

Sussex Review



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
SUSSEX

NEWS FROM THE SUSSEX BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

CPRE Sussex takes a big step forward

In recent years the challenges facing CPRE Sussex to protect our countryside have grown at an unstoppable pace. The growing complexity of government legislation, planning regulations, inquiries and instant internet communication means that gifted volunteers alone are not enough to deal with this any longer.

Apart from our loyal and extremely hard working staff at Blackboys, Liz Beeney and Sas Drury, our only other staff member has been Sarah Robinson, Branch Liaison and Development Officer. Sarah has worked tirelessly to keep abreast of all that is happening in Sussex by supporting the districts in their work and being a driving force in many campaigns. And our inspiring Chairman, Roy Haycock, despite some bouts of serious illness, has done more than we should be asking of him.

For several years now the Executive

Committee, whose members all play ever increasing roles in leading campaigns, appearing at Public Inquiries and more, have been concerned about the pressures facing the Branch. Over and again in committee they have scanned the balance sheet to see if we could appoint more staff. It has never proved possible.

Until now, that is... As Roy has said in his editorial, two handsome legacies have at last made it possible for us to appoint a Director for CPRE Sussex. As a result there has been frantic activity over the last few months but now it is with enormous pleasure that

we can announce the appointment from 21st January of Stuart Meier as the first Director of CPRE Sussex. Stuart's previous work and experience, coupled with his passion for the countryside, will be of inestimable value to CPRE Sussex. In fact his commitment to the job has been in evidence from the beginning, as he was quickly at work in the Branch before officially taking up his post!

Family commitments mean that Sarah will soon reduce her involvement with us, though we shall not lose her completely (more about Sarah in the Summer Review). We are, however, delighted to be able to announce that Gill Pawley has been appointed to take over from Sarah. They will work in tandem for the next two months to ensure a smooth changeover.

The challenges ahead are huge but we now have a real opportunity to move forwards.



Stuart Meier writes...

I am truly delighted to join CPRE Sussex as its Director, at what I see as a critical point in our evolution and at a time when the countryside of Sussex is under ever growing pressure from development of all forms, and yet more pressure likely as new major sites result from the LDF process.

As Sussex Review goes to press, I am just a few days into the job – and already I must extend a welcome, to Gill Pawley who has also just joined our team.

It is clear that my experience at Planning Inquires will be very useful, with Uckfield current, much work this week regarding the Glyndebourne wind

turbine and the South Downs Inquiry due to restart soon.

I am keen to meet members of CPRE Sussex, to reinforce our growing links with our sister branches in Hampshire Kent and Surrey, and to work with fellow campaigning groups like South Downs Society and of course CPRE National Office.

Finally a big thank you to you all for making me so welcome, in particular to Liz and Sas in the office, to Sarah of course, to Roy our chairman, and to the Executive Committee for their confidence in appointing me.

Sussex Review

£1 (free to members of CPRE)

Sussex Review is the newsletter of the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch (reg charity no. 265028) which helps the people of Sussex to protect their local countryside, country towns and villages where there is a threat, to enhance them where there is an opportunity and to keep Sussex beautiful, enjoyable and productive for everyone.

Please note that opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of individual contributors or of the Editor and do not necessarily represent the views of the Branch as such.

Please address any correspondence regarding distribution of Sussex Review to Branch Office.

NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for the next issue is 12th May 2008. Articles and letters please to the Editor:

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** For those living **solely** on state pension, income support or job seekers allowance.

Membership entitles you to be both a member of the National Organisation and a member of the Sussex Branch. For an application form please ring the Sussex Branch Office on 01825 890975.

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Cover photo – Path near Henfield, West Sussex. Photo Fran Rawlinson



As you will see from the front page we are delighted to report that CPRE Sussex will be moving into a new era in 2008 with the welcome appointment for the first time in our history of a Director. This results from generous legacies received from the late Geraldine Church and

John Acton Heath. Stuart Meier, our new Director, comes to us with a strong background in planning and in charitable work with volunteers and will be based at Blackboys. He will manage our daily affairs, direct our staff and lead our campaigns.

Gill Pawley also joins us as a Branch Development and Liaison Officer to work alongside Sarah Robinson and to our great good fortune, Vanessa Knivett, a professional journalist, has volunteered to act as our Press Officer, a post I have wished to see filled since I took over as Chairman.

As part of our objective of becoming more proactive and positive, we will be introducing a CPRE Award Scheme this year. Please see the article by James Frost on pages 8 and 9 about his experience of the scheme.

Another new direction this year has been our collaboration with Kent, Surrey and Hampshire to seek ways in which we can share and use the extremely varied expertise of our volunteers to our mutual advantage through joint responses and campaigns in the coming years.

Between 2008 and 2010 the Government is proposing significant changes to the way in which planning authorisation takes place and Shirley Wright has described the new developments fully on page 4. We have yet to see what effect this will have on Sussex so we will need to be vigilant.

Roy Haycock
Chairman

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Regional Planning...where are we going?

Shirley Wright Chichester North District

Following the emergence of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of 2004 we have had a tier of planning organisation sandwiched between Central Government and the Local Authorities, that is, Regional Government. The idea was to ensure 'sustainable development' for the country on a Regional basis and decision making at Regional level was to be the function of a Regional Assembly and a Regional Development Agency with representation of a range of interests including economic development and environmental issues.

A broad development strategy covering the next 15-20 years would include a Regional Transport Strategy (excluding rail) and guidelines for Local Authorities to produce local plans or Local Development Documents, Local Transport Plans and guidelines for major development areas such as Ashford in Kent, Energy Efficiency and so on. The old Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) were replaced with Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) but were often based on the earlier proposals.

Pretty dry stuff and we might ask 'what's new?'

