



Soulton Hall
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AGM NOTICE

CPRE Shropshire Annual General Meeting

AGM to be followed by a talk on the gentry houses of Shropshire and the origin, history and future of Soulton hall

Tuesday 27th June 2017
5pm Annual General Meeting (AGM)

at Soulton Hall, Near Wem, SY4 5RS

We are delighted to announce our keynote speakers will be Timothy Ashton and historic buildings expert, Carole Ryan-Ridout who will speak about the fascinating history of 'gentry houses' in Shropshire and the history of Soulton Hall in particular.

All Members and visitors are welcome.

Tickets: £12.50 (to include delicious BBQ). Paid bar.

To book your place now, contact Sarah Jameson, Administrator

President's report

Nothing seems to stay the same! As I sat down to write this report, Theresa May called a General Election. There will be new contracts to be forged, policies to be structured and lessons to be learned; not to mention the imponderables of Brexit! I am confident that the high regard in which CPRE is held, by politicians and officials, will allow us to use our research to inform and influence the decision makers who will be in place after 4th May and 8th June.

Over the past year much has happened. After many months of campaigning and parliamentary lobbying, February saw the publication of The Housing White Paper which was designed to address the 'broken' housing market. It was gratifying to see that Ministers had listened to CPRE's arguments, based on our Foresight papers*. Tinkering with the planning system was never going to be enough. The White Paper conceded that there was a need to prioritise brown field sites, stop big developers sitting on land banks and give small builders (including Housing Associations) more support. It further emphasised the very real need to protect the Green Belts, and to that end, further consultation on how housing need is calculated.

Roads are always an emotive issue. New research by CPRE has concluded that the promised economic benefits of new road schemes have largely failed to materialise. Many of these schemes have just encouraged out of town developments, thus reducing investment in established local economies while the vast majority increase traffic levels. There is much relevance in the research when applied to the

**Foresight papers: New model farming: resilience through diversity was the first in a series of 'Food and Farming Foresight' papers produced by CPRE National Office (August 2016).*

Shrewsbury northern link road, for example.

Organisations never stand still. Our Shropshire Branch is no exception. We have two important farewells: Firstly to Keith Ridland who has served as our Vice Chairman – his steady hand, wise counsel, coupled with his huge love for the countryside, will be a loss to our Branch and to Shropshire. I feel sure his energies will not be untapped for long. Secondly, we also say farewell to Isabel Matthias, who has so ably dragged us into the 21st century! We now have a website to be proud of as well as Twitter and Facebook accounts. Isabel has put the videos which Judy Crabb and John Woolmer produced in conjunction with Harper Adams University on to Facebook and they have gone viral; the one on litter has claimed over 40,000 hits. Thank you both so very much and good luck in your new ventures.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that 2016 saw the 90th anniversary of our inauguration; as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England; the name may have changed but the mission remains the same, 'The Conservation of our Countryside'. I am sure our founding fathers would be proud of what has been achieved over the last 90 year.

Finally, a huge thank you to all our supporters in Shropshire and particularly our Branch Executive. We are so lucky to have such a committed and knowledgeable team to face the challenges ahead.

Robin Thompson
President, CPRE Shropshire



Summer morning in the upper Redlake © Sarah Jameson

Chair's report

The last year has been an interesting time for the whole nation, not least CPRE Shropshire. Our president, Robin Thompson, who is now a trustee of CPRE nationally, has touched on many of the wider issues for CPRE in his report. First of all I would like to say how delighted we are to have Robin in this position; he is very well placed to keep us up to date with National Office thinking and, almost more importantly, to keep Shropshire up there in National Office's sights.

