

CHESHIRE

VIEWPOINT

AUTUMN 2016



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside



CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND CHESHIRE BRANCH

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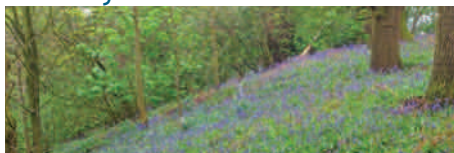
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BEAUTIFUL BLUEBELLS

The Branch wishes to express its
thanks to Peter Moore-Dutton for
allowing members to visit Tushing-
ham Hall again and see the won-
derful bluebells, and to attend
the Rogation Sunday Service at St.
Chad's Chapel on the afternoon of
Sunday May 1st.



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



CPRE Chairman, Su Sayer, with Cheshire Branch volunteers and secretary,

Debbie Janney, at a special meeting held on 27th September

We had a useful meeting with Su Sayer CBE, Chairman of CPRE, on Cheshire matters. The points covered will be described later in this edition, and these are the six main issues:

1. Circumstances - exceptional and very special: The Kings School application to build a new school on Green Belt land, financed by building housing on the school's existing two sites (one of which is in the Green Belt, the other in central Macclesfield) was not called in by the Secretary of State. This was despite the fact that a total area of over 80 acres of Green Belt (nearly 35 ha) would be impacted, and that no very special circumstances have been demonstrated beyond the school's own business case despite the parcels of land involved being rated as making either a 'major contribution' and/or 'a significant contribution' to Green Belt purposes.

The planning officer's report did not explain what new special circumstances had come forward to change her recommendations to positive ones in relation to the loss of Green Belt (she previously recommended refusal at an earlier hearing when decisions were deferred).

2. Call-ins: In the great majority of cases regarding the Green Belt, Local Councils have the greater local knowledge, so the view of the Secretary of State is that the council's decision should be respected. In most cases, the response to whether a case should be called in will be the following wording:

The Secretary of State has carefully considered this case against the call-in policy. The policy makes it clear that the power to call in a case will only be used very selectively. The Government is committed to give more power to councils and communities to make their own decisions on planning issues, and believes planning decisions should be made at the local level wherever possible. The Secretary of State has decided, having had regard to this policy, not to call in this application. He is content that it should

be determined by the local planning authority.

3. More and Better Use of Brownfield: The Housing and Planning Act, which became law on 12 May 2016, includes a provision introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development. Each local authority is responsible for compiling and publishing the register for its area, and updating it at least every year. The government believes that this will “increase transparency for developers and communities” and help to encourage investment in local areas. Registers will also help to measure progress against the Government’s commitment of having planning permissions for housing in place on 90% of suitable brownfield land by 2020.

4. Spatial Frameworks for Greater Manchester & Liverpool City Regions: National Office has provided a £20,000 grant to enable Jackie Copley, Planning Manager for CPRE Lancashire, to work on the emerging Spatial Frameworks for the Liverpool and Greater Manchester City Regions. Although primarily affecting Lancashire Branch, this will also have an impact on Cheshire, and we look forward to participating in this work.

5. Fracking: National Office is revisiting its policy position on Fracking, and Jim Cameron is representing the Branch on the Task and Finish Group looking at this issue. We will consult with members on the three options - described in the consultation document as *laissez-faire*, moratorium or unconditional ban. The first option is better described as ‘current policy position’. CPRE does not oppose fracking in principle providing that our conditions are met.

6. Rail and HS2: I went to some fringe meetings at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool on planning and transport, together with staff from NO. The talk on ‘Public Ownership of Rail’ was well attended. The main speaker was Andy McDonald MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport.

There seems to be some uncertainty as to how this will relate to HS2. Andy McDonald said he would oppose a partial scheme. It must be complete - without overrun on time or money, not just a link from London to Birmingham. RMT said it would be a benefit for the rich - like HS1. However, another Union spokesman said it would release capacity on WCML for freight from the Liverpool Super Port.

