has effectively broken its own rules governing the core functions of the Stakeholder Forum which state that it should:

1. provide a space for representatives from parishes, community organisations, business sector, voluntary sector, public sector and housing associations to consider topics raised through community engagement activities
2. provide a steer for continued community engagement to ensure that the wider community's views are fully captured and responded to

So, as you will see we have a long uphill battle on our hands and anyone wishing to join our Hart & Rushmoor District Group team will be most welcome to contact us through the Winchester office.

Alastair Clark, North East Hampshire District Group Chairman -
alastairc@cprehamphshire.org.uk

Shapley Heath Garden Community Stakeholder Forum - is it representative? (www.wehearthat.co.uk)

North East Hampshire

Sadly, development and budget deficits seem to be in the local news again.

The building of some four hundred dwellings in Hitches Lane, Crookham Village is now progressing which will undoubtedly put additional strains on our roads, watercourses and drainage systems.

Hart District Council has now published its proposed budget for the coming year which shows a large deficit, but it appears that continued costs of some £270,000 to promote the Shapley Heath Garden Community project (plans to build some 5,000 dwellings on greenfield land between Winchfield and Murrell Green which were struck out of the current Local Plan) will go ahead while other

South Downs and Central

The focus of recent planning work in the South Downs and Central Group has continued to be on the two very large projects in the countryside of East Hampshire reported in the last edition of Hampshire Views.

Veolia have applied to replace their recycling plant near Alton with an incinerator to generate electricity from unrecyclable waste. This requires a building 40 metres high with twin 80 metre stacks, which would dominate the Wey Valley to the east of Alton. To the south of the site is the South Downs National Park; and to the north a piece of fine countryside which we have submitted as being a Valued Landscape. So, unacceptable visual impact is the main ground of our objection, but also that there would be an adverse effect on recycling of waste in Hampshire if the existing recycling plant is replaced by an incinerator. Some of our points were quoted in requests from Hampshire County Council to Veolia for more information, following over 3,000 objections to the planning application. There has now been a further consultation on the information supplied by Veolia, which show yet more landscape and visual amenity impacts on the national park and its setting and fail to show a need for the plant or justification for the carbon impact it would create. We have made a strong response.

The other large project is the proposed Aquind Interconnector to exchange electricity with France through Direct Current cables coming

ashore at Eastney and then underground to a site near the National Grid substation at Lovedean. The current must then be converted to Alternating Current before transmission to the substation, and vice versa. The Examination of this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is drawing to a close, and in a concluding submission we have reiterated our concern that the two converter halls, each 90 metres long, 50 metres wide and 26 metres in height, are surrounded on three sides by the South Downs National Park from which they would be clearly visible, notably from the important Monarchs Way long-distance footpath. The decision of the Secretary of State will be one of deciding between the need for electricity from France and impact on the national park. There is also an issue as to why sites away from the national park were rejected by Aquind at an early stage.

As a first stage in development of a new Local Plan, Winchester City Council are consulting on Issues and Priorities to which we will be responding after discussion within our Winchester Planning Group.

Our two annual quiz nights had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions but, with thanks to all those who contributed, a virtual raffle was held instead which raised almost £1,000 for CPRE Hampshire (see page 3).

Christopher Napier, South Downs and Central District Group Chairman-
christopher.napier@btinternet.com



South Hampshire

We normally report on the many planning threats across the board in South Hampshire, but as spring is arriving with bluebells and meadow flowers peeking through the grass, we thought we'd take a look at the many positive aspects of the countryside that surrounds the cities and urban areas of this part of the county.

There are over one million residents in South Hampshire and we believe that protecting this countryside is critical for their health and wellbeing, something that has been proved in the recent lockdowns, when we all relied on access to countryside and open spaces on our doorsteps.

In the area that CPRE Hampshire has proposed as a new Green Belt there are numerous public rights of way, criss-crossing the open countryside as well as hundreds of kilometres of long and mid-distance footpaths, the Wayfarers Walk, the Pilgrims Trail, King's Way, the Itchen Way and the Solent Way.

