

# SUSSEX REVIEW

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## What future for our Countryside?

In this new-look issue of the Sussex Review, we are looking both forward and backwards with more than normal concern for our countryside.

### National Planning Policy Framework

On page 4, we assess the controversy surrounding the “National Planning Policy Framework”. CPRE supports simplification of the planning system – but the proposed draft by a ‘gang of four’, on which consultations commenced this summer is a gross over-simplification. It has attracted much recent publicity. In CPRE’S view it will harm not just the countryside but it will actually be counterproductive – slowing down rather than speeding up decisions as the ‘Law of Unintended Consequences’ (ever-prevalent in Planning) comes into play. We expect to hear much more on this topic before a sensible long term picture emerges.

### High Weald AGM report

On page 6 we look back to review 2010 and for those who were unable to join us for the AGM held at High Hurstwood, we summarise both the AGM and the presentation by our guest speakers, Jason Lavender and Matthew Pitts, from the High Weald AONB Unit.

### Sussex Countryside Awards 2011

On page 8, we tell you about the 2011 the Awards Ceremony held on 6th October at Petworth House, when winners of the 2011 Countryside Awards were presented with awards by Lady Caroline Egremont on behalf of the panel of judges.

### Does Neighbourhood Planning mean anything at all?

John Kay, CPRE Sussex Trustee and Chair of Ringmer Parish Council, reports on the view from a vanguard neighbourhood planning authority, and gives his opinion on its benefits or otherwise. So see page 10, which has a sting in the tale. And for news of your district, please see pages 13-15.

## THIS OTHER EDEN

**Stuart Meier**, Director

In recent months, CPRE has been campaigning ardently against the biggest-ever attack on our Town and Country Planning System. This has been a government inspired and ill considered attack which instead of the well thought out and well tested set of Policy documents we have built up and relied on over the years, would saddle us with a thin document, which would be little better than a beginners guide to planning.

This campaign and the surrounding controversy have led to regular front page coverage in national as well as local papers.

One effect of this publicity has been that the full name of CPRE – the Campaign to Protect Rural England - has become better recognised by the general public than for many years. Not quite a household name, but certainly with much better recognition by those who care about our countryside. Back in 1926, CPRE borrowed the phrase “this Other Eden” from Shakespeare - *Richard II*, Act 2 – as part of the rubric around its first logo (see right). And it is that logo which has inspired the new 2011 logo, based on the recognition that CPRE needed a more straightforward way to brand itself that its last attempt. CPRE Sussex will be using the new logo together with its marketing name – the Sussex Countryside Trust.

Shortly we will also be starting a major upgrade to our website – a leap into this decade from our previous website which betrays its roots in the *Noughties*. This will be a big project – but crucial for marketing ourselves in future.

Our chairman Rodney Chambers (opposite) mentions and welcomes new members who have become part of CPRE Sussex in recent months, having supported CPRE more generally in the past. To those and others reading this, please do contact me if you feel you can help us in any way, or if you have concerns you want us to consider. Letters to the Editor of the Review are always welcome!

CPRE is a volunteer organisation, and we always welcome your help both in the Districts and in the County Branch. You can email me at [Stuart.Meier@cpresussex.org.uk](mailto:Stuart.Meier@cpresussex.org.uk)



**Stuart Meier**



*The original CPRE 1926 logo*

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Welcome to our new look Sussex Review. In the Spring issue I asked, “Who do we think we are?”

After a great deal of thought by the Trustees, we will in future be marketing ourselves as the Sussex Countryside Trust. This appears on the front page of this issue next to CPRE’s new logo. Our official name remains The Campaign to Protect Rural England but we have chosen our own unique descriptor to emphasise that our overriding concern is

- for Sussex
- for the countryside (who talks of Rural England these days?) and
- we consider it as in our trust to safeguard this Sussex Countryside for future generations who will live in, work in, or visit our beautiful county.



We hope you will agree that Sussex people will instantly recognise who we are and what we stand for, in contrast to the difficulty faced by the large majority of people who are not familiar with the acronym ‘CPRE’! As I write we are welcoming as full members of the branch many people who have hitherto been “national supporters”, making an important contribution to support our work and principles, but without the opportunity to influence Branch policy and priorities here in Sussex.

To such new members, can I say – Please make your presence felt!

A few years ago we received a substantial legacy. This enabled us to employ Stuart Meier as our Director; I need hardly remind you of the huge impact he has made on the scope and effectiveness of the Branch. Stuart writes on page 4 about chaos in Planning, the potential legacy of this government’s attempts to over-simplify our Town and COUNTRY Planning System as well as (opposite) our ‘New Look’ branding.

Now, the more effective an organisation becomes, the more is expected of it!

So, most opportunely we have recently received another legacy which will enable us to employ (but only in the short term) further expertise in fighting campaigns on issues vital to us all – not least to ensure that any revisions to the Planning System will provide protection to the countryside rather than to developers’ profits, and to ensure that the implementation matches the spirit and the letter of the new Localism Bill.

We are always conscious of and grateful for the support we receive from you, our members, and know that we must – and can – rely on right-thinking Sussex people to support our efforts for the benefit of future generations.

**Rodney Chambers**

*CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust logo, 2011*



# Changing the planning framework – be careful what you wish for!

**Stuart Meier**  
 Director,  
 Sussex Branch



*The document causing all the controversy*

Since the Second World War, planning has been regulated by the Town and COUNTRY Planning Act 1947. This was passed to ensure that post-war reconstruction was carefully controlled to avoid the blight of urban sprawl and ribbon development. Such problems are the previous World War had of course prompted the formation of CPRE in 1926.

Over the years this first Act has been supplemented by others and by numerous policy statements and notes of guidance, until they reached a total of well over a thousand pages.

This has made the process of planning complex - some would say, too complex, but it is not surprising as the English legal system is based on precedent rather than central diktat. Furthermore, large developments are themselves highly complex, with numerous and varying impacts, and they must comply not just with national but also European rules and designations.

