

The Dorset Review

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The countryside charity
Dorset



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Front Cover image – View North East from Plush Towards Ball Hill

Chair's Report

The next six to nine months are truly interesting times. We have a new Minister responsible for planning, a draft bill on the Environment, COP26 conference, a report from Dorset Council on the consultation on the Dorset Local Plan and the outcomes of the CPRE Governance Review. Each of these matters are important for Dorset CPRE and the countryside. Each of these matters involves choices and even trade-offs. Consider the example of Poole harbour; increased pollution from development and farm run off of nitrates; some mitigation by Dorset Council, BCP Council and a private donor granting and lending sufficient resources to enable Dorset Wildlife Trust to purchase Bere Farm close to the harbour. A marvellous result for restoring nature say many; others would claim that we need to avoid the harm from the development that impacts on Poole Harbour. The wintering birds that visit the south side of the harbour are unlikely to benefit from Bere Farm reclamation, however they may do so if the Arne Moors project proceeds. What will be gained and lost from this initiative and at what costs? Can we accurately cost the loss and restoration of nature?

Nature Recovery

The Defra national consultation on nature recovery strategies can benefit from a careful consideration of how to balance the pressures for Net Gain to the Environment by mitigation measures. Is it not better to avoid harm in the first place rather than attempt to offset the recognised damage from development? Given the pressures on local planning authorities to comply with central government directions on house building, it may be that mitigation is seen as the only choice. However it pays to question the assumptions behind Net Gain as there are many uncertainties associated with attempts to transport nature. At the moment it is not clear what will be included in the forthcoming Bill on the Environment. Doubtless Net Gain will be there especially as Defra has revised its metrics for assessing mitigation. Metric 3 has been produced in response to an earlier consultation and representations from those keen to support development and sustainability. Dorset CPRE is working with three other CPRE County Branches on evidence

regarding mitigation in order to inform National CPRE prior to their formulation of a position on the Environment Bill.

Dorset Local Plan

With regard to the emerging Dorset Local Plan, we all eagerly await the report from Dorset Council on the earlier consultation. This has produced around 65,000 comments and observations, reflecting the concerns of the communities and residents of Dorset. It is hoped that the report will be more than a number crunching exercise where comments are aggregated and illustrated graphically. Nuanced comments are particularly important as they give qualitative information not easily captured in numbers and graphics. The report will assist Dorset CPRE and others in how they will be able to supply evidence to further stages of the process for the Dorset Local Plan.

Case for Exceptional Circumstances

We are in Dorset CPRE working up the case for the county to be considered as having exceptional circumstances in respect of the environment. A study is taking place on where other local planning authorities have made best use of exceptional circumstances to reduce government imposed housing numbers. We argue that Dorset does not have the capacity to accommodate significant development because of its designations e.g., the AONBs, Green Belts, Sites of Special Scientific Interest. In addition the growing concerns associated with the Climate and Ecological emergencies make the case for a Re-think of the Dorset Local Plan an imperative for us all. The inflated housing needs figures we say results from a flawed Standard Method calculation and an unworkable concept of the Uplift for Affordability. This Uplift factor increases the housing target for local planning authorities on the expectation that more and more market houses will make them more affordable. Unfortunately as the supply of new houses is almost entirely governed by viability for developers, new housing is not built out so as to increase affordability.

Re-Think of the Dorset Local Plan

Dorset CPRE are discussing and considering with Dorset CAN (Climate

Action Network) how a common campaign can be developed in respect of the Dorset Local Plan. Somewhat amazingly it appears that so many residents in Dorset are unaware of the Dorset Local Plan and its consequences. Feedback from residents indicates that they are concerned about climate change and affordable housing. It is considered a duty that Dorset CPRE contribute appropriate evidence to persuade Dorset Council to Re-Think the Dorset Local Plan. Lower housing numbers, use of brownfield sites, suitable genuinely affordable housing, protection of the AONB and the Green Belt, plus measures to ensure that the Dorset Local Plan addresses the challenges of the Climate and Ecological Emergencies are likely to be key components of any Re-Think of the Dorset Local Plan.

Do look out for media communications and our e-newsletters for more on the Dorset Local Plan.

Gardens and Nature Recovery

We may not be able to exercise fully our choices in respect of the big issues already mentioned here. However many of us can play a small part. Creating a pond in a garden albeit as little as a bucket of water from the Spring to the Autumn will attract wildlife starting with Mayflies followed by other species. Try it next year to see the consequences of your practical choices.

Do enjoy reading the articles in this edition. We look forward to seeing you at our AGM on Saturday 20th November. Guest speaker is Crispin Truman, CEO at CPRE.

Peter Bowyer

Chair of Trustees

Ospreys in Poole Harbour



One of the artificial nests near Poole Harbour which this year's ospreys have been treating as home

The Poole Harbour Osprey Translocation Project aims to restore a population of ospreys to the south coast of England where they have been absent for more than 200 years. Ten chicks were translocated under a special licence during July of this year from nests in Moray and Highland in northern Scotland and ringed on their right leg with numbers Blue 370 to 379. They remained close to their release pens for a while and then got to know the Harbour and explored further afield whilst also feeding up as much as possible before starting on their long migration south for the first time in September. The young birds have been visiting some of the nest platforms around the Harbour and interacting with longer term residents CJ7 and 022.

Young ospreys usually return to this country for the first time in their third year and some of the birds released in 2019 have been seen back in Dorset this year. CJ17 fledged from a nest in Rutland in 2015 and has returned to Poole Harbour each summer since 2017.

She paired with translocated bird LS7 in 2019 and this year with 022, a male bird translocated from Strathspey in 2019, but

two year old ospreys are not usually mature enough to breed. The two birds have remained close together ever since and if they both return from migration next year we hope that they will attempt to breed again here in the spring.

The aim of this Project is to restore breeding ospreys to the south coast of England but it will also help to link different populations. Some of the "Dorset" birds return from migration to Poole Harbour while others choose different locations. Male ospreys typically breed close to their natal site but females often disperse further. CJ17 has taken up residence in Dorset. A female, 014, translocated to Dorset in 2018 has successfully bred in the Glaslyn Valley in north Wales. Another female, 019, released at Poole Harbour has also been seen in Wales.

Do, please, go to www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk to find out more about this Project and watch them on camera next year on this website.

Dr John Larkin



Prompting Real Planning for Local Needs

It is common knowledge that farmers are expected to leave their land (when they cease farming) in good condition and, if sensible, in better heart than it was.

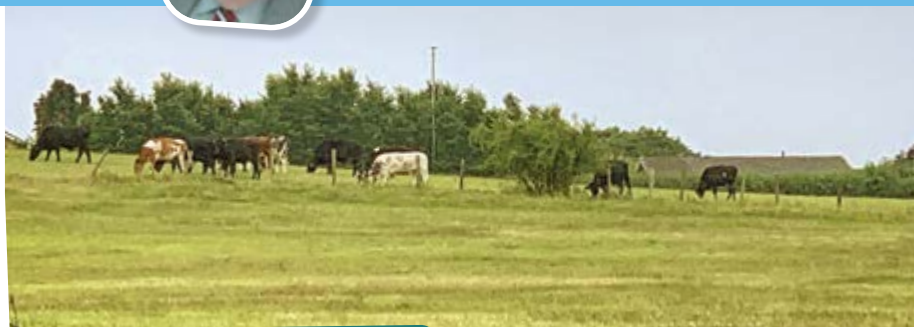
Members in Purbeck and Poole share the very same view when it comes to planning for flourishing local communities. Both of our Unitary Councils in Dorset affect the interests of our Group and over recent weeks and months attempts have been made to understand how we may assist elected decision-makers ensure that all our communities will be in in good condition (better heart) at the end of the planning period of about two decades – after many elections to come. Naturally at this stage, understandings are hard to develop but relevant legislation should allow us all to participate in ensuring that the plans are not only legal but also ‘sound’ by being fully co-ordinated with all relevant others such as the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership that is currently unaccountable, in any real sense, to the public.

Serving the public interest, not just those of a developer

As an illustration of our efforts, when we learnt that a housing development on a green site in North Poole was unable to deliver the expected ‘affordable’ housing, it seemed appropriate to seek a more robust decision (*serving the public interest, not just those of a developer*) in respect of a planning proposal for several hundred houses on a nearby green site. Our involvement (in trying to reinforce the local group of objectors) did precipitate a re-consideration of the decision but the matter was approved. The effect of the decision is that the developer has secured a high standard of confidence for the future in using a natural site but the public have no confidence about what will eventually be delivered or when that may occur, even though ‘affordable’ housing is the recognised priority.

Development on Oakley Fields

Continuing the illustration, we have recently sought to assist the elected decision-makers appointed to consider a third planning application in North Poole



Cows on Oakley Fields, North Poole



(site ‘UE1’ in the local plan now under review) for yet another 600 dwellings and a 62 bedroom care home on Oakley Fields by suggesting, amongst other things, that because of the exceptional state of flux in planning guidance and the likely need to correct the misjudgements in the past about population trends and the pressing need to maintain and enhance all our natural resources, the public interest would be best served by fostering “**building back better**” on pre-used urban land. It is recalled that the function of the Green Belt legislation was to ensure used land was recycled to prevent urban areas from being “hollowed out” by stopping urban sprawl over greener land. In any event the government has expressly stated that “**building more homes should not be at the expense of the natural environment**”, in any case; let alone a case involving land that is specially protected or should be. The photos with this article show Oakley Fields and the storm clouds over them. These fields could be lost – when they are gone – they are gone!

Persisting with the above outlined efforts, to ensure decision-makers respond effectively to evidenced local need, seems essential if residual natural

spaces (say adjoining Magna Road and Queen Anne Drive: the latter blighted by a car sales enterprise understood to be illegal and subject to overdue enforcement action) are not to be lost whilst urban land, that should be recycled, is retained.

