

CESHIRE

VIEWPOINT

SPRING 2016



Cheshire

Campaign to Protect Rural England

CESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN UPDATE
WIRRAL GOLF GREEN BELT THREAT
AGM: THE CESHIRE GENTRY
DEVOLUTION IN CESHIRE

CHESHIRE VIEWPOINT

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CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND CHESHIRE BRANCH

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Cheshire Viewpoint is the newsletter of the Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, produced twice annually (spring and autumn). CPRE Cheshire is a registered charity. Editor: Becca Nelson. Cover photo: Bluebells, Dunham Massey. Other images Becca Nelson unless credited.

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR



Cheshire Branch members enjoyed another wonderful Christmas event at High Legh to round off 2015, many thanks to our President Lord Grey of Codnor and to the musicians organised by Rod Tann.

Devolution and transport are two of the biggest issues facing Cheshire as a whole at the moment. Cheshire and Warrington have put in a bid to become a combined authority - but they also emphasise their links with neighbours, Wirral, Merseyside and Staffordshire. Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester have also joined in a partnership with five other councils (Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Stafford Borough Council, Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council) to set up the Northern Gateway Development Zone. This partnership has been set up to maximise benefits of the HS2 station announcement in Crewe.

I attended the opening of the Crewe Green Link Road. This is a potential link to the proposed new HS2 station. It was opened by Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin MP. Afterwards at Crewe Hall there was some discussion about infrastructure. Lord Adonis has launched a major new Call for Evidence, focusing on three of the UK's most critical infrastructure challenges.

Apparently the Mayors of Merseyside and GM favour east-west links - rather than HS2, and Lord Adonis is calling for a single answer from the Northern Powerhouse and the Northern Gateway.

There is now some uncertainty about HS2 north of Crewe. CPRE National Office has submitted a draft response to Lord Adonis on infrastructure, in which they say: 'We believe a fundamental re-think is needed of the western arm beyond Crewe. This could enable better sharing of the benefits of HS2 between Liverpool and Manchester, while improving capacity and speed further north with fewer financial and environmental costs.'

The CEC Local Plan examination in public first opened in the autumn of 2014 but, after three weeks of what should have been

a six-week EIP, it was suspended by the inspector who said he was unhappy with the piecemeal approach to Green Belt and he wanted to see a proper Green Belt review carried out. He also complained that the housing and employment land figures did not match up with the huge economic growth projections that CEC were making. As a result, Cheshire East Council went away and carried out significant further work, increasing the housing figures by 6,000 along the way and the employment land requirement by another 27 ha. They submitted their new evidence to the inspector after asking for and being granted an extension to the original timescale he set down for them.

The upshot was a week's hearings into the proposed modifications at the end of October 2015 where CPRE were represented on every 'matter'. CPRE and a number of other participants argued that what was effectively before the inspector was a new Plan, but he did not appear to concur with that point. Then, just before Christmas, the inspector issued a report saying he was prepared to resume the hearings proper - but only after CEC had carried out a full and formal public consultation on the modifications. CPRE Cheshire Branch was represented at these most recent hearings partly by Andrew Wood, the former CPRE RPO, and with support from Lillian Burns. Lillian has written a detailed article covering the most recent developments on this issue.

Upcoming events include a repeat visit to see the bluebells at Tushingham Hall and a visit to St Chad's Chapel and our AGM to be held at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight - full information is in this newsletter. If you are unable to join us at either of these events but are attending the Cheshire Show, please do pop down to the stall and see us there.

Andrew Needham, Chairman, CPRE Cheshire Branch



THE REGIONAL VIEW

After 10 years as Chairman of CPRE North West Regional Group, Nick Thompson has stood down, and was presented with a canvas director's chair bearing the CPRE logo at the North West Regional Group meeting in January. He remains active within CPRE as Chairman of Lancashire Branch. His deputy, Lillian Burns, has been holding the fort pending the appointment of his successor (see page 7) and she has written this article for our Spring edition.

DISJOINTED, DISORIENTING, DEMOCRATICALLY-DEFICIENT AND DEMANDING DEVOLUTION

The rapidity of the introduction of the devolution agenda is nothing short of astonishing, the lack of democratic input to it is alarming and the huge variation in powers being handed down from government to the new Combined Authorities is mind boggling. And the lack of transparency with the process is the most worrying aspect of all.

