

Campaign to Protect Rural England  
North East Newsletter  
(formerly Overview)

Summer 2013



Morpeth clocktower



CPRE fights for a better future for the English countryside.

We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving, countryside for everyone to value and enjoy.



Swans on the River Tees

**Campaign to Protect Rural England** - the countryside campaigners

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covering  
 Northumberland  
 Newcastle  
 North Tyneside

#### Durham Branch

Covering  
 Gateshead  
 South Tyneside  
 Co Durham  
 Darlington  
 Stockton  
 Hartlepool  
 Middlesbrough

#### CPRE Meetings

3rd July	Northumberland
9th July	NE Region
16th July	Darlington
5th August	Durham
27th August	Darlington
7th October	Durham
8th October	NE Region
17th September	Darlington

Please confirm meeting details before travelling

## Campaign to Protect Rural England

CPRE fights for a better future for England's unique, essential and precious countryside. From giving parish councils expert advice on planning issues to influencing national and European policies, we work to protect and enhance the countryside.

We believe a beautiful, thriving countryside is important for everyone, no matter where they live. Nationally, we don't own land or represent any special interests. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. We'll be stronger by being inclusive - CPRE is for everyone. Nationally, we don't own land or represent any special interests. This differentiates us from organisations like the National Trust and the Countryside Alliance.

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### Newsletter by e-mail

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If yes, please e-mail: [cpre.northeast@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cpre.northeast@yahoo.co.uk) and ask to be placed on the e-mail list.

Disclaimer: The views expressed within this Newsletter are those of the authors.

Photo credits: Front cover, p12 & 13 More in Morpeth; p9, p10 & p14 Richard Cowen; p17 Durham Tees Valley Airport; p18 CPRE; p20 & p21 Tees Heritage Park; and back cover Douglas Nicholson

Items for the next issue should be with the Editor by 1st August 2013.

## Chair's Desk

### Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013

In my last report I mentioned the Growth and Infrastructure Bill and concerns that it will weaken the Planning System. The Bill is now an Act and CPRE has produced a briefing note on it (see <http://www.cpre.org.uk/news/circulars-and-news-2013/item/3322-growth-and-infrastructure-act-2013?highlight=YTozOntpOjA7czo2OiJncm93dGgiO2k6MTtzOjE0OiJpbmZyYXN0cnVjdHVyZSI7aToyO3M6MzoiYWN0Ijt9>). Adam Royal is the author and he is asking for feedback both on his note and the effects of the Act.

Briefly, the Act now enables:

1. Applications for significant schemes to be made directly to the Secretary of State, rather than to the Local Planning

Authority if the authority has been designated by the Secretary of State as one that is 'performing poorly';

2. Extended permitted development rights where there are no objections within a specified period from certain consultees and in relation to certain home extensions where there are no neighbour objections;
3. A power for the Secretary of State to modify or discharge affordable housing requirements in Section 106 Agreements;
4. An extension to the power to erect communication masts. In particular this has implications for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs); and
5. Bringing certain business and

commercial projects within the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects scheme. Housing is excluded but it appears any other form of commercial enterprise may not be, including potentially fracking.

### Fracking

Which brings me to fracking. A CPRE Task and Finish Group has been set up to consider a Policy Guidance Note on fracking since the Government has permitted exploratory works to resume. I am on this Group which has only just met for the first time. We will seek to produce guidance to help us determine our stance with regard to planning applications as, if and when they do come in.

Although nothing is likely in the North East, at least for the foreseeable future, we cannot rule out interest here entirely and we may wish to produce our own policy in the future, but it will be helpful if we can have a useful policy from National Office to guide us.

While I cannot comment on any proposed document at the moment, perhaps it is worth noting that we have agreed not to oppose fracking in principle and accept that the Government is promoting it. We would, however, wish to ensure a fund is set up to study further renewable energy - but in my opinion this should be to try to find meaningful new renewables rather than continue existing, controversial ones.

### Housing

In addition CPRE has produced a Policy Guidance Note on housing and it is on the web site (see <http://www.cpre.org.uk/news/circulars-and>

[news-2013/item/3184-new-housing-policy-guidance-note-now-available?highlight=WyJwb2xpY3kiLCJndWlkYW5jZSIslm5vdGUiLCJob3VzaW5nliwicG9saWN5IGd1aWRhbmNliwicG9saWN5IGd1aWRhbmNliG5vdGUiLCJndWlkYW5jZSBUb3RlIi0=](http://www.cpre.org.uk/news/circulars-and-news-2013/item/3184-new-housing-policy-guidance-note-now-available?highlight=WyJwb2xpY3kiLCJndWlkYW5jZSIslm5vdGUiLCJob3VzaW5nliwicG9saWN5IGd1aWRhbmNliwicG9saWN5IGd1aWRhbmNliG5vdGUiLCJndWlkYW5jZSBUb3RlIi0=)). This is a useful document to refer to when we are considering our position regarding any housing application.

