

# The Dorset Review

Spring 2023 News Issue 120

## In this issue

- Powering Up Britain and Solar Strategy in Dorset
- Wild Thing: Rewilding at Mapperton
- Farmers want funding to extend hedgerow network and boost nature
- What is Nutrient Neutrality and why is it affecting planning decisions?



The countryside charity  
Dorset



- 2–3** Chair's Report
- 3** CPRE Volunteer Awards
- 4** North Dorset Group
- 5–7** Powering Up Britain and Solar Strategy in Dorset
- 8** Purbeck and Poole Group
- 9** BCP Council Elections
- 10** West Dorset Group
- 11** Farmers want funding to extend hedgerow network and boost nature
- 12–13** Wild Thing: Rewilding at Mapperton
- 13** Beavers in West Dorset
- 14** Sherborne and District Society
- 15** Litter Campaigns
- 16–17** What is Nutrient Neutrality?
- 18** Minerals and Waste in Dorset
- 19** CPRE Recent Publications
- 20–21** All Buttoned Up: A brief history of the Dorset Button industry
- 22–23** CPRE Annual Report & Accounts
- 24** Obituary Janet Healy
- 24–25** Quiet Rural Corners of East Dorset
- 26** Obituary Bob Breach
- 26** Obituary Bob Mizon
- 27** Dorset CPRE Membership
- 28** Contacts

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**Front Cover image** – View of carrot flowers and the coast, looking westwards towards Kimmeridge, taken by Rupert Hardy.

This edition of the Dorset Review contains much of interest to us all. We hope that you find it to be an interesting read.

At our 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary AGM held in November we had a presentation by Dr George McGavin, entomologist and author. George provided a wide-ranging, thought-provoking talk and discussion on how vital it is to address the crises of habitat and species loss and climate change. We welcome Bob Bowmer as our new Hon. Treasurer.

## Biodiversity Net Gain

The recent oil spillage in Poole Harbour raises concerns about the extent of effective environmental management in the area. The matter of pollution in Poole Harbour is such that it requires less pollution now. Proposals for Biodiversity Net Gain on new build sites are welcome yet they do little to reduce current levels of pollution in the Harbour and elsewhere. We need to be aware of greenwashing and well sounding claims when action to reduce pollution now is required.

As spring begins to move into summer let's see what we can do ourselves to encourage net gain for nature. Maybe less over gardening? Bowling green lawns could be replaced by wild flowers? No more lapped fencing? Even a small pond? Bees are attracted by honeysuckle, sunflowers and crab apple trees. Do you have space for any of these? Every little effort to help nature counts.

## Guidance on trees

Dorset Council has produced useful guidance on trees. The checklist is based on the principal of 'Right Tree Right Place.' Parish and Town Councils plus community groups that own land may well find this information helpful for tree planting and tree maintenance.

## Camping

Dorset CPRE are considering the subject of camping in the county. The government is suggesting changing the 'permitted development' rights for temporary recreational campsites that will allow the temporary placement of tents on land for leisure purposes, subject to limitations and conditions. It includes allowing for no more than 30 tents to be erected on the land at any one time and allowing for campsites to operate for up to 60 days per calendar year. Whilst supporting appropriate farm diversification we need

to ensure that unregulated camping does not harm the countryside and spoil the environment. Elsewhere in England there are conflicting views on wild camping. Interestingly there appears to be no position on camping by Dorset Council.

## Countryside Forum

Each quarter there is a meeting of the Dorset CPRE Countryside Forum. Cecilia Bufton, Chair of Dorset LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) was guest speaker at our December meeting giving an update on the current work of the LEP. In February John Calder gave a presentation on the Great Big Dorset Hedge project, a Dorset CAN Campaign. The aim is to bring together volunteers and/or contractors with landowners who want to have their hedgerows restored or extended. Visit <https://www.dorsetcan.org/hedge> to find out more.

## NPPF Prospectus Consultation

Earlier this year, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities sought views on how they might develop new national planning policy to support their wider objectives.

We submitted our response by the 2<sup>nd</sup> March deadline and also contributed to National CPRE's OneCPRE response. We focused on the lack of provision of social housing and we also urged that the national formula for assessing housing need must be revised and based on updated data. The current formula has led to exaggerated and damaging housing targets for Dorset. Councils and communities should be allowed to decide the level and pattern of development appropriate for their area.

BCP Council and Dorset Council also responded to the consultation.

## Comments on planning applications

It is rumoured that the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council have plans to restrict comments on planning applications to residents within a limited area of the planning application. Any such policy will remove the rights of others including environmental charities such as CPRE from commenting on the application. This policy idea may well be illegal as well as being undemocratic. Dorset CPRE are concerned about this matter and are keeping a watching brief.

## Dorset Council Local Plan

Dorset Council appear to be continuing with the Dorset Local Plan. It is not known how much of the feedback from the first consultation on the Dorset Local Plan will be acted upon, and whether there will be further consultation before the submission of the Dorset Local Plan for examination. Dorset CPRE are of the opinion that further consultation is needed. A vision management of land use needs to be developed so that we can see what Dorset may look like in the future. Any picture of the future for Dorset will need to draw upon the 2021 population figures. Current trends show an ageing population for Dorset. These trends create challenges for planners as the need to plan for services and infrastructure appears to be separate from the creation of the Dorset Local Plan.

STAND, the Dorchester based group opposed to the proposed development north of Dorchester (DOR13) held a well-attended public meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March. At the meeting reference was made to a book by Dr Quintin Bradley titled '**Property, Planning and Protest: The Contentious Politics of Housing Supply.**' A recorded interview with Nigel Kay (STAND) and Dr Bradley explains the importance of NIMBYS and its role in public engagement and protests. The video is available on YouTube <https://youtu.be/shgxCeSPnC4>. A worthy read for us?



*Blackthorn hedge in bloom next to a field with spring lambs.*

## New Planning role

Dorset CPRE are still looking for assistance with Planning. The new Planning role is responsible for developing and delivering the organisation's planning work. To date we have not been able to fill this paid role.

Details of the post are on our website. Please tell others about this important position and share with anyone you think may be interested.

*Peter Bowyer*

Chair of Trustees

## CPRE Volunteer Awards

We are so lucky to have active and dedicated members. At our 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM, held at Cerne Abbas Village Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022, we presented certificates and medals to recognise the special contribution of two of our hard-working volunteers.

### Dr David Peacock

Received 'The CPRE Special Contribution and Long Service Award', for his tireless commitment in researching and producing detailed reports on current and future renewable energy generation in Dorset and UK. His knowledge is invaluable when responding to policy and planning issues.

### Rupert Hardy

Presented with 'The CPRE Promoting Rural Life Award' for his leadership and energetic campaigning to promote rural life and Dorset's food and drink producers, judging the Best Village Shop competition, organising events and contributing well-received articles.



*From left Dr David Peacock and Rupert Hardy with their awards outside the Cerne Abbas Village Hall*

# North Dorset Group



The only major new planning issue has been the application to build 150 homes south of Blandford, which would provide housing in excess of that agreed in the Blandford+Neighbourhood Plan, while the site is not supported by that Plan. We objected primarily as it would extend ribbon development along the A350, threaten the miniscule green buffer separating Blandford St Mary from Charlton Marshall, affect the stretched infrastructure of the town, and is not sustainable.

We also objected to a trailer park application in the Deer Park at Blandford for 40 homes supposedly intended for Ukrainian refugees. It would cause serious traffic congestion and the site is prone to flooding. The development ran counter to government policy to accommodate Ukrainians within communities. There is concern that the longer-term objectives of the developer would be to reinstate the previously rejected permanent housing plans for this site. Would it be a Trojan horse?

One frustrating proposal was that to erect eight EV recharging stations in Pimperne. North Dorset CPRE, Pimperne Parish Council and the Cranborne Chase AONB fought to stop this development on grounds of conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan, light intrusion within the AONB which has Dark Skies status, adverse visual impact on the AONB, hazardous access and excessive noise. Sadly the development was approved by the planning committee, and there is serious concern from the outcome that the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan were being seriously flouted.

A North Dorset CPRE action group was involved also in opposing an appeal to build a large dwelling on the exposed skyline of the Dorset AONB at Hilton, and made representations to the Inspector at a hearing.



*Elaine Spencer-White, Bere Marsh Farm Manager*

## Planning Success

The planning application for a large park homes development between Colesbrook, on the north side of Gillingham and Milton on Stour, has been refused by Dorset Council. Good news! It was in conflict with Gillingham's Neighbourhood Plan and would have closed the much-needed green gap between all three communities.

## AGM

Nearly thirty people came to the North Dorset CPRE AGM in March at Clayesmore School and to hear Elaine Spencer-White talk about The Countryside Regeneration Trust and the wonderful Bere Marsh Farm. They have been busy transforming the farm, improving biodiversity and rewilding part of it since it was acquired in 2020. No

fewer than 126 volunteers are helping at the farm. They are opening a café this Easter and welcome visitors every day, so do visit.

## Visit to Bere Marsh Farm

We have arranged a visit for 6<sup>th</sup> June to the Countryside Regeneration Trust's (CRT) very special Bere Marsh Farm, Shillingstone, in an idyllic site by the river Stour. The ninety acre farm was acquired by the Trust in 2020 and there has been a major programme of work improving biodiversity and rewilding part of the farm. We are meeting in the morning for a guided walking tour as we will see more wildlife than in the afternoon. It should be fascinating to see the efforts to improve biodiversity and to rewild part of the farm.

## Oak Fair

We will be taking a stand at the Stock Gaylard Oak Fair again on the August bank holiday weekend. The Stock Gaylard Estate is a small traditional country estate just over 4 miles from Sturminster Newton and 8 miles from Sherborne. The Fair has a conservation and country activities bias for those who have not been before. It is a good opportunity to meet members and also recruit new ones.



*Rupert Hardy*  
Group Chairman

# Powering Up Britain and Solar Strategy in Dorset



Littleton Solar Farm, Blandford

Dorset CPRE is well aware of the climate emergency, the severe impact the Ukraine conflict has had on energy prices, and is fully supportive of renewable energy development. The government's recent policy paper, Powering Up Britain, was meant to address our slowness in introducing measures to meet Net Zero, but has so far been criticised for lacking ambition and offering very little new money. The government is still prioritising offshore wind power to supply the majority of our renewable energy needs, but is now aiming also for 70GW of solar ground and rooftop capacity, a fivefold increase by 2035, but it is very unclear how this will be funded or implemented. There appears too much reliance on pulling in private money. Next year a solar roadmap will be published on how this will be achieved, but we remain concerned that too much focus will be on greenfield solar, which could desecrate our countryside, and not enough on rooftop, where the government has belatedly focused and which we wholeheartedly support.

What can Dorset do, as new offshore wind is less likely to be proposed here and the main contribution will come from solar in Dorset. To combat climate change, Dorset Council (DC) aims to meet a huge renewable energy target of 3.8TWh/yr by 2050, up from current generation of 0.5TWh/yr. Developers will retort that we have plenty of potential sites to build solar farms on, or solar power plants which they really are, and that we should take advantage of the high solar irradiance of the county. However do not be deceived by the frequently misleading data issued by solar trade associations, whose members are more concerned with profit than saving the planet.

This spring we expect a planning hearing in North Dorset on the 190 acre solar farm developers wish to build at Pulham/Mappowder. We have not objected to a number of less damaging solar farms, but we are opposing this one on grounds of the harm it will do to the setting of the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and the beautiful pristine countryside it is tasked with protecting, as well as adverse impact on amenity and flooding risk. An application for another large solar power plant close to the iconic Horton Tower in East Dorset is imminent, but thankfully a 1400 acre one near Chickerell was recently withdrawn at the proposal stage. More will be coming though. Is this a price worth paying?

