

# The Dorset Review

Spring 2022 News Issue | 18

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The countryside charity  
Dorset



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**Front Cover image** – walking westwards towards Hen Cliff, Kimmeridge, taken by Rupert Hardy

## Chair's Report

Crispin Truman, the CEO of CPRE supplied a presentation at the Dorset CPRE AGM. His talk covered planning, research, renewable energy, COP26, the hedgerows scheme, and the deposit return scheme. A warm welcome to the three new trustees for Dorset CPRE: Dr Frances Hogwood, Neil Mathews, and Trevor Clements. All three were appointed at the AGM in November 2021. We look forward to their positive contributions to the direction and operation of Dorset CPRE. Our thanks are extended to the retiring trustees Dr John Larkin, Sandra Brown and Richard Norman.

## Membership Survey

Initial work has commenced on a review of Dorset CPRE. To date the trustees have received a draft report from the Vice-presidents. Branch policies are being developed and will be expressed in a common format.

As part of the review, we are conducting a survey to help better understand member and supporter experiences and interests. This will help us to provide the information and services that you are most passionate about. **Please complete the enclosed survey sheet and return to the Dorset CPRE office, or complete online.**

## New Local Plan Initiative from Dorset Council Leader

In January the leader of Dorset Council, councillor Spencer Flower, announced that he has written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP, requesting that the Dorset Local Plan be considered to be a pilot that moved away from a housing numbers driven approach to a Local Plan to one that was more suited to the needs of Dorset. In addition, councillor Flower's letter requested an extension to 2026 for the completion of the Local Plan process. It is understood that councillor Flower has met with the Secretary of State and the chief planner. Whilst welcoming initially this approach it is worth noting that apart from the proposed extension of the Local Plan date to 2026, all other aspects of the letter as reported appear to be able to be developed in line with the National Planning

Policy Framework and the associated National Planning Policy Guidance.

Dorset CPRE are of the view that the Dorset Local Plan should have much lower housing numbers closer to 22,000 rather than 39,000 up to 2038; adequate affordable local housing; and actions to address the climate and ecological emergencies.

## Case for Exceptional Circumstances

Dorset CPRE are continuing to develop the case for exceptional environmental circumstances to apply to the development of the Dorset Local Plan. Research on exceptional circumstances is ongoing. Members and District Group Committees are requested to document any such exceptional circumstances and send them to the Dorset CPRE office. Local examples including wild flowers, rare trees, and precious habitats are very important. Dorset Council work with consultants from beyond the county to map the area; however, to accurately record the environmental, ecological, and archaeological assets there needs to be an understanding of the locality as "the map is not the territory".

## Countryside Forum

Each quarter there is a meeting of the Dorset CPRE Countryside Forum. In December Chris Loder MP attended - it was good to hear from a Dorset MP; we discussed Dorset's housing figure in the Dorset Local Plan, farming, and the green agenda. A briefing paper, "A better housing target for the Dorset Local Plan" (see page 13) was supplied to the MP; in March Andrew MacRobb from Herefordshire CPRE outlined a citizens science project concerning river water quality in the river Wye. This involved weekly sampling of the water by volunteers. 70% of river pollution is from farming - the rest is sewage discharge. River water quality is an important issue in Dorset and one that many argue should receive far more regulation than at present. The poor state of Poole Harbour despite its designated status remains a cause for concern. We plan in June to have a talk from the Dorset National Farmers Union and later in the year a talk from the Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership.

## Food and Energy Security

The cost of living crisis and the conflict in Ukraine are illustrating the growing importance of food security and the nature of farming. Dorset CPRE welcome the opportunity to develop regenerative farming as well as ensuring that farming is sufficiently profiled in local and national discussions.

Farmers need to have a degree of certainty in order to plan in uncertain times – the ELMS (Environmental Land Management Schemes) to date appears not to supply that certainty. Placing solar panels on good quality agricultural land may not be the good idea that it initially appears to be.

Government Energy policy? Dorset CPRE has been promoting roof deployment of solar panels for some years, please see article on page 11. We need a realistic long run energy strategy which promotes new efficient technologies to largely meet Britain's energy needs while reducing carbon emissions.

## Hedgerow volunteer

We are looking for a volunteer to assist with campaigning activities for hedges in Dorset. It is increasingly recognised that both more and wider hedges assist in carbon reduction. Hedges are deteriorating throughout parts of Dorset. More is needed to ensure that hedges contribute to green growth. More sensitive long term management of roadside hedges throughout Dorset is required in particular to avoid the damaging effects of regular flailing of hedges.

The cherished and often beautiful villages in Dorset have been changing since the pandemic. More persons are working from home plus a flight from London for others; increased sales of property; less affordability for young and local residents; more retirees. How are these developments impacting on

rural life? Keep an eye on the increasing light pollution from external lights to houses as well as increasing demands for bowling green mown lawns and ever trim hedges. These and other growing rural issues with the pandemic require a long-term strategy and an action plan for rural areas like Dorset.



## Plant an apple tree

A challenge for 2022; plant an apple tree or two either for Jubilee celebrations or for carbon reduction- maybe even create a community apple orchard? In a years' time you will be able to enjoy Dorset Apple cake or even Blackberry and Apple pie.

We look forward to seeing you at our Garden Party on 29<sup>th</sup> June or at another event. Finally, do enjoy this edition of The Dorset Review and please let us know what you liked about it and what news should be considered.

*Peter Bowyer*

Chair of Trustees

## CPRE Volunteer Awards for Special Contribution and Long Service

We are so lucky to have active and dedicated members. At our 84<sup>th</sup> Anniversary online AGM, held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021, we recognised the special contribution of two of our long-standing volunteers.

### Richard Norman

For an outstanding contribution as Honorary Treasurer, for our North Dorset CPRE Group since 1990 and Dorset CPRE since 1993, and Trustee. Richard also volunteers at our annual Garden Party, AGM and event stands.



*Rupert Hardy presenting the award to Richard at the North Dorset AGM*



*Peter Bowyer presented the CPRE Special Contribution and Long Service Award to John*

### Dr John Larkin

For his tireless commitment to the activities of Dorset CPRE over the past 20 years, as a Trustee, Minerals & Waste Adviser, responding to consultations, representing us at various Forum Meetings and writing a variety of articles for our magazine.

Certificates are signed by Crispin Truman, and Simon Murray, CPRE Chair of Trustees. The certificates and medals were presented to

Richard and John in person in March 2022.

We will present more volunteer awards later this year.

# North Dorset Group



It has been a quieter period on the planning front, especially regarding housing.

## Solar Farm Planning Applications

We are well aware of the climate emergency, and have not objected to a number of solar farms in North Dorset, except for the most inappropriate ones that would desecrate our countryside.

In 2021 we focused a lot on the Pulham/Mappowder 190 acre solar farm application, objecting primarily on grounds of adverse visual impact of the Dorset AONB and flooding issues. There were about 200 objections so the action group did a good job given the small population of Mappowder. We did very well on the local and national media front. It was heartening to see Dorset AONB sending a robust response, saying they could not comment as the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment needed major amendments and modification. This has now been modified, but we are still hopeful it will be rejected.

## Solar Panels on roofs

We should point out we are supportive of small community-funded solar farms that can be well screened, as well as more deployment of roof-mounted Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels. One of our recent articles in the online Blackmore Vale Magazine (we have a regular monthly column so do please read it on [www.theblackmorevale.co.uk](http://www.theblackmorevale.co.uk)) covered the issue of why Dorset has installed so few panels on roofs – see also page 11 in this magazine. Last September 95.4% of households and 98.4% businesses within the Dorset Council area had no solar panels on their roofs. The answer is primarily government failure to make the fitting of solar panels on all new buildings mandatory. Some councils now stipulate Solar PV provision as part of their planning conditions, but Dorset Council has been slow here. Our Topic Leader on Renewables, David Peacock, has carried out a detailed statistical study showing that by installing Solar PV on only two thirds of available roof space, this would meet the UK's low carbon target for all solar in 2050. This means there would be no requirement for solar farms on greenfield sites!



Winterborne Kingston in April

## Planning Successes and Failures

The centre of attention has been the Strategic Planning Committee, which has taken on the task of assessing large solar farm applications. We were disappointed but not surprised that an Eco Hub, combining solar farm and EV Charging points, at Winterborne Whitechurch was approved. The applicant made a lot of concessions so the proposal was less damaging than in the original plan while the Parish Council's role was disgraceful in that they failed to follow correct procedure, conventional practice or legal guidelines. Most of the members resigned and a new and hopefully more responsible Council is now in place. To prove their impartiality the Strategic Planning Committee did however reject a large solar farm near Gillingham.

On the housing front, a development of 162 houses by Barratt, north of Wincombe Lane Shaftesbury, was approved but changes to the design had to be made, so our objection was not in vain. Similarly, a 55 unit Persimmon development on

the Upper Blandford Road, Shaftesbury was accepted but conditional on some changes to the design, which we had asked for. Mitigation is often an outcome we have to accept. Sadly 135 houses by Persimmon south of the A30 were allowed on appeal.

## AGM

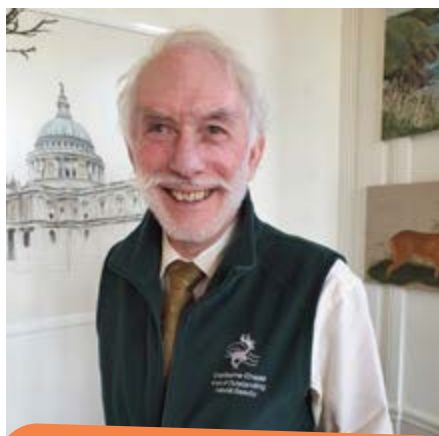
In March we held our first real AGM since 2019 with about thirty attendees at Clayesmore School. Our speaker was Richard Burden, who is the well regarded Principal Landscape and Planning Officer for The Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). His excellent talk was on "The Role of the Cranborne Chase AONB and How Best to Protect It". His encyclopedic knowledge of planning and exceptional forensic skills make him a formidable opponent of developers who put forward inappropriate proposals.

## Oak Fair

We will be taking a stand at the Stock Gaylard Oak Fair again on the August bank holiday weekend. It is a good opportunity to meet members and also recruit new ones.

## Visit to Down Farm

We will be inviting members in June to Dr Martin Green's very special Down Farm Museum of prehistoric artefacts, and be led on a tour of some of the extraordinary archaeological sites nearby on Cranborne Chase.



Richard Burden, Principal Landscape and Planning Officer, Cranborne Chase AONB

*Rupert Hardy*  
Group 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.

## Talking Rubbish – Litter Free Dorset Annual Event

Dr John Larkin attended this webinar on 13<sup>th</sup> October. Sophie Colley spoke about the Love Your Verge campaign and the hedgehog posters and mentioned thirty three litter hotspots throughout the County.

