

# The Dorset Review

Campaign to Protect Rural England



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**Front Cover image** – Cowslips on Hod Hill, Blandford Forum, taken by Rupert Hardy



## CHAIR'S REPORT



### Housing Numbers

In my column in the Autumn 2018 Review I referred to the Government's target of building 300,000 houses per year and the devising of a formula for Local Authorities (LA) to use when planning housing numbers. I also referred to the fact that the latest demographic trends figures, on which, such a format should be based, showed that housing need was being exaggerated, and whether or not the Government would act on these new figures. Indeed they did by issuing an instruction that the old 2014 figures were still to be used in the calculations! They then instigated 'consultation' on the how the formula should be amended in the future. Writing a very detailed response to this consultation Matt Thompson, CPRE's Head Of Planning, wrote: *'The standard method for the estimation of local housing demand is already deeply flawed and the proposal to retain the use of the 2014-based household projections is a fudge of staggering ineptitude'*. He goes on to say *'The argument that application of the current standard method formula to new projections results in a figure (213,000) that is lower than the number of houses delivered in the previous year is wrong'* and he goes on to explain why.

We are all aware of the nonsense associated with the large numbers of houses that are being demanded that LAs deliver. We have been indicating this for years now, we are still being asked to accept these figures and the speculative development that goes with them. CPRE Surrey with others have a case currently with the High Court that, if they win, might help clarification of whether or not the Government is within its rights to keep adjusting methodology to suit its requirements.

### Housing Need

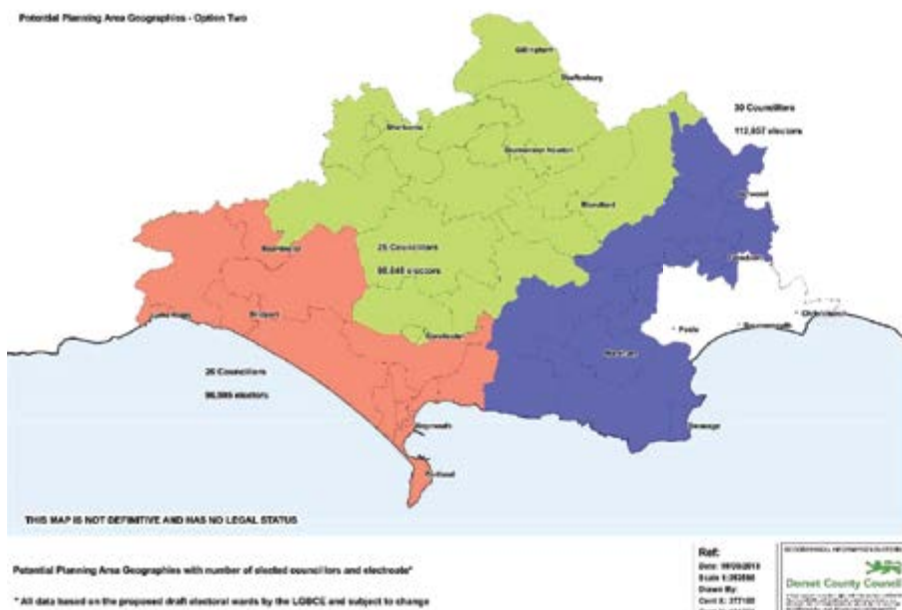
Of course it isn't just the overall housing numbers that are important. As we have said before it is what houses are needed and where. For example in the two Unitary Authorities for Dorset their combined housing registers show a requirement currently for 11589 dwellings (Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch: 6,289 and Dorset

County: 5,300). I have been able to obtain the breakdown of the types of accommodation required in the Districts of North and West Dorset and Weymouth/Portland. It might come as a surprise to you that 83% of the register is looking for one or two bedroom accommodation and just over 50% in total are single people. If you compare that with planning applications you will see that there is a huge mismatch between what is being built or planned and what is required. It is no surprise therefore, from my experience, that the numbers on the registers don't appear to alter much year on year. The current system isn't delivering the housing needed and the authorities don't really have the power to 'dictate' to the major house builders the type of housing they should build.

The Government have accepted Oliver Letwin's recommendation regarding more diversity on sites above 1500 houses but whether this will have much affect is difficult to see. Not many of our housing projects will be for that size of development anyway.

### New Unitary Authorities and Planning

By the time you read this the new Unitary Authorities will have been formed. As far as planning is concerned it looks as if the Dorset County Authority will have one strategic planning committee which will handle certain strategic town and country planning issues including applications that cross boundaries of the 3 local planning committees. These committees will consider applications based on East, Central and West locations. A map of the areas is below. Initially the Local Plans for these areas will continue to be considered policy but with the housing numbers aggregated across the County. By 2024 a composite Local Plan will be produced. It is hoped that this will have more strategic planning in it and we will endeavour to have as much input to that plan as possible. In the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Authority it is understood they will have one planning committee. Currently only Poole has a Local Plan and they similarly will produce an overall plan by 2024. Your local group will be inputting to that process.



## House and Landscape Design

Another important factor, as I have said before, is the design of accommodation being built. Elsewhere in this Review Rupert Hardy has compared design in the vernacular of local areas, with what the major house builders are building and I won't steal his thunder by further comment here. What your Trustees have agreed to do is to try early next year to conduct a day conference on housing and landscape design, aimed at planners and landowners in particular. We currently believe that several eminent architects will agree to participate. So look out for further information in due course!

## National Park for Dorset

A key decision of the Countryside Forum and the Trustees, taken recently, was to commit the Branch to supporting a National Park to cover the new Dorset County. Sandra Brown has commented on the current status of the National Park proposal on a later page. We sent views into the Glover Review and have just received the first report from the consultant we commissioned to assist with developing the proposal. Once this has been finalised it will be made available on our website, for comment.

## We have participated in the following Consultations:

- Defra consultation on a deposit return system

- Lord Best's Affordable Housing Commission
- MHCLG Local housing need assessment
- The Glover review Landscapes review: National Parks and AONBs
- Permitted development for shale gas exploration (Government consultation)
- Inclusion of shale gas production projects in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project Regime

## Other Issues

At National level the project which was mentioned by Crispin Truman as long ago as our 2017 AGM, is reaching its conclusion and more details should be available at the CPRE National AGM and Conference in June.

Finally, some of you will be aware that the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) prepare an economic strategy for the whole of Dorset and have been enlarging this to be more of a South West strategic review. The concentration is more on industrial strategy and they are light on concept of the rural economy. We have raised this issue within the CPRE South West Regional Committee and proposed that CPRE should produce a Regional Rural Economic Strategy. The CPRE South West Regional Chairman, Janette Ward, Richard Nicholls and Peter Bowyer may well lead on this as ideas develop.

Signing off now but hope to see many of you at the Garden Party on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July.

*Peter Neal*  
Chair of Trustees



Sally King, Dorset AONB, guest speaker at Countryside Forum December 2018



### North Dorset remains under siege

Ever since August 2017 when North Dorset District Council (NDDC) admitted that its housing land had fallen well below the government required five years supply, a spate of speculative schemes has been launched by housing developers. The North Dorset Group warned then of the dire consequences as five years housing land supply is essential for controlling planning applications under its adopted local plan.

### Housing Land Supply

However, despite a huge rise in planning applications to over 3,000 dwellings for the year to end May 2018, the deficit on Housing Land Supply to March 2018 came in disappointingly low at 3.3 years. Government tightened up unfortunately last year on the definition of “deliverability”, which was a factor, but there were also serious delays on major developments in Gillingham and Shaftesbury. A further issue has been delays in bringing planning applications to committee hearings due to the under-resourcing of the NDDC planning teams.

### Local Plans

We have been led to believe that existing Local Plans using the old LPA boundaries will prevail in the new unitary authority, Dorset Council, until a new Local Plan is adopted for all rural Dorset, but that does not have to be in place until 2024, but it may possibly get done earlier. This means that a deficit on Housing Land Supply in North Dorset is likely for some years despite the large number of housing applications coming in currently.

However, the transfer to Dorset Council is unlikely to be easy as there are the May elections so no one is certain who will be representing them, and it appears that very few of the ND Councillors standing in May have any planning experience anyway. Inexperienced councillors will need lots of training and may not be operational as a Planning Committee until late summer so there may be interim planning committees composed of experienced councillors but it is unclear how this will be achieved.

### Planning Applications

Housing planning applications are still coming in fast to ND, although actual numbers have fallen since early last year. We have been busy objecting to the most inappropriate of them. Richard Jones wrote a good letter against a 61 house development application in Marnhull, the fourth major one in a year. Derek Gardiner wrote an excellent objection to a 39 dwelling development at Pimperne as well as commenting effectively on the Scoping Opinion request for no less than 700 houses between Blandford and Pimperne. We also wrote against the housing development that Councillor Deborah Croney plans for her paddock at Iwerne Minster, as well as a housing proposal on an unsustainable site outside Child Okeford. Chris Gale objected strongly at the February planning hearing for 80 new houses at Bryanston within the AONB, but sadly to no avail despite lots of abstentions on the planning committee. Francesca Pratt spoke valiantly against a 61 house proposal at Marnhull.

### Reserved Matters Applications

We are also concerned about the importance of assessing Reserved Matters Applications (REM) which deal more with appearance. Local residents focus more on initial Outline applications, but developers are often unscrupulous in the changes made to developments at the REM stage. We are concerned that developments should not be Persimmon style Noddy boxes which ignore vernacular Dorset building styles and offer uniformity rather than diversity (please see separate article on page 6 in this Review).

A case in point is the recent Littledown Shaftesbury REM housing application. After Outline approval the land was purchased by Redrow, who changed the design layout, did not hold a public consultation and nor did they consult with the Cranborne Chase AONB, in whose area this is located, unlike the previous developer. We submitted a strong objection to this, and another one against 120 houses at Stalbridge, and also to the Blandford St Mary 211 dwelling development REM, where Bellway

continue to insist a pelican crossing is the best solution to linking the estate to Blandford across the busy A354, rather than a pedestrian bridge, despite innumerable protests.

### Speculative land promoters

We do have good news to report in that the Cann Common housing development for 55 dwellings has been turned down as has a smaller proposal for 9 houses at Spetisbury while the appeal mounted by Lightwood Strategic regarding its 100 dwelling development at Stalbridge has been dismissed. We objected to all three. We have very low regard for speculative land promoters, such as Lightwood. We have also been fortunate to get some good front page coverage in the local media on our views on housing.

### Solar

The solar farm at Spetisbury (36MW on 90-100 acres i.e. will be one of the biggest in Dorset) is sadly back on the agenda as they have asked NDDC for another EIA Screening Opinion. There is growing concern that developers can now build solar farms combined with battery storage profitably without subsidy, due to falling solar panel prices, but they have to be large ones to enjoy economies of scale. This means greater adverse visual impact.

### Planning Monitoring Group revived

The Planning Monitoring Group, which is run by John Holiday and myself, has been revived thanks to more volunteers. This should enable us to be a more effective group opposing inappropriate developments, particularly on the housing front.

### Summer Party

We are holding a late summer party at Chettle House on 5<sup>th</sup> September at 6pm through the generosity of Tom and Rosamond Sweet-Escott. They have spent the last three years restoring Chettle and its gardens to its former glory so it will be wonderful to have the chance to visit. Pevsner called it “the plum among Dorset houses of the early 18th century, and even nationally outstanding as a specimen of English Baroque”.

“One certainty is that more applications will get delegated, which likely means more approvals. This is worrying!”

# DORSET COAST FORUM ANNUAL MEETING



*Rupert Hardy welcoming members and guests to the North Dorset AGM 1st April 2019*

## AGM and Talk on “Farming and its Future in Dorset”

In April we held our AGM at Clayesmore School and George Hosford, the North Dorset farmer, gave an excellent talk about “Farming and its Future in Dorset”. He is well known for his environmental credentials and it was not an easy subject given the never-ending Brexit negotiations, but he warned us of the severe consequences should a “no deal” result. It was well attended with nearly fifty there, lured also by Dorset wine and cheese on offer.