So everyone – planners, developers, ordinary householders, and environmental organisations like us – were pleased when the Government originally announced that they would simplify and streamline the process.

## The Draft NPPF

But then we saw the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which purported to cover all these complex issues in just 54 pages. What a lot of baby went out with the bathwater! And the bath was refilled with some quite noxious proposals

- That the driver of all planning decisions should be economic growth.
- That the previous presumption that development on brown-field sites should take precedence over green-field was jettisoned.
- That in the absence of a local core strategy the default answer to any application for “sustainable development” should be “yes”.

- That Sites of Special Scientific Interest should receive no specific protection
- That the open countryside should not receive any protection in its own right

The Planning Inspectorate was so confident that the Government would get the NPPF through “on the nod” that they issued guidance to inspectors that it was a Material Planning Consideration, despite it only being a draft for consultation. As the voices of concern became more and more vociferous, they were forced in September to water down that advice. Indeed, in a recent Planning Inquiry decision in Hampshire (regarding the notorious “Cala” development) the Secretary of State admitted that “as [the NPPF] is for consultation and is subject to change, he has given it little weight”.

However, from the outset it seemed the government itself assumed that it would be accepted by all parties with little dissent.

## National outrage

How wrong they were. Ministers were immediately hit by waves of public concern led by CPRE and increasingly as it developed, by the National Trust. CPRE nationally and locally were determined to get government to treat the consultation exercise as a real opportunity to create something workable, rather than just window-dressing for form’s sake.

While one government minister claimed it was a ‘left-wing conspiracy’, that remark was certainly left of the mark! And as we told Greg Clark MP, the Minister for Decentralisation, the reaction of concerned country people was *outrage*.



*Logo of the County Times campaign*



Sussex newspapers give their views

Here in Sussex, we conducted a local campaign of letters to the press, and interviews with the media. We know many members wrote to their MPs, not least to point out that although as National Parks, AONBs and other sites were promised continued protection, everything else in our counties was “up for grabs” (as the National Trust put it).

Suddenly, planning became a hot topic, hitting the front pages of national and local papers, the evening television news, and Radio 4 morning after morning.

We repeatedly pointed out to MPs that their reassurances about ‘protecting the green belt’ are meaningless here in Sussex – because we have no green belt! At the time of writing, response from them has been, at best, disappointing. They have all asserted that the NPPF protected the green belt which is of course irrelevant in their constituencies. Surely they should know that what we have in Sussex are numerous towns surrounded by green fields all much treasured by local people, and all under threat.

Quite rightly, one of our local MPs, Caroline Lucas, described the concept of sustainable development – as inadequately defined in the NPPF – as a job creation scheme for lawyers; there is good evidence that many professional planners are equally concerned at the vagueness of this term.

It is plain that the NPPF makes a very uneasy bedfellow for the concept of Localism – the NPPF allows no right for local people to say “NO” - particularly since there is no provision for appeal against a permission granted against the wishes of local people. CPRE has campaigned for a ‘third party right of appeal’ so far without success, despite its inclusion in the manifestos of both coalition political parties.

We are all aware how developers can use threats to use the appeal process to gain permission at local level, because they know that the cost of an appeal will be prohibitive to a local authority and to objectors. There are several examples of this process current in Sussex at this very moment. We can be certain that the NPPF as drafted would extend the use of this tactic, and of ‘planning by appeal’.

### The Law of Unintended Consequences

Planning is bedevilled by the ‘Law of Unintended Consequences’. For example, Local development Frameworks were planned to speed up introduction of effective local development plans, yet had the reverse effect with more than half of local authorities still being plan-less.

With the NPPF, the government faces a real risk that, once again, proposals intended to speed up planning will actually slow it down. In this case, it could take many years of legal and planning inquiries to build up a completely new set of case law and decisions. So an attempt at a planning revolution could cause chaos, with costs and delays far beyond those current in planning decision-making.

Throughout September and October CPRE voiced its outrage and campaigned, either to have the NPPF radically redrafted or withdrawn altogether.

At the time of writing we know that we have been heard, but we do not know if we have been *listened* to.

By the time you read this, radical changes may be underway but we can’t count on it, so please be ready to engage in the next round of campaigning!

### Quotes relating to the NPPF

**David Cameron**, Prime Minister (in response to widespread outrage):  
*“I have always believed that our beautiful British landscape is a national treasure. We should cherish and protect it for everyone’s benefit.”*

**Shaun Spiers**, CPRE *“CPRE’s concerns about the NPPF are far reaching. As it stands, it will not save money, will not reduce planning delays or aid sustainable economic growth. What it will do is damage the countryside and hamper the ability of communities to protect the places they love, whether in town or country”*. He has also described it as *“fatally skewed in favour of economic development”*.

**Fiona Reynolds**, Director General of the National Trust *“the present draft NPPF... does not deliver these goals. It needs significant change to properly reflect the ambition of balance”*.

**Caroline Flint** MP *“we are living in strange times when the Government reveals that the National Trust is part of a vast left-wing conspiracy”*.

**English Heritage** *“The inference is that no or little justification is required for such harmful changes, which cumulatively could have a devastating effect on our nationally important buildings and sites.”* (quoted in the *Sunday Telegraph*)

**Sustainable Development organization** *“The government’s national planning policy framework is bad news for business, the environment and for its own green economy ambitions”*

# CPRE Sussex 2011 AGM report

## Julia Purcell

secretary to the Trustees

On 12 July 2011, CPRE delegates were welcomed to the 38th CPRE Sussex AGM held at High Hurstwood Village Hall, deep in the heart of the High Weald. The venue was chosen specifically for its location. The High Weald is one of Sussex's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a 'Hidden Jewel' of Sussex. It is an area of geographic significance, but its fringes are under attack from housing development.



Photographs on this page © Colin Leeves 2011

At the AGM, Rodney Chambers, Chairman, reported on important developments for CPRE, nationally and locally. He briefly touched on the re-branding of CPRE, with Stuart Meier and Penny Hudd having been involved at National level in the re-branding process.

