

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Director, Simon Bentley, to speak at our 2019 Branch AGM on 9th October

Simon Bentley, Director of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, has very kindly offered to give a talk about **Creating Living Landscapes** at our AGM.

He has over 18 years of experience having joined the Wildlife Trust back in March 2001 and during his first summer witnessed the Rutland Osprey Project achieve the first successful breeding of ospreys in England since the 1840s. The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust cares for 35 nature reserves covering 1,234 hectares (3,048 acres), spread across Leicestershire and Rutland. From woodland to meadows, wetland to heaths, these reserves contain a rich variety of animal and plant species, many rare.



AGM

**Wednesday
9th October 2019
6-30pm**

Speaker: Simon Bentley

**Director,
Leicestershire and Rutland
Wildlife Trust**

will speak on
**"Creating Living
Landscapes"**

**Kibworth Cricket Club,
Foley Road
off Fleckney Road,
Kibworth,
Leicestershire LE8 0PF**

The meeting will take place in the function room (on the first floor) at **Kibworth Cricket Club, Foley Road, off Fleckney Road, Kibworth, Leicestershire, LE8 0PF** starting with refreshments from 6.30 p.m. and finishing by 8.30 p.m.

All members are welcome. There will also be a light buffet available with tea and coffee for a small contribution of £2.00 per head. *So we can organize the catering, please let us know if you are attending.* Please email info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk or phone 01455 444679 (answer service) to let us know if you will be attending so that catering can be organised. There is ample car parking available at the Cricket Club.

This is an opportunity for members and guests to find out more about the work of the Branch during the past 12 months as well as hearing about the work of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust. The AGM business part of the evening will be from 7 until 7.30 p.m. followed by the Wildlife Trust presentation.

**Interested in volunteering with CPRE Leicestershire?
Come to the AGM or email info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk
if you would like to find out more.**

**For more details on CPRE Leicestershire, visit our website:
www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk**

To contact us or to join, email: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk

Welcome to Louise Hall, CPRE's Volunteer Development Officer for the East Midlands

Louise joins our National Office to help CPRE local groups in the East Midlands attract and develop new volunteers. She shares her love of raising awareness of everyday environmental issues, and tells how teaching English as a second language started her on her volunteering journey.

CPRE asked Louise about her favourite volunteering role.

"I'm currently loving my role as a 'washer up' for Refiesta, a Leicester-based initiative that supplies re-usable plates, cutlery and cups at local festivals and events, and washes them up so they can be used again and again. We have great fun talking with festival-goers, many of whom are very happy to reduce single use plastic and donate their £1 deposit to the project (and we get to join in with the festival fun!). I love being part of a team, doing something practical and raising awareness of everyday environmental issues."



CPRE asked what had inspired her to get involved in working in volunteering.

"As a student I volunteered to teach English as a second language. It was a challenge I enjoyed and I met a whole host of people I otherwise wouldn't have. I developed many skills and realised that, although English wasn't my favourite topic, I enjoyed teaching, and it opened up work opportunities for me after that. It took a few years to realise the full impact of those experiences and how much I had benefited. What I love about volunteering is that both sides win: volunteers can get as much out of volunteering (a sense of teamwork, satisfaction, developing skills), as we contribute to the project."

Also we asked Louise what she was looking forward to in her new role.

"I am looking forward to applying my experience of recruiting and supporting volunteers in different kinds of projects and roles, working closely with CPRE local charities. There is so much passion for the projects and issues CPRE engages with. It'll be great to be part of a team supporting local groups so that they can reach out to more people, engage them, find ways to increase involvement, achieve results and celebrate them together."

Charnwood District CPRE Group

Rick Hoyland, District Group Chair writes:

The District Committee concentrates on challenging and questioning the detail of significant local planning applications, particularly applications that are outside the provisions of the Local Plan.

For some time Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) had been unable to demonstrate a five year supply of land for housing because of a failure to deliver projected completions from sites allocated within the Local Plan. As a consequence CBC were struggling to resist speculative developments on unallocated sites because, in the absence of a five year supply of land for housing, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) take precedence. These provisions permit developments outside Local Plans provided they can be shown to be sustainable.