### National Character Areas

It is also worth noting that Natural England has produced two National Character assessments that affect our Region - one for the Cheviot Fringe and one for the Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau area. These are also good documents and can be found on their web site (see <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/default.aspx>). They could well be useful when determining our position in respect of planning applications in the given areas. They may take on a particular value as and when the Areas of High Landscape Value designation disappears. Further assessments will follow in due course.

### CPRE Redcar and Cleveland

Finally, you may have heard that district group CPRE Redcar and Cleveland has now left us and joined Yorkshire. This has been considered for some time and CPRE National Office has now approved it. We are sorry to see them go but wish them well in their new area. We do however believe there will still be a "duty to co-operate", to use the jargon, when events happen that will affect the Tees Valley generally, something that Bob Mullen has well in hand.

*Richard Cowen, NE Regional Chair*



**Top Tips from NFU Mutual**  
Proud supporters of CPRE

Your home could be worth a lot more than you think because of what's inside it. Most of us know roughly how much our house is worth, but what about its contents?

The list of possessions in your house today could certainly be a lot different from a decade or so ago.

Expensive TVs, iPads, mobile phones, coffee makers, and other gadgets all push up the value of your contents.

Have a look at our home contents calculator at [www.nfumutual.co.uk](http://www.nfumutual.co.uk) to check if you have adequate cover for all your valuable belongings.

And if you'd like a quotation for your home insurance call our office in Willington on 01388 746447

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The National Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited.

# National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) after one year

## *A national view: Less local control, more greenfield development?*

CPRE national office has published a major new analysis of how the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is being implemented during its first year since March 2012. The conclusion is deeply concerning, suggesting that the NPPF is being used to impose unnecessary greenfield development, and reduced amounts of affordable housing. This flies in the face of Government commitments to protect the Green Belt and devolve power to local communities.

75% of local authorities in a recent national survey said that they would be cutting planning budgets, some by up to 50%. All but one of the local authorities (South Tyneside) in the North East outside Teesside, have no up to date adopted local plans in place. As a result, there is increased pressure to approve any application for housing development in line with policies in the NPPF requiring a five year supply of 'deliverable' housing sites, rather than with local views.

Green Belt land is coming under growing pressure across England, and particularly in the North East. The major loss of Green Belt proposed in Durham (3,550 new houses and additional various industrial and commercial developments), comes only nine years after the Green Belt was

designated. In addition, 4,250 dwellings are proposed to the west of Newcastle.

These new threats result from a new focus on supplying 'deliverable' land, and a policy approach which suggests that in many cases brownfield sites can no longer be considered 'deliverable'. Developers have, therefore, been able to argue that planning permission is needed on more greenfield sites to meet the requirement for 'deliverable' land, land that could be profitably developed in a very weak market.

The most recent (2009) Government figures show that brownfield sites in the North East could accommodate 65,710 houses, not counting the additional 2,500 ha of brownfield land in the region classed as suitable for employment or commercial development.

North East local authorities propose allowing more development on greenfield sites because it is argued that brownfield sites are no longer 'deliverable'. But this ignores the point that developing brownfield sites requires less public investment in supporting infrastructure, as the work of Professor Anne Power has shown. Moreover, brownfield land could be used to meet the regional need for new housing for at least the

next six years, and more becomes available all the time.

Ministers have also accepted that pressure on local authorities to renegotiate planning agreements could result in 10,000 fewer new affordable homes nationally than were originally agreed.

CPRE recognises that there is a pressing need to build more homes. New guidance should be produced by the Government to ensure that Durham, Gateshead, Newcastle, and Sunderland councils work together to

promote suitable and available brownfield land before greenfield sites, and uphold the integrity of the Green Belt designation. Good planning will be essential to make sure that the needs of the growing elderly population, and young families, are met.

The report, *Countryside Promises Planning Realities*, can be downloaded from [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk). Paul Miner, Senior Planning Officer, CPRE National Office

## *A local view:*

On 27 March the NPPF became one year old and oh dear! what a year it has been.

The Government decided in their wisdom, at a time of an international and national financial downturn, to increase national productivity through a house building boom. It decided the answer lay in changing the planning system. This involved changing the original planning policy documentation (PPGs and PPSs) from over 1,000 pages of relatively few ambiguities to a mere 59 page single document with possibly over 1,000 ambiguities.

The introduction of the NPPF caused a number of local authority Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) to become obsolete and thus took away whatever policies councils had put in place to protect their communities against inappropriate house building, forcing a requirement to rewrite their LDFs to take account of the new NPPF policies. The Government allowed some of the

previous LDF policies to have weight in planning decisions, but this was only for a period of one year. Those local authorities with draft LDFs not yet approved by the Government within this one year grace period are, after 27 March 2013, now virtually defenceless against opportunistic developers.