One of the areas on which we thought Shropshire could lead is the effect of BREXIT on farming in a county dominated by agriculture. Some of you will have attended the Farming Conference which we put on in March at the Shrewsbury Football Stadium. It was open to all and we had a wide range of organisations represented there from our own members and other environmental organisations to farmers, land agents and a large number of individuals interested in the future of farming and its effect on our beautiful countryside and rural communities. There is a full report in this newsletter but I would like to particularly express my thanks to members who volunteered to help organise and run the event, very often abetted by their spouses and led by Sarah Jameson, our administrator. Also to thank our speakers who entered into the spirit of the occasion and took so much time and thought to prepare, without exception, excellent presentations. Graeme Willis from National Office who leads on farming attended and took back a number of points from the speakers and questions from the floor which he will feed into CPRE's National response to the effect of Brexit on the English landscape and rural communities.

We have welcomed some new Executive members this year, most notably Cally Ware who has moved to the most south western tip of Shropshire from Kent where she chaired a district committee and was on the main Kent CPRE board. As you can imagine Kent has a lot more problems than Shrop-

shire. When I first met Cally she said "how do you recruit members here, there aren't the threats from development I have been used to?" She has a point but there are threats still to some of our most beautiful countryside from developments like large poultry sheds in the middle of the AONB and, as you move north and east, threats from major housing developments around some of our market towns and the sprawl of Shrewsbury. We accept the need for new housing but it needs to be in the right place and well designed. We welcome Cally's experience and the way she has jumped in with enthusiasm to our somewhat different but important work in Rural Shropshire. We also welcome Stephen Spurdon, a financial journalist from London who has moved to Shropshire and has offered to help with media relations and press releases.

Charles Green has stepped up his work as Chair of the Oswestry District to contributing to our work on policy both from Shropshire Council's revisions to the Local Plan and the Government's White Paper on Housing. He has an attention to detail and willingness to question statistics which is invaluable. Charles has also initiated a service to all districts of scanning the weekly planning lists to highlight applications which district representatives can further investigate.

As Chair of the Shropshire Branch, I feel incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated team of volunteers. We are sad to lose Keith and Isabel as mentioned by Robin, but delighted to welcome Cally and Stephen and look forward to working with them and all the members of the Executive over the next year.

Sarah Bury
Chair, CPRE Shropshire

Treasurer's report

In 2016 CPRE Shropshire raised a total of £12,206, the majority of which came from our membership subscriptions. A generous donation from the Millichope Foundation topped this up - with the primary aim of supporting the costs of outsourcing independent specialists, such as for planning reports. In contrast to 2015, our net surplus was down considerably, as a Big Lottery Grant was awarded in late 2015, and the majority of the Memories of the Landscape project expenses were paid out in 2016. Overall we continue to be in a healthy financial position, with the ability to fund urgent and important CPRE work into the next year.

Emma Ireland
Treasurer, CPRE Shropshire

CPRE Shropshire's Farming Conference

CPRE Shropshire held an important conference - *Rural Shropshire: what next for our farming, food and landscape?* on Friday 3 March, 2017. The event, held at the Sovereign Suite, Shrewsbury Town Football Club, attracted 116 delegates, including 21 CPRE members, eight speakers and 15 representatives from the local branch and provided much food for thought.

In tackling the broad question of the future of Shropshire's farming, food and landscape, the CPRE Shropshire conference had, ironically, a sharp focus. It took place against the background of hopes and fears relating to the long awaited letter to the European Union (EU) formally declaring the UK's intention of leaving.

This occurred less than a month later with a letter from Prime Minister (PM) Theresa May to the President of the European Council on 29 March. The PM did not want to present a hostage to fortune by being detailed in her approach, it is interesting to note that while financial services merited a specific mention in the letter, agriculture did not.

Such factors may only increase the unease of a farming community which, while it may not wholeheartedly support EU farming policy, has at least grown used to its format and now fears radical change.

Government 'intentions'

However, firm evidence of the Government's intentions was provided by the CLA's Christopher Price. He said while existing EU agricultural and environmental legislation would be taken into UK law, those regulations relating to this legislation requiring both European and international co-operation, such as ones on fisheries and crop protection, will be delayed.

Mr Price also divulged that there is mixed progress in the development of government thinking on farming and the environment, covering the next 25 years. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is well advanced with the environmental Green Paper, but the one on farming is unlikely to meet its autumn schedule because of complexities imposed by devolution. Of course, the subsequent declaration of a general election, may well delay their publication well beyond the anticipated date of autumn 2017.