There are country parks at Staunton, Alver Valley, Lakeside, Itchen Valley and Royal Victoria. And there are nature reserves at Southmoor, Farlington Marshes, Portsdown Hill, Wildgrounds, Titchfield Haven, Hook with Warsash, Swanwick Lakes, Wildern, and Testwood Lakes amongst others. This just demonstrates the importance of this area for wildlife, particularly protected birds such as Brent Greese and several species of waders.

There are a number of important areas of woodland, with public access, notably Havant Thicket, Creech Wood, West Walk, Botley Wood and Stoke Park Woods. Some of these include tracts of highly valued ancient woodland and are part of what used to be the Forest of Bere, one of the king's old hunting grounds.

The area is steeped in history, particularly that associated with naval history and the area's role in protecting our country's seafaring supremacy. Dating from the 3rd century, Portchester Castle sits at the head of Portsmouth Harbour, while a group of Napoleonic forts line



Countryside at Denmead (Graham May)

the high ground above at Portsdown Hill, of which Fort Nelson is open to the public. There are the remains of the Bishop of Winchester's palace at Bishop's Waltham and important abbeys at Titchfield Abbey, Southwick Priory and Netley Abbey.

This is not meant to be a tourist guide, but just to highlight why the South Hampshire group of CPRE believes we need to work to preserve and protect the very special qualities and assets that make this area so unique.

Caroline Dibden, South Hampshire District Group Chairman – carolined@cprehampshire.org.uk

Test Valley

The Test Valley District Group committee only deals with planning matters now as we have very few people to call on and would dearly like more members to be aware of this and volunteer to help with organising interesting events and visits for us all. Do contact us!

The planning scene has been very quiet during lockdown. Lots of trees have been felled or topped however, and lots of extensions applied for but as far as we can see no new large developments are in the frame.



Bluebells and stitchwort carpet Great Wood near Abbots Ann (John Moon)

John Moon has been keeping an eye on the Test Valley Green Belt motion which has been proposed to Test Valley Borough Council by Councillor Nick Adams-King. A South Hampshire Green Belt is part of CPRE Hampshire's strategic vision for the county to ensure that green areas are retained specially in the south of the Borough. It was timed out of the first meeting of Test Valley Borough Council, but at the time of writing is on the agenda for the next, and we hope very much it will be discussed and passed. Do turn to the Campaigns Group report on page 8 to see more detail on this important move.

A continuing concern is the declining water quality in the Test and its tributaries. As with almost all other Hampshire rivers, it is suffering from inadequate control of the discharges from the various water treatment works in the borough and from agricultural run-off. The Environment Agency currently has no statutory timescale within which to improve the quality of our rivers, but it is hoped that a new parliamentary committee investigation into the problem of our rivers might invoke some action.

Green areas have been very important to all of us during lockdown. Most visitors love them and look after them, but it has been so saddening to see the way some people abuse them. Unhelpful and damaging car parking, litter, portable barbecues burning the plants, dogs out of control and dog mess, (even baby nappies stuffed in the bushes!) and this is even on SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest). There are always helpful notices with rules and information on every site. Let's keep our open spaces lovely.

This Easter with no holidays away allowed and varying restricted permissions to meet up outside, the pressure will be on managers and on nature. Leave nothing but memories, take nothing but photos, kill nothing but time!

Moya Grove, Test Valley District Group Secretary – moyagrove@gmail.com

John Moon, Test Valley District Group Acting Chair – john.moon@madasafish.com

Promoting rural life - news from CPRE Hampshire's Campaigns Working Group

Our Campaigns Working Group meets regularly to steer the charity's positive campaigns, some of which are long running and some of which respond to the political environment, meaning all hands-on deck for a shorter time. For example, the Planning White Paper response,

working with the Planning and Policy Group, was one of the latter. To contact the group please email Dee Haas chair@cprehampshire.org.uk or Caroline Dibden carolined@cprehampshire.org.uk.

Green Belt campaign

The Green Belt campaign continues to be relevant and necessary. The proposed large development, 'Royaldown' (update below) demonstrates the urgent need for a designation to prevent the coalescence of towns and cities in South Hampshire- we must be able to plan the growth that is needed without urban sprawl and the loss of precious countryside.

