

Sussex Review



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SUSSEX

NEWS FROM THE SUSSEX BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

Hidden jewels of Sussex

The glorious vista of the Seven Sisters; the wonder of Cissbury Ring and the great sweep of Folkington Down....these are certainly 'jewels of Sussex' – ones CPRE fights hard for – but they are hardly hidden! To find the hidden jewels you must look north, across the Vale of Sussex and beyond, to the High Weald. Stuart Meier, our Director, challenges our preconceptions.

Living here in Sussex we are spoilt for choice of countryside, surrounded as we are by landscapes of great natural beauty. Three of these are protected by law – the South Downs National Park (SDNP), Chichester Harbour and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Compared to the South Downs, the High Weald is a more secret landscape, with its intimate mix of woods and fields, sunken lanes and hidden byways. And 'high' it is – high or higher in altitude than the Downs which face it.

It is one of the best preserved

medieval landscapes in Europe, has many examples of early surviving timber frame buildings and includes the largest areas of Ancient Woodland in South East England.

It is also the least recognisable

**CPRE
challenges threat
to National Park**

see page 4-5

landscape in Sussex, lacking the openness of the Vale of Sussex or the Chichester Plain and the great scarp slopes which mark out the Downs. By contrast, the High Weald sneaks up on you as you travel into it, and here you will find the largest AONB area in south east England – almost the size of the SDNP.

Now that recognition of the South Downs has been achieved through the creation of the National Park, CPRE Sussex is leading a group of environmental bodies to increase the profile of the High Weald. This new group, which includes Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust, is known as the High Weald Network and has already started to work with the High Weald Unit (now part of DEFRA).

We are pleased to welcome Jason Lavender, one of the High Weald joint Directors, to speak at our AGM in July, when he will tell us more about the aims of his team and how CPRE Sussex members can help to further their objectives.



Secret location west of Mayfield

Sussex Review

Sussex Review is the newsletter of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch (reg charity no. 265028) which helps the people of Sussex to protect their local countryside, country towns and villages where there is a threat, to enhance them where there is an opportunity, and to keep Sussex beautiful, enjoyable and productive for everyone.

Please note that opinions expressed in the *Review* are those of individual contributors or of the Editor and do not necessarily represent the views of the Branch as such.

Please address any correspondence regarding distribution of *Sussex Review* to Branch Office.

NEXT COPY DATE

To appear in the summer AGM newsletter.

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This entitles you to be both a member of the National Organisation and a member of the Sussex Branch. For an application form please ring the Sussex Branch Office on 01825 890975.

Cover photo (top): Wild daffodils in Ashenground Wood, Haywards Heath
Right: Pevensey Levels

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Who do we think we are?

A glance through this edition of *The Review* shows once again the breadth of our engagement with the Sussex countryside, and the ways in which CPRE Sussex helps protect and enhance the landscape we all care for.

Yet how many times have you said to someone, “I’m a member of CPRE”, to be met with (very often) a blank stare, or at best “Oh, that’s something to do with the countryside, isn’t it?” In this age of instant images and electronic first impressions, this has been of increasing concern at both national and local level.

A national working party (on which our Director and Penny Hudd, a Sussex Trustee, serve) has now made recommendations to enhance our pictorial and written ‘brand’. We shall keep CPRE as our name – even if not everyone is quite sure what the initials stand for – because it carries recognition and prestige in influential circles; but we do need to move on from the ‘dead tree’ of our present logo.

So, visually, we are adopting a new logo – using the initials themselves – which looks simple and lively, and can be used in almost any context. This is to be launched in the near future.

But we still need to show what we are and what we do, by adding a brief verbal description to the image. The national organisation is likely to adopt ‘Standing up for your Countryside’ as a strapline, but it has been left to the discretion of each branch to demonstrate its own identity. Indeed, some Branches already have different titles, for historical reasons – The Suffolk Preservation Society, Friends of the Lake District – and Kent has flagged itself as ‘Protect Kent’ for several years now.

Your Trustees and I have been mulling over suggestions recently and moving towards some firm preferences to reflect our pride in Sussex..

Watch this space!

Rodney Chambers *Chairman*

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CPRE stands up for the National Park -

Stuart Meier Director, Sussex Branch

In one of the biggest local planning battles of recent years, CPRE Sussex has led a group of environmental organisations fighting an appeal by Pelham Homes against refusal of planning permission for 520 houses at Honey Farm, Polegate, in open countryside on the edge of the South Downs National Park, but just outside its boundary. CPRE with its partners, Folkington Estate, Campaign for Better Transport, South Downs Society and Sussex Wildlife Trust was a formal party, legally represented at the Inquiry in front of Inspector Robert Mellor. The group became known at the Inquiry as the 'EPOs', short for the 'Environmental Protection Organisations'.

The Inquiry started on January 11th and ran for three weeks, with Wealden District Council defending their decision against the attack by Pelham Homes. The EPOs argued their own case that the appeal should be refused due to its unsustainability, its impact on the South Downs and on the registered park at Wootton Manor and overall that – to quote our counsel, barrister Toby Fisher of Landmark Chambers, in his closing submissions to the Inspector – ‘this Scheme is the wrong design in the wrong place, coming forward at the wrong time, and based on the wrong plan’.

So why did CPRE decide to act in this particular Inquiry? We have long



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resisted the proposal for development north-west of Polegate, where we believe it will have the greatest disbenefits to biodiversity and the protected landscape, and the worst impact on the countryside. Crucially, we believed we could present evidence on planning, landscape, cultural heritage



*Left: Entrance to Wootton Manor
Below: The great vista of the Downs visible from Honey Farm, from left Combe Hill, to right, Folkington Bowl*



The Honey Farm Planning Inquiry

and transport with a real chance to sway the final outcome.

So the Inquiry has now closed; the Inspector has gone away to write his report, and we await news of the ultimate decision, much later this year.