Delegates were updated on the ongoing issue regarding the membership/supporter issue. This confusing arrangement is being simplified with only one class of membership in future.

The 2011 CPRE Sussex Award Scheme was mentioned. This prestigious and popular scheme was set up with the aim of recognising good development within the Sussex countryside. Rodney reported there were a substantial number of interesting nominations this year (see page 8 for details of the winners).

Rodney concluded by setting members a challenge. He observed that a small number of members do a large amount of the work and stressed the importance of a wider active membership. "We need more members and more members to be active!"

Peter Lansberry, our Treasurer, reported that overall expenditure was less than budgeted, due mainly to timing, with

some amounts being carried into the current financial year. He highlighted the importance of managing outgoings actively in order to achieve our goals.

Nominations for Officers and Members of the Executive Committee were received and duly seconded, with Justin French-Brooks elected as an additional Executive Member.

In his Director's report, Stuart Meier updated the meeting on the decisive and pleasing outcome of the Honey Farm Inquiry and the extraordinary generosity of the membership in support of the Appeal (substantially covering the costs). Useful lessons had been learnt from this Appeal for the future, as outlined in the Spring edition of the *Review*.

Stuart updated the meeting on the Government's planning strategy and the *National Planning Policy Framework* which would prove highly controversial (see page 4). He then provided a background to the re-branding of CPRE and the creation of a new working name: CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust. With only 3% of the UK population readily recognising the name of CPRE it was considered vital in the recruitment of new members that the name should be easier to understand and better reflect the activities of the organisation.

Protected landscapes were briefly reported on. These included issues confronting the High Weald, the South Downs National Park and Chichester Harbour, the latter for example being faced with the threat of a 50 acre glass house development on the Manhood Peninsula.

A wide range of matters raised by the floor included clarification on main campaigning priorities for the coming year. Stuart replied that much will depend on events triggered by developers, but that this year may also be about how CPRE deals with core strategies and longer term plans.

'Local Nature Partnerships', local publicity, 'Localism', the importance of supporting 'Urban Fringe Countryside', wind turbines and the Government's plans to change planning policy were discussed. With regard to Appeals, all were in agreement that the law should be changed so that those who seek to go to Appeal should bear the brunt of the costs; and that in our view the threat of an appeal is used wrongly by developers.

Thanks were passed to all the CPRE Sussex volunteers, members and staff for their hard work and continued support.

# AGM presentation 2011 – The High Weald

We welcomed Jason Lavender and Matthew Pitts, guest speakers from the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit.

**Jason Lavender and  
Matthew Pitts**  
High Weald AONB Unit

Co-Director Jason outlined the role of the Unit, a small specialist team charged with researching and promoting the High Weald's special qualities and advising on conservation options. Jason explained that underpinning this approach is the recognition that landscapes are our "life-support systems", providing essential human needs: food, water, shelter, energy etc. This approach also recognises that the High Weald is not a wilderness but a distinct and identifiable area, created and moulded over time by generations of people as part of a complex interplay of human actions with physical, social and economic processes. It is this interplay which gives us what we now call the High Weald's landscape character.

Jason stressed that the character of our landscapes has greatly influenced our past use of land, continues to do so now and will into the future. So, should we wish to ensure the High Weald realises its full potential to be a living, vibrant and working landscape, providing our essential needs in a responsible way, it is vital to achieve a greater understanding of how it can give us a range of services, whilst still conserving landscape character, identity and beauty.

The talk was continued by Matthew Pitts, the AONB Unit's Cultural Landscape Advisor, who reminded us that our landscapes are our common heritage. The landscapes we live in, work in or visit tell us about our past; not only the

*Looking towards Burwash*



*View across the High Weald countryside*

practical relationship between people and the environment that formed, fed, clothed, and sheltered them, but also the importance people attached to it.

Using a combination of maps, illustrations and photographs, Matt took us back 142 million years to experience the evolution of the High Weald landscape. He began with the earliest sediments formed when dinosaurs roamed the earth, continued through the great periods of faulting and folding of the landform into a vast 1000 metre high chalk dome (that lasted 70 million years), and concluded with the gradual erosion of the chalk over the last 2 million years, leaving us with today's distinctive landform of ridges and valleys.

Matt then took us to the end of the last Ice Age, around 12,000 years ago, to outline the natural colonisation of vegetation, its role in the evolution of the present landscape and the subsequent human immigration from the Continent. We learnt that these early human settlers quickly began a process continued by later generations, of working with the landscape and changing it from the unpopulated region of 10,000 years ago into what we see today.

He explained how seasonal pannage (the movement of animals from the North and South Downs into the High Weald) had led, by the Middle Ages, to a settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads, many still surviving today, surrounded by small, irregularly shaped fields which formed a mosaic with hedgerows and small woodlands used for grazing livestock. The dense pattern of narrow, often sunken lanes and rights of way in the High Weald are a visible survival of the ancient routes for moving animals in and out of the region. Since the Iron Age, woodlands – one of the most obvious features of the High Weald today – were a managed and valued resource that served the iron industry, seasonal pannage and the timber industry.

This long history of human interaction with the natural environment has given the High Weald the very human and cultural landscape we enjoy today: a land of dispersed settlements, historic route ways, abundant woodlands and shaws, and small, irregular shaped fields draped over a deeply incised and ridged landform of clays and sandstones.

For further information on the High Weald AONB and how to receive news on the work of the High Weald Unit, and details of events please visit [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org).

# Sussex Countryside Awards 2011

**Sarah Robinson**  
Awards organiser

At the Awards Ceremony on 6th October at Petworth House, winners of the 2011 Countryside Awards were presented with brass plaques and certificates by Lady Caroline Egremont on behalf of the panel of judges.