Please see the website or get in touch with us if you want to know more about our Green Belt campaign. Nearly 15,000 people have signed our petition, across southern Hampshire, showing how popular it would be – so please add your signature if you haven't already, and share with your friends and family – [Protect South Hampshire's countryside](#).



Landscape between Hursley and Oliver's Battery and the proposed site for 'Royaldown' (Carole Oldham)

Test Valley Borough Council support for new Green Belt

We are excited to report that on 26 February, Test Valley Borough Council voted unanimously in favour of a motion to support the principle of a new South Hampshire Green Belt. Our thanks go to Councillor Nick Adams-King, Deputy Leader of Test Valley Borough Council and Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport & Romsey, for proposing it to Full Council and to the members for their positive votes.

Councillor Adams-King moved: That the Council supports the principle of a South Hampshire Green Belt designation for the countryside

surrounding the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth and continues to support the Partnership for South Hampshire in its work on investigating the rationale and justification for an appropriate Green Belt designation or other forms of protection for the countryside to prevent coalescence of our towns and villages.

This is a really positive approach by Test Valley Borough Council, and we hope they will continue the good work.

'Royaldown' development proposals on potential Green Belt land

We object strongly to proposals for a 5,000-house new town ('Royaldown') to the south west of Winchester near Hursley. It represents the worst type of car dependant sprawl and is a completely inappropriate location - in open countryside, not related to any mass public transport hubs, and will likely lead to a significant adverse impact on climate change.

Development at Royaldown would be a first step in the eventual coalescence of Winchester with Southampton, which is something we have long feared. We want to see this area, amongst others, to be designated as Green Belt.

This area of open countryside is important to people's health, tranquillity and wellbeing, something that has been proved over the past few months during the coronavirus pandemic.

Environmental Land Management (ELM) test and trial



(Caroline Dibden)

Farming shapes our landscape and has done for centuries. The massive changes to agriculture which will stem from leaving the EU and the new emphasis on 'Public Money for Public Goods' in the 25 Year Environment Plan creates the opportunity to develop a modern, collaborative system for the governance of land management in England.

Merrick Denton-Thompson, who some of you will have heard speak at our AGM in 2019, is the brain behind this new test and trial, investigating the cultural shift in working collaboratively with the farming community which is being supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). He emphasises the vital importance of protecting and transforming agricultural land for securing sustainably produced food - a crucial part of our infrastructure.

CPRE Hampshire's Chair, Dee Haas has been invited to participate, joining the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the National Trust, Southern Water, Hampshire County Council, the NFU, CLA and more in helping to formulate this new governance framework.

Merrick Denton-Thompson says, 'It is a fabulous opportunity to transform the whole culture around land and natural resource management. Instinctively we all want to leave the environment in a better place than we found it. Our country has a sophisticated land use planning system, but we have no such system to manage land and natural resources. A consortium of public, private and voluntary sector participants has been pulled together to test and trial a new governance approach for the county of Hampshire including the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth in collaboration with DEFRA. We will focus on the two landscape character areas, the South Hampshire Lowlands and the North Hampshire Downs.'

We will report back at a later date as the trial will be ongoing throughout 2021.

Valued Landscapes



More than just 'the view' - valuing the East Hampshire landscape (Christopher Napier)

Christopher Napier has been busy evaluating the landscapes that we think should be protected as 'Valued Landscapes'. He started in East Hampshire with several reports into landscapes proposed for large new settlements. This has led to the East Hampshire District Council commissioning a landscape consultancy to carry out more detailed assessments which we were pleased to see broadly concurred with our views.

Christopher has now continued on to write Valued Landscape reports for the North Hampshire Downs proposed site for 2,500 houses at 'Upper Swallick' and 5,000 houses at 'Royaldown' south west of Winchester. We are hearing that these studies are beginning to be considered as part of the local plan process in several boroughs through Hampshire.