Green Belt legislation

No doubt it is appreciated that Green Belt legislation serves the symbiotic interests of both rural and urban communities and must therefore be respected, particularly when urban derelict, underused and misused urban land exists. If such ‘brownfields’ did cease to exist that would be a truly exceptional circumstance with potential implications for Green Belt Zones.

Please be assured that with your help (as sharers of concern, if nothing else), we will continue to try ensuring that the Local Plans being prepared by both Unitary Councils in Dorset will help in securing the delivery of appropriate housing and irrespective of:

- 1) the extant plans,
- 2) the flawed algorithms (relating to housing projections) produced by central government and
- 3) the state of flux in planning law.

Incidentally, such a prompt did allow us to support local objections to too many houses proposed for Lytchett Matravers: commuting should not be fostered under expected circumstances.

Please do not hesitate to **share your thoughts / concerns with me**. Such sharing will help our persistent effort, of extended marathon proportions, to secure real and relevant plans for the rural and urban needs of Dorset in time.

Gerald Rigler

Group Chairman

Dorset's Local Shops Need You

Photo: Jossy Parsons



Studland Stores

The local shops in Dorset need support from residents and visitors. The Pandemic has brought to mind the need for local supply chains especially for food. The Climate and Ecological emergencies have made it clear that we need to review our ways, habits and lives. Shopping locally to survive? Contribute more to the local circular economy? Reduce your carbon footprint? Help the rural economy survive? – all relevant pleas.

Short supply chains help reduce carbon footprints

One example to support is Studland Stores. The village of Studland population today is just over 300 – yet in fact it is much less due to second homes (nearly 50%). In 2000 there were three shops and a petrol station. Now there is just Studland Stores. Gone are the jobs on the farm and small holdings, gone are



Photo: Jossy Parsons

the Estate jobs and the little seasonal jobs for locals. Gone are most of the former Council houses; many of the former estate houses have been sold, used as second homes and even holiday lets. The changes over the last 60 years have transformed the local economy of this little heathland village by the sea. Local spending patterns have changed due to car ownership, the growth of supermarkets and now online shopping. However more and more we need shops like Studland Stores. Short supply chains help reduce carbon footprints. The less food travels the more we all benefit. Buy local is hugely important for shops in the small communities of Dorset.

Studland Stores is at the cross roads of the Swanage Road and School Lane. You cannot miss it as you pass by. Built in the late 19th century by the Bankes estate as a re-action to the growing success of the independent Agglestone Stores, the shop provided a local bakery, deliveries and seasonal goods. The growth of tourism and new building in the village up to the mid-1930s created a firm foundation for retail in the village. Fast forward to today with 1.5 million annual visitors, huge demands on the precious local environment, rising sea level, and limited local employment opportunities.

Strong presence of local Dorset products

Today the shop has a strong presence of local Dorset products: honey, ales, ciders, and beers, organic eggs, salt, chocolate, local chutneys, pastries, garden plants, logs and more. Bed and breakfast facilities have been added this year. The shop is run by Jossy Parsons, a local, aided by her parents, and village staff. Locals and visitors recognise the transformation of the shop since early 2019. New product lines to cater for short term visitors, second home owners, village folk and those just passing through.

When next passing though or planning a visit to the attractions of the beach, hills and heath, do call in to Studland Stores. Well worth a visit especially to seek out the “nuts inside”. But do remember all Dorset village shops deserve your support!

Peter Bowyer

Calculate Your Carbon Footprint

Do you know how big your carbon footprint is? Or what lifestyle changes you could make to reduce it? In the UK, on average, each person produces 9 tonnes of carbon emissions per annum*, covering homes, transport, food and services.

By 2030, to limit global warming to 1.5C, the average carbon emission per person globally needs to be just 2.5 tonnes of carbon per year. *data from GIKI (Get Informed and Know your Impact) is a social enterprise which is helping people live more sustainably. GIKI has developed an online tool to help people calculate their carbon footprint by looking at 30 different areas from electricity usage to financial services, from

diet to miles driven, to work out the carbon impact of each of these decisions. Adding up all these different areas provides an estimate of a person's overall carbon footprint. There are a few questions to answer to allow the footprint calculator to estimate your own carbon footprint. If you enter more information into the calculator, you can get a more detailed assessment covering all areas of your life. The tool also makes suggestions about steps that you could take to reduce your footprint.

Find out more here: <https://zero.giki.earth/>

North Dorset Group



We have been busy as usual on the planning front over the summer.

Planning Applications Pulham/Mappowder 190 acre solar farm

We are well aware of the Climate Emergency, and have not objected to a number of solar farms in North Dorset, but two applications were totally inappropriate. In the spring we focused a lot on the Pulham/Mappowder 190 acre solar farm application, objecting primarily on grounds of adverse visual impact. There were about 200 objections so the action group did a good job given the small population of Mappowder. We have done very well on the local and national media front. It was heartening to see Dorset AONB sending a robust response, saying they could not comment as the Environmental Impact Assessment needed major amendments and modifications. We understand the developer will have to redo a significant part of their Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and so a further consultation is expected late this year or early next.

Solar farm at Winterborne Whitechurch

In August we objected to an Eco Hub, combining solar farm and EV Charging points, at Winterborne Whitechurch. In principle it is a good idea but the proposed facility would be remote from larger centres of population and the strategic road network, when better located sites are already applying to fit EV Charging Points. The Dorset AONB was very critical of the site and the adverse visual impact on the AONB, while most of the site was on best and most versatile agricultural land, which the government has advised solar farm developers not to build on. There were serious heritage and access issues too. The PC meeting to discuss it was a disgrace. The PC voted to support the Eco Hub, despite at least half the village being against it.

Housing development changes

We have objected to major changes in a 162 home development proposed by Barratts, which seeks to produce a Noddy-box estate of identical houses on Wincombe Lane in Shaftesbury. We were also aghast at the temerity of Persimmon in wishing to alter dramatically for

the worse the Outline permission given for the 55 unit development on the Higher Blandford Road in Shaftesbury at the Reserve Matters stage and objected. We were also unhappy about a Reserve Matters application at Child Okeford, with the developer proposing a totally unsympathetic design.

Planning Successes and Failures

We were pleased to see the Northern Area Planning Committee reject an application to build 80 dwellings north of Common Mead Lane, Gillingham, which we had protested about earlier. We also objected earlier to a 30 unit housing development at Milton Abbas which was refused on appeal this summer. The Voscombe Farm Appeal in Bourton was refused too. Interestingly it marked a significant step in the right direction for an Inspector to say that Bourton's Neighbourhood Plan remains valid, despite being "made" over two years ago.

Sadly the appeal at Enmore Court in Shaftesbury was allowed, primarily on grounds that all the housing was affordable, not that they will be genuinely so. It was particularly disappointing after a long battle by an excellent action group to stop this development.

AGM

North Dorset CPRE welcomed over twenty to the virtual AGM in June. Jo Witherden gave a good talk on "Rebuilding Trust in Dorset's Planning System", but her message was somewhat downbeat.

Oak Fair

We took a stand at the Stock Gaylard Oak Fair on the August bank holiday weekend. I, Steve O'Connell, Barbara Hurst, Derek Gardiner, Richard Norman and Linda Williams helped tend the stand, and it was a successful event. A good opportunity to meet members and also recruit new ones.



CPRE Stand at The Oak Fair August 2021



Viking axe thrower at The Oak Fair.

New Planning System

North Dorset CPRE is becoming increasingly frustrated not just by the slow rollout of the programme, but also simple procedural errors made daily by the team inputting representations onto the portal. Back last year we asked Dorset Council (DC) to file all the representations coming in, not leaving

gaps, but also to label them by name/organisation and whether object/support.

DC have admitted that the systems integration is going slowly, and they have not got East Dorset or Dorset CC onto the new system yet. They will only implement changes/improvements to the portal after that, but they are reluctant to label representations object/support due to DC errors in the past. They have promised to tighten up on existing procedures, but this has happened before, so the jury is out!

Pubs Still Suffering

Dorset CPRE's remit is not just to protect the countryside but to support our rural communities. To that end I wrote an article in the Spring Review on how pubs and village shops are the beating hearts of our communities. I must sadly report that the tenants at the Milton Arms in Winterborne Whitechurch, whom we have supported, have been forced to close the pub due to the impact of COVID-19 on their business. Other pubs are still at risk so please support your local one this autumn! They need your business.

Rupert Hardy
Group Chairman

ASH DIEBACK: A Dorset and National Disaster

England fell into mourning in the 1970s as Dutch elm disease spread across the country, and yet we are reacting with insouciance to a far greater natural disaster, ash dieback. About 60m elm trees died, with a devastating impact on the landscape of East Anglia but we are witnessing the slow death of many more ash trees, albeit spread more widely. There were around 170m ash trees in the UK a few years ago, and the expectation is that up to 80% will die. The Dorset AONB estimates that ash accounts for 12% of the county's woodland, close behind oak. The disease was first discovered in South East England in 2012, but already half of Dorset's ash trees are infected, dying or have died. All over the county the raucous sound of chainsaws is being heard as loggers and tree surgeons remove the trees.

All ash trees are vulnerable

Ash dieback is caused by a fungus called *Chalara fraxinea*, resulting in leaf loss and crown dieback, but it is a slow death for the tree. It is carried on the wind and by transportation of infected trees. All ash trees are vulnerable, but particularly younger ones, while older and more isolated ones can survive. Look for leaves developing dark patches in summer, which then wilt prematurely, and long diamond-shaped lesions girdling small branches and twigs, which starve the leaves above of water. It affects new growth in particular.