Livy Drake, City to Sea, talked about the psychology behind littering, the lack of rationality in individual actions, and about social influences, and the perceived benefit of “What’s in it for me?” Most people do take their litter home especially if they think they are being watched.

Sam Longworth, Hubbub, said that there were one million people in Bournemouth during the Lockdown. They had identified specific types of litter across eighteen sites in BCP and found that 90 % of the items were food and drink related. Other items included cigarette butts, napkins and plastic fragments. A solar powered “Disco Bin” which lights up and plays a tune when used was found to reduce littering substantially.



Litter collected by local member along the River Stour

Martin Gregory, Dorset Council Waste Services, told us that they have a budget of £30 million and 400 staff who look after ten Household Recycling Centres and 176,000 dwellings which works out as a cost of about £167 per dwelling per year. These days all forms of waste are regarded as raw materials and 61% is recycled in Dorset which is amongst the best in the Country. Food waste goes to an anaerobic digester with an output of biogas and solid digestate for use on farmland. Garden waste is composted in a windrow. Other waste is sent to the Mechanical Biological plant at New Earth Solutions in Poole or combusted at the Energy from Waste incinerator in Somerset. Only five percent of domestic waste now goes to landfill.

Katrina Ryan, Mindfully Wired Communications, said they use social media including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn for environmental campaigns.

## Love Your Verge

The Love Your Verge campaign is back this spring! Litter Free Dorset (LFD) will be collaborating with Dorset Council’s Green Space team to roll out the campaign again this spring/summer season. The campaign aims to promote the Dorset Council verge management techniques used to encourage roadside biodiversity while reducing incidents of littering in our county. The greenspace team are embedding a ‘cut and collect’ system across Dorset to reduce cutting schedules and fertility of the soil. This in turn saves money as well as increasing the number of wildflowers and pollinators in Dorset.

Signs featuring four fun and friendly wildlife characters (a hedgehog, mouse, bee and grass snake) are displayed on the verges around Dorset.

## What Not to Flush Campaign

LFD are relaunching their ‘What Not to Flush’ campaign this spring- a positive, fun campaign to encourage people to only flush the three p’s (paper, poo and pee) down the toilet and dispose of any other products, such as period products, nappies and wet wipes, in the bin. They are looking to work with campsites and holiday parks in the Poole Harbour catchment area to display campaign wobble boards and posters in communal toilet blocks, to positively influence visitor behaviour while both onsite in their holiday accommodation and exploring the wider Dorset area.



## Disposable BBQ campaign

The LFD #ChooseToRemoveDisposableBBQs campaign launch in 2021 will continue again this summer. In 2021 Dorset Council



banned disposable BBQs and campfires from high fire risk areas across Dorset – this includes heathland. A joint campaign with local authorities, organisations and landowners took place to communicate to visitors and residents where they are not allowed to have BBQs and campfires. A map was created to show where BBQs are not allowed across Dorset. Please visit <https://explorer.geowessex.com/cside/nobbq>.

## Greening West Dorset’s Hills and Vales

The Greening West Dorset Hills and Vales project, covered in our Autumn 2021 magazine, is coming to an end. Over the winter LFD has been working with communities in Beaminster and Littlemoor and looking at reducing cigarette butts in West Dorset.

A big thank you to our members who undertake local and community litter picks, helping to reduce the impacts of litter in our county towns, villages, countryside and beaches.

# Huge growth in community-led projects

Over the last decade or two there has been huge growth in community-led ventures in Dorset, as well as the rest of the UK. However, we need more volunteers and more progressive action from town councils copying successful schemes elsewhere.

The drivers for this have been the reduction in services offered by local authorities, particularly during the austerity years following the 2008 financial crises, when government cut back massively on its financial support to local government, with, for example, subsidies for local bus services being cut.

More onerous drink-drive laws affecting pubs, the growth of supermarkets undercutting traditional village stores, successive governments reducing the provision of social housing and a need to provide roof-mounted renewable energy that will not desecrate Dorset's beautiful countryside, have all been factors.

## An increase in 'belonging'

At the same time growing life expectancy has meant that more retirees have the time and energy to support volunteering and community-led activities, usually on a voluntary, unpaid, basis. Innovation in ownership structures and arguably greater altruism have all helped too.

Across the UK more people feel they are part of their local community, with around a third acknowledging that COVID has increased their sense of belonging. There has been a growing realisation that communities need to act to reduce loneliness and isolation as the government has been slow to address longstanding issues, such as mental health.

The list of community-led or owned activities is long: pubs and shops; community transport; Community Land Trusts; community energy groups; community kitchens and myriad other groups. Dorset CPRE has been active in promoting many of these too, as we believe in community engagement and localism, opposing a government that remains too focused on centralisation and control of power.

## Genuinely affordable homes

Community-led housing covers a range of models, but Community Land Trusts (CLTs) may be the most significant, involving local people creating genuinely affordable homes on a non-profit basis. The concept was borrowed from the USA, where it was developed strongly during the civil rights movement era. The first CLT in Dorset was setup more than a decade ago in Buckland Newton, but there are now 20 here,



Photo: Samantha Cook Photography

Official opening of one Hastoe housing projects in Powerstock, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019, new homes at Forge Orchard.

with seven actually housing people. Sir Oliver Letwin, the MP, was a great supporter of the concept. There are examples in Dorchester, Gillingham, Toller Porcorum, Sturminster Newton and Fontwell Magna while our Sherborne and District Society group is supporting a new one which hopes to take advantage of Sherborne Castle Estate's wish to provide sites. Hastoe Housing Association manage many of the properties in Dorset.

## Pubs and village shops are the beating hearts of our village communities

Dorset CPRE support pubs and village shops, which are the beating hearts of our village communities, but they have been threatened by many factors, with COVID lockdowns



Thorncombe Village Shop

affecting pubs brutally. There are several community-owned pubs in Dorset and I am happy to eat at one in Shapwick, The Anchor, which produces delicious food. The designation of pubs threatened with closure as 'Assets of Common Value' has helped in their growth. Dorset CPRE run and judge the Best Village Shop competition, and a number of community-led shops, such as Thorncombe Village Shop have won prizes. The Plunkett Foundation has been instrumental in getting such ventures off the ground, and there are now over 350 in the UK. They succeed as they engage the communities, who are more likely to shop there, and they stimulate social activity. There are also community kitchens, such as Sherborne Community Kitchen created in Sherborne during COVID to help the vulnerable staffed by volunteers. Most towns have community food banks too, such as Blandford, Bournemouth, Dorchester and Gillingham, but without volunteers they would not exist.

## Affordable Solar Panels

The phasing-out of domestic solar panel subsidies in recent years meant that individuals became reluctant installers, despite falling panel prices, while cash-strapped local authorities were unable to help. However, community energy groups have sprung up with the goal to offering panels at very competitive rates. See article 'Why is Dorset so slow putting solar panels on roofs?' on page 11.

## Local transport schemes?

In the last decade a number of community transport schemes have got off the ground in Dorset towns and villages. This is in response to less public transport and the need to reduce rural

isolation. It would be great if government were to fund better public transport, but the chance of this happening appears remote. Dorset Community Transport, based in Blandford, runs 50 minibuses across the county helping schools and groups. They are largely funded by Town and Parish Councils, and stepped in to take over some of the bus routes which commercial operators pulled out of in 2017 after more subsidy cuts.

Bere Regis NeighbourCar offers a service run by volunteers using their own cars, for 'anyone with transport difficulties', while Milton Abbas runs a similar scheme. They both pay volunteers expenses. Dorset Council run a website where you can find your local community transport scheme, they are also offering grants of up to £5k to fund new schemes.

### Bus funding announced for local authorities

On 4<sup>th</sup> April, the government announced which local authorities would receive funding, as part of a £7 billion package, for their bus service improvement plans as part of the delivery of the national bus strategy. It was disappointing that rural Dorset was not included in this first tranche, although Bournemouth and Poole have been included.



Family sat in a rural bus stop waiting for a local bus

Photo: Abigail Oliver

Overall, it would be fantastic if more people came forward as volunteers so we can sustain the community spirit developed during COVID. Communities need you more than ever!

*Rupert Hardy*

## Cranborne Chase AONB Annual Forum

I attended a virtual meeting of the Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> November. John Watkins, CEO National Association of AONBs, said that they have a tripartite agreement with Natural England and National Parks England and they hoped that a new National Landscape service for AONBs and NPs would be delivered in this Parliament.

Richard Burden, Principal Landscape and Planning Officer, spoke about the management plan 2019 – 2024 and said that this year was the fortieth anniversary of the creation of the Cranborne Chase AONB. Michael Gove is the new Secretary of State. He set up the Glover report and was much involved in the Government's Twenty Five Year Environment Plan. The AONB is a statutory consultee for planning applications.

Steve Tonkin, Dark Skies Adviser, spoke about the Starfest Week in February 2021 which was generously featured by the BBC on Countryfile, and about the online Dark Sky Festival in February 2022. The Dark Sky Charter says that all lights should be properly shielded and also be warm white that is with a colour temperature of less than 2700 K.

Jonathon Monteith said that Chalke Valley and the AONB covered 254 square kilometres with 21 SSSIs and 259 ancient monuments. They now have a total of £2.7 million from the National Lottery and elsewhere to deliver twenty separate projects.

Tracey Adams said that people have created the landscape and that farming accounted for 89 percent of land use in the AONB. The Common Agricultural Policy will be phased out over the next six years but she has helped to create several Farmer Clusters and Farmer Groups involving 129 farmers to improve the natural environment on a landscape scale.

*Dr John Larkin*

Minerals and Waste Adviser to Dorset CPRE





## Clarifying Local Needs for Local Plans

### To say nothing, is saying something.

We must express our views and share them as best we may (even at the risk of being misunderstood) or some might believe that we support things we really do not.

The above has ensured The Purbeck and Poole Group has had a busy time, since I last prepared an article for you. Briefly, the busyness has related to:

### Planning and housing

- Supporting efforts to provide affordable housing in Swanage and Corfe Castle, not always successfully.
- Resisting the appeal (to the Secretary of State) against restoration of abused Green Belt land in Poole.
- Maintaining support for the retention of green fields on the boundary of Poole.
- Raising a question to BCP Council about the real number of necessary extra dwellings for local working families.

### Renewable Energy

- Resisting the 'land grabs' for ground-mounted solar panel installations when so many roofs (particularly large roofs in urban areas) could be prioritised. The electricity generation targets for Dorset are not a relevant issue and the other roles of the countryside are more clearly seen as valuable, particularly since the pandemic and the need to reduce global food miles.

- Advocating the use of sub-surface tidal flow turbines off the coast of Dorset – perhaps in the tidal race off Portland Bill which is more powerful than that currently being harnessed off the coast of Anglesea. It is hoped that Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership will consider fostering such an investment.