Funding a team of four witnesses with legal representation has been a major investment, particularly for CPRE Sussex and the Folkington Estate as the leading partners.

South East Plan – the zombie in the room!

Characterised by barrister Toby Fisher as one of the ‘Walking Dead’, the South East Plan and its housing intentions for Sussex led to much legal argument. Pelham Homes tried to use the Plan to justify an over-riding need for the houses in the Plan. We argued to the contrary, alongside Wealden DC.

The coalition government has tried to revoke the Plan, but the revocation has been found legally imperfect. Now, a legal case brought by the Secretary of State has ruled that despite the Plan still existing, its intended revocation through the Localism Bill must be given weight by planning decision makers.

As the actual decision, now expected in June, will be made by the Secretary of State we hope the intended revocation is given substantial weight!

Thanks to CPRE members

Our fighting fund appeal has been hugely successful, for which the trustees are extremely grateful to members as it will enable CPRE Sussex to continue to lead such major campaigns as this, when the opportunity is right (see panel right *CPRE Sussex – should we be involved in planning appeals?*). Not only is Inquiry work itself a major commitment of staff and volunteer time, and costs for counsel and witnesses, but substantial indirect costs also arise for many months in advance of the Inquiry itself. Members’ powerful support for the fighting fund for this work has shown just how strongly caring Sussex people feel on issues such as this.

National Park goes live

As the Review goes to press, the new National Park Authority is about to take up its full powers on April 1st 2011, after a year in ‘shadow mode’, including responsibility for Town & Country Planning.

From April 1st, the NPA becomes the local planning authority within its borders, but many of the routine planning decisions will be delegated back to district councils. As Honey Farm falls just outside the NPA boundary, the decision would anyway be one for the local authority. CPRE believes that in such cases the NPA’s views should be given great weight.

CPRE Sussex – should we be involved in planning appeals?

With limited resources, CPRE has to focus its efforts on those few cases where they will count most.

The key factors considered are:

- scale – does it have county level significance?
- wider impact – would it set a damaging precedent?
- benefit – do we believe our participation will make a real difference to the outcome?

In the case of Honey Farm, Polegate, the answer to all these questions was YES.



Sussex Countryside Awards 2011

Sarah Robinson Awards Organiser



Award winners 2008-09, from left to right, Beechwood Hall – Cooksbridge, Old Shoreham Toll Bridge, Bradford's Farm butcher's shop – Uckfield, Ouse Valley Foods, Coopers Farm – Hadlow Down

As I write, some two weeks after launching the second CPRE Countryside Awards in early February, I am delighted to report that we have already received nominations for several projects, which we hope will soon be submitted as entries. It is a promising start to the second Awards Scheme and I would like to thank all those members who have nominated projects so far. Entries will close on March 31st.

Sussex is rich in innovative and interesting projects. However, 'selling' an award scheme to the press is tricky and so we are delighted that you, the members, have risen to the challenge of encouraging more fantastic projects and individuals to step forward. We believe that by adapting the third category into

Sussex Rural Enterprise, we have made it more accessible and therefore hope to see more entries in this particular category this time. Our judging panel will then consider the entries and visit each worthy entry during June and July. Over the summer break they will make their final decisions.

The Awards Ceremony will be held in October 2011 and we are delighted to accept Lord and Lady Egremont's generous offer to host the Ceremony in their private quarters at Petworth House. The presentations will be in the beautiful North Gallery with its marble floor and array of sculptures and paintings. We are sure, with such a prestigious venue, the Awards Ceremony will be a memorable occasion.

Thank you to Maureen Holt

Sadly this is the last Sussex Review under Maureen Holt's editorship.

Appointed in 2008, she has raised the reputation of our Branch by the high quality of our magazine with consistently interesting and well-informed articles – I constantly hear compliments from other Branches. We have all come to respect the understanding but firm way of getting us to write reports – relevant, on time and within the word limit.

She has struggled with ill-health recently, and might have stepped down much sooner – we are very grateful that she has not! She will now have more time to look after herself, her beloved Green Ridge, and the protection of Brighton and Hove.

The Branch Executive and I extend our very best wishes to her and her partner Colin, and look forward to regular news – and contributions to the Review "in her own write".

Rodney Chambers Chairman

Sussex Review seeks new Honorary Editor

Stuart Meier writes

"Having known for some while that Maureen Holt was looking to reduce her commitments, it was with sadness but not surprise that I learned that she wishes this to be her last issue of Sussex Review as honorary editor. I am sure you will join me in wishing her well as she seeks to concentrate her voluntary work with her local 'Keep the Ridge Green' group.

Which leads me to ask if you or someone you know may be interested in helping produce the *Sussex Review*, twice a year.

Working with the chairman and the other trustees, the editor jointly with the director coordinates the production of the

Review. The editor needs quite good computer skills, particularly word processing, and works with our graphic designer to shape the publication. He or she will need persuasive skills in encouraging people to contribute articles, and organisational skills in making sure we meet printing and publication deadlines!

If you would like to contribute to our work to protect the Sussex Countryside, while learning more about the work of CPRE Sussex, please get in touch with me via Liz in our office on 01825 890975, or email me stuartm2007@gmail.com."

Outings 2011

Private guided walk in Wilderness Wood

Hadlow Down, near Uckfield, East Sussex

Thursday 28th April at 2pm

Cost £14



Our visit, arranged to coincide with the bluebell season, begins with a walk in the 2000 year old ancient wood. The theme of the accompanying talk 'Poison, Glue and Magic' is based on peculiar traditional plant use. After discussing sustainable woodland management, members are free to explore nature trails. In 2010, this beautiful High Weald woodland gained 1st prize in the Royal Forestry Society Excellence in Forestry and Quality Timber Production Awards. Judges were impressed that its owners had spent over 30 years diversifying slowly and sustainably without detracting from the forest focus. A better example of British multipurpose forestry would be hard to find. Tea and cake will be served in the old barn with an opportunity to buy timber products.