Henceforth, it is not going to be a matter of familiarising ourselves with a new order that applies across the country - as was the case when Regional Assemblies and Development Agencies were established - but of having to find out which powers have been awarded to which combination of local authorities and to what extent their particular powers reach. Every Combined Authority (CA) deal being done is different. Some will have mayors (the only members of the authorities that can be directly elected) and some will not. Some, as in the case of the Greater Manchester and the Liverpool CAs, include the right to produce a new level of statutory spatial planning document that sits above Local Plans. And, whereas clearly defined guidance was in place for the former Regional Spatial Strategies and Regional Economic Strategies, there is none for this new sub-regional level of spatial planning. Also, whereas CPRE had seats on a number of regional bodies, there are no similar opportunities for interested stakeholders within the emerging system.



Because of when it was inaugurated, CPRE Cheshire Branch covers the old County Palatine of Cheshire, ie. the pre. 1974 local government boundaries. So, it includes the Metropolitan Borough Councils (MBCs) of Stockport, Trafford and Tameside - which all sit within Greater Manchester - and also Manchester Airport (now within Manchester City Council boundaries). Meanwhile, Wirral MBC and Halton Unitary Authority (formerly Runcorn and Widnes) sit within the Liverpool CA - but are still part of Cheshire Branch, as is Warrington, a Unitary Authority in its own right.

Greater Manchester, which was the first area in the country to be made into a CA, has been awarded a huge array of powers, including many for health, and will be electing a mayor in 2017. It is on its way to producing the first Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMS F) which envisages massive growth and changes to the Green Belt over the 20-year plan period. Cheshire and Lancashire CPRE Branches, working with Friends of the Peak District and the North West Transport Roundtable, produced a response to the third consultation stage of the GMSF. This report is linked to from the CPRE Cheshire website, and can be downloaded via the link below:

<http://www.cprelancashire.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2334-joint-response-to-greater-manchester-spatial-framework-report>

The second spatial framework in the country is expected to be the one for Liverpool CA. Meanwhile, whilst Lancashire County Council and all its Districts (with the exception of Wyre), along with Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen UAs, have been consulting with their stakeholders about what form their devolution should take, Cheshire West & Chester Council, Cheshire East Council and Warrington UA are pressing on with negotiations for their devolution deal directly with government. According to their published document, 'Gateway to the Northern Powerhouse', they do not appear to be asking for the right to produce a sub-regional planning document but they are asking for a say in the use of government-owned land, for government support in working up the 'spatial growth hubs' of the Mersey Dee Economic Axis, Northern Gateway Development Zone and Warrington New City and retention of all business rates. They want to see the mechanisms and funding in place to ensure better cross-boundary working with Wales, the devolution of business support functions, skills and work programmes and health commissioning powers. At the time of writing, it remains to be seen what new powers and funding Cheshire and Warrington CA will be awarded - or whether they will accept a mayor or not - but some devolution announcements are expected on budget day (March 16th).

Lillian Burns, Acting Chair, CPRE North West Regional Group

NEW NWRG CHAIR



Former Cheshire Branch Chairman, Peter Raynes, has now been appointed as the Chairman of CPRE North West Regional Group, following the retirement of Nick Thompson.

Peter, who lives in Knutsford, is a national trustee of CPRE. He chaired CPRE Cheshire Branch from 2007 to 2011 after taking early retirement from his mainstream career with an international consumer group.

He is a keen amateur cellist, playing in a number of local orchestras and groups, and enjoys walking, cycling and skiing.

CHESHIRE BRANCH NEEDS YOUR HELP



CPRE Cheshire Branch was already finely stretched reacting to the existing pressures imposed by an all-out growth agenda. It is going to be even more challenged to respond to the new devolution agenda outlined in Lillian Burns' article, and to keep lobbying for sustainable development and land use.

If you feel you can help by becoming a planning volunteer or by donating to help pay for professional help as and when necessary, please contact the Branch office.

2016 CHESHIRE SHOW

CPRE Cheshire Branch will as usual be present at the Cheshire Show, along with our fellow countryside charities.

Members are invited to visit the stand for a cup of tea and a chat! Please do come along and meet fellow members and volunteers, find out about our current campaigns or have your say about issues in your area.



