

OUTLOOK

Spring 2017

IEWS AND NEWS FROM THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND

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LONG MARSTON - A GARDEN VILLAGE
THE HOUSING WHITE PAPER



Warwickshire
Campaign to Protect Rural England

OFFICE NEWS

roundup

April 2017



By John Wharam

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Good news - we have been searching for a person to help us with our website for quite some time. The web site is important and has not really received the attention it should deserve. Today a website is an valuable means of advertising your existence and making everyone aware of the work carried on to protect the countryside. In addition we need to promote CPRE on Facebook and Twitter. All of these mediums are used by us, but not to the extent they can be. Sophie Hall joins the team as Website and Media Communications Manager. We will update all our members in the next issue of Outlook and hope that we can all then see effective and powerful modern tools being used to spread the message.

Other news of people joining and leaving; regrettably Mike Patrick has resigned as a Trustee to be able to devote more time to his many other interests. Mike and Anna helped with the Fun Ride last year and Mike was counsel and vigorous campaigning will be sorely missed.

We welcome a new Trustee. Charles Melville Wright joins the Trustees. Charles has a wealth of experience with charity work and runs a consultancy specialising in fundraising. Charles has been one of our volunteers helping with the Fun Ride. Both are very welcome and will strengthen our team. Justin Whitehorn has agreed to act as the Independent Examiner for the Financial Statements. This document is returned to Companies House and the Charity Commissioners and is used to demonstrate our financial stability and is an important element in the governance of the charity. It is sent to all members

Our finances are in a reasonable state. Very tight control of spending ensures our cash flow remains stable and our reserves are still holding up well. We suffer from the very poor (non existent) rates of interest on our bank accounts, but are fortunate to still hold some Treasury Stock paying a decent rate of interest. It is anticipated that an appeal for funds will be necessary later this year.

We were recently invited to be part of a panel at Warwick University to address the students and answer questions about our opposition to HS2. Together with a representative from the Canals and Rivers Trust I was able to highlight the weakness of the business case, the waste of money, the very vague and optimistic forecasts of usage and demand for the service and suggest that re-opening a number of the branch lines closed by Dr Beeching in the 1960's would be a better use of public and help solve the capacity issues faced by the rail network. The students listened attentively and asked some interesting questions. I have been invited back to listen to their presentations on the subject - should be interesting!

The office in Warwick is open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and all members are very welcome to drop in for a coffee and a chat.

Thank you for your continued support.

Your Help Is Needed!

Protecting the countryside is what we do.

We have excellent planning volunteers in most of the Local Authority areas who monitor planning applications and respond as necessary. Currently we are not covering North Warwickshire, Rugby and Warwick and need your help to do this.

Knowledge of the planning system is an advantage, but training and back up help will be given.

Please contact me, Brian Douthwaite, chairman County planning group if you can help
wbldouthwaite@btinternet.com

Free Money

We sent Warwickshire member, David Coppage, a £20 Marks & Spencer voucher the other day for encouraging a friend of his, Adam Pearce, to join the branch and the fact was confirmed by Supporter Services at NO.

And when I spoke to David to ask him was he OK for me to publicise this in a paragraph in 'Outlook' he told me he had shared this bounty with Adam.

So everyone, if you have a friend who has an affinity with the countryside like you and wants to see it protected from inappropriate development, tell them of the offer, get them to join and we'll send you a voucher too - its almost free money!

Good News!

Out of the blue last month we received an email from a young freelance writer, Sophie Hall. In it she said she wanted to help us with our Social Media and Website.



Readers, you will probably be aware we having been having a bit of trouble with our website - due to no one's fault, but rather by trying to adopt the National Office template that uses a somewhat complicated operating platform called 'Joomla'.

So this contact was manna from heaven!

Sophie came to meet us at Smith Street for a chat, to learn a bit about what we do, and us to understand more about how she could help. When a couple of hours later we received an email saying she was still keen - and that after meeting John, Mick and me! - imagine our delight! Sophie has been working at the office for several days now and we have a completely new functional website - one which we hope will be useful to existing and potential members and to those who might need assistance in planning matters in the county.

