

Summer 2013

Issue 11

## STOP PRESS

I am writing this on Bank Holiday Monday suffering anger, and spluttering with unbelief after reading the second page of the Huddersfield Examiner. The gist of the article is that Kirklees LDF recently sent to the Planning Inspectorate is to be withdrawn. The Inspectorate insist "it wants far more space allocated for house building and Kirklees to co-operate far more effectively with neighbouring local authorities on the issue".

You will remember in my Spring article, I partially welcomed the fact that Local Authorities would be able to decide their own housing targets but was very concerned about the potential role of the Planning Inspectorate.

I am sorry to say that I have been proved right. According to the Examiner, the Inspectorate is demanding an increase of a third in the number of houses proposed by Kirklees which was set at 22,470. We had argued that this figure was far too high. So the new target now will be 29,211.

What a shambles. So much for the Localism Bill and the Government's promise that planning was in local control. Mr Pickles, your planning ideals are now revealed in all their gory details. You state one thing and then spit on any local plans.

I will write more on this when I learn more details for the next newsletter. In the meantime, please I urge you; write to your MP as suggested in the latest National CPRE agendas. Go onto the website. There they suggest outline letters.

John Denham

## Preserve or Protect!

I began to realise how long I had been connected with CPRE when I became involved with two hotly contested debates in the last couple of months. They were so different in content and character but both related to our countryside and I think they deserve an airing.

The first one was with a group who thought that CPRE members, and me in particular, were an interfering busybody set of fuddy-duddies preventing honest, community minded developers from earning an honest penny for the good of the community. (Is that an oxymoron?) They wanted to build in the greenbelt a simple group of houses costing about £900,000 each. CPRE, and me in particular was an organisation that wanted to ensure there was never any change to the countryside it was to remain as our grandfathers decreed with the roses around the little country cottage and everywhere pickled in aspic - never to change. Indeed they suggested I would have been against the introduction of electricity and the motor car early last century if I had been around then.

The second was with a group of people who did not want any change to their community, and their village, and their lifestyle at all. No more housing was needed even on brownfield sites as there was enough already. They, openly, were for a policy that said "Pull up the drawbridge; man the guns and keep out the plebs!" They were very vociferous in their arguments.

These two meetings and I exaggerate a little but not a lot, brought to mind my own reasons for joining CPRE. I was first a member in the early Sixties living in Lichfield and helping fight major incursions into the greenbelt. We lost! However there were members who did not want any change to Lichfield at all. It had been good enough for Dr. Johnston. My membership lapsed as I moved around the country but I renewed some 25 years ago when we moved to our current address.

I remember a debate I attended soon after I became a member for the second time, 25 years ago. The meeting was in London where we were debating whether the "P" in CPRE should be **Preserve** or **Protect**.

The arguments were not unlike the two different debates I have been to recently. Though I am sure they were expressed with more decorum and moderation than the examples above.

So what do we stand for?

Are we an organisation that does not want any change to our countryside? The Preserve argument! Or do we recognise that some changes are inevitable to meet the needs of a growing country and that our job is to ensure that changes are such that they do not damage our countryside for the generations to come. The Protect argument. I am sure we all have joined CPRE for a variety of reasons and the fact that we can discuss and argue how we manage change in our society is the strength of our organisation. Mind you we can go too far. In a recent article in one of the Sunday newspapers a so called conservationist was advocating that we return to a countryside that has wolves and bears and even rhinoceros roaming freely.

I would welcome views.

There is one group of planners who want to preserve and they have the law on their side by listing property. It is stated that Huddersfield has more listed buildings than Westminster and only second in the league to Bath. This is said with pride.

Now I am not against preserving some of our architecture but my goodness we do go too far with these minions of state in their jackboots. Now I better declare an interest. I live in a listed building. It was built in 1745 as a farm house and we are proud of it and want to ensure that it continues to blend in with the countryside. But why was it listed? No one in authority can tell me other than it is old. It bears no resemblance to what was originally built. It hasn't any outstanding architectural features. Owners have added to it over the years. Some with planning permission some without. I cannot put in double glazing without planners permission. I cannot put up a dish aerial. I cannot even change an old fence with a dry stone wall without endless discussions, drawings and visits by several so called experts. These groups of planners certainly come into the Preserve category.

John Denham

# **Around the Districts**

## **Southern District**

### **Annual Report 2012**

This district has been supporting various local community groups who are all concerned with new and possibly inappropriate development in their villages, whether threatened huge windfarms, housing on green belt or green field sites, or quarrying in their immediate vicinity.

It is gratifying to see that these communities are forming themselves into concerned and informed local groups, determined to fight for their areas. There is a huge pool of local knowledge and enthusiasm in people keen to join together do what they can to preserve landscape and countryside. We work with the help of local councillors and MPs who are often a great help in guiding us.