The show takes place on 21st and 22nd June. CPRE will be exhibiting in the Rural Activities Marquee beside the WI, close to entrance gate 4. Please see section of map to the right showing the location of the marquee. We hope to see you there!



CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Cheshire East's Local Plan is back on course with a big pro-growth agenda

After stalling during the examination in public stage late in 2014, the Cheshire East Local Plan looks set to be back on course to resume in September following the publication of proposed changes to the Local Plan in early February. These were approved by the full Cheshire East Council on February 26th, and the consultation will run from March 4th to April 19th (see www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan). Following the consultation, the Council will present the feedback from the consultation to the examination inspector in June. CPRE Cheshire Branch will be continuing to interact with the process.

Despite CPRE arguing that it was not realistic for the principal authority to go for a growth rate of just over 0.7% year on year over the 20 years of the Plan, Cheshire East has stuck with that projection. This translates into a population growth of 58,100 (up from 40,000 in the originally Submitted Plan), a minimum of 36,000 new homes (up from

a minimum of 27,000) and a prediction that 31,000 new jobs will be created (up from 20,000) - all by 2030.

Also, despite CPRE pointing out figures from the Office of National Statistics which show that over 12% of employed people in the North West now work all or part of every week from home - and the trend for home working is continuing to grow - Cheshire East has raised its employment land requirement even higher than the figures it was postulating during recent consultations with those stakeholders who took part in the Local Plan examination process. The revised Plan is now seeking 378 hectares of employment land despite the Submitted Plan having stated that the original provision of 300 ha. it sought was “towards the upper end” of the requirement.

The revised Plan has also increased the number of strategic sites to 53 from 31 and increased the instances of incursions into the existing Green Belt, notably around Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow. In addition much more Green Belt land has been allocated in South West Macclesfield (Gawsworth and Henbury) for beyond the Plan period. And some strategic sites which received very high rankings in the Green Belt Review carried out since the examination was suspended have still been retained in the revised Plan, such as the King’s School Fence Avenue site in north east Macclesfield which not only received the ranking of making a ‘significant contribution’ to Green Belt but which also lies within the Peak Park Fringe area.¹

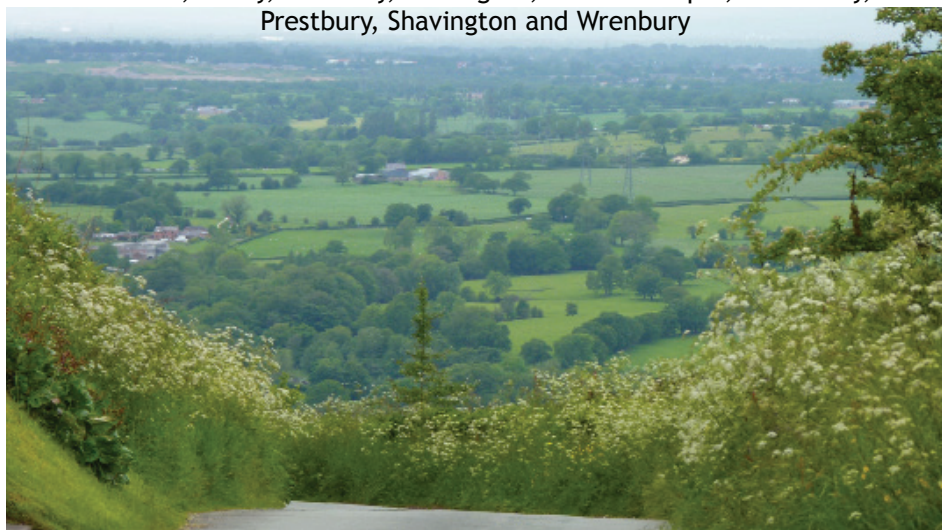
Proposals to create some new Green Belt near Crewe have been dropped and have been replaced with a revised Green Gap policy but further new development sites have been identified and others expanded in the south of the Borough as well, notably the South Cheshire Growth Village by Crewe Hall on the south east side of Crewe.

Housing requirements for both principal towns, all key service centres, all local service centres and for rural areas have all increased and so have employment land requirements in most settlements. See table overleaf which shows previous figures from the original Submission Version of the Local Plan in brackets.