The stark reality of both the condition of farming and the choices facing the Government were provided by the CPRE's Graeme Willis, who said farming is just one of the sectors demanding special treatment post-BREXIT, but the Treasury may be keen to claw back some or all of the £3bn awarded to UK farming last year from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This level of uncertainty appears a fact of life over the next few years, but NFU Mutual adviser Simon Latter (who is also a trustee of both Shropshire Rural Sup-

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Christopher Price: Director of policy and advice, Country Land and Business Association (CLA)

Clare Cole: Natural England, North Mer-
cia

Mark Measures: Organic farmer and or-
ganic
farming consultant, Shropshire Hills

Joy Greenall: Shropshire Hills organic
farmer

Simon Latter: Senior account executive,
NFU Mutual

Liam Bell: Gamekeeper and chairman of
the
National Gamekeepers' Organisation (NGO)

Cath Landles: Community and Landscape
Officer, Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding
Natural Beauty (AONB)

Graeme Willis: Agricultural adviser,



Traditional Hereford Cattle being taken down to the farmyard, at Cow Hall, Clun Forest. Photo © Mark Measures.

port and the Shropshire Federation of Young Farmers clubs) pleaded for the Government to ensure the industry did not face a cliff-edge.

Here, Mr Latter was referring to the possibility of no agreement on access to the EU's Single Market meaning trade would have to be on the basis of World Trade Organisation (WTO) tariffs. But the spectre of another 'cliff edge' with the post-Brexit UK withdrawing all farming subsidies as did New Zealand in the 1980s was adamantly dismissed by speaker after speaker during the Q&A session because of fundamental differences in the nature of agriculture in the two territories.

Looking over the horizon

While there was obvious emphasis on consequences for farmers of leaving the EU, some speakers took a more longer term view of farming and its impact on the landscape that we mistakenly think of as 'natural'. Gamekeeper Liam Bell's talk was particularly illustrative of this point, as he described how shooting has influenced the landscape since the 18th Century; woodlands being planted to encourage game such as woodcock and pheasants. He explained that this process continues and gave the example of how, on the estate he manages, wetlands have been created for duck fighting at the same time as encouraging lapwings and other waders.

Mr Bell also pointed to how his work acts to conserve woodland, through control of species such as grey squirrels and deer who "Can do a great amount of damage unless controlled."

Active conservation also means taking an objective view of how we treat the land. For instance, organic farming consultant and farmer Mark Measures spoke of the stark reality that we live and farm on a very thin layer of earth, and explained that while we have enjoyed great success in getting the most out of what we have, "cereal yields are plateauing." He further described the efficiency of nitrogen-based fertiliser as "astoundingly low" and pointed to the benefits of its substitution with the use of legumes and rotation. The realism inherent in being an actual working hill farmer was shown by organic farmer Joy Greenall stating that if we want to retain our beautiful countryside, we will have to pay for it. "Everything we do on the land is connected with everything else. That needs to be supported and so we have to support the people who do it", reasoned Ms Greenall.

For many farmers, Ms Greenall explained, particularly in the uplands, a combination of part of the payments received to help fund environmental management, plus the baseline farm support is the income they live on. However, the inter-relatedness of her own small farm with the local economy is shown by the fact that, at different times during the farming year, 20 local self-employed people are contracted in for specialist jobs, and the farm trades with 35 businesses. Thus, the impact of support reduction or withdrawal would have a much more wide-spread impact on rural areas than on farmers alone.

Getting local people onside requires a deal of effort in part because of the thinly-spread nature of the population of rural Shropshire. Here, the work of the Shropshire Hills AONB – which covers a quarter of



Farming Conference report

Shropshire – in cultivating local awareness and action to protect the resource was highlighted by Cath Landles. Whilst the designation imposes regulations, the AONB staff actively promote environmental projects working with the local population through initiatives such as Land, Life & Livelihoods, in the Clun Forest.