Unfortunately one of the driving paragraphs, a so-called 'golden thread' in the NPPF, is for local authorities to take into account "*the presumption in favour of sustainable development*". This appears to be a directive to build, build, build, regardless of the consequences. Unfortunately, the NPPF does not provide a specific definition of "sustainability". Without this definition a considerable number of developments have been approved by councils who may have used their previous LDF policies to refuse the application. If they refuse such an application it would have to go to appeal and inevitably the

# National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) after one year (cont.)

Government Inspector would allow the appeal.

This has been very disappointing from a CPRE point of view because a number of planning committees across the country have had to approve planning applications that attacked a number of green fields instead of the brownfield sites that should have been developed.

Pressure from the NPPF is also affecting the previously strong central protection provided to Green Belts. Many previous pages of Green Belt policies have now been reduced to a single bullet point in the NPPF. This now allows local authorities to make their own decision on whether parts of their Green Belt could be developed. The onus on justifying such development is on the developer but again the NPPF is deficient in information in defining the impact of their proposals on Green Belt sites and the “*presumption in favour*” clause will usually carry the day.

Instead of encouraging the

building industry and benefiting the productivity of the country, the NPPF, in many aspects, appears to have had the reverse effect with so many planning proposals ending up in appeal inquiries, with even the Planning Inspectors being confused as to what the Secretary of State requires from them. In the meantime, developers are placing options on large tracts of green fields across the country in the hope they can eventually benefit from the NPPF and simultaneously we lose a considerable proportion of its open countryside.

The only benefit from the new NPPF I can establish is that it has saved planning officers, planning consultants, planning Inspectors and planoracks like myself dragging along over 1,000 pages of policies to planning committee meetings, planning inquiries and campaign meetings. Perhaps it has also saved the lives of a considerable number of trees.

*Bob Mullen*



We are grateful to NFU Mutual for generously supporting this newsletter

# National Character Areas

As you may know, Natural England is preparing a number of National Character Areas (NCAs) which ultimately will cover the whole

an area scarred by quarrying but nonetheless still has some beautiful, even tranquil, areas. The Cheviot Fringe NCA covers the lower lying areas to the east and north of the Cheviots to the Scottish border and includes reference to its turbulent past as evidenced by such structures as Norham Castle and the military road, now largely followed by the A697, including the crossing of the River Till at Twizel Bridge.

Nic Best made comments on behalf of CPRE. I think these have helped to produce final documents that could well be very useful for us.

We have also commented on the draft Tees Lowlands NCA but the final version has not been published yet. A draft has also been prepared for the Durham Coalfield Fringe NCA (which also appears to cover the Northumberland area around Stocksfield to the A68).

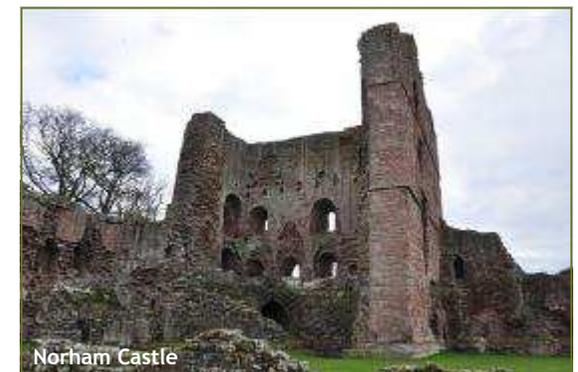
*Richard Cowen*



country. The country has been divided into numerous areas each with a general characteristic.

Three have now been completed for the North East, The North Pennines NCA, The Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau NCA and the Cheviot Fringe NCA. These can be found on Natural England’s website <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/587130>

The North Pennines NCA contains the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It therefore covers part of Northumberland, Durham and Cumbria. The Durham Magnesian Limestone Plateau NCA covers the escarpment from Sunderland to Hartlepool along the coast and inland to Newton Aycliffe. It is clearly



## Losing the Green Belt

Since 2002 the construction industry's lobbyists have repeatedly and successfully mounted attacks on the planning system that have significantly reduced its coverage and effectiveness. The latest manifestation of this is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Although this was extensively revised as a result of representations by CPRE and other groups, it still contains the "presumption in favour of sustainable development". Also, full planning control under the NPPF requires the existence of approved local plans, which many local authorities in the North East and elsewhere have not yet completed. The result is a series of threats to the Green Belt by developers anxious to secure "greenfield" sites that are

cheaper to develop than previously developed "brownfield" land.

Many of the arguments used are spurious and are being challenged by myriad local residents' groups anxious to defend their local Green Belts. A recent success by CPRE Northumberland has been to bring such groups in the Newcastle and Gateshead areas together to improve their effectiveness in resisting attacks on the Green Belt. CPRE Durham is addressing similar problems in the Durham City Green Belt. We have also received excellent support from Paul Miner at National Office.