### Local Plan and Consultations

- Responding to the Major Modifications to the Purbeck District Local Plan. It was stressed, amongst other things, that the number of proposed Main Modifications did illustrate the **inadequate** quality of full and proper consultations. It was also emphasized (with particular reference to Wool, Moreton Station and Morden Park) that The Habitats Regulations must not be compromised by any continued disregard of the relevant evidence provided during plan preparation and by the clear expressions made at the hearings prior to issue of the Main Modifications. Recently we learnt that two dozen photographs of different protected species in the Wool area have been displayed in the Parish and it is good to know we had advised Dorset Council that their relevant draft plan would damage (if not destroy) such wildlife.
- Supporting the Dorset Climate Action Network Group in prompting the need for a 're-think' on the draft Local Plan by Dorset Council.
- Welcoming the useful preliminary consultation initiated by BCP Council

on the 'issues and options' likely to affect a draft Local Plan to be prepared by that other 'new' Unitary Council in Dorset. We responded extensively and in detail and stressed, amongst other things, the need for realism in appropriate targets for extra dwellings, the need for effective collaborations and the need to reduce pollution in the rivers feeding Poole harbour. A copy of the response is available on [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk).

- Supporting respect for the expression of collective views from the elected parish and town councils in Purbeck. It is regretted that Poole has none, as yet; although it does have an elected Charter Trust, empowered, by Royal Prerogative, to 'control events locally to accord with the good rules of government'.
- Supporting the need for more accessible emergency hospital services than those currently being proposed by the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group which has failed to recognise the flaws in the basis of its decisions, notwithstanding Ministerial expectations about improving its standards in consulting.

### Share your thoughts

It is some time since we were able to have an open meeting of our Members in the Poole and Purbeck area and therefore there is a real risk that what we say (in expressing our views) may not be as clearly stated as you may wish in our campaigning. Consequently, and as health risks permit, I would hope to hold an open meeting as soon as may be sensible. In any event, please do not hesitate to **share your thoughts / concerns with me.**

Receipt of such shared views would, of course, always be welcomed but with both of the Dorset Unitary Councils seeking to prepare Local Plans this year (**affecting the next fifteen years or so – i.e. controlling the decisions of several new councils elected over the years**) your views would be most helpful if they came sooner, rather than later. I hope to attend the Garden Party planned for 29<sup>th</sup> June and, if you are able to attend also, I would be pleased to catch up with you: to be sure we are saying that which should be said at the right time!

*Gerald Rigler*  
Group Chairman



Photograph of protected species in the Wool area



## Ospreys in Poole Harbour

The Birds of Poole Harbour conservation charity and Poole Museum have formed a new collaborative partnership to interpret the Harbour's birdlife and natural heritage more effectively and to organise many more events throughout the year.

Poole Museum was recently granted £352,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop future plans for the museum. The Poole Harbour Osprey Reintroduction Project aims to restore a population of ospreys to the south coast of England where they have been absent for more than two hundred years. This is one of several stories the new partnership will tell and promote.

The female osprey CJ7 and male 022 formed an enthusiastic pair bond last summer and we hope they will both return to Poole Harbour in April of this year and possibly be able to start a family.

So do, please, go to [www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk](http://www.birdsofpooleharbour.co.uk) to find out more about this Project and watch the birds on camera this year on the website.

**Stop press:** Female osprey CJ7 arrived back in Poole Harbour on 5 April followed by the male 022 on 10 April. They soon found each other again and set up home on one of the big artificial nests which is fitted with a camera. They have so far (29 April) produced three eggs and are taking turns at incubating them. You can follow these exciting developments NOW on The Birds of Poole Harbour YouTube channel.

*Dr John Larkin*

Flying Osprey

Photo: Simon Kidner

## The Purbeck Beaver Project

The recent consultation on the reintroduction of beavers in England as part of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan has now closed and we await the decision on how this will be brought forward in different parts of the Country. Natural England have recently advertised for a National Beaver Officer. With Government approval the National Trust will release three pairs of beavers in the wetlands around Little Sea at the heart of the Studland dune system this year. For further details about beavers in the Isle of Purbeck contact [gen.crisford@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:gen.crisford@nationaltrust.org.uk).

Beavers were once a common site in England but were hunted to extinction for their fur and oil about four hundred years ago. The animals have been reintroduced at several sites across England and Scotland to restore wetland and woodland habitat and freshwater fen and pool habitats for the benefit of other wild life. They create dams and naturalise the water courses to improve water quality and carbon storage and reduce the risk of flooding. Two beavers were released on the National Trust's Holnicote Estate on Exmoor about two years ago and their first beaver kit has recently been seen there.

*Dr John Larkin*



Two beavers on a riverbank

Photo: Deborah Freeman

## Rewilding Somerset

Dr John Larkin attended a virtual meeting of Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT), and CPRE Somerset on 19<sup>th</sup> November. Sara King from Rewilding Britain gave an overview of the large scale restoration of ecosystems in the UK. About twenty sites all across the Country employ many staff and use a large number of volunteers. She spoke about tree planting in Scotland, farming in Haweswater, grazing over a range of habitats in the Purbeck Heaths NNR, and cattle and beavers at Wild Kenn Hill in Norfolk.

Jolyon Chesworth, SWT, said that they look after 4500 acres on seventy nature reserves with ancient woodlands on the Mendip Hills, marshes on the Somerset Levels and forty five miles of Jurassic coastline. The Trust works with the Diocese

of Bath and Wells Wilder Churches to monitor the botany and other wildlife in churchyards throughout the County.

Sara Dyke, South Somerset District Council, told us about verge management. Fifteen selected sites usually between 125 and 250 square metres are managed by the Council and looked after and surveyed by volunteers.

Holley Purdey runs Horner Farm on Exmoor. She has replaced orchards and hedgerows on the farm and uses only natural fertilisers. Sheep, cattle and goats trample the land and chickens help to clean it up.

Dr John Larkin also stayed on for the AGM of CPRE Somerset where Crispin Truman gave a short talk.

# West Dorset Group



It seems a complete “no brainer” to me and, I am sure, others:- *put solar panels on roofs!* I am pretty sure there is still no requirement to put them on new build houses (let alone proper insulation etc etc). I imagine the resulting reduction in the huge developer profits has a lot to do with it. Covering the countryside and farm land in panels is much easier and much more profitable. But we will need the farm land for essential food production and we now know how important it is to be independent in such matters. They are also a terrible eye sore, as are misplaced turbines in the countryside. There are also very important other issues like offshore wind turbines and tidal power (perhaps in the Portland Race?) which need to be campaigned for at a national level.

## Save The Area North of Dorchester

On Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, STAND (Save The Area North of Dorchester) organised a march through the town. As you know there is a plan to build 4000 houses across the north of Dorchester. We met at Maumbury Rings and, after several speeches, moved off. The procession included a “Skimmity Ride” – a re-enactment from the Mayor of Casterbridge where unpopular local



STAND march outside Dorset Council offices 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022



STAND march through Dorchester Town

ne’er do wells (in this case effigies of a developer and a planner) are paraded through the town seated backwards on a donkey with the accompanying crowd making as much noise as possible. We went down Dorchester Avenue – with the Town Cryer, Alistair Chisholm, striding out in front – up Trinity Street, then Colliton Street and ending up at the Dorset Council building. No-one was in the building of course but overall I thought it was a very successful march. It was on BBC South Today.

## Stop Portland Waste Incinerator (SPWI)



Demonstration on Portland last October

There was another successful demonstration on Portland last October against the Powerfuel incinerator application – organised by SPWI – another campaign we support (like STAND). Again a large gathering with speeches and a march. Not long ago Air Quality consultants produced a report that showed Powerfuel’s submissions on that subject to be inadequate with numerous errors. Impacts on human health, they say, may also have been under-predicted. And “conclusions of the detailed review of documentation submitted to date is that the information is insufficient to allow regulators to make informed decisions about the planning and permitting applications”. Of course, many other avenues of objection remain – including its position in the setting of the World Heritage Jurassic Coast, noise, CO2 production, multiple HGV journeys through the narrow streets of Wyke, a tall

ugly smokestack, near an SSRI and close to the AONB. The list of objections to this application is immensely long!

## Planning Applications

I mentioned last time that we had ‘seen off’ an application for a quarry at Westford Park Farm near Chard. Once again in the AONB. They have come back with a re-application which seems very similar to the last one. We have of course objected.

Also the saga of the Racing Stables at Higher Crockmoor Farm, Near Halstock, continues. Again in the AONB, there have been multiple cases of building (stables, roads, training runs etc) without planning permission which is then applied for retrospectively. The council, I am afraid, have not been at all active in the necessary enforcement. Meanwhile the owners continue to build regardless – including digging access ways and planting trees (around a bridge with refused permission). A Natural England Enforcement Order has been ignored.

At Vearse Farm, Bridport, (another development in the AONB), revised plans have been submitted requiring a further consultation period. You will remember this is another application – this time for 760 houses. We await developments.

There are other applications we are dealing with.

## Dorset National Grid

I attended recently an interesting talk by the National Grid. They are now beginning to wind down their work burying electricity cables. National CPRE are on the Stakeholder Group for the Visual Impact Provision Project. It runs from south of Coryates to the north of Winterbourne Abbas and is in the AONB. The 22 pylons will be gone by the end of this year. They’ve done very well – surviving a good many years past their use by date! The archaeology discovered has been extensive. A lot will go to Dorchester Museum. The finds go back to Roman and even Neolithic and Early Bronze Age including a cremation cemetery and much much more. Visit <https://dorset.nationalgrid.co.uk/> for more details.

*Dr Guy Dickinson*  
Group Chairman

# Why is Dorset so Slow Putting Solar Panels On Roofs?



Portland Bill – solar panels above shop and ice cream building by Elliott Brown

Dorset CPRE has always been supportive of renewable energy, especially at a time of Climate Emergency, and we support small <5MW community-funded solar farms as do the Low Carbon Dorset team at Dorset Council (DC). However we have opposed a number of huge solar

industrial power plant planning applications that can desecrate our beautiful countryside, especially if it is good agricultural land that should be growing food for Dorset. We have also consistently argued for solar panels to be put on public buildings and industrial roofs, as well as more on household ones. The record though is lamentable. As of September 2021, 95.4% of households and 98.4% of businesses within the DC area did not have solar panels on their roofs. Why?

## 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 groups have sprung 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 in January 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. More than 300 MPs have now committed their support to this Bill, which is designed to ensure that Ofgem creates a Right to Local Supply framework. There was no mention of funding for community energy in the Prime Minister's Ten-Point Plan in 2020 nor in recent Budgets, while most of the decarbonisation funding is going to local authorities and not community groups. Many also ask why the government did not make the fitting of solar panels on all new buildings mandatory in its low carbon strategy announced before COP26, rather than subsidising heat pumps, which are not feasible or too expensive for most homes. Some councils also now stipulate solar Photovoltaic provision as part of their planning conditions, but DC have not yet.