## Key Factors Affecting Solar Farms

We would argue that it is not a price worth paying and that rooftop solar could provide the same output, although we are supportive of <5MW community-funded solar farms. Key factors that should be considered are:

- **Solar farm inefficiency:** They are hugely inefficient compared to offshore wind. Solar's efficiency rating is 11%, compared to 40% for offshore wind.
- **Negative impact on landscape quality:** Solar farms are mostly power stations that industrialise our beautiful Dorset countryside, loved both by residents and tourists. In particular the AONBs should be protected. Cumulative impact from several solar parks in close proximity will exacerbate the damage, as can be seen from Badbury Rings, an ancient monument.
- **Adverse effect on heritage assets and their setting:** We have lots of historic churches, houses and ancient monuments which have huge cultural significance for Dorset.
- **Loss of good agricultural land and food security:** Many solar farms are being built on high grade productive farmland, such as at Spetisbury, which is unforgivable at this time, with food prices rocketing as a result of the invasion of Ukraine. Food security should be paramount. Development should be limited to brownfield sites and poor quality agricultural land. It can be argued that land graded 3b should not be considered as "poor" as much is productive and often soil here is better able to hold more moisture than higher grades. This was proved in last year's long hot summer. There was talk last summer of government including 3b in its definition of "Best and Most Versatile" land, but this was squashed by Thérèse Coffey.
- **Wildlife and biodiversity:** Developers may suggest token gestures such as sheep grazing, but sheep rarely graze under panels, and mostly just on the grass margin. Birds and bat deaths are common as they mistake glass panels for water, while the routes of transitory animals are blocked, forcing them to cross roads.
- **Amenity:** Most prospective solar farms have footpaths and bridleways crossing them, which are used by residents and visitors alike for enjoying the countryside.

# Powering Up Britain and Solar Strategy in Dorset (continued)

- **Permanent or temporary land use?** Most solar farms are leased for 30 or 40 years, with a strong likelihood of an extension being applied for. A 40 year period represents two generations relating to a farming tenancy. Land may never revert to agricultural use.
- **Tenant farmers ignored:** Solar proposal decisions are often taken by landowners against the wishes of their tenants, who farm the land.
- **Battery storage:** Many solar farms now incorporate this, but lithium-ion batteries present a dangerous fire risk which fire brigades find difficult to deal with.

We would argue that government needs to have a clearer solar policy, which it does not compared to development of land for residential purposes. The proliferation of solar applications across the country make it imperative that there is clearer guidance on grounds for refusal or acceptance of applications. We would also like stronger local landscape policies in Dorset Council's emerging Local Plan.

## Why 95% of Households and 98% of Businesses in Dorset Have No Rooftop Solar

Opposition to industrial-sized solar farms in the countryside is growing, as demands for food security and nature recovery are clashing with net zero goals. Promoting rooftop solar makes much more sense as Dorset CPRE have calculated that by installing solar panels on only 64% of currently unutilised buildings, you can reach the maximum government target for 2050 for Solar PV in England of 117.6 TWh, according to the Dynamic Dispatch Team at the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, without building another solar farm (search for renewable energy reports on <https://dorset-cpre.org.uk>). The figure for Dorset would likely be similar. We ask why 95% of households and 98% of businesses in Dorset had no roof-mounted solar as of December 2021. The answer was first a failure by government and Dorset Council, despite its declared Climate Emergency strategy, to make it mandatory for new housing developments to fit solar panels on every roof. After much badgering it appears Dorset Council is finally looking at ways it can impose new planning conditions on developers. Other local authorities have already done this.

Retrofitting older buildings will be expensive, but VAT on domestic solar PV was dropped a year ago. Another way would be to increase funding of community energy groups, like Purbeck Energy, who facilitate the fitting of solar panels at discounted prices. This would cost much less than subsidising directly millions of home owners, and yet Powering Up Britain has said little on this.

## Community Energy Groups

The phasing out of domestic solar panel subsidies in recent years meant that individuals became reluctant installers, despite the drop in prices of panels, while cash-strapped local authorities have been unable to help, but community energy



*'Hazelmead' is being built on the north-western edge of Bridport. The houses are designed to be affordable, high quality and energy efficient. Image by Bridport Cohousing.*

groups sprang up with the goal of offering panels at very competitive rates. It is a growing movement in which energy generation is owned not by large industrial companies but by local communities, with the profits invested back into the community. However last year Community Energy England, in advance of the second reading of the Local Electricity Bill, said that Ministers were failing to respond to growing support for community renewable energy, or properly plan for growth in line with net-zero commitments. Over 300 MPs committed their support to this Bill, which is designed to ensure that Ofgem creates a Right to Local Supply framework, which would help community energy. The Bill appears to be stuck in some Westminster crevice, but the government appears to have other priorities!

Despite this, in 2021 Sustainable Swanage and community energy group, Purbeck Energy, launched a project to offer Swanage residents the chance to get solar panels for their properties at competitive rates. They use a company, IDDEA, which has already made over 2,500 installations across southern England. The Swanage Mayor, Mike Bonfield, was fully supportive and praised it as a "brilliant scheme". How about more Dorset towns encouraging the same?

## Solar PV on Public, Industrial, and Farm Buildings

One of the reasons for slow progress on industrial buildings has been issues of building ownership and leasehold arrangements, complex planning processes, as well as roof weight and warranties. High energy prices now mean owners of commercial buildings are looking at rooftop solar wherever they can, especially as installing panels on these properties is so much cheaper than for domestic thanks to scale. The government is at least now consulting on changes to permitted development rights with the aim of simplifying planning processes for large commercial rooftop installations.

Progress is now being made to improve the energy efficiency on public buildings in Dorset too, where ownership is clearer. The first major push came from DC's Low Carbon Dorset team, who gave grants of £5m to fund 4.1MW of projects, both public sector and business, thanks initially to the European Regional Development Fund. DC was

also given £19m by the government for more renewable projects. This was one of the biggest grant packages given by the government, so well done DC! It paid for panels to go on the roof of Durlston Castle, the arts centre, County Hall in Dorchester, and various schools. In North Dorset, Blandford and Gillingham Schools are busy installing panels. Bridport-based Dorset Community Energy, which facilitates community ownership of renewable energy production, has financed the installation of panels on twelve schools and four community buildings throughout Dorset, such as Blandford Community Hospital. Thanks initially to the Lottery and many local shareholders it has funded over 1.5MW of panels. We hope to see more of these community-led projects.

DC in its briefing to its Climate and Ecological Emergency Support Group in November spoke of the progress made on decarbonisation of DC properties, including rooftop solar installation. They will be funding now directly most of the Low Carbon Dorset unit, which otherwise was due to close having distributed all the grants given them.

Farmers are fitting panels to their buildings but it is estimated that only a small proportion of farmers so far in Dorset have done so. Weight problems are often quoted as to why less retrofitting is done but access to the Grid is another. Mole Energy have been busy promoting the fitting of panels to farm buildings here, but have emphasised the serious Grid capacity issues, which got worse through 2022. They say the rapid phasing out of domestic subsidies in 2016 meant many solar PV installers had to diversify and the associated tradesmen left the industry, so there may be too few installers now too.

## Other Solutions in Europe

France announced plans to fast track renewable energy by mandating car parks nation-wide be covered by solar panels – a popular policy that could generate up to 11GW of power. With good planning and design, 20,000 hectares of car parking space in the UK could potentially yield an additional 8GW of solar capacity alongside tens of thousands of new homes. This compares to 14.5GW of solar capacity operational in the UK.

Belatedly the government will now introduce permitted development rights for solar canopies on non-domestic car parks, but this is not the same as mandating it, which would achieve so much more.

## Conclusion

We want our government to adopt a renewables strategy that prioritises rooftops, surface car parks and brownfield sites in a concerted effort to attract wide public support. Grid capacity issues need to be resolved too. If implemented quickly, the policy could drastically reduce energy bills during the cost-of-living crisis and speed up the transition to net zero, while leaving as much countryside as possible available for farming and nature restoration. Much hinges on the promised government solar road map.

Four urgent national policy changes are needed:

- A national land use strategy to balance the competing demands for development, energy and infrastructure, food security and nature recovery; and planning policy amended so that it actively promotes solar panels on agricultural land avoiding the best and most versatile agricultural.
- Solar panels should be mandatory for all new buildings; and planning permission should not be granted for commercial or public car parking spaces unless they also provide solar energy generation.
- Much more needs to be spent on home insulation, compared to the puny amount promised so far.
- The government needs to give more financial support to community energy.

Finally we do not want dozens of solar power plants desecrating our precious countryside land! It is not a price worth paying.

*Rupert Hardy*

Chair North Dorset CPRE





## Preparing to clarify local views

To be prepared, our Group tries to afford an opportunity for an exchange of views to take place so that it can take part in dealing with local problems. Recently such matters have included timely access to emergency hospital facilities, appeals to government for revision of local decisions, protection of Green Belt land, need for an action plan to stop damage to “protected” Poole harbour (arising from polluted rivers) as well as preventing light pollution from damaging insects and other wildlife (especially in vulnerable areas: see photo of pedestrian entrance to ‘dark skies’ Durlston Country Park).



Photo: Dr. Gavin Rider

Entrance to Durlston Country Park

## Exchange of views

The idea of an exchange of views is liked because views will be different, especially if we accept that harmony is not possible if everyone is expected to sing the same note: only notes that are different can possibly harmonize to make that compelling tune. In any case, differences of opinion are opportunities for learning and our Group, like our whole Dorset Branch, values learning with its membership.

## Soundness

As does any parish / town council or other association, forum or group in our County (with which we seek to liaise), we are able to form views which should be expressed to shape the desired future of local surroundings. Our Group is particularly interested in ensuring the expected draft Local Plans, being prepared by both Unitary Councils in Dorset, do benefit from our views well before their draft documents are issued by the experts employed by the Councils. Considerable benefits should accrue if any formally issued draft Local Plan is very ‘sound’ when released because it would reduce the need to ensure ‘soundness’ via The Independent Planning Inspector: a risky process that can take years to complete, as demonstrated by the continuing saga of the Purbeck Local Plan, and thus hamper local planning. “Experts” may have collected views from the public over recent years but, at the time of writing, it is not known whether such views have registered properly to be ‘sound’ as well as ‘legal’. The following quotation (alleged to have been a favourite of The Duke of Edinburgh – never afraid to speak his mind) has some relevance:-

**“I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure that you realize that what you heard is not what I meant”**

– R J McCloskey

With regard to ‘experts’, obviously respect for their ‘expert’ opinions is essential but such opinions may have limitations. A turkey, if you asked a turkey, should be stuffed with grasshoppers, grit and worms! Also, gardeners know that the difference between a flower and a weed is simply “perspective”. Local planning must reflect local perspectives of a generally desired reality.

To help ensure such realism / soundness, it is hoped that you, dear Reader, may wish to help ensure the eventual Local Plans are suitable for the next decade or so. If so, please do not hesitate to contact me (my address is at the back of this Review): a ‘heads up’ on any issue would be very welcome.