Private visit and tour of Charleston Farmhouse

Firle, near Lewes, East Sussex

Wednesday 6th July at 10.30am

Cost £13.00



After their London childhood upbringing, Vanessa Bell (the painter) and Virginia Woolf (the writer) turned a Sussex farmhouse into a country retreat for writers, painters and intellectuals known as the 'Bloomsbury Group'. The 'Sisters Tour' enables us to see the kitchen. Vanessa and Duncan Grant painted the decorative interior, their creativity extending into the walled garden – containing sculptures. A WWI vegetable patch/hen run became a quintessential painters' summer garden, mixing Mediterranean influence with cottage garden appeal. On arrival coffee and biscuits will be served. Weather permitting, a planned afternoon walk is due to start from here; either bring picnics or lunch at the café first.

Private visit and tour of Riverhill House and Gardens

Near Sevenoaks, Kent

Tuesday 17th May at 2pm

Cost £16



Our visit combines a tour of the 18th Century house (containing panelled rooms with portraits and family mementoes) – not usually open to the public – with a stroll around the 130 acre hillside Himalayan gardens renowned for azaleas, rhododendrons and fine specimen trees including Cedar of Lebanon. Four generations of the Rogers family lived here and John Rogers – a keen plant collector – introduced many new plants in Victorian times. Last year, the Channel 4 series featured this historic house with its extensive views across the Weald in 'Country House Rescue'. A cream tea will be served after the visit.

Private visit and tour of Sussex Prairie Gardens

Henfield, West Sussex

Tuesday 6th September at 2pm

Cost £16.50



This six acre garden on the edge of the Downs was recently transformed by owners Paul and Pauline McBride (taught by a Dutch master) into a stunning American-style prairie. Containing unusual herbaceous perennials – flowering alongside drifts of ornamental grasses – it is part of an influential British garden movement. Swathes of strongly shaped, richly coloured perennials mix naturalistically with grasses (at their best in September). Although ambitious in scale, it is full of inspiration for small domestic gardens and was publicised on the BBC 'Gardeners World'. A cream tea will be served afterwards in the attractive barn.

Outings booking form

To: **Outings, CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG**

DATE	PLACE	NO. OF PEOPLE	TOTAL COST
Thurs 28th April	Wilderness Wood	___ adults at £14.00 each	___
Tues 17th May	Riverhill House and Gardens	___ adults at £16.00 each	___
Weds 6th July	Charleston Farmhouse	___ adults at £13.00 each	___
Tues 6th Sept	Sussex Prairie Gardens	___ adults at £16.50 each	___
Total £			___

NB. Refunds, less booking fee of £5, will only be made for any cancellation received more than 14 days before the event. Location details will be sent out with tickets.

Please make your cheque payable to CPRE Sussex and enclose a 2nd class stamp.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

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

LTPs - what are they?

Stuart Derwent Branch Executive Committee

Local Transport Plans

Local authorities are producing their updated LTPs for the period 2011 to 2026. Both West and East Sussex County Councils and Brighton & Hove City Council have carried out public consultations and CPRE Sussex has responded to each.

There are five national transport goals:

- **supporting economic growth**
- **tackling climate change**
- **promoting equality of opportunity**
- **contributing to better safety, security and health**
- **improving quality of life**

Most CPRE supporters would not disagree with these as basic principles, but how do we turn them into what we would like to see? By comparison with other areas - even Hampshire and Kent - here in Sussex we have few motorways and dual carriageways crossing our countryside. Is that an advantage or disadvantage as a starting point in looking at those five goals and can trains and buses provide a realistic alternative?

What have we said?

A general comment has been that the consultation surveys are structured in such a way as to make it virtually impossible for anyone to disagree with most of the objectives. We have therefore also made detailed comments to give a better balance to our response.

A surprising omission is data on traffic growth. Whilst these can only be forecasts, it is difficult to see how any consultation draft plan can be put forward without traffic data forming a basis. They should be on an 'as we have been increasing' basis compared to the targeted figures based on measures included in the Plans to introduce a change in travel behaviour. These must clearly include not just road vehicles, but also public transport, cycling and walking to demonstrate what could be achieved. How else can we all see the future without knowing the results of the options? If not, there is a risk that the Plans are based on nice words without the public seeing a true vision of what could be achieved. What do we all need to do in changing our travel

behaviour to give ourselves the vision we would like to see?

Public transport - trains and buses

There are many general statements, but what about the specifics? How can train and bus services be improved to get people out of their cars, with an effective system from door-to-door which they actually want to use? Firm plans need to be given for bus and rail networks. These are essential in identifying long-term aims for the provision of public transport. Without these how can residents see the possibilities for themselves, their towns and their countryside?

From both the commercial and tourism point-of-view the West-East coast railway line would appear to be an undeveloped facility which largely exists. There is considerable scope for linking Southampton, Portsmouth, Chichester, Littlehampton and Worthing through Brighton to Lewes, Ashford and the Chunnel and thereby to mainland Europe, without putting further pressure on lines to London.

Another example would be the reinstatement of the Lewes to Uckfield line. Does hanging onto this faint hope for the future not just confuse issues? It has been studied and studied again but not stood up to analysis; its inclusion in the Plan can only lead to a vision which is false with nothing included in its place! The railways may not be under the direct control of the councils, but should there not be firm needs expressed by the Plan?

Quiet lanes and street clutter

Although not necessarily named as such, there are references in various parts of the consultation drafts to Quiet Lanes and Street Clutter, both very relevant to the protection and enjoyment of our countryside. Many of our roads and lanes are sadly dangerous to pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and wildlife. To provide safer roads for the enjoyment of all we support the inclusion of a speed limit policy which could improve not only the measurable statistics, but also the perception of the public and their inclination to use the roads without a car.