So do have a look at it at - www.cprewarwickshire.org.uk and send us news which could be posted on it.

Discover Your Countryside

Our national Office has arranged a number of concessions for members. One of the popular offers which may appeal to members is the two for one arrangement which apply to a number of attractions here in Warwickshire. The Shakespeare houses ; Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Hall's Croft, Mary Arden's Farm, New Place and Shakespeare's Birthplace are all included. These are, of course, in Stratford upon Avon as is Harvard House. In Warwick the Lord Leycester Hospital is included together with Compton Verney just outside the town. In the north Middleton Hall and Castle Bromwich Gardens and Ryton Organic Gardens are worth a visit. There are many other places of interest in the Midlands. Avoncroft Museum, Hartlebury Castle, Elgar's Birthplace are all included. The booklet is available from the office.

The CPRE 200 Club Recent winners.

Congratulations to the winners of the monthly 200 Club draw. Each month a prize of £50 is awarded to the holder of the winning number in the 200 Club. The Club now has nearly the full complement of members so we may need to re-name it the 300 Club soon! Very importantly this arrangement provides us with £1600 per annum for branch funds and the £50 prize each month provides a little extra income for the winner.
March 2017 Mr B Wilde
February 2017 Miss J Lutwyche
January 2017 Mrs A Gill
December 2016 Mrs P Willcox
November 2016 Mrs J Watson
October 2016 Mr M Reynolds

If you would like to enter the draw please contact Myles in the office



HOUSING QUOTAS WORTHLESS

There are eight local planning authorities in Warwickshire, only one of them has an adopted Local Plan, or Core Strategy as Stratford-on-Avon calls it.

Contemporary planning legislation, appears to us to have one fundamental aim: to ensure that as many houses as possible are built as quickly as possible. However, there must be limits. So the Core Strategy prescribes that about 14,600 houses shall be built in the Stratford-on-Avon District up to the end of the Plan Period, that is, 2031.

The next fourteen years will pass soon enough and then the Core Strategy must be revised and another quota of houses will be allotted to the District, which the developers, backed by the Government, will of course want to be as large as possible.

Until then, however, we have a respite. The one item in the Core Strategy that can be trusted is that 14,600 new houses - or thereabouts - will be the maximum inflicted on a suffering countryside before 2031,

No! It appears that even that is not trustworthy.

For at a meeting of Planning Committee (West) on 1st February, the District Planning Manager, Dale Barker, in reply to a question from a councillor, said:

“The requirement is for 14,600 but....that does not mean, and should not be taken to mean, that we don't grant planning permission for any more houses anywhere, ever. Very far from it. The expectation is that 14,600 is the minimum and we should continue to grant permission on sustainable sites, and the question you have to ask yourselves on any of the applications is, 'Is this a sustainable site, is it a suitable site?' (You can read the full text of the questions and answers in the Planning Report on Page 6). So the nightmare situation, where the developers mechanically twitted the

planning authority with the lack of a local plan, is to continue, for the Core Strategy, though adopted, will be useless.

Sustainable.... What does the term mean?

“Sustainable development” was coined by the Government when the National Planning Policy Framework was published five years ago. It has no exact meaning but is part of the general vagueness that is the essential character of the N.P.P.F. Its three aspects: social, economic and environmental, are all open to argument and different interpretations, which makes life so very easy for the developers.

So what is the point of bothering to create core strategies if the housing quotas cannot be relied on?

And what is the point of bothering to create neighbourhood plans, which, as we all know, are based on the premise that a settlement must accept the number of houses allotted to it and use this figure to underpin their policies?

Here is a direct challenge to our duty to preserve the countryside and CPRE Warwickshire has taken it up. We have written a round letter to the Stratford-upon-Avon district councillors firmly refuting Dale Barker's advice.