Role of the CPRE

Both Mr Willis and Natural England's Clare Cole emphasised a future need to recognise the 'multifunctional' nature of farming and the benefits it can bring to the non-agricultural country – if supported. Mr Willis said the need to reconcile differences between farming and the environment pointed to the central role the CPRE could play in the process of aligning the interests and working together for a common cause – as it cares for both the environment and the countryside itself.

Mr Willis urged people to be active in calling for political support for CPRE's aims: "We want farming working with nature to enable the countryside as a whole to thrive. We do need to mobilise, collectively and individually – especially in the Shires - call or

write to your MP - tell them how important farming is for the economy, for rural communities and for the countryside; better still get them to your farm and show them."

Stephen Spurdon

The Lure of the Elm

There are many edible plants out there; in fact far more than are poisonous and so learning the few really poisonous ones is really important. There is however a really big difference between being edible and being really palatable and tasty.

This time of year is Spring greens time and trees are among my favourite food particularly the young buds and leaves of beech and lime. However the very best to my taste buds is elm. The seeds not the leaves. Many people are really surprised when you mention the elm. 'But I thought they had all died?' Elm trees are alive and living in their thousands in

hedges and woods as small trees and shrubs. When they get older they usually succumb to Dutch Elm disease and then grow up again from the base.

Occasionally you may find a large tree and the Woodland Trust encourages the recording of these 'huggable' specimens. If you cannot get your arms around it, possibly that tree is old enough to be immune to the disease. There are still a few really big elms hidden away too. Their bright yellow flowers and seeds stand out from a distance and are often in such profusion that you can eat them by the fistful, or if you prefer pick them daintily one by one.

Few wild foods grow in quite such profusion and they have a slight nuttiness and a sweetness unusual in the wild. Here in Shropshire the elms seen producing fruit are mainly Wych elm with considerably fewer English elm and one or two rarities.

Long live the elm! Maybe in decades or centuries to come it will achieve immunity and rise up from our hedges. Until then we can enjoy it as it is and as a sweet wayside snack.

Rob Rowe
rob@robrowe.co.uk



Communications report

Unprecedented challenges are facing our beautiful county – the threats and opportunities of Brexit, the large developments of new houses which risk overwhelming our towns and villages, the ‘urbanisation’ of some of our loveliest landscapes.

CPRE Shropshire is one of the only organisations actively standing up for our countryside and it is important that our voice is heard. It is important that we communicate with local and national government, with decision makers across the county and with you, the people who live here. We need homes – but we need the right homes in the right places. We do not need inappropriate development to spoil our countryside.

As a charity, we depend entirely on income from our members to fund our work in influencing planning decisions. In order, therefore, to strengthen our ‘voice’ in planning decisions and increase membership and thus income, we have co-opted two new volunteers to the Executive Board of CPRE Shropshire.

Cally Ware has recently moved to South Shropshire from Kent where she was a CPRE Kent Board Member, District Chairman of CPRE Tonbridge and Malling District and chaired the branch’s Communications Committee. She has spent over 30 years in international marketing and communications and now lives in a converted barn in the Shropshire Hills AONB with her husband Bill and 3 dogs.

don, now savours the friendliness and tranquillity of Shrewsbury. He worked on trade and national titles, and spent a year in public relations. Since 1994 he freelanced for newspapers, magazines and websites.

Cally and Stephen are due to be formally elected to the Executive of CPRE Shropshire at the forthcoming AGM. Once this is done, they will help the branch improve relations with the press and other media, they will help co-ordinate messages on our website, on Facebook and Twitter and will help us campaign more effectively for our landscapes and countryside.

Cally can be contacted on cally.ware@btinternet.com and Stephen on sspurdon@outlook.com



Cally Ware



Stephen Spurdon

Stephen Spurdon also recently moved to Shropshire and after 38 years as a journalist in Lon-



Shropshire Council's Local Plan Partial Review

Although SAMDev (Site Allocations and Management of Development) is less than two years old Shropshire Council have already launched a partial review of their Local Plan "*in whole or in part to respond flexibly to changing circumstances*" as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Consultation on this review ran for eight weeks to 20th March 2017. The review covers the next twenty years from 2016 to 2036 and the Council's survey form asked for views on housing numbers and where those houses should go, as well as views on employment policy and policies for rural areas.