Ash trees provide an important habitat

The Woodland Trust estimate it will cost the UK £15bn to clear up dying trees and to offset the impact on the environment,

such as the reduced level of water purification and carbon sequestration. This is higher than the reported cost of the foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in 2001. There will be a major impact on wildlife. Ash trees provide an important habitat for more than 1,000 species including birds, beetles and mammals, such as the Hazel Dormouse. The Dorset landscape that Thomas Hardy extolled is changing for the worse with ash being the one of the major hedgerow trees. One of our other concerns is that local authority planning teams are not considering the adverse impact on the screening of new development projects.

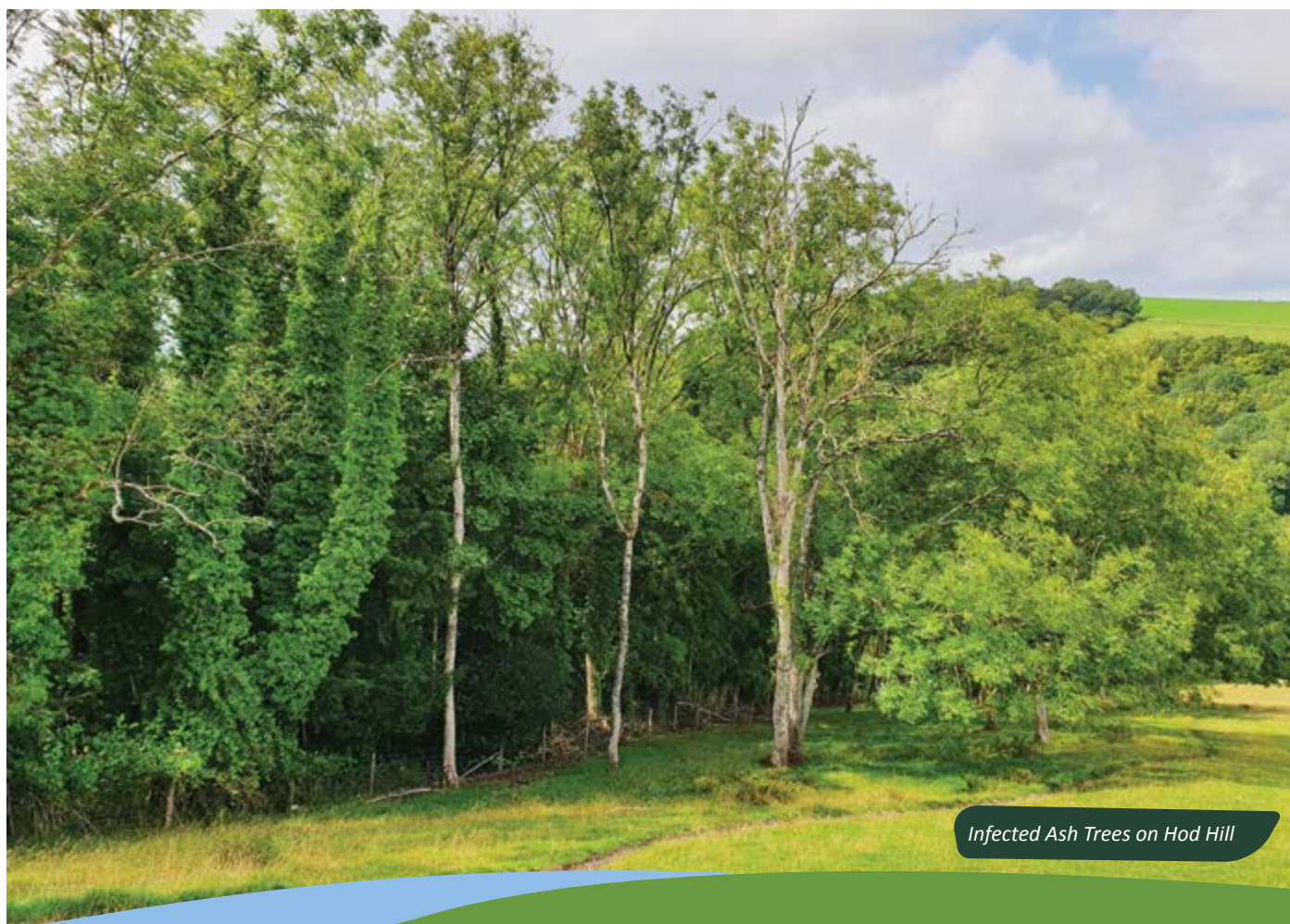
How can you help?

If you have an ash tree in your garden, gather up and burn all the dead leaves, however healthy the tree appears. Out walking, please clean your shoes before and after visiting a wood.

Everyone is being encouraged to plant new trees to offset climate change, but few have taken onboard the extra need to replace the ash trees. Dorset CPRE are funding Trees for Dorset to plant new trees in Purbeck, and North Dorset CPRE are open to requests for funding to support planting in North Dorset on public land.

Get planting!

Rupert Hardy



Infected Ash Trees on Hod Hill

West Dorset Group



Views of Westford Park Farm near Chard site of a proposed quarry extension taken by Action Group "Stop the Quarry in Dorset AONB"

I can start with some very good news. We objected to an application to extend a quarry at Westford Park Farm near Chard. There is a very effective local group "Stop the Quarry in Dorset AONB" who were a tremendous help and the net effect was that, contrary to the planning officer's recommendation, the application was turned down at the recent hearing. Of course there may be an appeal. The area in question is (once again) in the AONB and there was strong objection by the Dorset AONB Partnership. It was said to be an "extension" of a quarry already there but there was a clear boundary. That fact, as well as its position in the AONB and destruction of hedgerows and trees, accompanying noise and dust pollution, HGV traffic and the fact that the stone is not essential, all contributed towards its rejection. The photograph demonstrates the beauty of the area – like most of our county. It is also particularly good to see a development refused in the AONB!

Vearse Farm, Bridport

In Bridport the Vearse Farm land was sold to the Vistry Partnerships, Barratt and David Wilson Homes earlier this year. Having just welcomed the refusal to develop in the AONB near Chard (above), this is the opposite – but much bigger (760 homes). Due to publicity from the group "ADVEARSE" the developers' marketing department changed their name to "Foundry Lea" – claiming this would be an "outstanding place to live... with abundant accessible, inclusive and green space of its own". No mention of the former AONB! At least now there will be some affordable housing thanks to government funding. It is said that

houses will begin to be occupied in December next year. Work on the Miles Cross roundabout and on the development, itself is due to start next January although the design of the roundabout hasn't yet been finalised.

North of Dorchester

The massive "North of Dorchester" 4000 house proposal continues to be fought very effectively by the group "STAND" who now have excellent communications to engage the whole county against Dorset Council's Local Plan with 13 core members and a myriad of skills. They have contacted all DC councillors expressing their concerns such as the absence of reports on hydrology, flood risks and the development's financial viability and asking for their views on affordable housing needs, sustainable transport options and the compatibility with the council's climate emergency plan. So far only 13 of the 84 councillors have responded. Questions to Cllr David Walsh have also been submitted leading to news of critical reports on the impact on Dorchester's heritage being carried out by the site promoters. In July STAND presented a petition with 5000 signatures to the DC Chair – but a debate on it was refused. So 100 STAND supporters showed their anger in a demonstration. STAND is now a Company Limited by Guarantee giving it a formal and transparent structure. It also has developed ties with Dorset CAN (Climate Action Network) with county wide opposition to the Local Plan. While their focus is protecting the land north of Dorchester, they recognise the need for decent affordable housing for the local people of Dorset. Please visit www.stand-dorchester.net for more details.

Max Gate, Dorchester

We will, however, be able to support an application by the Duchy of Cornwall to build 100 homes not far from Max Gate in an area called Four Paddocks which had previously been identified for future building. It has limited impact on the area and meets the needs of the people of Dorset with a significant proportion of affordable and social housing. However, it must be emphasised that this application pales in to insignificance compared with the disastrous plan to build 4000 houses north of the water meadows in Dorchester.

Portland Waste Incinerator

The Portland Waste Incinerator application continues to be opposed by "Stop the Portland Waste Incinerator" (SPWI). The arguments against are very sound:-

- there would be huge numbers of HGV journeys through narrow streets and past schools every day.
- It would produce significant pollution. It is situated on the World Heritage Site (which may have its status removed if built).
- This incinerator is not needed.
- One thing about this is certain – despite arguments for or against incineration, *this is simply in the wrong place!*

In addition, I have a strong suspicion that behind the scenes there is a desire for an excuse to wreck the beautiful Fleet by building a bypass. SPWI regularly put up banners which are often removed (but then replaced by them). At the time of writing, there are two important deadlines – firstly September 22 for submissions for the Environment Agency certificate of safe running of the plant (fire, pollution, disasters). There is great concern the Agency is under-resourced and unable to give an adequate report. And secondly September 27 – a new deadline for objections. Portland Town Council are very much opposed and are consulting legal advice in their objections. Donations have enabled SPWI to employ three expert planning consultants. Please visit the website stopportlandwasteincinerator.co.uk for more details.

Dr Guy Dickinson

Group Chairman

Dorset National Park

Dorset CPRE supports a Dorset National Park

which would work in partnership with Dorset Council and all stakeholders to bring benefits for our communities, economy and environment Dorset-wide.

Planning and the Local Plan

Readers are aware of Dorset CPRE's concerns about the proposed Dorset Local Plan. Central housing targets could mean new development "in excess of any sensible forecast of local need" (as the Opinion Research Services report for Dorset CPRE says.)

What difference would a Dorset National Park make?