Following our successful talk from George Hosford at our AGM, I have had some requests from members to arrange with him a farm tour. I should add some CPRE volunteers much enjoyed a tour a few years ago there. He would be delighted to take us round on Tuesday June 11th at 5pm, and the tour will last 2-2.5 hours. He can take up to 20. We have a few spaces left.

*Rupert Hardy*  
Group Chairman



*George Hosford giving a talk on Farming and its Future in Dorset at North Dorset AGM*

I attended the annual meeting of the Forum at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy on 29<sup>th</sup> November.

Bob Huggings retired after thirteen years as Chairman of the Forum. He was generously thanked for his services by all concerned and presented with an oil painting. Tony Flux is the new chairman and Lee Hardy is vice chairman.

The Dorset Coast Forum has expanded in recent years and now has a team of ten people covering a wide range of topics. It is not really a campaigning organisation but concentrates on gathering data and facilitating projects related to the Dorset coast. The day was filled with a wide variety of talks:

## Eden Portland

Sebastian Brooke, Project Director, said this new venture would try to explain what it means to be human. It will be located in the worked-out Albion stone mines at Portland. These enormous man-made rectangular caverns are ready-made for the Project and will avoid the expense and time delay of building a new structure.

This will be almost another world underground with displays concentrating on biodiversity and how this has related to extinction and regeneration processes throughout the ages. The Project is headed by Dr Tim Smit and is supported by Dorset LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), and by the new Dorset Council.



*The Portland stone mine on the Isle of Portland*

## Smart Pebbles

Sacha Neill, Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership, told us how a large number of barcoded coloured pebbles were distributed along Portsmouth beach and then tracked with a radio frequency antenna. The pebbles were of a variety of different sizes and shapes and they indicated the rapid movements of the beach after each storm event and also the littoral drift over several years.

## Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group, FLAG

Martin Sutcliffe, Animateur, said that the Group operated on behalf of fishermen between Swanage and Beer who have 127 vessels mostly less than ten metres. They usually work single handed and catch mainly crab, lobster and whelks. FLAG recently installed a new hut and an improved winch at Lulworth and held a conference for the fishermen in Lyme Regis.

## South West Offshore Renewable Energy

Matt Hodson, Marine Hub Cornwall, said that there was a gigantic market for offshore wind turbines set on platforms like those used for oil extraction in the North Sea. He also talked about tidal stream energy but the technology is not economically viable at the present time.

## Other topics

This included the Durlston Pleasure Grounds Project, the Jurassic Coast Volunteer Network, Making a Dorset National Park, and Litter Free Dorset.

*Dr John Larkin*

*Dorset CPRE representative at the Dorset Coast Forum*

## IN PRAISE OF DORSET VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE: A POINT OF VIEW



*Thatched houses on new estate at Augustan Avenue, Shillingstone*

Before the 17<sup>th</sup> Century all domestic architecture was generally vernacular, whether it be a hall house or hovel, farmhouse or cottage. Houses were built with what was available in terms of local materials, and they were usually simple, practical and rugged. These houses were the building blocks of rural villages and are distinct from grander “polite” ones which are characterised by stylistic elements of design for aesthetic purposes which go beyond a building’s functional requirements, probably using local materials, but not always, in any part of the country. Examples might be Jacobean, Georgian or Victorian Gothic which are reminiscent of different styles and ages.

### Variety of the Underlying Geology

Much of the character of Dorset’s vernacular buildings is based on the variety of the underlying geology. That stone affects the character of the landscape and also its buildings as it was difficult to carry stone too far from a local quarry. You can observe how houses close to the Purbeck quarries used the limestone both for the walls and roof, while houses built ten or more miles away might use terracotta tiles on a roof with stone tiles for only the lower courses, if they were not thatched. In North Dorset around Shaftesbury the local greensand stone was used most effectively as you can see in the Ship Inn located in the town. Brick was used where there was little availability of local stone. Often a mix of materials was used as in brick and flint houses built on the chalk downlands. Cottage walls were often made of cob which is either clay, taken from the sub-soil, mixed with straw and grit, or it is rammed chalk, then rendered with lime plaster.

### Modern Housing Estates

We do not expect modern housing estates to fully emulate historic vernacular buildings, but to blend into existing villages built up over centuries they need to pay more than nominal lip service. The National Planning Policy Framework says that “planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments....are visually attractive as a result of good architecture are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and history”. Some builders do try quite hard to do vernacular



*Handsome brick and flint houses at Manor Farm Close, Pimperne*

successfully, but it is more the local rather than national developers. The problem has partly been the demise of small and medium-sized builders (under 1,000 homes a year) which in 1988 accounted for 40% of new homes in England but this had fallen to 12% by 2017 according to the Home Builders Federation. These builders need easier access to finance, which the government has been slow to act on.

## The Virtues of Local Builders

However, Wyatt Homes, CG Fry, Morrish and Parsons & Joyce are good examples of smaller builders still active in Dorset that have received praise for some, and sometimes a lot, of their work. Estates that appear well designed and vernacular in style include Old Dairy on the old Faccenda chicken factory site at Okeford Fitzpaine (Parsons & Joyce), Augustan Avenue in Shillingstone (Wyatt Homes), Manor Farm Close in Pimperne (Wyatt Homes) and Malt House Meadows in Portesham (CG Fry). This does not mean we are against modern or contemporary, but such housing mostly looks better in an urban environment. By contrast take most Persimmon estates and there is a dull uniformity in the serried rows of “Noddy box” style houses they construct, which usually pay no attention to local vernacular, and offer little diversity. Many of the other national house builders are equally guilty. We would like to see estates that will gradually blend into their surroundings, not stand out like sore thumbs.



*Attractive vernacular estate at Old Dairy, Okeford Fitzpaine*

## More Skilled Labour

Why is this? There are clearly multiple factors at work but recent discussions with local builders suggest the following. Vernacular building clearly requires more skilled labour and is a little more expensive, and you can see this in the form of thatched roofs, or brick and flint fascias. Local builders mostly like working within the parameters of Local Plans, developing long-term relationships with those farmers and large estates who are concerned about their legacy to communities, and are better geared to delivering small estates, say under a hundred dwellings.



*Dull Uniformity of Persimmon estate at Gurkha Road, Blandford*

## Housing Land Supply

In North Dorset we have a particular problem with the deficit in the housing land supply and as at April 2018 this was only 3.3 years due to slow build-out-rates on certain key estates in Gillingham and Shaftesbury. We see the crude five-year housing land supply measure applied to LPAs as unfair and unjust as it encourages speculative developers to target unsustainable sites that had been excluded in the Local Plan. In particular it suits land promoters, such as Gladman, with extensive marketing teams, who are only too happy to get planning permission on a site and then sell it to the highest bidder with little regard for quality. Dorset CPRE scrutinise housing applications where possible, and one should point that the appearance of an estate is often left to Reserved Matter Applications, and sadly local residents do not pay enough attention to these, focusing their efforts on the earlier initial Outline Applications.

Overall government wants to deliver 300,000 houses a year nationally but there is a clear perception that there is little regard for quality, and we will not cover in depth the woeful lack of genuinely affordable or social housing in this mix. However looking at North Dorset in the year ending April 2018 only 9 housing completions were classified as affordable. The drive for quantity plays into the hands of the national builders, who primarily work off standardised portfolios, and appear to have little regard for local vernacular.

## Local Builders Need Support

Local builders would certainly like more support from government and we applaud Oliver Letwin's Build-Out Review last year with its recommendation that large estates should provide a more diverse offering. All builders face rising costs, labour shortages and an increasing regulatory burden, but the local ones highlight the problem of dealing with under-resourced local planning departments, with underpaid staff. The best planning officers are easily tempted to join developer teams. In North Dorset the delay between validation and an Outline planning hearing is approaching a year for major developments. To help local builders, LPAs should be required to include within their local plans a strategic consideration of the contribution that small sites can make to local housing delivery, and how they can enable this to come forward. The New Dorset Council Unitary Authority took over in April, and there are hopes that the planning teams will be better resourced.

*Rupert Hardy*



### Enhancing protection of national assets

It is a joy to be able to see the respect given to our countryside by so many and to appreciate that they take great pleasure in seeing wildlife flourishing. Therefore, it was good to see Poole and Purbeck planners consulting with local people about enhancing the current substantial protections of Poole harbour to mitigate the recreational impact of new housing development upon the harbour.

### Landscapes and Biodiversity

Although parts of our county enjoy some protection from landscape and wildlife designations, such designations have not prevented or stemmed the deterioration in our landscapes and biodiversity which has occurred in the past 70 years and which continues – for example a decline of almost 60% in insect life with consequent implications for birds, animals and plant life. Dorset CPRE supports a Dorset National Park, which would work with partners to conserve and enhance our environment and wildlife. We want this National Park to include as much as possible of the Dorset Council area.

Beauty is in the mind of the beholder but often requires 'mother nature' to figure prominently. Consequently it does not surprise me that architects are seriously considering green walls, green roofs and yet more trees in urban areas and their clients are warming to such ideas which should help insects and birds to flourish more easily.

In our responses to the above-mentioned consultation we supported the need for enhanced protection measures (assuming that all avoidance opportunities will be exhausted first!) if Dorset really must have over 70,000 extra houses during the next ten years or so: a matter that needs careful re-examination when possible since considerable doubt exists over the 'need' for such a large number.

The thrust of our responses to the Poole and Purbeck planners may be briefly summarised as follows:-

**1:** The absence of any mention in the consultation documents of the role of The Maritime Management Organisation (MMO) was surprising



Arne, Poole Harbour

in view of their Poole office and the considerable interest and powers the organisation has over the harbour and sources of damage to the environment including its flora and fauna. Polluters upstream in the catchment area of the harbour are subject to their powers as well as those damaging the harbour (and its wildlife) much more directly.

**2:** The public examination of Local Plans should always consider the adequacy of mitigation measures when considering the soundness of necessary extra houses. This appears not to have occurred for the Poole Local Plan but no doubt it will in respect of the Purbeck Local Plan. Poole is left trying to avoid building at its margins in order to comply

with the new Habitats Regulations or finding practical and affordable mitigation measures.

**3:** The very special characteristics of the Dorset coast (that includes the country's only natural World Heritage Site) will continue to be reinforced by Poole harbour if effective measures for controlling recreation facilities are implemented. It is hoped that this will be possible given the indications in the consultation documents and the interest of the MMO, Natural England and local landowners that include The National Trust.

### Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace

Amongst the other things that we suggested (full statement available upon request to me) was the view that the effects of a SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) are not yet properly addressed. SANGs encourage people to exercise their dogs in areas often occupied by wildlife. During nesting periods dogs not on leads will not only frighten birds but they will also eat the eggs /chicks of ground-nesting birds at such a speed that the owners will probably not notice but another generation of that bird will have vanished: an unsustainable policy. In other words SANGs are not the whole answer to relevant mitigation and the role of urban parks and playing fields must be strengthened to protect the wildlife in the SANGs and at large.

*Gerald Rigler*

Group Chairman



Sunset casts its magic over irises and foxgloves taken by Rupert Hardy

# A NATIONAL PARK FOR DORSET

The government-appointed Glover Review of Designated Landscapes offers a great opportunity for Dorset to secure its long-awaited National Park (NP). Thank you to all those CPRE Members who responded to the Glover Review consultation in support of the proposed Dorset National Park. As Tom Fyans, CPRE's Director of campaigns and policy, told our AGM in November, the national team considers Dorset a strong and well-evidenced candidate for NP designation.