In March 2006 the South East Regional bodies sent proposals for the next 15-20 years in a South East Plan to Government for approval. We are now awaiting the resultant final consultation document before the definitive South East Plan is published in late summer

this year. The current RPG 9 by which we are currently 'controlled' covers the period to 2016 or at least we think it does. What is happening is that events keep on overtaking what appear to be firm government statements. An example of this is that the new housing numbers demanded are increased before regions and planning authorities can begin to comprehend them and changes to planning rules are proposed and planning structures rearranged while we pause for breath. Large infrastructure developments are to be promoted by Central Government following National Planning Policy Statements (NPS) and will not be Regional matters. These will include Power Stations, Airports and major road developments.

Regional Assemblies will be phased out around the year 2010. Not much time to gather one's thoughts here. Regional Spatial Strategies including the South East Plan are to be reviewed allowing for ever more housing and associated development to be imposed (at least 240,000 homes per year by 2016).

As Regional Assemblies are phased out – there go some of our local democratic voices – strategic planning,

housing and transport functions will be transferred to Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) who will format combined Regional Spatial Strategies with Regional Economic Strategies. So broadly based decisions on what

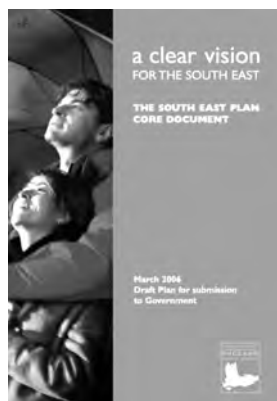
development takes place and where will be vested in one body with strongly biased interests in an expanding economy leaving great cause for concern for environmental and other issues.

Any influence we mere citizens may have on this decision making will be via our local authority input. Our voices could be lost as we become

pushed further from Central and Regional Government contacts.

Central Government will dictate the economic growth target for each region which will be reflected in the level of housing development. This is already in place in The Housing Green Paper (July 2007) where the onus is on local authorities to find the land for building.

So what is all this change likely to achieve? With Government obsession with development in the South East we are certainly going to see even more built environment creeping out into the countryside together with the associated infrastructure problems. These proposals for planning organisation will probably speed up the process.



Financial support for campaigns

The recent legacies have already enabled us to make a difference in our fight to protect the Sussex countryside. For example we have contributed £2,500 to the campaign fighting the location of the Glyndebourne wind turbine and a further £2,500 to challenge the proposed boundary designation of the South Downs National Park. These contributions, together with those from other like minded environmental organisations, will fund the preparation of data including specially drawn maps and specialist representation at the public inquiries.

Executive members

CPRE Sussex is currently looking for new Executive Committee members to help the Branch expand its activities to protect the Sussex countryside at strategic level. Meetings are held five times a year. If you are interested please contact the Chairman via the Branch office (tel: 01825 890975)

Woodland saved in Bolnore village

Stuart Meier Director, Sussex Branch

For some time, members of Mid Sussex District have been aware of the controversy regarding the final phases of the Bolnore development at Haywards Heath. A group of community organisations, the LCOs, was campaigning for changes. I had been leading the LCOs for several years, ultimately on a full time voluntary basis for over a year prior to my appointment at CPRE Sussex.

Bolnore Village is a major urban extension to South West Haywards Heath, originally planned for 780 houses in 1993 but now likely to take 1400 or more, with much increased density.

Phases 1 to 3 are already built, some 860 units. The Bolnore Planning Inquiry dealt with Crest's plans for Phases 4 & 5. These included a further 785 units, on fields and woods, all embedded in Ancient Woodland and other key ecological assets.

The LCOs had pressed for the elimination of 'The Ten Flaws' – but they did not object to the principle of development. We actually supported the plans if the flaws were rectified. We recognised that a refusal would simply lead to a new application, and pragmatically we sought to fix the Flaws through the planning system.



This veteran tree is now protected



Hatched area shows the site proposed for development, embedded in ancient woodland

Critical among the changes sought was the removal of development on Four Acre Wood. Our partners, Sussex Wildlife Trust and others insisted this is Ancient Woodland. Crest's QC kept asking 'where are the trees?' So volunteers surveyed them – all 821. Clearly, Crest couldn't see the trees for the wood! In fact, the developer repeatedly mistook a small area of meadow for the woodland around it.

Other improvements sought included better buffering of the woodland edges and a reduction of the number of units, to give future residents adequate open space in the heart of the community.

Scheduled for just 8 days, this Inquiry ran for over a year, the longest running such inquiry in the country. I represented the LCOs every day, working with our barrister, Charlie Banner.

When Crest submitted the applications in autumn 2004, they hoped for a rapid decision as the proposals were generally in line with the Local Plan. Over three years later, the decision of the Secretary of State finally arrived in late January 2008 – and the LCOs won on all our key points.

As well as saving Four Acre Wood and getting better buffering, the case

established some important new principles for the benefit of other sites, one of the reasons we fought so hard.

In particular, we saved Four Acre Wood despite the area being allocated for development in the Local Plan. We ensured the importance of the brand new Ancient Woodland Inventories was recognised. Finally, the decision has established that a wood does not need to be continuously wooded throughout time to be ancient. After all, for 20 years or so Four Acre Wood had been an open field – called Four Acre Meadow!

To quote one witness 'paradoxically, the one thing you don't need in a wood is trees'.

Press Officer

We are delighted to report that we now have a volunteer Press Officer, Vanessa Knivett, whose background is in journalism. Vanessa will ensure that work and current campaigns of CPRE Sussex come before the public eye on a regular basis. If any member has a story of particular interest please contact Branch office.

Horse Logging in Britain

Doug Joiner Chairman British Horse Loggers



Horse logging is the extraction of timber using horses as a 'base machine' with a wide range of traditional and modern implements. Horse loggers work through the whole range of timber produced in British woodlands; from small coppice poles, thinnings in soft and hard woods up to final crop – large saw logs in soft and hard woods.

The British Horse Loggers is an independent group and is the national industry body representing horse logging contractors and their supporters. It offers demonstrations, training, professional development and works to advertise and promote horse logging. It has recently established a charity, the British Horse Loggers Charitable Trust, whose objects are to promote and maintain the standards of the craft of Horse Logging for the public benefit and to advance education and training in the craft of Horse Logging and associated skills. Its principal activity has been to establish an Apprenticeship Scheme.