National Parks are not subject to central housing targets. Dorset CPRE and the Dorset National Park Team want as much as possible of rural Dorset to be included in the proposed National Park. Equally, a community would not have to be within the National Park to benefit from it. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) says that where a local planning authority (in this case the Dorset Council) shares an area with a National Park, then a local methodology may be used for calculating housing need rather than the national formula with its resulting housing targets. So, the Dorset Council in partnership with the Dorset National Park could assess and agree on a level of housing development for the **whole Dorset Council area** that appropriately reflects Dorset's needs, taking account of household projections and economic aims. National Parks have a statutory duty to foster the social and economic wellbeing of communities, and a duty to respond proactively to local housing needs including for affordable homes, and they plan in partnership with local communities. The South Downs National Park (SDNP) helped to fund and facilitate around 60 Neighbourhood Plans and these helped inform its Local Plan.

Working in close partnership

The sooner Dorset can secure a National Park, the sooner this partnership between the Dorset Council and National Park can begin. With a National Park, working in close partnership with the Dorset Council and communities, a locally relevant and responsive, partnership approach to planning, for appropriate housing numbers where these are needed, can apply to the whole Dorset Council area. Recent discussions with local communities and parish councils have shown that communities support such a partnership approach.

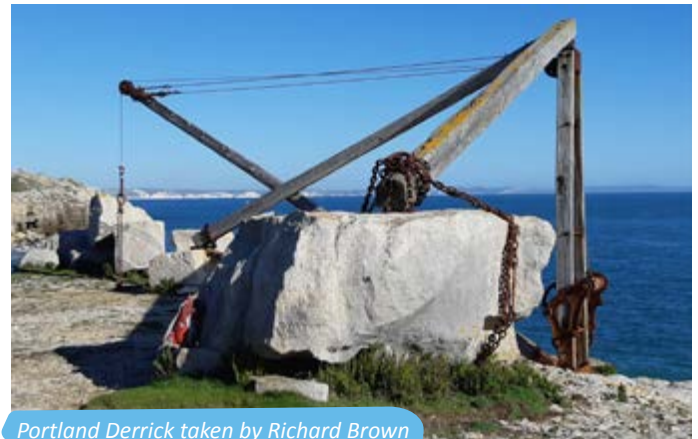
Government committed to new National Parks to benefit Communities, Economy and Environment

The Government's election manifesto undertook to create new National Parks for England. This commitment was repeated by the Prime Minister in November 2020 as part of his plan for a thriving, greener economic future. Ministers want National Parks which work in partnership for Nature, People, Place and Climate and deliver for local communities, including working beyond their boundaries. For example, the SDNP,



Mangerton Mill taken by Richard Brown

England's newest National Park and a living, working area with many towns and villages, works in partnership with councils, communities, farmers, landowners and other businesses. The SDNP is leading a sustainable economic recovery initiative, with government funding, to help local communities across a wide area. It also works with its neighbour conurbation, Brighton & Hove, to bring benefits there.



Portland Derrick taken by Richard Brown

Explore new approaches for National Parks

Ministers want to explore new approaches for National Parks. This gives Dorset Council, our communities and others the opportunity to think about the kind of National Park which would meet Dorset's needs. The inclusion of areas from Portland in the south to Sturminster Newton, Sherborne and other landscapes and heritage towns in the north, would help the government achieve its pledge to designate 30% of England for nature by 2030 ("30 by 30"). Rural Dorset offers the unique opportunity for a one-to-one close relationship between the unitary Dorset Council and a National Park. The Dorset Council would remain the lead authority for the whole of rural Dorset, responsible for major functions such as education, social care and highways. We have suggested that the Council and the National Park would share a planning team and develop and deliver a joint, coherent Local Plan for all rural Dorset. They would work together on a shared agenda for living, working, thriving, resilient and sustainable communities, countryside and rural economy throughout rural Dorset. All Dorset would benefit from the additional resources and expertise which a National Park would bring. Follow the news on the website: www.dorsetnationalpark.com

Sandra Brown

Dorset National Park Team

The Sherborne and District Society

This is both a busy and an important period for CPRE generally and our Group in particular. The Government remains hell-bent on concreting over vast swathes of the countryside, focusing on a dogmatic and questionable policy to “build, build, build”! We continue to challenge the numbers earmarked for Sherborne – an additional 1230 dwellings – whilst at the same time working with the principal Landowner, Sherborne Castle Estates, and our Town Council to ensure that whatever is built is consistent with our beautiful town, has adequate infrastructure and includes green spaces and a feeling of community, not just a housing estate.

Town Centre Regeneration Group

Alongside this, we have taken ownership of the Town Centre Regeneration Group (TCRG), previously an independent initiative, but working with many others who share our vision for a better town centre than we see eroding today. The development of Sherborne House as an Art Centre, together with the massive improvements to the Eastbury Hotel, provide a springboard for regeneration, but we strongly believe that unless Cheap St is revitalised, the very core of our town will wither.

With Sherborne’s commercial centre facing many problems – not least a number of unoccupied shops – it is perhaps timely to be reminded by this photo that footfall in Cheap Street was not always quite as great as we might have thought. We are committed to a revival of the town centre alongside enhancement of the green areas that make the town especially attractive. But you would be lucky today to see a policeman there!



Earlier image of Cheap Street



Development in Longburton

A Case Study 83/85 Cheap Street

This is just one example of how Sherborne and District Society is working to raise the bar in planning to preserve our area’s rich architectural heritage. We have recently been involved in the planning process of an innovation project to bring a new public service to the town at the Abbey Pharmacy, Cheap Street.

Recognising the need for better availability of prescription services in Sherborne, the original application proposed a 24-hour self-service pick up point in the front elevation of a new well-being centre to be located at 85 Cheap Street (formerly Phase 8 dress shop).

Working with Mr Hewitson, (owner of Abbey Pharmacy) we reviewed the planning application with the aim of supporting the need of one of the town’s oldest local independent businesses to adapt to changing commercial demands, with the preservation of this important historic shop front opposite the Conduit.

After a site visit and engineer’s report it was agreed by all parties that the prescription pick-up point would be much

better located in the Long Street window elevation. This constructive and minor modification to the planning application will ensure that Sherborne benefits from a new and necessary facility, and Cheap Street retains its valuable heritage environment.

We are committed to working with businesses to preserve the historic

environment of Cheap Street, whilst welcoming sympathetic developments that ensure the long term sustainability of independent businesses and meet the needs of residents and visitors.

“Good design in DT9” is an aim of Sherborne CPRE which is always alert to new buildings – good and bad. The development in Longburton (shown in the photo) seems to demonstrate a particularly pleasing example of design that integrates well with the village and reflects the local vernacular style of building.

Farming and Rural Affairs

You will have noticed the empty shelves appearing in supermarkets, disruption to supply chains and the difficulties facing fruit growers who cannot recruit enough workers to pick their produce. On top of this the nation is desperately short of HGV drivers, farmers face an uncertain funding future and the government seems unable to find solutions other than the standard comment from a ‘government source’:

“We have well-established ways of working with the food sector and are working closely with them to ensure businesses have the labour they need. We are looking at ways to help the sector recruit more domestic labour and invest in automation in order to reduce the reliance on migrant workers coming into the UK.”

In the meantime, hospitality and food retailing outlets are reeling as they desperately try to find stocks of essential produce. The UK produces 64% of our food needs, but the chaos after Brexit, exacerbated by COVID-19, means we will inevitably now face shortages over the next few months. We see our Farming and Rural Affairs workstream as an increasingly important part of our drive to raise public awareness of the importance of national food production, and we intend to ensure the whole topic is elevated through Dorset CPRE to National CPRE level. Please also read Shaun Leavey's article on page 13.

Farm visit to Castle Farm

The Group's recent visit to Castle Farm, Osborne Road, was a great success thanks to the kindness of our hosts the Dimond family. Ian Dimond – supported by Dawn and Georgie – explained the history of the tenanted farm and the main enterprises. Members were able to watch the robotic milking taking place, look at the young stock, and see the milk vending machine in the farmyard.



Georgie, Dawn and Ian Dimond with Sir Christopher Coville

Crossing the road we then went up into a field above the farm buildings and were able to look across the entire farm with its arable and grassland fields stretching away to Crackmore Wood. The family answered a wide range of

questions about both the farm and wider farming issues.

Sir Christopher Coville
Chairman

Discover the delights of Dorset gardens

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1112664



Farm Meeting on “Diversify your rotation”

hosted by Wessex Water



Photo: Suzanne Keene

Bird Seed Field taken September 2019

I attended the Farm Meeting near Blandford on 15th September particularly out of interest in ways to control the pollution that is poisoning our streams and rivers. Nitrates are washed out of the soil during agricultural activities, and phosphates are mainly generated from domestic waste water. This is a serious problem – for example, numbers of mayflies in a standard sample from the Avon dropped from 1,900 in 2015 to just 4 in 2017.

Nitrogen management

The Europe wide Habitats Directive details the levels of pollutants that can be discharged into water courses and the Environment Agency is enforcing these, even preventing housing developments being approved if there is no credible plan in place to control them.

Farming has a bad name for applying high levels of nitrate fertilizer to the soil that then washes through with no benefit to crops. This event, well attended by farmers, explained several ways in which farmers can avoid this.

Land cultivated for cereal crops, if autumn ploughed or left as stubble, is prone to have nitrates washed out over the winter. Farmers increasingly avoid ploughing and sow crops directly into the ground but even so this does not avoid runoff. Instead, a cover crop such as clover or crops that provide seeds for birds can be sown after harvest to remain over the winter to protect the soil. It holds the nitrates in the soil to benefit the next cereal crop. In spring the crop has to be cleared off, and unfortunately spraying with glyphosate is the method of choice at present.

Sow a companion crop

Another strategy is to sow a companion crop to grow at the same time as the main crop. I was surprised to learn that some crops mature and can be harvested at the same time as the cereal. Presumably the clever machines used these days can sort grain from peas, for instance. Another method is to sow a quick maturing catch crop (like we might sow quick maturing lettuces in our vegetable garden) after the main crop harvest.