There are many good reasons to resist development in the Green Belt. These include protecting open spaces, preserving farmland for food



production, protecting wildlife reserves and biodiversity and preserving local amenities. However, the attacks continue relentlessly, although the major developers have extensive land banks with extant planning permissions. In Newcastle two sites to my knowledge offer scope for extensive housing development but have not been developed. These include most of Newcastle Great Park (itself deleted from the Green Belt years ago) and the Sanderson hospital site in Gosforth. Our members probably know of many more, it might be an idea for CPRE NE to collate this material.

For me the ultimate danger is that what has happened to American cities could be replicated here. In 1994 a Washington policy analyst warned that soon notices stating "Danger - keep out!" would have to be posted outside America's downtown cities where crime, deprivation and health hazards had become too general for it to be safe for ordinary people to enter them. I was warned myself by a sailing friend - "Don't walk around our cities at night - it ain't safe!". During the Thatcher years, Bishop David Sheppard of Liverpool warned of creating "communities of the left behind". In our case, much has been successfully done by the councils to prevent this happening in Newcastle and Gateshead by regenerating the river banks, but the danger is still there unless inner-city "brownfield" sites are developed and regenerated. So all hands to the pumps to defend our Green Belts!

*Howard Elcock, Vice-Chairman, CPRE North-East.*

## Fighting for the Green Belt

Would you like to join the e-mail network watching out and fighting for the Green Belts?

When Paul Miner came up for the CPRE North East meeting in April he asked if he could meet with those concerned about Green Belt in the region. The result was a series of meetings and discussions on the day. The morning meeting in particular brought together those worried about both the Durham and Tyne and Wear Green Belts. The result was a very well briefed Paul and a network of contacts which soon had e-mails flying. Whilst both Green Belts are under threat the plan of attack to defend them is being tailored to suit. For the Tyne and Wear Green Belt the start is a press release. With the Durham Green Belt a letter has gone to all Durham County Councillors, backed up by a press release. The next stage of *The Durham Plan* is due out in October so it is important to reach the decision makers.

If you would like to join the e-mail network contact Paul Miner at CPRE National Office, e-mail [paulm@cpre.org.uk](mailto:paulm@cpre.org.uk), or Gillan Gibson, e-mail [cpre.durham@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cpre.durham@yahoo.co.uk)  
*Gillan Gibson,*  
*Secretary, CPRE Durham*



# The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan

Many local communities are seizing the opportunity to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, creating more detailed planning policies for their local area which the planners and planning committee members of the local planning authority will have to follow once the Plan is adopted. Neighbourhood Plans do have to be aligned with national and 'local' planning policy and cannot be used to block development, so there is a measure of cynicism about them but also much hope.

There are five or six communities in Northumberland developing Neighbourhood Plans including Allendale, SW Cramlington, Alnwick & Denwick, Morpeth and a couple in the National Park with more coming forward all the time.

Some have specific objectives - affordable housing in Allendale, masterplanning the final phase of the old Cramlington New Town scheme - while some like the Alnwick and Morpeth Plans are comprehensive and risk turning into 'mini District Local Plans'.

The Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan process covers Morpeth and the surrounding parishes of Pegswood, Mitford, Hebron and Hepscoth, an area of about 50 square miles with a population of around 20,000. The Steering Group is led by Morpeth Town Council and includes representatives of the other four parish councils and the leads on the various themes.

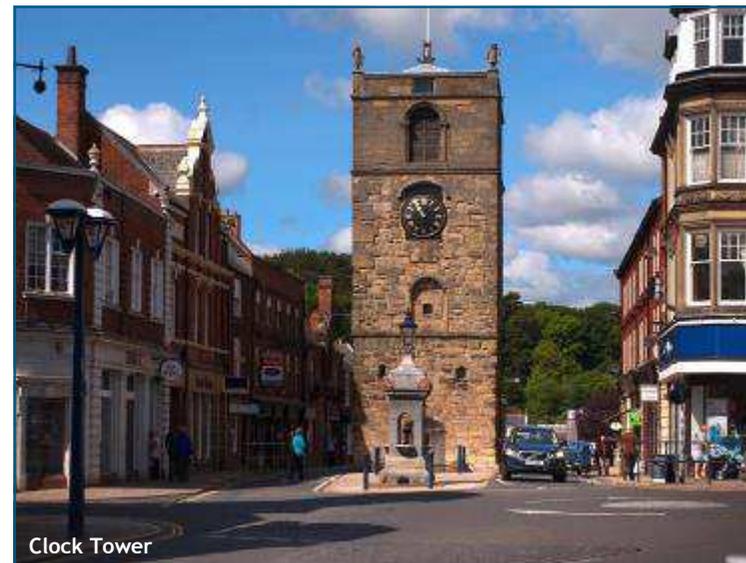
Our original view was that demand for housing and pressure to

develop the local economy were external pressures to be 'managed' while the local environment and heritage were 'place shaping' influences that had to be recognised and retained. So at the public launch in October

2012, we channelled comments into the four themes: housing; local economy; local environment; and heritage - and established four main Topic Groups to address these. We also classified implications of development into a number of 'cross-cutting themes' including transport, infrastructure, education and sport & leisure. We have something like 150-200 volunteers actively involved in these Groups with more signing up for information through the website ([tmnp.org.uk](http://tmnp.org.uk)).