However, allocated sites are coming forward and CBC can now demonstrate a supply of land for housing in excess of six years. Accordingly 'rogue' applications have reduced but we are still dealing with a number of appeals.

Charnwood and Leicestershire face many important issues in the immediate future, not least the impact of the Leicester & Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) including the proposed A46 Expressway, Climate Change and accommodating Leicester City overspill.

Rick Hoyland remains as District Chair, supported by Joyce Noon as Vice Chair but we are a small Committee and need more active helpers. Please contact Rick Hoyland on 01509 416490 or Joyce Noon on 01509 414519 to discuss ways in which you might contribute to our activities.

Focus on our volunteers

Jill Prior

Our Committee Administrator

Hi there, let me introduce myself.....

I have always loved the countryside, having spent over 30 years living in Hertfordshire and enjoying long country walks with my two labradors. I then moved to the beautiful rural area of Leicestershire over five years ago to be nearer to my daughter, her husband and my three grandsons.



Having moved to this lovely area, I worked as an Executive Assistant at a large Acute NHS Trust in Coventry for the Chief Workforce and Information Officer and, prior to that, I worked for a Bowel Consultant at the same Trust. However, after more than six years there, I decided it was time for some “me time”, so I decided to take early retirement.

I think the countryside is very important for both us and the younger generation as there is a need for everyone to have space to walk, run, explore and look at nature and, when the opportunity to join CPRE Leicestershire in September last year arose, I jumped at the chance.

Having joined a small band of wonderful volunteers, I feel I have slotted into the role of Committee Administrator well and have been welcomed most warmly by the brilliant team with open arms. My biggest challenge to date was organising a public meeting in April on the Proposed A46 Expressway which was attended by nearly 300 people, including Parish Councillors, Members of Borough Councils and an MP.

Given any opportunity, I talk about my role to whomever will listen (!) and encourage them to join CPRE, highlighting the need to protect our countryside for future generations before it disappears altogether. It is important that someone is sticking up for our countryside and CPRE certainly does do that. If our rural areas disappeared this would be calamitous for future generations.

Becoming part of the CPRE team was one of the best things that has ever happened to me and I feel that I am helping to protect our ever decreasing countryside, which is so beautiful and enjoyable, be it on a lovely warm sunny day or when there is a frost lying over the fields making them look so magical. So please, encourage your friends, work colleagues and associates to join our Charity to ensure there will be some countryside for our children's children and, indeed, their children and so on to enjoy in future years.

Volunteer with CPRE Leicestershire

The work of the Leicestershire Branch of CPRE is undertaken by a small group of volunteers. We are always looking for new people to bring their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to expand this group.

You might have expertise in planning, marketing, desktop publishing, social media or fundraising which would help us to develop the organisation and take our work forwards. You might be an experienced manager from the not-for-profit-sector or you might just love the Leicestershire countryside and want to contribute to looking after it.

Please get in touch on info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk if you would like to find out more.

Busy year for CPRE Leicestershire

Strategic Growth Plan and A46 Expressway proposal

The past 12 months have been a very busy time for CPRE Leicestershire. The Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) and its proposal for a new A46 'Expressway' east and south of Leicester has been, and remains, a major focus for branch activity.

Branch Priority

Responding to and, at times, challenging the SGP has been a priority for the branch since 2016 when a growth and development plan for the city and county was first suggested.

A small Task Group, chaired by Tony Stott, has worked closely with Gerald Kells, a specialist Policy and Campaigns Consultant, on issues relating to the SGP and A46 since 2017.

Councils endorse SGP

In early 2018 we submitted a substantial and critical response to the consultation on the SGP.

When in autumn 2017 all Leicester and Leicestershire Councils were asked to endorse a largely unaltered plan, we worked with others to try to persuade Councillors not to endorse the SGP.

A46 Expressway Meeting

In 2019, as part of an effort to raise public awareness of the A46 'Expressway' proposal, CPRE Leicestershire, in conjunction with South East Leicestershire Action Group (SELAG) and Willoughby Waterleys Residents Association (WWRA) organised a public meeting in Billesdon at the beginning of April.