Now, you might not think that managers have a place in farming but you would be very wrong. A survey recently found that the most profitable farms were those where the farmer (or often their partner) put a lot of effort into collecting and monitoring data and planning accordingly.

Then, how



Photo: Suzanne Keene

Bird Seed Field taken July 2019

about farming for carbon credits? These are traded between industries that emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and those that are able to take it up – as do some growing crops and plants. Several companies can enable farmers to trade carbon credits. Amazing.

Automated Machines

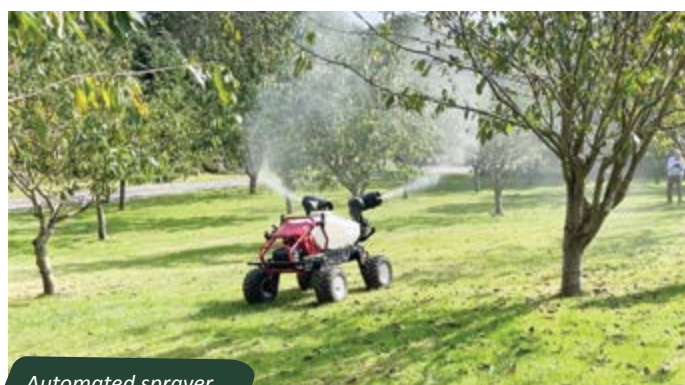


Photo: Suzanne Keene

Automated sprayer

Some of the advanced machines used in farming today were on display. Combine harvesters can monitor how much crop is harvested in every area of the field and send data that will in turn determine how much fertilizer is applied later. Incredibly, a recent device can monitor weed growth from satellite images and cross the field applying an electric current to actual individual weeds. I'll have one of those for my garden, please!

Dr Suzanne Keene

The perfect storm bearing down on our Dorset landscape

As CPRE members our principal concern is the landscape. For the vast majority of Dorset that means the farmed landscape. That landscape is now under serious threat. Just for a moment forget about Dorset Council's badly drafted planning proposals. The main long-term threat to the Dorset landscape is from a total absence of any clear English government strategy for our farming industry – and there is certainly not one for the UK as a whole.

In the mid-1980s we produced 78% of our food needs. Today, that figure sits at 64%. The UK is just 18% self-sufficient in fruit and 55% in fresh veg – the latter declining 16% in the past two decades.

Our production capacity is now so small that Food Foundation analysis shows if everyone in the UK tried to eat their 5 a day from our current yield, we would fall short by 2.1 million tonnes annually.

Before and after Brexit the government was vociferous in blaming the EU and in particular the Common Agricultural Policy for perceived deficiencies in our farming and environmental protection. The CAP was never a perfect project, but it ensured that throughout most of my lifetime Western Europe did not go hungry. It also enabled the EU community as a whole to increase their capacity to feed themselves.

Rubbish talked about EU incentives to pull out hedges etc is just that. I know because I was working in the industry at the time that farmers were incentivised to increase field sizes by the UK government long before this country joined the EEC (as it then was). Many of our environmental protection measures were brought in by the EU.

Governments of both main political parties have not always been so cavalier about UK food production. Under a Conservative government Peter Walker brought in a policy called "Food from our own resources". More recently Labour under David Miliband brought in the "Sustainable Food & Farming Initiative". Conversely Michael Gove brought in his initial Agriculture Bill in a form that barely referenced the role of farming as a source of food production.

The Gove mantra was "public funds for public goods" – and bizarrely public goods seemed not to include food production. Perhaps significantly it was launched at the offices of the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

So where do Dorset farmers stand now? They are faced with a progressive decrease in the subsidy that they were paid under the CAP which will be halved by 2024. Instead there is a scheme called Environmental Land Management (ELM) which

is not yet available other than on a trial basis. Meanwhile there is an interim scheme called Sustainable Farming Incentive. Search that scheme on the Defra website and look at the criteria set out for one or other category – say – unimproved grassland. It is horrendously complicated, and how a small acreage dairy farmer with 100 cows on 120 acres in the Blackmore Vale is going to cope with it I have no idea. I could not make head or tail of it. Larger acreage farms and estates will merely tell a highly paid land agent to sort it out for them.

Farm diversification

So, what is likely to happen? Many farmers have been telling me over recent years that they are doing everything within their resources to diversify their businesses and to find income streams that use their land and buildings for non-farming purposes. Farm diversification is a double-edged sword, and one that CPRE nationally seems not to fully understand. Done well – as a farm shop or conversion of redundant buildings to holiday accommodation or offices it has great merit. Done badly – either through desperation or lack of management expertise or plain greed it can be a disaster for the countryside.

If you cannot use your farmland profitably for food production, what can you do with it. . . host a rave, set up a moto-cross course, store out of season caravans, fence off a field and charge dog walkers to use it, create pony paddocks? The possibilities are endless and I suggest most of them are not how CPRE members want to see the countryside used. "Wilding" it (in inverted commas) or allowing it to go derelict can in some instances be more or less the same thing.

So how do we resolve this dilemma which is entirely of our nation's own creation? How do we sustain a profitable and attractive countryside which provides a higher proportion of the healthy food we need? Personally I believe that to ensure a high degree of self-sufficiency in food we could be justified in supporting farming at the levels which prevailed pre-Brexit under the CAP. However I recognise that at a time when we have a serious deficit in the nation's finances merely asking for more public funding is unlikely to be acceptable to government.

In the 1950s we spent a third of our household income on food. By 1974 this had gone down to 24%. In the last 5 years food shopping has accounted for around 10%. The top five multiple retailers (headed by Tesco) have about 75% of total UK grocery sales. Their profitability is demonstrated by the buy-out of Morrisons by a US based private equity company and the speculation about a similar offer for Sainsbury's. As such I think that we have to face up to the **economic and political reality of paying more for our home produced food as a price for national self-reliance of our food supply and retaining a farmed countryside.**

In 2017 Dorset CPRE started a campaign to promote quality local food and drink producers. Please continue to support them, buy British and buy local food, support campaigns by the farming industry, seek to clearly understand the issues that confront them locally, and above all lobby Ministers via your MP for robust sensible measures to safeguard our food supply and our countryside.

Shaun Leavey



Changing face of the countryside

Local school provides “litter-free” artwork for the Priest’s Way, Isle of Purbeck



Local farmer Trish Earley with Julie Baker of Jurassic Bark and Bessy, one of the litter free cow cutouts decorated by St. George's CE VA Primary School, Langton Matravers.

Litter-free Purbeck is one of many volunteer litter campaign groups to benefit from the CPRE's support over several years. While some activities have been curtailed by Covid 19, Litter-free Purbeck's Love Langton has been able to undertake limited group litter picks in areas such as Dancing Ledge on the National Trust's South Purbeck estate.



The Love Langton team litter picking on Dancing Ledge with Bournemouth University students on secondment with the National Trust.

With so many more people visiting the area over the past eighteen months, Love Langton and its new project group Jurassic Bark Purbeck (see page 15) also discussed with the National Trust and local farmers how to encourage visitors not to drop litter. Providing bins in remoter car parks is not an option as they can quickly overflow so the encouragement of personal responsibility was the aim, chiming with the government's own Countryside Code message #RespectProtectEnjoy and Litter Free Dorset's variant, #RespectProtectCollect.

The Trust had recently used colourful cutout figures of cows at Studland to advise visitors of the real cows introduced to graze in the dunescape there. Working together with St. George's Church of England VA Primary School, Langton Matravers, this idea was adapted for use at Spyway, a popular route to the historic Priest's Way nearby, the South West Coast Path and local beauty spot, Dancing Ledge, a spectacular old coastal quarry. The children at the school were invited to paint the cow cutouts with themes and messages to encourage people to take their rubbish home. They named the cows Bessy and Gertrude and even enlisted St. George's fire-breathing dragon in support of the campaign.

The project has proved very popular, the cows sitting very comfortably in the landscape. They convey a heartfelt, soft touch and engaging appeal to visitors to keep the countryside litter-free for our future generations in a way that conventional signage simply would not. Bessy and Gertrude may well be deployed again next summer!

Bridget Mayes

for Love Langton, part of Litter-free Purbeck

Jurassic Bark Purbeck – extending a coordinated approach to the issue of dog-fouling in Dorset’s open countryside

This summer Love Langton was prompted to start a new group to address the issue of dog fouling and dog poo bags left in the countryside in its part of Purbeck. Jurassic Bark Purbeck is modelled on the volunteer dog litter campaign at Burton Bradstock at the west end of the Jurassic Coast UNESCO World Heritage Site. Working with Litter Free Coast and Sea and the National Trust, this started life as Pooo Pin (Poo Out, People In). Now more snappily named Jurassic Bark, its leader Helen Freeman advised the Purbeck group on methodology.

Dog fouling on local footpaths

The project started when Langton Matravers resident Julie Baker took up her concerns about dog fouling on local footpaths with Love Langton. A survey of a well-trodden footpath between the National Trust’s Spyway car park and Spyway Farm revealed twenty dog poo bags left over the winter despite the efforts of other more aware dog-owners to remove them.

The aim was to raise awareness of the health risks of dog poo in the environment, including from abandoned dog poo bags. Purbeck draws hundreds of thousands of visitors from around the UK but many are not aware that they may be walking through a working farm if fields are not being grazed at the time. Dog poo not only looks unpleasant but as it is easy for dog-owners to be late worming their dog, popular dog-walking areas can quickly become a transmission hub for parasites from dog poo that can infect livestock, wildlife and people, including children.

Teamwork was essential

Litter Free Dorset funded Jurassic Bark Purbeck high vis jackets and the group had the full support of the National Trust and local farmers. One local farm had two recent confirmed cases of neospora caninum infection which led to two beef cows aborting their calves. The cows could not be bred from again. On alternate summer weekends dog poo and bags were identified with eco-friendly paint to draw attention to it, then removed by a group of four volunteers across the same area around Spyway and eastwards along the Priest’s Way, south of Langton Matravers. The project was also well-publicised on Litter-free Purbeck’s Facebook page reaching thousands more and is backed by a Litter Free Dorset poster campaign.