We called on local people to object strongly to this review, largely because of the large number of new houses the Council wants to build. Ideally, our campaign would have been launched earlier, but many thanks to those of you who responded in the limited time available.

You can see more details of all this on our website, under the Planning tab, including our full response to the Council. We had considerable help from planning consultant Gerald Kells with this, and we included a critique of the Council's Full Objectively Assessed Housing Need report of July 2016, which underpins the housing figures. Of the 25,178 houses that the FOAHN report says are needed in the twenty year period, only as little as 41% arise because of actual changes in population size according to Government figures. Surprisingly, about 28% arise because of projected reductions in the average number of people in each house and, possibly disturbingly, about 20%

arise because the Council uses a different modelling programme to the Government. Incredibly, 1,200 of the 25,178 houses are in the plan because they are projected to be vacant! And the Council's review did not even then use this suspect "*objectively assessed*" figure but offered three choices of housing numbers which were up to 14% higher again, and 65% higher than the Government figure. No wonder we asked you to object!

And then, before that consultation had ended, the Council launched another consultation on their Economic Growth Strategy, running for seven weeks until 28th April 2017. Despite a considerable overlap with the Economy section of the Local Plan Review, the consultation offered only very bullish figures, and effectively incorporating the previous high Core Strategy housing need figure of 27,500 houses.

We have cried foul over the crossed wires over consultation, and the high "*growth culture*" that the Council seems to have bought into, even before it has assessed the responses to the Economy sections of the Local Plan Review consultation. There should be much more emphasis on reducing the effects of climate change and in any case, continued incessant growth cannot be sustainable in the long term.

Charles Green
Chair, CPRE Oswestry district



The Government's Housing White Paper

The Department for Communities and Local Government launched the Housing White Paper (HWP) on 7th February 2017 with a 12-week consultation period ending on 2nd May. It is entitled *"Fixing our broken housing market"* which tells you its thrust. They think that building more houses will help to make them cost less. That is because between 1997 and 2010 the ratio of average house price to average income more than doubled, from 3.5 to 7. To meet demand, they think that nationally they must deliver between 225,000 and 275,000 homes every year. The threat is bad enough in Shropshire but think of the pressure round London and other big city areas.

There is no silver bullet to "fix" this so the HWP proposes a number of measures to help Local Authorities and developers get things moving, including maximising land use (whilst continuing to protect the Green Belt etc), devising a standard approach to Objective Assessments of Housing Need, and reforming the housing delivery test that so bugs Local Authorities (including Shropshire Council).

