

PRESS RELEASE

9th October 2011

CPRE Sussex rewards Countryside and Community Champions

Leading countryside campaigners CPRE were delighted to welcome representatives from eleven winning projects across Sussex to their prestigious Countryside Awards ceremony held at Petworth House on Thursday 6th October. Hosted by Lord and Lady Egremont the winners were applauded by David Tupper DL - High Sherriff for West Sussex, Carola Godman Law DL – Deputy Lord Lieutenant for East Sussex and the Right Honourable Nick Herbert MP, together with 100 guests representing local authorities and like minded organisations from across the County.

Awards were given in three categories: New Sussex Landscape, Field to Table (for local food projects) and Sussex Rural Enterprise. The judges were impressed with the quality of entries and in particular the sheer determination, innovation and commitment of those leading the projects.

Lady Caroline Egremont, one of the Panel Judges said “the winning projects are both inspiring and captivating. The sheer determination of those involved in taking their projects forward is quite inspirational. Each and every project will make a positive contribution to our countryside and its communities”.

Rodney Chambers, Chairman of CPRE Sussex told guests “CPRE is delighted to have this opportunity to commend good development and innovative design in our countryside. Whilst we are probably better known for our challenge to inappropriate or insensitive design, this evening gives us an opportunity to celebrate the very best of Sussex”.

Mr Chambers went on to note “we are extremely grateful to our President Lord Egremont and Lady Egremont, one of our Panel Judges, for allowing us to hold the Awards Ceremony here, at their home at Petworth House – one of the jewels of Sussex”.

FULL AWARD WINNERS

BREDE STEAM ENGINE SOCIETY - Sussex Rural Enterprise category for the Restoration and Display of Heritage Water Pumping Engines at Brede Water Treatment Works .

This magnificent collaboration between Southern Water and The Brede Steam Engine Society has resulted in the restoration of a collection of water pumps together with a range of steam engines displayed in their traditional Victorian and Edwardian buildings. Of enormous educational value this museum vividly represents our industrial archaeological heritage and displays, in an inspiring environment, the scale and brilliance of British engineering. The engines are lovingly cared for by a team of volunteers and are opened to the public once a month free of charge.

BISTRO @ THE STATION IN ETCHINGHAM - Sussex Rural Enterprise category.

A most unusual but highly commendable project with the de Etchingham Community Interest Company having been formed at the outset to steer it through, the purpose being to fill the gap created by the loss of so many village amenities. The original station master's house has been totally refurbished to create a Bistro with a young couple appointed full-time to manage it. The décor is simple but tasteful, with clever touches to remind one of the station's setting. The opening times and menus have been arranged to meet the requirements of the commuters and village groups, even allowing for customers to text their order for a latté from the comfort of the train, to be met with it on the platform and so to continue their journey! The upstairs rooms are let out for village events, parish council meetings and private functions.

GURKHA SUSPENSION FOOTBRIDGE at NORTHSTOKE in the **New Sussex Landscape** category

The restoration and rebuilding of a rare and historic suspension footbridge, which had been irreparably damaged by a falling tree in 2008, was one of vision, determination and sheer hard work, inspired by leadership from the Amberley Society, chaired by Grahame Joseph. The involvement of the 70 Field Support Squadron Gurkhas in the re-building of the bridge has given it a special meaning. Many obstacles were overcome before the Queen's Gurkha Engineers could complete their magnificent restoration within budget and ahead of schedule. Although the Council would undoubtedly have replaced the bridge, it would, for reasons of cost, inevitably have been of a utilitarian design. Instead the end result is a beautiful copy of the original footbridge and, with it, the re-opening of a path for local people and walkers amidst the River Arun meanders. It is rewarding to see that the new O.S. map of the area identifies it as the Gurkha Suspension Footbridge.

GREENPOWER CENTRE at FONTWELL in the **New Sussex Landscape** category

An inspirational building, being the headquarters of the Greenpower Education Trust is aesthetically very satisfying and, with its almost exclusive use of sustainable materials seems to meet every requirement one could think of. Innovative design features include a spiral staircase, stacking chairs made of nettle fibre, bamboo tables and straw insulated walls. A wildflower roof provides insulation and reduces traffic noise.

The building also serves as a base for ongoing experimentation in the use of various materials and systems through its continued close links with the owners and designers Fordingbridge plc. In addition to the building itself the promotion of engineering by the Trust as a career for young people means it is serving a great need at a time when engineering would appear to have taken a dip in popularity amongst the young.

LODSWORTH LARDER LIMITED at LODSWORTH in the **Sussex Rural Enterprise** category

This most unusual and innovative project whereby an eco-friendly building has been erected from locally sourced, sustainable materials to provide a local shop in the centre of the village. Apart from two employed staff all others serving in the shop are volunteers and all profits are fed back into the shop or shared out among local community projects. The shop has well displayed produce and every effort is made to respond to requests or suggestions from customers. These include the provision of an internet connection and some postal services.