Andrew Needham, Chairman, Cheshire Branch





THE REGIONAL VIEW

Peter Raynes, former Chairman of Cheshire Branch and member of the CPRE Trustee Board has now been elected to the role of Chairman of the NW Regional Group

Few weeks go by without news headlines concerning devolution deals, and the need to reinvent and redevelop our Northern Cities. Certainly this is a necessary goal after the decline in our Industrial base. However, precisely because of our Industrial heritage and the large areas of Brownfield land that result from our history, CPRE is campaigning hard to prove the renewal of our Cities can be achieved without sacrificing the landscapes and open spaces we treasure.

Increasingly the plans that decide on which areas of open Countryside that will be lost are not only drawn up by the seven local Authorities in the Cheshire Area, but also by City Regions such as Manchester and Liverpool. This makes cooperation at Regional level of growing importance, and increases further the work that our volunteers have to make in challenging and showing alternative options less damaging to the environment.

If the formal planning system is becoming more “regional” and more complex, this is also true of the Development Organisations set up to propose and deliver housing and jobs growth. Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington, Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire are now all working together within a Northern Gateway Partnership to deliver 100,000 new homes and 120,000 new jobs by 2040. CPRE again has an opportunity here to push for the maximum regeneration of urban areas and minimising the loss of open countryside and green belt.

Since the spring edition we have seen the United Kingdom vote to leave the European Union. While the impact on our Countryside was not a prominent issue in the debate, how the Government decides to reshape the Common Agricultural policy may profoundly change the regions farming and therefore its landscape. There is a real opportunity to redesign the farm payments structure to better meet the needs of farmers and to fund more directly those activities we as a community desire such as flood mitigation or preserving the upland

landscapes of the Peak District or Lake District National Parks.

Wildlife habitat protection is also covered by EU legislation and Developers are already lobbying to change and remove restrictions which stop development in sensitive wildlife habitats. This was an excellent issue for us to work with other organisations such as Wildlife Trusts, and we hope to provide an opportunity to Branches to work together as a North West Region with the Trusts.

If there is one message I would like to emphasise, it is that we are in a period where the rules that determine the future of the Countryside are changing at an unprecedented pace. There are opportunities to influence these events and I would urge readers to consider volunteering to help by contacting the branch office (contact details inside front cover).

*Peter Raynes, NW Regional
Group Chairman,
21st September 2016*

ROYAL CHESHIRE SHOW

The weather was wonderful for the first Royal Cheshire Show in June 2016. Although the show has been a fixture in the annu-

al agricultural calendar for over 175 years, it has now been granted 'Royal' status.

As always, CPRE Cheshire Branch was represented at the show and volunteers manned the stall to spread the message about CPRE Cheshire Branch and our campaigns. HS2 was a topic of interest, with a number of visitors taking a keen interest in the Branch's detailed route map.

Over 75000 visitors attended the show in total over the two days.

BRANCH AGM

Cheshire Branch's Annual General Meeting took place in May at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight.

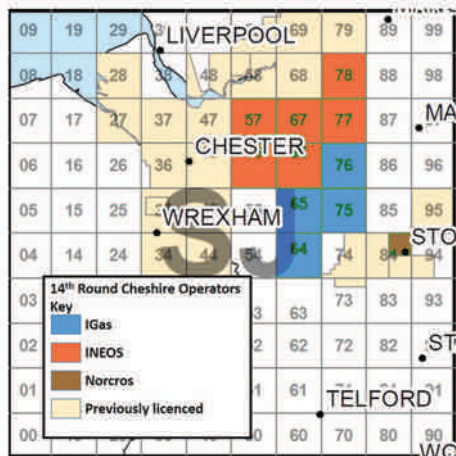
Following a brief business meeting, around 50 members listened to Doug Haynes's fascinating talk on the history of the landed Gentry in Cheshire from 1850.

The talk focused on families such as the Tollemaches, Wilbrahams, Cholmondeleys and Grosvenors, and looked at the ways in which their activity has shaped the Cheshire landscape that we know today, as well as the wider impact that these families had on national matters.

The evening concluded with a tasty buffet.

FRACKING: HAVE YOUR SAY

CPRE National Office is revisiting its policy position on Fracking and is currently consulting on this issue, with an options paper currently available. Cheshire Branch would like to consult members for their views to inform our response to the survey; this will then feed into the National Office Policy Position. Jim Cameron is representing Cheshire Branch on this committee.



map: www.drillordrop.com

tryside, especially water, are not polluted or used unsustainably; and that it can be demonstrated how the exploitation of shale gas contributes towards meeting our climate change commitments consistent with established Government policy, for example by substituting for unabated coal use. CPRE will oppose proposals which fail to meet these conditions.