In Kirklees we are still determined that Castle Hill should be properly preserved and that a pub on the very summit would be disastrous. There still needs to be an in depth archaeological survey done to establish the many layers of human activity going back into pre-history. This is a very important site, as yet not fully appreciated, and a proper survey we hope will soon happen.

Honley show was cancelled, due to the appalling weather so we hope to attend again this year. As well as some local visits, the wildflower meadow near Garforth being one example.

The Stirley farm project is going from strength to strength. It now has cattle and grows vegetables and runs training sessions for the public who want to grow their own. The derelict farm buildings are being repaired and renovated. They also hold open days for all to go and see their work.

We met our new President, Sir Andrew Motion in October. He very kindly joined some of us for a talk and delicious afternoon tea on his way to the Ilkley literary festival. He is as concerned as we are about recruitment and how to get young people to join us. We wish we had the answer.

The fight against bad development and the rash of ever higher single wind turbines continues. Do we win? sometimes.

Susan Carter

## Spring Report

Some of the Kirklees group had a meeting with Barry Sheerman MP to discuss our concerns about the continuing problem about the pub on Castle Hill. He agreed with most of our points and was encouraging in pointing out that whilst there was a need for some sort of interpretation/refreshment building, this could be probably be accommodated below the brow of the hill in a more tasteful fashion than a big pub on the very top. Also he was keen that nothing should be done before a full scale in depth archaeological survey could be carried out.

More and more applications are being submitted for individual turbines which seem to be getting higher.

Local groups are not happy about them and we support their efforts to object to them.

We had a fascinating visit to Stanley Ferry on the Aire and Calder canal near Wakefield where lock gates are made. It was most interesting to see these huge balks of green oak turned into enormous lock gates, each one tailored to fit specific locks.

We look forward to more visits in the coming summer months to interesting venues. Come and join us.

Susan Carter, May 2013.

## Planning Officer Report

I'm going to start this quarter's update with some good news because, for members involved in on-going opposition to emerging Local Plans, and for others working to stop specific developments that threaten the countryside, it doesn't often feel that there's much around. But hang in there because, along with others who share our concerns, we can make a difference. A year ago a planning application was submitted for open cast mining near Clayton West, at a site close to Bretton Hall and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. CPRE West Yorkshire, other bodies- including English Heritage and Wakefield Council, and some local residents opposed the scheme, which would have destroyed the current landscape. In April Kirklees Councillors rejected the application, recognising that while the site was outside the Bretton Hall estate, it was still part of Bretton Hall Park, a nationally significant listed landscape. Result!

In May I had the pleasure of spending a day at national office, which gave me the opportunity to learn more about the important work done in London on behalf of members across the country. Their work includes lobbying Government departments and Members of Parliament, developing considered policy statements that support our objectives, and organising national campaigns- such as the *Stop the Drop* anti litter campaign. If you want to find out more, be sure to read the CPRE magazine and sign up for *Fieldwork*- national office's campaigning newsletter.

Closer to home, together with the southern district (Kirklees and Calderdale), I've been working to help Kirklees Council develop a *Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan*. *Green Infrastructure* (GI) is a way of looking at land and the natural environment, which emphasises ecological and life support functions. The GI approach is about protecting and enhancing these areas in order to realise not only greater environmental benefits, but also wider social and economic benefits. Although a relatively new concept, through the work of Natural England and others, there is growing recognition of the GI idea and its importance in town planning. This can be seen in the National Planning Policy Framework's (NPPF's) requirement for all local authorities to plan for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of GI.

Along with other local stakeholders, CPRE West Yorkshire was asked to comment on a draft version of the Kirklees plan. While it was clear that a great deal of work had been done, we felt the plan needed an explanation of GI that highlights examples within Kirklees, and a more thorough assessment of the current state of GI in the district. Our response highlighted several of the proposed actions that we strongly support, including: promoting local food production, enhancing opportunities for outdoor recreation, and re-greening urban areas. We also suggested areas where the plan should do more, for example, in encouraging new native woodland planting, and in promoting the connection of isolated islands of GI to create connected networks. As a branch we hope to use the approach we developed to contribute to the production of GI delivery plans in the other West Yorkshire districts.

As part of a regional campaign to draw attention to recent dramatic increases in the number of wind turbines in parts of Yorkshire and the Humber, I've begun work to map the turbines in our area. Since identifying every turbine from a planning application would be an enormous task, I've written to our local authorities asking if they have accessible records that they're willing to share. So far I've got data back from two of the five. I'll mention no names at this stage!

Other work has included attending the Wharfedale & Airedale Review Development (WARD) Planning Campaigns seminar, which was co-sponsored by CPRE West Yorkshire. The well attended event was an excellent opportunity for local campaigning groups, and others concerned about inappropriate development, to share ideas and get up to date information on new legislation and emerging Local Plans. I really enjoyed meeting the people I was able to speak to, and I left the event encouraged by the passion and commitment that was shown.