## Encourage constructive debate

Unsurprisingly, our Group values informed local opinion and is not afraid to encourage constructive debate about the future of Poole and Purbeck (with its shared harbour) as it seeks to ensure the relevant authorities deliver solutions to actual local needs that are soundly based upon common sense. We are keen to help ensure the good people of Purbeck and Poole are satisfied that all is as they would wish it to be: shades of The Royal Charters (granted to those in Poole) that decree, in effect, that *matters will be controlled locally to accord with the good rules of government so as to encourage good people and also that peace and all other acts of justice may be kept and done without delay.*

Please do not hesitate to share your personal views with us. I am happy to receive them at any time because we may be missing something. Hopefully your views will allow our Group to be prepared to maximize support for sound policies and minimise the risks of any misunderstandings. We certainly do not wish to see any undermining of the necessary trust in effective local planning for the common good. Grass roots opinions are the bedrock and fundamental building blocks of a democracy.

*Gerald Rigler*

Group Chairman



# BCP Council Elections: Letter to candidates

There were full local and parish council elections in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 where all seats in 33 BCP Council wards plus 5 parish/town/village councils were up for elections.

We wrote to candidates in April to introduce our organisation and focused on the key actions that can be taken forward by councillors. A copy of the letter is reproduced in this article and we will write again to elected councillors.



Dear BCP Council Candidate,

I am writing to introduce CPRE, The Countryside Charity.

Dorset CPRE works with both Unitary Councils in Dorset to promote, enhance, and protect the local countryside, for the benefit of all and we are part of a wider national Network of CPRE groups. The CPRE, both nationally and locally, contribute to major consultations including strategy, housing, planning and the environment.

The Dorset CPRE has identified the following key actions that will positively contribute towards providing new and improved homes, key infrastructure and protection of the natural environment and wildlife:

## Protect the Green Belt

Dorset CPRE maintains that excessive local housing targets are wrong, since they lead to planners being compelled to allocate sites for market housing on precious Green Belt land. Green Belt policy is a valid long-term constraint on housing sprawl (*preventing urban areas from being 'hollowed out'*), whilst providing open countryside for present and future generations to enjoy.

## Brownfield first!

CPRE's 2022 'State of Brownfield' report, see page 19, shows that the amount of previously developed land continues to grow across England. In BCP there are 329 sites covering more than 135 hectares of brownfield land, potentially around 12,000 dwellings. You could help to utilise these sites effectively if you:

- Brought suitable brownfield sites forward for housing by: Maximizing any funding opportunities; working with delivery partners to get brownfield sites approved for development; and using Compulsory Purchase Powers where necessary.
- Investigated bringing the 2,127 empty homes (DLUHC stats to Oct 2022) in BCP into current use.
- Identified brownfield land suitable for housing by working with local communities to pinpoint possible new sites.
- Ensured any Infrastructure levy, including Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 requirements, are set at a level which positively discourages Greenfield land development, particularly in green corridors and play areas.
- Only allowed Greenfield developments as a last resort (with necessary exceptions for affordable and social homes to address local need).

## Solar and insulation

In BCP only 3.4% of domestic and .5% of businesses have solar on roofs (Dorset CPRE report May 2022). There is an untapped potential for rooftop solar across the country, with 250,000

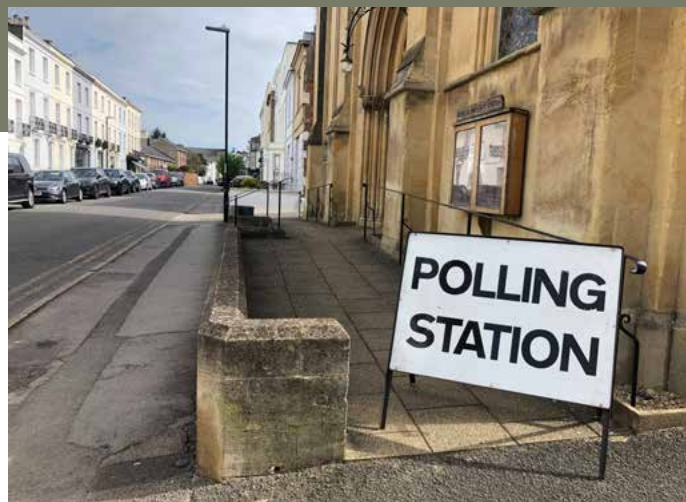


Photo: Red Dot on Unsplash

hectares of south facing commercial roof space nationally, and a further 20,000 hectares of car parks. Using this rooftop space would dramatically reduce the pressure for controversial 'greenfield' solar farms.

Therefore, it would be sensible to:

- Make solar Photovoltaic (PV) and thermal panels the standard expectation for all suitably-orientated roofs on new buildings, including homes. Incorporate this objective in any BCP Climate Strategy or Action Plan, any Corporate Strategy or any emerging Local Plan.
- Prioritise the installation of solar PV and thermal panels upon all suitably-orientated roofs on publicly owned buildings or suitable publicly owned brownfield land. Ensure that any previous commitments by BCP regarding solar installations are being resourced, monitored and met.
- Use local plan policies to allow refusal of planning permission for homes unless they are Future Homes Standard or equivalent.
- Use local plan policies which only allow planning permission to be granted for commercial or public car parking spaces if they also provide solar energy generation.
- Support the installation of suitable (e.g. English Heritage approved) double and triple glazing for Listed and conservation area dwellings to improve insulation and reduce running costs.

## Thriving Dorset communities

Our area has a distinctive rural character that we need to nurture for future generations to allow everyone to enjoy the countryside for its health and wellbeing benefits. This suggests there are needs to:

- Protect the Natural Environment and green spaces from development to retain the special character of our area.
- Encourage the development of genuinely affordable homes for social rent.
- Support local economies, infrastructure services and supply chains, including farmers and Dorset food and drink producers.
- Deter and proactively reduce littering, anti-social behaviour, and river, harbour & sea pollution.

If you are elected as a Councillor, I urge both you and your sponsoring party, if any, to support the above key actions.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Bowyer*

Chair of Trustees



# West Dorset Group



STAND meeting in the Corn Exchange on 25<sup>th</sup> March, taken by Ian Gosling

To start with, one piece of great news which most will know of by now- the unanimous rejection at the hearing at Dorset Council on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March of the Powerfuel application, which I attended, for their waste incinerator at Portland Port. To have a unanimous verdict against is fantastic. Great work by the pressure group 'Stop the Portland Waste Incinerator.' It is hard to think of any good reason to have it there, but easy to find objections! There were some excellent speakers at the strategic and technical planning committee meeting. The director of Powerfuel Portland has said the company will appeal Dorset Council's decision to refuse permission.

## Chickerell Solar Farm withdrawn

Our countryside is rapidly being industrialised. Increasingly solar farms (or parks, industrial estates or power stations – call them what you will) are threatening to cover Dorset's exceptionally beautiful countryside in glass and large batteries. While writing this, the news came through that the one causing the greatest threat now in West Dorset, the Statera Energy proposal, was being withdrawn! It would have consisted of a 1300 acre solar so-called 'park'. The top half, or just under a half, was in the Dorset AONB (which supposedly has the highest level of protection). The Dorset AONB also surrounded it to the west and south. It would have produced 300 MW of electricity.

It is an enormous relief it has been dropped. It would have abutted the

area where the National Grid recently spent a fortune burying cables so that the overhead pylons could be removed. Dorset CPRE favours smaller scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic installations with a maximum capacity of 5 MW (20,000 panels) that can be well-screened from surrounding view points, and strongly supports roof top solar panels. Less than 3% of domestic and business roofs have solar panels in the UK (4.2% for Dorset Council and 3.1% for BCP Council)<sup>1</sup>. There is a huge potential there to avoid ruining countryside and farmland. The countryside is needed to protect people's general wellbeing and mental health as well as for feeding us. There is no doubt that being out in the countryside elevates mood- very important in these times.

## Chickerell Battery Storage

However, we are left with Statera Energy's proposal for a huge battery storage – called a BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) – close to Chickerell with an alleged 40-year lifespan. This is also within the setting of the Dorset AONB. It seems that around the time the solar park was dropped, the size of the battery bank was increased from 480 to 600 lithium ion battery units (shipping containers) on land to the north of the Chickerell National Grid substation. i.e.- very large! All enclosed by a 3 metre high security fence. They talk of "extensive landscaping" but one is rather sceptical. There is a new application P/ESP/2023/01922 for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping request.

There have been reports of batteries like these spontaneously combusting or exploding, emitting noxious gases locally and over quite a wide area (3 KM – taking in for example Broadwey, up to Weymouth seafront, Chickerell and down to the Fleet). They propose to place the BESS very close to houses especially along Coldharbour Road. During construction, over 18 months, there would also be tremendous disruption when all the other necessary materials are brought in up narrow lanes in large lorries. The batteries are also apparently noisy when operational and need a lot of water to cool them. At the very least we need to have all these fears thoroughly examined in the EIA.

We recently formed a very committed group CAG (Chickerell Action Group) and will now focus on the Battery Storage proposal.

## North of Dorchester

STAND, Campaigning to save the area north of Dorchester, had a very successful meeting at the Corn Exchange on 25<sup>th</sup> March which I attended. It was packed full – more than 200 people (as shown in the photograph). There was a talk by Paul Stanfield from Wessex Water. He described the work involved by a water company in a huge new housing estate like this – factoring in predicted changes with climate change, increased number of cars and people in the area. He noted that Wessex Water are not able to object but can make representations. In fact, they have an obligation to provide the infrastructure (water and sewage) to an approved new site. It always amazes me that Dorset Council, despite declaring a Climate Emergency, fail to put solar panels on the roofs of their new builds (most of which of course should be facing south!). There were other good speakers from the floor – making comments such as that the planning system in the UK is developer driven and not by the needs of the local people.

<sup>1</sup>The Role of roof-mounted solar photovoltaic installations in 2050 electricity generation, dated May 2022, produced by David Peacock is available to download from the Dorset CPRE website.

*Dr Guy Dickinson*  
Group Chairman

# Farmers want funding to extend hedgerow network and boost nature

In July 2022, Farmers Weekly conducted a survey of farmers and their hedgerows on behalf of CPRE. The results appear in the **'Farming and hedgerows: stretching the boundaries'** report that was launched in the House of Lords on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

Responses to the survey represent a broad cross section of farmers and land managers working across all regions, types and sizes of farm business.



## Key findings

- The vast majority (86%) of farmers say that hedgerows are important to them and their business;
- Overall, six in ten have planted some hedgerows in the past ten years;
- 70% of respondents cited cost as the biggest barrier to planting hedgerows, while the same percentage would plant more hedgerows with improved government incentives;
- 86% of farmers surveyed see wildlife habitat/nature corridors as the top benefit of having hedgerows;
- Overwhelming support for a new government target of 40% more hedgerows by 2050, with 8 in 10 backing this recommendation from CPRE.

The findings show farmers are keenly aware of the benefits of revitalising nature on their land. More than 1,100 farmers who completed the survey revealed a lack of funding was by far the biggest obstacle to planting and maintaining hedgerows. This is despite wildlife and nature corridors being seen as the greatest benefit of hedgerows by almost nine in ten farmers. Other benefits include providing shelter or shade for crops or livestock, providing a home for pollinators and pest predators – and more than half of farmers simply recognising that hedgerows enhance the beauty of the countryside.

## Future hedgerow funding

Private finance, possibly in the form of carbon credits, was identified as a significant opportunity for future hedgerow funding. A small majority of farmers said they currently received some form of government support for hedgerow planting, often from Countryside Stewardship funding. However, over a quarter had access to private funding.

CPRE recommends the government explores how private funding, such as hedgerow carbon credits, or from water companies wanting to improve water quality, could help support farmers to deliver a major hedgerow planting programme. Ministers are well placed to create the right frameworks to channel public and private funding to support farmers to invest in their hedgerows to benefit farming, nature, landscape and climate.

## Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs)

The popularity of hedgerows among farmers suggests they could become a torchbearer of the government's new Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs). The new schemes promise public money for public goods but since December 2022 ELMs has been under review. Most farms across the country have some hedgerows, making

them an ideal entry point to the new land management schemes. But, the government needs to deliver practical funding options that complement current farming practices.

There is overwhelming support among farmers for the government to introduce a target to expand the country's hedgerow network. A nationwide survey showed the vast majority of farmers and land managers responding also want the government to properly fund the target, which is 40% more hedgerows by 2050, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee.

John Calder owns farmland in West Dorset, is participating in the Sustainable Farming Incentive Pilot (the fundamental element of ELMs) and has been working directly with DEFRA (the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) on the Hedgerows Practitioners Work Group (the potential powerhouse for innovation in ELMs co-design). He is also the driver behind the ambitious Great Big Dorset Hedge survey, a Dorset CAN campaign, which has begun to chart the current status of hedgerows in Dorset which has been strongly supported by Dorset CPRE.



Dorset CPRE and Dorset CAN shared a stand at the Thorncombe Eco Fair, on 16th February 2023, and promoted the GBDH surveys and CPRE's Hedgerows report

John says "Nobody should underestimate the enormity of the challenge DEFRA faces when catering for the wide variety of contradictory stakeholder inputs as they design the ELM scheme. Nor should they imagine that the DEFRA staff deployed to do this are lacking in diligence. However much more work needs to be done to the Hedgerow component of ELMs for it to be fit for purpose.

- We still need DEFRA to provide farmers with real incentive to prioritize the planting of new hedgerows, and not just a partial subsidy;
- The ELMs payments should clearly differentiate between rewards for well-maintained hedges and rewards for neglected hedges;
- Payments made should be based on the value of public goods provided rather than the wholly inappropriate historic basis of 'income foregone plus costs'.

It is to be hoped that DEFRA pays close attention to this very welcome report from the CPRE where finally clarity of purpose could be found. The changes listed above, if adopted, would help to make ELMs the successful scheme for hedgerows that clearly so many farmers would want it to be."

# Wild Thing: Rewilding At Mapperton



Mapperton House

photo: Mapperton Estates

Luke and Julie Montagu took on the challenge of running the family estate at Mapperton, near Beaminster, in 2016 from his parents, The Earl and Countess of Sandwich. Initially they introduced many positive changes, but the biggest has been the decision to rewild part of the 1,900 acres they own. Inspired by the success of the Knepp Estate in Sussex, they are now employing rewilding, traditional conservation and regenerative farming to deliver major ecological benefits as well as offset the huge expenses of maintaining the historic house, the wonderful Italianate gardens and their four farms.

Rewilding began in 2021 using the 200 acre farm at Coltleigh, and another 257 acres will be added this year, and another 500 or so later. The aim is to restore the degraded landscape featuring magnificently beautiful but marginal agricultural land. For the rewilding sceptics this is really not good agricultural land. Extensive ecological surveys were conducted to help identify key habitats and the benefits of rewilding. They are introducing large grazing herbivores which will replicate the low intensity of grazing comparable to the Mesolithic Period. White Park horned cattle, Exmoor ponies and beavers have now been brought in, and the cattle will be managed using virtual fence technology and electronic collars so internal fencing and gates can be removed in the rewilded area. It is hoped that after ten years or so that virtual fencing can be dispensed with too. These herbivores help create habitats by dispersing seeds and nutrients through grazing, browsing, trampling and rootling. Broadleaf tree species are being planted and new ponds created to support a wetland ecology. Beavers should be able to help with flood alleviation as they are “ecosystem engineers”. They were hunted to extinction in the 1600s thanks to the value of their pelts, but are being reintroduced selectively in the UK.

This year they will be introducing Iron Age pigs, which look like wild boars. Pine martens are being considered too. Driven game shooting is now stopping but they will still have rough shooting, which is sustainable. There are wild deer on the estate and these still need to be culled to manage the health of the herds. Luke wants to carry out research into the rewilding process, and plans to work with both Reading and Bournemouth Universities.

## Mapperton vs. Knepp

Comparing Mapperton to Knepp, there are some clear differences in approach. All of Knepp has been rewilded, while half of Mapperton, where there is better land, will still be farmed, but focusing more on regenerative agriculture. This places soil health at the core of the farming practice. Crops are sown using direct drilling and no ploughing, while minimal use of fertilisers and pesticides improves biodiversity, better recycling of farm waste, carbon sequestration and more nutritious food. Luke is well aware that Mapperton is much more remote than Knepp so they are relying far more on “virtual” visitors. He and Julie had previous career experience in film and reality TV, which has helped in developing a strong social media presence for Mapperton abroad, especially in the USA, so they are in a position to monetise YouTube, where they have no less than 130,000 subscribers. They also have a Patreon community, who pay extra to get exclusive video of what is happening at Mapperton. These virtual visitors can become real visitors as this year they will be organising Grand Historic Tours in Dorset, aimed at wealthy Americans. If you look at real visitors overall half come from Dorset and half outside. Only 0.5% of Dorset residents have ever visited Mapperton so there is clear potential here, especially as they are making the estate a more family friendly attraction with play areas being built in the gardens. Clearly more accommodation will be needed so old

photo: Sam Rose



*Aerial photo of the Mapperton landscape being rewilded*

farmsteads are being converted. Glamping started last year and Luke hopes that it will be possible to offer real wild camping soon. They also intend holding more events and talks in the expanded visitor centre. The Dorset economy will benefit from more attractions, such as Mapperton, away from the crowded coast. Overall they are keeping their prices well below Knepp's.

One of the major frustrations experienced at Mapperton has been the lamentable slowness of government in mapping out the future of British farming and subsidy schemes. Fortunately there are features of the old subsidy regime, such as the Higher Stewardship Scheme which will remain, and the new Capital Grants are much more generous.

## Benefits of Social Prescribing

One new interesting approach is social prescribing. Local healthcare professionals will be able to refer patients to nature-based programmes at the Estate, which would include outdoor activities, such as coppicing and foraging, to support their health and well-being. One of Luke's admirable visions is "connecting people with nature, the landscape and the heritage of the area".

To complement the activities at Mapperton, West Dorset Wilding has been set up with two other estates to raise understanding of rewilding and regenerative agriculture, and to establish wildlife corridors, as well as targeting certain species such as beavers, focusing on the river Brit catchment. Close by are a number of gardens open to the public which have introduced rewilding, such as Hooke Farm, which has glorious wild flower meadows in the spring.

Do go and visit Mapperton this year, visit their website for more details [www.mapperton.com](http://www.mapperton.com). CPRE Members receive discounted entry to the Gardens (2 adult tickets for the price of 1 on Wednesdays and Thursdays, excluding special events). If you live in Dorset it is actually not that remote, and you will find more than delicious sandwiches in their smart café. Dorset CPRE are also organising their Summer event there so please see the separate flyer, and do come.

*Rupert Hardy*

Chair North Dorset CPRE

## Beavers In West Dorset

### Somewhere near Bridport

Beavers have bred in Dorset for the first time in 400 years at Dorset Wildlife Trust's enclosed site at a "secret" location in west Dorset. Trail cameras inside the enclosure have captured images of a young beaver, known as a kit, and its mother exploring the watery woodland created by its parents since they were released there in February 2021. Beavers typically have one to four kits in a litter so there may be other kits yet to be seen. DWT, the University of Exeter and Wessex Water are assessing all the impacts that beavers make on the natural environment including river flow, water quality and biodiversity. The beavers have built dams and created a wetland to suit their needs and which also provides habitats for other species such as frogs, newts and toads which depend on water.



*Two beavers on a riverbank*

Photo: Deborah Freeman

### Mapperton Estate

Woody and Twiggy are a pair of two year old Eurasian beavers which have been living in a large fenced enclosure on the Mapperton Estate near Beaminster since last year as part of the Mapperton Wildlands rewilding project see above for full article. They escaped recently when a fallen tree damaged the

fence during the wet weather. They were very soon located, trapped, and returned to their enclosure by which time the fence had been repaired.

*Dr John Larkin*

# The Sherborne and District Society



An evening walk out of Sherborne up the lane leading to the golf club is a reminder how lucky we are with the glorious countryside that surrounds our town. It is also a reminder of how important it is for our local CPRE to safeguard such **landscapes** at a time when there is considerable economic pressure on farming and the ever-present threat of development on green field sites.

## Right to roam

In the wake of energetic lobbying by special interest groups for an extended “right to roam” (including almost all farmland) we are now seeing some politicians climb on to that particular bandwagon. Most Sherborne and District Society (Sherborne CPRE) members will be only too aware of the vast difference between such open access on Scottish uplands and the situation in Dorset. Dorset already has an extensive rights of way network, and farming systems (especially livestock) that are totally incompatible with any vast increase in public access. CPRE encourages optimum access to the countryside, but must not confuse that with populist measures which would impact adversely on the commercial viability of Dorset farms.

## Farming liaison

Plans are afoot for Sherborne CPRE to host a seminar later in 2023 with local farmers to hear what problems currently face them and to ascertain what CPRE can do (if anything) to help them remain in business. Locally we value our “farmed landscape”, but have to recognise that it is under threat. The photo below shows CPRE members on Mike Tizzard’s dairy farm, at Lower Farm, Lillington, last year – a fascinating visit.



## Proposed closure of Almshouses

Sherborne CPRE is very concerned by the recent announcement that the almshouses are under threat. They are a magnificent feature of the townscape, and date back to the fifteenth century. Initiatives are known to be underway within the town to safeguard them, and Sherborne CPRE (which has a civic society role) stands ready to support any that will ensure they remain in appropriate use.



## Newell House

The sad saga of Newell House (a Grade Two building) continues. Sherborne CPRE recently challenged Dorset Council to confirm what action they were taking to safeguard the building, and received a belated and totally unsatisfactory response. The Council’s interest in heritage buildings seems woefully inadequate. Other efforts to get remedial measures under way are currently being considered by Sherborne CPRE, but in the meantime we have written to several media outlets to register our concern.

## Planning

As members will be aware, there is a two-year delay to the Dorset Council Local Plan, which carries with it threats and opportunities. On the bright side of life, we will press hard for some sensible amendments to the current draft: a reduction in numbers in the proposed western development, but emphasising that whatever the final number they must be properly designed, with adequate infrastructure and have the required number of truly affordable homes for younger people. We are also pushing Dorset Council to issue a fully-comprehensive plan to ensure the Zero-Carbon target is realistically achievable in the County, which will require a more determined approach to insulation and appropriate renewables. We are especially concerned that new developments still lack proper insulation, and opportunities are being missed to fit PV panels on new private and commercial buildings. But the bad side of the delay is that there is a risk that unscrupulous developers will see this as a window of opportunity to gain planning permission for shoddy constructions; we are on our guard!

## Town Centre Enhancement

We are actively involved in promoting better coordination and communication across the many wonderful groups who are doing great work in the community, but often without knowledge of overlapping efforts from others. At the same time, we are working with other stakeholders on realistic schemes to enhance the “Sherborne Experience.” Early days, and more to follow, but we are extremely excited at the prospect of maximising our Civic Society role as key players in these worthy endeavours.

*Sir Christopher Coville*  
Chairman

# Litter Campaigns

We participate in the Litter Free Dorset Forum meetings, hosted by Litter Free Dorset-Land, Coast and Sea, and contribute to discussions on a number of topics and campaigns.