Speakers including Gerald Kells for CPRE, Neil O'Brien, MP, and Simon Galton, a local County Councillor, explained to the audience of around 300 people the detrimental implications of the Expressway for the countryside and rural communities along its route.

Our Report on the A46

In conjunction with this meeting, CPRE published a report "*Leicester A46 Expressway – The Road to Ruin*" which sets out our case against the proposed



Is this what you want to see in the attractive countryside of eastern Leicestershire?

If not, you can help us to continue questioning the plans, by donating to our funds, joining CPRE or our SGP Task Group and helping with our campaign. If you are interested, please email: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk.

expressway and related developments.

Midlands Connect

We have also been monitoring the work of Midlands Connect, which is responsible for promoting strategic transport infrastructure 'improvements' across the Midlands.

We are concerned about their efforts to promote the A46 corridor from Immingham to Gloucester, as a strategic national route, and, in

particular, about their investigation into options for potential 'improvements' to the A46 around Leicester. They are due to report in November.

Campaign activities

These campaign activities have involved us in:

- responses to consultations on the SGP in 2016 and 2018;
- two critical submissions in 2018 to the County Council's Scrutiny Commission;
- raising awareness through public meetings in Great Glen in 2018 and Billesdon in 2019;
- letters, emails, lobbying, and meetings with MPs and councillors;
- gathering evidence through meetings and contacts with elected politicians, officers and Midlands Connect;
- Freedom of Information (FOI) requests;
- contact with like-minded organisations;
- press releases and letters to the press.

Achieved by a small team of volunteers

All this activity has been undertaken by a small team of dedicated and concerned volunteers. If the campaign is to grow in scale and effectiveness, more volunteers are needed urgently.

For more on our campaigning go to: <http://www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk/>

A46 Expressway Meeting – A Great Success

The plan for the A46 Expressway was heavily challenged at a very well attended meeting organised by CPRE Leicestershire and its partner organisations, South and East Leicestershire Action Group (SELAG) and Willoughby Waterleys Residents Association (WWRA) held at the Coplow Centre in Billesdon on Thursday 4th April.

An audience of nearly 300 concerned residents heard speakers from CPRE, SELAG and WWRA as well as the local MP, Neil O'Brien, and County Councillor, Simon Galton. All were highly critical, challenging the case for the SGP and the Expressway and calling for alternative solutions to be examined.



The meeting was about raising public awareness, mobilising concerns and up-dating the public about the expressway proposal and the strategy set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) to place 38,000 new houses, logistics and other infrastructure development along its route to the south and east of Leicester.

Tony Stott, Chair of CPRE's SGP Task Group

He explained that very early on CPRE had recognised that any city and county wide strategic growth plan would raise major concerns.

As a result questioning and responding to the SGP and the A46 has been a major priority activity for CPRE Leicestershire since 2016.

"CPRE has been asking critical questions, marshalling and putting forward strongly argued criticisms of what is being planned and playing a key role in raising public awareness of the issues involved."

Tony said, CPRE had come to view the SGP as a 'flawed plan'. CPRE has substantial concerns about the housing numbers, the emphasis on new road building and neglect of the SGP's impact on the countryside, especially High Leicestershire.

CPRE was also frustrated at the lack of public engagement, transparency and public scrutiny involved in the way the SGP was developed and endorsed by all the Councils.

Gerald Kells, CPRE's Consultant

He focused on the technical issues relating to housing figures and transport. He questioned the underlying assumptions of the SGP and the case for building the A46 Expressway.

He argued that the level of housing need that forms the basis of the SGP was exaggerated and that the number of houses needed in Leicester was not as high

as indicated in the SGP. CPRE believes that Leicester can supply more housing on brownfield and windfall sites within the city boundary.

Turning to the A46 Transport issues, Gerald suggested that Leicester's congestion problems were driven by traffic wanting access to and from Leicester, especially in peak times. This is a network problem requiring solutions across the whole network.

Building a new A46 Expressway around Leicester would not solve these problems. Instead, together with housing developments along its route, it would facilitate additional traffic growth, commuting and more congestion on the routes from the east and south of Leicester with traffic using the radial routes from the Expressway into Leicester.