In Dorset CPRE's response to the Glover Review in December we said:

*Dorset CPRE supports the designation of a Dorset National Park. We see the following as key points:*

- Dorset has world class environment, biodiversity, cultural heritage and natural capital, and these are Dorset's greatest economic asset, worth around £1 – 4 bn pa (see report for Dorset County Council on Dorset's Environmental Economy: <https://jurassiccoast.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Dorsets-Environmental-Economy-Final-Report-Dec-2015.pdf>. This is undoubtedly an underestimate and does not fully reflect the value of rural Dorset's environment and heritage.) But Dorset also faces serious issues and challenges, including continuing environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity, deterioration of water catchment quality and harbour ecology, as reports by the Dorset LNP (Local Nature Partnership), DWT (Dorset Wildlife Trust) and others show. Communities and the countryside face pressures from development, yet there is a shortage of housing which is genuinely affordable by local people including young workers and families.
- The Dorset Council with its wide-ranging responsibilities including social care, will be stretched, including financially, and a Dorset National Park would work in partnership with the Dorset Council and other stakeholders to address these challenges. The Dorset AONB, with comparatively very limited responsibilities and resources, and no statutory planning role, cannot realistically do this, even if its role and resources were enhanced.
- A Dorset National Park, whatever its boundaries, would work for and benefit the whole of rural Dorset. It would bring additional resources and support the Dorset Council, in partnership with other stakeholders, to deliver on the environment and heritage, biodiversity and natural capital. The Council and the NP would share a planning team, develop a joint, coherent local plan for the whole of rural Dorset – an important reassurance for areas and communities that could be outside the NP. They would work together on a shared agenda for living, working, thriving, resilient and sustainable communities, countryside and rural economy including farming, throughout rural Dorset.

A NP would work with the Dorset Council, communities, farmers and landowners, to promote appropriate development, including housing for local people and truly affordable homes, and relevant economic development that rural Dorset needs. It could work with farmers and landowners to develop and deliver to all of rural Dorset locally relevant public benefit funding, as proposed by the South Downs and other NPs. A NP could develop a coherent tourism strategy, promote added value eco and heritage tourism, help spread the season and economic benefits to parts of Dorset that are underappreciated and help manage tourism pressures, e.g. at coastal hot-spots. It would work with all stakeholders to develop the natural capital investment strategy called for by the Dorset LNP.



*Pilsdon Pen, Lewesdon Hill, West Dorset taken by Ben Buxton*

- The suggested boundary of the National Park is a starting point and subject to Natural England's detailed assessment. Dorset CPRE would wish the boundary of the National Park to be the new unitary authority of rural Dorset. We are actively working on the case for this. This would include Thomas Hardy's Egdon Heath, the market towns of Sherborne and Sturminster Newton and their associated countryside, and the Isle of Portland.

The Dorset NP Team, in its response to Glover, said *"The National Park should include as much of rural Dorset as meets the designation criteria. It would be the first English National Park to have a significant coastal area – the spectacular World Heritage Jurassic Coast – and potentially the first to have an offshore role."*

## Benefits all of Dorset

The NP Team has set out how a National Park should operate to benefit all of Dorset. The NP would be a catalyst for a living, working, thriving, resilient and sustainable Dorset by helping to promote action to benefit our communities and economy as well as the landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage. The NP would be a close partner and asset for the new Dorset Council. It would work on a shared agenda and bring much-needed additional resources to support local services, communities and the economy.

## National Park Funding

NPs are funded by central Government and are not a call on local people or businesses. At a time when the Dorset Council will have many priorities including the rising cost of adult and children's social care, a partner NP could look after the environmental agenda and free Council time and resources to focus on other priorities. There would be a shared planning team and seamless local planning, and the NP would work with the Dorset Council and communities to assess and meet local housing needs including for genuinely affordable homes.

Support for the proposal continues to grow. Weymouth & Portland Borough Council in January agreed a resolution calling on the Glover Review to support the proposal and ask Natural England to prioritise its full assessment.

## Newsletter

The Dorset National Park Spring Newsletter, with interesting articles and including "Your questions answered" and an at-a-glance summary of the benefits of a NP, is available on the NP website: <https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com/single-post/Spring2019> where you can also see the NP Team's submission to the Glover Review, and a further note to the Glover panel on landscape diversity, accessibility and relative deprivation.

*Sandra Brown*

Dorset National Park Team

## WEST DORSET GROUP



Plans continue to abound for more building over the beautiful Dorset Countryside. The case against the number and types of houses planned continues to grow.

### Housing Seminar

We joined a recent seminar organised by CPRE Devon with 230 people attending. Their recent review of housing 'need' was presented – "A Review of Government Housing Policy and Its Impact on Devon". It has startling results. It examines the evidence of the claimed housing crisis and that the housing market is broken. It shows that both claims are false. Government figures for future housing need are based on out-of-date data and false projections. This report caused great local interest in Devon and a significant rise in local CPRE membership as a result. We hope we might be able to arrange a similar review for Dorset – and perhaps encourage other counties in the South West region (or further) to do similarly. Perhaps central government might then take some notice? In essence it says that the government's estimate of the number of houses needed is about twice that actually required. And, as we know, most houses are not of the type required – too large, unaffordable etc. – also as identified by National Office.

The seminar continued in to the afternoon when it became a completely different affair. I gather the Review was to be summarised before the Housing Minister spoke so he would know the facts but somehow that was cancelled! The local MP, Sir Hugo Swire, spoke first. Kit Malthouse MP, Minister of State for Housing, gave a speech and answered questions. Most people, myself included, left very disappointed and angry. He had avoided all the relevant issues and questions. I am afraid there was some laughter and heckling. Sir Hugo Swire was to speak after that but somehow he also declined. It shows that we have a huge task ahead. Meanwhile the countryside suffers as large developers make huge profits (one was quoted as making an average of £72,000 per house). Ecosystems and wildlife are being destroyed.

### Housing Developments

Currently the largest threats to West Dorset are firstly the 3500 houses north of Dorchester. We are working with



*Dorchester Spring Clean event 30<sup>th</sup> March organised by Litter Free Dorset*

local action group STAND (Save The Land North of Dorchester). Secondly up to 930 houses are planned at Vearse Farm which sits on the western outskirts of Bridport in the parish of Symondsbury. It is an AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) overlooked by many significant hills, including the iconic Dorset landmark Colmer's Hill. Again, Dorset CPRE are supporting the local group, ADVEARSE. Thirdly (and again in the AONB) is the Littlemoor application – so called Littlemoor Urban Extension. This is of course on top of the Nottingham development and much building in Chickerell as well as many other applications.

### Planning appeal over 120 homes for Charminster

At the time of writing, the now lengthy inquiry in to the 120 houses right next to Wolfeton House, Westleaze, Charminster, continues. We await the result with trepidation. They start with the usual frankly pathetic 30% affordable homes – which will probably be reduced. As usual the developers, in this case Land Value Alliances Ltd, claim the damage will be minimal. Architectural historian, Roger White, from our Sherborne and District Society CPRE had warned that allowing homes to be built close to the Grade 1 listed Wolfeton House could set a precedent for additional houses in the area.

We were involved in trying to prevent a large extension to a scrapyard (in the AONB) near Portesham. I am afraid unsuccessfully and I believe it was passed on rather dubious grounds in that one of the councillors stated that it didn't matter it was in the AONB.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April Dorset Council will replace

the existing district and borough councils (East Dorset, North Dorset, Purbeck, West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland) and Dorset County Council, all of which will cease to exist. The second unitary authority to be known as Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council. How this will affect planning will soon become apparent.

### Recent AGM

Our AGM took place at Charlton Down on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We were very fortunate to have Tom Munro, the AONB manager, who gave an extremely interesting talk on the new AONB Management Plan and the project development work Dorset AONB are scoping in West Dorset. Linda Poulsen of STAND and Sarah Carney of ADVEARSE also gave an update on their campaign efforts.



*West Dorset Group AGM – Dr Guy Dickinson, Tom Munro and Dr John Larkin*

### Dorchester Spring Clean

On a different note, some of us helped in the Dorchester Litter Pick on March 30<sup>th</sup> organised by Litter Free Dorset. The haul was worryingly large and varied. Please see our Litter Campaigns article on the next page for more details.

*Dr Guy Dickinson*  
Group Chairman

## LITTER CAMPAIGNS

### Damers First School urge Michael Gove to back an 'all-in' deposit return system

A group of schoolchildren from Damers First School in Dorchester travelled to London on 27<sup>th</sup> February and met with the environment secretary Michael Gove to urge him to introduce an 'all-in' deposit return system that covers all drinks cans, bottles and cartons.

In a meeting organised by CPRE, the children questioned Michael Gove on his plans for tackling litter, and presented him with their 'golden rules' for how the system should operate.

Damers First School have a number of green initiatives that the children have helped to set up, including becoming a 'plastic-free school' and introducing Learning Gardens and Classrooms. The children are also leading the charge in creating an eco-school and an eco-community in Poundbury, Dorset.

Litter Free Dorset gave Mr Gove a special gift to represent how crucial the Deposit Return System is for a Litter Free Future. The sculpture of 'future fossils' is carved out of Blue Lias by The Dorset Stone Carver Ben Russell.



A Gift 4 Gove sculpture of 'future fossils'

### Deposit Return System Consultation

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) launched in February 2019 a new consultation on two design options for what the system will include and how it will operate. Dorset CPRE are sending a response to the consultation which ends on 13<sup>th</sup> May.

### British Citizen Award

Peter Ryan, from Bournemouth has been recognised at the Palace of Westminster with a British Citizen Award. Peter was recognised for his services to the community, with a BCAC, at a prestigious medal presentation on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

He is proud to say he is the first person managing a voluntary litter picking community group to pick up the award. Readers of our magazine will be aware that Peter started Dorset Devils in 2013 and with some gentle encouragement, use of social media and lots of talking rubbish they now have 400+ signed up residents which includes 35 junior Devils.

Peter said 'The whole idea of Dorset Devils is individual effort within our own neighbourhoods and other outdoor spaces, especially our beach, whenever we each feel like it. It's intended to make our local environment that much cleaner and tidier, raise some community spirit and hopefully encourage others to do the right thing.'

The community group receives support from Bournemouth



Chris Larmer, Peter Ryan and Michael Underwood at the presentation event



Children from Damers First School meet with Michael Gove

Borough Council (this will continue under the new Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council) who provide equipment, and Bournemouth University who have allowed them to kit out the junior Devils and increase their reach with the TeamDD activities.

### 'Don't Be A Tos53r' roadside litter

This campaign was launched by Litter Free Dorset in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy aimed at those who toss their rubbish out of car windows.

You may have spotted the posters displayed on bus shelters and locations like McDonalds restaurants. Litter Free Dorset have received positive feedback from the public. The National Trust have put posters up in car parks ready for the tourist season however some people have taken them down. Litter Free Dorset will start using street cleaning vehicles to promote the campaign within the next couple of months.



### Dorchester Spring Clean 30<sup>th</sup> March

Representatives from Dorset CPRE along with over 80 people turned up to give Dorchester a good clean. The event was organised by Litter Free Dorset, as part of the Great British Spring Clean which ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> March to 23<sup>rd</sup> April.

The volunteers collected 40 bags of rubbish as well as some unusual finds including some bathroom scales, a strimmer and some plastic vinyl. The fresh fruit from Waitrose in Poundbury went down a treat. All fruit left over was delivered to Dorchester Community Church for Sunday's food parcels.

### Big Blandford Litter Pick

One of our members wrote in to tell us about her granddaughter Romilly aged ten, together with a friend of the same age from Spetisbury School, who advertised, organised and executed a grand litter pick in Blandford on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March, from 10.00am to 2.00pm.

It was cold, very windy and drizzly but in spite of the weather over fifty people came to support and help them. The volunteers collected over 22 bags of rubbish and 7 big crates of recycling material. Well done Romilly!