Photographs on this page © Colin Leeves 2011



Guests were welcomed by Lord and Lady Egremont and served locally sourced canapés and wine. Entering via Lord and Lady Egremont's private quarters they were allowed access to parts of Petworth House not open to the general public, passing via the Grand Staircase, with its murals by Louis Laguerre, into the captivating Marble Hall with its far reaching view across Petworth Park. The Ceremony took place in the North Gallery where guests were surrounded by paintings and sculptures by masters such as John Edward Carew and John Felix Rossi.

In 2011, the entries were once again considered by our established and distinguished panel of judges: Dr Peter Brandon, Lady Caroline Egremont, Miss Margaret Moore, Vice President of CPRE Sussex, and Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts OBE, CVO. The judges visited each entry during June and July and were impressed with the quality and variety of projects entered in all three categories.

The judges were awed by the level of innovation in tackling technical difficulties or fundraising shortfalls in many of the winning projects, and in particular the gritty determination applied when battling the inevitable

raft of bureaucratic hurdles so often encountered. Lady Egremont commented "it has been a great privilege to visit such interesting and inspiring projects throughout Sussex."

Margaret Moore said "so many of the winners not only have met a need in the community, but also created employment for local people. Other winning entries offer a means to gain new skills or learn more about our County's history and its rare and historic landmarks".

Award winners were congratulated by the many dignitaries present, including David Tupper DL, the High Sherriff of West Sussex, local MP's, members of the Southdown National Park Authority and other partner organisations and individuals.

Stuart Meier said "this second set of Countryside Awards has given us the opportunity to find out about, and celebrate, the very best in innovation and community collaboration that Sussex has to offer; projects that all too often go unnoticed yet have a significant contribution to make to the future of our countryside and its residents".

## WINNERS

**Brede Steam Engine Society**  
Restoration and display of Heritage Water Pumping Engines at Brede Waterworks.

**Rushfields Farm Shop, Poynings**  
New Farm shop, sourcing 80% products locally.

**Bistro @ The Station in Etchingham**  
Renovation of derelict station into a bistro for villagers and commuters.

**Gurkha Suspension Bridge, North Stoke**  
Restoration and refurbishment of the North Stoke Suspension Bridge.

**The Greenpower Centre, Fontwell**  
A low carbon office development.

**Priory Park, Lewes**  
Restoration of a derelict historical site creating access, education and information for locals and tourists.

**Lodsworth Larder Limited, Lodsworth**  
An eco-friendly community owned village store.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

**Plumpton College Centre for Sustainable Food, Forestry and Farming**  
Not just for farmers – offers bespoke training in rural skills and agriculture for all with a interest in the countryside and its produce.

**Arundel Food Festival**  
Annual festival of food and food related activities.

**Goodwood Home Farm, Chichester**  
Wholesale cheese production enterprise at Home Farm using their own milk.

# Outings 2011

Lorna Train



## Charleston Farmhouse – the Bloomsbury Group’s country home

Our visit to Charleston, the country retreat of Vanessa Bell and her sister Virginia Woolf, was a great success. Our private tour took us to parts of the house not usually open to the public. We were all impressed by our guide’s depth of knowledge about the house and its former residents. Not least, she was able to explain to us the complex set of relationships of the various members of the Bloomsbury set who lived or stayed at the Farmhouse. We were absorbed by the details of their bohemian lifestyle and by the interesting art and craftwork, which spilled out into the attractive walled garden. After our visit a group of us walked across the Downs to the Church at Berwick to see some of the murals painted by Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Quentin Bell.

## Riverhill House and Gardens – a Country House rescued

The 88 year old matriarch of Riverhill, Evelyn Rogers, gave our group a fascinating tour of this 18th Century house. We were treated to an excellent insight into several generations of her distinguished ancestors. Using personal mementoes she commented on topics ranging from The Reformation, the glamorous era of Edwardian Country House parties, her relatives’ illustrious army careers and the family links with Charles Darwin. Coming to the 21st Century, she explained Riverhill’s financial problems, involving major ground works to repair serious land-slippage to the large terraces. Walking through the beautiful woodland it was good to see evidence

of a sustainable use of the trees: den building using only fallen branches. Judging by the number on view, this has clearly proved popular with the younger generation! On leaving, you are left feeling that since its appearance on the Channel 4 series, *Country House Rescue*, the family are making a real success of improving ‘the visitor experience’.

## Sussex Prairie Gardens – “A field of dreams”

A recent article on Sussex Prairie Gardens in the Daily Telegraph was headlined: “A Field of Dreams”, which we could all relate to despite braving these six acre gardens in driving rain and strong winds. Wonderful and unusual, these gardens were a real feast to the senses, with huge plantings of swaying grasses and amazing colour from vast drifts of wonderful perennials. Add to this the rare breed pigs, hens and Shetland sheep, together with artwork that made you smile, including rainbow-coloured sheep and a herd of life-size Bison. The naturalistic borders were planted by about 40 of Paul and Pauline McBride’s friends and family in 2008: a “planting party” that lasted a fortnight. The vegetation now has compost provided by a local waste recycling company, but the compost has to be checked to stop unwanted items slipping through, like a pair of false teeth! Pauline plans a collage of these items when she has a spare moment. For myself, I shall be planning a return visit when the forecast is set fair.

For anyone who missed this event Sussex Prairie Gardens do open as part of the National Garden Scheme. They also are hosting an “unusual arts and plant fair” on 2nd September 2012.



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CPRE Membership No. \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like shares \_\_\_\_\_ at £10 each share

I enclose my cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ made out to **CPRE Sussex**

*Send to:*  
CPRE Sussex  
Brownings Farm, Blackboys  
Uckfield, East Sussex,  
TN22 5HG

If you do not want to cut your *Sussex Review*, a photocopied form is acceptable.

## WINNERS

During 2010 we raised a total of £1760 and gave away £521.50 in prize money with a net gain of £1238.50 for our funds.

