

CHESHIRE

VIEWPOINT

SPRING 2018



Cheshire

Campaign to Protect Rural England

FARNDON VILLAGE PLAN SUCCESS

AGM: HS2 IN CHESHIRE

LOCAL NEWS ROUND-UP

CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND CHESHIRE BRANCH

Patron - H.M. The Queen

President - Lord Grey of Codnor

Charity number: 248304

Branch Chairman:

Andrew Needham

Branch Treasurer:

Derek Goldstraw

Branch Secretary:

Debbie Janney works Tuesday -
Friday mornings. Answering ma-
chine at all other times.

CONTACT US

Branch Office:

Victoria Buildings, Lewin Street,
Middlewich, CW10 9AT

Tel. 01606 835046

Email: info@cprecheshire.org.uk

www.cprecheshire.org.uk

CPRE National Office

5-11 Lavington Street London,
SE1 0NZ

Tel: 020 7981 2800

email: info@cpre.org.uk

Cheshire Viewpoint is the newsletter
of the Cheshire Branch of the Cam-
paign to Protect Rural England, pro-
duced twice annually (spring and au-
tumn). CPRE Cheshire is a registered
charity.

Editor: Becca Nelson. Cover photo:
Macclesfield Forest - F. Nelson-Riggott.
Other images Becca Nelson unless other-
wise credited.

CONTENTS

View from the Chair:

Andrew Needham 3

The Regional View:

Peter Raynes 5

Neighbourhood Planning 6

New Northern Forest 9

Manchester conference 10

Membership form 11

No Finer Life 13

Events 14

District News 15

New CPRE Publications 20



CPRE Cheshire Branch always
welcomes new volunteers.
Whether you would like to get
involved in planning in your lo-
cal area, to help out our stand
at the Cheshire Show or behind
the scenes at an event like our
Christmas Celebration, or if you
have professional expertise to
bring to our Planning Commit-
tee or Trustee Board, please do
contact us. Phone the Branch
Office or get in touch by email -
we would be delighted to hear
from you.

Help us to protect Cheshire's
wonderful countryside.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Andrew Needham revisits the refurbished Hayhurst Bridge in Northwich that he opened in 2004 - photo Matthew Games

Our Regional Chairman Peter Raynes makes an important point in his report that developers are building remote estates in open countryside far from schools, utilities and shops and which can only be accessed by car.

Part of the problem has been an over emphasis on retail expansion in the towns. This is particularly the case in Cheshire West. We have campaigned for more emphasis on residential rather than retail.

There are growing doubts about the wisdom of this strategy - Guy Butler, the retiring Chairman of the Chester Growth Partnership, wrote the following in an article in the Chester Civic Trust magazine in December 2017:

The economic viability for investors in the high street is dead: people are not keen on retail. So we need to look at attracting investors in other sectors - like housing, hotels, leisure and offices. Housing is about getting more people living in the City. Not just apartments - family housing, retirement living etc.

CPRE Cheshire has been campaigning to highlight the fact that so many of the retail units in Baron's Quay in Northwich remain unoccupied, and making the argument that they would be better repurposed as riverside living accommodation.

The original concept for Baron's Quay included both residential and retail units; this would fit well with CPRE's campaign to ensure housing was built in the right locations, where people can access local services in a sustainable way.

There are parallels between the empty units at Baron's Quay and the potential 'risky retail' units proposed for the Northgate development in

Chester, which, like Baron's Quay, is partially funded by the taxpayer. CWaC have not learned from the problems in Northwich (some call it 'Barren Quay') - and have ambitions for another retail project in Chester. But part of the problem for Northwich is that CWaC are enticing retailers to Chester. On the other hand, there have been with news stories