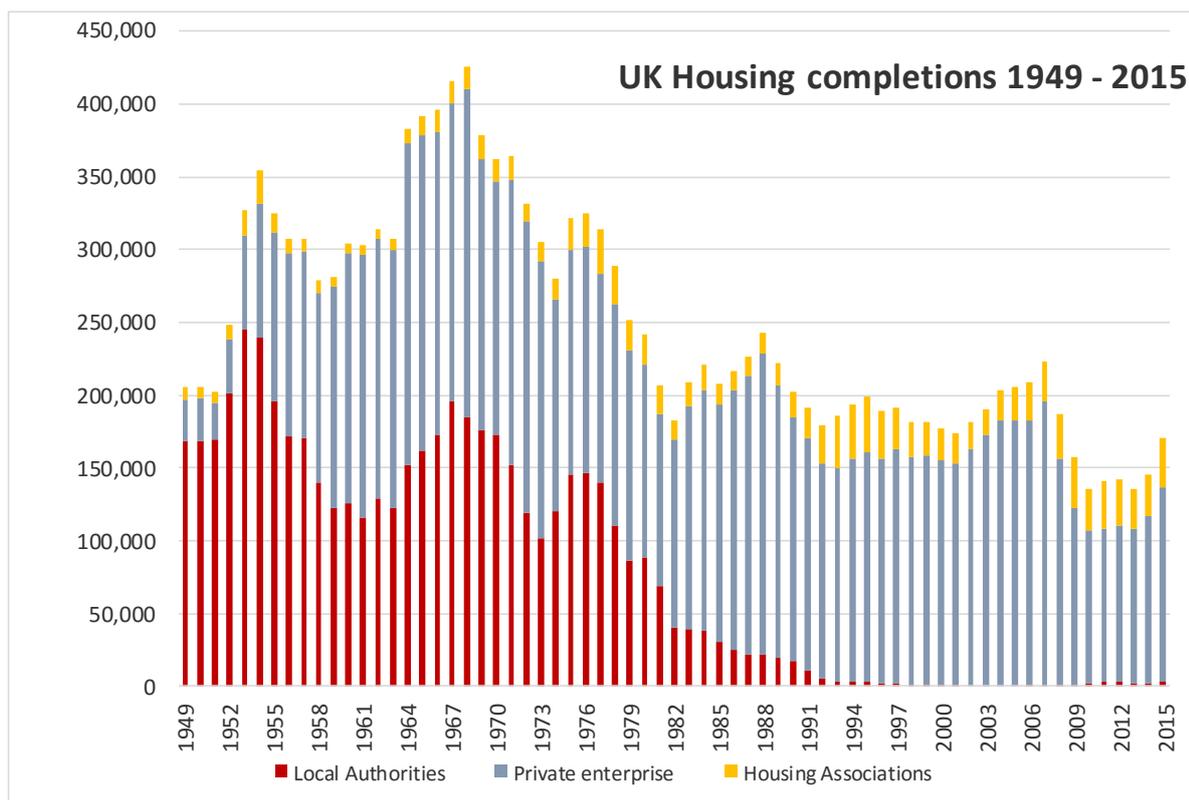
In order to co-ordinate a "One CPRE" response our National Office organised a three-stage process involving firstly a SurveyMonkey questionnaire, then a Branch Engagement Day in London on 29th March (which two of us from Shropshire

attended) and then an online Forum. The result was a comprehensive 30-page consultation response (which you can access via our website).

The day after the Branch Engagement Day I heard an Inspector (who was re-hearing a Shropshire Council appeal) say, most surprisingly and revealingly, that he did not agree with the Government's reasons for thinking that the housing market was broken. The graph below (showing housing completions since World War II) illustrates his thinking, which is that much of the blame is because of the lack of council housing.

National Office have also appointed a demographer to look at the methodology behind the Objective Assessments of Housing Need, which is expected to be the next stage of consultation surrounding the HWP. The work we have done on the Shropshire Council figures will feed into this review.

Charles Green
Chair, CPRE Oswestry district



Graph showing housing completions since World War II (graph derived from DCLG Live Table 241: Permanent dwellings completed, by tenure, UK historical calendar year series)

District reports

North Shropshire

Regular readers will have heard this plea before, but we desperately want to hear from any members who are prepared to coordinate or contribute to our activity in North Shropshire. Although other commitments have meant that I have had to step down recently after 3 years as Vice Chair and an Executive Committee member, I live in North Shropshire and am only too conscious of the many acres of green fields and rural landscape, often close to towns and villages, that are currently disappearing under building projects. Whitchurch, Ellesmere, Market Drayton, Hadnell and Wem come immediately to mind, but there are other areas too. Anyone who feels they could help us in any way at all in the north of the county, please contact our Administrator, Sarah Jameson.

Keith Ridland

Shrewsbury & Atcham

The last committee meeting of the Group was held in October 2016. Since that time a letter explaining the parlous position of the Group has been circulated to all Shrewsbury area members asking for support to keep the Group running.