PRIORY PARK restoration, LEWES, in the **New Sussex Landscape** category

This long neglected site of the former Cluniac Priory has been transformed into an area of historical, archaeological and recreational interest to both the general public and educational establishments. The sympathetically restored landscape is a pleasant environment for dog walkers, cyclist, children and school groups with well designed benches, footpaths and interpretation boards. This was a carefully planned and executed project involving grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage. The judges spoke to several passers by during their visit who all said they were delighted at the transformation of the site which means it is now a valued open space for locals and tourists alike.

RUSHFIELDS FARM SHOP near POYNINGS in the **Field to Table** category

The Farm Shop is a worthy addition to the 27 year old family run Garden Centre. The building has been erected using an oak timber frame and blends in with the local landscape. The shop is spacious, open and well planned with a wide selection of beautifully displayed foods, 80% of which are locally sourced. The shop employs six part-time staff and has its own butchery, visible to customers, with a full-time butcher. It is well placed between Henfield and Hurstpierpoint, and also Pyecombe, which has recently lost its own shop.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

ARUNDEL FOOD FESTIVAL – Field to Table

A self-funding and self-organising Chamber of Commerce initiative driven by Messrs Imms and Brantigan. The first week long Arundel Food Festival was held in October 2010, the objective being to celebrate and advertise local produce and help put Arundel “on the map”. This year’s Festival

opens on the 15th October and promises an exciting programme of events, once again with the aim of bringing together those responsible for the production and supply of food in and around Arundel in order to give residents and visitors an exciting and memorable experience.

THE CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD, FARMING AND FORESTRY AT NETHERFIELD in the **Sussex Rural Enterprise** category.

The Centre offers an excellent programme of short training courses for farmers and all who work in the countryside and related businesses in the High Weald where, by nature of the landscape, farms are often small and many farmers work alone. The courses cover rural skills, farm management, business and financial management, management of stock, butchering, safety requirements - the list is endless and is constantly evolving to meet ever changing needs, to offer small rural businesses invaluable advice with regard to constantly changing legislation and to provide invaluable networking opportunities for the sharing of current concerns.

WHOLESALE CHEESE PRODUCTION at **HOME FARM GOODWOOD** in the **Field to Table** category

An impressive, new cheese making enterprise, which makes excellent use of redundant calf sheds and surplus milk from the Goodwood organic dairy herd, is still in its infancy. The intention is to create 'a cheese board' of three new cheeses for the local wholesale market. One of these cheeses, the 'Charlton Cheddar', is already in production, sales brisk and the project is progressing well. Although two of the new cheeses are not yet all on the market, as they have to undergo final shelf life testing, the appointment of a full-time cheese-maker – someone who is clearly highly skilled and dedicated to his job - means the aim of encouraging people in the Goodwood and surrounding areas to buy locally made cheeses would seem to be well within reach.

COMMENDED

FINDON DELI and TEA ROOM in the **Sussex Rural Enterprise** category

A small, independent shop and tea room in the centre of Findon. Converted from a disused bike shed, Findon Deli offers a welcome, friendly, meeting place in the heart of the village and provides quality produce from local Sussex suppliers. It is staffed by five part time local residents. The judges were impressed by the relaxed, comfortable atmosphere and willingness to meet the needs of the villagers, including home delivery to elderly customers if required. Seating for 14 inside and for a further 30 outside, means there is ample space for local people, tourists or walkers alike.

ENDS

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Notes for editors

Photographs of the Ceremony and individual projects are available on request.

The New Sussex Landscapes Award – rewards those projects that make a positive contribution to landscape through innovative and sensitive development.

The From Field to Table Award – rewards those projects and individuals who help to inform the public about the value of locally sourced, seasonal food and help consumers gain a better understanding of the countryside it creates.

Sussex Rural Enterprise Award - Innovative projects that bring opportunities to rural areas through employment or education. Those projects that have developed traditional crafts and/or have green credentials are encouraged.

The awards were judged by a panel of distinguished judges, chaired by renowned landscape historian and geographer Dr Peter Brandon. Lady Caroline Egremont, Mrs Phyllida Stewart-Roberts and Miss Margaret Moore completed the judging panel.

CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, is a charity which promotes the beauty, tranquility and diversity of the English countryside. CPRE advocates positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside. Founded in 1926, CPRE have 60,000 supporters and a branch in every county. Patron: Her Majesty the Queen.

Bill Bryson, the well known author and champion of the countryside, is its president.

CPRE Sussex represents nearly 2,000 organisations and individuals as members from all walks of life. With 11 District Groups across Sussex, CPRE volunteers help ensure the countryside has a voice in the matters that affect it.

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