Our Patron is HRH The Prince of Wales. He is committed to promoting and encouraging high quality woodland management and his Charitable Foundation has contributed financially to the Apprenticeship Scheme.

Horse loggers are currently employed throughout Britain. They work in our state forests, for the woodland and

wildlife trusts, for our statutory agencies, national and local bodies, voluntary groups and for owners of small woodlands. There are successful horse logging contractors working from the north of Scotland, throughout England and Wales to the south coast. Most work as self employed contractors. Horse loggers work in commercial, amenity, conservation and private woodlands.

Horse logging has considerable benefits over other extraction systems. It is the ultimate low impact extraction system and out performs all other small scale systems including quad bikes and mini forwarders. Horse logging allows for a highly selective silvicultural management of our woodlands resulting in a quality of woodland management and woodland care that can not be equalled by any other system. Horses can extract timber effectively and safely through standing timber without causing any damage or disturbance to the standing timber or to the flora and fauna.

Horse logging can appear to be expensive, superficially. It is highly skilled and complex work and demands a premium. When the quality of the work is taken into account along with the low impact, the lower reliance upon expensive infrastructure (such as stoned roads) and the lack of costly reparation, the cost equation evens out. Horse loggers are often asked to work with

poor quality timber on dangerous terrain over a long distance. This can give a poor impression of outputs. Allowed a reasonable extraction distance, good timber and reasonable terrain, horse logging can be cost effective and cost competitive and the daily output is impressive.

Horse logging is not an outdated and outmoded relic of a previous age. It is a vibrant and continuous tradition using the very best of the past; the traditional and important skills of life long horse men and women, with the very best of the current; the contemporary, practical skills of working horses, their handlers and modern equipment. It has an important niche in contemporary forestry and does not threaten or challenge more conventional systems.

Horse loggers perform other important services in forestry: controlling bracken, brambles and other invasive weeds, scarifying to encourage natural regeneration, moving fencing materials, tools and equipment as well as working in establishment. Horses can offer a flexible answer to a range of access problems.

If you wish to employ a competent and professional horse logging contractor who you can employ with confidence, contact the British Horse Loggers using the contact details below. The British Horse Loggers have a Professional Register of recommended contractors.

For more information, contact the British Horse Loggers. Visit www.britishhorseloggers.org for more information and membership details.



Glyndebourne

South Downs Environmental Protection Consortium

Sarah Robinson Branch Liaison & Development Officer

The Glyndebourne Coalition has been renamed the South Downs Environmental Protection Consortium (SDEPC) to clarify our position in the Inquiry. The Campaign has moved apace over recent months in preparation for the Public Inquiry which opens on 26th February and is expected to run for six days.

With representatives from The South Downs Society, CPRE National Office and Sussex, The Ramblers (central office and Sussex area), The Council for National Parks and The Open Spaces Society, the Consortium has focused our challenge on the threat the turbine poses to our precious downland landscape. Working alongside Natural England and The South Downs Joint Committee we believe we have a strong case. Dr Tony Parker will challenge the proposal on grounds of noise, but will stand as an individual at the Inquiry.

As a consortium we have employed a

professional advocate and expert landscape witness to represent us. These highly experienced professionals are being paid by funds donated by all member organisations of the Consortium. We are particularly grateful to those individuals from CPRE Sussex who have made private donations to this important campaign.

Consortium members will each have representatives covering their specific concerns at the Inquiry. We are very fortunate that Dr Peter Brandon has agreed to represent us. One of the most renowned 'Downsmen', having made a career out of exploring and understanding the Sussex Downs, Peter will draw on his immense knowledge of the area, much of which is documented in his many books.

However whilst we continue to challenge this turbine, due to its location and threat it poses to our precious Downland landscape, we continue to

support appropriate renewable energy schemes in Sussex as outlined in our Branch Policy which may be found on the branch website by following this link: www.cpresussex.org.uk/Resources/cpre-sussex-policies.

Glyndebourne Inquiry

The inquiry is to be held at the White Hart Hotel, Lewes, and at 10am Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays commencing 26th February. It is likely that our evidence will be heard during the second week of the Inquiry, probably on Tuesday 4th March. Please do come along and hear our witnesses in action, your support would be greatly appreciated. If you need any further details please call Sarah Robinson on 01444 457293.

Vision for 2026: what future for the countryside?

Lorna Train Branch Volunteer

Along with over 100 other CPRE volunteers from across the country, I attended a one-day conference at The Merchant Taylor's Hall, London, on 23rd November. The Board of Trustees was very keen to listen to the views from the 'grassroots' on the strategic direction and policy of the whole organisation.

The main focus for the day was on policy issues and the development of CPRE's Vision for the countryside in 2026, the Centenary Year for the CPRE. The issues are: Housing and Demography; Planning and Local Democracy; Engagement with the Countryside; Food and Farming and Landscape. A lively debate on each of

these important issues led to a range of solutions which will help inform this important document to be published early in 2008. There will certainly be a lot of media coverage when the 'Vision for 2026' goes public.

The conference concluded with a literary debate on the future of the countryside. Five noted authors formed a debating panel to exchange their own views and to respond to questions from the audience. The authors were our President, Bill Bryson; Sue Clifford, the co-founder of The Common Ground, which campaigns to link nature with culture and the positive investment people can make in their localities; Nicholas Crane, probably best known

as a presenter on the BBC's Coast and Map Man series; Richard Girling, a feature writer for the Sunday Times and the naturalist, Richard Mabey. There was no shortage of questions from the floor and to give you a flavour of the questions I will finish with a few of them to consider perhaps for yourself:

- Of all the total charitable giving in the UK, why is only 2% given to the environment?
- Why is the Government not more supportive of food and farming?
- To what extent should we be managing our wildlife?
- How can the panel help to educate urbanites to care more about the countryside?

Awards, marks and prizes

James Frost Director CPRE Norfolk

Several branches of CPRE run annual Award schemes which reward good landscape and architectural practice. Many other branches also award the nationally recognised CPRE Mark when outstanding projects in the county are identified. These awards offer good opportunities for promoting the branch in a positive way, recruiting more volunteers and contributing overall to CPRE's objectives.