The letter received an encouraging response, and recently we were able to hold a meeting at the Shirehall with a small number of people who had expressed an interest. Whilst none of them were willing, at this stage, to take on any of the offices within the Group they all expressed an interest in learning more about CPRE and the sort of activities in which it was involved. A number of documents have now been circulated to those who attended the meeting giving a flavour of our involvement with the planning process, some of the other activities we had acted upon in the last few years, and finally the Shrewsbury Landscape Character survey in which a good deal of interest had been expressed. We propose to arrange a further meeting in the near future.

Objections have been submitted on the lack of recreation facilities in the proposed residential development at Radbrook College and to requests to vary the conditions imposed on the Hencott Winery development against which we have always been opposed.

We have also been involved in the response to the Consultation on the Issues and Options stage of the Local Plan Review where Shropshire Council are putting forward proposals for housing targets that are far higher than is indicated as necessary by the Office of National Statistics household projections.

Roger Carlyle

Telford & Wrekin

At a meeting in High Ercall in the latter part of 2016, it was evident that the rural areas of Telford & Wrekin were very important to the communities and it was recognised that they are equally important to the urban areas of the Borough as this is what makes Shropshire so special.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is a national organisation and its Shropshire Branch has been active over many years shaping the future of the County.

As a new volunteer, I was keen to support the work in our towns and parishes and was encouraged by the number of local people who truly care for our area. Whilst I acknowledge the excellent work of the Shropshire Branch, it was disappointing to find that we did not have a Telford & Wrekin Branch.

So, here we are! Your turn to get involved and create a local branch that will support the rural areas whilst ensuring that they complement the urban areas of our wonderful Borough.

Telford & Wrekin is unique in many ways, however, what we do best is work together for the benefit of the entire Borough. This new branch will have the opportunity to work with all members of our communities and in particular organisations and groups such as Town & Parish Councils. We share one vision and our first meeting will be an opportunity to shape this organisation so that it meets the needs of our area.

We look forward to seeing you at Harper Adams University, Edgmond on Tuesday 4th July at Harper Adams University. Everyone is welcome, you do not have to be a member to attend this meeting.

Connor Furnival

Are you interested in learning more about CPRE and live in Telford & Wrekin?

Come to a meeting on **Tuesday 4th July at 7pm** at Harper Adams University to meet and greet like-minded people.

Light refreshments.

Please book in advance.

Connor.furnival@icloud.com
katrina.oaklands@btinternet.com

South Shropshire

This has been a relatively quiet period as far as major and/or controversial planning applications go in South Shropshire. Perhaps worthy of mention are the plans for a large housing estate of almost 140 homes on the southern boundary of Ludlow, which look as though they will be developed, and the plan to build a smaller estate of 47 homes and a coach park on a school playing field in Church Stretton. If this latter application goes through it may well see the closure of a water bottling plant that has produced bottled water from Long Mynd aquifers since 1881, as development could contaminate the aquifers. The proposed estate would consist of large market value homes – none affordable – and be overlooked from both the Long Mynd and the Stretton Hills on the other side of the valley...all in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Farm diversification is something undertaken by over half of all British farmers. In the main this has been forced on them by the provision of cheap food by the big supermarkets, and the desire to increase their annual incomes. South Shropshire badly needs tourism and, in the main, our increased numbers of farm shops, B&Bs, campsites, rural crafts, tea rooms, barn conversions, llamas, and alpacas have added to our diverse landscape and helped to increase the number of visitors. Not nearly so welcome are the expensive energy diversification schemes that involve anaerobic digestion, huge poultry factory sheds, solar schemes that cover large acreages, and giant wind turbines sited on prominent locations. These commercial and non-agricultural applications provide very few jobs, look ugly and out of place, and can have a cumulative affect that threatens our treasured landscape and, ultimately, the tourist economy of the SHAONB and the County.

Although planning is perhaps our key activity, we must continue to care for our environment and for the countryside itself. So much of South Shropshire is covered by the SHAONB that its conservation and enhancement are of paramount importance and any planning application that causes significant landscape harm must be resisted. Additionally, predator control and nature conservation; multifunctional farming; the management of hedgerows and woodland, grassland and pastures; better control of the bracken incursion onto uplands will all, I hope, become priorities in our post-Brexit South Shropshire countryside.