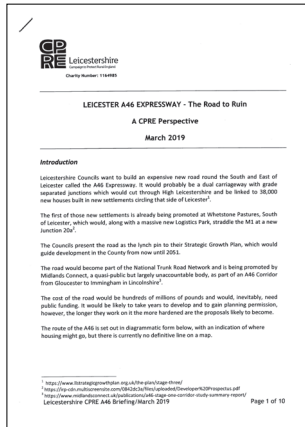
"It is a myth to suggest that this new route would solve the problems for through traffic going around Leicester on the A46. Less than 20% (and even less in peak times) of the traffic on the current A46 is through traffic and less than 10% of that is HGV's."

The end result would be an increase in local traffic on this route and more congestion on roads into Leicester."

Instead Gerald argued that solutions should involve getting rid of the Expressway plan, investing in public transport access to Leicester, 'Demand Management' measures in Leicester, and, as a stop gap, investment in specific interventions on the existing A46.

Continued on page 8

“Leicester A46 Expressway - The Road to Ruin”



This report, which was issued in advance of the protest meeting held in Billesdon on 4th April this year, sets out CPRE’s case against the proposed Expressway plan and related developments.

The plan for an Expressway to the east and south of Leicester, together with 38,000 new houses, is the central element of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP). This was endorsed by all of the principal councils last autumn. The road would become part of the National Trunk Road Network and is being promoted by Midlands Connect, a quasi-public but largely unaccountable body, as part of an A46 Corridor from Gloucester to Immingham in Lincolnshire. The route around Leicester is set out in diagrammatic form below, with an indication of where housing might go, but there is currently no definitive line on a map.

CPRE believes the proposals are fundamentally flawed because:

- The road will not resolve the transport problems around Leicester. In the longer term it will encourage increased traffic and thus exacerbate the problems.
- The road will act as a catalyst for housing to be built in open countryside along the route while, at the same time, adding to traffic problems going into Leicester.
- Midlands Connect are exaggerating the benefits of wide scale road building along the A46 corridor.

CPRE also questions the proposed level and location of housing:

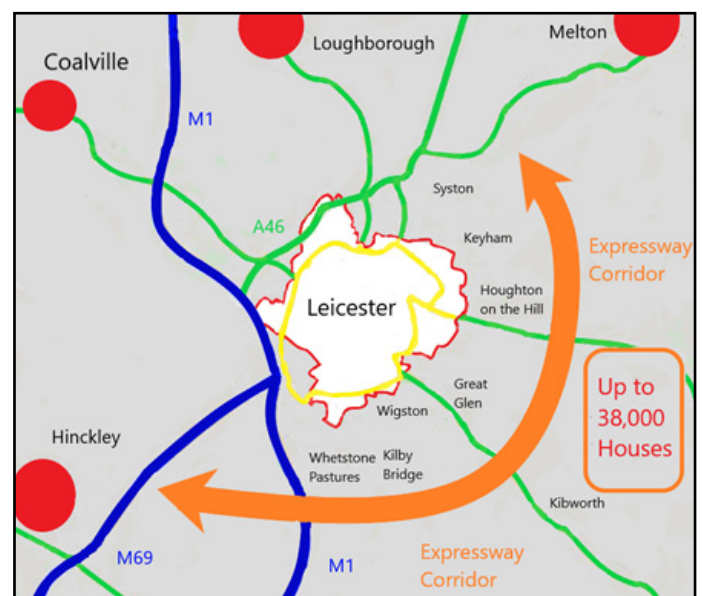
- The level of housing needed in Leicester is more modest than is being suggested.
- Councils should be maximising opportunities for development within Leicester and other urban areas.
- New settlements around the edges of the city would not provide the right kind of housing for the county in the right place.

CPRE warns that, if the current proposals are taken forward, they would:

- Do great and irreparable harm to the high-quality countryside around the east of Leicester.
- Increase congestion within and into Leicester and fail to provide public transport alternatives to car travel.
- Undermine Sustainable Development goals, including reducing Climate Change.