Much of the county of Cheshire is currently licensed for gas extraction, as you can see from the map above. The three options being consulted on are the status quo (described in the consultation as 'laissez-faire'), a moratorium on fracking or an outright ban.

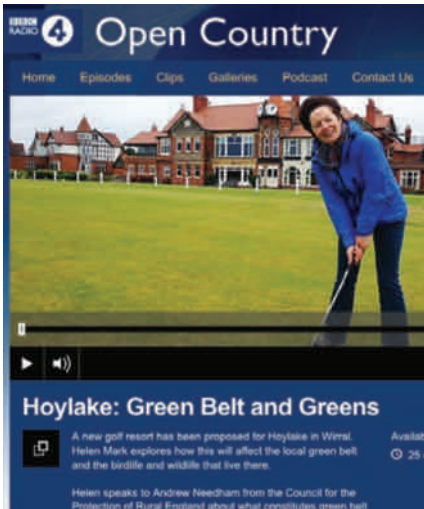
If you would like to have your say on this issue or find out more, please download the options paper which has more information on each position, including pros and cons, from the web address below:

<http://www.cprecheshire.org.uk/Shale-gas-consultation.pdf>

Please email Debbie Janney in the Branch Office to let her know your preferred choice (info@cprecheshire.org.uk). Alternately, if you don't have access to the internet please phone the Branch Office, and Debbie will arrange for a copy to be sent out in the post.

Responses must be returned to the Branch by Friday 28th October to be considered.

GREENBELTBROADCAST



Our Chairman Andrew Needham spoke to journalist Helen Mark for Open Country on Radio 4.

My interview with Radio 4's "Open Country" about Green Belt release in the Wirral was broadcast on September 1st.

A golf course in Green Belt could be permitted - and the big issue is the proposed hotel and housing. Wirral Council could allocate this in their emerging local plan, claiming 'exceptional circumstances'. They would need to do this if they really want to attract a serious developer. The alternative would be for a developer to make a planning application: in this

case there would need to be 'very special circumstances'. R4 were interested in these 'circumstances'. I explained that Green Belt serves five purposes:

- *to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- *to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- *to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;*
- *to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;*
- *to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

I explained the guidelines for evaluating 'circumstances' - and said that in the majority of cases the decision is that local councillors are best placed to assess whether very special circumstances can be demonstrated, and the response is normally the form of wording which I quoted in 'View from the Chair' on page 3

CPRE's Green Belt campaign promotes six purposes:

- *It's where we relax.*
- *It's where we watch wildlife.*
- *It's where we take part in our hobbies.*
- *It's where we eat and drink.*
- *It's where we feel inspired.*
- *It's where we make memories.*

R4 commented that the latter seems rather romantic. I said the aim was public opinion rather than planning policy.

Andrew Needham

Listen again via the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/OpenCountryWirral>

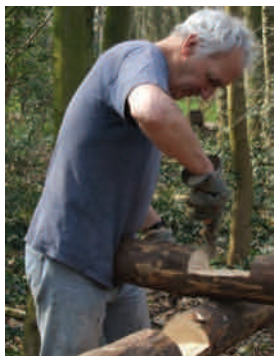
OBITUARIES

Michael Blank, former Chairman of Stockport CPRE District, sadly died in October 2015. Below is an extract from his obituary which was featured in the Manchester Grammar School Alumni Magazine.

Michael Blank, a former pupil of MGS, was a popular man with a host of friends from all stages of his life and from all ages and backgrounds. He was devoted to his wife Jane and cherished the home and social life that they had created. They enjoyed lots of activities including reading, music and travel. Michael was an inspired photographer and Jane has some amazing photographs which he carefully catalogued to reflect the wonderful times they spent together.

Michael was a keen propliner enthusiast and travelled the world viewing and photographing old planes. He forged international friendships with fellow enthusiasts. He enjoyed walking and had a love of the countryside, and was an active member of CPRE.