## Litter Free Dorset Forum Meetings

At the January and April quarterly meetings, the Litter Free Dorset (LFD) team gave an update on their current and upcoming projects, including Community Projects, Sustainable Business Awards, Reconnecting with Nature Spaces and 2023 Beach Projects. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Great Dorset Beach Clean is held in April. During the soapbox speaker session in January Sarah Brown from Sea Changers spoke about grants for purchase and installation of water drinking fountains. Rob Thompson from Odyssey Innovation, a company that recycles marine plastic including fishing gear, explained that they offer recycling of fishing gear to fishing communities for free to prevent it going to landfill. This has led to fisherman gathering and bringing back ghost gear for recycling. Recycled materials have been turned into bins, kayaks and surf gear.

At the April meeting Jan Nielsen from NOTPLA, who are recent Earthshot Prize Winners, spoke about their innovative plastic free products made from seaweed, one of nature's most renewable resources. Ed Carter from Dorset Council and the newly appointed Weymouth Harbour Master updated us on fishing gear recycling at the harbour. Ellie Maguire summarised how to apply for the Wessex Water Environment Fund, up to £2000, that supports charitable and community activities that aim to have a positive impact on the local environment. Schools and parish councils may also apply if they can demonstrate a community benefit.

## 2023 Bathing Water Projects

Lisa Worthington, LFD Project Officer, is leading the bathing water projects for 2023. There are exciting plans to reduce litter at source and improve bathing water quality at six bathing water locations for this year: Kimmeridge Bay, Church Ope Cove, Branksome Cliffs Chine, Canford Cliffs Chine, Poole Shore Road and Whitley Lake. Stakeholder engagement and scoping has begun for the bathing waters.

## Dorset Council and LitterLotto partner up to tackle

The LitterLotto® app that uses gamification to encourage citizens to dispose of litter properly and has been making

**waves in the fight against littering.** Users of the LitterLotto® app in Dorset are given the opportunity to win an additional £100 each month, on top of the £1,000 weekly jackpot and spot prizes already available.

## Sustainable Business Network Launch Event

We wrote about the project in our autumn magazine. LFD hosted their Sustainable Business Network launch event on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup> January at Dorset Museum. They were joined by panel of experts including representatives from LUSH, Dorset Council Waste Services, City to Sea, Naked by the River and Brothers Make. The panel discussion touched on key points about sustainability, single use plastic and small changes that everyone can make to their businesses. This project, funded by the EU INTERREG Preventing Plastic Pollution project, will also bring businesses across Dorset together to support each other towards a more sustainable future. Visit [www.litterfreedorset.co.uk](http://www.litterfreedorset.co.uk) to find out more.

## Deposit Return Scheme

The launch of a long-awaited Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for plastic bottles in England was announced by the government earlier this year. It finally looks set to start in England in October 2025. Five years after Michael Gove first promised to bring it in, ministers have given the go-ahead for a DRS that will not include glass. The failure to include glass in the scheme, which was a 2019 manifesto promise, has been highlighted by CPRE and others as a missed opportunity.

## Ban on single-use plastic plates

In January it was also announced that a range of polluting single-use plastics will be banned from October 2023, allowing businesses time to prepare, following the Government's consultation. The ban will include single-use plastic plates, trays, bowls, cutlery, balloon sticks, and certain types of polystyrene cups and food containers. The ban will not apply to plates, trays, and bowls that are used as packaging in shelf-ready pre-packaged food items, as these will be included in our plans for an Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme – which will incentivise producers to use packaging that can be recycled and meet higher recycling targets. For example, this would include pre-packaged salad bowls and bowls filled with food at the counter of a takeaway.

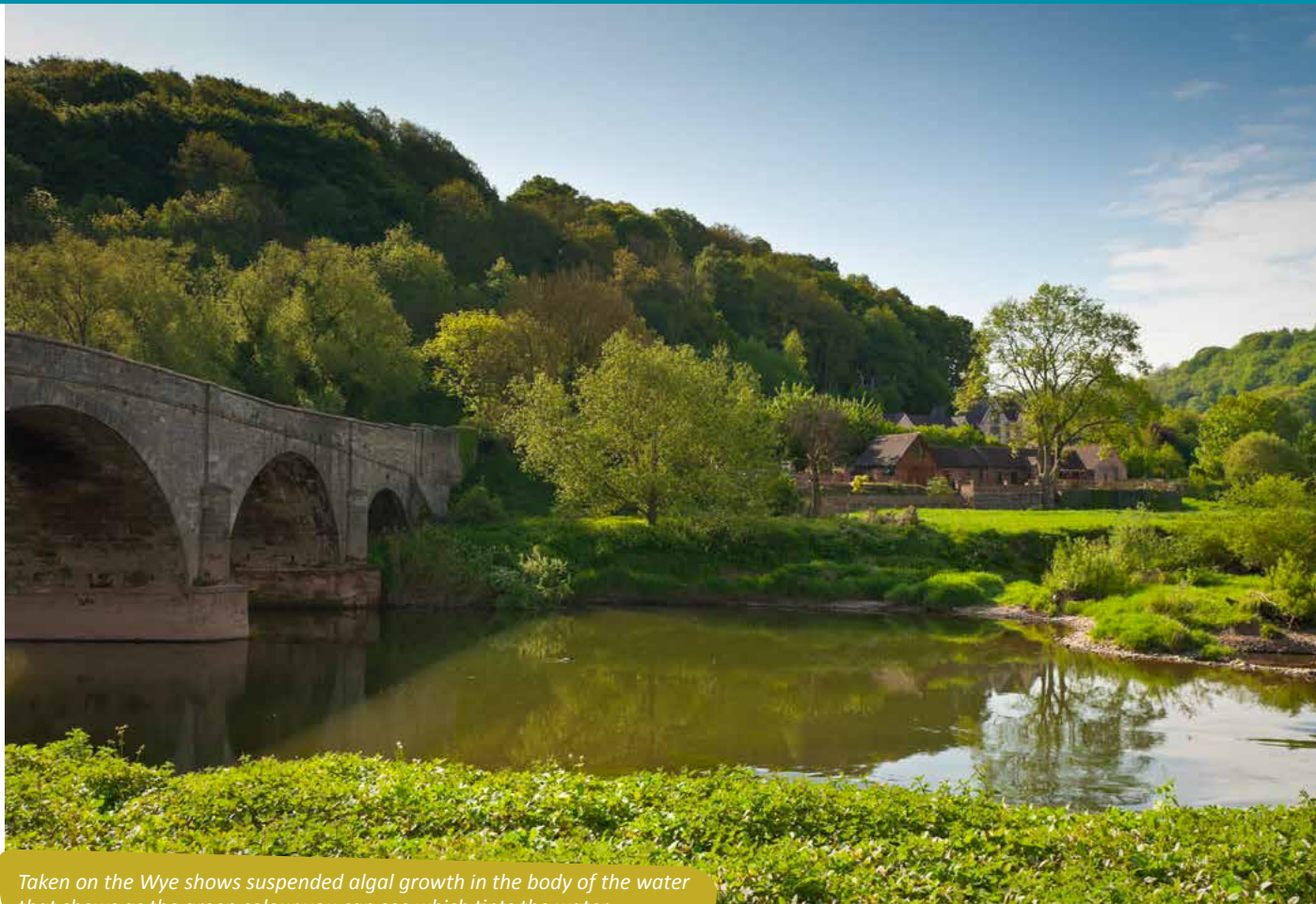


Bottles and cans collected during litter pick



Litter pick by local member in Lower Stour March 2023 which included a car door

# What is Nutrient Neutrality and why is it affecting planning decisions?



*Taken on the Wye shows suspended algal growth in the body of the water that shows as the green colour you can see which tints the water.*

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is an important mechanism for assessing and managing the water environment in the European Union (EU), through a six-yearly cycle of planning and implementing measures to protect and improve the water environment. Since the UK left the EU, the EU WFD has been revoked and replaced throughout the UK by similar legislation so that the UK continues to fulfil its reporting requirements under the new legislation.

There has been little change in the overall number of surface water bodies in the UK awarded “high” or “good” ecological status since the indicator was first prepared in 2009 as part of the WFD means of reporting water quality. Similarly, there has been little change in the short term, between 2015 and 2020. In 2020, 36% of surface water bodies were assessed under the WFD as being in “high” or “good” status, the same as in 2009 and one percentage point higher than the figure of 35% reported in 2015.

## Algal bloom

One of the major concerns is the excessive concentration of nutrients which causes algal blooms. These consume oxygen from the water, so undermining the ecosystems in rivers and the surrounding habitats. Nitrogen and phosphorous are naturally present in the environment and in low quantities, are necessary nutrients. However, the high levels of nitrates found in sewage, agricultural run-off, nitrogen-based fertilisers, and manure pose a problem requiring active management to resolve.

## Dutch Nitrogen Case – ‘Dutch-N’

Following a landmark European Court ruling in 2018 (the Dutch Nitrogen Case- ‘Dutch-N’), the government agency Natural England issued advice directing councils not to approve developments that would add to the nutrient pollution in watercourses in protected habitats, where the site in question is already judged to be in an “unfavourable condition”.

## New homes being put on hold

Figures provided by the Chief Planner, as of March 2022, show that 74 local planning authorities have received nutrient neutrality advice from Natural England across 27 catchments amounting to 14% of England’s land area. In these areas, the granting of planning permission is delayed until appropriate mitigation can be secured. According to the Home Builders Federation (HBF), this has led to proposals for an estimated 100,000 homes being put on hold. HBF companies have had to spend anything between £5,000 and £25,000 in order to procure works privately to mitigate potential nutrient pollution from new housing development.

## Protected habitats sites

On 16 March 2022, Natural England notified Dorset Council of its updated advice for development proposals that have the potential to affect water quality resulting in adverse nutrient impacts on internationally protected habitats sites. This advice applied to the catchments of five habitats sites which together cover a large part of the Dorset Council area.





Algal bloom on River Wye

The advice was that Dorset Council should “carefully consider the nutrients impacts of any new plans and projects (including new development proposals) on habitats sites and whether those impacts may have an adverse effect on the integrity of a habitats site that requires mitigation, including through nutrient neutrality”. The catchment areas within Dorset that this advice relates to are:

- Poole Harbour – nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient deposition
- Somerset Levels and Moors – phosphorus nutrient deposition
- River Avon – phosphorus nutrient deposition
- Chesil and The Fleet – nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient deposition
- River Axe – phosphorus nutrient deposition

Although the issue of nutrient pollution is not new, Dorset Council is working with the other councils across each catchment and with Natural England to understand the implications of this updated advice for future development. As a result of this advice, Dorset Council confirmed that the adoption of its local plan would be put back by two years until Spring 2026, citing nutrient neutrality and uncertainty surrounding national policy as some of the reasons for the delay.

His Majesty’s Treasury Spring Budget Report included the following paragraphs:

- High levels of nutrient pollution in protected sites are stalling housing delivery across 74 Local

Planning Authorities, reflecting a major barrier to the government’s ambition of delivering 300,000 homes per year. The government has already provided significant support for protected sites that are affected, both to address the pollution at source and to support housing developers to deliver their environmental obligations.

- In recognition of the scale of the impact, the Spring Budget announces further support to ensure ‘nutrient neutrality’ obligations can be efficiently delivered, thereby reducing the risks facing developers building homes in affected areas. DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) will shortly launch a call for evidence from Local Planning Authorities, backed by a commitment to provide funding for high quality, locally-led nutrient mitigation schemes.

As one of the chief advisors from Natural England commented, “we are all watching the progress of the LURB (Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill) Act through parliament that will deliver enormous savings in nutrients (nitrates and phosphates) leaving the provision of mitigation much more achievable than it is currently”.