By definition, the typical CPRE campaigner is almost always objecting or asking for modifications to someone else's ideas and therefore often appears unduly negative. This often prompts the question, "Well, what would you do instead?"

To answer this question, many CPRE branches around the country make Awards to projects that have made an outstanding contribution to the character, preservation or living value of the local countryside. CPRE Award schemes allow branches to highlight examples of best practice and reward projects that have been executed with the sort of forethought, ingenuity and professionalism that we all like to see.



Earth sheltered social housing scheme in Honingham

CPRE Norfolk Awards

In this article, at the request of Roy Haycock, Chairman CPRE Sussex, I have described the winning formula that makes Norfolk's Award scheme and others around the country, such a success.

In Norfolk, our Awards scheme is a central part of our work. The CPRE Norfolk Awards was founded in 1979 to recognise significant achievements in the fields of conservation and architecture. The scheme is very broad based with entries coming from a multitude of sources. Restoration projects, building conversions, innovative new building design, landscape management projects and school's environmental work, are all considered.

The judges look for projects which demonstrate some or all of the following criteria:

- respect for the 'integrity' of the original building
- restraint in intervention
- excellent use of materials and quality of detailing
- environmental changes which 'work' with the local ecology
- landscape as an opportunity for 'learning'
- ingenuity in bringing new vitality to old settings

Around the country

CPRE Design and Countryside Award Schemes operate all over the country in CPRE Branches such as Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Friends of the Peak District and Hampshire.

Some other branch Award schemes are linked to specific CPRE Campaigns. In Cheshire, for example, the branch give an annual Award for worthy local food suppliers, as nominated by the general public. And CPRE Isle of Wight work with local astronomers to give an annual Award for sensitively planned lighting schemes on the island. Many other branches present the CPRE Mark, a bronze plaque donated by National Office, on an ad-hoc basis when and where outstanding projects in the English Countryside are identified.

The breadth and diversity of winning projects is outstanding. In Edale in the Peak District a CPRE Award has been given to a local craftsman who has carved a small bridge from a single oak tree. The bridge sits inconspicuously in the landscape, creating a walkway over a stream in an isolated rural landscape. At the other extreme, CPRE Northamptonshire presented an Award to a local authority project in the market town of Brackley. The work included a



A bridge carved from a single oak tree in Edale, the Peak District

A further suggestion

Edward P Echlin, branch member, has written in with his own suggestion for an award. His particular area of concern is the current epidemic of slabbing, tiling and concreting front gardens. He would like to see some kind of modest awards for people who remove asphalt or similar and plant a tree instead.

major re-landscaping of the market square and painstaking renovations to the war memorial.

Sustainability considerations have come to the forefront in recent years. Here in Norfolk we awarded an earth sheltered social housing scheme in Honingham that provides extremely low cost living for local people by use of a range of renewable energies and a thoughtful design. An Award was also presented to a 'Classroom of the Future' – a new classroom powered by a wind turbine and geothermal heating system. The children can monitor and check the energy usage of their classroom environment by way of monitors on the wall.

There is no limit to the types of project can be awarded and branches have no need to use their imagination to come up with worthy and diverse projects. Examples have included the making of a

pair of iron gates for a church graveyard by a local blacksmith; the restoration of a derelict church by a team of volunteers; the creation of a nature reserve in an unseen part of the county; a detailed study of vernacular architecture in a district area; the creation of a school's wildlife garden; and a solar powered boating scheme on local waterways. All of these projects have received CPRE Awards across the country.

And the winners are...

Awards schemes are also about people. Architects, conservation managers, builders, boatbuilders, hedgecutters, blacksmiths, thatchers and conservation trust managers have all been recognised by the CPRE Awards in recent years. CPRE Awards schemes also provide an opportunity to highlight excellence within local government and regular Awards are made to local authority officers for their work on school projects, conservation projects and historic restoration. All winners take away bronze plaques to put up at the location of the project and framed certificates for their office wall. Free advertising for CPRE!

To sum up, I believe it is vital to reward individuals when they enhance their surroundings or 'save' a building or area of landscape otherwise at risk. This enhancement or restoration does not simply happen by accident, it is

often the result of a great deal of effort and dedication by one individual or group, which would otherwise go unnoticed. A CPRE Award scheme gives us all the chance to celebrate and reward this hard work.

CPRE Sussex is planning to launch a new Awards scheme in 2008 and will be inviting interest for the judging panel.

SEFS – South East Forum for Sustainability

CPRE Sussex supports this small but influential environmental group which is based in Brighton.

At its AGM in October 2007, it reported on its success in influencing the development of the South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy. It has helped push forward environmental issues so that the South East Plan now includes important sustainable development principles. It has influenced policies such as climate change, the ecological footprint, green infrastructure, biodiversity and the Thames Basin Heath.

SEFS is also working to lobby the Government over its plan to introduce the Sub Regional Assembly by 2010. This will replace the current regional assemblies. There is real concern that in this new structure environmental issues will be less important and there will be no role for stakeholder engagement.

SEFS is developing its own objectives. They have decided to adopt and refine the 10 principles of the initiative 'One Planet Living': www.oneplanetliving.org/10principles.html.

Lorna Train Branch Volunteer



Classroom of the Future, Thurlton

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Uckfield, East Sussex,
TN22 5HG**

*If you do not want to cut your Sussex
Review, a photocopied form
is acceptable.*

Winners

During 2007 we raised a total of
£1,850 and gave £547.25 in prizes,
with a net gain of £1302.75 for our funds.

**Winners of the September, October,
November and December 2007
were:**

	SHARE NO	AMOUNT
Miss B P Weller	84	£44.50
Mr R J Sharp	137	£44.50
Mr and Mrs J E Cross	160	£44.75
Mrs J Davidson	149	£45.75

The Cuckmere estuary

John Hurwood and Peter Mumford Wealden South District



This autumn the Environment Agency (EA) set out their view of the options and their recommended future strategy in their publication Planning for the future, Cuckmere estuary draft flood risk management strategy.