# THE SHERBORNE AND DISTRICT SOCIETY

## Housing and Planning

As you are aware from earlier Dorset Reviews the West Dorset/Weymouth and Portland (West Dorset District Council) Local Development Plan was under review in 2018 and we contributed a critical and forward thinking paper to WDDC. We suggested that given the advent of the new Dorset Unitary Authority, a “cut and paste” job on the individual local plans and policies was inappropriate. The time was right for an overall review of all Local Development Plans (LDP). It was time for fresh thought on Dorset’s housing and employment needs and development. Sadly, the opportunity has been delayed and old policies will be perpetuated until a new plan is developed by 2024. The LDP will not recognise the reality of modern shopping, lack of public transport and the impact of the internet. Over the next year we will reconsider whatever plan emerges and work to preserve Sherborne and its environs and give its development a chance.

On housing numbers, the LDP has to accept slavishly the formulaic approach embedded in the new National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF promulgated by the Department of Communities and Local Government. This necessarily leads to plans for excessive development around Sherborne. We will use all our efforts to try to deter the excess whilst encouraging well designed developments of brownfield sites and appropriate affordable housing.

Our strategy is to try to be pro-active and look for opportunities to influence proposals before they become issues to oppose. We continue to develop relations with Oliver Letwin, the Council’s Strategic Planners, The Town Council and Sherborne Castle Estates. In this connection I have joined a Committee to develop the barns at Barton Farm.

The intention is to turn these into a Community Arts facility with workshops, an auditorium and parking. It would be a home for ArtsLink in Sherborne.

## The Paddock Project

The Paddock Project has continued to dominate your Committee’s time and I repeat that the Society, in principle, should encourage this project which represented an opportunity to bring a gallery to Sherborne. But we have now seen, considered and formally objected to the plans in the Planning Application. This followed a special meeting where the Committee voted unanimously for this course of action whilst also agreeing that we should support the idea but not these plans. The Application came before the last meeting of the Planning Committee in late March. The design has changed a little from last year to increase the size of the building on the site but it still means the destruction of half of Paddock Gardens, the loss of significant parking spaces and an undistinguished building. There is no business plan so the likelihood is that this may become an albatross for Sherborne. Our numerous attempts to get the scheme amended have been fruitless – no changes at all were made in the process leading up to the planning application.

At the Planning Committee we learnt that Heritage England, a statutory consultee, had on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March formally objected to the building and recommended that the application be withdrawn for further negotiation of the design of the development. In addition, some forceful presentations from our committee members on Sherborne House, parking problems and the loss of Paddock Gardens meant that the Planning Committee did not put the application to a vote of approval or refusal.

Instead consideration was delayed and there was a recommendation that the application itself be re-considered.

The benefactor of the Paddock Project has in 2018, through a different Charitable Trust, purchased Sherborne House. Our President, Peter Neal, has met with the benefactor and talked through his plans. We continue to offer constructive discussions and hope that the Trustees of the Sherborne Arts Trust will now feel able to change course on some of their plans for the Paddock Project.

## Events

Our thanks are due to Edward Fox who spoke at our dinner in 2018. This will be a hard act to follow too. Then I would like to thank Shaun Leavey for organising another successful farm visit to Mr Loder’s dairy farm near Milborne Port. This was very informative and interesting. This year Shaun has organised a visit to Sherborne Castle Home Farm on Friday 31 May at 2 to 4.30pm. This is described as: “an arable unit with some areas of grass, also growing forage maize for the local dairy farmers and we can touch on the deer”. Numbers will be restricted to 20.

During the year we formed a sub-committee to review our attendance at the Sherborne Castle Country Fair. They have worked extremely hard and will revivify our approach.

## AGM

Sadly, I have to report some retirements from our Committee. Firstly, David Gould our vice Chairman and for many years Secretary has relinquished all his roles even Chairmanship of Yetminster Parish Council and has decided to retire. We are grateful for all the work he has done for the Society.



Sherborne and District Society AGM

Next the Rev Richard Kirlew has been recognised in the Diocese and in 2018 has been promoted to a more onerous and time consuming task – that of Rural Officer for the whole of Dorset. We wish him well in this and thank him for past service. We hope he will have time to contact us now and then as appropriate.

Lastly Malcom Saunders has decided to retire due to a move and health issues. We greatly valued his advice as a man of common sense and a former planner. He will be missed.

I would like to thank all the members

of the Committee for the hard work they continue to put in and their real support. We could do with more support and hence any member is welcome to come along to the Raleigh Hall on the first Tuesday of alternate months to join the Committee and participate. Of course, I should not chivvy you as members – my gratitude is due to you. Without you we don't have a Society. Your commitment to our aims is much appreciated.

The following were elected as The Society Committee for the next year. Peter Neal (President), John Newman

(Chairman), John West (Treasurer), Fiona Hartley (Secretary), Ray Hartley (Membership Secretary), Paul Austin, Johnnie Boodle, Sir Chris Coville, Douglas Rice, Shaun Leavey and Roger White. Dickie Bird is our Life Vice-President.

The meeting concluded with a very interesting talk, including a Question and Answer session, on a National Park for Dorset, given by Sandra and Richard Brown.

*John Newman*  
Group Chairman

## DORSET LOCAL NATURE PARTNERSHIP

### Annual Forum 2019 A 25Year Environment Plan for Dorset

I attended the Forum at the Lighthouse in Poole on 27<sup>th</sup> February. Dr Simon Cripps, Chairman LNP, said that the Government's 25 Year Environmental Plan was published in January 2018 and that Dorset LNP will support the Plan and produce a manifesto which is already in draft form. He outlined the six priorities:

#### Chapter 1. Using and managing land sustainably

Luke Rake, Dorset LEP, said that the Gross Value Added (GVA) in Dorset lags behind other parts of the Country. We must acquire the necessary finance for clean growth and use the benefits of our natural environment to compete with the so-called northern powerhouse. We will work with farmers to protect crops, manage the heathland and support large scale woodland creation,

#### Chapter 2. Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes

Tom Munro, Dorset AONB, said that their Management Plan 2019 – 24 showed how they would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB. The South Dorset Ridgeway Partnership has greatly improved that landscape over the past five years. The Glover Review of National Parks and AONBs will conclude its work later this year and will produce its report in time for the seventieth anniversary of the first NPs in December.

#### Chapter 3. Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing

Rachel Partridge told us that the NHS worked with Local Authorities to promote health and wellbeing through the natural environment and by encouraging children to be close to nature. We will support the 2019 Year of Green Action and plant more trees and create more green infrastructure especially in the market towns and villages of Dorset.

#### Chapter 4. Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste

Darren Orchard, Dorset Waste Partnership, said that waste management must be consistent and use best practice

throughout the Country with the collection of a core set of materials for recycling and the free collection of garden waste. The management of food waste in the brown boxes costs £30/ton but £120/ton if the food is put in black bags with waste for landfill. Food waste should be collected everywhere and always be collected weekly, Dorset sets a good example with the second best recycling in the country and it does not send waste abroad. General recycling used to pay for itself but in these more difficult times this is not possible. Manufacturers will be required to meet the full cost of disposing of their packaging.

#### Chapter 5. Securing clean, healthy, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans

Robert Clark, South Dorset Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, told us that the Dorset sea has a very high biodiversity, the DORIS sea search has helped us to understand this region and about half of it is now designated as a Marine Protection Area. The inshore fishery is presently defined as a six mile zone but this and much else may change when we leave the EU. Dorset aquaculture is an important local industry, large quantities of shell fish are grown in Poole Harbour and elsewhere. Weymouth is important for sea angling.

#### Chapter 6. Protecting and improving our global environment

Maria Clarke, Dorset LNP, said that we must tackle climate change and protect and improve international biodiversity, international forests and sustainable global agriculture. Nearer home we have been developing Wild Purbeck and the Natural Improvement Area.

The Government's 25 Year Plan is full of sound ideas and good intentions but not so good on firm target dates or saying where the necessary money will come from. The Dorset LNP seem to have their feet on the ground, have given a good survey of the possibilities and have promised a manifesto later this year with a lot more detail. It will be interesting to see how all this develops in Dorset over the next twenty five years.

*Dr John Larkin*  
Minerals and Waste Adviser to Dorset CPRE

## DORSET FARMING REPORT



*Derelict Barn featured in our publicity campaign on current threat to farms*

In the current political climate it is tempting to think that not only hares are reckoned to be “mad” in March. Recent pronouncements by the US ambassador about the state of farming in the EU (and by implication the UK), the threat of a no-deal Brexit, and the contradictory remarks about US food exports made by Michael Gove MP and Liam Fox MP have all combined to cause enormous concern to the UK farming community.

Mr Gove has hinted that post-Brexit he would establish tariff protection for beef and particularly lamb, but would not confirm the position for cereal production. Mr Gove later echoed the concerns expressed by the President of the NFU, and acknowledged that “*Australia and New Zealand have tariff-free access to EU markets for a certain amount of sheep meat. If we lose our EU market share, it would be extremely difficult to restore it*”.

Land agents are still talking up farmland sales, but acknowledge that more land has been coming on the market. Significantly for the first time for very many years more agricultural land is being bought by those who are not currently farmers than by existing farmers. I have a suspicion that some of this trend may be caused by the government’s apparent enthusiasm for future support payments going to those with land even if that land is not actually farmed. If we treasure our existing landscape in Dorset this trend is one of which we should – at the very least – be cautious about.

Around the time of the Brexit referendum I was concerned that the government was not carrying out the appraisals – commodity by commodity – of the economic impact that Brexit would have on UK farming. When we were in transition for entering the EEC (as it then was) the National Economic Development Council sponsored such studies which were a useful aid to the industry even though they were not an infallible guide to what would actually occur. Where are they now?

“Almost one-in-eight food and drinks businesses believe they may go bust in the event of a no-deal Brexit according to a survey by the Food and Drink Federation”

A further 46% believe crashing out of Europe would be a “*very serious challenge*” and likely result in redundancies. While three-in-ten said they had done everything they could to prepare, they remained unsure about their supply chain. A further one-in-ten said they simply did not have the resources to prepare for no-deal at all.

### Publicity on current threat to farms

Sherborne CPRE is working on a publicity campaign to highlight the current threat to farms throughout the county of Dorset and increase recruitment to CPRE. Our provisional message in poster form (linked to the above photo) is as follows:

**IF YOU DON'T WANT LOCAL FARMS  
TO LOOK LIKE THIS**

**JOIN SHERBORNE CPRE**  
**Government plans for farming seriously threaten the  
viability of many Dorset farms and farming families.**  
**The Sherborne group of CPRE is fighting for  
measures that will safeguard Dorset farms . . .  
but needs your support.**  
**PLEASE JOIN TODAY**

### Farm Visit 31<sup>st</sup> May

Lastly there is an opportunity for CPRE members to be shown round Sherborne Castle home farm by Mr Paul Carter the farm manager during the afternoon of Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May. Numbers will be limited to 20, and precedence will go to Sherborne CPRE members, but others can apply. Those wishing to take part are asked to contact Shaun Leavey on [battlegreen@waitrose.com](mailto:battlegreen@waitrose.com). Directions as to where the farm tour starts and parking arrangements will be issued before the event to all those taking part.

*Shaun Leavey* OBE FRAGS  
Farming Adviser to Dorset CPRE

## THE STAR OF DORSET CHARCUTERIE

The British have been slow to develop artisanal charcuterie businesses. There may have been a strong history of preserving foods but bacon was the only major charcuterie product. Previously we left other Europeans, especially in the south, to make the huge range of charcuterie you see, say, in a good Italian deli. The main excuse was our damp climate. The term charcuterie originated in France from “char” (flesh) and “cuit” (cooked), and came about from a ban on selling raw pork. “Salumi” had its roots in Italy and is focused on dry-curing and air-drying pork and other meats into classic products such as salami and prosciutto. This enabled gluts of meat to be eaten well beyond their usual shelf life.