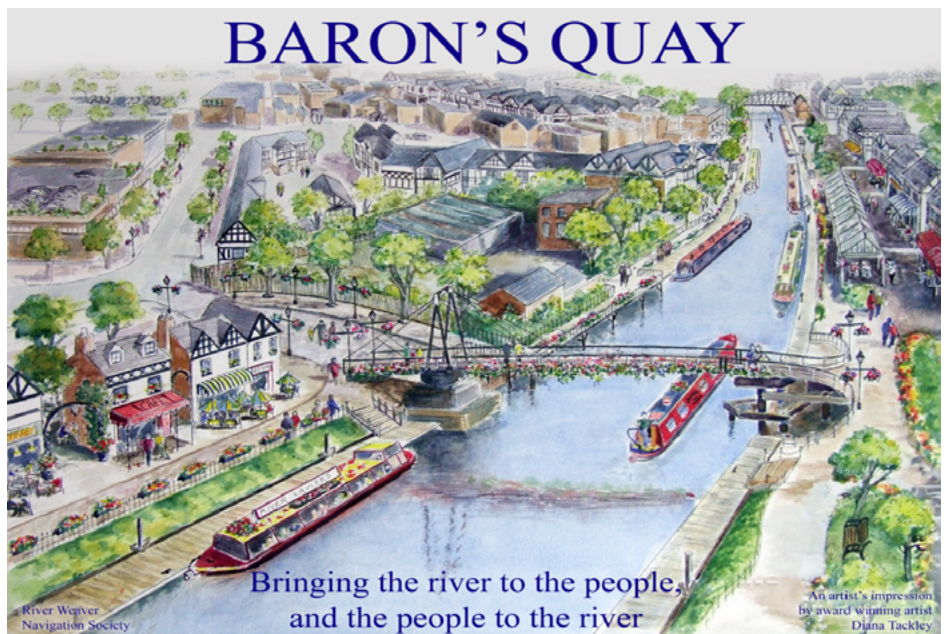


Andrew with members of the River Weaver Navigation Society. Photo: Northwich Guardian

in the local press highlighting concerns that if stores relocate into the new units in the Northgate scheme, this will leave gaps in Chester city centre.

CPRE always tries to suggest solutions rather than focus on the problems. We are campaigning alongside the River Weaver Navigation Society to promote the riverside

for housing and recreation as well as retail, as was originally outlined in the Northwich Vision proposals for the area. Below is an artist's impression painted by award-winning artist Diana Berenice Tackley, giving an idea of the potential that Northwich Riverside holds.





THE REGIONAL VIEW

**KEEPING OUR COUNTRY-
SIDE AND PROVIDING
THE HOUSES WE NEED**

Our Charity's work since 1923 to create National Parks and Green belts has ensured millions have easy access to beautiful open countryside.

As members we are well aware of the continued campaigning needed to protect these successes, particularly at a time when the shortage of housing for young people is a key political and social priority.

Before thinking that these goals are inevitably in conflict, it is worth remembering that the CPRE was founded by people who thought the opposite. They believed that through good planning we would provide well-designed houses in settlements with clear boundaries and surrounded by accessible countryside.

The foundation of the CPRE coincided with the introduction of cars and the road network. This had for the first time allowed development of isolated housing estates on cheaper land scattered across the countryside.

The parallel with the new developments we are now seeing in Cheshire could not be clearer. Removing the authority of the planning system has led to developers again building remote estates in open countryside far from schools, utilities and shops and which can only be accessed by car. This has not solved the housing shortage. After allowing for an unrelated recovery after the financial crisis, house building has not significantly increased.

If undermining the planning system has achieved nothing, what happened when the system was introduced? The key dates for these reforms were:

- 1947 Town and Country Planning Act

- 1949 National Parks Act

- 1938-1955 Adoption of Green Belts around our major and historic cities

If the rhetoric of the building lobby were to be believed, we should have seen house building collapse, but the real result was the opposite - an increase from 170,000 a year at the beginning of the 50's to over

350,000 a year in the mid 1970's.

While other factors, such as large scale public housing projects explain much of the expansion during this period, there is no evidence the new planning rules restricted the delivery of new houses and they did preserve much of the beauty of our Countryside.

In the 21st century we are faced with even more reason to plan carefully. Well planned towns and villages are one of the few ways we can enhance our quality of life and reduce the carbon emissions.

Our Campaign has never been more important, if we are unable to return to a system of planned and effective development we will have passed yet another environmental problem on to future generations.

FARNDON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

On Thursday 22 February 2018 the village of Farndon in Cheshire held the Referendum to decide on the adoption, or otherwise, of the Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Plan and the Referendum were the culmination of five years' work by a small group of residents appointed by Farndon Parish Council.