Despite this, last March Sustainable Swanage and community energy group, Purbeck Energy, launched a project to offer Swanage residents the



Dorset Community Energy stand at Dorchester Earth Day event 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022

chance to get solar panels for their properties at competitive rates. They are using a company, IDDEA, which has already installed 1,000 panels across southern England. The Swanage Mayor, Mike Bonfield, is fully supportive and praised it as a "brilliant scheme". How about some of our North Dorset towns encouraging the same?

## Solar PV on Public, industrial and school roofs

One of the reasons for slow progress on industrial buildings has been issues of building ownership and leasehold arrangements, as well as roof weight and warranties. However progress is now being made to improve the energy efficiency on public buildings in Dorset, 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. In the last year DC was given £19m by the government for more renewable projects, which include solar PV, heat pumps and LED lighting. This was one of the biggest grant packages given by the government, so well done DC. It is paying for panels to go on the roof of Durlston Castle, the arts centre, County Hall in Dorchester, and various schools. In North Dorset, Blandford School is adding more panels to its existing ones, while Gillingham School has installed some too. Bridport-based Dorset Community Energy, which facilitates community ownership of renewable energy production, has financed the installation of panels on twelve schools, including Beaminster School and Blandford School, and four community buildings throughout Dorset, such as Blandford Community Hospital. Thanks initially to the Lottery and now ninety eight local shareholders it has funded 1.5MW of panels. We hope to see more of these community-led projects.

## Solar PV on Farm Buildings and Churches

The Church of England may not be a pioneering custodian of the nation's most historic fabric, but it is now installing panels on many of Dorset's churches, even Grade I listed medieval ones such as St Mary of the Annunciation, Beaminster, as they will be barely visible from the ground. Farmers are slowly 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 retro-fitting is done. Mole Energy, part of Mole Valley Farmers, the co-operative group, have been certainly busy promoting the fitting of panels to farm buildings here, but have pointed out that renewed demand is now facing capacity issues. 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.

We have criticised DC's Draft Local Plan for its total lack of ambition in pushing developers to adopt more sustainable and energy efficient building standards, compatible with its declared Climate Emergency strategy. However the recent publication of DC's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy promises positive changes, so we urge DC to include initiatives to promote roof-mounted panels in the Local Plan's next iteration this spring. Please do ask your MP to put pressure though on government for a more credible low carbon strategy, as this is so critical.

*Rupert Hardy*

# The Sherborne and District Society



## Where to begin?

As Chairman I am very aware that so much has been going on in recent months which concerns Sherborne and District Society CPRE that it is difficult to summarize. Suffice it to say that the officeholders and the committee have been far from idle in relation to planning, landscape and farming issues.

## Planning

Much of the Group's attention has obviously been directed towards Dorset Council's plans for residential development, and the adverse impact that could have on Sherborne, and its surrounding area. Currently it looks as if the Council is having an encouraging re-think about the whole basis on which it was required to prepare its Local Plan. CPRE has always argued that the criteria set at national level were wrong, and so any change for the better from those will be very welcome.



1802 re-print of 1735 map

Sherborne will always change as a town (see 1802 re-print of 1735 map). Sherborne CPRE fully recognizes that, and it has a somewhat unusual dual role of concerning itself with the townscape as well as the surrounding countryside. As such it has been keen to get involved with plans for the future of the town centre, and to safeguard some individual buildings. Lack of any enforcement action by Dorset Council in relation to both endangered buildings and infringements of planning regulations by commercial property owners is a concern we will raise at a future Town Council Meeting.

## Sherborne Town Centre Regeneration Group

The Steering Group met on 6th April and endorsed a strategy to focus on early wins, including a Visitor Centre for the Abbey, support for an artisan centre (Paddock 2), some TLC for the railway station and better facilities for young people.

## Western Development

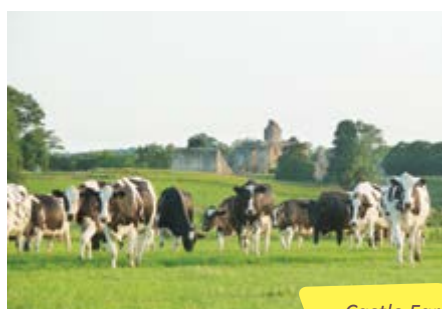
At a more strategic level Sherborne CPRE has been considering the proposals by Sherborne Castle Estate (SCE) for extensive residential development on the western side of the town. Whilst the plans look good, and we appreciate the early dialogue with SCE, we are very aware that to implement them successfully requires establishing a vibrant and cohesive community. As that will be so far from the town centre, it will necessitate much infrastructure (roads, shops, bus services, doctors' surgeries etc) that currently lack the necessary detail in the plans. There will also be a need to ensure that a very significant proportion of the site incorporates green spaces, tree planting, and a good rights of way network. Our relationship with SCE needs to be even closer, and that will be an objective as we emerge from the pandemic.

On housing numbers, currently over 1400 planned, we believe this to be excessive and based upon outdated and ill-informed data. We have settled on a figure of an additional 700 new dwellings for the proposed development to the west of the town; this is subject to greater clarity from Sherborne Castle Estates on the supporting infrastructure and landscaping.

## Farming and the landscape

We have started a local campaign to raise the profile of farming within the national resilience strategy, emphasising the importance of optimising land use rather than pursuing dogmatic objectives.

Last year's visit to Castle Farm brought home to many of us the extent to which the town's attraction is in part due to its relationship with the surrounding farmed countryside. That means we in CPRE need to take an active interest in the well-being of farming . . . and hence our local farmers and their families. Currently farmers face a dramatic change in the regime for supporting them from that which prevailed over many years during the country's membership of the EU.



Castle Farm

Michael Gove's 2018 Agriculture Bill made much of the need to only reward farmers with public funds for "public goods", but that seemed not to include food production. South of Sherborne we have a large swathe of attractive countryside – the Blackmore Vale – with relatively small grassland farms on low lying land. There are new schemes for supporting farmers: the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme and the Environmental Land Management scheme of which the latter is still under development. Further schemes are promised for landscape scale changes, but they are not applicable to most Blackmore Vale family farms. If farming incomes decrease farm diversification – such as at Castle Farm with their milk dispenser – can be an entirely appropriate option for some. But other forms of on-farm diversification can be very much more controversial. Meanwhile we can only keep a close eye on how the new regime impacts on our local landscape, and try to support local farmers in every way possible . . . not least by buying local produce.



Sherborne Fields

## Sherborne's Heritage Buildings

We remain very concerned at the state of several buildings of historic interest in Sherborne and are in the process of escalating activity. I will report more fully on this matter of great importance to our members in the next newsletter.

## Contact with Our Membership

We recognize that the pandemic has made face-to-face contact a challenge, but hopefully we will see a progressive relaxation of the current rules on meetings, along with the confidence we all need to make personal engagements acceptable. The committee will be addressing these important issues soon, and I hope to report progress within a month or so.

*Sir Christopher Coville*  
Chairman

# A better housing target for the Dorset Local Plan



*Golf course at Sturminster Marshall, a local Green Belt site proposed in the draft Local Plan*

The whole Plan so far is based on the conjecture, from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), that Dorset has a **housing crisis**:

- evidenced by unaffordably high prices,
- resulting from a lack of supply of new builds,
- and caused by a planning failure to release enough land.

The remedy from the MHCLG was to oblige Dorset Council to make a new local plan by 2023 based on the Standard Method, leading to a much higher housing target than hitherto, requiring **land to be allocated for 39,000 homes**.<sup>1</sup>

This compares with the recent<sup>2</sup> projected growth of **20,000 households** in Dorset for the same period.

Dorset is unusually rural with no large urban centre where housing can expand. Building land is constrained by AONB, historic settings, Green Belt and more. As a result of the high target, **planners have been forced to allocate many extra Green Belt and green-field sites whose development objectively would be judged as harmful to future generations**. This has resulted in an estimated 50,000 negative responses to the draft Local Plan so far.<sup>3</sup>

## Should this be helped by an alternative lower housing target justified locally?

The answer is yes, for four reasons:

- The draft Local Plan<sup>4</sup> shows 12,000 permitted plots currently not built on, so land is not evidently a constraint on house building in Dorset. **More land won't help**<sup>5</sup>.
- Recently house building by developers in Dorset has followed projected household growth while permitted plots have accumulated. Adopting a much higher target and allocating land in excess of projected demand will cause **planning chaos** in housing delivery tests and five year land supplies.
- Perversely, the sites where development is most harmful are also the most marketable and desirable to developers. If actual housing demand is below the Standard Method target, developers will cherry-pick from the surfeit offered. The sites where development would be less harmful will remain undeveloped. **Maximum harm will result**.
- Demographically, Dorset grows only because of net-incomers of modal age 60-64. Only households aged over 65 are projected to grow. This gives credence to Dorset having South East house prices with South West incomes. It has led to the older-than-average composition of Dorset's population and promises a growing care problem. **Expanding this retiree-dominated market is unwise**.

**What should be done instead?** Dorset Council's planners should be free to plan properly by balancing the need for homes against the harm caused to publicly-valued green spaces. This would chime with recent ministerial remarks about leeway in meeting targets, greater use of brownfield sites, reasonableness regarding constraints such as Green Belt and AONB, and sophistication in the way **soundness** is regarded by Planning Inspectors. The Standard Method constrictor knot feared by planners should be loosened by the Ministry of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (formerly MHCLG). A more modest housing target (22,000 has been suggested) would match actual demand yet remove the need for any new allocations of land in the Green Belt and the AONBs. It would offer scope to address the negative results of the consultation and foster a positive reception for the next iteration of the plan.



*Golf course at Sturminster Marshall, a local Green Belt site proposed in the draft Local Plan*

- (1) 39,000 is built up by averaging 10 years of the out-dated 2014-based Household projection, increasing it by 38% based on a high local affordability ratio, multiplying by 17 years, then adding overspill from BCP and an allowance for sites not built.
- (2) ONS 2018-based principal projection 2021-2038; little has changed in the Dorset projection, but the BCP projection has reduced dramatically since the Standard Method (SM) was created; that reduction has removed completely any need for Dorset to take overspill housing from BCP, but only if BCP escapes the SM as well.
- (3) Based on a sample of 3,000 of which 75% were negative, from a total of 66,000 submitted.
- (4) Fig 2.7 in the first volume of the Draft Dorset January 2021.
- (5) As long as there is more than one potential buyer for each house on sale, people will pay as much as they can afford for a house they want to buy. Low interest rates or access to wealth, which enable buyers to afford to borrow or spend more, push prices up. Buyers believe prices will always rise, so they feel comfortable doing this. Help for those priced out must come in other ways.