We are under pressure to get the Plan to a state where it will be given some weight by the Planning Inspectorate because Morpeth is under heavy pressure from housing developers, but on the other hand we cannot get the Neighbourhood Plan adopted until the countywide 'Local Plan' has been adopted and that is at least eighteen months off!

We are coming to the end of our evidence-gathering stage and

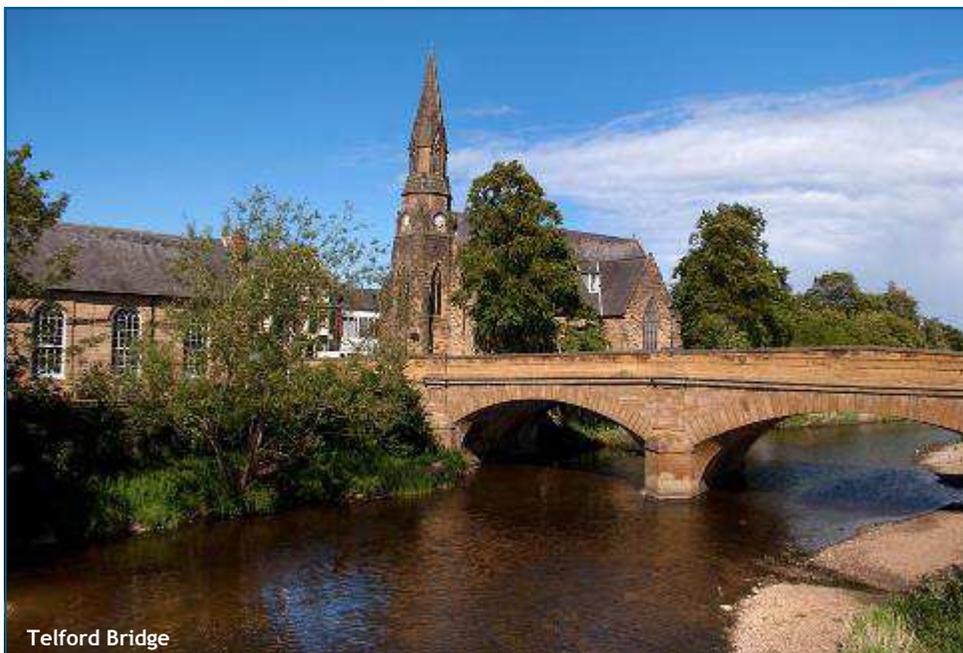


Clock Tower

should produce thematic 'technical reports' over the summer and an 'issues & options' consultation in September. We've had support from Colin Haylock of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) to help us formulate our 'vision' for Morpeth, and from Planning Aid to maximise community engagement, though Government contract deadlines made both of these rather rushed!

Impressions so far are that Neighbourhood Planning is very volunteer-intensive and not really that 'light touch', but there is still optimism that it'll prove worth doing. And you can watch how we are doing through the website: [themorpethneighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://themorpethneighbourhoodplan.org.uk) (or [tmnp.org.uk](http://tmnp.org.uk) for short!)

*Nic Best is on the Steering Group and leads on the Environment theme for the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan*



Telford Bridge

## “State of Nature Report 2013”



No doubt you have seen this *Report* mentioned recently either in the papers or on the TV. As Group Leader of Durham Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) I have been sent a copy of the *Report*. Although I appreciate that wildlife is more a relevant issue for other organisations, we do still consider it to be at least of secondary importance to CPRE. After all, a landscape without wildlife would be a very empty one. Therefore, I thought it may be helpful to give a brief resume of it.

The *Report* is subdivided into various different habitats that altogether cover the country. These range from our maritime limits to the uplands, farmland to urban. It even covers brownfield sites. This is perhaps important for us at CPRE. One of our primary objectives is to see brownfield land developed before greenfield sites. But this *Report* states that some brownfield sites have become important wildlife havens. I do not think this should affect our overall strategy, but perhaps we need to bear this in mind.

It also covers all types of wildlife. So it is not just the animals or birds that we are all familiar with, but insects, flowers, trees, fish, etc. One point the *Report* makes is that

organisations have reasonable records for animals, birds and butterflies but our knowledge of many other species is very limited.

It is hoped to produce further *Reports* in the future which will contain more specific details. Perhaps one plea I can make is that you could consider submitting records. There are various organisations that keep records (I have only recently received an email from the British Trust for Ornithology suggesting that I spread the word so far as sending them bird records. The Electronic Records Information Centre, based at the Great North Museum, also welcomes records for all species.)

It is clear from the *Report* that our wildlife is suffering, some species drastically so. No doubt its purpose is to encourage the Government to be aware of this when formulating policy. We have all recently read about the problems bees are suffering and indeed the potential problems for us if they decline further.