Farndon is a small village situated at the lowest bridging point of the Dee south of Chester and dates back to pre-Roman times. It was essentially the settlement at the ford where the east/west Roman road crossed the Dee. The population was always small rising from the 37 residents recorded in the Domesday Book to the 1,665 shown in the 2011 Census.

Neighbourhood planning was enabled by the National Planning Framework of 2012 and was in its infancy when Farndon began the consultation process. As many residents as possible - from pupils at the primary school to pensioners groups and everything and everyone in between - were contacted. Questionnaires were distributed to each household and all business premises in the Parish, informal meetings arranged, information leaflets distributed, coffee mornings and public meetings held and the results recorded and analysed. When gathered together, the information formed the basis of what became the Farndon Plan.

There were, as always, delays in the process - at one point, when approval was given by the Council during 2012 and 2013 for four large estates to be built on agricultural land on the edge of Farndon - effectively increasing the population by 41% within four years - the village



became very discouraged and enthusiasm was at a low ebb. However, after consulting residents, work on the Plan continued. Residents were very clear that they wanted the future protection afforded by the Plan - even if nothing could be done about the past.

A thorough analysis of all responses to the questionnaire and individual comments resulted in the development of six distinct topics: -

- i. The Local Economy
- ii. Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village
- iii. Protecting the Built Environment
- iv. Facilities for Local People
- v. Transport and Communication
- vi. Landscape and Environment.

The Plan went through about ten drafts before all interested parties ranging from Cheshire West and Chester Council to the Environment Agency were content that that it complied with the national and local legislative requirements.

There were other considerations too, which are important to Farndon: -

- there are two sites of Special Scientific Interest - the Dee Cliffs and the River itself - not that any of that area can be developed, as the Dee valley at this location is a flood plain - but never the less - there were hoops to be jumped through.
- The village is largely a designated Conservation Area, which is extremely important to residents as they wish to respect the existing, mainly Cheshire style of buildings and avoid modern, anodyne, mass, estate-type development.
- Farndon Bridge is a Grade 1 listed building and a scheduled ancient monument and St Chad's church is listed as Grade II along with 15 other buildings around the village.

- And Farndon itself is surrounded by Grade 1 and Grade 2 agricultural land but has no buffer of Green Belt to protect the village and its setting.

An unforeseen complication came in the middle of the process when in April 2015 the Parish boundary was altered to bring two small hamlets and some outlying farms into the Parish. Consequently, the consultation was broadened and in part re-run to include comments by new parishioners.

The team were surprised by just how long the whole 'official' process took. The final draft was completed in July 2015 and submitted to Cheshire West and Chester. Subsequent procedures involved further consultations by the Council with interested parties of which there turned out to be many, further consultation with residents, reference to the independent Examiner, further consultation with the Parish Council, final agreement between the Examiner and the Council. Each stage involved a degree of re-drafting of the Plan and further consultation with residents. And the final stage was the village Referendum - held to Electoral Commission regulations - with polling cards issued by Cheshire Council to all eligible residents.