*Mike Allen*  
Dorset CPRE Member

# Stour Valley Park

The 'Dorset' Stour, many call it, to differentiate it from other rivers of the same name. And why not? Apart from its source at Stourhead, the entire river system lies neatly within the county boundaries, adding considerably to Dorset's famously beautiful landscape and rich heritage. The Stour plays a central role in supporting Dorset's wildlife, economy and communities, yet there's been little appreciation of its true value, or the urgent need to protect it. Until now. The proposed Stour Valley Park (SVP) extending from Kingston Lacey to Hengistbury Head, aims to provide the recognition and protection that the river deserves. And, of course, these aims closely align with those of Dorset CPRE.



Roman Bridge, Mill Lane, Shapwick

Photo: Simon G Bradley Roberts

## History and Heritage

One important aim of the SVP is to promote the valley's history and heritage. The Stour's course down through Dorset is flanked by archaeological evidence of human occupation since the Stone Age, (hill forts dominate the landscape right along the river), illustrating its vital importance throughout human history as water supply, for food, for agriculture, for industry and for transport. Formerly, settlements adjacent to the river gave direct access, both to provide water for household use and so that goods could easily be transported to markets and ports. Navigable as far as Sturminster Newton, the waterway was vital for national and indeed international commerce. The river was also an important source of power, as the surviving mill at Sturminster Newton attests. Remains in the landscape indicate centuries of thriving industry, with clever manipulation of the watercourse to draw water to and from the many waterwheels. The power of the river (Stour means 'strongly flowing') was also harnessed for irrigation, creating the thriving agricultural industry that has left us the beautiful patchwork of farmland for which Dorset is famous.

## Vital Blue and Green Corridors

Environmental issues are also prime considerations for the SVP, not least because of the threats posed by pollution and development. The river provides vital blue and green corridors and is valuable amenity space, thus benefitting both wildlife and humans. But it needs help. As the UK's first Nature Wellbeing Park, the SVP aims to regenerate the river, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity. Water meadows are also to be rewilded, significantly adding to the beauty of the riverside environment. At the same time, SVP will increase public access, so that local residents and visitors can take full advantage of opportunities



Photo: © Pierre Terre (cc-by-sa/2.0).

River Stour near Eyebridge, Wimborne

both to enjoy its wildlife and for the many benefits to health and wellbeing it offers.

## Protect and Enhance the River Valley

The long-term, sustainable land management being introduced will have other benefits, too, such as converting existing buildings for new use, thus creating local jobs and business opportunities. However, it will require an integrated approach to future growth, as SVP works with the housing and transport departments of both Dorset Council and Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council to protect and enhance the river valley. As both authorities develop their local plans, it is all too clear how timely, and necessary, is the formation of the Stour Valley Park.



River Stour, West Parley

## Protect the Precious 'Dorset' Stour

It is of particular interest to Dorset CPRE because we have seen how, although much of the important low-lying land beside the Stour is protected from building by flood risk, the important wider setting is attracting developers. Developments such as those proposed for Sturminster Marshall, Wimborne Minster, Merley, Canford, Bearwood, Dudsbury and Holdenurst all impinge on the river's setting, despite being in the Dorset and BCP Green Belts. This must stop. Hopefully, the formation of a Stour Valley Park will persuade our councils that they must do all they can to protect the precious 'Dorset' Stour.

To find out more about Stour Valley Park, visit their website: [www.stourvalleypark.uk](http://www.stourvalleypark.uk), where you will find a range of interesting videos. The Stour Valley Way is a 64 mile long distance walk along the River Stour, more details can be found on [www.stourvalleyway.co.uk/](http://www.stourvalleyway.co.uk/).

*Barbara Hurst*  
Dorset CPRE Member

# Planting a New Hedge at Highcliffe School

Sir Christopher Chope MP, visited Highcliffe School in Christchurch on 15th February to learn more about CPRE's Hedgerow Heroes initiative in the area. The students had already been learning about hedgerows as part of their citizenship course.

The best part of the morning was the actual planting of a new hedge on the school site. The event was organised by CPRE Hampshire and Dorset CPRE paid for the plants. Up to 30 students threw themselves into this task with great gusto and we had 50 metres of new hedge planted in not much more than an hour. The students each signed a pledge to look after the hedge as it grows over the next few years.

Sir Christopher Chope said "It was wonderful to be hosted by the children at Highcliffe School to learn more about the CPRE Hampshire hedgerow initiative and consider the vital role hedges play in the health of our countryside, and indeed our climate. Essential for wildlife, such as bees, bats and butterflies, hedges also contribute to our planet by storing carbon and preventing soil erosion. I have learnt a lot."

Hedgerows play an enormously important role in the health and diversity of our land, climate, and wildlife, and CPRE Hampshire are backing the Climate Change Committee's call for a 40% increase in hedgerows by 2050. We urgently need to encourage more nature-based solutions if we are to tackle the ever-increasing climate emergency.



Students had been learning about the importance of hedgerows as part of their Citizenship class



The 'whips' – the new hedge plants ready to be planted



Happy to get stuck in

PHOTOS: BOB HART

## BCP Council Local Plan, Issues and Options Consultation

We believe Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council appear to be giving far more details than Dorset Council to allow the public to see what is being envisaged and to comment accordingly. We responded to the recent Issues and Options Consultation, focusing on the survey questions that are pan Dorset related namely:

- New market and affordable homes
- A prosperous economy
- Providing a safe, sustainable and convenient transport network
- Natural environment
- Our built environment
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Tackling climate change
- Providing infrastructure that supports development

A copy of Dorset CPRE and our local Poole & Purbeck Group responses are available to download from our website. Later this year, BCP Council will be consulting on a draft Local Plan on how much, where and what type of development will take place across the BCP area up to 2038.

# 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.

The various Stakeholder Groups where I represent CPRE Dorset are continuing with their work within the recently relaxed restrictions for the pandemic.

## Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Minerals Sites Plan 2019

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

## Imerys Ball Clay Operations Dorset – Community Liaison Group

I attended a Public Exhibition at Springfield Hotel in Wareham on 16<sup>th</sup> November. Imerys gave detailed proposals for the future investment in Dorset ball clays through a planned extension to North Hills Blue Pit at Povington in West Creech which is one of five pits in Purbeck operated by the company. Some of the other workings at Povington have come to an end and that land will now be restored in line with the original planning permission. This pit is in a remote part of the Purbeck Hills with no close neighbours. There will be no increase in the number of lorries carrying ball clay but there will be more lorries on Grange Road carrying sand and gravel which will be extracted commercially here for the first time.

## Bridewell Wood

We await an Environmental Impact Assessment and a Planning Application to extend the winning and working of ball clays and aggregates in this area.

## Toll Bar Stream

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

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

## Wytch Farm Oilfield Consultative Committee

The extraction of oil and gas from Perenco's oilfield continues and I will prepare a report when the next meeting of this Committee is convened.

## Geophysical Survey

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

## Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan 2019

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

## Dorset Innovation Park Enterprise Zone

Some 651 people presently work at the DIPEZ, located in Wool near Dorchester. The Dorset Council, Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership (Dorset LEP) and the Home Communities Agency continue to advertise widely to attract new technological businesses to the Site.

## Renewable Energy in Purbeck

It was reported in the Bournemouth Echo that four large turbines were transported to the site at Masters Pit on the Puddletown Road for erection by the autumn of this year. Dorset CPRE and Dorset Against Rural Turbines (DART) Action Group both put a lot of time and effort and money in trying to stop these turbines. Planning Permission was refused by Purbeck District Council in March 2011 and the decision was overturned by the Planning Appeal Inspector on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012. A Statutory Appeal in the High Court on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 to quash the Inspector's decision was unsuccessful. The constituent parts of at least one turbine lying on the ground are visible from the Puddletown road but it is difficult to see how much more is there.

A grant from the Dorset LEP, of £1.8 million will be used to build a new electrical substation at the Stokeford Farm site together with a six kilometre long cable under the river Frome near Wareham to connect the wind turbines and adjacent solar panels to the National Grid.

## Arne Moors Intertidal Nature Reserve

I attended a Zoom meeting of this Group on 1<sup>st</sup> December. We were told that a public exhibition before the submission of a Planning Application for all the necessary works will be held early in 2022.

The Team shared their understanding of the evolution of the landscape since the last Ice Age and interpreted the human influences which have shaped the Moors over the last eight thousand years.

## Mass Extinction Memorial Observatory (MEMO) at Portland

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

## Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ)

The new Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone Habitat Protection Strategy is being introduced by the Marine Management Organisation to protect sensitive sea grass and sea horses. A voluntary no-anchor zone to protect the core sea grass habitat commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> December and this will be extended to cover a larger area off South Beach from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2022. The Seahorse Trust recently installed eco-moorings in the Bay so that boats do not damage the sea grass habitat when they drop anchor. The high density of the grasses slows down the water currents and helps the nutrients to settle and attract more wildlife.

## The Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve (PHNNR)

This is the largest area of lowland heath in the Country. It extends to 8,321 acres and includes Hartland Moor, Arne, Brownsea Island and Studland and Godlingston Heaths. The PHNNR was designated by DEFRA in 2020







and was the first to be nominated as a Super National Nature Reserve.

There are a wide variety of habitats including wet heathland with mires, dry heathland, woodland, grassland, salt marsh, farmland, a large brackish water lagoon, several freshwater ponds, an

extensive shoreline, the marine lagoon on Brownsea Island, and some wet meadows which will soon be partially flooded to make an intertidal nature reserve. There are also worked-out opencast ball clay pits and an anti-aircraft gun site from the Second World War.

A new glossy leaflet giving full details of the NNR and a map of the Reserve showing the single grazing unit is now available at RSPB Arne.

*Dr John Larkin*

Minerals and Waste Adviser to Dorset CPRE

## Winfrith Site Stakeholder Group

I attended a virtual meeting of the Group on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Barry Quinn, Chairman, spoke about the timetable for decommissioning at Winfrith and about proposed Geological Disposal Facility sites in Cumbria identified by Radioactive Waste Management. He and Peter Fry are liaising with Dorset Council and Dorset Museum to mark Winfrith's role in the development of nuclear energy with a Blue Plaque and historical exhibits in the new gatehouse when this is built.

Andy Munro, Director, said the End State of the Site was now unlikely to be reached until several years after the previous target date of 2023. Cranes and a ventilating system had been installed for the dismantling of the Dragon reactor core. A planning application will be submitted later this year for the demolition of the Blacknoll reservoir.

Jonathon Jenkin, National Decommissioning Authority (NDA) told us about the business plan for the next three years with a single waste division. Dounreay had transferred to NDA and seven other radioactive reactor sites will be decommissioned in

the coming years.