CPRE calls on the Councils:

- To set out a strategy to address the transport issues in Leicester which aims to reduce the level of car dependency in and around the city based on prioritisation in this order:
 - a) first, public transport interventions,
 - b) second. specific improvements on existing roads,
 - c) third, (and only if needed) providing limited new road capacity to complement proposals in (a) and (b).
- To redirect their policy towards increased housing within Leicester and other towns to support wider urban regeneration.
- To set out policies to protect the countryside of High Leicestershire (East of Leicester).



A46 Expressway Corridor with indicative housing areas

CPRE's perspective - key points from our Report

- **The Transport Issues Around Leicester**

Leicester currently suffers from congestion problems, which are evident on many of the radial routes. However, Leicester's traffic problems are not simply a problem on one route, but are a network problem which requires solutions across the whole network.

- **Why the Expressway Won't Work**

This proposal relies on a 'predict and provide' approach that exaggerates future traffic growth and is inconsistent with the levelling off of the rise in traffic in recent years. The result is that the level of traffic predicted on the Leicester network and the resulting congestion are likely to be exaggerated.

However, there is strong evidence that building new road infrastructure increases traffic. This is partly because of extra traffic that would result from new developments along such a route. In addition, a new road facilitates additional traffic growth, for example, encouraging commuters to travel from further afield.

Building a new A46 Expressway around Leicester would facilitate additional traffic growth. It would encourage commuting into Leicester from further away, with traffic using the radial routes from the Expressway into Leicester. Congestion on these routes would inevitably increase as a result of this new road, even if the road itself could be kept free-flowing despite all the development around it.

Despite these obvious facts, Leicestershire County Council has failed to take account of additional traffic that would be generated by building this road in its assessments. It has not, to our knowledge, undertaken work to assess whether the radial routes from the Expressway could cope with the additional pressures the road (and the adjacent housing) would bring.

- **Midlands Connect and the A46 Corridor Myth**

The proposals for a Leicester Expressway are also being promoted by Midlands Connect. They have manufactured the concept of a key national economic corridor along the A46 from Gloucester to Immingham in Lincolnshire, while making unsubstantiated claims about the traffic benefits of improving the route to Expressway Standard.



A view of Hungarton, one of many villages to the east and south of Leicester that would be affected by the coming of the A46 Expressway.

Its officers have not, so far as we are aware, considered whether managing traffic congestion into Leicester would be a better way to address problems on the A46 in Leicestershire rather than building a new route, which will inevitably, itself, become congested.

Some other points from the report:

- **Housing:** We do not believe the evidence supports the need for large scale housing development along the line of the A46 Expressway. To do so would almost inevitably lead to housing development in the wrong place at the expense of urban regeneration.
- **Countryside:** The route of the A46 passes many attractive rural settlements through an area of very high landscape value. High Leicestershire, in particular, is an area of undulating arable and pasture fields intersected by a network of narrow country lanes, tracks and footpaths. It is interspersed with woodlands, hedgerows and small attractive villages, hamlets and farm buildings.
- **Pollution and Climate Change:** The impact of the proposals on pollution, climate change and other wider environmental impacts do not appear to have been adequately considered. Given the increased car usage likely to result from these proposals it is hard to see how they can do anything other than increase emissions.

To read the full report, go to:

<http://www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk/resources/cpre/item/2301-report-leicester-a46-expressway-the-road-to-ruin-march-2019>

News and Views

Retrospective Planning Consents

CPRE Leicestershire are concerned regarding the increasing practice of commencing ‘minor’ building works without Planning Consent.

As a tactic it gambles on the fact that Local Authorities rarely take enforcement action to undo offending work, wishing to avoid the possibility of a costly legal battle. In most cases where unauthorised works have been notified the offender will be required to submit a retrospective application which is invariably approved. This practice cleverly sidesteps the proper consultation process and denies neighbours and consultees the opportunity to comment effectively. Faced with a fait accompli, it is then often too late for objections to be fully taken into account.