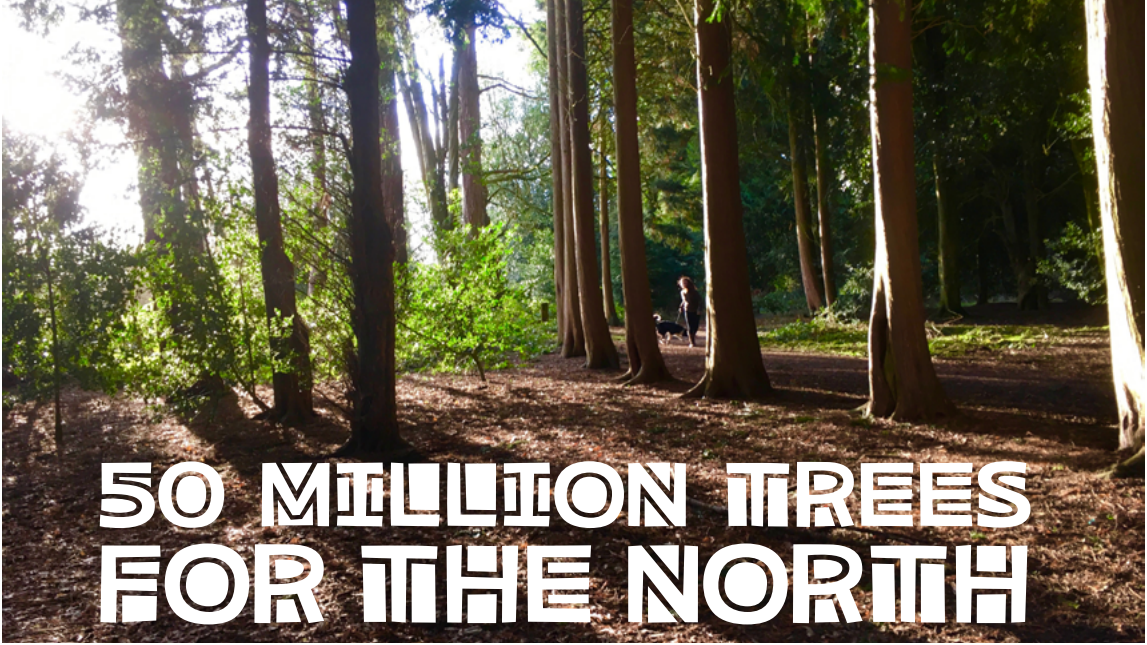
To ensure that all residents were able to read the final document the Parish Council distributed hard copies of the Plan around the village to locations including the Post Office, the two pubs, the coffee shop, the Surgery, the beauty salon, the DIY shop, hairdressers, the Memorial Hall and the Community Club. Posters advertising the Referendum were placed in almost every shop window and on most lamp posts, drop-in coffee mornings were arranged and information circulated courtesy of the Focus newsletter. The Plan was also posted on the Parish Council and the Cheshire West web-sites.

The usual Polling Station at the village Memorial Hall opened at 7.00 and the count was undertaken immediately after the poll closed at 22.00 and the result, posted on the Hall noticeboard was: -

TOTAL VOTES CAST = 382	
OF WHICH	IN SUPPORT = 361
	NOT IN SUPPORT = 20
IN FAVOUR = 95%	DOUBTFUL = 1

The turnout of 24.6% was one of the highest in Cheshire for a village plan. The result conveys weight in law to the Farndon Plan and as such, it must be taken into account when the Parish Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Secretary of State consider future planning applications. We did the best we could and are delighted that residents supported the Plan.

Gill Moroney



50 MILLION TREES FOR THE NORTH

Plans for a new Northern Forest stretching from coast to coast in Northern England have been welcomed by Cheshire CPRE and other environmental charities, although some queries remain over funding. Northern parts of Cheshire Branch are in the scheme's area, which includes Northwich Woodlands (Marbury Park, above), Marshall's Arm and Delamere Forest, as well as Risley Moss, Moore Nature Reserve and the Sankey Valley in Warrington District, and Murdishaw Valley, Pickering's Pasture and Lewis Carroll Wood in Halton.

The scheme, developed by the Woodland Trust and the Community Forest Trust, aims to improve air quality across a swathe of England, with the M62 roughly bisecting the area; fifty million new trees are set to be planted over 25 years. In addition to air quality issues, the forest should help to reduce flood risk, provide economic opportunities both through tourism and forestry activities, and increase the amount of woodland available for leisure pursuits around some of the north's biggest cities including Liverpool, Chester, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Hull.

The focus will not just be on planting new trees; existing community woodlands will also benefit from better, more sustainable management as part of the scheme.

To find out more about visiting the Mersey Forest, or other local woodlands in your area, visit www.merseyforest.org.uk, and to find out more about the Northern Forest, you can download the full prospectus here: <https://tinyurl.com/new-northern-forest>

GREATER MANCHESTER SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The first iteration of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF), which includes Trafford and Stockport districts, included plans to release a large amount of Green Belt land. CPRE's response was one of 23,000 objecting to the extent of Green Belt release proposed in the document. Manchester's elected Mayor, Andy Burnham, announced that the plan would be revisited, which prompted CPRE Lancashire Branch to hold a public meeting in Manchester to discuss the GMSF and gather feedback about aims and objectives, areas where local campaigners need help and current barriers to achieving these aims.