This consultation document was backed up by public displays in the area and presentations to local groups. The present river banks have reached the end of their useful lives and, with the government's proposed cut in the flood prevention budget, the EA offered the options of (1) continuing as at present but building up the banks to contain rises in sea levels; (2) a partial withdrawal, by continuing to stop the build up of shingle at the river mouth (it's actually a canalised section) but allowing the river to breach its banks in places to create a flood plain; and (3) allowing nature to take its course and breach the banks over a longer section of flood plain.

In conjunction with Lewes District, as the estuary lies on the cusp of the

boundary between our two districts, we submitted comments by the required date.

We chose Option 3, with the proposal for additional breaches to manage the creation of a flood plain and mud flats over the whole length from Exceat Bridge to the sea. This would allow the river to resume its original winding course coming out near to the Eastern cliffs. It would create an attractive series of wetlands and paths providing habitats for many waders and other wildlife. The build up of shingle will we feel improve the protection for the Western cliffs with their famous coastguard cottages (now in danger of falling into the sea). Options 1 and 2 we believe increase the risk of flooding upstream in places like Alfriston when the increasingly frequent storm surges occur. (As a matter of interest there was flooding in the Alfriston and Hailsham areas only last month.)

The period of time covered by this paper ranges from 20 to 100 years.

We await publication of their decision early in 2008.

Much Ado Books

We wish to thank Much Ado Books of Alfriston for their generous donation of £110 from sales at the Volunteers Conference in November. Independent Bookshop of the Year 2007, Much Ado Books is well worth a visit. They also have a great website, offering books and related gifts online if you can't get to Alfriston.
www.muchadobooks.com

Around the districts

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There is nothing new to report this time. However we do desperately need some more volunteers to help keep an eye on planning in our district. Much of it can now be done on internet which saves many a journey. **14.1.08**

Arun District

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Since the last edition we are pleased to report that Arun District Council has in fact rejected the application for a crematorium at Bilsham (near Yapton between Littlehampton and Felpham/ Bognor Regis), and that the prospective developers have decided not to appeal against the Authority's decision.

Less welcome is the news that two separate development consortia have applied to DCLG for the former Ford Airfield site (between Yapton and Littlehampton) to be designated one of the Government's first new 'eco-towns' – for at least 5,000 new homes and related infrastructure development. As these new homes will be in addition to the 11,000 that Arun District has now been required to build – forcing the Authority to begin formulating anew its LDF 'preferred options' – the Council has consequently expressed its opposition to the Ford eco-town proposals, pointing out that these would inter alia undermine plans for the regeneration of Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

Meanwhile a developer has put in an application for 50 new homes to be built on another (former light-industrial) site

at Bilsham, while Bellway Homes are appealing the Council's rejection of their application for 24 (mainly 'executive-style') homes on a site just outside the built-up area boundary at Fontwell.

Elsewhere construction is now poised to begin of some 1,300 new homes at the greenfield Sites 5 and 6 on the edges of Felpham and North Bersted (Bognor), already consigned to development under the existing Arun Local Plan. It is only to be hoped that the new homes – other than the mere 30% designated as 'affordable' – will go some way to meeting local housing needs, and not simply go mainly to buyers from outside the District (as seems to have been the case with executive-style housing developments elsewhere). **12.1.08**

Brighton & Hove

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We held our AGM in October. Only nine people attended to hear Dr Dan Danahar, Environmental Co-ordinator at Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton, speak about the importance of maintaining the biodiversity of urban open space both for educational and ecological purposes. Urban open areas often provide corridors through which wildlife can migrate between more naturally wild areas. As a teacher he uses these wild areas in the city to introduce children to the natural world.

Brighton and Hove Council are working with people such as Dan to develop urban spaces as a resource for wildlife, recreation and education.

As a result of the poor turn-out at the AGM in 2007 we will combine the 2008 AGM and the Rectory Garden Party (June 8th 3-5pm at the address above – all welcome from any District).

Falmer Stadium is not entirely signed, sealed and delivered. There is still some

doubt about the football club's ability to raise the funds and there have been some statements from Brighton and Hove Council suggesting that they are not expecting the rate payers to come up with the money. We again express our gratitude to Richard Allden and David Young for all the work they have done on Falmer and the South Downs National Park. **4.1.08**

Chichester North

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I have taken over from Michael Dew who has stood down from his position as Chairman while he battles with a health problem; however, he will continue as our South Downs National Park inquiry representative. We all wish him well in his progress towards a full recovery.

The never ending stream of planning applications keeps Shirley Wright very busy and we are all very fortunate to have the benefit of her long and skilful experience in responding to them.

In Nyewood/Rogate we have objected to a proposal for a residential care home. We do, of course, support the need for Care Homes, but as this site is within the Sussex Downs AONB, great care is required to preserve both the scenic values of the area and the consequential impact on the local community and infrastructure. Our principle objections refer to the size (32 units) and design of the main building which, as proposed, would make an unsightly impact on this rural area. We have also expressed our concern that the roads surrounding the site are not suitable for the potential increase in traffic.

Plans for the Syngenta site, Fernhurst/ Haslemere, refer to the conversion of redundant offices and for new-build

accommodation. In total, over 400 flats and 10 other new buildings have been proposed; this site is also within the South Downs AONB. While we accept the need to put redundant buildings to good use, we have highlighted the impact that a development on this scale would have on all services and facilities of the village. Further pressure will also be put on the already overloaded road system. We have also requested that special provision must be made to reduce the visual impact of any on-site development.

The mineral site at West Lavant was the subject of an article in the Autumn issue of the Sussex Review. There have been no new developments since then but we continue to watch this situation very carefully because, as proposed, the project would have a severely damaging effect on both the environment and the quality of life of the local community.