Looking ahead, in addition to the continuing turbine work, I'll be developing a training session for interested members on the basics of the planning system and how to respond effectively to planning applications. I hope this will give members a better understanding of how planning applications are judged, and how to develop relevant arguments when applications are consulted on.

Joe Varga  
Planning Officer  
CPRE West Yorkshire

## Report on the 2012 Annual General Meeting

This year's AGM was held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May at Oakwell Hall, Birstall.

- Stuart Roebuck presented the Treasurer's report for 2012 which was accepted by the meeting
- The following were re-elected as officers and trustees:
  - Executive Committee:
    - Martin Bennett
    - Susan Carter – Trustee and Events Secretary & Newsletter Distributor
    - Michael Church – Trustee, Membership Secretary, Newsletter editor and co- distributor
    - David Cooke
    - David Cove
    - John Denham – Trustee, President, Pres and Publicity Officer
    - Rodney Elliot
    - Vince Haigh
    - Stuart Roebuck
    - Charles Tunbridge - Treasurer
    - Nigel Ward
- Treasurer: Stuart Roebuck resigned from the post after eight years' service and Charles Tunbridge was elected in his place. The meeting passed a motion of thanks for all Stuart's sterling efforts.
- The meeting was reminded that we still had the following vacancies for the honorary positions of Chairman, two Vice-Chairman and Secretary.
- The meeting requested that the Executive committee clarify the status of the Executive Committee members and Trustees and requested that the Constitution be reviewed and updated. The revised Constitution to be presented at next year's AGM for ratification by the membership.

## News from the Executive Committee

### Social Events

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2pm

Our Annual Visit to the Wild Flower Meadow at Brecks Farm

Brecks Farm at Swillington Garforth is down a lane off the A 642 .( Post code LS26 8BY) . Coming from the Leeds direction on the A63 turn right at the roundabout taking the the A642 ( in the direction of Swillington and Rothwell) The farm lane is on the Left about a quarter of a mile from the roundabout near the top of a hill

If you would like to join us please email David Cooke at [cookedl@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:cookedl@tiscali.co.uk), or phone him on 01937573377.

### Planning Training

Following Joe's report we are planning holding the first training sessions in this autumn, most probably on Saturday mornings so that members who are still working can attend. We plan to hold them in Leeds, Huddersfield, Bradford, Halifax and Wakefield.

So that we can get an idea of who would like to attend, could you please let me know either by email at [church\\_mj@yahoo.com](mailto:church_mj@yahoo.com) , phone me on 01924 462811 or drop me a line at 58 Alexandra Crescent, Birkdale Road, Dewsbury, WF13 4HL.

Michael Church

### Honley Show Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June

We will be again exhibiting at the Honley Show in the Countryside Tent Why not pop in and meet members of the Southern District. If you have the time to help on the stand, please contact Susan Carter on 01484 847439.

### Executive Meetings

- 18<sup>th</sup> July 2013 7:00pm – Methodist Mission, Leeds
- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013 7:00pm – Methodist Mission, Leeds
- 21<sup>st</sup> November 1:00pm – Three Nuns Pub, Mirfield, meet 12:15 for Lunch

## Situations Vacant

We still have two vacancies in the branch one old and the other new which we hope some of you will be tempted to come forward to fill.

### Minutes Secretary to the Executive Committee

Until recently Rosemary Hollins has been our Minute Secretary. She did the job for several years and due to personal reasons has stood down. We would like to thank Rosemary for the work she did on the Executive Committee and the excellent timely minutes that she took.

We now urgently need a replacement for Rosemary. This is an opportunity to get more involved with the branch. Duties are to prepare the Agenda, take the minutes of the executive meetings and the Annual General Meeting, agree them with the Chairman and send them out to members of the committee.

The Executive Committee meets six times a year for the winter months the meetings are at the Three Nuns Pub in Mirfield from 1:00pm to around 3:00pm. In the summer we vary the venue and meet in the evenings starting at 7:00pm and ending around 9:00pm.

We need somebody that has PC experience and internet access.

If you are interested please contact:

Michael Church on email [church\\_mj@yahoo.com](mailto:church_mj@yahoo.com) telephone 01924 462811 or Mobile 0777 607 7289

or

Charles Tunbridge email [charlestunbridge@btinternet.com](mailto:charlestunbridge@btinternet.com)

### Webmaster

The Executive Committee has decided to move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and as our first move we are looking to set up our own website. We have received a template from national office with full instructions.

Having the tools we now need somebody with some IT experience and internet access to take the project forward.

If you are interested please contact Michael Church on email [church\\_mj@yahoo.com](mailto:church_mj@yahoo.com) telephone 01924 462811 or Mobile 0777 607 7289