Presentations were given by CPRE Lancashire's Planning Manager, Jackie Copley, and Anne Morgan and Richard Wood, Senior Planning Officers from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Prioritising development on



Image: <http://www.cprelancashire.org.uk>

brownfield sites and ensuring best use of these sites is key in ensuring that the Green Belt and open countryside are protected, and Jackie highlighted the fact that CPRE's Brownfield Register Toolkit is to be released in April, and will help local people to check the robustness of the brownfield registers with their respective local authority.

CPRE advocates city region scale plans as the most effective way to carry out strategic planning both for transport and other strategic infrastructure. CPRE also believes that a city region framework will better inform decisions on issues such as Green Belt.

A reassessment of the GMSF is welcome, but CPRE is concerned that developers are more likely to be able to gain permissions to build in less appropriate locations in the countryside in the absence of the GMSF. Should the GMSF be adapted to include the availability of brownfield land and prioritise its development, it should be key in preventing the development of agricultural land around the city.

CPRE emphasised the importance of community engagement in planning and is committed to supporting a GMSF that best protects and enhances countryside in the future. Both of the presentations and workshop notes from the day are available to download from CPRE Lancashire Branch's website:

<https://tinyurl.com/GMSFMtg2018>

JOIN CPRE

We're delighted you want to join CPRE and help us to stand up for the countryside. CPRE membership starts at £3 per month.

CPRE CHESHIRE BRANCH MEMBERSHIP FORM

Title: _____ First Name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

We would like to write to you to keep you updated on what we are doing to protect the countryside, including our campaigns and fundraising. If you would prefer not to receive certain communications from us, please call our Supporter Services Team on 0800 163680 or email supporterservices@cpre.org.uk.

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

☐ Please tick here if you are happy for us to contact you by phone

☐ Please tick here if you are happy for us to contact you by email

Please be assured that we will never sell or share your contact details with anyone outside CPRE.

If you would also like your partner and/or family to enjoy CPRE membership, please add their details below. We recommend a minimum of £5 per month membership if you are adding additional names.

Name: _____ (D.O.B. if under 16)

_____ / _____ / _____

_____ / _____ / _____

Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. Simply tick the box and complete the declaration below. Thank you!

☐ Treat as Gift Aid all donations and subscriptions I make from the date of this declaration, until I notify you otherwise. I am a UK tax payer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

If your circumstances change, or you want to cancel your declaration, please contact us on 0800 163680.

Full name of taxpayer: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please complete payment information overleaf

Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay and helps us to plan our work, but we also accept payments by cheque or debit card. Please complete the relevant section below.

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT

I wish to pay a Direct Debit of (please tick as appropriate):



£3 per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	£5 per month	<input type="checkbox"/>	£10 per month	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------	--------------------------	--------------	--------------------------	---------------	--------------------------

I'd rather pay £_____ per month/year (delete as appropriate)

Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit:

To: The Manager, _____ Bank/Building Society

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Name(s) of account holder(s): _____

Sort Code:

--	--	--	--	--	--

 Account Number:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Service User Number:

7	2	4	2	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

Reference: (for office use only)

							/				
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay CPRE Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction will remain with CPRE and my details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____

Date _____

PAYMENT BY CREDIT/DEBIT CARD OR CHEQUE

Please tick chosen annual membership rate below, and indicate how you will pay.

£36 (equivalent to £3 per month)	<input type="checkbox"/>
£60 (equivalent to £5 per month)	<input type="checkbox"/>
£120 (equivalent to £10 per month)	<input type="checkbox"/>
£_____ per year	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ I have enclosed a cheque made payable to CPRE
☐ OR I wish to pay by Credit/Debit Card

Card type (please circle): Visa / Mastercard / Amex

Card number:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Expiry Date:

Start Date:

Security Code:

		/		
--	--	---	--	--

		/		
--	--	---	--	--

--	--	--

Name on card _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please complete this form and return to:

Freepost Plus RTCK-UBXX-BBCR, Supporter Services, CPRE,
 5 Lavington Street, London, SE1 0NZ

NO FINER LIFE



CPRE Cheshire Branch was delighted to be able to host a performance of Graham Harvey's *No Finer Life* as part of the play's February/March tour. Over 100 tickets were sold and despite extremely inclement weather, the audience almost reached a hundred members.