¹ CPRE Cheshire Branch has lodged an objection to a planning application by King’s School, Macclesfield, to build houses on its Fence Avenue and Macclesfield town centre sites and to construct a new school campus on 50 acres of Green Belt which is high quality agricultural land in Prestbury. The area received the highest ranking in the Council’s Green Belt Review for making a ‘major contribution’ to Green Belt purposes and CPRE complained that the school had not shown any recognised special or exceptional circumstances for building on Green Belt. See District News for more information.

Town/ Settlement	Total housing nos. 2010-2013	Average no. houses per year	Employment Land total 2010-2013	Average land take each year
Principal Towns				
Crewe	7,700 (7,000)	385 (350)	65 ha	3.25 ha
Macclesfield	4,250 (3,500)	213 (175)	20 ha (15 ha)	1 ha (0.75 ha)
Key Service Areas				
Alsager	2,000 (1,600)	100 (80)	40 ha (35 ha)	2 ha (1.75 ha)
Congleton	4,150 (3,504)	208 (175)	24 ha	1.20 ha
Handforth (inc. proposed North Cheshire Growth Village)	2,200 in total (150 for extant settlement + 1,850 for new)	110 (8 for existing settlement +93 for new)	22 ha in total (10 for extant settlement + 12 for new)	1.10 ha (0.50 ha for extant settle- ment + 0.60)
Knutsford	950 (650)	48 (33)	15 ha (10 ha)	0.75 ha (0.50)
Middlewich	1,950 (1,600)	98 (80)	75 ha	3.75 ha
Nantwich	2,050 (1,900)	103 (95)	3 ha	0.15 ha
Poynton	650 (200)	33 (10)	10 ha (3 ha)	0.50 ha (0.15)
Sandbach	2,750 (2,200)	138 (110)	20 ha	1 ha
Wilmslow	900 (400)	45 (20)	10 ha (8 ha)	0.50 ha (0.40)
Other Settlements				
LSCs*	3,500 (2,500)	175 (125)	7 ha (5 ha)	0.35 ha (0.25)
Rural areas (inc. Wardle Employ- ment Improvement Area)	2,950 (2,000 previously for rural areas + 0 for Wardle)	148: pre- viously 100 (rural areas), 0 (Wardle)	69 ha in total (5 previously for rural areas + 61 for Wardle)	3.45 ha (0.25 previously for rural areas + 3.05 for Wardle)

*Local Service Centres (LSCs): Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury



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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!

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☐ 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"/>
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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:

7	2	4	2	4	5
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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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£_____ per year	<input type="checkbox"/>

☐ I have enclosed a cheque made payable to CPRE
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Card number:

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Expiry Date:

Start Date:

Security Code:

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

GOLF PROPOSALS THREATEN WIRRAL GREEN BELT

Neil Parry, Green Belt Co-ordinator for the Wirral Society, reports on the proposed golf resort which threatens the Peninsula's Green Belt.

For some 15 years now Wirral Council (controlling the north and east sides of the Wirral peninsula) have been pursuing the great scheme of developing a Golf Resort on farmland and the existing municipal golf course, to the south-east of Hoylake, between West Kirby and Meols. For all these years the "Golf Resort" has been the only idea from the Council for the land.

This seemed like a good idea to develop the Hoylake "Golf Brand" created through the recent "Opens" in 2006, 2012 and 2014 held at the confusingly named Royal Liverpool Golf Club in Hoylake. There is the problem that the Open prior to these was 1967, and who knows when the next Open will be held at Hoylake. The other Royal golf clubs in the North West will doubtless be interested in having "their turn".

The associated "logic" put forward is that this would make Hoylake the centre for England's North West "Golf Coast". However as Hoylake is at the extreme south end of the "Golf Coast", one must worry about Councillors' map reading skills!

This "scheme" had rumbled on for years at a cost that the Council has not yet disclosed and despite having three "Opens" did not attract any attention from a developer.

However in the autumn of 2015 we learned that Jack Nicklaus Designs were interested in developing a Jack Nicklaus Championship Course and a replacement Municipal Course.

Later at open "consultations" held by the Council we learned from enthusiastic Council staff that there would be "Enabling Development" of some 100 or more "luxury houses" that would help the developer fund the creation of this Golf Resort.