Street Clutter is another important area and one where the CPRE are running a national campaign. Many of our roads, both in towns and in the countryside, are festooned with road signs for all sorts of purposes. Their proliferation is leading to not only visual intrusion to our countryside and towns, but to increasing confusion with too many to take note of, thereby potentially leading to a reduction in safety.

It would be a sad countryside where it is not safe to use the roads and lanes without being in a vehicle.

Specific comments

We continue not to support the Bexhill-Hastings Link Road which would despoil the beautiful Combe Haven valley. To further back-up our argument, we have drawn attention to the comments in the section on Uckfield



I / we _____

CPRE Membership number _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Telephone _____

Date _____

I would like _____ shares
at £10 each share

I enclose my cheque for £ _____
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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 £1,760 and gave £521.50 in prize money, with a net gain of £1238.50 for our funds.

Winners of the September, October, November and December 2010 and January 2011 draws were:

	SHARE NO	AMOUNT
Mr & Mrs MP Mulholland	54	£43.50
Mrs S Knight	106	£43.50
Mrs P Checkley	12	£44.00
Miss JHF Green	104	£44.00
Mr AP Williams	82	£43.25



Two crossings of the River Adur: the enormous A27/A259 cloverleaf interchange dominates, compared to the original Old Shoreham Tollbridge in the background

with its references to unacceptable traffic congestion in the centre of the town. Uckfield has its relatively recent bypass to the west of the town centre and yet it is already being said that the town centre is again congested.

Our new South Downs National Park

Important additions would be to identify ways of accessing the SDNP which do not lead to its detriment. It would be ironic if the anticipated increase in tourism led to the despoiling of the National Park.

Economic growth

This is important or there will be no funding for any sort of transport or other improvements. Focussed attention to the provision of superfast broadband and locally based businesses in a co-ordinated approach with land-use planning would provide a sound basis to build on the existing character of Sussex to not only enhance economic growth but also to maintain a high quality of life.

Mitigate or facilitate?

There is a tendency for LTPs to promote actions to 'mitigate' the effects of new developments, which would seem to be

a negative approach. Development gives the opportunity to not only provide infrastructure for itself, but also to enhance infrastructure to serve the area. The use of the word mitigate tends to suggest the reduction of negative impacts whereas there might be a better result if the mindset was changed to see development as an opportunity to facilitate enhancements. That is not intended as an open door to uninhibited development; a balanced approach is required.

What do we do now?

We all need to continue to press for changes in travel behaviour supported by reducing the need to travel, particularly by car, by the integration of transport and land use planning, and the way that we all work and live. Can we go on as we have been for the last few decades with more cars and roads only leading to more roads? We now need to take more care of our countryside.

Want to know more about LTPs?

This article is necessarily brief and only gives a flavour of our comments. However, the County Council websites have voluminous documents and we would be pleased to receive your views.

SE Water Inquiry Outcome

John Kay Branch Executive Committee

Last May and June two planning inspectors held the first ever public inquiry into a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). This was for the Australian-owned South East Water (SEW), which supplies drinking water to a large proportion of the SE in parts of Berkshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Kent and substantial areas of Sussex. Its supply areas interdigitate with those of Southern Water, but unlike the latter, SEW does not undertake drainage or waste water removal and treatment, so many Sussex households have to pay two different water bills. WRMPs are intended to ensure water company supplies will be secure up to 2035.

SEW's proposals for the period up to 2020 were uncontroversial in planning terms, though they include compulsory metering, which may not prove universally popular. They foresaw increasing demand per household from 2020 onwards, and assumed continuing high rates of population growth in their area, leading them to conclude that some large new reservoirs would have to

be created. Their proposals included new reservoirs at Clay Hill near Ringmer, just north of Lewes, and at Broadoak near Canterbury. They also planned to increase the size of the existing Bewl reservoir. The two new reservoirs were both planned for unspoiled areas of countryside, devoid of people but of exceptional landscape and biodiversity value and it was principally these aspects of the WRMP that were opposed by CPRE Sussex and our colleagues in Kent.

CPRE volunteers attended throughout the 20 day inquiry, joined when possible by our Director, Stuart Meier. We and other parties presented evidence stating that: SEW's projections of water demands were unreasonably high; would damage ancient woodland; the landscape and wildlife value of areas which SEW planned to flood.

The inspectors' recommendations, fully endorsed by the Secretary of State, were published just before Christmas. The uncontroversial parts of the WRMP, covering the period to 2020, were judged to be sound, but the inspectors concluded

there were doubts about both the demand forecasts and the appropriateness and deliverability of the reservoir options for the later period. They endorsed virtually all CPRE's evidence that SEW had given insufficient weight to the impact of their proposed reservoirs on the landscape, ancient woodland, protected wildlife and biodiversity, so doubted their deliverability.

The inspectors allowed SEW to publish their WRMP, despite extensive doubts about its fitness for purpose for the period post-2020, in order that the compulsory metering programme could get underway. Sadly, they did not insist that the reservoirs should be deleted from the WRMP at this stage, but instead required SEW to undertake a comprehensive review of both their demand estimates and alternative supply options for the post-2020 period over the next two years.

Let us hope in two years time SEW will come forward with a more sensitive selection of options, so that we avoid having to go through the whole process again!

Work of art or blot on the landscape?

Last summer, a 30ft-high bronze head of a horse called 'Artemis' appeared on the top of The Trundle – the hill, topped by an Iron Age fort, which overlooks Goodwood racecourse. It stayed then for only a few weeks, but has again been temporarily re-installed.

Jake Wright, a CPRE member, has attacked it, in a letter to the local press, as "intrusive" upon "the beauty and peace of this historic site". This prompted further correspondence both about its siting and its validity as a work of art, with comments ranging from "awe-inspiring and majestic" to a travesty of the horse as "an elegant, spirited beast". The Trundle already suffers from two hideous telecommunications masts, dating back to World War II – if the landscape is already scarred, does a further intrusion mitigate or intensify the damage?