Graham Harvey's name will be familiar to *Archers* fans amongst the readership as he was a long-serving Agricultural Storyline Editor of the radio soap. *No Finer Life* is narrated by Elizabeth, a former land girl from Somerset, who



went to work on an Oxfordshire farm where the health of the soil and land were held in the highest regard, the storyline moving between the 'Green Revolution' of the postwar era and the present day, drawing clear parallels between George Henderson's conviction of the importance of farming without reliance on chemicals and the modern organic debate.

Rebecca Bailey, on stage for 80 minutes, gave a wonderful singlehanded performance accompanied by songs

and background music by musician and composer Alastair Collingwood.

Following the interval, Graham Harvey and the play's producer, Antony Bellekom, took to the stage to talk about the development of the production and, inevitably, about *The Archers*. There was a lively question and answer session with a sizeable contingent of *Archers* fans who were keen to know more about future storylines!

The Branch would like to thank the production team and the staff and volunteers who helped to bring this unique performance to Tarporley.

Photographs: Debbie Janney

ROYAL CHESHIRE SHOW BRANCH AGM

CPRE Cheshire Branch will again be exhibiting at the Royal Cheshire Show in 2018. There is some availability for volunteers - contact Debbie Janney in the Branch Office if you would like to man the stand for some of the show and talk to members of the public about CPRE's aims and policies - or if you are visiting the show, do come along and say hello. Full information about the location of the stand will be updated on the Branch website and Facebook nearer the time. The show takes place on Tuesday and Wednesday, 19th and 20th June 2018.

Following the announcement that Crewe is to be a hub station for HS2, Cheshire East Council's Leader, Rachel Bailey, has agreed to give a talk on HS2 and what it means for Cheshire following the formal business of the AGM.

The meeting is to be held at the Victoria Hall, Middlewich, on Thursday 31st May 2018 at 7pm. There is a large, free car park directly behind the hall.

The meeting is free to attend, but pre booking is essential. Please return the enclosed booking slip or email the branch office (info@cprecheshire.org.uk) giving your name and address to book your place(s).

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Cheshire Branch's popular, annual Christmas celebration was held at St Mary's Church in Acton near Nantwich on 13th December, 2017. The church looked beautiful dressed with numerous decorated Christmas trees following a tree festival the previous weekend.

After the carol service, our Branch Chaplain, Rev John Whitehead, gave a brief talk about the church and drew attention to some of its unique features including the Tower which is said to be Cheshire's oldest, dating from 1180, and then all the guests enjoyed light refreshments.

Many thanks to our wonderful musicians, comprising a string quartet featuring Robert Anderson, Rod Tann, Michael Thorneloe and Peter Raynes, Richard Merritt (continuo) and Peter Foster (organist), to Rev John Whitehead, who organised the service, to St Mary's church and all those at our CPRE Branch who helped to make this event so successful.

DISTRICT NEWS

Chester District

Christleton Hall College of Law.

A planning application has been submitted for the college site on the edge of Christleton village for 60 dwellings. CPRE understands the College of Law is relocating to Chester city centre. This application has been amended reducing the area of the site and reducing the number of dwellings to 42.

Chester Zoo.

A planning application has been submitted for 7.6 hectares of land outside the boundary of the Zoo towards the M53 Motorway for the construction of new buildings, paddocks and security fencing.

Both planning applications are on land in the Green Belt.

Congleton District

Cheshire East Council is now consulting on the proposed Eastern Bypass in Middlewich. Residents' views are being sought at consultation events and replies must be received by 29th April 2018. The new preferred route travels to the east of the current industrial estate in order to increase the availability of housing and industrial land for the town. Middlewich, the largest town in Cheshire without a functioning railway station, has already seen a massive increase in new housing while at the same time, bus services to the town have been cut, leading to an increased reliance on the car rather than public transport.

The campaign to reopen the line connecting Sandbach and Northwich, reopening the station in Middlewich and creating a new station at Gadbrook Park, has received further impetus from the news that Crewe is set to become a hub station for HS2. However, a strong case for reopening the line can be made whether or not HS2 were to go ahead. The group has commissioned two reports both highlighting the potential benefits of connecting the Mid-Cheshire line with Crewe - currently travellers would have to change at Stockport or Chester to get to Crewe in order to connect with much of the main railway network. Local MP Fiona Bruce has promised to redouble her efforts in support of the campaign.