In the last decade or two we have finally been making enormous strides to catch up, helped by interest generated by British foodies on holiday in southern Europe and an emphasis on localism. British farmers, butchers, producers and cooks all got into the act. In Dorset we may have only one producer of serious significance, Capreolus Fine Foods, but it is highly regarded. Karen Richards, its CEO, attributes the new growth of British charcuterie to “the best animals, the best husbandry and the best land”.



Karen Richards at Capreolus

### Capreolus

**Capreolus** was only set up in 2009 by Karen and David Richards in rural Rampisham, but has already received more awards than virtually any other Dorset local food producer. Their name comes from the Latin for roe deer, as their first product was a cured venison.

Karen says “they use only the best ingredients, know the provenance of everything and never sell the product until it is ready”. Their standards are so high that they train environmental health officers! David is a serious food lover and is the recipe master. Their product range covers pork, venison, beef, mutton, goat, wild boar, goose, duck, chicken, pheasant and partridge. They primarily make dry-cured meat, using salt and spices/herbs, and employing a fermentation culture, as well as salamis which are fermented but not dry-cured. Both are air-dried, and some are smoked too. David is a real innovator who hates waste. Their Goose Salami originated from a desire to make duck saucisson sec but finding local duck was too expensive to buy in, he decided to use old geese from breeding flocks which were more or less worthless. It is now a bestseller.

40% of the meat comes from Dorset and the rest from neighbouring counties. Their pigs include those from Maureen Case in Milton Abbas who rears Oxford Sandy and Blacks, a rare traditional breed. Traditional pig breeds carry more intramuscular fat and less moisture, making them ideal for curing. Washingpool Farm sells beef to them. Most of their delicious charcuterie is sold to top-end restaurants or the food service sector, with much going to London. They supply the Michelin-starred Benares restaurant for example. You can find their produce in certain shops in Dorset too, such as Felicity’s Farm Shop in Morcombelake, or buy it online from them at <https://capreolusfinefoods.co.uk>. New products are Smoked Mutton,



Rupert Hardy from CPRE enjoying the delicious charcuterie at Capreolus

Spreadable N’duja (spicy hot spreadable salami, which originated from Calabria) as well as Venison and Pork Pepperoni for use on upmarket pizzas. They continue to grow but Karen does wish they had more help from the banks!

**The Real Cure** also make wonderful pork and wild venison charcuterie near Shaftesbury, particularly salamis, pepperoni and chorizo, but they are a much smaller business (<http://www.therealcure.co.uk>). James Smart started the business in 2014 and has won quite a few prizes. They source their pork from Naomi Bugg’s Hartgrove Farm, which are mostly Berkshires, and all the venison comes from Dorset deer.

*Rupert Hardy*



Dorset Blue Vinny and Fig Salami

## EAST DORSET GROUP



### Applications

#### Leigh Road, Wimborne

The Leigh Road housing development stirred first (3/18/2262/RM) with a reference to some of the reserved matters. I did not respond to this but Hilary Chittenden did on behalf of the East Dorset Environment Partnership (EDEP).

In December another application part of this hybrid development came to the fore, 3/18/3505/FUL. Outline application for 174 dwellings with all matters reserved but for access. A full planning application for sports facilities including club house, pitches and parking etc.

I believe this is the rugby side of the sports ground. This application has been around for years.

#### 3/16/0002/FUL Cuthbury Development

This has also been kicking about for years. However, something seems to have gone awry in East Dorset District Council and none of the interested parties were aware that a) no fresh chance to object and b) we could only speak at a full Council Meeting.

I was fortunate in rushing in some comments just one day before the deadline. I reiterated my objections to the size of the café/office block (the latter will house approx. 50 workers) despite the size supposedly being reduced. It is in a prime position fronting the Stour. This will be very lucrative for the developer, but despite this, they are still only offering to replace 20 old social houses. They refuse to commit to any more and this is only 9%.

#### North of Edmondsham Road

The other planning application was for North of Edmondsham Road, Verwood. The site was quite pleasantly laid out with lots of open space but there were some concerns with parking. The other problem was the eastern boundary of the SANG which had drainage problems that impacted on Burrows Lane. The ditching had been neglected for many years and it was the lowest point within the hills.

I went to the Thanks Giving Service for the demise of East Dorset District Council. I have been in contact with them to make sure that after the 31<sup>st</sup> March I will still get a copy of all the planning applications.

### Local Plan Review

East Dorset District Council is now part of Dorset Council. Christchurch Borough Council is now part of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. The joint Christchurch and East Local Plan was created before reorganisation and still applies to the former council areas until the new council adopts its new plan. Whilst work is being progressed on a new local plan for Dorset, the adopted local plans will still apply to the areas they covered previously.

### Waste Plan

AS27 was a last-minute addition for a second minerals site at Horton Heath. This is not an area I know much about but Hilary Chittenden, Chairman of the EDEP, is very concerned about it and the damage to that area of SSSIs. I did forward a copy of my rather negative response to the inclusion of this site. The Inspector has now reported on the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan. I checked all the Inspector's comments and our Cannon Hill South site still remains absent, we were worried in case the Inspector reinstated the site. Maybe if it is now recognised as a recreation area they will also drop it as a Gypsy and Traveller site.

### Draft Dorset Wide Gypsy and Traveller DPD

It is now 8 years since the Draft Dorset Wide Gypsy and Traveller DPD was published and we are still waiting for the Pre-submission. It is now obvious that it will not be published until after the local elections in May so they can all hop on the gravy train for another 4 years.

### Stour and Avon Magazine

Very sad day the passing of our Stour and Avon Magazine in December as they would print both articles and letters for me. Marilyn Barber who was the News Editor for the old Stour and Avon has been in touch. She is now news editor for Viewpoint and 4Dorset. Thank goodness we have a voice again, though, I have to remember to collect them as they are not delivered and I am not sure how many people read them.

*Janet Healy*

## CPRE backs 'best shop' award

Dorset CPRE is sponsoring for the sixth year the 'Best Village Shop' category in this year's Magna Housing Best Village Competition. Duck's Farm Shop, Portesham, won Best Dorset Village Shop 2018, but Chapel Lane Stores, Abbotsbury, came in as a worthy runner-up. Communities are asked to nominate the village shop which serves them best, closing date is Monday 24th June 2019. Application forms are available from <http://www.magna.org.uk/my-community/dorset-best-village-2019/>.



Duck's Farm Shop, Portesham,  
Dorset Best Village Shop 2018

# CPRE ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2018

## Objectives

The objects of the Branch shall be seek to improve, protect and preserve for the benefit of the public, the countryside and the market towns and rural villages of the County of Dorset. To meet this objective the charity seeks charitable donations and subscriptions from the public.

## Grants totalling £12,386 were paid out for the following projects:

Refurbishment & Renewal of Fingerposts:	£ 6,850
Lympwatch Hydrology Survey	£ 1,944
Mapperton Solar Farm, Judicial Review	£ 2,092
Best Village Store Competition	£ 150
SturQuest Local Walks Leaflet	£ 150

## Sherborne & District Society CPRE

Yetminster Parish Church	£ 500
St. Andrews Church, Trent	£ 250

## North Dorset Group

Fingerpost Refurbishment	£ 200
Fording Point Arts Centre	£ 250

Dorset CPRE will consider giving money to causes other than campaigns that oppose something. We set aside up to £20k per year for grants and fund requests.

## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 August 2018

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Total 2018 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>			
Donations and legacies		26,356	26,356
Activities for generating funds		2,751	2,751
Investment income	4	<u>5,752</u>	<u>5,752</u>
Total Income		<u>34,859</u>	<u>34,859</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		(21,956)	(21,956)
Other expenditure	6	<u>(15,072)</u>	<u>(15,072)</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>(37,028)</u>	<u>(37,028)</u>
Gains/losses on investment assets		<u>3,388</u>	<u>3,388</u>
Net movement in funds		1,219	1,219
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>			
Total funds brought forward		<u>268,325</u>	<u>268,325</u>
Total funds carried forward	12	<u><u>269,544</u></u>	<u><u>269,544</u></u>

A detailed set of accounts including the Trustees Report can be found on the Charity Commission website and are also available on application to Linda Williams or Richard Norman.

## TRIBUTE TO RICHARD NICHOLLS

I am delighted to have been asked to present this award to Richard Nicholls, at the Dorset CPRE AGM, in recognition of his great and continuing contribution to Dorset CPRE. We first met almost twenty years ago and then went on to be Vice-Chairmen together some 15 years ago; we do not have Vice-Chairmen now their being replaced, in a most successful reorganisation, by a Trustee Board, which assists the Chairman. I count Richard as a staunch friend as well as a colleague. Those of you, who know him well, will need no reminding of his special qualities. Whether because of or in spite of a Trade Union background he is a master of conciliation so essential in a charity like CPRE. Managing motivated but touchy volunteers is far more difficult than managing business colleagues. I have some experience of both.

### County Chairman for Seven Years

Richard is unduly modest as well as conciliatory and I hope I shall not embarrass him by listing some of his many achievements. He has been County Chairman for seven of the last ten years! You can take it from me that successful Chairmen do not grow on trees and without his firm grasp of the reigns the organisation might easily have foundered. He has kept the West Dorset group alive, finding committee members, chairing meetings, as and when required, and leading opposition to unsuitable development. In Bridport, where he lives, he has led the fight against over-development that has threatened to overwhelm the town. This is no better illustrated than in the campaign against a proposal for up to 930 houses at Vearse Farm, which would result in 2000 more cars being thrust upon already congested roads. Working with ADVEARSE, a group of Bridport residents who have campaigned against this development since 2013, we await the final Decision Notice. (Bridport lost its railways in the nineteen-sixties and no account was taken then of the massive subsequent development of the town, one of the largest in Dorset outside the conurbations.)

### Foreign Secretary

For close on ten years Richard has been our Foreign Secretary, attending regional and national meetings on behalf of Dorset CPRE. Here his skills and experience in diplomacy and conciliation have served him and us fantastically well. Recently I watched, as others may have done, a documentary on the working and machinations of UK the Foreign Office. While I was



*Richard Nicholls receiving CPRE medal and award from Stephen Howard December 2018*

generally impressed I quickly realised what a poor diplomat Boris was as compared with Richard! I have, though, to admit of some jealousy as national meetings are generally held in the aura of racecourses and are followed by delicious lunches. In the one year that I was chairman the national meeting was at Stratford-on-Avon Racecourse and we all lunched in the member's dining room after the meeting. Additionally he was a trustee for many years and continues as a member of the Countryside Forum and as a leading campaigner in Bridport and in West Dorset more generally.

### Successful Career and Life

Richard kindly came to see me in July at the height of my recent illness, some 4 weeks after I had been discharged from hospital. Over lunch he told me more of his intriguing and successful career and life. As a young man he had joined Post Office Telephones, remember them, before British Telecom and privatisation. After all, are not letter-post and telephones both forms of communication; abroad the PTT is still an enduring symbol of communication of mail and telecom although both are now privatised in some European countries. For many years the Post Office and railway companies were the largest companies in Britain.

He quickly rose through the union movement to be a member of the Executive Committee of the Post Office Union, a very senior position in which he will have negotiated with senior PO management. This was at a time when union barons called the shots in industry and were seldom off the front pages of newspapers; many of you will remember the charismatic Stan Jackson, with his, whiskers, the all-powerful general secretary of the Post Office Trade Union (Union of Postal Workers). Those were the days of Red Robbo and walk-out strikes but I would imagine that Richard was what in the TU movement was called a 'moderate' taking a balanced view of events.