The Wirral Society (the CPRE on the Wirral Peninsula) has always had concerns as to what this Golf Resort may be and had hoped that with the failure of the Council to attract any developer during three "Opens", that the matter would have gone away.

However it is now gaining strength.

Whilst this may seem an excellent idea to increase tourism there are a few realities that Wirral Council fails to mention when promoting this Hoylake Golf Resort and Enabling Development:

a) In Wirral Council's area there are some 14 golf courses, four of which are owned by the Council



b) The Council has been trying to sell 3 of its municipal courses with no success, obviously not trying to sell the one earmarked for this Hoylake Golf Resort.

c) Golf is nationally in decline as a pastime

d) The Council keeps claiming the farmland is low grade but the Landis analysis by Cranfield shows it is moderate grade.

e) The land is mostly owned by the Council.

f) It is the Council who decides on any planning application, e.g. for 100 or more luxury houses

g) It is Green Belt land, will it remain Green Belt land?

h) A Consultant's report, extracted from the Council under FOI, clearly warns "that the 'very special circumstances' required to overcome Green Belt policy will prove very difficult within the existing planning regime" (dated November 2006).

i) Wirral Council has without a public vote or consultation joined Liverpool City Region, and it is likely that the City Regions will become the final arbiter on Planning decisions. Whether any appeal to an independent body such as the Secretary of State will still exist is unknown

j) The embryo Liverpool City Region has expressed support for the Hoylake Golf Resort, probably as it would also have an interest in the £ windfall.

k) The site is some 300+ acres of farmland that would obviously be revalued as luxury house land and golf land, with obviously windfall to the landowning Council.

l) The council is still writing its "Local Plan" to replace the existing UDP. However that is likely to be some time off. It could be that the only "evidence" is the Hoylake Neighbourhood Plan, that we have criticised for not producing any plans to develop Hoylake Town, only

referencing the Out of Town Hoylake Golf Resort.

m) It is difficult to understand how such a development meets the new guidelines of the NPPF for Sustainable Development, that surely focusses on making the best use of what is available rather than building new. Surely losing farmland is very short-sighted given the increasing demand for food. Surely not utilising an existing Golf Course and creating a new one is more “slash and burn” policy than “sustainable”.

Then in addition to the “political” issues there are the matters of:

n) The hydrology, the existing flat farmland absorbs huge quantities of rainfall without a high run-off into the local rivers / drainage. Properties just a couple of miles away flooded last year due to heavy rain and poor drainage. Creating housing and well-drained golf courses will need to be managed so that the greatly increased run-off does not immediately flood the towns downstream.

o) The site is an important site for birdlife and wildlife that would be disturbed if not eliminated by the chemicals needed to keep the greens “green”.

p) The RSPB might be concerned as to the black tailed godwit population that may now have reached international importance.

q) The planned construction of a new road to the site and an additional route for HGV traffic to the Hoylake industrial estate.

r) The “need” for affordable rather than “luxury housing” on the Wirral. However the Council refused “affordable housing” at a neighbouring Green Belt site.

s) There is constant reference to the “value” of the Opens, however the £ figures presented are always for “Merseyside” rather than for Hoylake Town, that is usually quiet with the regular shoppers keeping away during the “Opens”.

t) The Hoylake Golf Resort is an Out of Town development and a resort. Resorts tend not to encourage their customers to become customers in the local towns. It would be informative to see any figures that identify the value to Hoylake town of this resort. There must be grave concern as to the negative effect on Hoylake businesses that would occur with this Out of Town Resort.

In summary we have a Council owning acres of Green Belt farmland that they have been trying to sell for years, under the sole guise of a Golf Resort.

We have the land owner being the body that decides on the future of Green Belt land, and potentially no appeal to an independent central government body.

The outlook for Green Belt in this area of the North Wirral looks bleak.

AGM: CHESHIRE GENTRY & THE LANDSCAPE



This year's Branch AGM will be held at Hulme Hall, Port Sunlight, on Thursday May 19th from 7 - 10pm.

The evening will commence with a brief AGM, following which local historian Doug Haynes will speak on the History of landed Gentry from 1850 and how they helped shape the Cheshire landscape. Doug's talk will touch on the history of such families as the Tollemaches, Wilbrahams, Cholmondeleys, Grosvenors, Crewes and Delves-Broughtons, many of whom can trace their ancestry to the Norman Conquest, and whose decisions have had a lasting impact on the rural character of the modern County.