### Credit scheme

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, Natural England opened its nutrient mitigation scheme to developers in the Tees catchment area. The aim of the credit scheme is to provide a quick and simplified mechanism for developers to purchase nutrient credits. This will enable them to discharge their obligations under the Habitats Regulations. While the scheme has now been launched, it will not meet the demand for mitigation in all locations. The Nutrient Mitigation Scheme will work in combination with existing projects already in place or under development including nutrient credit trading schemes, Local Planning Authority led mitigation schemes and onsite mitigation solutions integrated into the design of housing developments.

*Derek Gardiner*

Topic Leader Water and Flooding

### Mandating sustainable drainage in new developments

In January 2019, Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into force in Wales. The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) are considered and used to manage surface water, so ensuring resilient drainage systems for new developments in both urban and rural areas. SuDS use nature-based approaches to slow, store or infiltrate rainwater that would otherwise risk overwhelming sewers, causing flooding and sewage pollution. Until January 2023, Schedule 3 is not law in England. The government have now announced they will finally implement the change which will mandate sustainable drainage in new developments.

# 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 continue to monitor the Minerals Sites Plan 2019, Imerys Ball Clay Operations Dorset, Wytch Farm Oil Field, the Waste Plan 2019, the Winfrith Site, and other developments throughout the County of Dorset. This time I will present news of a few things which have been happening here recently.

## Swanworth Quarry

Dorset Council has granted planning permission for a big extension to the quarry for the extraction of stone aggregates and the restoration of the countryside when the work is complete. The new bridge will be visible from the road but there will be no increase in commercial traffic.

## Litter Free Dorset

I attended a zoom meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> January where the main topics were coastal water fountains, the recycling of fishing waste, and a LitterLotto. Dorset Council and LitterLotto have joined forces to launch a new initiative aimed at tackling littering and rewarding citizens who are doing their part to keep Dorset looking its best.



Arne Moors which will be developed as an Intertidal Nature Reserve

## Arne Moors Intertidal Nature Reserve

Dorset Council has granted planning permission for all the necessary ground works at the Site for this important project which will provide extensive new facilities for wading birds and other wild life, and help to ameliorate the tidal rise in Poole Harbour.

The work will take about three years

altogether and some carefully planned heavy traffic on local roads will be publicised well in advance. Purpose built footpaths and viewing points and a small car park for disabled drivers will be opened to the public as soon as the works are complete.

## Ospreys in Poole Harbour

All the ospreys migrated to Senegal or somewhere else in that part of Africa in September and have spent the winter there in a warmer climate. They will presently be making the long journey back "home" to breed in Poole Harbour and elsewhere and will begin to arrive here in early April. The osprey chicks born in Poole Harbour last year were the first for nearly 200 years to be born there or anywhere in the south of England. This year more of the birds translocated in recent years from Scotland will be old enough to breed and we are looking forward with great interest to see what happens.

Do, please, go to [www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk](http://www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk) to find out more about this exciting Project and to watch the birds on camera again in due course.



Heathland has to be carefully maintained or forestry will soon take over

*Dr John Larkin*

Minerals and Waste Adviser CPRE

# 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](http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources):

## Stillingfleet community energy vision

This document is based on a series of workshops held in the parish of Stillingfleet (lies between Selby and York) in 2021, in which local residents discussed their views on the future of renewable energy in the local landscape. The document sets out a vision for where, how, and under what conditions new renewable energy schemes could be integrated into the local countryside to help provide low carbon electricity for the community.

## State of brownfield report 2022



The 2022 state of brownfield report shows that the availability of previously developed land continues to grow across England. In summary, it has found that over 1.2 million homes could be built on 23,000 sites covering more than 27,000 hectares of brownfield.

A record breaking number of brownfield sites has been identified for redevelopment as the housing crisis deepens, new CPRE report shows

- Largest number of brownfield sites ever recorded – enough for 1.2 million homes – lying dormant
- Despite a growing housing crisis, almost 30,000ha. of brownfield land, most of it in town and city centres, needs regeneration and is ideally situated for new homes
- Nationally, only 45% of brownfield sites have planning permission – with the former industrial heartlands faring worst.

The data shows clear regional disparities. On the whole, the former industrial heartlands, which are most in need of levelling up, are least likely to have planning permission to redevelop brownfield land. Compared with the national average of 45%, the proportion of available housing units with planning permission is: 33% in the northwest, 36% in the West Midlands and 40% in Yorkshire and the Humber.

CPRE’s latest ‘State of brownfield’ report calls for a range of measures to protect green fields, farmland and countryside, while boosting the development of social and truly affordable homes in areas where it is most needed. Previous research has shown that development of the highest quality farmland has soared 100-fold in ten years while

brownfield sites wait for regeneration. Meanwhile, the demand for social housing is growing six times faster than the rate of supply in rural areas and, at current rates, the backlog of low-income families needing accommodation would take over 120 years to clear.

## Farming and hedgerows report

A survey of more than 1,100 farmers reveals strong support for the government to increase our hedgerow networks, and properly fund the target of 40% more hedgerows by 2050.

Findings from CPRE’s survey show that farmers see the benefits of hedgerows on their land. In fact, farmers saw the nature-boosting attributes of hedgerows as the greatest benefit, followed by others such as providing crop shade and attracting pollinators and pest predators.

See full article on page 11

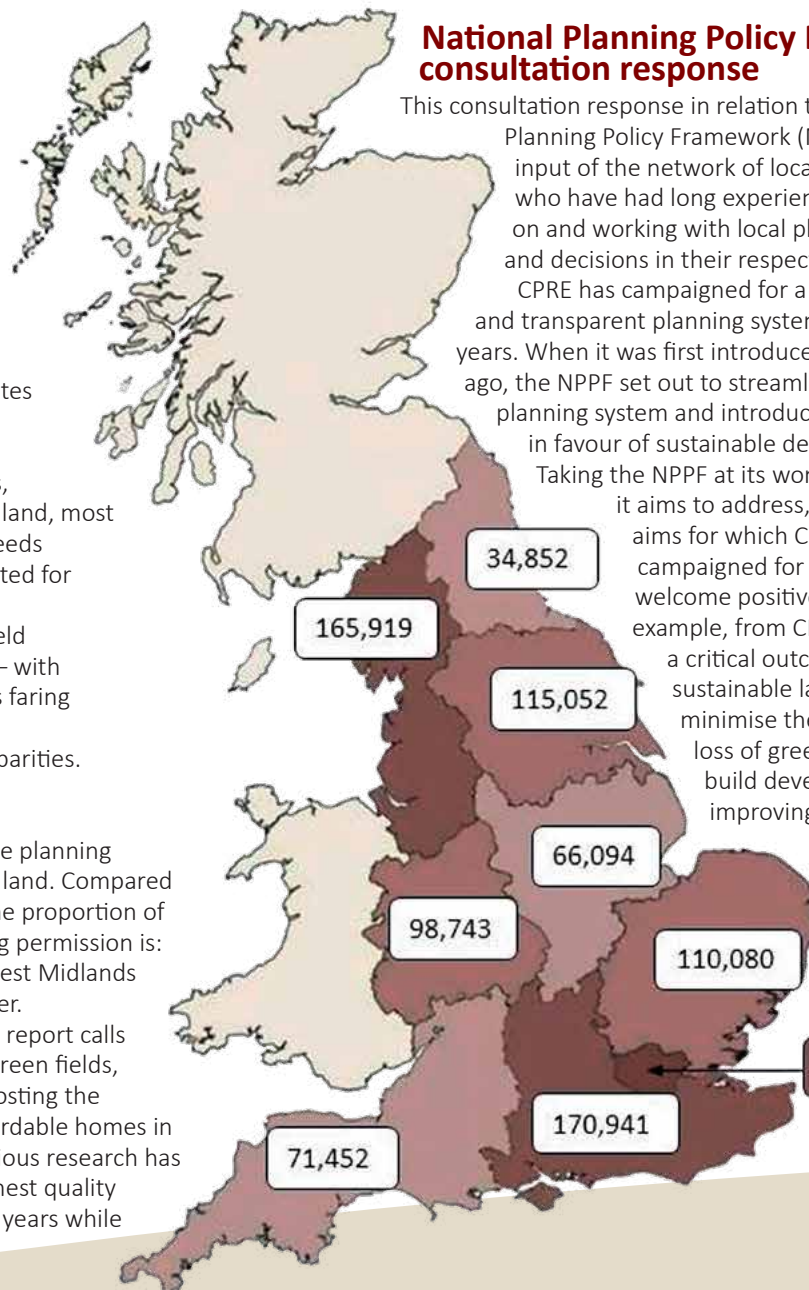
## National Planning Policy Framework consultation response

This consultation response in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) reflects the input of the network of local CPRE groups, who have had long experience of campaigning on and working with local planning policies and decisions in their respective areas.

CPRE has campaigned for a strong, effective and transparent planning system for nearly 100 years. When it was first introduced over a decade ago, the NPPF set out to streamline the English planning system and introduce a “presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

Taking the NPPF at its word on the issues it aims to address, there are some aims for which CPRE have long campaigned for and would warmly welcome positive change. For example, from CPRE’s perspective, a critical outcome is to achieve sustainable land use and minimise the unnecessary loss of greenfield land to build development, whilst improving the provision

of genuinely affordable homes to create thriving rural communities.



# All Buttoned Up: A Brief History of the Dorset Button Industry



Photo: Dorset buttons

It all goes back to Abraham Case, a soldier who fought in the Wars of Religion that ravaged Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He saw how soldiers replaced buttons on their uniforms by twisting a piece of cloth over a form and fastening it with a thread, but may have been influenced in part by Brussels lace. He was also impressed by the skills used in the buttoner's art, seen in the work of Northern French and Belgian button makers. He realised that Dorset had all the raw materials readily at hand: fabric, discs cut from the horns of Dorset Horn sheep and thread. Although originally from the Cotswolds, Abraham had married a local girl, and set up his business in 1622 in Shaftesbury, opening depots in Bere Regis and other mid-Dorset villages. The catalyst for growing demand was the change in mens' fashions from doublet and hose, to waistcoat and breeches, requiring buttons, at this time.

By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, nearly 700 women and children worked for the Case company alone, while up to 4,000 buttoners were employed in the industry around Shaftesbury and 3,000 around Blandford, mostly as outworkers. It enabled women to work from home, as well as retired farm workers. In that area it was the biggest industry, albeit a cottage one, and second only to farming in employment. Tracy Chevalier's book, *Burning Bright*, features a character, Maisie, who makes money from buttony.

## High Tops and Knobs

The first buttons were called High Tops, mostly used on women's dresses. The horn disc was covered by material and made into a conical button using a needle and thread. Flatter

Photo: Dorset buttons



High Tops

versions were called Dorset Knobs. It was possibly the inspiration afterwards for the baked biscuit of that name. In 1731 a Yorkshireman, John Clayton, was brought in to reorganise the business after a bad fire at the Bere Regis depot. He used his contacts with Birmingham wire manufacturers to switch to metal rings, which were cheaper than horn. Some of these buttons were made using wire twisted on a spindle, called Singletons. Other variations were called Blandford Cartwheels, using a ring and thread. The town's earlier Huguenot lace industry was by then in decline, but the button makers had found a new use for the fine lace thread. The highest quality buttons were mounted on pink card, and exported, while Seconds came on blue. The best buttoners could make a gross a day, earning three shillings and sixpence, and this was much more than that for an agricultural labourer.