Simon Napper, Office for Nuclear Regulation, said that they had carried three formal inspections since our last meeting. Liquid and gas discharges at the Site remained very low. They are expected to increase with the decommissioning of the Steam Generating Heavy Water Reactor (SGHWR) and the Dragon reactor but will still be a long way below the legal limits.

Andy Hass gave a project update on the SGHWR. A remotely controlled jacking system will elevate and rotate the entire reactor core and robotic tools will be used to cut the core into segments. The grout and concrete plant for the SGHWR and Dragon has been completed.

*Dr John Larkin*

Minerals and Waste Adviser to Dorset CPRE

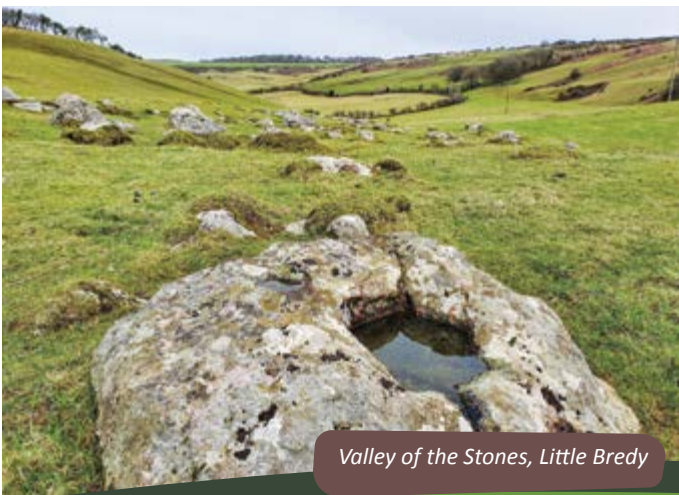
# THE LAND OF STONE: The Wonders of Neolithic Dorset



*The Grey Mare and Her Colts, Abbotsbury*

An interest in ancient stone monuments followed my discovery as a teenager of the cartoon books of Asterix The Gaul, and his large friend Obelix, who used his strength to throw menhirs, or large standing stones, at the invading Romans. Moving to Dorset some twenty years ago I was delightfully surprised by the large numbers of extraordinary stone monuments and earthworks here.

The earliest recorded settlement of Dorset was by Mesolithic hunters in 8000 BC. Small groups were concentrated along the Isle of Purbeck, Portland, Chesil Beach and the Stour Valley. These early settlers used stone tools, antler picks and fire to clear the ancient oak forest that covered the hills, making way for the agriculture and animal husbandry that was to flourish during later ages. This article will focus though on the Neolithic



*Valley of the Stones, Little Bredy*

period of 4300 to 2000 BC, which followed the Mesolithic, and the many monuments they left behind. No written language has survived; therefore, the history, culture and way of life are known mainly through archaeological finds. We may not have Stonehenge but we do have the Dorset Cursus, arguably the largest Neolithic site in Britain, the Kingston Russell Stone Circle, the Knowlton Rings and the mega henge at Mount Pleasant close to Dorchester, as well as dozens of long barrows. New discoveries are made every year, just as they are discovering around Stonehenge, thanks to sophisticated geophysical surveying techniques, such as LiDAR (3-D laser scanning), carbon dating and aerial drone photography.

## Early Neolithic: Barrows and Cursuses

Around 4300 BC there was a major migration of people from the Middle East into Europe and Britain. They brought a more developed knowledge of cereal farming and animal husbandry, pottery making skills, as well as a more sedentary lifestyle than the Mesolithic communities they replaced, although it is unfair to categorise these just as hunter-gatherers, as there is clear evidence of some farming of crops and domestic animals from about 4500 BC. Their arrival led also to a more developed and stratified society of farmers, artisans and leaders. Forest clearances provided more room for farming with native cattle and pigs, and later on sheep and goats coming from the continent. Many of the Dorset hilltop forts we associate with the Iron Age were first occupied in the early Neolithic period, and this is true for both Hambledon Hill and Maiden Castle. However you have to look hard to find remains of the oval enclosure of two segmented ditches built on the eastern plateau at Maiden. This causewayed enclosure, so-called because of the gaps between the ditches, was one of the earliest monuments in Britain.

Other earliest but still visible earthwork sites were long barrows used for communal burial, with the bodies buried in stone and timber vaults, and these began in the early Neolithic period. Over sixty remain on Dorset's chalk downlands, particularly Cranborne Chase and the South Dorset Ridgeway, which provided ideal locations for early defensive settlements. One of the more interesting is the Grey Mare and her Colts, a Neolithic chambered long barrow that stands above Abbotsbury. It is 24 metres long featuring huge sarsen stones. The nearby Hell Stone is another example but it was badly restored by the Victorians. Most were oriented with the large end pointing east, and the tapering small end west. It has been speculated that this orientation had to do with the importance of the rising sun in their religions.

## Where did these durable sarsen stones come from?

A mile away is the beautiful Valley of the Stones, so called as the floor is covered with them. Sarsen is silicified sandstone, and these are found naturally all over southern England, but here is one of the finest examples of a sarsen boulder train in all the UK. Freeze/thaw conditions at the end of the last Ice Age caused sandstone on top of the chalk ridge to fragment and slump downhill. The name derives from Saracen, denoting a pagan origin.

One of the major innovations of the age was the polished



Hellstone Barrow, Portesham



Knowlton Church and Henge

stone axe. Stone tools previously were made by chipping and flaking. Grinding and polishing gave an even cutting edge, superior strength and better handling than the old flaked edge axes, and this facilitated the clearing of trees for farming. Polished axe heads were possibly regarded too as sacred objects or traded as a display of visible wealth.

However it is the Middle Neolithic (3300-2900 BC) when other exciting developments occur. The Dorset Cursus dates from then and runs for a full six miles through the chalk downs of Cranborne Chase, much longer than others in Britain, such as the one at Stonehenge. Originally consisting of a pair of parallel banks about 90m apart running north-east to south-west, some of the Cursus is clearly visible with elements of the original earthworks remaining, as are many of the associated long barrows. Plough damage though has been extensive over the last century. It is assumed the Cursus served a religious or ceremonial function related to its southwesterly orientation following astronomical alignments. From the eastern end at Bottlebush Down you can see the midwinter sun set behind the long barrow on the ridge of Gussage Down. It is a magical experience on a sunny winter solstice.

## Late Neolithic: Circles and Henges

By 3000 BC our ancestors stopped building long barrows and cursuses, and moved on to circular monuments. The Stone Circle at Kingston Russell, on a ridge near Portesham, is typical and is made of sarsen stone, and it is the largest surviving one in Dorset. Sadly the stones are not standing so you need to use your imagination as to how they would have looked. Stone circles can be seen elsewhere in Dorset, as at Litton Cheney and Rempstone, but they are mostly found close to the sea. They may not have been used for rituals but



Kingston Russell Stone Circle

more as silent monuments to the dead. The Kingston Russell site can still be visited, as can The Grey Mare and her Colts long barrow close by.

Henges, which feature enclosures surrounded by ditches and banks, usually with stone or timber circles, were seen however more as ceremonial sites where people gathered for feasting and rituals. The Knowlton Circles are a cluster of four henges, one of which surrounds the church there in East Dorset. Church Henge is the best preserved, and consists of an oval enclosure surrounded by a one metre deep ditch and two metre high earthwork bank. The ruined church there symbolised the transition from pagan to Christian worship. It is a very atmospheric place so do visit it on a summer's evening. Some suggest it is haunted.

However the biggest henge in Dorset was only discovered in 1936 just east of the Dorchester bypass at Mount Pleasant. It was built around 2500 BC, or the same time as Stonehenge, and is nine football pitches in size, with a large timber palisade surrounding an inner henge enclosure of stone and timber. It was only excavated in the 1960s. It has since been returned to farmland but it is still visible as a white cropmark. Within Dorchester few realise that Maumbury Rings was a Neolithic henge before the Romans turned it into an amphitheatre.

## Pottery

Another feature of the late Neolithic is the pottery they made. At Down Farm on Cranborne Chase shards of Grooved Ware pots and building postholes have been found close to henges.

Around 2200 BC there were further migrations of people into Britain. The Beakers came from the lower Rhine region and they brought with them, not just fairer skin and hair colouring, but developed skills in pottery, thus the distinctive Beaker-ware pots, but also metal-working. The Bronze Age had arrived and stone was relegated to lesser roles in society. However we are grateful for the wonderful and still visible stone and other monuments that our Neolithic ancestors created.

If interested to pursue this further, Dr Martin Green has a fascinating private museum of prehistoric finds from the area around his farm at Down Farm, near Wimborne St Giles. He has been described as the most professional of amateur archaeologists, and a great enthusiast. Visits by appointment on [mgreendownfarm@gmail.com](mailto:mgreendownfarm@gmail.com). See also North Dorset Group article on page 4.

*Rupert Hardy*

# Dorset National Park

Dorset CPRE calls for a new approach to rural strategy which reflects the key strengths, priorities and potential of areas, like Dorset, where the environment and heritage are our greatest economic asset, central to a thriving future.

The environment and heritage of rural Dorset are of local, national and international importance. The whole countryside, including our towns and villages, are central to Dorset's natural and cultural heritage and "sense of place." In response to surveys, Dorset residents attach great importance to the natural environment and want to see it thrive. Public appreciation of the countryside's vital contribution to mental and physical health has grown in recent times.

The climate and ecological emergencies, declared by the government nationally and Dorset's unitary councils, are a wake-up call. With appropriate policies and support, Dorset's countryside can play a key role in addressing climate change, restoring nature, improving health and wellbeing, and providing great Dorset food.

Dorset CPRE welcomes recent proposals by Dorset Council and BCP Council that they be allowed to prepare Local Plans appropriate to our communities and environment, as local people wish. But Dorset's countryside remains at risk. Existing designations such as AONB, Green Belt, SSSI etc, have proved insufficient to prevent the degradation of our environment and loss of species through various causes, including inappropriate planning schemes. The quality of Dorset's water catchments, rivers and harbours, including Poole Harbour, the second largest natural harbour in the world and a vital habitat, has deteriorated over a long period. A report by Bournemouth University found that all of Dorset's vital ecosystems are in continuing decline ("Tipping points in lowland agricultural landscapes").



Cowslips taken by Sandra Brown

**A National Park for Dorset** would work in close and supportive partnership with councils, communities, businesses, farmers and other stakeholders across Dorset to promote a thriving, prosperous, greener future for our communities, economy and countryside and help revive Dorset's ecosystems. It would create opportunities, help address the challenges we face together and help develop and deliver sustainable policies, e.g. for transport, tourism and energy. A NP would work with farmers and land managers for a successful and sustainable future, including the production of great Dorset food and drink; effective carbon capture in soils, hedges and woodland; health and wellbeing for local people and visitors; and opportunities for renewable energy in partnership with communities. A National Park would help develop a successful green/blue economy, improve skills and life chances, and respond to local



Early spider orchid taken by Jon Bish

housing needs including for affordable homes, to the benefit of Dorset communities including young people and families.