But it is not all doom and gloom. Otters, once close to extinction in this country, can now be found in every English county. The Red Kite release programmes have been extremely successful, including the one in the Derwent Valley. These however are the exception rather than the rule.

Our primary concern is of course landscape, but landscape without wildlife will be very poor indeed. I believe that we should be aware of this *Report* at least on a secondary basis when we are considering our position on our core interests.

*Richard Cowen*

## Promoting CPRE

May was a month of meetings and events, with talks to 2 residents' associations and participation in 3 events. Darlington Green Fair and Darlington Love Your Market Event saw many conversations with those interested in the issues that concern CPRE. As always there was particular interest in local food, litter and flytipping, plus tranquillity, as well

as landscape. The Love Your Market Event resulted in contact with a number of people who wish to be kept informed of our activities. A Friday event at Hetton was particularly good for reaching youngsters, with a number of school groups attending. Their interest gives much hope for the future.  
*Gillan Gibson, CPRE Durham*

## Contributions please

As with all newsletters this one relies on those who contribute articles and information. Could you contribute?

It may be there is an issue of concern which you would like to tell others about. Perhaps you could describe somewhere special which demonstrates why we care about our country and its landscape.

Photographs which can be used are particularly welcome. Would you like to see your photo in print?

Please give it some thought and I look forward to hearing from you, e-mail:  
cpre.northeast@yahoo.co.uk  
*Gillan Gibson*  
*Newsletter Editor*

## Would you like to be an active member?

The regular meetings held by our two branches, Northumberland and Durham, are executive meetings usually involving those who are active, though all are welcome to come. CPRE Northumberland meets roughly once every 6 weeks and CPRE Durham alternate months. There is a list on page 2 of the proposed dates with contact details if you would like the agenda, minutes, etc.

However, there may well be members out there who receive this *NEwSletter* who would like to become more involved in our doings.

One aspect is we need to ensure that our members are monitoring the planning applications for all areas throughout our Region. If you think you could help with this by checking the weekly planning lists issued by the local authorities in your neck of the woods, please let us know and we will advise you of the procedure involved. This is perhaps half an hour's work a week thanks to modern information technology.  
*Howard Elcock, Vice-Chairman, CPRE North-East.*

## CPRE STOCKTON

### In the beginning

CPRE (Stockton Group) was founded by our Chair, Jan Arger, in 1999 and has met regularly in Yarm ever since. In addition to the usual assistance given to groups or individuals suffering from inappropriate planning applications, Jan had two major projects up her sleeve.

Firstly, to create a Heritage Park (mini National Park) running along the Tees Valley from Stockton Centre to Yarm.

Secondly, to monitor Teesside Airport's development at a time when there were grandiose plans to turn it into a European freight hub.

A third project, was also undertaken, to give protection to Victorian, Edwardian and Thirties areas of Stockton that did not lie within Conservation Areas and as a result were under siege by developers. The land these houses stood on, was worth more than the properties themselves. Flats were the usual culprits.

As you are probably aware, the first and third projects have been brilliantly successful.

### Tees Heritage Park

The Friends of Tees Heritage Park, initiated by Jan, and under the able leadership of CPRE Stockton committee member Doug Nicholson, has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams. Massive Lottery grants have been achieved. The Tees Heritage Park is now official Stockton policy

## Organisation spotlight

and Doug has been appointed Chair of River Tees Rediscovered where the concept is being expanded to include the area between Piercebridge in Co Durham to the mouth of the Tees at the coast. In addition, Doug has been given Stockton on Tees Borough Council's Environmental Award for 2013!

### Period Housing

As regards the period housing, we fought Stockton Council to a standstill. This was despite the head of Stockton planning, with whom we had been working along with the local MP and Ward Councillors to try to restrain development, jumping ship at the height of the battle and joining the developers' principal planning advisors in the area. Long term members may remember the row that followed when he tried to sue both CPRE and me personally for critical comments I had made at a Public Meeting. However, we partially achieved our objectives, with specific areas of Stockton being given exemption from density guidelines and enhanced protection.

In addition, a local list of buildings was set up. Eaglescliffe, Yarm and Norton in particular, went from being a soft touch for developers to an area to be treated with extreme caution!

### Airport

The remaining major project was the Airport. All through the early 2000's it was achieving dramatic growth

even although it was finally admitted that the freight hub was a non-starter.

On behalf of CPRE, I applied to join the Consultative Committee but was rejected, principally because of fears that I would be a disruptive influence and be anti-aviation! I did however attend regularly as an observer and was finally accepted as a full member, representing both Stockton and Darlington CPRE groups from 2004.

Our three main concerns were: the eventual joining up of Stockton and Darlington had the Freight concept taken off; night time flying; and noise pollution.