Winners of the February, March, April, May, June, July and August 2011 draws were:

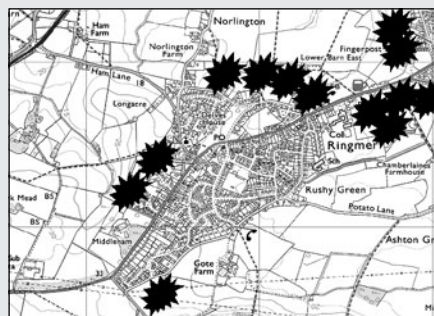
	Share No.	Amount
Miss P B M Butler	9	£ 43.25
Mr J R Dennison	16	£ 43.25
Mr D Hayward	27	£ 43.25
Mrs S J Walker	168	£ 43.25
Mrs M W Kingston	150	£ 43.25
Mr J F B Marriott	142	£ 43.25
Sir Frederick and Lady Sowrey	70	£ 43.25

# Neighbourhood Plans – the view from the Vanguard

## John Kay

Branch Trustee and Chair,  
Ringmer Parish Council

Ringmer, in partnership with Lewes District Council and the SDNP, was selected as one of the first 17 'Vanguard Neighbourhood Development Plans', because we tick a number of boxes. The main settlement at Ringmer Green lies at the foot of the Downs. The National Park boundary runs through the parish and along the settlement edge, so the District Council and SDNP will have to work in partnership.



Areas around Ringmer targeted  
by development

We are a Quality Parish Council, with a mix of new and experienced councillors. We have a long-established Village Plan, developed to include an ambitious increase in local employment opportunities and the need for more affordable housing. We also have experience at consultation with our residents, so welcomed the opportunity offered in the Localism Bill for local people to shape their own community to reflect its own needs.

To date we have formulated a 'Vision' for Ringmer in 2030, identifying four 'Key Principles' for success. We planned to consult on these with our local residents and businesses this autumn and, if approved, develop them in the first half of 2012. We have had many meetings with officers of Lewes District Council, the National Park and DCLG, all held in a spirit of cooperation.

Then came the bombshell. Lewes District Council is of course developing its own plans, with a consultation on a draft Core Strategy scheduled for this Autumn. This includes new employment provision within Ringmer, exactly as we would have wished. But instead of leaving identification of appropriate locations to our NDP, which we understood was the whole point of Localism, they have insisted on including their own proposals, based on the recommendations of private sector development consultants. These comprise three new sites, all greenfield. Two are at highly sensitive locations within the National Park, and obvious non-runners to anyone who knows the area; not even identified for consideration is a long-derelict chicken farm with direct access to the A26, recommended by us in 2006.

The Core Strategy housing plans are even worse, adding up to a third to the village size, almost all greenfield development, and all for new commuters. Specified 'growth areas' are designated. The initiative for these new greenfield sites is 100% developer aspiration, 0% local input. Any development on such a scale would completely undermine the whole purpose of the NDP, and any NDP compatible with it would have the same chance of survival in a local referendum as a snowflake in hell.

Ringmer is a large village that until recently provided employment for almost all residents. But development planned in the 1960s doubled the population, with the newcomers mostly commuters. The main village employer closed in the 1980s resulting in a more ambitious level of commuting than was ever envisaged, clogging the local road network every rush hour. Demographic and economic factors have combined to change the age profile. We are much greyer now. The number of children entering the village school fell from 75/year in the 1970s to nearer 25/year at the turn of the century.

Our NDP Vanguard application focused on making the village more sustainable, creating more local employment and reducing the need for commuting. We have made clear progress in the past decade, and have already identified suitable new employment sites. Our plan to focus new housing provision on accommodation suitable for young families, to rebalance the community, is already proving successful. The village school entry was 50 last year.



The Mill Post – part of Ringmer's  
cultural heritage

# Changing the shape of Sussex – Managing the coastline west of Selsey

In the 18th century Selsey (as the ‘ey’ at the end of its name implies) stood on an island. The way into Selsey used to be by ferry across what is now the Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve; for many years the B2145 has had a causeway, but the first house you come to after you cross it is still called Ferry Farmhouse. The channel used to run around the west of Selsey to meet the sea at Medmerry.

**Rodney Chambers**

*Approximate area affected  
by the Medmerry realignment*



In the 19th century a mile-long gravel bank was built, between Selsey and Earnley to keep the sea at bay, and to link with the “hard” defences south and east of the town itself.

These sea defences have proved increasingly difficult to sustain, in the face of higher tides, rising sea levels and more violent weather – perhaps an effect of climate change.

A few years ago research was conducted into the most viable long term way of protecting Selsey and other inland settlements inland in the long term from the dangers of flooding. After extensive public consultation (“the 2008 Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy”) it was agreed to adopt a strategy of “managed retreat” and allow the sea to reclaim its own. This will create a tidal saltmarsh, contained within an earth bund which will run in a kind of flattened semicircle from the east of Earnley round

to the west of Selsey enclosing an area large enough to change the overall shape of the Sussex coastline (see aerial photograph).

Immediately to the east of the bund in the photograph is the very large holiday caravan park run by Bunn Leisure Ltd. Bunn Leisure have undertaken substantial reinforcement of their frontage which will protect an enterprise very important to the local economy and, incidentally, create a new sandy beach.

The new tidal marsh will form an invaluable wildfowl reserve which will be managed by the RSPB and will compensate for loss of similar habitat further west, on the Solent.

This scheme has been managed by the Environment Agency, in this case with applaudable skill and sensitivity. After initial concerns from local residents it has evolved into a collaboration between

a Government department, a commercial enterprise, an environmental organisation and the community, through the Stakeholders Advisory Group who have brought much local knowledge to the design.

After meticulous work to protect the existing wildlife and natural habitats, work began on implementing the scheme in September 2011. Work is expected to be complete by Spring 2013. Great care is being taken to minimise construction traffic; the material for the bunds being excavated from within the site itself.

When fully established the reserve will be a major asset to wildlife and the community; it will have great importance as a wildfowl habitat. Footpaths are being constructed and a restricted number of parking spaces provided for visitors.