Purbeck’s Priest’s Way is visited by many responsible dog owners each year. This family from Hampstead, London, came equipped to carry dog poo back to a bin and were among the many people that Litter-free Purbeck’s Jurassic Bark group chatted to about dog fouling over the summer.

The weekend walks were a relaxed way to raise awareness of the dog poo issue with both local residents and visitors enjoying our beautiful countryside. The few who don’t pick up may now be aware that their one dog poo left behind in any way really does matter. The group met so many dog owners clearly doing the right thing by picking up their pets’ deposits and taking them to a bin wherever that might be. They come prepared to carry dog poo hygienically even on a long walk. As one local man the group met put it “It doesn’t clean itself, does it?”

While the issue isn’t over, Jurassic Bark projects are an engaging way to address it. Jurassic Bark Purbeck will resume next summer, with Love Langton volunteers keeping a watching brief over autumn and winter.

Bridget Mayes

for Jurassic Bark Purbeck, part of Litter-free Purbeck

Green Recovery Challenge Fund

The Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve is nationally and internationally important for many types of rare and threatened wildlife. Dorset AONB and other nature conservancy bodies are working together with grants of over £800,000 from this Fund and the Wytch Farm Landscape and Access Enhancement Fund to establish a 1370 hectare single grazing unit between Stoborough, Corfe Castle and Arne. Different breeds of cattle, ponies and pigs will roam free like they do in the New Forest and their grazing and trampling and rooting and wallowing will help the spread of different species and

restore natural patterns of habitat.

Fences will be taken down between National Trust land and RSPB and Natural England land. Seven new cattle grids are being installed and one redundant one will be removed but traffic diversions and delays will be kept to a minimum on these minor roads.

Nature does not respect boundaries and this Project will provide a significant joined up landscape for wildlife. And it will also be a wonderful landscape for people to visit and enjoy and to see how it changes and evolves over time.

Dr John Larkin



New fences and cattle grids will enclose 1370 hectares to form a single grazing unit for cattle, ponies and pigs on the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve

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.

I have been in touch with the various Stakeholder Groups where I represent Dorset CPRE. All have now settled in to their new routines and are continuing with their work within the ever varying restrictions.

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan 2019

We can do nothing about the various proposed Minerals Sites until a planning application is submitted for one of them.

Imerys Ball Clay Operations Dorset – Community Liaison Group

I attended a virtual meeting of this Group on 5th July. Narender Dhayal told us that the impact of Brexit and the shortage of HGV drivers had created some difficulties but the 2021 production of ball clay in Dorset was twenty seven per cent higher than that in 2020.

The five-year Furzeyground Restoration and Management Scheme will be completed this year and passed on to the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust. An ecological survey has been completed at Povington to support a Planning Application for an extension to North Hills Blue Pit. The big worked-out ball clay at RSPB Arne which was converted into a lagoon for wading birds has received a planning excellence award from the RTPi (Royal Town Planning Institute).

Bridewell Wood

This extensive mature woodland has a bridleway running through it which forms a popular route for local and visiting horse riders and walkers.

Exploratory drilling has recently been completed in a southwesterly direction from Doreys South Pit and Imerys will shortly submit a Planning Application to extend the winning and working of ball clays and aggregates in this area.

Professor Robert Kenward has written a paper where he points out that this would remove all but 6.4 hectares of the 22 hectares of woodland notably leaving a strip of woodland containing veteran beech trees and mature oaks centred



The bridleway through Bridewell Wood with veteran beech trees and mature oaks

on the route of the Toll Bar Stream. However, it seems likely that a pit so close to important trees will adversely affect the water table on which the mature deciduous trees depend and also risks adverse effects on the Ramsar wetland which is a major contributor to the Toll Bar Stream.

He proposes a revision to this proposal which would provide increased buffering of about six hectares for the mature deciduous woodland and also retain a damp area containing oak and birch which borders the Ramsar site. The extent of these strips should be based on findings by non-local geologists possibly from the British Geological Survey. The importance of the work of winning the ball clay must be balanced against the possibility of losing Bridewell Wood.

Toll Bar Stream

Imerys work on improving the Stream was recognised globally by winning the Environmental category of the Sustainable Development Challenge 2020.

Surveys by Bournemouth University will continue this year and in future years.

Wytch Farm Oilfield Consultative Committee

The extraction of oil and gas from the oilfield continues and I will prepare a report for the Dorset CPRE Countryside Forum when the next meeting of this Committee is convened.

Geophysical Survey

The geophysical survey, by the Polish company Geofizyka Toruń, of Perenco's Wytch Farm oilfield was recently completed but the analysis of the results will take some while.

Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019

We can do nothing about the various proposed Waste Sites until a planning application is submitted for one of them.

Winfrith Site Stakeholder Group

Decommissioning of the SGHWR, Dragon, ALES and the sea pipeline continue. The next biannual meeting of the Group will be in the autumn of this year.

Geological Disposal Facility

Working Groups to discuss the potential for a GDF have been formed in Allerdale and Copeland, both in Cumbria. These discussions are expected to take some while.

Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone

Some 651 people presently work at the DIPEZ. The Dorset Council, The Dorset LEP 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 of the Alaska wind turbines.

Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO) at Portland

Sir Ghilleen Prance, former Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, is Chair of the MEMO Trust who plan to use some of the artificial rectangular caves of the worked-out Portland Stone Mines as a monument to interpret biodiversity and extinction.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

The Marine Management Organisation, MMO, has called for evidence about the better safeguarding of the marine habitats of the South Dorset MCZ and the Studland Bay MCZ. They will enable sustainable marine activities such as fisheries and renewable energy to co-exist with the marine environment for seahorses, sea-grass beds, fish and other marine life.

Dr John Larkin
Minerals and Waste Adviser
to Dorset CPRE

Arne Moors Intertidal Nature Reserve



This rough grazing land will be converted in to an Intertidal Nature Reserve

I attended a virtual meeting of the Stakeholder Liaison Group on 14th July. Neil Watson, Environment Agency, said that the archaeological trenches were typically 25 by 2 metres and that about 100 more would be dug in the next month. They have found a lot of pottery and other material and some species were translocated to Sunnyside Farm. Ecological surveys continue on bats, water voles and sand lizards.

Catherine Farrugia spoke about the Poole Harbour and Wareham Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. Nearly all of the Arne Moors site of 150 hectares will become intertidal and there will be two big lagoons up to half a metre deep for the wading birds with several islands. She showed a map with an embankment which has an impermeable core and a wide walking path. Existing ditches will be retained. Cattle will graze the site to help with long term management. The main entrance to the site will be opposite Soldier's Road with another access point near Bank Gate Cottages.

The next meeting of the Group will be in October and a public exhibition before the necessary Planning Application for all the necessary works will be held early next year.

Dr John Larkin

Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England

Do, please, contribute to this important survey which can be found at Beaver reintroduction and management in England on the website www.gov.uk.

Beavers are to be given legal protection as a native species as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. Plans to release beavers into the wild are the subject of this twelve week consultation which closes on **17th November 2021**. The consultation is seeking views on releases in to the wild and in to secure enclosures and on the mitigation and management of beaver activity. A cautious approach is being taken to ensure that all impacts are carefully considered.

Applications for a licence to release beavers in to the wild must demonstrate positive stakeholder engagement, assessment of the impacts on surrounding land, water, habitats and protected species.

It is proposed to introduce a small group of beavers at Little Sea in the Isle of Purbeck but this will be subject to the results of this consultation and then formal permission from the Government.

Beavers were formerly a native species in this country but were hunted to extinction around 400 years ago. Wild beaver populations (escapes or unlawful releases) presently exist on the Rivers Otter, Tamar and Little Dart in Devon, the River Stour in Kent and the Rivers Avon and Brue in Somerset and Wiltshire. There are also beavers present in secure enclosures licenced by the Government at twenty sites throughout England. One of these secure sites is at a "secret" location in west Dorset.

Over a period of five years in the highly successful trial on the River Otter the beavers have enhanced the local environment, created wetland habitat, improved the water quality and reduced flood risk for housing downstream.



The beavers will make themselves at home here at Little Sea and in the surrounding Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve

For further details about beavers in the Isle of Purbeck contact gen.crisford@nationaltrust.org.uk. A new society called the Beaver Trust has a website at <https://beavertrust.org> which explains how beavers prevent floods, purify and store water, and bring back other wildlife.

Dr John Larkin

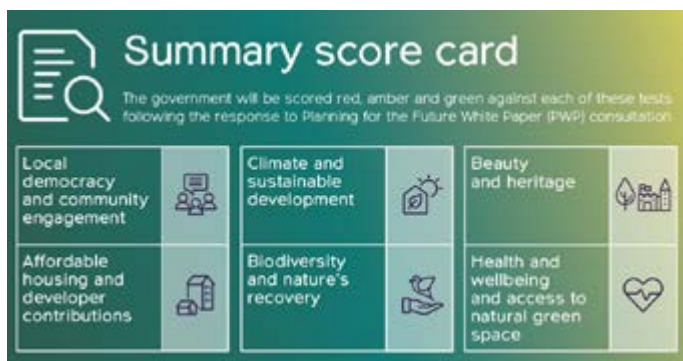
CPRE Recent Publications

National CPRE 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:

Six tests for planning

Created in collaboration with a coalition of housing, planning, environmental, transport and heritage organisations, these six tests will score the government on how it will achieve its aims set out in the 2020 Planning for the Future White Paper.