In the lead up to the financial crash of 2008, passenger numbers had nearly reached a million per annum and were projected to rise to 3 million! Huge expansion of the Airport was in progress which required careful monitoring. The Airport changed its name from Teesside Airport, to suit BMI Baby (much to all locals' annoyance). Then everything went into reverse. Passenger numbers collapsed as we lost our regular London flight (which was a disgrace) and the Airport was stabbed in the back by BMI Baby who reneged on a contract. That legal battle still goes on! The fashion for City Breaks declined with the recession and Airlines going bankrupt.

I had always had concerns that the relationship between the Consultative Committee and the Airport Management/Owners (partially the Local Councils,



partially Peel Holdings who owned two other Airports) was too cosy. This had its advantages, as you were sometimes privy to insider info, but the downside was, no pressure was ever put on them. I had argued for a stand to be taken by the Consultative Committee over the loss of the London flights, but to no avail. Passenger numbers continued to decline and the Airport introduced a Passenger charge to increase its revenues. An immediate consequence was that they then lost Ryanair.

Things came to a head in January 2012. By this time, the Local Councils' shareholding was much reduced. Peel had also done a deal with a Canadian Airport owner, to whom they sold part of their stake and rumours were flying that the Airport was going to close. Most of the Consultative Committee Members were Councillors and did not have a business background. I was appalled at the way things were going. I had been called a scaremonger at a previous meeting when I tried to warn Members that closure was the inevitable outcome, if numbers continued to drop. I was on holiday in the Cotswolds when the routine January Meeting was held. I contacted the Press in advance of the Meeting and they turned up, together with photographers. I had prepared

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### Abbreviations

AHLV	Area of High Landscape Value	MP	Member of Parliament
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	NCA	National Character Area
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology	NE	North East
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	NFU	National Farmers Union
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England	NP	Neighbourhood Plan
DTVA	Durham and Tees Valley Airport	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
FTHP	Friends of Tees Heritage Park	PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
ha	hectare	PPS	Planning Policy Statement
LDF	Local Development Framework	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
LP	Local Plan	SW	South West
		TV	television
		UK	United Kingdom

## CPRE STOCKTON (cont.)

a statement stating that the Committee had not been told the truth by Management in the past, (giving specific instances) and had been treated with contempt. I came back for the day from the Cotswolds to make the Statement. A lot of Press coverage followed. Shortly afterward a Board Meeting was held by Peel and to everyone's astonishment, including the local MP's, Peel reversed their policy, bought back their interest from the Canadian Group and said they would concentrate all their efforts on trying to turn it round. A senior Director from Peel now attends the Consultative Meeting on a regular basis. They have combined the management of Durham Tees Valley with Robin Hood Airport, which they also own, and cut costs to the bone. The jury is now out as to whether they will succeed. Durham Tees

Valley is not the only Airport in trouble, many regional Airports are in the same boat. Both Leeds Bradford and Newcastle Airports would be delighted if it closed. The population drawing power (within 1.25 hours) of Durham Tees Valley is actually a lot larger than Newcastle, which is ironic when you look at their passenger numbers! An Airport is also extremely important to a major industrial/commercial centre such as Teesside.

The final irony is that the Airport had opposed a representative from CPRE joining the Committee, yet it was this representative who was ultimately leading the Consultative Committee's battle to help save the Airport - insisting that the Committee took a more proactive role!

*Norman F Douglas, Vice-Chair  
CPRE Stockton*



# Tees Heritage Park

The Tees Heritage Park occupies a six and a half miles stretch of green wedge land along the River Tees. The River Tees has long had a bad reputation associated with heavy industry and a high degree of pollution. Over the last few years this reputation has been dispelled with the introduction of the Tees Barrage and tremendous clean-up efforts along the banks of the river. This stretch of river and the surrounding land is rich in history, landscape and wildlife, deserving protection in the face of modern development.

In Spring 2008 the local group of Stockton CPRE (Campaign for the Protection of England) and one of their leading members, Doug Nicholson, became the driving force behind setting up and organising the Friends of Tees Heritage Park, a

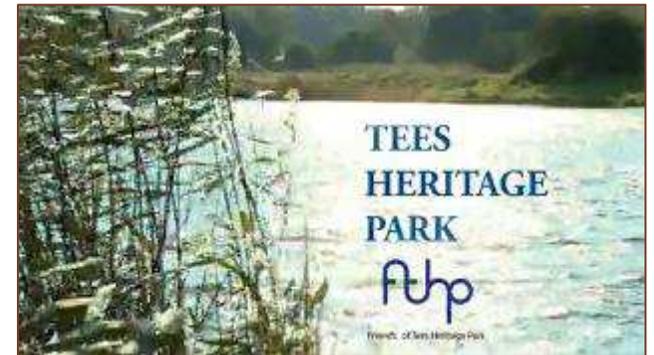
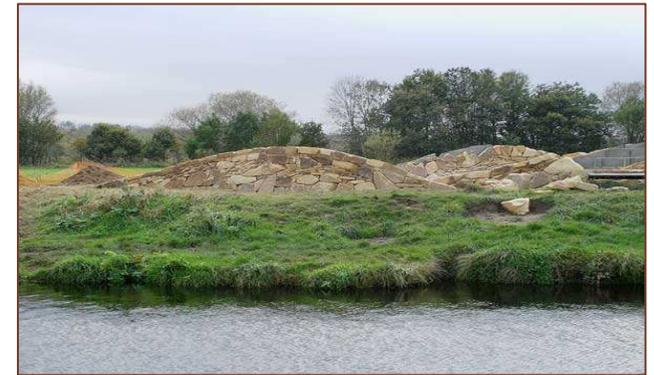
group that recognised the benefits and importance of the green land on either side of the river upstream from Stockton towards Yarm. Their aim was to protect, preserve and enhance the landscape within the proposed Park area for the benefit and protection of wildlife and the enjoyment of residents and visitors to the area.