Nor will the matter rest there. We will campaign ceaselessly to see that the District Council does not renege on the housing quotas they established in the Core Strategy.

And if the figures in the Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy are worthless, why should the figures in any of the other seven local plans that have not yet been adopted have any substance either?

You, our members, pay us a subscription to save and conserve the English countryside. For the sake of this trust we will be alert, vigilant and outspoken.

Nicholas Butler

‘Contemporary planning legislation, appears to us to have one fundamental aim: to ensure that as many houses as possible are built as quickly as possible.’

PLANNING REPORT

By Nicholas Butler



In the Stratford-upon-Avon District, the housing quotas prescribed by the Core Strategy for the Plan Period have been achieved. It is therefore only right to call a halt, or at least to challenge new applications on these grounds. For the local service villages and the thirty-two settlements that are drafting, or have drafted, neighbourhood plans, this is a very important matter indeed.

At a meeting of Planning Committee (West) on 1st February, Councillor Peter Richards asked for clarification about the housing numbers. He was given unequivocal advice by the Planning Manager, Dale Barker.

Here is a transcript of two questions and answers. You can see and hear for yourself exactly what was said because planning committee meetings are now webcast and appear on the District Council website. (The application under consideration was 16/03264/FUL, Five Houses at 33, New Street, Tiddington.)

Councillor Peter Richards:

I'd like to ask about housing numbers. We've heard that Stratford's committed to 14,600 homes over the Plan Period. My understanding is that in the Core Strategy it's 14,600. Do you understand where that number might have come from?

Dale Barker:

Yes, I think I can help with this. The requirement is for 14,600, but we have to date identified or granted sufficient land for 16,500. We have over-identified. That does not mean, and should not be taken to mean, that we don't grant planning permission for any more houses anywhere, ever. Very far from it. The expectation is that 14,600 is the minimum and we should continue to grant permission on sustainable sites, on suitable sites, and the question you have to ask yourselves on any of the applications is, "Is this a sustainable site, is it a suitable site", rather than doing these convoluted maths. "Is it 104? Is it 104 or 102?" That's the wrong question to ask, members. The question to ask is, "Is it a sustainable site?"

Councillor Peter Richards:

In the local service villages, we have provided for 2,000 houses, 2,000 houses for local service villages. I understand we've reached that. Am I right? And if we have reached that should we not now be looking at these sites unfavourably in this scheme? That's my understanding.

Dale Barker:

The same answer. That we have reached the 2,000 doesn't mean that we should stop building houses. It means that in each site you have to assess whether this is a suitable site for development, whether it is sustainable development. Your Core Strategy Policy....check....CS.15.... We're looking

at D, In Local Service Villages:

Development will take place through small-scale schemes on unidentified but suitable sites within the built up area boundaries.

That's what we're looking at. "Is it a small-scale scheme on an unidentified but suitable site?"

So the housing quotas in the Core Strategy cannot be trusted. Large-scale developments may be prevented, if a settlement has accepted its quota, but single houses, or two, or perhaps three, will be in order and since an indefinite number of ones and twos will inevitably make a large-scale development, albeit dispersed over the settlement, and since the developers, who keep a close eye on the District Council webcasts, now know this, the expansion of each and every settlement, provided that it proceeds by ones or twos, can continue indefinitely.

Woe, then, to those who live in the Stratford-upon-Avon District. For if this advice is accepted as an official ruling the effects will be damnable.

The effects on 1st February were damnable. The final item on the agenda was an application for a single house in **Welford-on-Avon** and, incidentally, in Duck Lane, which was once a quiet country road with timber-framed cottages and is now a revolting mish-mash of architectural styles. The maximum prescribed by the Core Strategy is 84; the planners tell us that the number of houses built and a-building is now 115. Well they may, to save themselves embarrassment, but it is not the truth. 115 is the number of houses inside the built up area of the village, but for the parish, the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, the number is 135.

No, not 135, 136. For this application, which would have otherwise have been refused nem con, was passed nem con. A disgraceful, an appalling, an utterly irresponsible decision.