John Woolmer

Oswestry

The Oswestry District has concentrated on planning issues, on CPRE Shropshire's responses to planning consultations (see elsewhere in this bulletin) and in producing edited weekly lists of all Shropshire Council's planning applications, for circulation to other Districts. There are usually around 100 applications a week and although only about 20% might be worth a further look, our limited resources mean that, in practice, we object to very few.

We liaise with other local groups including some in Wales; Powys County Council's Local Plan is not up-to-date like Shropshire Council's, and their Renewable Energy policy has been in disarray. Its inadequacies were brought out by tenacious work by CPRW members over the border.

Border issues also arose with a recent application for a so-called 'community energy park' in the Uplands behind Oswestry. The applicant chose a site that was inches into Wales, so the main application went to Powys CC, whilst another went to Shropshire Council. And the proposed 102m high turbine would also be visible in the Clwyd and Wrexham Districts. Our objection argued that a joined up approach is needed rather than the salami slicing of the applications.

Carole Ryan, our heritage expert, has been working for some years to help save the Cross Keys Inn in Kinnerley, and a listing for the pub, and a Conservation Area for Kinnerley have already resulted with her help. Hopefully a recent planning application for alterations and extensions to the pub will help it to re-open, once the application grinds through the mill-wheels of the planning department. Carole prepared a Heritage statement for this application and she is also keeping an eye on listed building and conservation area applications elsewhere in the County. She relies on CPRE members, County wide, to notify her of any that are causing concern.

The Government decision on the re-determination of the two Mid Wales wind farms that appealed their refusal will not now be made until after the election. So we still don't know, over six years after they were first threatened, whether National Grid's pylon plans will go ahead across North Shropshire and Powys.

Finally, congratulations are due to our committee member Charles Lillis, who has recently been appointed as High Sheriff of Shropshire. In this prestigious ceremonial and charitable role he would like to shine a spot-light onto rural isolation and highlight the work of those who alleviate it, with a particular focus on the farming community.

Charles and Sally Green

Bridgnorth

The District held its AGM on 4th May 2017, and resulted in all the current officials being elected for a further year. In the Chairman's Report he mentioned that the Committee's activities have been many and wide ranging, including challenging controversial planning applications. The Secretary has diligently represented the Committee on the County Executive and has been the County's member on the West Midlands Regional Group, which has kept everyone up to speed on what is happening elsewhere in CPRE.

All members of the Committee have played vital roles in difficult rural issues, mostly on inappropriate developments in the countryside. The latest type of planning application that is giving grave concern is industrialised-sized chicken farms. After a year's deliberations disappointingly one at Faintree, near Bridgnorth was granted planning permission. Yet another at Tasley on the outskirts of Bridgnorth caused the Committee to submit strong objections and a decision is awaited.

Another hot local issue was the proposal for a Co-op Convenience Store at the Squirrel Inn Alveley, which recently was refused on the grounds that it would be an inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Also, despite intense public opposition there was a disappointing result when planning permission was granted for five new shops adjacent to historic High Street with the loss of 120 much needed car parking places.

Stella Voysey

New life for our CPRE Telford & Wrekin district!

Our Telford & Wrekin district has been without a lead person for a year or two and we are delighted now to report that it has a new district 'lead' in the form of Connor Furnival. Born and bred in Telford, Connor works in Health & Safety and has two children.

He first got involved in environmental matters at a young age when he started a gardening group at secondary school. Since then he went on to start a group called the Friends of Holmer Lake, and became secretary to the Friends of Telford Town Park in 2016, who look after the UK's Best Park 2016. Connor is also a Borough Councillor in Telford where he is known for his objections towards large scale developments and protection of green spaces. His work on the

Council has included regular litter picking and funding local environmental projects.

Connor says: "I got involved with CPRE because I am passionate about protecting green spaces and I strongly feel that Telford has a better chance of having its "green voice" heard if it had a CPRE of its own."



CPRE Shropshire Contacts

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CPRE Shropshire Districts

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