With funding from the Big Lottery Community Spaces programme, along with considerable assistance from Stockton Council, Groundwork UK (NE) and other important organisations, completion of the first phase of the project was celebrated in September 2012. The Park is now recognised by Stockton Council and is identified and incorporated in the Council's planning policies, adding to statutory protection of the Park itself and the

concept as a valuable asset to the Borough and its residents.

An interesting feature of the Park is the five "Gateways", each with its own unique sculpture designed and built by landscape artists Keith Barrett and Linda Watson. The Gateways are entry points onto the quality pathways that will link the areas within the Park. An excellent Gateway access to the Park is Preston Hall in Eaglescliffe with a fascinating Council-run Museum.

*Bob Mullen*



## CPRE North East Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 9th July 2013

Holy Jesus Hospital  
City Road, Newcastle. NE1 2AS

1.00 pm

Followed by  
Quarterly Meeting

## Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool

The relentless acquisition of green fields across the area by housing developers continues. In the absence of up-to-date Local Development Frameworks such proposals are likely, in the main, to be approved by council planning committees. Any applications refused would no doubt be subject to strenuous developer appeals.

A major worry across the area is the lack of sports and recreation green spaces, not the formal playing pitches usually controlled by private clubs or organisations requiring paid membership, plenty of those around, but those open-to-the-community areas where informal kickabout games could take place, kites could be flown and picnics could be taken.

Admittedly there are lots of green spaces surrounding our urban

areas which themselves provide an excellent visual amenity and contribute to the tranquillity of the surrounding wider countryside, but by virtue of being under private ownership they do not offer recreational access for our communities. Even these private green spaces will soon be disappearing under new housing in the near future.

It is essential to maintain pressure on local councils to consider the needs of urban residents and to actively contest the loss of any green spaces and require the council to introduce and protect such spaces where the value of a kickabout area for healthy youngsters is paramount.

*Bob Mullen*

## Stockton

Stockton Council is presently considering the responses they received in their recent Local Development Framework (LDF) Preferred Options consultation. The LDF Publication document consultation is due later this year, prior to being submitted to a Planning Inspector for an Examination in Public.

A number of large scale planning applications are presently in

the pipeline. Morley Carr (350 houses) is already approved in outline and there are a number of other applications pending a decision: Mount Leven (350 houses); Green Lane (370 houses); Cayton Drive, Thornaby (55 houses); Wynyard Park (780 houses plus 220 retirement dwellings); and Ingleby Barwick (school and 350 houses).

## Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough Council is also considering the responses they received in their recent LDF Preferred Options consultation. The LDF Publication documentation consultation is due later this year, prior to being submitted to a Planning Inspector for an Examination in Public.

A number of large scale housing developments on green fields have now received full planning permission: Rose Cottage Farm (106 houses); and Stainsby Hall Farm (77 houses). Grey Towers Farm Phase 1 full application (123 houses) is presently awaiting a planning committee decision.

Middlesbrough Council recently completed their Open Space Needs Assessment for the Borough. They

have calculated the community's needs on such spaces using a number of criteria based on square metres per person. Although their 2012 threshold targets were almost met, the actual spread across the Borough, especially in the 'amenity and natural green spaces' category, is considerably disproportionate with some communities definitely being under-provided.

A large proportion of green fields under future housing development threat are in Council ownership and the Council is being actively pursued by local campaign groups to allocate portions of these fields for free access sports and recreation purposes.

## Hartlepool

In January of this year Hartlepool Council had their Local Plan publicly examined by a Planning Inspector. A number of issues were raised by the Inspector at the time, with the result the Examination was suspended for a period of six months to allow Hartlepool Council to address these issues. As the North East Regional Spatial Strategy, with its unreasonably high housing forecasts across the region, has since been revoked this may assist Hartlepool Council in having their revised Local Plan accepted at the next Examination.

The developers of the South West Extension, Yuills, have not, as yet, submitted their planning application for an anticipated 2,500 houses. The local Fens Residents Association are still continuing their discussions with all parties to protect the 50 hectare Green Wedge adjacent to Greatham Beck located within the proposed development.

A planning application for large scale development in Wynyard (650 houses) has been submitted and is under consideration.