This led me to take a straw poll of our own local members – and opinion proved exactly equally divided for and against! Should CPRE take a view on such installations?

It is a truism that there is hardly a square foot of this country that does not show the mark of man. Arguably, the first intrusion on The Trundle was by the Iron Age folk who built a hill fort three millennia ago. How did Durham feel about the 'Angel of the North' when it first appeared? What is Kent's opinion of the planned Ebbsfleet stallion? If we were in Wiltshire, how would we view the regimental badges cut into the chalk hillside at Fovant? Or do we wait a few centuries until late medieval installations like the Cerne Abbas Giant – or our own Long Man of Wilmington – mature into Ancient Monuments? Will a wind turbine ever become as picturesque as a windmill?

It would be interesting to hear from our readers. **RC**



Around the districts

Adur & Worthing

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There are many issues which could have a direct impact on the local Sussex environment, namely the changes in planning procedures, which restrict budgets at local, district and county council levels.

This report is short on specific updates regarding previously advised changes and developments but I will endeavour to bring the latest information when known. A combination of major changes to my personal circumstances and a renewed period of poor health have resulted in other matters taking priority. However I intend to hold an area meeting for members, which should afford an opportunity to raise and progress any pressing matters they wish to advise on. This is likely to take place at a venue in Worthing or Lancing within the next six to eight weeks.

I have been monitoring the situation with reference to the Sompting amenity tip, but as yet I have not established what the latest position is for use of this site, but will continue to seek a confirmed view and advise when known.

My mail bag and inbox has been rather quiet with regard to local branch members, so please do remain in contact as you could raise an issue which all of us on the committee are unaware of!

13.2.11

Arun District

P. Carder (planning only)

redrac701@tiscali.co.uk

Now that the Secretary of State's attempt to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies by ministerial order has been ruled illegal, local councils again face having to accept levels of house building dictated by regional plans – or risk

rejected development applications being allowed on appeal.

This has now happened in Arun District in the case described previously, concerning former nursery land just outside the built-up area boundary of Barnham village. In allowing the developer's appeal, the Inspector accepted their argument that Arun DC had failed to show that it had the five year supply of deliverable sites necessary to meet the house building rate demanded by the SE Plan, so that in consequence; major new housing development in locations such as Ford also must now be considered a real possibility. It must be noted here that the Localism Bill will likely not abolish the SEP in time to remove the need for such development to be accommodated in the Council's LDF within the deadlines that it must meet.

The significance of the Inspector's decision for LPA countryside protection policies must be that settlement boundaries, delineated under earlier local plans, will not now afford protection to adjacent undeveloped land – where it has at least a 'degraded' appearance or is partly surrounded by existing development. These qualifications may be the only cause for hope regarding recent applications for even larger developments on greenfield land beyond existing settlement boundaries at Burndell Road, Yapton (173 new homes) and Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton (up to 600 units).

12.2.11

Brighton & Hove

Stuart Derwent

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The District has been pleased to welcome Penny Hudd who lives in Hove, to the committee. With a professional background in Design, Communication and Landscape Architecture, she has been a member of the CPRE's national

Brand Advisory Group and was elected as a Sussex Trustee at the Branch AGM last July.

Cala Homes' appeal against the Government's proposals for scrapping the Regional Spatial Strategies continues to cause delay in proposals for Brighton and Hove City Council's Corporate Strategy. At the Inspector's Procedural Meeting in January the next meeting was proposed as probably being in the second half of June. Things move very slowly!

We continue to monitor Planning Applications and 'garden grabbing' remains a feature. It can be seen as taking pressure off 'Urban Fringe' countryside on the edge of the SDNP, but leads to loss of green space generally and changes the character of the area. The National Park is very much welcomed and several wildlife groups with sites within the area are looking forward to the National Park Authority taking over – with a move from 'discretionary' (as an AONB) to 'statutory' status on land management. However, it adds other pressures with housing numbers being key to the plan and the Core Strategy will need a careful balance in Brighton and Hove where land is in short supply.

Advance notice for diaries: Our District's AGM and Garden Party will be held on Sunday 5 June at 3pm. We are grateful to Jane Terry for again making her lovely garden at Rectory Gardens, 77 New Church Road, Hove available. The Committee is currently making contact with members to ensure that the District is correctly representing their interests, and are always pleased to hear peoples' views on any issue. 15.2.11

Chichester North

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We have seen the usual number of relatively small extensions, conversions

and some replacement houses this spring. However there have been three major proposals which will affect the District.

Since 2003 the vacant site of the former King Edward V11 Hospital has been the subject of several (consented) applications in order to preserve the listed Sanatorium including some 350 new homes. The first application included a new hospital which CPRE generally supported in order to preserve those facilities in this area. The latest application by City and Country Group comprises 388 homes, including assisted care apartments in the sanatorium and adjacent buildings, and 220 new homes – also extensive improvements to the estate and Gertrude Jekyll gardens with its underground car parking. The application is currently being evaluated by CDC for the number of new homes needed for the restoration of the sanatorium.

The current owners of the Syngenta site near Fernhurst, Comer Homes, together with CDC and the SDNPA recently held a public consultation to establish a working brief, incorporating the general ‘wish lists’. It is hoped that the number of new homes will be kept to the minimum, be of mixed development and will include some light industry and leisure facilities, and moreover should relieve the pressure for further developments on green field sites in the area. The general concern with both these proposals is for the impact the number of people will have on all the district facilities – including increased traffic congestion on the A286.