Finally, most of our recent work has been directed at preparing our submission for the re-opened SDNP inquiry in February. The acceptance of the Western Weald as a coherent part of the South Downs and, therefore, its inclusion within the SDNP continues to be our main objective. In addition, we are focusing on the area including the towns of Midhurst and Petworth to further argue the case for their inclusion. It seems inconceivable that a National Park, characterised by the provision for leisure activities, should exclude two towns which provide much of the source information for the enjoyment of our countryside. **3.1.08**

Chichester South

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During the past few months, we have dealt with enquiries from the public about matters of local concern, and either given advice or passed them on to the appropriate local councillor.

A development of 102 new houses on a brownfield site, part of the old Tangmere airfield, has received planning permission. We did not object, as it had the support of the Parish Council, and

had already been identified as a site for housing within the (now rejected) Local Development Framework proposals.

The state of the sea defences at Selsey has given concern. We await the Environment Agency's response to last year's consultation exercise with some apprehension – it is plain that without continual active intervention, the defences at Medmerry will be increasingly vulnerable to high tides and storms. One major commercial concern is rebuilding and reinforcing its own frontage at its own expense, but it is unlikely that funding will be available to protect the whole stretch.

We have received notification that a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is to be carried out, over which the four coastal West Sussex councils will co-operate where appropriate. CPRE have been named as consultees, and we shall be ready to contribute.

As ever, we need more volunteers to help safeguard our area! **14.1.08**

Horsham & Crawley

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The Panel Report on the SE Plan recommended that countryside protection policies should be strengthened which is to be welcomed by Horsham & Crawley. Our thanks for presenting a convincing case on this point must go to the CPRE South East Regional Group in conjunction with CPRE Sussex, Surrey and Kent. However, large scale development west of Horsham and west of Crawley has already been written in to the Horsham and Crawley Local Development Frameworks. It remains to be seen whether the Government will provide the necessary funding for the corresponding infrastructure to service all these new houses and people.

The area West and North West of Crawley falling mostly in Horsham District has been earmarked in the 2001 West Sussex Structure Plan for 2,500 new homes, facilities and associated infrastructure. Consultation on the Joint

Area Action Plan (JAAP) ended on 30 November 2007. A public examination is expected in December 2008.

At the same time, consultation on the West of Horsham Masterplan closed on 5 November 2007 and is expected to be adopted in Spring 2008.

A few selected planning issues:

- Water Farm, Bashurst Hill, Itchingfield – a revised planning application for the conversion of chicken sheds to industrial use was refused by Horsham District Council on sustainability grounds
- Horton Landfill Site, Small Dole – determination of the planning application to extend the landfill site has been delayed because the operator, Viridor has not provided the required information. Local groups, Horsham District Council and CPRE have all objected to this proposal. However, whatever the outcome, we still need to find a solution for the waste that is generated.
- Land at Sullington Lane, West Storrington – the Planning Inspector dismissed an appeal on the basis that there was no proven agricultural need for the barn and access track and that it would harm the character of the surrounding area and ANOB. The applicant was directed to remove the barn and access track and restore the land to its previous condition
- Thakeham Mushroom Farm – Enforcement Notices have been served in respect of 10 unlawful uses. Appeals have been submitted but no retrospective planning applications. In this case Horsham District Council has applied PPG18 in respect of loss of amenity through change of use. **13.1.08**

Lewes

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Our AGM was held in October at Lewes Town Hall and was quite well attended. The existing Committee and myself as Chairman were re-elected for another year. The speaker from English Nature gave an interesting resume of their work in general throughout the county.

With 2007 now behind us and some decisions made, perhaps 2008 will be a little less hectic but we still have some major projects both local and county wide to keep us busy and on our toes.

On a County basis we shall be represented at the re-convened South Downs National Park Inquiry which opens again on 12th February at Worthing where our case will again be put forward for the restoration of Ditchling and Falmer villages to be within the boundaries of the proposed SDNP.

The Public Inquiry into the proposed wind turbine at Glynebourne will open on 26th February, if all goes according to plan. Again we shall be represented.

The proposed provision of an Incinerator at Newhaven is now likely to be the subject of a further Public Inquiry following the recent developments into the emission data given.

Work on the scheme of providing a bus lane on the A259 west bound between Peacehaven and Rottingdean has started and will most likely be completed just before or after Easter. It is hoped that the scheme will reduce bus delays considerably thus helping both the travelling public and also reduce the CO₂ emissions for the area.

The new road bridge at Beddingham over the railway lines was opened on 16th December last doing away with the level crossing which has been blamed for all the delays to road traffic in the area. Very little mention has been made that one of the significant causes for the delays was due to the increase in road traffic which the area was never designed to take. The scheme has not included any major road works east of Beddingham roundabout and time alone will tell if the money spent (over £32m) will simply have moved traffic jams from one roundabout to another.

In conjunction with Wealden South District comments have been sent to the Environment Agency on their proposals for the long term future of the Cuckmere Estuary – see page 10. **3.1.08**

Mid Sussex

Sarah Robinson
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By the time you receive this newsletter, hopefully some of our Mid Sussex members will have attended a meeting to discuss the Core Strategy document that is currently up for consultation. As mentioned in our invitation to the meeting, the housing requirement for the period to the year 2026 is for 15,000 new dwellings in Mid Sussex. This includes the controversial development planned at East Grinstead as well as further new strategic development of 3,000 dwellings in Burgess Hill and 1,500 in Haywards Heath/Lindfield.

We can't stress strongly enough how important it is for members to respond to this consultation – there is still time as the deadline for comments is **20th March 2008**. The document is available on the Mid Sussex DC's website www.midsussex.gov.uk as well as at public libraries and the Council offices.

At the end of 2007 the District Council received the final Inspector's Report on the Council's Small Scale Housing Allocation Development Plan. There have been some amendments but the report is binding on the Council and it is expected to be formally adopted in February. As well as sites in the three towns, there is also development proposed for the larger villages including Lindfield, Hassocks, Cuckfield and Crawley Down. We will need to be vigilant as planning applications are submitted for these sites to ensure that the development is carried out with the minimum of damage to the environment, and the infrastructure needs of the affected communities are fully met. Do watch the Local Press for details. **12.1.08**

Rother & Hastings

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The last quarter in Rother has been dominated in planning terms by a large scale application, approved, for housing on the edge of Battle for between 250 and 300 housing units. CPRE objected because the land is in the AONB and insufficient infrastructure to the town of Battle generally was being proposed.