Dorset CPRE joins with many communities and local councils, societies, other groups and individuals who support a Dorset National Park and wish to see the benefits and opportunities which this would bring for people and nature across Dorset - our communities, businesses, farmers and visitors as well as our exceptional environment, wildlife and heritage.

*Sandra Brown*

Dorset CPRE Member

## Landscapes Review Consultation

Dorset CPRE welcomed the opportunity to input to the Government's consultation on its response to the Glover Review of Landscapes.

The Government consultation seeks views on how designated landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) can do even more to bring people closer to nature, enhance the environment and boost biodiversity, improve mental and physical wellbeing and support local communities and economies. We welcome these aims and the proposals to place greater emphasis on nature recovery and to require more action by all public bodies to enhance our National Parks and AONBs. Please visit our website to read our full response submitted in April 2022.

# CPRE Annual Report & Accounts for Year Ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021

## 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 £25,922.46 were paid out for the following projects:

### Dorset CPRE:

Fingerposts	£ 1,180
Trees For Dorset	£ 300
Morden Holiday Park Legal Advice:	£18,960
Charlton Marshall Objection:	£ 1,350
Draft Response to Dorset Council Local Plan	£ 1,536
Stop Portland Waste Incinerator	£ 1,000
STAND (Save The Area North of Dorchester):	
½ Cost of Leaflet	£466.46

### North Dorset Group

Pimperne Parish Council Legal Advice regarding Neighbourhood Plan	£ 1,000
Fingerpost	£ 130

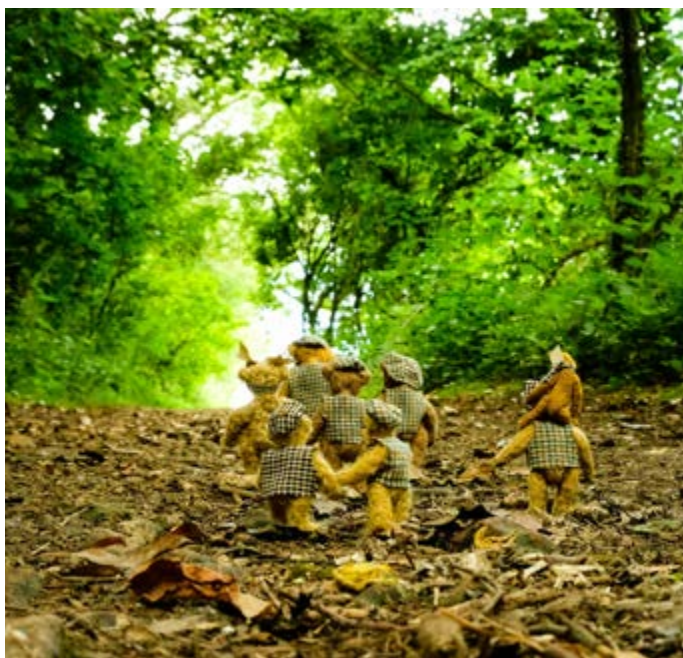
Dorset CPRE has given money to purchase plants for a new hedge and fingerpost refurbishment and will happily contribute to causes other than campaigns that oppose something.

## Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 August 2021

	Note	Unrestricted £	Total 2021 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>			
Donations and legacies		85,258	85,258
Investment income	4	<u>7,923</u>	<u>7,923</u>
<b>Total Income</b>		<u>93,181</u>	<u>93,181</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds		(30,043)	(30,043)
Other expenditure	5	<u>(29,747)</u>	<u>(29,747)</u>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<u>(59,790)</u>	<u>(59,790)</u>
Gains/losses on investment assets		<u>29,414</u>	<u>29,414</u>
Net movement in funds		62,805	62,805
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>			
Total funds brought forward		<u>742,451</u>	<u>742,451</u>
Total funds carried forward	11	<u><u>805,256</u></u>	<u><u>805,256</u></u>

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

# Welcome to Country Lane Bears GB



They slowly climbed the hill in the late afternoon sunshine, and rested up on the 5 Bar Gate.



The view of the countryside spread out before them, whow, such a magnificent sight. They all sat in silence, just gazing in awe of the endless beauty.

A little group of Bears were travelling along the Country Lanes, sharing their adventures along the way, although their transport with accommodation in the Little Shepherds Hut, was a very tight

squeeze, with many "Nose to Toes". Led by Treacle, together with his 3 young sons, his niece and 2 young nephews, he had thought how adventurous and hands (paws) on it would be to take the classroom into the Country Lanes, to teach, share and learn from very nature itself.

Whilst walking in the lanes last Autumn, he met up with one of his dear, dear friends, Shinrin, who had just returned from across the seas, having spent many years living in the Forest. Treacle invited him to join their little group. Shinrin's knowledge and experience, together with his conservation values and skills would be so exciting to share with the other younger members.



That day, on the top of the Hill, on the 5 Bar Gate, was the last time for many months, that they were able to enjoy the roaming, freedom feeling! They too experienced "Lock Down", and had to swop grass for carpet and freedom for closed doors!



Their Little Hut was moved indoors, under the bed! And Treacle set to, creating indoor learning and adventures, swopping trees with furniture table legs. He kept their spirits high, with lots of improvisation and imagination, and they became very online (not just the climbing ropes) and began to meet lots of new friends both locally and internationally. They had great fun sharing traditions, customs and folklore with many friends less fortunate to be able to get outside to enjoy the "Countryside".

And then one day, freedom, although limited in distance. How exciting it was to smell the "fresh air" again, feel the grass beneath paw, and the breeze on fur! Their closest little Country Lane was alongside the busy, noisy dual- carriage way of the Dorset Way!

And yet, here they found beauty of changing seasons, wild snowdrop, violets, catkins and bluebells! They even celebrated a Wedding there!

But most of all, the little gang realised how important it was, to be able to share all the beauty of the countryside, with those less fortunate to be able to get outside to enjoy, by whatever or however means, they were able to.

To be able to enhance, enrich and promote rural life, with a holistic approach, by sharing their adventures with those with limited access.

Latest update, is that they were seen preparing for their journey for the exciting Summer Jubilee celebrations .

In the meantime, they would like to wish everyone a Happy Springtime ♥

Enjoying the beauty of new growth after the long sleep.

They are very proud to support and promote CPRE.

Bearly Good Wishes  
Country Lane Bears GB ♥♥



Imaginative creativity has always been a life long passion, together with a love of the countryside and preserving its beauty. The origins of creativity started three decades ago, with needle, thread, joints, glass eyes and stuffing. Teddy Bear Artistry commenced, initially under the name of "Hedgerow", but about 5 years ago, the idea of a group of individual characters, travelling the Country Lanes in their 1/12th scale Shepherd's Hut started to evolve.

Creativity with needle and thread, suddenly became with pen and paper too.

Sharing their adventures, with those unable to get out into the countryside, led to research and self-learning into expression and literary skills of communication.

Over recent years, they have received some lovely feedback and acquired several followers, both locally and internationally, as well as being able to promote the importance and well-being of the countryside.



Having recently been introduced to CPRE, I would very much wish to promote and support this wonderful Charity, and raise awareness of its profile, aims and values.

Thank you

*Caroline Leppan*

*The Country Lane Arctophile*  
("Greek" arctos-bear + phile-lover)

## THE COUNTRY LANE

*Along the Country Lane,  
Far from Motorway and tar,  
Is a world of pure enjoyment,  
of nature..... a full 5 Star.*

*Edged by Oak, Ash and Hawthorn,  
and dappled in kaleidoscope sunlight,  
providing peace, calm and comfort,  
for all the wildlife ..... sheer delight.*

*All the senses are awakened,  
Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch  
Wild Honeysuckle, Garlic and Blackberry,  
beautiful birdsong ..... enjoyed so much.*

*Country Lane of all 4 Seasons,  
Your beauties are wonders to behold,  
Folklore, customs and traditions,  
Our future generations to uphold.*

*Maybe it's time to veer off the beaten track,  
and enjoy new benefits less harmless,  
Nature in its abundant ways,  
can create more pleasurable inner  
calmness.*

## Leaving a Legacy

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



©Ian Dagnall/Alamy

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

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

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

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

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

# THE DORSET SOLDIER WHO WON THE FIRST WORLD WAR: General Lord Rawlinson of Trent

Henry Rawlinson (1864–1925) is not as well known as he deserves. His career covers much more than the disastrous first day of the Battle of the Somme, for which he takes a share of the responsibility. Can I justify my title?

## Family and Early Career

Rawlinson was born on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 1864 at the family home of Trent Manor in Dorset. His father Henry was a soldier and political officer previously of the East India Company's army, veteran of the 1<sup>st</sup> Afghan War and distinguished expert in the history, languages and antiquities of the Ancient Persian Empire. His London home was often full of interesting men with military, imperial, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is no surprise that the son would spend his life serving the British Empire. His Dorset connection was through his mother, Louisa Seymour. Her influence was to encourage young Henry in a love of art and of his own work as a water colourist. He remembered Dorset with affection and one unrealised ambition was to become colonel of the Dorsetshire regiment.

He was encouraged by Frederick Roberts, the distinguished Irish field marshal, to take his profession seriously and work for entry to the Staff College. He passed in and did well in his studies.

Rawlinson had married in 1890 Meredith Kennard, known to her husband as 'Merrie', at a smart West End wedding. There were no children, but all the evidence is that they were devoted. He wrote to her every night from the Western Front; sadly these letters don't survive. She hugely admired him. He enjoyed robust health while hers was a constant worry to both of them. Yet she outlived him.

He served with distinction in colonial wars. Reforms followed the British Army's poor performance in the South African War (1899–1902). Rawlinson contributed as the first of three reforming Staff College Commandants. The curriculum was improved, constant assessment replaced written exams, teaching had a new urgency and relevance. One of his students, future General Sir John Burnett-Stuart, wrote: 'Rawly was about the most versatile soldier of his generation; alive, inquisitive, experienced, and very human; there could have been no better guide for our studies. The atmosphere at once became less academic and more soldierly and realistic.'

In January, 1910 he took command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division on Salisbury Plain. In annual manoeuvres, Rawlinson showed himself forward thinking in his use of intelligence and in employing Royal Flying Corps aircraft to spot for artillery.

## The Great War

Britain entered hostilities on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1914. It was a war like none before, immensely challenging for all armies, especially the British used to small imperial wars. How to penetrate the barbed wire and trenches of the Western Front? The British Expeditionary Force was tied to the French, supporting their offensives.