The paper builds on the joint Vision for planning published in January 2021. It outlined a vision to build beautiful places where communities participate in local decisions, to deliver more affordable new housing and development in line with climate ambitions, and to protect nature and heritage. The six tests will determine how far CPRE feels the government has met these goals in its response to the 2020 White Paper consultation.



Info graph for Six key tests to assess planning bill

A research overview: Access to nature in the English countryside, 2021

An overview of the findings of the CPRE and National Economics Foundation (NEF)-commissioned participant-led research project exploring inequalities in access to the countryside for people of colour in 2020-21.

Brownfield land register toolkit

Use the toolkit to provide information on brownfield land in your local area to help increase the amount available for development and to protect greenspaces and countryside. This toolkit aims to help people to tell their local council about brownfield sites that might be developed, and to ensure they are included in the council's Brownfield Land Register and Land Supply dataset. This will increase the chances of these sites being developed, and take pressure off less appropriate places. The digital form uses an application called Survey123 as part of the suite of ArcGIS applications, allowing CPRE to conduct analyses and create visuals which we haven't been able to before.

Hedge fund: investing in hedgerows for climate, nature and the economy

This research, commissioned by CPRE, and undertaken independently by the Organic Research Centre, provides an evidence-based overview of the impact of increasing the extent of UK's hedgerow network by 40% – for nature, climate and the economy. CPRE then make recommendations on how the government, local authorities, farmers and land managers can maximise the potential of the humble hedgerow.

Dorset CPRE are delighted to link up with CPRE Hampshire to support the restoration of hedgerows. It is part of a new project, called Hedgerow Heroes, to plant or restore over 15 kilometres of hedge across the country. CPRE Hampshire will be working closely with site landowners, the Hinton Admiral Estate, who will carry out the planting work. The site is on the Dorset/Hampshire border just to the north-east of Christchurch. The project involves the planting of 1.7 kilometres of new hedgerow and improving a further 1.3 kilometres of existing hedgerow to create a better habitat for wildlife. The planting will begin mid-November to late December. Linked to the same project, we are providing funding for the cost of plants for new hedgerows at two secondary schools in the Christchurch area.



Photo: Bob Hart

Dorset and Hampshire CPRE Team visit the Hedgerow Heroes project site on a windy and cold day 21st May 2021. Met with Rich Shirley (Hinton Admiral Estate Manager), Darren Lloyd (Countryside Manager) and Chris Sparkes (Hedge laying expert and trainer).

Fingerposts: Dorset Icons



Farnham, northeast of Blandford Forum, fingerpost before repair



Farnham fingerpost following refurbishment

One iconic image that is unique to Dorset are its fingerposts, the old road signs featuring a white or occasionally red metal roundel or finial. The roundel always shows the National Grid Reference at the bottom and the strap across the middle shows the location. They are a common feature of the Dorset countryside, and are a legacy of the early road system. In 1773 the General Turnpike Act made it mandatory for trustees to put up signs informing the traveller of the distance to the closest town. The four red fingerposts are a source of some debate. Were they the locations of gibbets? The Red Post fingerpost on the A31 was more likely painted red to help prison guards find the local lock-up at the nearby Botany Bay Farm, when accompanying prisoners marching from the Dorchester assizes to the ships at Portsmouth which would convey them to Australia.

Many were lost in WWII

Of the 1300 or so fingerposts thought to exist in the 1950s, less than half survive today. Many were lost in WWII as they were removed in 1940 to deny guidance to an invading army, and not replaced. Some of the originals have been repaired using non-traditional materials or lettering, and others are in need of attention. Now the Local Authority no longer has a remit to repair them, both the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Dorset CPRE are keen to support local 'Fingerpost Champions' to save these signs from extinction and restore them back to their former glory. Hundreds of signs are being renewed by community groups, and individuals.

Roger Bond (Normtec) co-ordinates the Dorset AONB Fingerpost restoration project, working from his home workshop. Normtec are restoring existing lettering and numbers to their former glory whilst Coles Castings provide new stock ready for painting. If cost is an issue then Dorset AONB are delighted to offer the services of the Dorchester and Blandford Mens' Sheds, and HMP Guys Marsh and Youth Offenders Institute on Portland.

Small Grants

Dorset CPRE offer a small grants scheme for people wanting to restore fingerposts using the correct materials as set out by the Dorset AONB. Match funding is not required and there is no application form, but we ask that requests come from a Parish Council representative (or similar), with a summary of the fingerposts that need repairing, their location(s) and details of who the cheque needs to be made payable to. Dorset CPRE are covering all of Dorset, and are prepared to award between £100–£200 per post. We have now spent £15,352 on grants for 105 fingerposts with many in North Dorset. These include Melbury Abbas, Winterborne Stickland, East Stour, Farnham and Motcombe to name a few. It is so important that we preserve these Dorset icons!

Rupert Hardy

Dorset Coast Forum Annual Meeting

I attended this virtual meeting on 17th June. Rhiannon Jones, DCF Coordinator, told us about work on the Dorset Coastal Connexions including the Highcliffe zigzag path, the enhancement of Poole sea front, West Bay Welcome Hub, Weymouth Station Gateway and Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone.

Martin Sutcliffe, DCF Aquaculture and Fisheries Development Officer, spoke about the Future of Aquaculture Innovation. Dorset seas produce around 8000 tons of sustainable local sea food mainly shell fish with some inshore fish such as wrasse. Kingston Maurwood College runs a marine aquaculture course.

Colin Wood, 5G Programme Manager, Dorset Council, said that Dorset connectivity is lower than average but new mobile phone masts are expensive so they always try to use existing facilities. The network is used for mapping and precision

agriculture and they work with the Maritime Coastguard Agency and the RNLI to monitor the sea state with dedicated buoys.

Matt Hosey, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk, BCP Council, spoke about erosion in Holes Bay. 140 hectares of salt marsh had been lost since 1924. A £12 million flood defence scheme between Poole Bridge and Hunger Hill was approved in January 2021 and is presently undergoing detailed design.

Sally King, Dorset AONB, said that during the pandemic we have had large numbers of visitors who were new to the area and unfamiliar with the landscape. She liaises with landowners and campsites in the AONB to manage the visitors and keep rubbish and fires to a minimum.

Dr John Larkin

Three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar with Nelson in 1805

In 1906 Alexander Broadley and Richard Bartelot published a well regarded book ***The Three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar: Thomas Masterman Hardy, Charles Bullen, Henry Digby***. It was written to celebrate the centenary of the battle. Both were interesting Dorset-born figures, particularly Broadley who was a lawyer with Wildean tendencies. I am frequently asked if I am a descendant of Kiss Me Hardy, a nickname my father suffered being a naval officer, which is not true but one of my ancestors did sail with Nelson as a midshipman in the French Revolutionary Wars. I have therefore always shown great interest in Dorset naval heroes, of which there are many, as well as naval battles here. This may not be surprising as Dorset is a maritime county, but probably also reflects the lack of career choices in what was a poor county too.

Dorset: A County of Naval Heroes

You can start with King Alfred beating a Danish fleet in AD 877 in Swanage Bay. Dorset sailors and ships formed a major part of the English expedition to France that secured the Black Prince's victory at Crecy, while in Tudor times Sir Richard Bingham was the first of Dorset's famous sea-dogs. Admiral Sir George Somers was born in Lyme Regis and discovered the Bermudas in King James I's reign, before he sadly succumbed to a "surfeit of eating of a pig". Admiral Robert Blake defeated the Dutch fleet led by the formidable Van Tromp at the epic battle of Portland under Cromwell. The Hood family of Little Windsor in West Dorset produced in the C18 arguably the greatest Dorset sailor, Admiral Samuel Hood as well as his brother, Admiral Alexander Hood. Admiral Sir William Domett was Thomas Hardy's mentor, and then went on to represent Weymouth in the House of Commons. However I am focusing on the three Dorset Captains at Trafalgar, as the book has been largely forgotten despite being reprinted.

Thomas Masterman Hardy



Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy by Domenico Pelligrini

Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy, in whose memory the Hardy Monument was erected, was born in Kingston Russell, brought up in Portesham, and joined the Navy in 1781. He sailed under a squadron of Nelson's in 1796, and was a key part of the prize crew sent aboard the captured Spanish warship Santa Sabina. His

first command was the corvette HMS Mutine and he was part of the fleet under Nelson that won the Battle of the Nile in 1798. Soon after Nelson's flag captain was sent home with dispatches and Hardy was promoted to captain of Nelson's flagship, HMS Vanguard. One task was to rescue the British ambassador in Naples, Sir William Hamilton, and his wife

Emma, who embarked on a passionate love affair with Nelson. Hardy was there at the Battle of Copenhagen, when Nelson famously looked through his blind eye, ignoring his Admiral's flag signals, before destroying the Danish fleet. Nelson and Hardy transferred to HMS Victory in 1803, blockading Toulon until 1805.

Henry Digby



Captain Henry Digby by William Beechey

He joined the Navy in 1783 as a Captain's servant. His first command was HMS Incendiary in 1795. The following year he took on Aurora escorting convoys around Spain. In those two years he captured no less than 57 enemy vessels. His habit of paying prize money to his crew straight away, rather than waiting for judgement from an Admiralty court, was very popular. In 1799 he with two other frigates captured two Spanish frigates, one being the Santa Brigada. Their cargoes of Pieces of Eight were worth £56mn in today's money, so you can imagine the prize money given out. He transferred to HMS Africa, just before Trafalgar.

Charles Bullen



Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Bullen by A. Grant

He spent his early childhood in Weymouth, joining the Navy aged just ten in 1779. As a lieutenant on HMS Ramillies he took part in the battle of the Glorious First of June in 1794, off Ushant, France. He then transferred to HMS Monmouth, where he helped stop a mutiny by drawing a line on the deck and threatening to shoot any man who crossed it. His prompt action saved the lives of his fellow officers,

including the Earl of Northesk, and they became firm friends. Monmouth was engaged in the battle of Camperdown in 1797 against the Dutch, capturing several ships and Bullen was promoted for his valiant action. His first command was HMS Minerve in 1803 and a year later the first rate flagship HMS Britannia. Britannia joined the blockade of the Franco-Spanish fleet just before Trafalgar.