Elizabeth House knows that Welford has not only accepted more houses than its official quota for the Plan Period, but more than any other settlement in the District, it knows that the village infrastructure is creaking, the school full, the roads crowded, the sewerage overloaded, and that its neighbourhood plan, which specifically demands that there shall be no more houses beyond the prescribed quota, is due to be adopted in the near future. Yet when this application was considered these things were never mentioned.

Happily, a member of our planning team looked at the webcast, was duly appalled and as a result the branch has sent a hard-hitting letter, directly challenging Mr. Barker's advice, to every district councillor.

We will not let this matter rest. The policies in the Core Strategy are wraiths compared with those in the now defunct Local Plan, but the one thing we thought we could rely on was the prescribed housing numbers for the District. If they are worthless, then the Core Strategy is itself little better than worthless. If the countryside is to be saved – until 2031, but what will happen thereafter? – we must see to it that our local planning authority stands up both to the developers and the Government.

Now for some better news.

At the time of the last planning report the **Long Compton** Neighbourhood Plan, adopted on 25th April, faced two challenges, both of them applications to build on the green fingers of land that are a defining characteristic of the village. The Core Strategy, too, was newly adopted and this was the first test of how, or indeed if, the policies in these two documents would mesh comfortably together.

Nine houses were proposed for one site, access into a field for the other. The Council refused both applications, roundly, handsomely. The first went to appeal by written representations. The Parish Council wrote the most vigorous, intelligent and detailed rebuttal of a Statement of Claim that I have ever read, supported by a long and lawyerly letter from the erstwhile chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. The S.D.C. smiled on the counter attack. Robert Weeks sent the Parish Council an e-mail to say that it had his full support. The Applicant, who had suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan, since it had been adopted before the Core Strategy, was now out of date, and cleverly altered the plans in order to turn the application into a new one and therefore invalidate all the comments that had been submitted, was trounced on both these points and the appeal conclusively dismissed. It appears that when residents display as much knowledge of planning as the professionals the local authority will back them.

The village is now facing two more developments, including two for houses, not in the wrong places, but in the wrong style, houses that are too large and too urban for the countryside. Negotiations with the developers are ongoing and the Parish Council may well secure a successful outcome.

Have you ever heard the tale about the road to Serendippy, a place that you could never reach because as you travelled towards it the road became longer and longer? The road to the Referendum for the **Welford-on-Avon** Neighbourhood

Plan is also enchanted. An unfortunate choice of public examiner, who recommended no fewer than 150 changes, all of which the Parish Council vigorously resisted, has wasted no less than eighteen months, during which time the village has been plagued by numerous unwanted applications. The Neighbourhood Plan is now undergoing its final period of consultation, which is due to end on 26th April. Then it will go to Cabinet and a date for the Referendum will be set....and then....perhaps....!

The proprietor of the Binton Bridges Caravan Park, who benignly announced that he would forgo his right for sixty caravans at **Welford-on-Avon** to be occupied all the year round if he were allowed to site forty immobile mobile homes on a site near **Temple Grafton**, has been refused permission for the forty. As a matter of interest, will he or won't he implement the sixty?

Valfresco Ltd., the firm that specialises in growing salad crops at **Hampton Lucy**, was refused permission for 4.63 more hectares of polytunnelling, but allowed to retain a huge and horrible building for seasonal workers. What if permission had been refused? Has Elizabeth House got the courage and the big guns to order its removal?

As I write this, the application for an anaerobic digestion plant at **Alderminster**, which would also be huge and horrible, and very visible in several directions, has not yet been decided, and I have heard nothing more about the two applications regarding the huge but charming **Oversley Castle**, one of which is to knock down both the castle and the adjacent art deco mansion, and the other to knock down the mansion but spare the castle.