As a 'chateau general', Rawlinson was not uncaring of his men. In November 1914 he wrote, 'ground white, temperatures low – very miserable for the men in the trenches – we have sent them coke and charcoal to try and keep them fairly warm but these nights are terribly severe.' His HQ arranged hot baths in warm linen factories. By the week's end the cold was being countered by braziers in the trenches and



General Sir Henry Rawlinson painted by William Orpen at Fourth Army Headquarters 1918

sandbags filled with straw into which the men put their feet at night when on duty. At Christmas 1914 Rawlinson arranged with his wife to have traditional puddings for everyone purchased at Harrods.

Rawlinson like other generals struggled to find the solution in trench warfare. He gained some successes, although not until 1918 would he score the spectacular victories on which his fame should rest. In March 1915, at Neuve Chapelle, he massed 340 guns for an overwhelming bombardment which surprised the Germans. His attack tore a breach 1600 yards wide in the German position, but only achieved a limited advance. In the terrible Battle of the Somme of 1916, Rawlinson had confidence in his young soldiers, writing in his diary late on 1<sup>st</sup> July – with a very incomplete picture of the casualties – 'The courage of the new armies was magnificent'. On 14<sup>th</sup> July, he orchestrated a night march and dawn surprise attack. The British broke into the German second line on a front of 6000 yards, inflicted 2300 casualties and took 1400 prisoners. On 25<sup>th</sup> September, Rawlinson's gunners brought overwhelming artillery firepower against the German third line. In places the operation went like clockwork. By the end of the battle, British soldiers were confident of being on top of their enemy; British prisoners told their captors: 'Don't you think we have done very well?' The Berlin conference on 9 January, 1917 took the fatal step of renewing unrestricted U-boat warfare; Field Marshal von Hindenburg supporting the navy said: 'We must save men from another Somme battle.' The United States with its vast resources entered the war.



Fourth Corps's Christmas Card 1914 drawn by Rawlinson





Some of the nearly 30,000 German prisoners captured at the Battle of Amiens August, 1918

## The British Victory

1918 saw Rawlinson exploit Western Front experience. The German offensive launched on 21 March narrowly failed. Rawlinson, facing desperate odds as Germans advanced, launched counter-attacks. His success coincided with the visit of the French Premier Clemenceau and Winston Churchill, Minister for Munitions. Churchill was impressed by Rawlinson's calm, writing that whatever the situation, success or possible catastrophe, he was the same man, good-humoured, cool, unpretentious. 'During the War I saw [Rawlinson] at some of his worst moments of misfortune and in his hour of greatest triumph....Whether his front was crumbling away or in the moment of a dazzling victory, he was always exactly the same.' Triumph followed his moment of misfortune.

On 8<sup>th</sup> August at the battle of Amiens, Rawlinson's Fourth Army launched a surprise attack led by over 400 tanks. Rawlinson insisted on great secrecy; the attack caught the Germans completely unaware. Their gun batteries were captured without firing a shot, gun crews asleep in their dug-outs. A German ammunition train steaming forward, unaware of the Allied advance, was shelled by tanks and burst into flame.

On the battle's second day, Churchill travelling to visit Rawlinson's headquarters was delayed 'by enormous columns of German prisoners which endlessly streamed along the dusty roads'. In less than a week, spectacular success had been won. The Allies took 29,873 prisoners and 499 guns. Total German losses were perhaps 75,000. Historian C.R.M.F Cruttwell wrote: 'the credit lies principally with Rawlinson and the 4<sup>th</sup> Army staff for the extreme efficiency and secrecy with which this model attack was mounted'.

Amiens marked the beginning of Fourth Army's 80-mile advance, fighting 18 actions and 4 great battles, capturing 80,000 prisoners. Major Clive Wigram, Assistant Private Secretary to King George V, told Rawlinson: 'Your progress takes our breath away, and it is almost impossible to keep pace with events.' On 11<sup>th</sup> November the Germans signed an Armistice accepting harsh terms.

In July, 1919, the *Manchester Guardian* posed the question, 'Who really did win the Great War?' and answered it by stating, '[Germany's death blow] was delivered by General Rawlinson and our Fourth Army...'

Can I justify the claim? Up to a point. The German army had been beaten in the field, vast numbers of prisoners taken. The British took the lion's share. There were, however, other factors: the collapse of Germany's Allies, Turkey, Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary; bread riots, strikes, mutinies in the navy in Germany; the Americans' entry to the war. They would have been three million strong in 1919. But in 1918, the Armies of the British Empire and especially Fourth Army struck the heaviest blows.

## India and Trent Church

The rest of his career was successful. In 1919 he sailed to Murmansk and Archangel in Russia to evacuate British forces sent to fight the Bolsheviks. In 1920, Churchill secured his appointment as Indian Army commander-in-chief. Churchill told Prime Minister Lloyd George: 'the best appointment we could make would be that of General Lord Rawlinson'. Rawlinson's achievement was to reduce the Indian army's numbers and cost, but improve its firepower, mobility and training. With modern equipment, morale was good. He announced a scheme of 'Indianisation' commissioning Indians as officers. An Indian Military College was founded at Dehra Dun run on English public school lines to encourage Indian officer candidates. By the end of his command, he had been selected to become Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He would have been the only officer to hold both top posts, Indian and British. This was not to be. His last diary entry recorded a visit to Dehra Dun to play cricket against the boys. He made twenty-one runs 'having not had a bat in my hand for thirty years'. Towards the end of March, 1925, he fell ill. Following an operation, he inexplicably weakened and died.

His loss was widely felt. Sir Hastings Anderson, a staff officer with twenty years' acquaintance, wrote: 'It is hard to connect with death that tireless energy in work or sport, that brisk, cheery manner; those quick, searching questions; that attention to the views of subordinates, not unmixed with impatience of a slow moving or less direct mind; the whole alert, soldierly personality which went to make up the Chief whom we feared and respected, the Lord Rawly whom we loved.'

For his wife Merrie the loss was devastating. She insisted that he be brought home for burial near his home at Trent in Dorset. Following memorial services at Delhi and London, his body was taken

to Sherborne and then to Trent. Ironically for a man whose life was filled with action, Henry Rawlinson found his last resting place at a quiet country church in the chapel of St Martin, St Michael and St George.



Rawlinson's last parade: his coffin escorted across Westminster Bridge by bands of the Guards

*Rodney Atwood*

Dorset CPRE Member

# 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):

## Climate emergency: time for planning to get on the case

This paper investigates what local plans can and should do to tackle the climate emergency, and looks at how recently-adopted plans are shaping up. The findings are based on CPRE research into all local plans adopted since the government introduced the national, legally-binding 2050 target for net-zero carbon. Only 1 out of 24 local plans (outside Greater London) adopted since 2019 has a quantified, strategic policy to achieve the council's net-zero carbon target.

Around 85% of England's local authorities have now declared climate emergencies and made political commitments to tackle them. The majority are setting net-zero carbon targets of 2030, well ahead of the UK government's legally binding 2050 target and just eight years from now. Achieving these ambitions is a monumental challenge, to which every single development decision must contribute.

Despite a national policy requirement that local plans should help to achieve 'radical reductions' in emissions, there is very little evidence of radical measures. None of the plans CPRE studied tackles the tensions between economic growth, car dependence and emissions, or shows that different spatial options for development and transport have been considered, and the lowest carbon option chosen.



## A little rough guide around the hedges Why we love hedgerows.

This guide is a celebration of hedgerows. We wanted to share our passion for them and encourage more people to care about them too. And to entice you further, we've included a handy hedgerow plant identifier for when you're next exploring our beautiful countryside.

## Local Green Spaces report, 2022

CPRE's February 2022 research into what tools are currently available in the toolbox of the planning system for local people to protect the local green spaces they value most from getting lost to development, and how these tools are being used. The number of Local Green Spaces (LGSs) in Dorset is 282. Being the first analysis of its kind, this report

has shown that since its introduction in 2012, the Local Green Space (LGS) designation has protected 6,515 locally valued Local Green Spaces across England from inappropriate development – 282 are located in Dorset.

CPRE found great public enthusiasm for the opportunities that the special designations offer – but gaps in uptake and many areas where more locally valued spaces can be preserved.

## Recycling our land: the state of brownfield report, 2021

The 2021 edition of CPRE's annual reporting on the status and potential of brownfield land.

The report finds that brownfield land continues to be a perpetually-regenerating resource, with the capacity of brownfield land for housing development continuing to grow since last year. Much of this capacity already has planning permission and can be found in the Midlands and north of the country, providing a valuable opportunity for levelling-up as well as protecting our countryside and green spaces.

## Young people in rural areas: a report

On behalf of CPRE, the countryside charity, YouGov conducted this unique online survey of 1,019 16-25 year olds living in 'rural' and 'town and fringe' areas in England to examine why young people feel forced to leave the countryside.

This survey is the first of its kind commissioned by CPRE, examining the experiences of young people living in rural areas in England. The data was collected during June 2021.

The findings are startling, with young people reporting pessimism about their future, concerns about affordable housing and huge numbers reporting loneliness and isolation.

### Key findings



#### Affordable housing

Of those surveyed, 72% of young people living in rural areas say affordable housing is their top concern. 84% of those who want to leave say it is an important factor in making their decision.



#### Transport

86% of the 16-25 year olds who want to leave rural areas surveyed cite infrequent and unreliable public transport as an important concern.



#### Connectivity

More than three-quarters (76%) of young people who want to move away surveyed say that poor digital connectivity has influenced their desire to leave their rural area.



#### Loneliness

84% of those wanting to move away surveyed cite loneliness and isolation as important reasons.



#### Decision makers

Shockingly, fewer than 1 in 10 (8%) feel listened to by decision makers as a young person living in a rural area.



#### Future

Just two in five young people (43%) in rural areas surveyed anticipate staying living in a rural area within the next five years. Worryingly, only 18% of the 16-25 year olds in rural areas surveyed think that the future looks bright for them; 63% are more pessimistic.

# Dorset CPRE Membership

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

## Not already a member? Stuck for a gift idea?

Joining CPRE is the single most effective way to stand up for the countryside. Once farmland and green spaces are built on, they are lost forever. The more you can give, the more we can do to keep our countryside safe. You can join online via our website [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk) or contact our office on 0333 577 0360 to receive a copy of our membership form. Individual £3 per month and £5 for Household membership. We also provide membership for 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
- 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

Contact us for your discount code which you can also use with Snow + Rock and runnersneed.

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

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

## Diary Dates

Please visit the Dorset CPRE website [www.dorset-cpre.org.uk](http://www.dorset-cpre.org.uk) for 2022 meeting dates for the Countryside Forum, Planning Group, District Groups and events.

**29<sup>th</sup> June** – Garden Party, please return enclosed booking form.

**19<sup>th</sup> November** – 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary AGM, 11 am, Cerne Abbas Village Hall.

# Campaign to Protect Rural England

## DORSET BRANCH

Registered Charity No. 211974

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

#### DISCLAIMER

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