We feel that there is an argument for reviewing the option of retrospective consent. In the case of significant minor works it is difficult to believe that they were commissioned in ignorance, particularly in the case of serial applications for the same property. We suggest that where unauthorised works are deemed to require formal retrospective consent, approval, if granted, might be subject to a substantial ‘fine’ sufficient to discourage the opportunist.

We would welcome our members’ observations regarding retrospective consents and in particular evidence of Leicestershire issues which might be used to inform discussions with Local Councillors, MPs and Planning Authorities.

A46 Expressway Meeting *(continued from page 5)*

Philip Bland, Chair of SELAG argued that a new road through High Leicestershire would decimate a truly beautiful part of the County and the Chair of WWRA, David Campbell-Kelly, explained that plans were being drawn up now for a large new Garden Village at Whetstone Pastures, which would have a massive and adverse impact upon Willoughby Waterleys.

Neil O’Brien, MP, and County Councillor, Simon Galton, wanted to see alternative options worked up, particularly as the City has scope to meet far more of its own housing needs and the Expressway will make transport problems worse on the east and south sides of Leicester.

Overall the meeting was a great success in highlighting local concerns about the impact of the SGP and Expressway on the beautiful countryside, villages and rural communities to the east and south of Leicester.

All the speakers urged the audience to get involved in the campaign. We need to be objecting and mobilising now.

Climate change Emergency declared in County

Local Authorities in Leicestershire have declared a Climate Change Emergency, with an aim for councils to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Councils are calling on Westminster to provide the powers and resources necessary for them to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and to implement best practice methods to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

This year the councils that have pledged to do this are: Leicester City Council (January); North West Leicestershire (March); Oadby and Wigston and Leicestershire County Council (May); and Harborough, Melton, Hinckley and Bosworth, and Charnwood (July).

CPRE Leicestershire welcomes this commitment but urges councils to review urgently all areas of their work in the light of the Climate Change Emergency.

This should include the logistics based growth strategy and A46 Expressway and associated housing developments that form the spine of the Strategic Growth Plan.

Please Help our Campaign on the SGP and A46

Producing reports and marshalling evidence is costly and time consuming. You can help us to continue questioning the plans by donating to our funds, joining our SGP Task Group or helping with campaign activities.

If you are interested, please email: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk.

HS2 in Leicestershire

High Speed Rail 2 (HS2) is a scheme to construct a new railway initially joining London to Birmingham, with a second phase extending to Manchester and Leeds. Phase 1 has been approved and it is supposed to open in 2026. It is now at least two years late and construction work has not started pending a review of costs, several major design issues and the business case.

The intention is that Phase 2 will start to go through the approval process in 2020. It has also been delayed and seems unlikely to meet its proposed opening date in the 2030s. It has recently been announced that the cost has increased from £56bn to £85bn at 2015 prices. That's £160m for each English parliamentary constituency. Many other costs are not included and it is likely that the final cost will exceed £100bn.

The Map is of the northern part of HS2 showing the two legs in Phase 2 and the five stations. There are two more stations in London which are not shown.

The eastern leg to Leeds runs for 19 miles through Leicestershire between Appleby Magna and Kegworth. The route follows the A42 but as HS2 is designed for speeds up to 250mph it needs to be much straighter so it cannot follow the line of the A42 closely. It requires a section of the A42 near Measham to be diverted.

Apart from Leeds, there is only one other station on the eastern leg which is located at Toton between Derby and Nottingham.



This means that very few Leicestershire residents will find it useful, although this applies to virtually all affected counties. One of the claims is that HS2 will free up capacity on other routes, including the Midland Mainline (MML) through Leicester. An unfortunate side effect of HS2 is that electrification of the MML was scrapped.

The high speed necessitates deep cuttings and high embankments so it requires a wide swathe of land and considerable earthmoving. In Leicestershire the scheme takes over 50 houses, 20 commercial premises and 22 farms. During construction 800Ha (hectares) of land are needed. Around 500Ha will be required permanently, which equates to an average width of 175 metres although the tracks only take up about 20 metres. A huge construction / storage area is proposed near Ashby which could end up as a freight terminal.