*Richard Nicholls Dorset CPRE AGM 2012*

## Trade Union Background

His trade union background had, and still has, a certain poignancy for me although I generally sat on the other side of the table from him. In the early years of my career I sat on management panels implementing the Beeching Plan, a sensitive and difficult task requiring hours and days of negotiating with the NUR (National Union of Railwaymen), now the RMT, and other railway trade unions, eight in all, over closures of lines, stations and depots, redundancies, redeployment and changed working practices. In these years I came to make many friends with and to admire senior trade union officers. I cannot say now that I view these achievements with unqualified approval but at the time there was a job to be done. With hindsight many lines were closed that should not have been closed on the basis of thin and misleading financial information. I invited Sydney Weighell, General Secretary of the NUR to my wedding in 1969! He did not come, of course, but was, I believe, pleased to have been asked.

## Left London for Dorset

Richard had, like me, spent most of his life in London, in Westminster to be exact, working in Post Office Telephones but

finding time to be a Westminster City Councillor as well. He never left time to rest. However, during holidays and visits from London, he developed an early love of the countryside that has never left him. When the opportunity came he left London for Dorset, where else, you may say. He had not long been in Dorset before he recognised the growing threats to the countryside from unsuitable and poorly-planned development and joined CPRE quickly rising through its ranks to the summit. Richard's enthusiasm and good humour are infectious and have inspired many others to join and fight for the cause. He is true leader and a person I count as a staunch friend as well a colleague. Dorset CPRE is indeed fortunate to have enjoyed his support and leadership over many years.

Despite his huge commitment to CPRE, lecturing to aspiring union members in Oxford he found time to study the history of the trade unions at East London University on a course funded by the trade union movement.

We salute Richard for his achievements and hope he will continue to work with us in Dorset CPRE for the countryside.

*Stephen Howard*  
Vice President Dorset CPRE

## Protecting Our Public Rights of Way

1<sup>st</sup> January 2026 is the cut-off date for adding historic paths to what is known as the definitive map (DM), the official record of the public's rights of way in an area. When a path is on this map, it not only means you have a right to walk on it, but it is much easier to protect and maintain. However, any path which came into existence before 1949 and that has not been requested to be on the map by 2026 will be lost – forever!

Local walkers who know their areas and are familiar with their own localities are an obvious source of information about where

these “lost paths” may be. The Ramblers Association provide an online guide to help you get started on the hunt for lost rights of way in your area. Please visit <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-with-us/dont-lose-your-way.aspx> or email [DLYW@ramblers.org.uk](mailto:DLYW@ramblers.org.uk) for more information.



*Walking on Public Right of Way near Cerne Abbas taken by Rob Jayne*

## LEAVING A LEGACY

**A GIFT IN YOUR WILL  
CAN HELP PROTECT OUR  
GLORIOUS COUNTRYSIDE  
FOR GENERATIONS TO COME**



© Ian Dagnall/Alamy

If you share our beliefs about protecting our precious heritage of a beautiful countryside, please consider leaving a gift to CPRE in your will.

Your legacy, no matter what the amount, will help us ensure that developments are sensitive to the countryside, and that housing sprawl is kept in check. With your help, there will be a green, tranquil and beautiful England for tomorrow's children to enjoy.

*“The English countryside is an exceptional creation – immensely old, full of surprises and nearly always pleasing to look at. For me, the countryside represents so much of what makes life worth living but how much of it will be left for future generations to enjoy?”* Bill Bryson

### 3 Simple steps to leaving a legacy to CPRE

1. Find a solicitor or other qualified advisor
2. Decide what type of gift you'd like to leave CPRE – a share of your estate or a fixed sum.
3. Take our details with you – your solicitor or advisor will need our full name (Dorset CPRE), address and registered charity number 211974.

## MINERALS AND WASTE IN DORSET



This is a summary of our recent work on minerals and waste in Dorset together with a few other items of interest.

### Pre Submission Draft Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Sites Plan

The definitive version of the Plan was examined at a public meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> September by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. We await the publication of his report with interest.

### Imerys Ball Clay Operations Dorset – Community Liaison Group

I attended a meeting of this Group at the Springfield Hotel, Wareham on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Imerys are presently selling about 100,000 tons of ball clay per year from Dorset and of this about 14,000 tons is sold in 25 kilogram bags. A new bagging facility, costing nearly half a million pounds, has recently been installed. It will be more efficient, faster, and cut down on the inevitable dust from this sort of work to the benefit of other adjacent machinery, the staff and also the local environment at Furzebrook.

The western extension at the Trigon pit will be excavated for about twelve years and then returned to a mixture of woodland, heath and arable land. The north drive to Trigon House will have to be relocated before excavation can begin.

The new automated system for the measurement of acidity and suspended solids presently at the Doreys South lagoons will eventually be installed at all the other ball clay pits in the area. No more ball clay or sand will be taken from Doreys North pit, it will shortly be landscaped and there will be a substantial new lake which can already be seen from Holme Lane near the railway bridge.

### Toll Bar Stream

Improvements to the Toll Bar Stream are being monitored by the several Parish Councils and the Dorset Wildlife Trust.

### Wytch Farm Oilfield Consultative Committee

I attended a meeting of this Committee at the Council Chamber in Westport House on 12<sup>th</sup> September. There was much discussion about the proposed use of Wytch Farm gas to generate the large amount of electrical energy needed for the submersible pumps at the base of the oil wells. A new 25 megawatt generator will be more efficient, be less noisy and produce fewer emissions than the present plant which is approaching the end of its useful life.

Ongoing improvement of footpaths at Studland and other landscape enhancement work was described. Further applications for funds under Section 106 are still invited for local projects, the contact is Mrs Alison Turnock at the new Dorset Council.

I also attended a guided tour of the Wytch Farm site on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. We saw the Gathering Station which is a large industrial site with nodding donkeys, Christmas Tree wellheads and a vast array of pipework. The new portable drilling rig is mounted on a long low-loading lorry. We then visited the several well sites on the Arne peninsula. All this is rather well

hidden by mature pine trees, there is very little noise and one can still drive past and be unaware of the activity.

### Corallian Energy Drilling Operation

This controversial oil rig which is 340 feet high and 250 feet wide has been working in Poole Bay about four miles off the coast at Studland since the beginning of February. It is clearly visible from a long stretch of the World Heritage Site coastal path. Corallian Energy was initially licensed to do exploratory drilling of the Colter Prospect oil reservoir which is more than one kilometre beneath the sea until 28 February. The Government has recently extended the deadline until 31<sup>st</sup> March. The licence allows them to discharge up to 6753 tons of chemicals including eight tons of biocide. However, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, DBEIS, said that “this would not pose a significant environmental risk”

### Pre Submission Draft Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Waste Plan

The definitive version of the Plan was examined at a public meeting at the Dorford Centre in Dorchester on 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June by Inspector Nick Palmer who was appointed by the Secretary of State for the purpose. We await the publication of his report with interest.

### Litter Free Dorset

I attended a meeting of this Group at Boscombe on 16<sup>th</sup> January. Posters for the “Don’t be a TOS53RCampaign” have been displayed on DWP vans and bins and elsewhere. The LFD Resources Hub has information about the disposal of large items, composting, tool kits and much else. Peter Ryan, Founder of the Dorset Devils litter picking group, has been awarded the British Citizen Award for Services to the Community. He received his medal at a ceremony in Westminster on 24<sup>th</sup> January. Please see more details in the Litter Campaigns article on page 11.

Marten Gregory, Dorset Waste Partnership, said that DWP had recently issued 123 Fixed Penalty Notices for a variety of offences. He was especially concerned about the difficulties arising from fly tipping in many parts of Dorset. Anthony Vosper told us about the Sherborne Stop the Litter Campaign. Linda Williams spoke about the CPRE Green Clean Initiative. I reported on Michael Gove’s Waste and Resources Strategy for England. Jonathon Leyland, Purbeck National Trust, spoke about NT beach cleans and litter picks. Several others spoke about litter picking events all over Dorset.

The Great British Spring Clean took place from 22<sup>nd</sup> March until 23<sup>rd</sup> April and the THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY Great Dorset Beach Clean from 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March. Dorset CPRE supported the Spring Clean event held in Dorchester on 30<sup>th</sup> March.

### Winfrith Site Stakeholder Group

At the recent meeting of the Group at Winfrith Newburgh village hall on 1<sup>st</sup> November Mr Rob Gentry, Closure Director, explained that the Parent Body Organisation nominees to senior management posts would leave Winfrith on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 and that the recruitment of new members of staff was presently underway.

All gaseous and liquid discharges on the site remain well within the required limits. Preparation has started for the cutting and lifting of the steam drum on the SGHWR, a particularly difficult and demanding task. Work continues on testing the Dragon reactor core.

Andrew Davies, Nuclear Decommissioning Agency, said that environmental and safety tests at the site were all as expected. Rebecca Cleverly, Environment Agency, reported that their site inspections had also been entirely satisfactory.

The Winfrith Socioeconomic Fund has provided £5000 to local projects. Further applications are now invited and should be submitted to Mrs Emma Burwood (01305-203107) or to [www.Magnoxsocioeconomic.com](http://www.Magnoxsocioeconomic.com).

## Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone

The Dorset Innovation Park at Winfrith Newburgh and the Home Communities Agency continue to advertise widely to attract new technological businesses to the Site.

## Renewable Energy in Purbeck

There is no further news about the proposed Alaska wind turbines in Puddletown Road.

## Arne Moors Intertidal Nature Reserve

I attended the Stakeholders meetings at the Town Hall in Wareham on 12<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> February and a public exhibition on 28<sup>th</sup> November. There were detailed reports on the surveys of fluvial waters, tidal waters, and surface water together with the results from core samples. The groundwater which drains from the Purbeck hills passes through the sandstone deep under Ridge village and eventually out on to the grassland by the River Frome east of Ridge Wharf at Arne Moors. A rather splendid three dimensional coloured map at the exhibition had a series of spot heights above the Ordnance Survey Datum. The map showed that all the houses in Ridge are two metres and mostly quite a lot more than that above the tidal levels on the proposed reserve. Increased surface water at Ridge is highly unlikely.

There will be two shallow lagoons (each about 19 hectares) for wading birds at the western end of the site with a number of small islands and varying depths of water throughout to accommodate different species of wader. The intertidal zone itself will be about 78 hectares so the whole site will be 116 hectares or 290 acres.

The proposed public access was described in some detail. The present reserve at RSPB Arne has about 100,000 visitors per year and will continue to be the main focus. The car park at Sunnyside will be extended and a footpath will be provided from there as far as the northern lagoon. An off-road path near the southern edge of the site will lead all the way to Hyde Heath and Arne.

## Dorset Coast Forum – Dorset Aquaculture

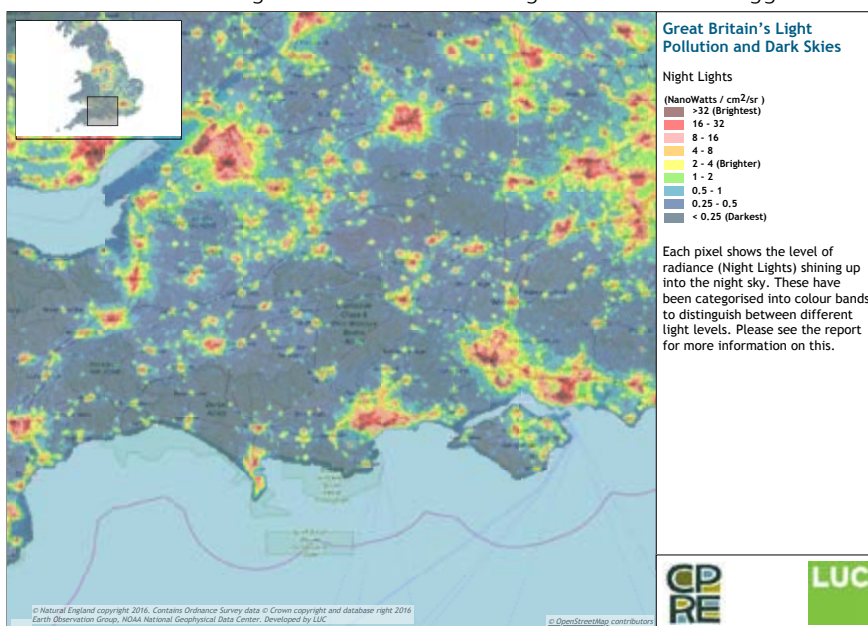
I was not able to attend the Dorset Agritech event concerning Dorset aquaculture in the Pengelly Room at Kingston Maurward College on 8<sup>th</sup> February but I received a copy of the presentation. Shaun Leavey, Farming Adviser to Dorset CPRE attended.