The new proposal for a smaller area of sand extraction at Horncroft on the Barlavington Estate has been submitted but the initial objections are still relevant. It will be interesting to see what view the SDNPA will take. **7.2.11**

Chichester South

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We have, as usual, scrutinised planning applications, and registered objections

where appropriate. Since my last report, two matters in particular have caused concern:

– an application from Madestein (UK) Ltd. to build a total of 52 acres of glasshouses at Easton Farm, Almodington. This site is outside the designated Horticultural Development Area, and such a construction would have a devastating impact on the immediate locality, and the traffic generated, for nationwide distribution, would make an already overloaded road system even more congested. We are supporting a strong local protest group and are informed that if the application is refused, Madestein are ready to go to appeal.

– the erection of a 30-foot high bronze horse’s head on The Trundle, which overlooks Goodwood Racecourse. The sculpture, entitled ‘Artemis’ has divided local opinion (see page 10) – does it mitigate the effect of the two unsightly wartime radio masts (still in use for telecommunications), or merely add to the clutter? A member had a letter of protest published in the ‘Chichester Observer’ and I took the opportunity to ask, through our recently established e-mail group, our members’ opinion – which proved exactly evenly divided! I have recently circulated news and information to those giving their e-mail address. If any other local members who would like to be ‘in the loop’ let us know if you wish to be included by sending your e-mail details to the above address. **28.1.11**

Horsham & Crawley

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Some good news has resulted from the Government’s spending review and cuts! The February 2011 Update of Investment in Local Major Transport Schemes published by the Department for Transport, has confirmed the A24 Ashington/Southwater scheme will not be funded in the current Spending Review period. Accordingly, this CPRE District calls upon WSCC to abandon the misconceived expensive scheme and

withdraw compulsory purchase notices, which have blighted the local community and concentrate instead on enhancing road safety along this stretch of the A24, thus building on improvements already made.

Of more immediate concern is the Interim Statement consultation launched by Horsham District Council (HDC) on 21 January 2011 in order to justify the building of 500 new houses at Billingshurst and another 500 new houses at Southwater. HDC argues it must approve this development in order to maintain the 5 year land supply required under planning law. However, this number of houses is based on targets set in the SE Plan although the Plan does not reflect the recent global financial crisis and ensuing economic turmoil. HDC also continues to claim that these targets remain valid despite a Court ruling that the Government’s public announcement of its intention to abolish these Plans and the corresponding targets, is a material planning consideration. Indeed, the Localism Bill which will enact this is already on its way through Parliament. It is not surprising therefore that many other Councils are taking the common sense stance of waiting for the Government to complete this process before reviewing their LDF Core Strategies or taking any further action on strategic planning issues. HDC’s pre-emptive action in launching this consultation is all the more surprising given that the developers have failed to bring forward development at existing strategic development sites e.g. West of Horsham. This presumably reflects the state of the property market and makes one wonder why HDC is so keen to bring forward new sites when the developers are not prepared to develop existing ones. Accordingly, Horsham & Crawley has submitted a formal and detailed objection to this proposal.

On a happier note, I am pleased to report that Marie-Helene Baneth has joined the District Committee. Marie-Helene also serves on the CPRE Policy Committee, after having chaired the SE Regional Group, and thus brings a high level of experience to our work in local matters. **16.2.11**

Lewes

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Relatively low levels of activity so far this season, but needless to say, the most active problems arise from planning applications. Several major schemes including Falmer Stadium, Peacehaven Sewage Disposal Works and the Newhaven Incinerator which, over a period of time, we have monitored, objected to, or agreed with, are now under construction and near completion. The Glyndebourne wind turbine has full approval, despite the unexpectedly low wind levels revealed by the year long test, and its construction is imminent. CPRE joined other parties in opposing the new Clay Hill reservoir (*see p10*). The report published in December and endorsed by the Secretary of State, upheld many of our objections in questioning a reservoir at this location and alternatives are to be explored but the proposed reservoir has not yet been firmly ruled out. CPRE has also joined local parish councils and several dozen residents in opposing a large nursing home complex called Gradwell Park proposed for a greenfield site in South Chailey.

A major scheme likely to be debated this year and the necessary action taken, is the proposal to install several hundred wind turbines off the Sussex coast between Selsey Bill and Beachy Head. CPRE concern with these will concentrate on where the electrical supply comes ashore and where new substations are to be located and any new power lines erected to get power to the National Grid. Probably the nautical safety side is outside our remit. If Newhaven is to be one of the ports used as a principal service port for this offshore array, then we need to look at the business side of the scheme and it is one we may wish to support. A final decision will take place when further details emerge.

LDC has taken significant steps towards its LDF, now estimated to be delivered in 2012. These include two reviews commissioned from consultants to identify potential new sites for commercial and residential development. These reports may be located in full by inserting ELR

(employment) or SHLAA (housing) into the search engine on www.lewes.gov.uk. The methodology used gives cause for concern. The decision was made to ignore the existence of the new SDNP and several large greenfield sites within its boundaries are recommended for development. More insidiously, the methodology for identifying suitable housing sites gives excessive weight to the aspirations of landowners to develop their land, and the certainty that such development would be profitable; far less weight is given to landscape impact or sustainability. The outcome is predictable. Virtually all new sites proposed are 'greenfield', with the majority 'rural greenfield', while the prospects of developing brownfield sites are downgraded. About 60% of the new housing sites recommended are on the edge of rural villages, housing just 25% of the current population, an approach unlikely to find favour with CPRE.

15.1.11

Mid Sussex

Claire Lloyd

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The ups and downs of the SE Plan are causing great uncertainty in the District, with the lack of a 5 year housing land supply coming under challenge at the Bylanes Close planning Inquiry last December. The council, along with the North Cuckfield Action Group, was resisting a development just within the High Weald AONB where the developer Rydon Homes claimed they should be allowed to build 42 houses. Regrettably, the appeal has now been allowed, not boding well for other developments where housing land supply fails the 5 year rule.

At Burgess Hill, The Friends of the Burgess Hill Green Circle are urging their members and other townspeople to resist a plan by the Town Council for 4000 houses on green field sites in the Low Weald. While the scale is lower than the 8000 houses previously suggested by the District Council, without an agreed core strategy we believe such a proposal is at the least highly premature.