Macclesfield District

A consultation event was held on the Crown Estates' plan to build new homes and business units on two sites on the outskirts of Knutsford. The



proposed Northwich Road Site, on the A5033, would be solely residential, whereas Manchester Road would be a joint-use site, with a 7.5 Ha Business Park and 50 houses being built.

There has been local opposition to the plans, which initially saw housing numbers increased from 175 to 260 homes for the Northwich Road site. The collective total across the two sites has now been reduced to 250 homes, and revised plans are to be submitted to Cheshire East Council reflecting these changes.

Vale Royal District

Outline planning permission has been granted for a further 160 homes on a brownfield site formerly occupied by ICI in Winnington, subject to agreement being reached on the proportion of affordable housing. The fact that the site is brownfield has been welcomed by local councillors, but concerns have been raised about congestion issues on the single-lane bridge on the A533 in Winnington.

Warrington District

Warrington Borough Council Draft Local Plan is now expected to be published in Autumn/Winter of this year. This will have more detail than last year's Preferred Development Option (PDO) so it is important to take part in this new consultation whether or not you previously responded to the PDO.

The Borough Council will be setting out the next stages in the process but it is important to keep visiting the Planning Policy section on the Council Website because more information that will feed into the local plan consultation is being added.

Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP)

I have made a short comment on this and added some of the CPRE national papers on housing.

With the Local Plans I make the following comments:

- The importance of the purposes of the Green Belt
- The importance of the Green Belt and fields as “green lungs” which combat poor air quality
- The importance of flood plains
- The importance of farms and rural businesses given climate and political instability in the world.
- Decisions should be made on existing infrastructure rather than proposed changes which may never happen.

There are many CPRE papers on housing as the aim is the right housing in the right places, so these are submitted as part of the response.

General point

Planning Applications continue both in Warrington and neighbouring authorities. It is worrying that some are made which will put extra traffic on our already crowded motorway and strategic road systems. Please look at their Transport Assessments to see if the impact on the wider road system has been considered, and question it if not.

HS2 route 2b

HS2 are gathering information for their Draft Environmental Statement which will also go out for consultation in Autumn. This is another opportunity to make your views clear. In the meantime if you have any knowledge about difficulties with the actual line, both its route and construction, let us (plus councillors and local groups) know.

HS2 will not just affect people and businesses on the route but those who travel or transport goods across Warrington.

Otherwise there is:

- Transport for the North
- The SubRegional Rail Strategy
- The West and Wales Strategic Rail Network

with other proposals for rail to consider.

Jacqui Johnson, Warrington District

The Wirral Society

The Wirral Society, that covers the peninsula of The Wirral on behalf of

CPRE, is busy planning its 90th year celebrations.

Perhaps the largest issue we will be facing is how we work with the Liverpool City Region, that covers Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council area, the North part of the peninsula, as well as with Cheshire West and Chester Council, covering the South.

It is encouraging the Metro Mayor has recently been meeting with his counterparts, in an attempt to obtain for the Mets, extra Government support aimed at seeking a review of how funding for new housing is allocated maximizing and improving the viability of brownfield sites.

The second biggest issue is that Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council (WMBC) have yet to set a Local Plan, the draft may not appear now until 2019. We believe that the Secretary of State is considering "Direct Rule" from Westminster for WMBC's planning function. Would this be a better option for the people of WMBC's area?

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council area

Hoyle Golf Resort

Despite mounting local opposition, the Labour Council continues to spend and commit funds to support its Golf Resort "vanity scheme".

We are at a loss as to why the Council is continuing to fund this. It has even recently approved taking out a loan of £26m to lend on to the developer to finance the development. All this when even the leader of the Labour Party has admitted that golf "is in decline".

This latter financial issue is all the more concerning since the Council claim to have no money for New Ferry's redevelopment, in part destroyed by an explosion over a year ago.

Local Plan and SHMA / SHLAA

The Council has produced plans of possible development sites, that seem to cover most of the remaining open land in WMBC's area (the SHLAA).