The market for farmed fish, shellfish and aquatic plants in the UK and globally is growing at unprecedented levels and aquaculture is projected to be the prime source of seafood by 2030. Dorset people traditionally eat a lot of fish and there is a vibrant tourist industry with a demand for local fresh fish.

Poole Harbour, Portland Harbour and numerous other sheltered harbours and land based sites provide hatcheries and recirculation systems. Excellent water quality, warm sea water and moderate tidal flows give good growth conditions for a wide variety of fish, shellfish, molluscs and plants. Rainbow trout, sea trout, mussels and oysters are the most important local aquaculture crops.

A diverse range of technologies are being developed and deployed in Dorset.

Dorset's Fisheries Local Action Group, DFLAG, develops fisheries, aquaculture and seafood sectors between Swanage and Beer. The Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, CEFAS, provides research, consultancy and laboratory services. The Dorset Coast Forum looks at the long term issues affecting the coast and inshore waters. Exeter, Plymouth, Portsmouth and Southampton universities offer marine science degree courses and Kingston Maurward College offers a foundation degree in marine ecology.



## Dark Sky Parks

The CPRE Star Count 2019 took place from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> February. See <http://www.cpre.org.uk/starcount> for more details.

The map shows that large parts of rural Dorset have some of the darkest skies in the Country and Dorset would be an ideal site for designation as a Dark Sky Park. Cranborne Chase AONB is well advanced with their application for official designation as a Dark Sky Park but Dorset AONB has been unable to devote the necessary resources to do the same.

*Dr John Larkin*

Minerals and Waste Adviser to Dorset CPRE

# RAILWAYS IN DORSET: THEN AND NOW



*Class 158 set in First Group South Western Railway livery at Southamptton Central  
South Western Railway's diesel unit 158887 leaves Southamptton Central station with a service from Romsey to Salisbury,  
photograph by Geof Sheppard*

There are three rail lines now in Dorset and all three have seen a huge growth in passenger numbers over the last 20 years – since privatisation. These are:

- (1) Waterloo – Southampton-Bournemouth-Dorchester South-Weymouth;
- (2) Waterloo-Salisbury-Yeovil Junction – Exeter and
- (3) Bristol Temple Meads-Bath-Yeovil Pen Mill-Dorchester West-Weymouth.

Before the 1921 Act the dominant railway company in Dorset was the London & South Western Railway (L & SWR) but there was also the Weymouth – Yeovil – (Paddington) line, which carried the Channel Islands boat trains, owned by Great Western Railway (GWR) and the Somerset and Dorset Joint line (S & D) owned jointly by the L & SWR and Midland Railway (MR). Amalgamations under the 1921 Act created the 'Big Four': London, Midland Scottish Railway (LMS), London and North Eastern Railway (LNER), GWR and Southern Railway (SR). Thereafter Dorset was served principally by the Southern Railway, apart from the GWR Weymouth line and the LMS which had assumed the MR's former interest in the S & D. At this time, 1923 say, when railways were close to their peak and, before the motor car and motorway had emerged as powerful competitors, there were around 50 stations in Dorset and that was without including Bournemouth and Christchurch then in Hampshire. Now there are 19 stations including Bournemouth and Christchurch.

## Nationalisation of the Railways

Most readers will know that nationalisation of the railways took place in 1948 under the Transport Act, 1947. British Rail (BR) immediately replaced the 'Big Four' with six geographical regions and Dorset fell wholly within the Southern Region, which absorbed former Southern Railway, GWR and S & D lines in the county. While most of the former L & SWR system was included in the Southern Region, lines in Devon and Cornwall were transferred to the newly established Western Region and most subsequently closed.

## Modernisation Plan

BR was faced at the outset with a rapid growth in road transport and motorway construction along with assets that were run-down after the war years. In 1953 it embarked on a Modernisation Plan, which, while bringing much needed investment, was insufficient and poorly conceived and financial performance continued to deteriorate. The London, Manchester and Liverpool electrification was most successful and showed what well-planned investment might achieve, but BR was not permitted to establish a rolling programme of electrification as undertaken by most other European countries. Meanwhile limited expansion of Southern third rail electrification was undertaken, for example from Basingstoke to Bournemouth, subsequently extended to Weymouth.

## Branch Line Closures

It was inevitable, perhaps, that government would reach for the razor or hatchet as financial performance continued to worsen. This led to the appointment of Dr Richard Beeching as BR chairman, tasked to radically reduce losses, and his subsequent Reshaping Report in 1962. Following the report BR embarked on a massive and partly misguided programme of line and station closures allied with staff reduction; in Dorset as elsewhere, except for London, more than half the stations were closed. The remaining lines were rationalised and the three remaining routes were partially or wholly single-tracked much reducing capacity.

It is easy to be wise after the event but it is clear that more secondary routes and branch lines should have been retained and modernised. Savings from branch line closures were small as compared with those from rationalisation of freight yards, depots and workshops in major centres. In Dorset there has been much subsequent development in areas once served by railways, amongst them Bridport, Blandford, Ferndown, West Moors and Verwood. It is true that BR lacked the financial systems necessary to relate revenue and costs incurred at the time and, therefore,

figures produced to support closures, were arbitrary and misleading. Because so many costs were shared, actual savings were generally much below those claimed. Had the figures been based on a modernised labour-efficient operation the number of closures might also have been smaller. Further a failure to safeguard rail alignments, with many subsequently used for roads and housing, has made reopening unduly expensive in Britain.

## Privatisation

The general view is that privatisation, which occurred generally between 1993 and 1996, has been hugely successful and in some respects it has been, although recently there have been growing calls for renationalisation. Passenger numbers have trebled, freight has held up despite a huge decline in heavy industry and investment has trebled with all new trains being funded privately though specialist leasing companies. So why do I qualify my praise? Infrastructure management and development, undertaken by state-owned Network Rail (NR) has been poor with investment unit costs rising fourfold over those of BR in constant prices. This has occurred, I believe, because so much technical expertise was lost in privatisation and fragmentation. 20 years on Network Rail still lacks an effective asset-register, showing the location, design and condition of track and other infrastructure assets. It is a shell-company with fat-cat directors, little expertise and is 'milked' by private sector contractors.



Class 458 set in Stagecoach South West Trains livery

## Electrification Programme

I cannot illustrate NR's short comings better than in the Great Western Electrification Programme, which is more than four-fold over budget, more than 5 years late and is being curtailed short of its principal destinations: Oxford, Bath, Bristol and Swansea that it was planned to serve because the money has run out! This has arisen from a combination of over-design with heavy unsightly structures, poor project management and a construction programme, using a specially-designed construction train, that failed lamentably to achieve the level of productivity predicted. The ugly structures have had a devastating effect on the magnificent Thames Valley between Reading and Didcot while their erection around Bath and within the Grade 1 listed Bristol Temple Meads Station has been strongly opposed by an alliance of conservation groups; this impasse might have been avoided had Network Rail engaged with these groups at the outset but it adamantly refused to do so. Just compare this with sensitive light-weight design

used by BR on the east and west coast routes to Scotland at less than a quarter of the cost and with less disruption to services.

There is no single good solution to managing and operating railways; you cannot say that privatisation is better than state-ownership or vice-versa. It depends on how they are set up and regulated. Railways are essentially political, require public money and serve the nation. In France state-owned SNCF has not increased services in the last 10 years; compare that with Britain, where there has been a massive increase of services with privatisation. More than 90% of rail investment in France goes into TGV services used by less than 10% of the population. French regions yearn for privatisation of local services and expect new operators to provide more services at lower cost as has been achieved in Germany. So where do we go from here?

## Franchising System

A review of the UK rail industry is now underway. I do not favour renationalisation and prefer a much needed overhaul of the franchising system. While BR was a relatively efficient state-owned business, Network Rail is not and it is difficult to see how it or a fully nationalised railway might be efficient without a change in culture. Also will government be ready to invest all that is needed in the railways? Germany, Norway and other European countries are progressively privatising their railways to reduce costs and attract investment; evidence suggests that they are regulating private operators more effectively than we are in Britain but no country has seen the growth in passenger numbers seen over last 20 years in UK.

Dorset has indeed been very fortunate since privatisation to have been served for more than twenty years by Stagecoach trading as South West Trains. They have acquired new rolling stock, increased train formations and so capacity, introduced 'clock face' timetables and generally provided clean, well maintained and punctual trains. In this they have been more successful than most other operators. But this higher quality came seemingly at a price and now the contract has passed to First Group trading as South Western Railway and a rapid deterioration has set in.

## Train Strikes

How did this happen? While Stagecoach had retained the SW franchise for a number of years they were underbid by First Group last year. Franchising is a good system if well designed and effectively 'policed' as in Germany and other countries. In Britain selection criteria adopted by the Department of Transport do not, despite some recent changes, sufficiently encourage good management, instead focusing too narrowly on price and provision of new rolling stock. Also bids are not adequately scrutinised to ensure an acceptable level of 'deliverability', that is to say an ability to meet strict performance norms within the contract price. First Group appears to have submitted an under-priced bid to win the SW franchise and now is cutting corners to save money in the full knowledge that the Department of Transport is unlikely to fine or punish it for poor performance. On the Salisbury – Exeter line, a flagship route under Stagecoach, where passenger numbers have grown rapidly, a deep decline has set in with short-formation trains and consequent over-crowding, lower levels of cleanliness and maintenance in addition to regular strikes. The group have also seemingly antagonised their staff who are now engaged in a series of strikes.

*Stephen Howard*  
Vice-President Dorset CPRE

# DORSET SMUGGLING: BEHIND THE MOONFLEET LEGEND



Swans on the Fleet where smuggling "tubs" would have been hidden in the 18<sup>th</sup> century

I remember as a boy reading avidly J.Meade Falkner's *Moonfleet*, that vivid tale of smuggling, treasure and shipwreck set around Chesil beach in Dorset in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Every year TV dramas, such as *Poldark*, continue to remind us of the derring-do of smugglers from that period. Beyond the fiction, however, you do not have to dig that deep to find out about the surprising scale, motivation and real-life characters behind the explosion of illegal trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, carried out all over England's southern coast, and in particular Dorset.

## High taxation was the root cause

Punitive taxation was primarily responsible for the explosion in smuggling. During the Civil War a new excise tax was levied to pay for it, and even after it ended it still covered chocolate, coffee, tea, beer, cider and spirits. However, after 1688 it was progressively broadened to include other essentials such as salt, leather, and soap. There were also customs duties to pay, which had a historical precedent in that the Crown had for centuries claimed a proportion of all cargoes entering the country. The wars with France were a drain on the Exchequer and tax rates increased further in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so that the combined rates on tea reached 70% of its import cost. This affected all classes but in particular it angered the rural population, many suffering from poverty. To complicate matters, the collection of customs duties was haphazard, bureaucratic and corrupt. Smugglers were basically opportunists, taking advantage of a demand for highly-taxed luxury goods and the government's almost total inability to collect those taxes. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century two thirds of all tea imported into the UK was believed to be smuggled!