Given the concerns about climate change, congestion and pollution, as well as the poor quality of alternatives to the car, it seems sensible to question whether so much should be spent on a risky project which will take such a long time to deliver. Few people travel by train and most journeys are short. Focussing on better public transport, walking and cycling could help to transform the way we think about travel and ensure that we put new developments in places that are far less reliant on car use. Many foreign cities have made significant progress in reducing car use in recent years while creating healthy, vibrant and attractive places to live and work.

Thanks to John Marriott for this contribution to the newsletter

Building new homes on derelict land at five-year low

The proportion of new homes built on derelict and vacant land has fallen by 10% since 2014, bringing it to its lowest level over the past five years, according to an analysis of new government data by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

New figures from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) show that, in 2018, 53% of new homes were built on ‘brownfield land’ – land that has previously been built on, and now sits derelict or vacant. This is down from 56% in 2017, 61% in 2016, 57% in 2015 and 59% in 2014.



© Shutterstock

The amount of brownfield land that has been redeveloped for new housing has also seen a significant decrease, falling from 2,628 hectares in 2017 to 1,758 hectares in 2018. In comparison to this, more than double the amount of farmland, forests, gardens and greenfield land was lost to housing over the same year, which, at 3,689 hectares, reached a five-year high.

This fall in housing developments on derelict and disused land comes despite findings from CPRE’s **State of Brownfield 2019 report**, published in March this year, demonstrating that there is space on suitable brownfield land for more than one million new homes.

This report also highlighted that through changes to the definition of ‘previously developed land’, and increasing the density of homes built on brownfield land, the true number of homes that could be built on brownfield sites could actually be much higher. Prioritising this land not only delivers more homes in towns and cities close to existing infrastructure, services and jobs, while removing local eyesores through urban regeneration, but also limits the unnecessary loss of our countryside, says CPRE.

These new government figures are a clear indication that more must be done to realise the full potential of brownfield land, which can help to transform vacant spaces and provide much needed homes.

CPRE are calling for the government to introduce a genuine ‘brownfield first’ policy, which ensures that suitable previously developed or under-used land is prioritised for redevelopment over green spaces and countryside.

Rebecca Pullinger, planning campaigner at CPRE, said:

“Increasing focus on building on brownfield land can breathe new life into towns and cities, and represents the most sustainable location for building the homes we need.

“There is space on derelict land for more than one million new homes and, with new sites coming forward all of the time, this renewable resource could continue to provide a steady pipeline of new housing going forward.

“It is imperative, if its potential is to be fully realised, that the government, councils and house builders all take a brownfield-first approach to development. By ensuring that run-down areas, which are crying out for regeneration, are prioritised we can build more of the homes so desperately needed in areas where people want to live, while simultaneously preventing the needless loss of countryside to new housing.”

See: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/5132-building-new-homes-on-derelict-land-five-year-low>; and <https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/5085-one-million-new-homes-on-derelict-land-could-transform-towns-and-cities>



Conference on Affordable Homes

Tuesday 12 November 2019 at 9.00 for 9.30am
The Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood St, Nottingham NG1 4EZ



CPRE East Midlands and CPRE Nottinghamshire are holding a conference for local decision makers and other people interested in the need to provide affordable homes in rural areas and elsewhere. It is to consider how to implement solutions that will contribute towards developing sustainable and thriving communities.

Even a few suitably designed affordable homes in the right location can make a real difference to the longevity and vibrancy of rural communities, while supporting the delivery of government housing targets. We hope that our conference will enable participants to better influence and plan for sustainable and thriving communities.

The conference will equip and empower participants with the information, relationships and tools they need to realise affordable homes to meet the need of their community. There will be a range of speakers with expert knowledge and experience, covering subjects including:

- What is affordable housing?
- What are the policy barriers to providing affordable housing and how may these be overcome?
- The national perspective on affordable homes
- How Rural Homes are being provided
- Local examples
- The role of the private builder
- How communities can get involved
- What you can do
- What would you like CPRE to do?

Admission is by ticket (free of charge) on a first come first served basis. Please obtain your ticket from Eventbrite at **Eventbrite Ticket Link** (<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/want-to-help-solve-the-affordable-homes-crisis-tickets-68805239323>). The closing date for ticket applications is 25 October, but, as we expect this event to be popular, we cannot guarantee that tickets will still be available by that date.