Dorset Knob

Photo: Dorset buttons

The quality of Dorset buttons was noticed in London, where High Tops soon adorned the waistcoats of courtiers. There is speculation that Charles I went to his execution wearing a waistcoat made with Dorset buttons. Much later Queen Victoria had a dress trimmed with Dorset Knobs. Cartwheels are probably the most popular ones made today.

## Unbuttoned: The Demise of the Industry

The Industrial Revolution sadly destroyed many cottage industries, including Dorset's Buttons. Benjamin Saunders began making machined buttons from his London workshop, and took out a patent in 1813 for his fabric buttons. However, the death knell came with John Aston's patented button-making machine which was demonstrated to great effect at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and there was no way the Dorset buttoners could compete.

There was acute distress across mid-Dorset, so that from Shaftesbury alone 350 families were sent to the colonies at government expense. Yet it was made worse by The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1840 and the arrival of cheap food from the colonies bringing in its wake a long-lasting depression in rural Dorset in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Farmers were forced to mechanise to compete and laid off thousands of agricultural labourers. You can see this both in Thomas Hardy's tragic novels of rural hardship, as well as the parish censuses of the time. At Winterborne Tomson, where I live, there were 53 inhabitants in 1841 but by 1891 this had halved. Those who left either emigrated or went to work in the factories of the North.

Florence, the Dowager, Lady Lees tried to resurrect the button industry, learning from women who had been in the industry long before. In 1908 she set up a small business making Parliamentary buttons for Dorset MPs in the constituency colours, but it died with the onset of World War 1. Today Dorset buttons are more a heritage craft, but at least there has been some renewed interest. In particular Dorset Buttons at Henry's Buttons, based near Shaftesbury, aim to help keep the heritage craft of the Dorset Buttons industry alive, organising workshops and talks. There is also a permanent display of Buttons at the Gold Hill Museum in Shaftesbury and I would recommend Thelma Johns' book "Dorset Buttons: Hand Stitched in Dorset for over 300 Years".

*Rupert Hardy*

Chair North Dorset CPRE

## Celebrating reinstatement of damaged Greenhill fingerpost

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. They are a common feature of the Dorset countryside, and are a legacy of the early road system. The Greenhill fingerpost located on the junction on Combe Valley Road and Plaisters Lane near Sutton Poyntz, Weymouth, is back in operation following its restoration after an altercation with a misguided lorry. Peter Jones, a local CPRE member, has been the driving force in getting this fingerpost first restored six years ago with community effort and again for this latest repair to a damaged finger. The repairs were funded by Weymouth Council, Sutton Poyntz Ltd, Dorset AONB (provided the oak finger) and grant from Dorset CPRE. A photo shoot was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April to celebrate the reinstatement of the damaged fingerpost.

Dorset CPRE offers a small grants scheme for people wanting to restore fingerposts using the correct materials as set out by the Dorset AONB. Please visit the Dorset CPRE website for details on how to apply for the grant.



Photo: Jez Cunningham

From left Guy Dickinson (West Dorset CPRE Chair), Peter Jones, Andy Hohne (Treasurer and Secretary of the Sutton Poyntz Society), Cllr Ann Weaving (Mayor of Weymouth), Caroline Richards (Dorset AONB) and Roger Bond (Normtec)

# CPRE Annual Report & Accounts for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022

## 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 £16,777 were paid out for the following projects:

### Dorset CPRE:

Fingerpost Grants	£2,700
Higher Stockbridge Solar Farm legal advice on possible JR	£8,712
Highcliffe School Hedge plants (via CPRE Hampshire)	£ 375
Case for "Exceptional Circumstances" ref Local Plan	£3,840

### Poole & Purbeck Group

Judicial Review Poole Green Belt Land	£ 350
Print survey on non-listed heritage assets in Swanage	£ 300
Legal Advice Wool Flora and Fauna (Richard Buxton solicitors)	£ 500

Dorset CPRE will consider giving money to causes as well as campaigns that meet our charitable objectives. We continue to offer grants of up to £200 per request for Fingerpost repairs and this is advertised in the Dorset AONB Fingerpost Project website. Currently we have spent £15,137 on grants for 133 fingerposts with a further 11 that have been approved totalling £2,015 but not paid for. This will be reviewed when we reach the approved total of £20k.

We set aside around £30k per year for grants and fund requests. The branch finances remain healthy.

## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 August 2022

	Note	Unrestricted £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>			
Donations and legacies		26,251	26,251
Activities for generating funds		2,318	2,318
Investment income	4	<u>12,518</u>	<u>12,518</u>
Total Income		<u>41,087</u>	<u>41,087</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		(31,590)	(31,590)
Other expenditure	5	<u>(17,912)</u>	<u>(17,912)</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>(49,502)</u>	<u>(49,502)</u>
Gains/losses on investment assets		<u>(33,172)</u>	<u>(33,172)</u>
Net movement in funds		(41,587)	(41,587)
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>			
Total funds brought forward		<u>805,256</u>	<u>805,256</u>
Total funds carried forward	11	<u><u>763,669</u></u>	<u><u>763,669</u></u>

## Finances

The branch finances remain healthy. We invested the 2020 legacy with Punter Southall Wealth in 2021 after receiving professional advice. As you will see in the full accounts, following a difficult year in the financial markets, there has been a drop in the value of our investments not only with Punter Southall Wealth (now Canaccord Genuity Wealth Management) but also the COIF Charity Funds and the small Barclays Wealth holding. The Fixed Income sector has taken a battering. In October 2022 the Trustees met with James Knowles, Investment Director and Head of Fixed Interest at Canaccord Genuity Wealth and our adviser, to review our investment objectives and current risk profile and strategy. The cautious approach to investing the legacy has helped to limit the losses – 41% of fund invested is currently held in cash. He outlined his view of the markets and his expectations over the next few months especially in the Fixed Interest markets. It is hoped there will be better returns on our investments over the next three years. The current investment strategy is for a balanced outcome with an emphasis on income in future years. Currently any income generated by the Canaccord Genuity portfolio is reinvested within the portfolio.

Canaccord Genuity provided the Trustees with a Confirmation of risk profile and strategy document which set out small tweaks in the parameters of how they will continue to manage our funds under our current investment strategy. This was discussed with James Knowles and the Trustees have agreed not to change the current underlying strategy namely to continue with a balanced portfolio managed for future income and growth.

A 6 year rolling budget, that was agreed to in 2020/21, needs to be reviewed. It is the policy of the Trustees to maintain unrestricted free reserves sufficient to cover 2.5 years of the average 5 year budgeted deficit. The reserves and investment policy were looked at by our new Hon. Treasurer, Bob Bowmer, and approved at our February 2023 Trustees Meeting.

## Governance and staffing

The substantial legacy has altered the perspective of the Branch and such legacies always bring into question, how they are to be managed, and therefore how the charity is governed.

Earlier in 2022 the Vice-Presidents were asked by the Trustees, supported by the Countryside Forum (CF), to undertake a review of the constitution and branch procedures and to report and make recommendations to Trustees. Following input from Trustees, they made a series of recommendations to introduce an appropriate structure for the recruitment, training and conduct of the Trustees using sources of information and model documents from NCVO, National CPRE, a local charity of similar size and the Charity Commission publications. The review listed policies and procedures that should be implemented as soon as possible and those to be documented at a later date. The Key policy recommendations have been discussed and agreed and have been documented in a common format to include a review date.

The Trustees discussed becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Following the governance review and doing what

we have agreed, it was felt there is currently no imperative to move to a new status.

We encourage our volunteers to take up free online training organised by National CPRE including governance webinars, inductions, social media, planning and project management.

## Review of the Countryside Forum; clarity of purpose and membership

There was broad agreement that the Countryside Forum should continue to operate as it has done over the years i.e., as a place where district group chairs, topic leads/interested parties, trustees and vice presidents can meet to discuss matters relating to the direction and operation of Dorset CPRE as well as receiving reports and presentations from invited guests. The Forum was seen as the main communication channel to the trustees. The trustees are the decision-making body for Dorset CPRE. Trustees accept that no change is required to the purpose of the Forum at this stage.

## Review of District Groups

The formation of two unitary authorities has meant, that from dealing more on issues to do with strategic development at a local geographical level, we now must think more pan Dorset.

The Vice-Presidents' review report identified the challenge for Dorset CPRE to respond to the creation of a unitary council for Dorset in April 2019. Dorset Council has three planning area committees: western, northern and eastern areas. These areas do not fully align with the former six district councils. The views of 4 of the 5 District Groups of Dorset CPRE were obtained and it has been decided to maintain the status quo with area groups developing mechanisms to review planning applications that go to Dorset Council planning area committees. It is likely that more attention needs to be placed on Dorset wide issues especially as Dorset Council has a preference for county wide policies.

## Detailed set of accounts

A detailed set of accounts including a review of activities and future development can be found on the Charity Commission website and are also available on application to Linda Williams or Bob Bowmer.



Knitson fingerpost in Langton Matravers repaired in 2022 following a grant from Dorset CPRE



# Janet Healy

## 1943 – 2022

In November 2022 we said goodbye to Janet Healy. Janet was a former Trustee and until a few years ago a very active volunteer focusing on Green Belt issues, East Dorset District Council Local Plan, consultations, and detailed responses to major housing planning applications in Wimborne and East Dorset.

Janet lived with her husband Kevin in a lovely Victorian house with a big and productive garden just outside Wimborne where she raised her children. She used to go walking and before that she went horse riding regularly. She only moved into her flat in the centre of Wimborne after her husband died. One of our members wrote *“She was such a lovely lady with a great sense of humour and I really enjoyed sharing coffee and cake with her at her home. She was always a source of knowledge and help when we were involved with the Christchurch & East Dorset Local Plan.”*

Commenting on affordable housing in 2016 Janet wrote *“Between the government’s potential weakening of the NPPF through the latest consultation on modifications and an apparent weakness in the East Dorset District Planning, we are likely to fail to achieve a proper percentage of affordable housing. For whatever reason, the outcome seems to be less benefit to the local people having given up our open countryside, a potential for more strain on our local services.”*



Janet healy

### Outstanding Contribution award

At our 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM in 2016 Janet received an Outstanding Contribution award from then CPRE CEO Shaun Spiers, for her years of tireless work, writing articles for our magazine and being our topic lead for the Green Belt.

Looking through our archive of articles written by Janet we discovered one for our Spring 2010 edition encouraging readers to take a walk in a quiet rural corner of East Dorset. We are reprinting it in memory of Janet, a lovely woman and she will be missed.

## Quiet Rural Corners of East Dorset

You do not have to travel far out of the conurbation, just north over the Stour, and you will find some lovely tranquil rural places. We have chosen just a few quiet places that you can visit individually or treat as a circular walk if you wish. Stout footwear and a street map is all you need.

We start at Hampreston, a lovely quiet village, a few houses, a church and a primary school, that is all. Parking is by the church. Crossing the churchyard to the far corner, turn right into the field. The style is a bit awkward, either take in the view or cross it and turn left, walking along the river terrace. Below you is the flood plain. Towards the end of the terrace is a broken stile, negotiate it then turn right and onto a gravel track (Highmead

Lane). Just up the lane turn right into Longham Lakes. These have been formed by gravel extraction and you can see another adjacent to this taking shape. Near the Angling Centre you exit and turn right. Park in Longham to visit these lakes, the entrance to them is on the bend opposite the white cottages.

The path is narrow and muddy but interesting. Exit near Longham Bridge, crossing the road with care. Public parking is available by The Bridge House, and inside, refreshments. Take the footpath just passed the Hotel to Dudsbury. Follow the rivers edge, climbing up to Dudsbury Heights, follow the path to the Iron Age hilltop fortress, the centre of it is a guides camp. Turn left and walk to Christchurch Road.