Nelson's Captains

Surprisingly few of his Captains had sailed with him before, except Hardy, but what is interesting is that three out of twenty seven Captains of ships of the line i.e. major warships, came from Dorset, and went on to have distinguished careers too. Nelson undoubtedly inspired loyalty, and he was the first naval leader to use the phrase "band of brothers" to describe his Captains at the Battle of the Nile, even if he borrowed it from Shakespeare's Henry V.

Hardy's role in the battle has been widely written about.

To recap, Nelson foolishly wearing his full Admiral's uniform was spotted by a French sharpshooter in the Redoubtable, and a musket ball struck him passing through his spine. Nelson was taken below. His dying words to Hardy beside him were "Kiss me, Hardy" (not Kismet meaning destiny, a Victorian invention), which he did on the cheek. His last words were "Now I am satisfied. Thank God I have done my duty". Nelson's words reflect an extraordinary professional relationship and friendship of over twelve years.

The battle was effectively won at this stage anyway. Bullen commanded *Britannia*, which was a slow moving ship, and he was ordered to "take station as convenient" i.e. not in the van (front) of the fleet. However he managed to fall in 5th behind Victory, so attacked three ships before pursuing the enemy's fleeing van. His ship was relatively undamaged, and he was able to bring three captured ships back to England. His prize money was £3,000 for these, or £250,000 in today's money, so a tidy sum.

Digby was commanding *Africa*, a poor sailor, and on the morning of the battle was far off station to the north. Informed of the impending battle, he arrived somewhat late but weaved between the advancing enemy, engaging each in turn before joining the melee around the huge Spanish flagship, *Santissima Trinidad*. He then fought the *Intrepide* until she surrendered. *Africa* was badly damaged and lost 62 men killed or wounded. It is arguable that he disobeyed Nelson's orders to avoid battle, as his ship was so small carrying just 64 guns, but Nelson himself frequently did the same, winning glory. Hardy later commended his actions.

Captains's letters

The letters of all three Captains show an intense interest in the welfare of their crew, and I should add there were no less than 180 sailors and officers from Dorset at the battle. An example is from one written by Digby after the battle: "I have no time to say more, surrounded as I am with the wounded men in my cabin ... A little groom boy that stayed with me is safe." Hardy's letters too show his concern for the well-being of local boys

serving on his ships, and how he helped friends and relatives find a place in the Navy. My ancestor benefited too from this form of patronage as his father was a friend of Nelson's father. For those who might criticise, the Army at this time still allowed purchases of a Commission to facilitate promotion regardless of merit, unlike the Navy.

Why Did Nelson Win Trafalgar?

It was a combination of many factors. Firstly Nelson's unorthodox strategy of a direct frontal attack with two columns

was crucial, but he was helped by some very experienced officers and well trained crews. Secondly British training focused on sinking ships by firing at the waterline, which worked well in a slow moving battle such as this, while the French were directed to fire more at masts and rigging. Third the French and Spanish fleet was poorly trained with many crews below complement, their gunnery was known to be poor, while they were demoralised. The British carried far more carronades than their enemy, and these were very effective weaponry at close quarters, as in this battle. Light winds favoured the lighter and more manoeuvrable British ships. However the key factor was Nelson's leadership. He knew his enemy well and their

weaknesses, he was well prepared and professional. Married to audacity and decisiveness, these provided a winning combination.

After Trafalgar

After Trafalgar Hardy had a successful naval career. He was given command of *HMS Ramillies* and was involved in North America in the War of 1812, occupying successfully Eastport, Maine, gaining respect there. He became First Naval Lord in 1830, retiring as Vice Admiral. Digby continued afloat until 1815, when he inherited the estate at Minterne Magna from his uncle. However he still served in the Navy until 1830 also, retiring as a Vice-Admiral too. Bullen spent the next three years on *HMS Voluntaire*, blockading Toulon harbour and engaged in other actions off the French and Spanish coast. He served as a Commodore in west Africa during the 1820s and his last command was of the Royal Yacht, *HMS Royal Sovereign*. He retired in 1837 as a Vice-Admiral. He died in 1853, the last surviving captain of the British fleet at Trafalgar. All these men were brave, humane, professional sailors who served their country well and were a credit to their county of birth or adoption, Dorset.

Rupert Hardy



The Death of Nelson by Arthur Devis

John Newman

1946 – 2021

Early in 2015 when I was chairman of the Sherborne and District Society, I was contacted by Sir John Garnier over concerns regarding a planning application in Thornford. At a meeting with him to discuss the matter he mentioned that a neighbour had written an excellent letter of objection and that I should see it. The author was a one John Newman, a graduate of Cambridge and an accountant specialising in taxation. On reading the letter, which was a well-argued representation of the position, it immediately occurred to me that John would make an excellent addition to the Society's Committee; as it appeared that he shared our prime objectives, *'to have and express concern about local developments which fail to enhance the special nature of Sherborne and its local villages and strive to enhance the quality of life in our area, especially concerning housing, work, leisure and transport.'*

Contact was made and later in 2015 John was co-opted onto our committee and subsequently became a member of the newly formed Dorset CPRE Countryside Forum. In both capacities he played important roles in delivering ideas and writing reports and press releases on a variety of issues. Always with great clarity and attention to detail. These included a report relating to:

- developers' land banking, a comprehensive review of the draft West Dorset and Weymouth Local Plan,
- arguing about the wrong interpretation of the demographics of Sherborne, because of how pupils at the various boarding schools caused an over-estimation of the number of teenagers who resided locally,
- joining a committee whose purpose is to develop the listed barns at Barton Farm and individual objections to unsuitable developments locally.

One of these developments was over plans for an Arts Centre in the Town, which we felt would be better developed around the refurbishment of Sherborne House and its curtilage. It was during this time that John, some colleagues and I were accused of being Philistines for taking a stance against what was being proposed. Of course, John being John, then spent some time indicating to me the history of the Philistines and how the word came into colloquial use. We agreed, however, the term didn't apply to us and showed a complete lack of understanding of who we were and what we stood for. Incidentally, I know that he would have been delighted to hear that shortly after his death in May plans were approved for just such a project centred on Sherborne House.

It was following a suggestion by John that the Society instigated a dinner for members, at the same time indicating that he would be happy to provide B&B for the guest speakers if they needed it. I've never asked Freya if she was aware of this invitation before it was offered but I presume it was OK; as after two such dinners, Shaun Spiers (then CEO of CPRE) and Edward Fox (Dorset CPRE President) availed themselves of the offer, that I gather included a few "nightcaps", which were much appreciated.

John and I established early on that having a good relationship with our Local MP could be beneficial and we were able to agree regular breakfast or lunch meetings with the then MP Sir Oliver Letwin, at which we discussed issues of local concern as well as broader matters. I have to say it was quite a task for me to keep up with the intellectual



capacity of 2 Cambridge graduates, but so worthwhile. I know that Sir Oliver enjoyed these sessions too and held John in high regard. It was after the last of these meetings that I have an abiding picture of John, jauntily walking through Dorchester, swinging his briefcase in his usual manner, tripping over a kerbstone, falling headlong, dusting himself down and brushing away my concerns by – "blaming his glasses"!

I was delighted when John succeeded me as Chairman of the Sherborne and District Society. As we are all aware subsequently his failing health became evident but up until very recently, he retained his involvement in the work of the Society and Dorset CPRE giving advice and comments by telephone and email. He did make one very good choice which was to not get involved in any review of the composite Local Plan for Dorset, as it would get him too worked up – A very wise decision.

Whenever we attended any meeting together, outside the local area, I would be chauffeur and as we travelled, we would talk incessantly about the meeting ahead and more likely be "putting the World to rights". Our conversations were so intense that on one occasion I went to Wool Village Hall, rather than Winfrith Newburgh and on another missed the turning to Down Farm and we were well on our way to Cranbourne before we realised and had to turn back. Explanation was offered when we eventually arrived much to the amusement of those present.

Although I had known John for only a comparatively short period of time, I classed him as a great friend and a lovely man. In conclusion may I sum up my feelings with a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt "Many people walk in and out of your life but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart."

Peter Neal

Dorset CPRE Membership

Thank you for being one of our valued members. Your membership makes a real difference to what we can achieve, and with your generous support we will continue our work towards our vision of a thriving, beautiful countryside for everyone.

Not already a member? Stuck for a gift idea?

Joining CPRE is the single most effective way to stand up for the countryside. Once farmland and green spaces are built on, they are lost forever. 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 or contact our office on 0333 577 0360 to receive a copy of our membership form. Individual £3 per month and £5 for Household membership. We also provide membership for Town and Parish Councils.

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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.

Don't forget to take your membership card with you. All houses and gardens' opening dates and times are subject to coronavirus restrictions and may be updated throughout the year so please call, email, or check entries' websites.



Mapperton Gardens



10% off at Cotswold Outdoor

Dorset CPRE Members also receive –

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- They can also join our Planning Group meetings

You'll save money on outdoor kit for the whole family with 10% off most full priced products at Cotswold Outdoor. Full T&Cs apply.

Diary Dates

Please visit the Dorset CPRE website www.dorset-cpre.org.uk for 2021/22 meeting dates for the Countryside Forum, Planning Group, District Groups and events.

20th November – 84th Anniversary AGM, 11 am, Cerne Abbas Village Hall. Guest speaker is Crispin Truman OBE, CEO at CPRE. Please return enclosed booking form.

Campaign to Protect Rural England

DORSET BRANCH

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