Again in the High Weald AONB, there have been two recent retrospective planning applications on Cleavers Lane north west of Cuckfield. The first, an application to station a mobile home in connection with alpaca breeding, was refused in January 2011. The other, to change a playing field's use to commercial storage and distribution, was refused in November 2010. Enforcement proceedings have commenced and the applicant has appealed. CPRE is objecting to both proposals in this visually sensitive location on the skyline of the AONB. **24.2.11**

Rother & Hastings

Stephen Hardy (Planning only)

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In sheer numbers of planning applications to Rother, 2010 has ended up only slightly down on 2009, with just over 3,000 registered. However, the number of major applications does appear to have diminished. What has increased is the number of applications which have been appealed and also which have been granted on appeal.

This may be connected with the facts that 62% of major applications were determined within the 13 week target and 75% of minor applications within the eight week target, and that the number of staff within the planning department has been reduced. It is also interesting that in response to a Freedom of Information Act question as to whether Rother participated in a recent survey by DCLG about the future of planning costs and fees, whose answers would have revealed financial effectiveness or otherwise, the Council's representative said, "Rother did not respond to the survey due to lack of time and limited staff resources."

Our wish has to be that our planning departments are staffed appropriately to ensure they can deal with applications in a sensitive and professional way, and that they will be up to the further challenges that may face them if and when the Localism Bill becomes law.

The trends we have previously noted in applications continue; persistent

applications (some for the third or fourth time) to get bigger houses on to existing plots, or garden grabbing, applications for housing on previously commercial or industrial sites, where not enough effort has been demonstrated that the sites can continue in employment use. This latter is very disturbing for the continued vibrancy of our rural areas.

28.1.11

Wealden North

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Just a few lines to do two things; firstly, to introduce Lesley who has agreed to act as our co-ordinator and is also helping Liz in the office on Wednesday morning each week, and secondly to update you on local planning issues.

Lesley will be exploring ways of providing a more effective integration

between members and the District, and she will be writing to members about a 'District Meeting' in the summer. Lesley is a seasoned volunteer and has particular interest in environmental issues and how the CPRE can contribute to local matters on behalf of members.

On planning issues, we are objecting to a proposed housing development in Fairwarp on the edge of the Ashdown Forest, and Peter Scott, a member, has attended the Hearing on our behalf and ensured the Inspector receives our views. The outcome is expected by Easter. Peter has also made representations on our behalf regarding a clay shoot development at Northall Gun Club, Fletching. Unfortunately, Peter is unable to help us in future but we would like to thank him for his assistance in recent months.

We are studying the draft Wealden Core Strategy, and will be responding to the District Council jointly with Wealden South. Lesley looks forward to meeting you at the forthcoming

AGM to be held on 12th July at High Hurstwood, see below. **22.2.11**

Wealden South

John Hurwood (Planning only)

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Last year at this time we had four main issues. Looking back I now get a sense of déjà vu. We were happy that at last WDC had turned down the Honey Farm development application. We had responded to WDC LDF consultation. We had responded to the ESCC Waste consultation. We were getting ready for the application for the large (so called) CHP generator at Polegate.

Well, where are we now? The Honey Farm appeal, where CPRE had a major role (see article on p4), is just over. WDC are about to embark on the next stage of their LDF consultation. Having beaten a retreat following their waste consultation last year, ESCC are awaiting the revised national guidelines. We are expecting no more news until the summer.

The CHP application was withdrawn, following officers recommendation for refusal, but we continue to monitor large numbers of planning applications, many of concern to local members. One interesting application objected to, was to close a village pub and convert it into a house; surprisingly there are no national CPRE policies on this. The Cuckmere Pathfinder Project (see their website for details) has also been contributed to and monitored.

Finally, on Pevensey Marsh the high profile issue concerning the white statues of lions and other matters is being watched. Regarding the lions, it took over a year for the Planning Inspectorate to give their decision on the appeal. They upheld the WDC decision, but we still await their removal – initially delayed by a supposed appeal to the High Court. Notice was given but not followed up, then the appellant said he would remove them, but as this hasn't happened WDC are out to tender for a contractor to do it! Other site issues are also getting more complex so, sadly, it looks as if it is all going to end up in a courtroom. **10.2.11**

The 38th Annual General Meeting

of CPRE Sussex

will be held on

on Tuesday 12th July 2011

at

High Hurstwood Village Hall

Chillies Lane, High Hurstwood, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 4AD

Our guest speaker will be the co-director of the High Weald AONB Unit

Jason Lavender

who will give a talk on this valued landscape entitled

'The Making of the High Weald'

Following lunch, by kind invitation of Sir Frederick and Lady Sowrey, we have a guided tour of their nearby farm at Herons Ghyll.

There is no charge for the meeting and morning coffee, but the fork buffet lunch for those wishing to stay, will be £12.50 per head.

The booking form will be in the Summer Newsletter.

Business Matters

The Agenda will be included in the Summer Newsletter but, due to time scale, nominations for Officers and Members of the Executive should be received, duly seconded, at Branch Office at least 28 days prior to the AGM. Please apply to Branch Office for a nomination form and state any other items you may wish to be included under Any Other Business

Live and let live

Dr Gerald Legg Keeper of Natural Sciences, Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton

Being tidy is not always a good idea as the natural world is not tidy, but people often find this difficult to deal with. Go anywhere that humans have not been at work and you will find a tangle of vegetation teeming with life; quite different from a manicured park resembling a green desert fringed by weed-free beds of roses supporting little associated life.

In order to facilitate and harbour its rich diversity of life, woodland should ideally be allowed to be naturally untidy (but not with garden rubbish, dumped fridges or old sofas!). Organisms interact with each other in complex and chaotic ways, building relationships that form the foundations of the habitat. Any interference, including 'over management' with this system has profound effects upon the whole as well as upon individual species.