Hampreston Church



The Stour at Dudsbury/Longham





Longham Lakes

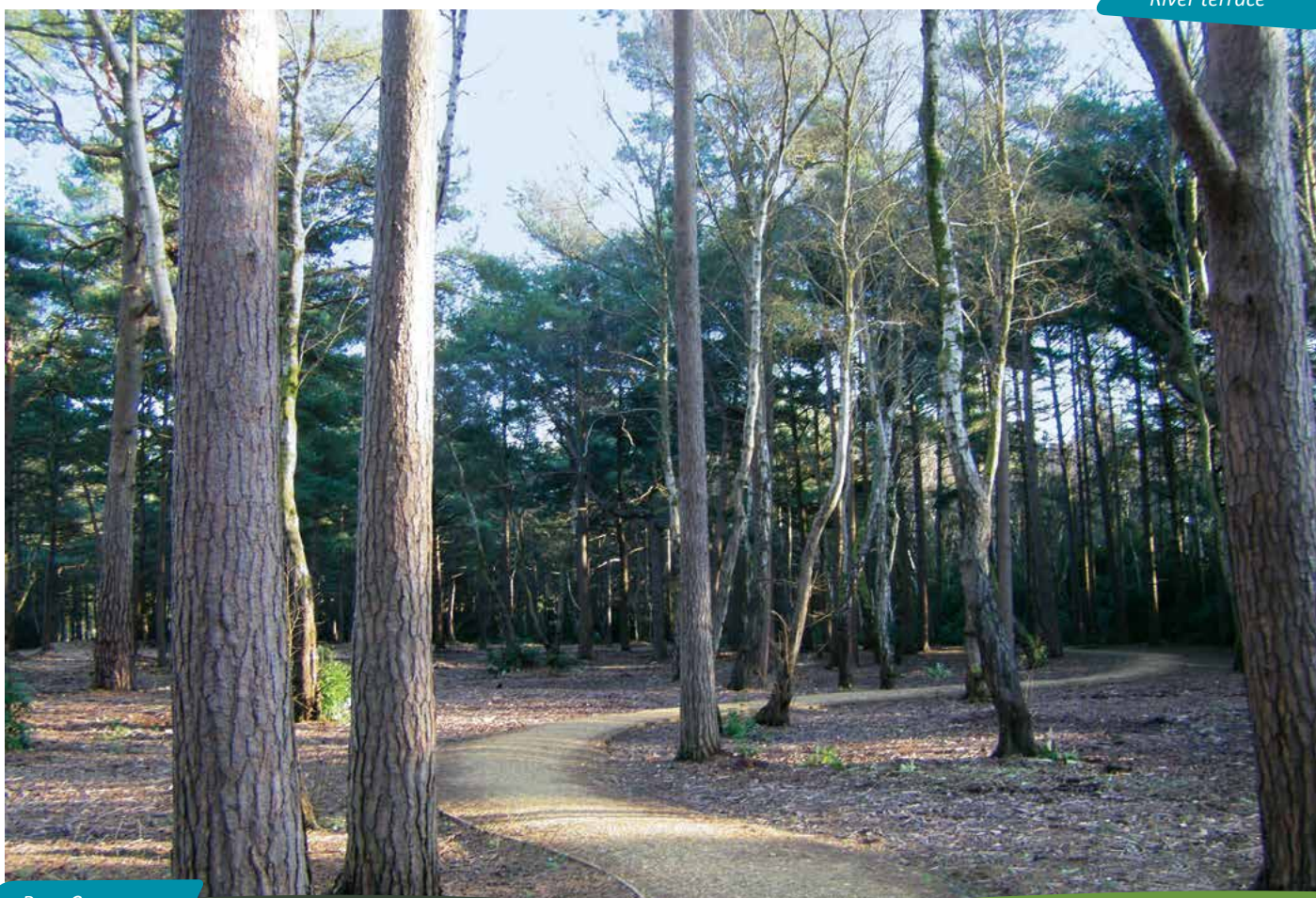
Turn right and there are three inns. To resume the walk turn left, take the narrow path next to number 129, to Poor Common. Head north then west, it's muddy once you leave the gravel tracks to join Ringwood Road, otherwise park/walk through the estate. There is also parking in the lay-by on Ringwood Road. Cross the road, opposite the Angel Inn is Angel Lane. Take the lane, at the T-junction turn left into Pompey's Lane and go passed Coneygar Farm, follow the path over the wooden bridge. Left will bring you out opposite Highmead Lane, you can retrace your steps to Hampreston. Right will take you onto Stapehill Road, turn left back to the crossroads and Hampreston. Enjoy.

*Janet Healy*

Written in 2010 and reprinted in memory of Janet



River terrace



Poor Common

# Robert “Bob” Walter Breach 1927 – 2023

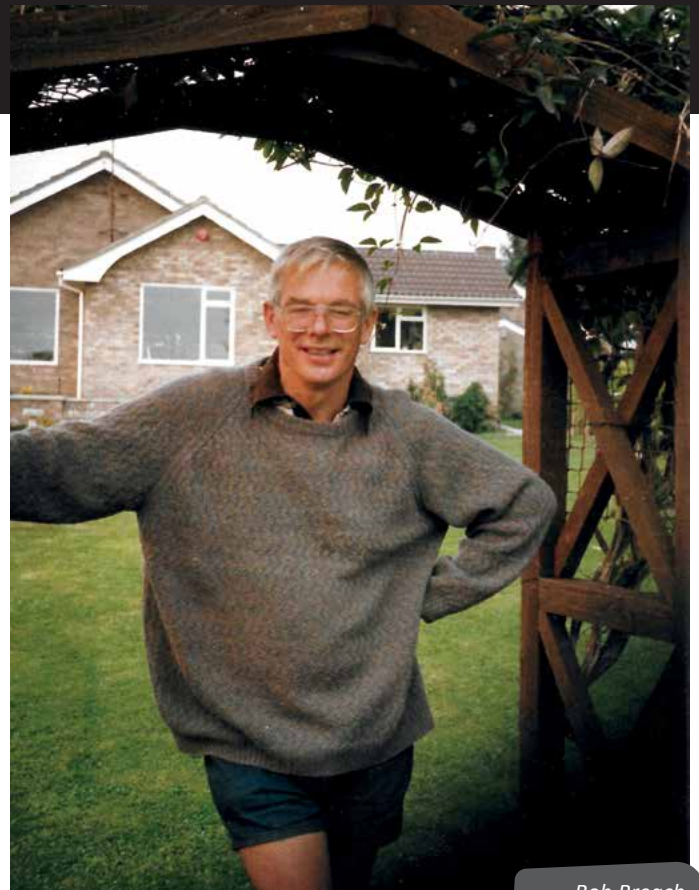
Robert Walter Breach was born on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1927, the third of four sons of a Wiltshire farming family.

The young Bob was a clever lad, did well at school and won a place at Devizes Grammar School. In 1946 Bob went up to Bristol University to read History. In 1950, he returned to get a Diploma of Education. In 1953 Bob got his first teaching position at Sherborne Prep School. It was here he met Sue, a matron at the school and they married in 1955. They had three sons and it would be a long, happy, and loving marriage. Bob taught history at different schools before transitioning into Teacher Training.

He was a gifted teacher enjoying a successful career becoming Vice-Principal of King Alfred’s Teacher Training College in 1972, a role he held until his retirement in 1984. In 1985 he and his wife Sue retired to Ivy Paddock, East Melbury at the foot of Zig- Zag Hill. Bob enjoyed gardening and writing history books and poetry. Bob had a feeling for language and a sense of poetic rhythm. In 1998 he published ‘Melbury Abbas, A Narrative History of a Dorset Parish’. They often said their time in Melbury was the happiest of their lives. A time they cherished for all the friends they made, and for being part of a community where they truly belonged. They both held positions on numerous committees, Bob was church warden in this very church for a period, sat on the church council, parish council, CPRE, and was a long-term member of the literary society.

## CPRE committee work

Bob joined CPRE and became chairman of the North Dorset Group in the late 80’s into the 90’s. He was a hard-working member and led a very talented and passionate committee including Cristobel Cayford and Mary Norman. He was involved in fighting the proposed Melbury Abbas bypass. The preferred route was to have been an embankment over Spread Eagle Hill. It would have involved major works and new roundabouts onto the A30. This was eventually turned down after a spirited fight by CPRE and the National Trust.



Bob Breach

Before that battle he was also involved in fighting the Spetisbury Charlton Marshall bypass. This proposed route was going to go along the old railway track behind these two villages. This was also turned down.

He recruited Charles Bowen to take over as Chairman who went on to become Branch chairman.

In March we said goodbye to Bob at his funeral in St Thomas’s Church, Melbury Abbas. Bob was a staunch supporter of all our events and gave a lot of good advice to our members. His wit and help will be much missed.

*Richard Norman and extract from Will Breach’s tribute*

# Robert “Bob” Edward Mizon 1946–2023

Bob was awarded an MBE in June 2010 for voluntary service to Astronomy and to the Environment, in recognition of his role as the National Co-ordinator, Campaign for Dark Skies. Since then, the organisation he was instrumental in founding has been renamed the Commission for Dark Skies. Bob was instrumental in helping Cranborne Chase AONB achieve its status as an International Dark Sky Reserve. He and I had been friends and colleagues for well over 30 years, and during my term as President of the BAA I was involved in him receiving the International Dark Sky Association Galileo Award in 2006. He will remain in my memory as everyone’s ‘Uncle Bob’. RIP.

*Dr Richard Miles, Dorset CPRE Dark Skies Representative*

## CPRE Star Count 2023 results

Bob Mizon worked closely with National CPRE on our annual Star Count. This February, we invited you to take part in CPRE’s Star Count, a cosmic census to map our view of the



Orion visible over a beach in Kent

night sky. Almost 4000 of you took part across the country. Here in Dorset, 107 people submitted star count results, 38.3% counted less than 10 stars, and 3.7% more than 30. Visit our website to view the star count results map.

Photo: Joseph Vary – Unsplash

# 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.

## Gift of Membership

### Have you considered the gift of Dorset CPRE membership?

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](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk) or contact our office on 0333 577 0360 to receive a copy of our membership form. Individual £5 per month and £7 for Household membership. We also provide membership for Organisations, Town and Parish Councils.

As a member you'll receive our regular Countryside Voice magazine, and enjoy discounted entry to houses, gardens and other attractions around England.



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.

- Abbotsbury Subtropical Gardens
- Athelhampton House & Gardens
- Edmondsham House & Garden
- Mapperton 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.



*Mapperton House & Gardens*



## 10% off at Cotswold Outdoor

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.

Dorset CPRE Members also receive –

- The Dorset Review magazine in the spring & autumn
- Membership of your local county branch
- Access to our Planning Hotline for advice from CPRE Staff
- They can also join our Planning Group meetings

## Diary Dates

Please visit the Dorset CPRE website [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk) for 2023 meeting dates for the Countryside Forum, Planning Group, District Groups and events.

**22<sup>nd</sup> June** – Mapperton Estates, Re-wilding / House Tour and gardens. Please return the enclosed booking form.

**18<sup>th</sup> November** – 86<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM, 11 am, Cerne Abbas Village Hall. Roger Mortlock, new CEO at CPRE is attending.

# Campaign to Protect Rural England

## DORSET BRANCH

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  @DorsetCPRE

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#### CPRE SOUTH WEST

#### Regional Chair:

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Please sign up to our e-newsletter on the Dorset CPRE website to receive regular news updates.

#### 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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