What is a 'Valued Landscape'?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) refers to protecting valued landscapes but as yet doesn't define these. In the absence of any guidance, practitioners are finding their way around the subject with reference to the approaches taken by inspectors in their appeal decisions and the courts when decisions are challenged. The key message from the courts appears to be that to be a Valued Landscape has to demonstrate that it is out of the ordinary and should have some demonstrable physical attributes rather than popularity.

Government have taken note of the advice in the Landscape Institute's Guidance on Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which includes some of the following: landscape quality (condition); scenic quality; rarity; representativeness; conservation interests; and recreation values.

Affordability of rural housing

Volunteers from CPRE Hampshire's Local Plan Response Group have prepared guidance and policy and position statements on most important aspects of Local Plans. One of these resources covers the affordability of housing in rural areas and is available from the website.

Nick Stenning, a rural affordable housing expert and author of our policy and position paper says: 'We believe that the best way to ensure that we have a living and thriving countryside is to have thriving communities. Rural communities thrive best when they have a robust foundation of people who work in the local area and can afford to live there. This means rural communities which are stronger and more diverse, and where more people live and work in the countryside. Yet this will only be achieved if people, particularly those on low incomes are able to find a decent, affordable home close to their place of work or close to where they have family connections.'

We believe that the provision of housing in the rural areas that is affordable for those who want to live and work in the countryside is a priority. Unfortunately, housing in many rural areas of Hampshire has become increasingly unaffordable for people on low and average incomes, and the failure to create homes that people can afford is fuelling some of the main issues facing rural communities. The closure of rural services (such as post offices, pubs and public transport) and the ageing population structure, due to falling numbers of young people, is linked strongly to the inability of people to be able to afford a home. The policies relating to the affordability of housing in the countryside therefore encompass the issues of affordability, employment and local connection.'

An affordable housing guide for CPRE members, 'How to improve the supply of rural affordable housing', is also available from the national website.

Pandemic positives for the landscape...?

by Ted Wake - Chairman, Hampshire Gardens Trust



Ted Wake, Chairman,
Hampshire Gardens Trust (Carrie Lees)

In thinking about the respective roles of CPRE and HGT, there are many similarities - both are involved with plants, trees and the wider countryside - and through our activities we aspire to learn more about the many aspects of the unique tapestry of the landscape's component parts. We endeavour to protect these areas for future generations, whilst at the same time enabling the public to share these priceless, open spaces.

If we were to generalise, HGT tends to deal on a smaller scale, with a focus on parks, gardens and designed landscapes, where leisure and aesthetics are the main focus. Whereas CPRE tends to work on a 'landscape scale', where the shape of the view has originally been created by those who have farmed the land, with arable and livestock production as the primary objective. In both cases, we try to manage our respective areas as sympathetically as possible and recognise that we need to restrict some forms of access and development that might compromise our core objectives.

2020/21 will be years to remember for many reasons - and, whilst some aspects have been very challenging, we hope that, ultimately, there may also be a number of the positive changes as we begin to see vaccine science triumph over Covid. No one will forget the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, but we do know that memories of even the most traumatic events fade, and life will, eventually, return to some sort of normality. Of course, the definition of 'normal' may change - but I sense that those of us who are involved in the preservation of the natural environment

may now feel that we can dream of greater ambitions in terms of encouraging our fellow Hampshire residents to pay more attention to their local area.

Pandemic positives are few and far between, but there is no doubt that during lockdown many people have discovered, or rediscovered, a connection and appreciation of the natural world and their local landscape - and we now have a unique opportunity to attract the attention of a wider range of supporters. This is especially true of those who live in more urban areas, where they have begun to explore beyond their local parks and have discovered that this is just the tonic they need after months when they have been confined to areas with little or no green space, and no opportunity to enjoy the privilege of walking in the wider landscape.

In spite of the many challenges faced by us all, the Trustees and members of the Hampshire Gardens Trust feel a sense of optimism about what lies ahead, and we would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with CPRE Hampshire on local projects and acknowledge that there is much to be gained from co-ordinating more closely to achieve our ambitions for a better Hampshire.

Welcoming new volunteers and volunteering opportunities

Volunteers have always been at the heart of everything we do. With a passion and energy for promoting, enhancing and protecting the Hampshire countryside, we are enormously thankful to be supported locally by over 100 volunteers working in a range of different roles across the charity.