However the difficulty in opposing the application was caused by the fact that the site had been approved in the relatively recently adopted Rother Local Plan. **It proves beyond any doubt that work needs to be done at local plan, or LDF stage as it now is, to give our organisation a fighting chance of preventing devastation to a site immediately adjacent to the actual fields where Harold's troops massed before the Battle of Battle, as it should really be called.**

Another issue has concerned applications for the siting of 'gypsy' caravans, so described in the applications themselves. The councils will have difficulty in refusing some applications because neither Rother nor East Sussex has made proper provision for traveller sites in their areas.

There has also been an unhealthy crop of back land applications, where applicants seek to develop an existing single residential plot by creating a new access and cramming in 1, 2 or even 7 dwellings, all cheek by jowl with existing properties in rural villages. Fortunately at the moment in most cases Rother planners are dealing with these robustly.

Another recent tendency has been for there to be applications for huge garages adjoining or adjacent to existing mature houses, quite out of keeping with the size and format of the original house. One was for a 5 car garage with playroom above, probably bigger itself than most of the houses in the village. Yet the planners do not seem to bother about the accumulation of building mass in sensitive locations, because apparently houses have rights to have garages!

14.1.08

Wealden North

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The public inquiry into the Downlands and Bird in Eye sites at Uckfield opened on 15 January. Scheduled for three weeks, it has now run into its fourth week, with a further four weeks adjourned until June. Dr Roger Smith, Branch Executive

Transport

member, will challenge the development at Downlands Farm on grounds of the damage and loss of Ancient Woodland. We objected to the proposal from the very start and have raised our concerns on the Bird in Eye Farm sites based on infrastructure need, in particular the impact on local roads.

We continue to liaise with the Ashdown Forest Conservators. They have an excellent website www.ashdownforest.org which provides an invaluable source of information about the Forest.

Nigel Primrose continues to monitor the WDC planning lists. If you are aware of any proposals you feel we should support or challenge please contact Nigel via Branch office. **16.1.08**

Wealden South

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In conjunction with Lewes District we submitted comments on the Environment Agency's consultation document for the Cuckmere Estuary, as the estuary lies on the cusp of the boundary between our two districts – see page 10.

It is worth noting that a survey has been carried out all round the sea shore in order to decide what action to take in each section of coast. Proposals vary from a managed retreat, allowing the sea to take its natural course to full protection eg where there is much expensive property and infrastructure. Predictably of course, the government will not provide all the required money so that with rising sea levels and more frequent storms, and so for some coastal dwellers troubles lie ahead.

On a more usual note, we are facing additional 'developer' pressure in Polegate and Hailsham. In one case in Polegate an application to change the use from high grade business purposes to yet more housing is going to appeal shortly. We are supporting the District council in their objection to this as the lesser of two evils. As might be guessed both schemes are the result of infilling of spare land created by the By-pass as inevitably happens. **16.1.08**

As was only to be expected from an organisation geared to growth at any price, the SE Transport Authority voted in favour of the Hastings link road. They say it is essential to the development of the area (which we have already shown is a myth, as it is more likely to take people and trade away from the town). They continue by urging the Department for Transport to find the extra money by whatever means.

It has just been announced that further administrative and legal delays are now necessary, putting the earliest possible date for the public inquiry back to the end of the year. By this time of course there will have been another major increase in costs and undoubtedly a further squeezing of the government's budget.

It is good to see the number of passengers on trains continues to increase in spite of a few hiccups which the media exploit to the full. On a personal note I had two seamless and very comfortable rail journeys over the Christmas period. All we need now is for the government to divert a bit of the money they use to subsidise the roads to invest in the less polluting, safer and apart from commuting times, more comfortable railways.

By the time the next Review appears, we oldies will be able to enjoy free bus travel in every area in the country as well as in our own districts. This should enable many people to leave the car at home even more.

Peter Mumford Transport Campaigner

Aviation

The Civil Aviation Authority has reported that the number of passengers using regional airports last year smashed the 100 million barrier! They now account for 42% of air passengers travelling to and from the UK. In Scotland, the passenger numbers at the five largest airports have risen by 162% in the past 15 years. Edinburgh airport saw the largest net growth, from 2.5 to 8.5 million over the period.

The Exeter-based low-cost airline 'Flybe', which exclusively operates short-haul flights, has announced a £20-million increase in full-year profits, obtained from increased passenger numbers which have risen by 2 million to 5 million in the past five years. Their routes flown have increased from 41 to 125, many of them between regional UK airports. Recently they have produced adverts discouraging people from taking the train!

The Government launched its consul-

tation into expansion at Heathrow on 23 November. It will last until 27 February 2008. If the plans go ahead, aircraft movements could rise from 473,000 per annum to 720,000! Ken Livingston, Mayor of London, states 'I have made it very clear that I oppose all airport expansion in London and the South East, not just at Heathrow'. For once, I agree with him.

If a third runway were added, it would take the pressure off the demand for an additional one for Gatwick, but this is still dependent on the levels of air pollution. A recent report by Woodnewton Associates, which analysed the polls and studies carried out on attitudes to climate change, particularly as it applies to aviation over the past 4 years, has found that 'there is no public appetite for airport expansion. Only 18% support it and, indeed, 57% of people support ...a policy aimed at slowing down growth in air travel'.

Roy Haycock Branch Chairman

Outings 2008

Tour of Groombridge Place Gardens, Groombridge, Kent

Thursday 15th May at 2pm

Cost £16.50 per person to include a cream tea



These award winning gardens situated on the Kent/Sussex border formed the location for the recent film, *Pride and Prejudice*. The gardens form a series of outdoor rooms and during our organised tour we will see spring flowering trees and shrubs in the

Peacock Walk, cherry blossom and laburnum in the secret garden and bluebells in the Enchanted Forest. During the visit there will be the chance to take a short canal boat trip to and from the Enchanted Forest with idyllic views.