# King Edward VII hospital site Ten years on – and still no agreement

**Rodney Chambers**

It was opened in 1906 by King Edward VII as a TB sanatorium in the days when treatment for that scourge relied on fresh air, peace and tranquillity. Many of us in West Sussex and beyond have memories of the hospital (my own Aunt Nancy died there in 1938 – before I was born – and I have been a patient there myself).

It is a handsome building with “Arts and Crafts” features and is now listed Grade II\*. Its grounds were originally landscaped by Gertrude Jekyll. It served its purpose well until the 1950s when drug treatment for TB became so effective that sanatoriums like KE VII became redundant.

Thereafter, it functioned as a general hospital for both NHS and private patients until ten years ago. It was then deemed too expensive to keep running, and was closed, in the face of strong local opposition. Subsequently a succession of schemes has been put forward to preserve the buildings by converting them into flats and houses. It has been consistently argued by a succession of developers that such a scheme could not be commercially viable without permission to build a substantial number of new dwellings.

CPRE Sussex has broadly supported the objective of preserving the building



*The massive buildings of the King Edward the Seventh Hospital*

For more than a century, King Edward VII Hospital has been a feature of the Sussex landscape standing high on the South Downs looking south across National Trust land to Woolbeding Common.

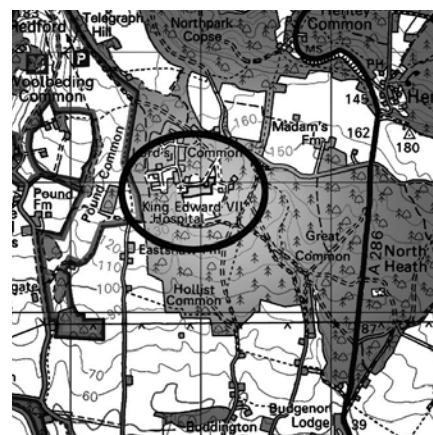
but opposed large-scale additional development in what is now the centre of the South Downs National Park. We did not oppose a lesser application in 2008 which gained approval from Chichester District Council. Nevertheless, we share the apprehensions of local people that the infrastructure of services, transport, road access and community facilities could not sustain such an addition to the local population.

An application by Town and Country Properties, specialists in the conversion of historic buildings, was submitted to Chichester District Council in autumn 2010 and was called in by the National Park Planning Authority when it came into being. To our relief, it was refused. Since then, however, they have not only applied for an extension of an earlier 2008 permission, but also lodged an appeal against the refusal of their application in July this year. This appeal will be determined by the Secretary of State on the recommendation of his Inspector.

As we said at the Application Hearing in June, the scheme (as with its predecessors) had some merit, but that we nevertheless opposed the application on the grounds it was “a price to high to pay”. We shall repeat our opposition at the appeal.

CPRE has in the past supported the principle of preserving the building by putting it to good use, and tidying up a derelict site, but NOT at the cost of massive additional house-building. We appreciate the contribution of the built inheritance to the uniqueness of our Sussex countryside as well as its landscape value. We strive to take a balanced view, but in this case the balance is tipped too far against the landscape.

If we had existed in the early 1900s would we have opposed the construction of the Hospital in the first place? The building has now been part of the Sussex landscape for over 100 years. It exists, it should be preserved – but at what cost?



*King Edward the seventh hospital, in wooded countryside about 3 miles from Midhurst*

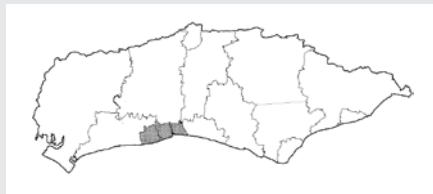


## **Fran Rawlinson**

We cannot allow Fran Rawlinson, who worked as our Graphic Designer for the *Sussex Review* for over ten years, to ‘retire’ from the post without thanking her for her patience, professionalism and humour throughout. With each *Review* the editor would put together the material gathered, together with a rough outline for the page layout. Within just a few days Fran would transform this into the inviting format that you would see. To the editors this always seemed a miracle and for this we cannot thank Fran enough. She made the task of editing the *Review* not just a challenge but a pleasure too.

Margaret Moore  
(Vice President and past Editor)

# Around the districts



## Adur & Worthing

David Start  
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My key focus at present is the many and varied planning applications that have been, or are about to be, submitted. This is against the background of the many deeply held anxieties regarding the draft National Planning Policy Framework which inadequately sets out the minimum standards of sustainable development. I still consider that the development in the Teville Gate area is needed, but the intended proposal is out of keeping with the existing structures and does not allow for possible infrastructure problems.

Worthing residents have been encouraged to suggest options, from a selected list, for the council to save money in the forthcoming spending review. The sale of local assets, particularly recreational and green areas, is paramount; a very easy choice but one which many would strongly oppose.

Residents enjoy the use of these facilities, and should there be any attempt to pursue this line I urge anyone concerned to speak up.  
3.9.11



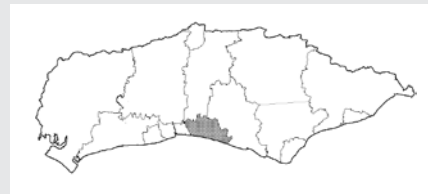
## Arun District

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Following the judicial reinstatement of the South East Plan and the successful appeal of the developers (WSSC!) in the Barnham nursery case, reported previously, Arun DC has received a number of applications for new housing outside existing settlement boundaries at Courtwick Lane and north of Toddington Lane in north Littlehampton; at Goodacres and Woodgate Lanes in Barnham; and at Ferring south of the A259. Developers have also appealed against refusal to build on Urban-Fringe countryside north of Burndells Road in Yapton.

Developers have persistently asserted that, though contrary to the Local Plan, their applications should be allowed because Arun allegedly lacks a five-year housing land supply.