Throughout his career as a Chartered Surveyor, Michael was held in high esteem by colleagues, clients and students who described him as fair, ethical, thorough and a gentleman of high integrity. During his lifetime Michael made a positive difference to all those who knew and loved him. He leaves a huge gap and a multitude of fond, thought provoking memories.



Phillip Kuehnle began volunteering with Cheshire Branch in 2011, having previously worked for the Audit Commission. He lived in Pickmere, which straddles the boundary of the former Vale Royal and Macclesfield districts, and was very involved with village life. He was a member of CPRE Cheshire's Planning Committee and supported the Branch in many areas, from manning the stand at events to responding to planning applications and consultations. He was also an enthusiastic member of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers' Mid-Cheshire Group; the photograph (taken

by Ray Woodward from Vale Royal Conservation Volunteers) shows Phil working in the woods with the group.

Phil was also involved with his local riding club in Antrobus. He and his wife moved to Lincolnshire after his leukaemia went into remission, to be closer to their daughter. He sadly passed away on 4th May 2016.

Sir Iain Glidewell, who formerly lived in Knutsford and Henbury, also died in May 2016. Sir Iain, originally a Barrister working in the area of Planning, who became a Lord Justice of Appeal and a Privy Councillor, supported CPRE Cheshire Branch in responding to Planning Appeals. His obituary in The Times described him as 'one of the dominant figures in the areas of planning, environment and public law of the last 40 years'.

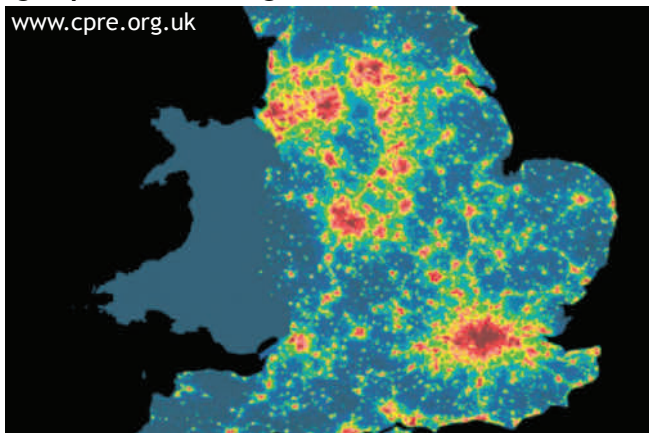
NIGHT BLIGHT

Our county may be home to a cutting-edge radio-astronomical research unit at Jodrell Bank, but if you're interested to look up and see any but the brightest of stars, you would be well advised to travel out of Cheshire. New maps released by CPRE show that our county is amongst the most light-polluted in England.

Cheshire comes fourth in the table of the least dark counties, following West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Berkshire.

The maps were produced using satellite imagery captured at 1.30 am throughout the month of September 2015.

www.cpre.org.uk



In light of the mapping exercise, CPRE National Office has made the following recommendations:

- Local authorities should develop policies in local plans to control light pollution, which ensure that existing dark skies are protected and that new developments do not increase local light pollution.
- Highways England should use the maps to identify sections of motorways and trunk roads that need urgent attention to reduce light pollution. Any new lighting should be well designed and the minimum required to meet its purpose.
- Businesses should review their current lighting and future development plans to save money by dimming or switching off light to reduce pollution.

National Office has also produced lesson plans for primary school children which can be downloaded via the link below:

<http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/resources>

Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal, commented: "It has taken a great deal of dedicated effort to generate these maps. They are fascinating. They tell us where dark skies can be found - and perhaps, by highlighting the regions where light pollution is greatest, will encourage remedial efforts that will not only save energy, but also enable more of us to enjoy a dark sky in the way earlier generations could."

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!

giftaid it

☐ 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 _____

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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"/>
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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:

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 Account Number:

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Service User Number:

Reference: (for office use only)

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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 _____

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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:

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Expiry Date:

Start Date:

Security Code:

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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

FARMING FORESIGHT

CPRE has released a report calling on farmers to use the impetus of Brexit to become more diverse and environmentally resilient. The 'New model farming' paper argues that a more diverse sector - in demographics, farm size and production - would forge a more resilient future that offers rewards beyond food: beautiful landscapes, clean water, abundant wildlife, better flood management and improved carbon storage. It also argues that a post-Brexit settlement along these lines would make clearer the public benefits of huge public investment in farming.