Private visit to Parham House, Storrington, West Sussex

Tuesday 8th July at 2pm

Cost £16.50 per person to include a cream tea



Set in an ancient deer park below the South Downs, Parham House is a beautiful Elizabethan House with a remarkable family inheritance of portraits, furniture, paintings and notable early needlework. Our private tour of the house will last about 1.5 hours after which we shall be free to visit the two award winning gardens: the 19th Century Pleasure Grounds and a magnificent 4 acre romantic walled garden with a 1920's historic Wendy House.

Guided tour of High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, Mid Sussex

Thursday 12th June at 2pm

Cost £16.00 per person to include a cream tea



Dating from the early 20th century, these gardens in the Sussex Weald are a well preserved example of a landscaped woodland garden. The visit will begin with a guided tour lasting approximately 1 hour after which we shall be free to wander around the garden.

There are 27 acres of magnificent woodland and water gardens with rare, exotic and unusual plants from many parts of the world that were collected by some of the most

famous plant hunters in history. In June, they boast the best natural (unimproved) acid wildflower meadow in the county. There is also a tree trail to follow. *The gardens are on a hillside and so, regrettably, are not suitable for wheelchairs.*

Visit to Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex

Wednesday 30th July at 2pm

Cost £16 per person to include a cream tea



A quintessential English Garden, Pashley Manor Gardens was voted English Garden of the Year 1999. It offers a blend of romantic landscaping designed by the eminent landscape architect Anthony du Gard Pasley, imaginative plantings and fine old trees, fountains, springs and large ponds. In July the scent of sweet peas and lilies will perfume the air, alongside roses and a variety of summer bedding plants. The gardens surround a private Grade 1 listed timber framed Tudor house.

Our visit will begin with a 15 minute introductory talk by the Head Gardener after which we shall be free to tour the gardens.

Outings booking form

To: **Outings, CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG**

DATE	PLACE	NO. OF PEOPLE	TOTAL COST
Thurs 15th May	Groombridge Place Gardens	___ adults at £16.50 each	___
Thurs 12th June	High Beeches Gardens	___ adults at £16.00 each	___
Tues 8th July	Parham House and Gardens	___ adults at £16.50 each	___
Weds 30th July	Pashley Manor Gardens	___ adults at £16.00 each	___
Total £			___

NB. Refunds, less booking fee of £5, will only be made for any cancellation received more than 14 days before the event. Location details will be sent out with tickets.

Please make your cheque payable to CPRE Sussex and enclose a 2nd class stamp.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

If you do not want to cut your Sussex Review, a photocopied form is acceptable.

South Downs National Park – the Inquiry begins

Rodney Chambers Vice Chairman, West Sussex



Ditchling village nestling beneath Ditchling Beacon

The National Park designation process has now reached a crucial stage, with the Public Inquiry re-opening on Tuesday 12th February.

The Park was formally designated in 2002, on boundaries set by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), but was put on hold pending a legal challenge relating to the New Forest National Park and the passage of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

After further consultation over the summer of 2007, and on advice from a landscape assessor, the Inspector, Mr Parry, issued a Report recommending a number of changes, which would mean excluding the main towns and the area to the north of Midhurst and Petworth, which makes up some 23% of the area designated in 2002.

In the case of the Western Weald, Natural England, on the instructions of Defra, had an 'indicative boundary' drawn up on the landscape assessor's criteria – broadly that 'the National Park should be confined to a single landscape type, the chalk ridge, and so should exclude the sandy soils, arable land and heathland of the Western Weald, and the Rother Valley'.

And, it was claimed, a significant proportion of the Western Weald landscape was not of sufficient quality to be included, because it had been degraded by unsympathetic agricultural practices, or by the presence of electricity lines, housing and other buildings, or by the intrusion of busy roads.

CPRE believes that this reasoning is fundamentally flawed, and that if the boundary is drawn so tightly, we will not have the National Park our landscape deserves. Also, most of the 'excluded' area is in either the East Hampshire or Sussex Downs AONBs. This status would be brought into question. To put it starkly, if some of this landscape is considered of insufficient quality to be in a National Park, it might also be judged unfit for AONB status, leaving it vulnerable to large-scale development. WSCC and Chichester DC were both

against the National Park from the start, and are now urging a boundary even tighter to the chalk ridge. They believe that the AONB designation of the 'excluded area' is secure. We are not convinced.

Feeling is equally strong about the exclusion of Falmer and Ditchling – the Beacon will be in but not the village! Lewes DC and a number of individual members have formally protested, and a powerful case is being made by The Ditchling Society.

The South Downs Campaign (SDC), which has a membership of over 120 organisations, including CPRE Sussex and Hampshire, has worked tirelessly to achieve the best National Park for the South Downs. They will continue to lead and co-ordinate evidence for the Inquiry.

They will argue that the revised boundary is based on mistaken assumptions, and make the case for confirming the designation of the National Park on the boundary proposed in 2002 without further delay.

See www.cpresussex.org.uk and www.defra.gov.uk, and www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/southdowns.

ADVANCE NOTICE

The 35th Annual General Meeting of CPRE Sussex

will be held at

Plumpton College, near Lewes

in the new Sussex Rural Business Centre

(The same venue as last year by popular request)

on Thursday 10th July 2008

The speaker will be Dr Peter Brandon, Branch Vice President
He will speak on the immediate challenges facing CPRE Sussex.

There is no cost for the meeting and morning coffee but the buffet lunch for those wishing to stay will consist of locally sourced foods and will cost £12.00 per head.

Following lunch, there will be a guided tour of the College farm. This should cover a different area from last year and will give members a further opportunity to learn about the activities at the College.

The booking form will be in the Summer Review.

AGM Business Matters

The Agenda will be included in the Summer Review but, due to time scale, nominations for Officers and Members of the Executive Committee, should be received, duly seconded, at Branch Office at least 28 days prior to the AGM. (This is before the Summer Review comes out).