Earlier this year, we were very pleased to introduce our dedicated volunteer hub, Assemble. The hub is a one-stop shop for everything you need to know about volunteering with us, from finding new volunteer opportunities to accessing guidance and support. We hope the hub will be a valuable tool in helping to recruit, communicate, and support our volunteers making their time with us an enjoyable and fulfilling experience.

Meet some of our new volunteers



Lisa



Kevan



Jacob



Beatrice



Mandy



Janine

Alan Preece

Alan has been working on a sustainability checklist to assist members of our Campaigns Working Group in identifying what sustainable development should look like.

Lisa Higgins and Kevan Bundell

Lisa and Kevan join our South Hampshire District Group supporting Caroline Dibden with planning.

Jacob Standen and Bob Hart

Jacob and Bob are providing communications support as photography contributors.

Beatrice Malama

Beatrice joins our North Hampshire District Group supporting Des O'Donnell with planning.

Mandy Roberts

Mandy has been supporting the office with administration and has worked extremely hard managing our 2020 Christmas Cards.

Janine Jones-Browne

Janine will support us with our Instagram and Facebook pages.

Volunteering opportunities

Building volunteer capacity in the New Forest and Waterside area

Over the next year, our New Forest District Chair, Russell Webb, will step down from his position, and take a well-earned break. Russell has worked tirelessly over the years to make a positive difference to the Hampshire countryside, and we are extremely grateful to him for his dedication and significant contribution to the local countryside.

Our New Forest District Chair is the public face of CPRE Hampshire in the New Forest and Waterside area. They help build relationships with communities and local councils and contribute to the development of CPRE campaigns and messages. As a leader they advocate our work to inspire others and safeguard the good name and values of the charity.

We would love to hear from anyone who might be interested in taking up this exciting and significant role.

We are also looking for a number of volunteer planners across the New Forest and Waterside. Our planners play a key role in investigating local planning applications which impact the Hampshire countryside, and help in influencing their outcome.



New Forest National Park (Annie Spratt/Unsplash)

Other volunteer opportunities

- New committee members to join the North Hampshire District Group to support with future events and activity
- Content writer to write short articles and good news stories
- Website volunteer
- Videographer
- Research
- Climate Change (see below)
- Eyes and Ears (see below)

Climate Change volunteer

CPRE Hampshire is looking for a volunteer to join a recently formed small working group to tackle climate change issues. The group looks at local authority plans and larger planning applications to ensure climate change issues are being taken as seriously as possible. The group also encourages renewable energy projects 'done well' and other issues related to Natural Capital and climate change.

Join our Eyes and Ears network

As a member of CPRE Hampshire, could you help us take a closer look at the issues affecting your local countryside? CPRE Hampshire believes in a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to enjoy. Our Eyes and Ears network help us to realise our mission by informing our team of any local issues of concern.

If you are someone who may not have the time to commit to a regular volunteer position but would like to make a positive difference to the Hampshire countryside, our Eyes and Ears network could be for you.

CPRE Hampshire is proud to be supported by over 100 local volunteers. If you are interested in any of the positions above, or if there is an area of our work that you would like to get involved in, please visit our website or get in touch with our volunteer co-ordinator, Natalie Hargreaves on 01962 841897 or hantssupportercare@cprehampshire.org.uk.

We would be very pleased to welcome you to the team!

Enough brownfield land for 27,900 new homes in Hampshire



Former Brewery Site, Romsey - the site has had full planning permission since 2006 (Nicola Revolta)

There is enough brownfield land for almost 27,900 new homes in Hampshire and over a third of sites already have planning permission, a new CPRE report has revealed. Nationally, there is capacity for 1.3 million new homes on brownfield land and over half a million already have planning permission.

The figures for Hampshire and across the country demonstrate that there is already enough available and suitable land in the planning system to meet the government's ambition to build 300,000 homes a year for the next 5 years (this Parliament), calling into question the controversial plans to deregulate the planning system that has been proposed by Ministers.