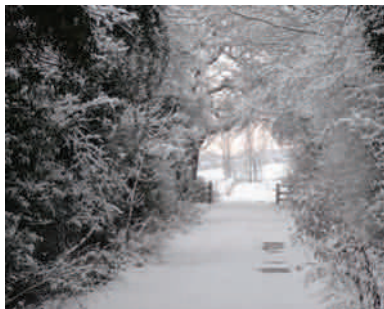
A CPRE Cheshire Family Farm Walk which took place in Mickle Trafford in August 2011, where children learnt about farming Red Poll Beef alongside making environmental improvements with farmer Hugh Rowlands

Graeme Willis, food and farming campaigner for CPRE, who hails from Mickle Trafford in Cheshire, commented "The Government has a great opportunity post-Brexit to determine what farming and the English countryside will look like. Do we really want to continue the pattern of ever larger agri-business, less connected to communities and out of kilter with nature?"

"To forge a more resilient future, the Government should encourage a mix of farms that produce different foods for local people and varied, thriving landscapes. The obvious place to start is by redirecting funding to help smaller, more innovative and mixed farms, and by making land available for new farmers to enter the market."

New model farming is the first in a series of 'Food and Farming Foresight' papers from CPRE, written to encourage debate about the future of farming.

The paper can be downloaded from the CPRE website via the following link: <http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/farming-and-food/farming/item/4347-new-model-farming>



CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN HIGH LEGH

Our annual Christmas celebration will again be held at St. Mary's Chapel in High

Legh, the family chapel of our Branch President, Lord Grey of Codnor.

We hope that members and friends will join us at this popular event, which this year is to take place on Thursday December 15th. There will be a short service, festive music and carols, followed by refreshments at the village hall.

Please contact Debbie Janney at the Branch Office to book your place, or return the enclosed slip.

DISTRICT NEWS

The long-awaited Cheshire East Local Plan is now undergoing the 'Examination in Public' process, with sessions taking place in Congleton and Macclesfield Town Halls between 13th September and 21st October. Housing figures proposed by the council were revised upward from 29000 (which is already much higher than anything that has been achieved previously) to 36000: this is likely to necessitate the early release of 'safeguarded' sites in the North Cheshire Green Belt which were not supposed to be built on prior to 2030. Lillian Burns and Andrew Wood produced a response on behalf of CPRE Cheshire Branch.

Cheshire West and Chester Council's consultation on Part II of their Local Plan was live in August and September, and Andy Yuille kindly gave the Branch some assistance with preparing a response. Issues addressed included stressing the importance of the historic setting of Chester as a walled city, employment land (there has been a historic over-supply of employment land) and transport.

However, and most importantly, the omission of a detailed policy for Green Belt was noticeable. This is especially concerning in light of the role that Chester's Green Belt plays in preventing the coalescence of settlements and preventing urban spread. As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework, 'The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence'.

If you would like more information on either of the above, please contact the Branch Office.

Chester District

Mixed news for Chester's Green Belt sites this month. Permission has been granted for 31 houses to be built on part of the Wrexham Road site that was released from the Green Belt in the Local Plan (Part 1). The permission was given in advance of there being an overall housing plan for the site as a whole. However, a planning application submitted by Ashton Heyes Nursery School which was for a new car park and extension to be built in the Green Belt outside the built up area of the village has been withdrawn.



Congleton District

Permission has already been granted for over 1200 new homes in Middlewich over seven sites, and construction is well established to the south of the town on a number of sites which were previously agricultural land in the Warmingham Lane area. Now another application has been submitted to build 500 homes and a new church building to the east of the town on open fields outside the town, on land owned by the Middlewich Community Church. If successful, this will bring the total new housing stock for the town up to 1750 new homes with planning permission; in the 2011 census, there were just under 6000 dwellings in the town, so this number would mean an increase of 30% in the housing stock, with no improvement in public transport links for the town or extra infrastructure to ease the issues with school overcrowding and traffic problems in the town. Middlewich remains the largest town in Cheshire without a railway station. The new proposed development is sited on land which straddles the Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester border.