To conclude the evening, there will be an optional sandwich buffet with tea or coffee at a cost of £5 per head; pre-booking essential.

Hulme Hall is an appropriate venue for this talk, as it is another example of the legacy left by a rich Cheshire landowner. Port Sunlight is a model village built by the Lever brothers on 56 acres of marshy land in the late 19th and early 20th century, and contains over 900 listed buildings. The village has been suggested for World Heritage Status in order to preserve its unique character. Lord Leverhulme rose from more humble beginnings as the son of a successful Bolton grocer, and unusually, added his wife's maiden name to his own surname (Lever) to create the name 'Leverhulme'.

For Beatles fans, Hulme Hall was the venue at which Ringo Starr made his Beatles debut on August 18th, 1962!

Please return the enclosed slip to reserve your place.

DISTRICT NEWS

Chester District

The former Saughton Camp is the largest brownfield site in Chester District which has been allocated for a large housing site, and there is now an application to build additional housing on land within the site reserved for a primary school. CPRE have objected to moving the school onto a Green Belt site adjacent to the camp.

An application has been submitted for a ‘footgolf’ course on the Green Belt, but it is lacking necessary details. Chester CPRE is concerned that when the nearby Mollington Golf Course was built, imported waste was used for contouring, and that this may be an issue with the new application.

Chester District representatives have expressed concern that requests for extensions for planning applications in their areas are often refused, leading to Planning Officers making a decision using delegated powers.

Congleton District

Gladman Developments have submitted plans for a further 235 homes to be built on the southern edge of Middlewich, supplementing those already approved nearby. Morris Homes are building a 194 home estate adjacent to the land which Gladman proposes to develop, and a further 149 homes are being built by Bellway homes on a site to the north. Town councillors have voiced their opposition to the plans, as the town is regularly gridlocked when there is an accident on the motorway without the addition of so many more cars, and the schools and GP practices are already oversubscribed.

Macclesfield

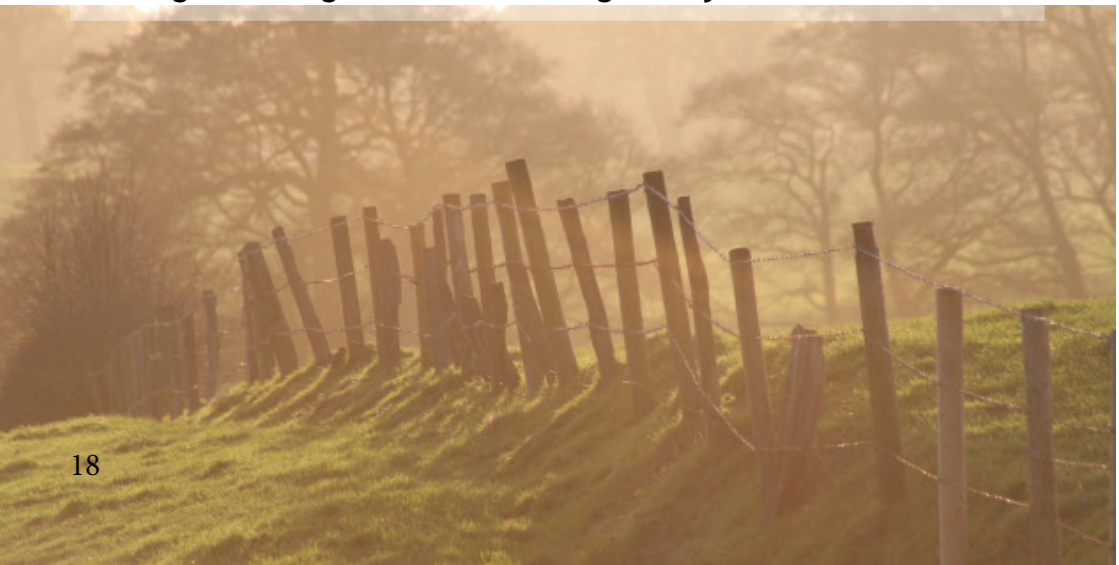
The King’s School, Macclesfield has made a major planning application with potential far-reaching impacts upon three sites - one within the urban part of Macclesfield and two in the surrounding Green Belt. The former involves a historic site near the town centre. Both of the latter involve the loss of productive agricultural land, mature trees and hedgerows.