CPRE Hampshire has highlighted that the method of calculating housing numbers is the single biggest issue facing Hampshire in the government's recent Changes to the Current

Planning System consultation. The government proposes to allocate 9,275 new homes a year to Hampshire (46,375 over 5 years), although the Office for National Statistics projects only 4,097 new households will be formed (20,485 over 5 years).

Brownfield land – land that has previously been built on, and now sits derelict or vacant – provides a valuable resource in the protection of our green spaces and countryside from development. The State of Brownfield report 2020 is the latest in a series of yearly CPRE reports on the Brownfield Register, which catalogue the number of brownfield sites available for development. Brownfield Registers were first introduced in April 2017 following CPRE's Waste of Space campaign.

In Hampshire, more than 470 brownfield sites have been identified, with the largest number of sites in Portsmouth (65), Hart (63) and Basingstoke and Deane (57). Portsmouth also has the largest sites by size (119 hectares), closely followed by Gosport (115.5 hectares) and Havant (111 hectares). The greatest number of homes that could be provided by sites are in Portsmouth (5,522 homes), Southampton (3,779) and Hart (3,328).

The analysis clearly demonstrates that the planning system is not slowing building rates. There is currently planning permission for over half a million (565,564) units on brownfield land, of which almost 11,800 units are in Hampshire. In February 2020, the Local Government Association found that over one million homes in total had been granted planning permission

but not yet built. This means that brownfield sites and other unbuilt sites with planning permission could provide over 1.5 million new homes – clearly demonstrating there is already enough suitable land in the planning system to meet the government's 300,000 annual target for the rest of this Parliament.

Commenting on the Hampshire figures, Caroline Dibden, CPRE Hampshire Vice President, said:

'CPRE's analysis is based on sites included on Local Planning Authority Brownfield Registers. It is therefore a snapshot in time and is dependent on when local authorities update their registers. Brownfield sites include those where the entire site area meets the definition of previously developed land, are of at least 0.25 hectares (0.61 of an acre) or capable of supporting at least 5 homes and are suitable and achievable for residential development.

However, the overall potential of brownfield land for new homes is likely to be even higher. Brownfield Registers are solely reactive to sites being put forward by owners and developers rather than the Local Planning Authority proactively seeking sites. There will also be many smaller sites of less than 5 homes, which are not included. The impact of Covid-19 on town and city centres may well have a marked effect in the future too.'

In order to make best use of suitable brownfield land, CPRE is urging the government to introduce a genuine 'brownfield first' policy, which ensures that suitable previously developed or under-used land is prioritised for redevelopment over green spaces and countryside.

Government should rethink damaging planning proposals and plan back better, urges coalition of 18 organisations



CPRE and 17 other organisations launch vision for a gold-standard planning system

The government should rethink major elements of its controversial planning proposals and work with stakeholders to deliver a planning system that puts people, climate and nature at its heart.

The call comes from CPRE and a broad and united coalition of 18 housing, planning, transport, environmental, heritage and public health organisations that have worked together to forge their own alternative 'Vision for planning'

in response to the government's Planning White Paper, published in August last year. The government is expected to make a further announcement in March about whether and how it will take forward the proposals in the White Paper.

The joint 'Vision for planning' was launched in January at a virtual debate with speakers including the Housing Minister the Rt Hon Chris Pincher MP. Commenting on the new joint 'Vision

for planning', Tom Fyans, deputy chief executive of CPRE said:

'We're calling on the government to plan back better and work with us to develop a planning system that puts people, and tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, at its heart. We all deserve a home we can genuinely afford to live in, and to have a say in shaping the communities around us. And for over 70 years, a toolbox has been in place to make sure that can happen: the planning system. But as things stand, under the government's current proposals, the opportunity to influence what happens and where in our communities would be halved.

Before Christmas, the government announced a welcome revision of its housing numbers 'algorithm'. However, this was only one small part of a range of potentially damaging proposals put forward by the government last year. That's why we're calling on Ministers to take an equally pragmatic approach to improving policies relating to community voice, affordable homes and access to green spaces. Together, we can develop a planning system fit for the 21st century.'

To find out more about the Vision for Planning, see the News section of the website.