Macclesfield District

The King's School, Macclesfield, succeeded in reversing planning officers' recommendation that the school's expansion plan be rejected, ironically by increasing the contribution that they would give to the local council for additional school places in the town, as well as increasing the proportion of affordable housing included. The application was then passed by the planning committee on 27th July, and hopes that the application would be 'called in' were dashed in mid-September when it was announced that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government would abide by the council's decision.

The proposal, which would see the boys' and girls' schools united in a brand new building to be constructed on high grade agricultural land, will affect around 70 acres of open countryside in the Green Belt. The school is currently based on two sites; the boys' school is situated in the town centre, where it has been based since 1844, and the girls' school site is on Fence Avenue. The school's playing fields are located outside town on Alderley Road in Prestbury, and this is the location which has now been approved as the school's new site; a rural location, not only Green Belt land but also classified as an area of special county value. The tenant who previously farmed the land recently died, and this enabled the school to acquire the land and put in an application to build 450 new homes to finance the new school building, 300 of which would be on the Green Belt on Fence Avenue.

The site in question received the highest possible rating in the ARUP assessment of Green Belt land in Cheshire East. This study graded 'parcels' of land based on an assessment of the extent to which they fulfilled the five purposes of the Green Belt.



Flooding near Big Wood, near new Kings School site: © Michael Ely

As well as being a site that currently acts as a buffer to prevent the coalescence of the settlements of Macclesfield and Prestbury, the development will necessitate the felling of mature trees and the grubbing out of historic hedgerows. It will increase the risk of flooding, is likely to cause congestion on unsuitable road networks (for which mitigation

proposed is insufficient), and unlike the current site of the Boys' School, it is not in a location served by public transport networks.

Three applications on the part of the school were passed only on the Chairman's casting vote and the 'Very Special Circumstances' cited were to do with the need for educational facilities; this seems difficult to justify in light of the fact that the school is a fee-paying school which will not provide additional school places to the local community. The sum of £1,352,000 was requested from Kings School to provide additional school places for the children who will inhabit the new homes in the planning application, but Kings School offered less than half that amount (£550,000) and this figure has been accepted by the council.

The London Green Belt Council and CPRE London's joint report "*Safe Under Us?*" is an investigation into widespread threats from housebuilding in the London Metropolitan Green Belt, and illustrates the fact that government policies and sanctions appear to be forcing councils to release Green Belt land for development. Although focused on London, the report is relevant to other metropolitan areas. You can download a copy of the report via the link below:

<http://www.cprelondon.org.uk/resources/item/2339-safe-under-us>



Vale Royal District

Some good news from Vale Royal. An application to build 184 homes on greenfield site at Darnhall, which had previously been approved by the Inspector at appeal, was refused by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and further appeals were also disallowed. Despite the fact that the developer attempted to make the development more attractive by increasing the proportion of affordable housing in the development, and to employ local builders, the grounds for refusal were:

- The extra affordable houses were not a significant increase especially as the development would spoil the rural aspect.

- The use of local builders was unenforceable.
- The development was not on the area for development in the neighbourhood plan (NP)
- CWAC already had more than a 5 year housing supply.

This judgment makes encouraging reading for all those involved in neighbourhood planning in their own areas.

Warrington District

Warrington was designated a New Town in 1968. Both brownfield and undeveloped farmland were used. Some farmland in South Warrington was not used but could not be returned to the Green Belt at the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The UDP Inspector did not put land at Peel Hall back into the Green Belt either. Since then these pieces of land were protected by a Regional Policy of regenerating city and town centres, and “brownfield before greenfield”.

The Core strategy report in 2014 had a annual figure of 500 new homes p.a. between 2006 and 2027. This and other issues were challenged in the High Court and the Council was supported on 6 of the 9 issues but it went against the Council on the housing figures. The council began to revise the figures so that they were on line with the ruling, and government policy.

This has produced a range of figures depending also on employment needs. These higher figures and housing land availability will soon be the subject of a consultation so look at the Planning Policy section on the Council website as well as information in the press.