Raid on the Poole Customs House. E. Keble Chatterton – King's Cutters and Smugglers 1700–1855/Wikimedia Commons

## The smugglers

Surprisingly in certain areas, everybody was involved in smuggling, or at least stood to benefit by it. The poor landless labourer helped carry goods; the parson bought cheap tea and wine; the local squire lent his horses while the merchant obtained cheap supplies. Most goods came by sea, and particularly from France. Sea smugglers were seafarers and fishermen, who had a sense of adventure or an eye for a quick profit. There were foreign seafarers involved too, if you remember Daphne Du Maurier's stirring novel, *Frenchman's Creek*. Sailing ships brought the goods from the continent, and kegs and bales were man-handled, often up steep cliffs, to waiting files of men. They then transported the goods either in carts or caravans of ponies, or tied the tubs to their own backs for a journey inland. To give an idea of the profits to be made, a labourer could earn nearly as much in one night's smuggling as he could on the fields in a week, while the smuggler could mark up his purchase price by four to nine times once it was sold on.

## Packaging and concealment

Exporters on the continent would package goods to be smuggled in smaller quantities than usual so they could be lifted by one man. For example, spirits would be poured into four gallon "tubs". As the customs men stepped up their vigilance, suppliers started packing their goods in disguised shapes. Tobacco was made up into ropes, which could be innocently coiled on the deck. Similarly, spirits were stored in barrels with false bottoms — the tub was then topped up with water or wine, on which a lesser duty was payable.

Once landed distribution in cities was sometimes via apparently reputable dealers, who were able to undercut the competition.

Otherwise the goods would be sold around the public bars, or gin houses. In the countryside distribution of spirits was sometimes carried out by hiding a pig's bladder full of spirits under a woman's clothing — pregnancy explained away a large swelling. If captured, a quick stab with a knife was all that was needed to get rid of it.



Cask adapted for smuggling

## Smuggling vessels

The ships were mostly fore-and-aft rigged so they could sail more easily up a creek, unlike the older square-riggers which needed the wind behind and could easily get trapped. Smugglers then introduced carvel-built boats, with smooth sides, that could outpace the clinker-built revenue vessels, and later in the century the smugglers moved to larger boats that both outran and outgunned the opposition. It also helped that the smugglers were highly motivated sailors mostly up against second-rate revenue commanders and crew.

## Why Dorset and Chesil Beach?

Dorset was not as near to the continent as was Kent and Essex, but the coast here had other advantages: the Channel Islands made a favourable staging post; there were many fine beaches for landing goods; the winds were favourable and the coast was less heavily guarded. Parts of the Dorset coast were flanked by untamed heath and woodland that made hiding easy and pursuit difficult. Much agrarian poverty here made smuggling a very tempting sideline.

Weymouth smugglers had the special advantage of Chesil Beach, and the Fleet, the lagoon behind. Smugglers landing on the beach in the pitch black of a moonless night were able to judge their position to within a mile by simply picking up a handful of shingle, and gauging the average size of the stones. At the Portland end, the pebbles are the size of potatoes, and then slim downwards as you go west.

Tubs landed here were carried over the Beach, and sunk in the quiet waters of the Fleet for collection later. Landing, though, was not always easy as in stormy weather a ferocious sea pounds Chesil Beach, often reducing vessels to matchwood. There were numerous incidents between smugglers and the revenue men. In 1822 a storm loosened a raft of tubs, which floated free, and a race between the revenue and the tubs' owners ensued, to see who could reach the contraband first. The revenue boat was in the lead, but the smugglers raised a sail, and surged ahead. As they passed, the helmsman dropped his trousers and mooned at the downcast revenue men. Another memorable incident was when a Cornish vessel full of contraband broke up on the Beach in 1762. Weymouth citizens rushed to save the cargo before the customs men got there. They claimed 36 tubs to the revenue's 10.

## Moonfleet's Chapel

The villages behind the Fleet developed a thriving commerce in spirits, tea, tobacco and lace. The community close to Chickerell is today the best-known, since it provided the basis for J Meade Falkner's novel Moonfleet. Though fictional, the story had its foundations in the trade that flourished here. Some of the places mentioned in the book can be seen locally and the tiny chapel is especially atmospheric: it was here that tubs bumped together in the flooded vault. It can be found at East Fleet overlooking the Fleet, as it only just survived the tidal wave that struck it in 1824. The headland called The Snout in the book is Portland Bill. Nearby Abbotsbury boasts a dramatic chapel too on the hill-top, which provides a fine navigational marker, and the local smuggling HQ was the Ilchester Arms, once the Ship Inn.



Isaac Gulliver, the most famous Dorset smuggler

The most famous and successful Dorset smuggler was Isaac Gulliver, who was known as the gentle smuggler as he never killed a man. He bought a farm close to Eggardon Hill and planted a clump of trees there as a landmark for his ships, and these can still be seen today. One entertaining incident was when he feigned death. His wife chalked him up so he laid white-faced in an open coffin to embarrass the customs men.



The "Moonfleet" Chapel at East Fleet

## Napoleonic wars and adoption of Free trade

The Napoleonic War made smuggling more difficult as the coast had to be better protected. After the end, the Coast Guard was established on parts of the coast where the blockade men did not patrol, and by the end of the 1820s the effectiveness of the two forces was starting to have effect. However, it was the adoption of a free-trade policy in the 1840s that slashed import duties to sensible levels and thereafter large-scale smuggling

all but ceased in England. This will not stop you enjoying Moonfleet though if you have never read it. It is a ripping yarn!

PS I am indebted to Richard Platt who wrote an excellent book *Smuggling in the British Isles* as I borrowed some incidents and text from it. Please buy it if interested to know more!



A dragoon in the 6th Dragoons as he would have looked in 1779. These Dragoons all rode black horses until 1796 when the authorities decided that it was no longer possible to get a black horse for all the country.

A Dragoon, often used to intercept smugglers

*Rupert Hardy*

## CPRE RECENT PUBLICATIONS

CPRE National Office publishes a number of reports based on detailed research. Here is a summary of the most recent reports that can be found on CPRE Resources webpage [www.cpre.org.uk/resources](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources):

### State of Brownfield 2019 (March 2019)

CPRE's annual State of Brownfield report shows that there is enough suitable brownfield land available in England for more than 1 million homes across over 18,000 sites and over 26,000 hectares.

The report, which is based on analysis of council's brownfield registers, also finds that:

- Every local planning authority now has a brownfield register recording brownfield land considered to be suitable for housing led development.
- Brownfield registers continue to show enough suitable brownfield land is available for more than 1 million homes across over 18,000 sites and over 26,000 hectares.
- More suitable brownfield land has come forward over the last 12 months, with one in seven homes on up to date brownfield registers being on sites identified in the last 12 months. This shows that brownfield is a perpetually regenerating resource, with the potential to provide a steady pipeline of development opportunities.
- The majority of brownfield sites are available to build on now as 59% of the total identified housing is identified as deliverable within the next five years, with 63% of newly identified sites also meeting this definition.
- Capacity for more than half a million homes has yet to obtain planning permission, so whilst developers should get on with building the homes they already have planning permission for, more needs to be done to ensure these sites get planning permission, and are developed before greenfield sites.
- Not all opportunities for redeveloping suitable brownfield land are recorded on brownfield registers, for example small sites and those exemplified by CPRE London's work in Enfield.
- Where councils are failing to identify all possible opportunities and even in areas with a lot of suitable brownfield capacity, countryside remains at risk unnecessarily. This shows the importance of implementing a genuine brownfield first approach to development.

### Back to the land: rethinking our approach to soil (November 2018)

This report from CPRE calls for a radical rethink of farming practices and soil management in order to help regenerate the soils that underpin our supply of food and environment. It sets out practical ways to restore soil and new approaches to policy. This is the third paper of our Food and Farming Foresight Series. Shaun Leavey OBE FRAGS, Farming Adviser to Dorset CPRE comments:

*"With a mixed farming economy in Dorset (i.e. both arable and grassland) our county has to be acutely aware of the importance which soil management plays in local husbandry – both for crops and stock. Dorset farmers and growers will want to have a say about the way in which any future measures are introduced to improve soil management. I hope that Dorset CPRE can engage with the farming community to learn how they can best implement the objectives that CPRE has set out. It will be important to remember that making policy about an issue such as this is one thing, and making it happen on the ground is quite another.*

*There is best practise out there on some farms, and we need to learn from those who have adopted it already how it might become a far more widespread and accepted way of safeguarding this crucial area of husbandry."*



*“The open countryside of the Green Belt acts as the “green lungs” of our urban areas. To take away land from these green lungs is taking something of immense value from our children, something they would surely not thank us for.”*

Paul Miner, CPRE's Head of Strategic Plans

# DORSET CPRE MEMBERSHIP

## NEW MEMBERS — Since October 2018

### North Dorset:

Mr Harry Bucknall  
Sallie P Orr  
Mrs Francesca Pratt  
Mrs & Mr Tompsett  
Mr David Burton

### Purbeck & Poole:

### The Sherborne and District Society:

Mr Philip Davis

### East Dorset, Christchurch & Bournemouth:

Mr & Mrs Knowles

### West Dorset:

Mrs Susan Goodlet  
Miss Page, Ms Lawton & Ms Page-Nash  
Ms Alice Jones  
Ms Poulsen & Mr Alcock

We also welcome members who have moved from other branches or re-joined during the year.

## DECEASED MEMBERS

### East Dorset, Bournemouth & Christchurch:

Mr Francis Parkes  
Mr Norman Hamilton  
Mrs Pamela Haley  
Mr John Cresswell

### The Sherborne and District Society:

Mr Desmond Worley  
Mr Alan Forward  
Mrs Bridgett Wilson

### West Dorset:

Mrs F M Woodhouse  
Mrs Anthea Bay  
Mr Brian Rogers

## DIARY DATES

**31<sup>st</sup> May** — Farm visit to Sherborne Castle home farm, from 2.30 pm to 4.30 pm. Places limited to 20.

**11<sup>th</sup> June** — George Hosford's Farm Tour, Durweston, Blandford Forum, meet 4.45 pm, and the tour will last 2–2.5 hours.

**20<sup>th</sup> July** — Garden Party. See enclosed booking form.

**5<sup>th</sup> September** — North Dorset Group Summer party at Chettle House starting at 6pm.

**16<sup>th</sup> November** — AGM, 11 am at Cerne Abbas Village Hall. Guest Speaker Sir Oliver Letwin MP.

Please visit the Dorset CPRE website for 2019 meeting dates for the Countryside Forum and District Groups.

## NOT ALREADY A MEMBER?

Joining is the single most effective way to stand up for the countryside. The more you can give, the more we can do to keep our countryside safe. You can join online via our website [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk) or contact our office on 0333 577 0360 to receive a copy of our membership form. As a member you'll receive our regular Countryside Voice magazine, and enjoy discounted entry to houses, gardens and other attractions around England. The following Dorset properties offer a discounted admission for CPRE Members:



- Athelhampton House & Gardens
- Edmonsham House
- Forde Abbey & Gardens
- Mapperton Gardens
- Serles House & Gardens
- Wolfeton House

Visitors are asked to check for individual opening times before setting out as many are seasonal.

Please visit our website for details on how to join or contact our office for a joining form. CPRE Membership also makes an ideal present.

## Dorset CPRE Members also receive –

- Two Dorset CPRE reviews per year
- Fieldwork, our quarterly newsletter to help you campaign
- Membership of your local county branch
- Access to our Planning Hotline for advice from CPRE staff

# CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND DORSET BRANCH

Registered Charity No. 211974

PO Box 9018, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 9GY.

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website: [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk)  
  @DorsetCPRE

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**Mrs Linda Williams**

## Executive Committee & Trustees 2019

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### East Dorset, Bournemouth and Christchurch:

**Contact Dorset CPRE Branch**

## Countryside Forum Chairman

The role is rotated between group Chairmen

## Advisers to the Forum

### Trees for Dorset

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### CPRE SOUTH WEST

#### Regional Chairman:

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## DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in some of the articles do not, necessarily, represent the views of Dorset CPRE. Many of the articles have been written from a personal viewpoint.

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