CPRE is changing...

Over the past 18 months, CPRE has been working to clarify its purpose and to broaden its appeal.

A multitude of surveys show that most people feel the countryside is an important national asset, including CPRE's own YouGov polling, which found that 53% of the public say they love it. However only 22% of adults in England have heard of CPRE. Extensive consultations have shown that CPRE can be perceived as negative, and this puts many potential supporters off, even if they love the countryside.

This is why we have returned to the principles of CPRE's founders. They knew that promoting a greater understanding and appreciation of the countryside – its benefits and fragility – increase people's emotional connection and desire to protect it and see it improved in ways that benefit people and nature.

So we've realised that we must rebalance our original mission and give equal emphasis to promoting, enhancing and of course, protecting the countryside.

As a result, you will begin to notice a change in tone from CPRE, focusing more on the positive solutions that we have always tried to create. Our new strategic aims to 'Connect people and countryside', 'Promote rural life' and 'Empower communities' will help us do that in the run-up to CPRE's centenary in 2026.

To find out more, go to the CPRE website: <https://www.cpre.org.uk/>

MPs call for SGP rethink

Leicestershire MPs, Edward Argar (Charnwood), Neil O'Brien (Harborough) and Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) have, according to the Leicester Mercury on 16th August, said they cannot support the SGP as it stands and have called for a rethink of its strategy and the A46 Expressway plan.

They are quoted as saying: "As things stand, we are not convinced the proposed expressway and accompanying housing development is the right approach to the future of transport or housing needs of the county."

Rural Housing in Leicestershire - an update

Fantastic New Development in Cosby

This autumn sees the launch of Leicestershire's latest Rural Exception Site. This fantastic development of 32 new homes at Prior William Close and Croft Road, Cosby, will create a strong and sustainable community for many local families and individuals. For some, this will be a life changing experience. Being able to remain in, or return to the village in which you grew up is such a big deal to people for many reasons.

The scheme is another example of great partnerships with Midlands Rural Housing, identifying the local housing need and working with the community along with Blaby District Council, GEDA Construction and Nottingham Community Housing Association which own and manage the homes.

Of the 32 new homes, 22 will be allocated on an Affordable Rent basis through Blaby District Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme. 7 will be offered on a Shared Ownership basis (part rent, part buy), and the remaining 3 properties have been taken through Rent to Buy, a low cost home ownership option.

Lobbying, partnership and promotional work

Midlands Rural Housing continues the important lobbying and promotional work it does to champion the cause for rural housing. The Managing Director, Richard Mugglestone, spoke recently at Homes England's Midlands Partner Event, with a focus on the partnership work which the organisation does across Leicestershire with its Local Authority partners. The Leicestershire Rural Housing Group partnership is seen as an example of good practice and the new development at Cosby is a brilliant example of what this collaborative approach to delivering homes in rural communities can achieve.

CPRE Conference

We are also looking forward to meeting colleagues old and new, as Midlands Rural Housing has been invited

CPRE Leicestershire has for many years argued the need for more affordable rural housing and past newsletters have included regular reports from Richard Mugglestone of Midlands Rural Housing on developments in Leicestershire and we are grateful for this update. Thanks to Richard and his team for this contribution.



Some views of Leicestershire's latest Rural Exception site at Cosby

to attend and speak at the CPRE event taking place in Nottingham later in the year. (See page 11 for details)

Leicestershire Rural Housing Association

Local rural housing specialists, Leicestershire Rural Housing Association, is about to embark on an exciting recruitment drive for new Board members. They are looking for people who share their passion and enthusiasm for rural housing issues to join their existing Board.

If you think this could be you, and you would like to strategically guide the work of a Rural Housing Association, then please keep an eye on their website www.leicestershirerha.org.uk in the coming weeks.

CPRE Conference on Affordable Homes
Tuesday 12 November 2019 at 9.00 for 9.30am
The Mechanics, 3 North Sherwood St, Nottingham NG1 4EZ
(see page 11 for more details)