If you are thinking of writing a neighbourhood plan, but feel there is not enough enthusiasm in your community for the task, then you will be well advised to combine forces with a neighbouring parish. Two years ago, five small settlements, **Armscote**, **Blackwell**, **Darlingstons**, **Newbold-on-Stour** and **Tredington** produced a charming and comprehensive joint Parish Plan. They have now decided to produce a joint neighbourhood plan. The inaugural meeting at the Blackwell Village Hall was packed with quiet determination and I left with the feeling that in spite of the many obstacles that the Government has created to make life difficult for these ventures this particular one will meet with the success it deserves.

PLANNING REPORT

By Mick Jeffs



Solihull Draft Local Plan. To meet the Borough's own housing needs a housing target of 13,500 dwellings over the plan period is proposed. This would mean that it would be necessary to identify sites for at least a further 4,000 dwellings in the current Solihull LP. Under the duty to cooperate Solihull may have to accommodate another 2,000 of the 37,500 dwelling shortfall that is occurring in the Housing Market Area for Birmingham. The Plan has also proposed major changes under a Green Belt Review. While we may have to accept some loss of the Green Belt, this should only be removed following a sequential test to ensure that only areas of lesser importance are removed. We have made representations that there should be a preference for more small and medium sized housing allocations rather than the almost entirely proposed large housing locations proposed by the main house builders. In addition, there is an over-intensification of proposed development for the south Shirley and Blythe area so there should be more dispersal of development throughout the Borough.

M42 Service Station, Catherine-de-Barnes. There is still no decision as yet on this major application and another planning application for proposals for a MSA on the M42 at junction 4 also in the Green Belt, but on a much smaller site and the design would have less impact on the surrounding area. CPRE are objecting to both proposals and suggesting a more suitable site north of Junction 6 associated with a new Junction proposed junction 6a which views have been supported by Dame Caroline Spellman MP. Highways England have extended the period for their consultation until March.

M42 Motorway Service Area Stratford Road (A34). Application submitted in the Green Belt for a smaller scheme than the one above. Objection letter submitted. (2016/02754)

Plans to Fell 31 Trees in Rumbush Lane Coppice, Dickens Heath have been Refused by Solihull Council. This is a great relief for the local community who have been fighting for the past year on a number of separate plans to clear this coppice to facilitate development. However this decision has now been Appealed by the Applicant. (2016/01059).

Rumbush Farm Appeal. An objection letter submitted on grounds of unsustainability, over intensification of the haulage business with increase heavy traffic affecting the tranquillity of the area in the Green Belt and affecting the openness of the Green Belt. (16/3163356)

Norton Lane, Earlswood; another success story. Proposals to demolish and replace an existing dwelling, and erect four dwellings. This site is in the Green Belt and at such a high density of development that would have require a considerable amount of removal of established hedgerow and trees, which is against Para 81 of the NPPF and Policy P10 of the Adopted Solihull Local Plan. This "back-land development" did not reflect local distinctiveness or

maintain local character being at a much higher density for this semirural location. CPRE, working with the local Parish Council and residents have influenced Solihull Council to refuse this development.

Land at Shadowbrook Lane, Hampton-in-Arden. Appeals were against an enforcement notice of an extension to a gypsy caravan site. This site is in the Green Belt with poor accessibility. Representations were made but the Appeals were allowed. (App/Q4625/C/13/2209777 & APP/Q4625A/13/2209776).

Further expansion into the Meriden Gap Green Belt for a new logistics warehouse for JLR by Elmdon Park. Objection letter submitted on Green Belt grounds and the need for a Master Plan for the area. (16/03131)

Land Adjacent to 39-79 Earlswood Road Dorridge. Application for 45 Dwellings. **Refused.** (2016/01535) Tidbury Green Farm. Additional 41 dwellings by Bellway. This site was taken out of the Green Belt by an Appeal for 190 dwellings. We have supported Tidbury Green PC with an objection letter being submitted on unsustainability grounds. (PL/2016/03232/PPFL)