We now learn that there are intimations that the SEP "targets" might be retained after all which, if the draft NPPF proceeds unamended, would mean that Arun would have to plan for the SEP requirement of 11,300 new homes plus another 20% on top of that!. Thus, major new housing development at 'strategic locations' such as Ford must now be considered a very real threat, not just in the longer term but also in the immediate future as a result of developers' applications being allowed by "default". 4.9.11



## Brighton & Hove

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In the Spring Review, we bemoaned delays in drawing up the Corporate Strategy for Brighton and Hove City Council, and in particular that the proposed date for the next Inspector's Procedural Meeting was as late as the second half of June. At that meeting it was agreed there would be a more general review of the draft, with the next Inspector's Meeting probably in November, to tie in with the Localism proposals. Sensible from the Inspector's and the Council's points of view, taking the national legislative situation into account, but the delay in the opportunity to comment on the revised proposals and the lack of decision continues. Meanwhile, "garden grabbing" and the like still go on, and other properties remain empty.

National CPRE and others are now being more forceful in criticising the National Planning Policy Framework which the Government appears to be determined to implement to enable developments to be forced through. From the District's point of view it not only puts pressure on the adjacent South Downs National Park and the Sussex countryside generally, but also on the City's important urban fringes. 5.9.11



**Chichester North**

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The proposed development of the former King Edward V11 Hospital site continues as the major concern in our District – see page 12 for a detailed report.

Meanwhile the consultation on the Design Brief for the Syngenta site nearby is still not finalised and until it is there is little hope of a planning application which is acceptable to the SDNPA, the District and the local communities.

All this leaves our District extremely apprehensive, as the SDNPA’s Local Development Framework will probably not be in place until 2014/15, and there is therefore a danger that developers will challenge any refusal involving large developments. 18.9.11



**Chichester South**

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There have been unusually few planning applications during the summer. The application by Madestein Ltd for 52 acres of glasshouses at Easton Farm, Almodington (mentioned in my last report), was heard by the CDC South Development Control Committee, before whom many objectors, including Richard Hill, spoke effectively; to our relief, it was rejected, despite Officers’ recommendation for approval.

A crucial issue is that Madestein own a further 200 acres of adjacent farmland; if expansion were permitted in the future, the result would be the largest greenhouse complex in the country, in an area which cannot sustain the threat to local amenity, ecology or transport infrastructure.

An appeal has been lodged, which will be strongly resisted. The Almodinton Association will continue their effective campaign, and CPRE stands ready to provide support and expertise.

At the time of writing, we are responding to the consultation on housing numbers for the new Local Plan. This draws largely on research on housing need for 2011-2031, on which were based a choice of 5 growth options for Chichester South of between 305 and 415 houses a year. These figures are no more acceptable than the 480 in the defunct South East Plan. Our response has emphasised that they are still much too high, given such constraints as the increasing congestion on A27, lack of capacity in waste water treatment, and the augmented pressure on areas not in protected categories. (compiled by Prof Christopher Lewis and Richard Hill). 14.9.11



**Horsham & Crawley**

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At the beginning of 2011, Horsham District Council launched a consultation on an Interim Statement citing the need to build 1,000 new houses on greenfield land at Billingshurst and Southwater. After vigorous campaigning by local groups, HDC finally accepted that the majority of the communities concerned opposed the development and at its meeting on 7 September formerly abandoned it. HDC will now start a Local Development Framework Core Strategy Review. Regardless, developers have submitted applications for these unwanted developments.

In April, despite vigorous opposition, HDC approved applications for 146 houses (an increase of 60%), local facilities and new mushroom production facilities at Thakeham. Even by HDC’s own assessment, this application was a departure from the LDF and planning policies and should have been refused. However, HDC linked this application to another for new mushroom production facilities, on the basis that the housing development was needed to fund the business and safeguard employment.

In reality, the viability of the business was questionable and much of the workforce came from outside the village. Besides, what would happen if the houses were built and then the business closed or was taken over? In the event, Sussex Mushrooms was put into liquidation at the end of July, and the business transferred to a profitable Irish company, making the reason for linking the two applications invalid. Given that this amounts to a material consideration, HDC has been prompted to review this decision before finalizing it later this autumn. Let’s hope they make the right decision this time. 19.9.11



**Lewes**

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This summer has been one of the quietest times I can remember since I took on this job. In short, I have little to report. All the large schemes which have filled this space for several years are either just coming into being or are being constructed, such as the Incinerator at Newhaven, the Sewage Disposal Works at Peacehaven and the Community Stadium at Falmer.

I am watching the progress of the proposed Reservoir at Ringmer, and am waiting to see the detailed plans for the off shore wind turbines across the Sussex Bay and the large commercial developments at Newhaven. 4.9.11



**Mid Sussex**

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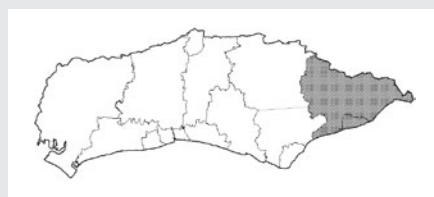
There has been little respite for Mid Sussex this year, as the perennial onslaught from property developers shows signs of intensifying.

Development tends to be concentrated in two wide bands, between the Surrey Green Belt and the High Weald AONB in the north, and the High Weald AONB and the South Downs National Park in the south. It is clear from the draft NPPF that these 'unprotected' areas will be fair game for unrestricted development in the coming years which will be a tragedy for the residents of East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill, who are likely to lose the green fields around them they currently take for granted.

The greatest threat is a highly controversial proposal by Burgess Hill Town Council for a strategic development of 4,000 houses, ostensibly to fund 'urgent' new facilities for the town such as a shopping centre. Haywards Heath and East Grinstead are also seeing large amounts of housing development, principally using open spaces within the towns, but unfortunately no-one seems to be counting the number of units completed, which must be in the thousands when taken in aggregate over recent years.

Mid Sussex District Council is keen to rush out a District Plan, although the political in-fighting that scuppered the Core Strategy has yet to rear its head, as it undoubtedly will.