We remain opposed to the Council's very optimistic economic and employment forecasts that seem to be behind the need for x3 the number of new houses needed compared to the forecasts of the old Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

Having to meet a "need" of some 803 houses per year the Council have embarked upon a Green Belt review, with the obvious intention of destroying Green Belt land with housing.

There is some hope that the proposed Wirral Waters development with a massive housing potential could again be considered as part of the solution. There is the real prospect of a further 1,000 housing units coming forward in the coming months, subject to planning permission and some grant applications. Not only would it help the regeneration of the dock area, it would be providing housing in an already developed

area of the borough, and so spare the remaining open green spaces.

New Fire Station at Saughall Massie

The Council's Planning Committee went against its previous refusal of this "Industrial site" in the Green Belt. How the minor changes to the building plan made on re-submission could address the issues originally raised about the quality of road that the Fire Service would have to use was not detailed!

Perhaps there is hope as the Fire Authority have not yet started to desecrate the Green Belt land with their "Community" facility. (Only some 4,000 local residents petitioned against it!).

It may be that other greater issues will distract the Fire Authority and they give up on moving their Fire Station one mile down the road! Conversely, changes in manning at other Wirral stations, may generate the need for an increase in the size of the station currently approved.



Peter Craine [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Thornton Hough

We are still awaiting the planner's recommendation on the proposal to develop Green Belt land at Thornton Hough for sheltered accommodation for the elderly. The Wirral Society has supported the local groups that are in opposition to this scheme.

There are the twin issues of loss of Green Belt (and farmland) and the fact that such a facility would be wholly inappropriate in this rural setting far away from the urban infrastructure needed.

Cheshire West & Chester Council

In comparison to WMBC, CW&C has been relatively quiet.

Issue of potential fracking at Ellesmere Port seem to have been refused.

Redrow builders continue to develop their 2,000 unit housing estate on what was top grade farmland. Show houses are up and houses are selling.

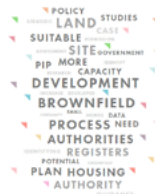
T Neil Parry, Green Belt Coordinator, The Wirral Society, March 2018

NEW CPRE PUBLICATIONS

Unlocking Potential: Best Practice for Brownfield Land Registers This new research, commissioned by CPRE and carried out by HTA Design LLP, examines the identification and assessment of brownfield sites by local planning authorities in light of the Brownfield Land Register Regulations, 2017. It finds that national and local government could be doing far more to identify more brownfield land and make the task more efficient in the process.

State of Brownfield 2018 is an analysis demonstrating the

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL:
BEST PRACTICE FOR
BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTERS



CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England

hio

CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England

State of Brownfield 2018:
An analysis demonstrating the potential of brownfield land for housing



February 2018

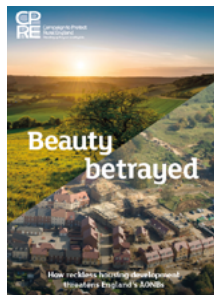
potential of brownfield land for housing, following on from previous CPRE work in this area. Examining new brownfield registers published by 320 local planning authorities in England, the report demonstrates that brownfield sites capable of accommodating at least a million homes have been identified across the country, and many of these sites could be used more efficiently, preventing unnecessary loss of countryside and green spaces.

Viable Villages examines the detrimental effect that loss of affordable housing can have on small rural communities. Local families and young people frequently find themselves unable to afford to live in villages, a situation exacerbated by the role that viability assessments play in allowing developers to argue that building affordable homes can reduce their profits below competitive levels.

How 'land promoters' exploit legal loopholes at the expense of communities and the countryside: This briefing sheds light on the practices of self-styled 'land promoters' who make lucrative profits by exploiting the planning system and working against local wishes. CPRE's analysis of appeal decisions concerning land promoters between April 2012 and August 2017 found that even in cases where local authorities had an up to date 5 year housing land supply, a third of cases were approved.



Beauty Betrayed summarises new research commissioned by CPRE and carried out by a group of independent consultants to investigate the impact of major housing development on England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty since the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012. The report's findings show that such schemes pose a significant threat to the beauty and character of our finest landscapes.



All available to download from: www.cpre.org.uk/resources