Each organism, from a soil bacterium to a badger, contributes to the richness and diversity of a habitat. Walk through a wood and each adult foot treads upon over 5000 little animals happily living their lives amongst decomposing wood, leaves, humus and soil as they make their home. Plants and animals grow and die and their remains are eaten by bacteria, fungi, mites, springtails, flies, beetles, worms, millipedes, centipedes, woodlice and a host of other tiny creatures. In turn, these are eaten and parasitized by other creatures and fungi. Complex communities exist beneath your feet and within those 'untidy' rotting trees but without these 'recyclers' diversity deteriorates and inhabitant numbers fall. Nutrients become locked-up in dead remains and pile up. We rely on these 'little rotters' to recycle carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus and other elements – liberating them to be used over and over again. So next time you are walking around the countryside, spare a thought for all those minuscule organisms hard at work in rotting timber, leaf litter, humus and soil.

Organisms' dependency upon

decaying material varies; some use it as a place to nest (e.g. badgers, some wasps and spiders). Others, including some beetles and flies (especially hoverflies) spend only part of their life-cycle as little rotters, whilst others are permanent residents virtually never seeing the light of day. Dead wood is a 'temporary' habitat which eventually disappears, whereas litter and soil form a long-term habitat and may be around for tens of thousands (or millions, in the case of some forests in Africa) of years. Consequently many unusual and rare species live there.

Our largest pseudoscorpion is only found in dry decaying hardwood (usually oak). This is nationally and internationally very rare as it is associated with ancient woodland. Since it cannot fly it relies on certain uncommon wood boring beetles to take it to a new dead tree – a process known as phoresy (a form of hitch-hiking). One of our more common species, *Chthonius ischnocheles*, is shown here. Many other invertebrates found in rotting wood are also rare – because our woods are declining.

Wood does not need to be on the ground for it to be colonised, as dead



TOP Pseudoscorpion, *Chthonius ischnocheles*

ABOVE Millipede associates with snail



Woodlouse – frequents damp shady places

limbs and dying standing timber also provide homes for these organisms.

An unmanaged wood will have 17% of its organic matter present as dead wood, a high proportion of the habitat available for other organisms. Some 13% of Britain's invertebrates and fungi are dependent upon rotting wood (5000 species of invertebrates,). This is a massive contribution to our national biodiversity and there is a special Habitat Action Plan (HAP) devoted to it: <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/urbanwt/ecorecord/bap/html/deadwda.htm> – provides useful information including a list of the numbers of species present in dead wood and management guidelines.

The 'little rotters' are largely unfamiliar and disdained by most people, but without them we would not have woods and forests. Further, they form an integral part of virtually all terrestrial habitats, from rocky crags to oak woodlands. 'Clearing up' fallen timber for whatever reason, be it for firewood, 'safety' or its apparent visual offensiveness, is interfering with the balance of life in a woodland as well as putting the lives, or very existence, of many exquisite creatures at risk and reducing our biodiversity at a time when there are just too many pressures on our natural world.

Dark skies

Dr Darren Baskill Member of the CPRE Sussex and the Campaign for Dark Skies



PHOTOS: D.BASKILL FOR THE CAMPAIGN FOR DARK SKIES

Sky glow light pollution over Brighton, as photographed from the South Downs National Park

One of the CPRE's campaigns is to reduce the amount of light pollution in the UK - artificial light which shines where (or when) it is neither needed nor wanted. This wasted light causes a whole range of difficulties, not only for those who want to see a sky full of stars, but it can also be responsible for health problems, waste vast amounts of money and has even caused fatal accidents.

Instead of just shining where they are needed, most lights shine outwards and upwards into the night sky. This light then reflects off moisture in the atmosphere, drowning out the view of the starry sky and replacing it with orange smog that hangs above our heads throughout the night. In the UK alone, £1 billion per year is wasted by inefficient street lighting and home and commercial flood lighting, the latter being the most inefficient lighting available.

Most species have evolved to take advantage of the night in order to avoid predation, but millions of years of evolution have been undone in the last 50 years with massive increases in inefficient lighting, which has turned night into day. This has had a detrimental effect on mammals such as bats, birds, and insects including moths and glow-worms.

One of the most concerning aspects of light pollution is its effect on human health. Experiments which have taken place over the last few years show that exposure to light-at-night can disrupt the body's production of melatonin, a brain hormone best known for its daily role in resetting our biological clock. This in turn increases an individual's risk of developing oestrogen-related malignancies such as breast cancer.

Even fatal accidents have been caused by glaring lights. In Oxfordshire, a pedestrian was killed after flood-lighting temporarily blinded a car driver. Similarly, a light aircraft crash in Australia was caused by nearby floodlights impeding the pilot's vision.

So why has nothing drastic been done

to reduce the amount of light pollution in the UK? Unfortunately, while many have heard of this problem, few realise how trivial the solutions are. Local authorities and private companies are slow to take advantage of modern efficient lighting. Flood-lighting, the most inefficient type there is, shows people's preference for cheap-to-buy/expensive-to-run lighting. The proliferation of home and business flood-lighting is a case in point.

Examples of good lighting practice and financial savings by using them, are just beginning to be recognised. From 2002-5, the city of Calgary (Canada) replaced all their street-lights with modern efficient lighting that only shone on the street. This scheme had paid for itself within five years, thanks to the reduction in electricity costs.

Trials of dimming street-lighting overnight, or even turning them off altogether, have also been successful. When street lights were switched off overnight in Saffron Walden, Essex, night-time crime almost halved. It is possible that lighting may actually aid criminals in what would otherwise be unfamiliar surroundings.

The vast majority of the population have not experienced the inspirational sight of a night sky full of stars. We should be doing all we can to preserve the few remaining places in the UK where the glorious sight of the Milky Way stretching overhead can still be seen.



Good efficient lighting in Charlton, London - these street-lights are only shining on to the street