In summary, the proposal by King’s School is to move away from the two sites on which it currently delivers education at Westminster Road/ Cumberland Street in Macclesfield and at Fence Avenue, Hurdsfield, selling both of these sites for housing and

- with the proceeds - fund a move to an entirely new campus it wishes to build in the countryside to the north west of Macclesfield alongside its existing playing fields. This is spelt out within the documentation accompanying the planning application.

The school's reason for moving to a new site is its desire to consolidate its operations onto one site. The application is unconvincing that sufficient effort was put into finding a non-greenfield site or one already designated for development (no evidence is provided) and nowhere is justification provided for building on Green Belt. The only reason offered is that it suits the school's economic case. This does not constitute special or exceptional circumstances which need to be proved in order to build on Green Belt. There are any number of developers/would-be developers who 'want' to build on Green Belt and who would benefit economically from doing so, but that is not a satisfactory justification.

The site to which the school proposes to relocate is within a particularly fragile area of Green Belt between Prestbury and Macclesfield. The planning application submitted for this site, on Alderley Road, Prestbury, is to build a substantial new school campus "in a parkland setting" on over 50 acres of land currently used for dairy farming and growing potatoes. In addition to the main school buildings there would be a sports centre containing a six-lane swimming pool, dance studio, six badminton courts and a gym. The average height of the buildings would be 40 ft. There would also be internal roads, car parks, five rugby pitches, two hockey pitches, six netball/tennis courts and five outdoor cricket net lanes. Footpaths would require re-routing. This site alone would contravene all five of the Green Belt purposes. It was given the highest categorisation of making a 'major contribution' to



Green Belt by Arup, as part of its Green Belt assessment for the Local Plan.

CPRE has submitted an objection to the plans in their entirety and oppose each of the three separate applications. Please see the Branch website for more information.

Cheshire East Council has approved an outline application from Alderley Park Ltd (which comprises Cheshire East Council in consortium with Manchester Science Partnerships and Bruntwood, a developer) in which plans are set out to convert the former AstraZeneca Life Sciences Park into a mixed use site with additional employment land, 275 homes and a 100-bed hotel with sports facilities and related structures.

Planning officers stated in their report that the scheme would lead to loss of openness as some of the land to be developed is currently vacant, but cited the creation of up to 7000 jobs and the provision of new housing as justifying the 'very special circumstances' needed for development on Green Belt land.

Stockport District

It is with great sadness that we report that Michael Blank, who held the post of Chairman of Stockport District CPRE, passed away suddenly on 15th October 2015.

Michael, a Chartered Surveyor by profession, was District Chairman and representative for about 7 years, and was involved in a number of campaigns in the district, and regularly attended Branch events. He was also a keen amateur photographer. The Branch wishes to extend its condolences to Michael's family.

A full obituary will be printed in the next edition of Cheshire Viewpoint.

Warrington District

Warrington Borough and Parish Councils are opposing plans for the Warrington section of HS2, which they feel offers no benefits to the area but many significant drawbacks. The proposed Golborne Link would have a significantly disruptive effect on the villages of Croft and Culcheth, as well as threatening up to as well as threatening up to 500 jobs at the Taylor Business Park.

St Helens is conducting a consultation on the borough's Green Belt review; CPRE is concerned about the land around the Park-side Colliery site.

More information about current issues in the Warrington area can be seen on the 'Our Local Voice' website, an initiative affiliated with CPRE Cheshire and Civic Voice: <http://ourlocalvoice.co.uk/>

BLUEBELL WALK

Sunday, 1st May 2016 - 2pm until 5pm

By kind permission of Branch member Peter Moore Dutton, CPRE Cheshire Branch would like to invite members to Tushingham Hall to walk around the wonderful Bluebell woods and gardens.

Members would also be very welcome to join us at 4.30pm at nearby Old St Chad Chapel for a Rogation Sunday service.

The Chapel is close to the Sandstone Trail, which joins the Shropshire Union Canal at the Willeymoor Lock Pub.



Tea and coffee will be available at the gardens during the afternoon. Parking is available at Tushingham Hall.

Tushingham Hall is off the A41 a couple of miles north of Whitchurch. Please see map insert for directions.