Finally, CPRE Mid Sussex Group is organising an Annual Meeting for November, further news of which will be forthcoming soon. 13.9.11



**Rother & Hastings**

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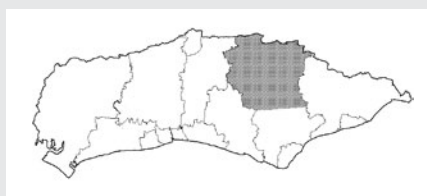
Rother Planning has recently been preoccupied with a bizarre conundrum. Rye is a beautiful old town with a precious Citadel part to it. There is a site in Rye just on the edge of town, next to the railway station and quite near to an existing 10,000sq ft supermarket. Rother planners only five years ago had indicated in the Plan that this site should be a site for housing – one of only two sites in fact, and the one site where they

indicated there should be a considerable number of affordable and social housing units. What better site would you wish, close to services and the centre of town? One problem: East Sussex County Council had knocked down the school which had occupied the site and sold it already... to Sainsburys.

However the site access which is next to the level crossing just outside Rye station is not very good, so Tesco had speculatively bought the pub just on that corner to give them a lever to get a development opportunity. In Rother we have now had the unedifying spectacle of both supermarket giants slugging it out with plans for the site for a superstore – to serve a town of 4,000. What did Rother do, faced with the might of two megacorps? Run scared in that they kept deferring a decision, and were clearly fearful of the consequence of one supermarket giant losing out, but showing little regard to the future needs of the town of Rye. Officers recommended approval to both sets of proposals despite major issues.

Faced with the officer recommendation for approval for both Tesco and Sainsbury, the latter planning for a building some 20% bigger than Tesco, the Planning Committee did the impossible, refusing the Tesco application, after a two and a half hour debate, but bizarrely the less satisfactory Sainsbury application was approved! Rother must now fear the consequences.

Any money on the chances for a judicial review? 22.9.11

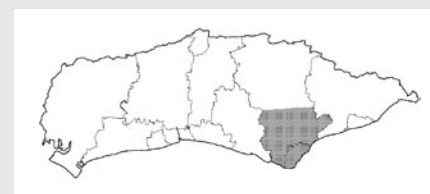


**Wealden North**

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We continue to monitor the planning applications in the district but currently there are no major issues. However, we have noticed an increase in the number of applications for solar panels and arrays. Although this is a positive trend we must ensure that the ground sited arrays are in the right locations and not intrusive to the local environment.

Otherwise, there has been some concern regarding the proposal to build up to 400 new homes on 70 acres of land at Hempstead Farm owned by the Sussex Horse Rescue Charity in Uckfield. We are keeping a watching brief should an outline planning application be submitted, but at the time of writing it appears the developers are pulling back. 26.8.11



**Wealden South**

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Further to my last report the Cuckmere Pathfinder Project, looking at the future of the "meanders" near the sea, has come to a general consensus, and hopefully will be transformed into actions.

We registered an objection to the filling of an old chalk pit at Filching using "construction inert waste". This started as a proposal for ESCC approval, but rather late in the day was taken over by the National Park. The application was withdrawn.

We had an application within the National Park for the erection of a "small" wind powered generator. We objected on the ground that we have consistently opposed visually obtrusive mobile telephone masts on this end of the Downs, and this structure was significantly larger than they are. Surprisingly the National Park made no comment, and the WDC officers recommended approval. However it went to the WDC planning committee who objected. 21.9.11

# The importance of Low Weald countryside for owl conservation

## Michael Nailard

Chairman of the Woodland Flora and Fauna group

In Hurstpierpoint & Sayers Common Parish, the countryside is valued highly for its landscape and biodiversity qualities. In 2004 a local volunteer group was founded, The Woodland, Flora & Fauna Group, to learn about the local countryside and the survival needs of parish wildlife. In 2006 and 2010 it undertook conservation projects to help the nationally dwindling owl populations, due to the progressive loss of natural nesting sites. With landowners consent, a total of 39 barn and tawny owl boxes were erected in suitable locations around the parish.



*A barn owl being recorded during the survey*

The locations had to be of sufficiently rich habitat, in wide open countryside and woodland, to sustain the prey to feed the owls. These have been a resounding success, providing an ample choice of roosts for owls sheltering from damp and cold winter weather and seeking alternative sites to raise their young. All boxes show evidence of winter occupancy. Each summer they are visited by a licensed inspector, with volunteers, and any young are weighed, measured, ringed and recorded.



*Another home for owls in the Low Weald*

With barn owls decreasing to a degree that classifies them as an endangered and protected species, there has been much acclaim for these results. Owls born in our boxes have been found in many other county locations. The distribution of boxes throughout the parish, and the 2km radius hunting territory required by each occupant, makes the whole parish countryside essential for their survival. Volunteers monitor the boxes, owls and their required habitat. Each winter working parties repair, clean and paint the boxes to ensure they are in good condition to house next year's breeding inhabitants. The work is physically demanding, involving

the transportation of ladders, paint and equipment across wet fields and muddy woodlands.

Owls are fairly small when their wings are closed but from the top of a ladder, if one flies out of a box that has just been opened, can appear alarmingly large. There are other dangers. It has been known for a volunteer to lose an eye when an owl launched itself from a box, so eye protection is essential. Young owls have a defence mechanism against intruders to their boxes. They turn their backs to the intruder and imitate projectile vomiting from their rear ends. On one summer inspection a volunteer opened a door and received unified squirting from 4 partly fledged owlets. It hit him squarely in the face and eyes and due to the high ammonia content had the severity of an acid attack. He was momentarily blinded and had burns to the skin on his face. Others quickly removed the residue and he eventually recovered.

These owls are precious wildlife species requiring large tracts of suitable countryside for hunting territory. That is why it is so important to preserve this Low Weald natural environment and to acknowledge its conservation value, especially in the current climate of mounting development threats.

Published by CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust, the Sussex branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England which exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of our countryside by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

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