We have a planning application ongoing for Peel Hall. Consultations by the Homes and Communities Agency or HCA, have started on land in South Warrington, in the Appleton area and Grappenhall Heys. If you have any comments on these please contact the Branch Office (details inside cover), who will pass them on to me.

HS2 proposals through Warrington are still there, statement expected on the route by the end of November.

The Wirral Society

Wirral Borough will soon be part of the Liverpool City Region: the impact on planning matters in the borough is not yet known. It is possible that all planning decisions will need to be signed off by the elected Mayor of the City Region.

The Local Plan is still in progress and it may be many months before it is finalised, even if the process is not further delayed owing to changes resulting from the Borough’s inclusion in Liverpool City Region. The So



Sandbank Marker Buoy near Hoylake © Galatas

ciety recently responded to another consultation on housing numbers to inform the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The Society employed Jackie Copley (Lancashire Branch's Planning Officer) to assist them in responding to this consultation within a very tight timetable.

Readers will be familiar with the ongoing 15-year-long saga of the Hoylake Golf Resort. Developers have now begun to show an interest in the plans now that the council is "proposing" enabling housing on the site (which is in the Green Belt). Local pressure led to this issue being featured on Open Country (see p.8), and Andrew Needham outlined the planning issues and constraints that are relevant to Green Belt land. The revised Flood Risk map recently released by the Environment Agency highlights new risks to the area from flooding, and the development is also opposed on the grounds of the loss of Green Belt land, good agricultural land, wildlife habitats and the fact that golf as a sport is no longer as popular as it used to be.

The Society has also responded to the proposal to build a new fire station on Green Belt land at Saughall Massie, to replace the current station situated one mile away, from which the Fire Service has been working for the past 18 months. The 'Very Special Circumstances' cited include the fact that "the building has been designed to fit into the Green Belt"!

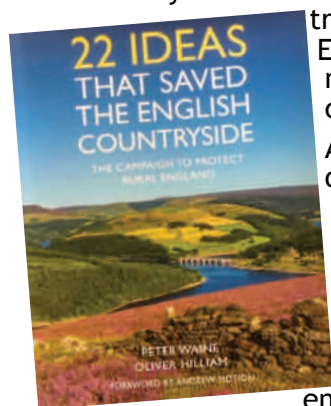
Over the (planning) border in Cheshire West and Chester, the planning committee approved an application for Vauxhall Sports Club to build 50 new affordable homes in order to provide funds to keep the club open and allow it to redevelop. In line with the Kings School application, the Secretary of State declined to call in the application despite the many concerns about the plans, and the detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Neil Parry, Green Belt Co-ordinator, the Wirral Society

22 IDEAS THAT SAVED THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

22 Ideas That Saved The English Countryside is a new book written by Peter Waine, former CPRE chairman, and Oliver Hilliam, senior communications and information officer at CPRE.

The book tells the story of the evolution of England's relationship with the countryside and our desire to defend it from the forces of industrialisation and urban sprawl - from the birth of England's conservation movement with the Commons Preservation Society in 1865, to the recent campaign to save England's forests.



At the heart of the story is CPRE - celebrating our 90th anniversary this year having been created in 1926 to unite 22 existing organisations (The National Trust and RSPB among them) in "concerted action".

Peter Waine, co-author of the book, says: "We hope this book can offer an optimistic antidote to the 'doom and gloom' of much modern-day environmentalism. While threats remain, and

there is no room for complacency, we take heart from the fact that these 22 Ideas have stood the test of time so convincingly. The fact they gained popular currency in the face of overwhelming opposition proves that the right combination of passion, principle, and not a little genius, can allow David to beat Goliath.

"We must continue to take inspiration from the pioneers who have handed down to our generation something which remains the envy of the world - the unique beauty of the English countryside."

The book is available to buy online from Blackwell's, as well as from other shops and websites (rrp £25). **CPRE members are entitled to a 40% discount (£15 inc free UK P&P) when ordering direct using the details and offer code printed on page 12 of the Spring issue of Countryside Voice magazine.** If you don't have the details to hand, contact CPRE Supporter Service (supporterservices@cpre.org.uk).

Makes an ideal Christmas gift. All proceeds to CPRE.