Shipston-on-Stour. Up to 109 dwellings off the Oxford Road south of the town. This was recommended for grant by officers but refused by the East Planning Committee. The refusal was not appealed, no doubt because of the intervening adoption of the Core Strategy and attainment of a near-6 year HLS as a consequence of which "rapacious developers" are going away with their tails between their legs! (15/01478/FUL)

Tredington. A further application (15/03372/OUT), but for a reduced number of dwellings (37), on this site was refused by officers and an appeal dismissed as being contrary to CS.16 and AS.10 (not small-scale and outside the physical confines of the village). AS.10 in particular is biting the "rapacious developers" in Local Service Villages since adoption of the CS and attainment of the necessary HLS! It was good to see SDC's vigorous defence of the appeal.

Tredington. Still awaiting a long-overdue decision from SDC on the application for 3 houses behind the White Hart pub in Newbold-on-Stour (16/01325/FUL). CPRE wrote a letter objecting in principle because Newbold already has completions/commitments of about 60% above the approximate maximum prescribed in CS.16. Why the application was not summarily refused long ago is unclear, but maybe the arrogant Punch Taverns are threatening SDC if they refuse it and "negotiations" are going on!

Idlicote. Application for three dwellings in a remote countryside location. The applicants argued that, under ¶55 of the NPPF, there were special circumstances in favour of the application in a location where market housing development would normally be unacceptable, namely that it would help "save" a derelict listed barn. The committee, in going against officers, refused the application and an appeal was dismissed, but the determined applicant has come back with new designs which, he says, deals with the Inspector's finding that the previous designs would harm the listed barn. (15/00969/FUL and 15/00970/LBC)

Whichford. Holycombe is a large house in substantial grounds that have been the base for a holistic retreat/camping business for many years. Initially, the owners didn't have the necessary planning permissions, but eventually they applied and were granted permission - only to have the decisions quashed, on a technicality, by the High Court on application for JR by a wealthy Whichford resident (with the support of one or two of her local friends) who doesn't like the idea, despite the fact that there is huge support from most residents and users of the facilities. Village politics at its worst!

One of the quashed applications (15/02005/FUL) is being re-determined, whilst a new application relating specifically to the modest camping activities (16/04039/FUL) has been filed. CPRE is supporting the applications because any harm to the AONB/Conservation Area is clearly minimal whereas Holycombe provides a significant amount of local employment and its clients patronise local businesses such as the pub/pottery/cafe when they are in Whichford.

Fenny Compton. Up to 39 houses in a Category 2 LSV which has already many more completions/commitments than prescribed in CS.16. It also conflicts with AS.10 and heritage provisions of the Core Strategy. Still pending, but very likely to be refused by SDC. (16/03403/OUT)

Fenny Compton. Up to 25 dwellings. Refused by officers on delegated report and now under appeal which, very encouragingly, is being vigorously defended by SDC on the grounds of conflict with at least three paragraphs of the Local Plan. (16/00990/OUT)

Stoneleigh Abbey, proposal for 12 new 4 and 5 bed houses nearby. The site is in the Green Belt and development is justified as providing funds to maintain the abbey. 10 houses were approved in 2000 for the same reason. I question whether we can accept 6 new houses every 10 years for this purpose for ever more. Cathy is attending a meeting of the Conservation Advisory Forum on the evening of 23rd where this will be discussed.

Warwick Local Plan. The Public hearings have ended. We await the report of the Inspector. It is likely that there will

be increases to housing numbers proposed in the submitted Draft Plan.

Blackdown. No decision so far on the proposal for student accommodation by Chesford Bridge in Green Belt.

Nuneaton and Bedworth. Local Plan submitted February 2017 for 13,500 homes to be built in the Borough with 13 sites to be declassified from the Green Belt. No Green Belt was taken in the original 2006 Core Strategy Plan. The plan includes a 2330 overspill from Coventry. Publication Stage consultation is in progress. Closing date is 13th March 2017.

Galley Common. Plan for 300 homes to be on the site of the Plough Hill Golf Club Centre. Refused on 1/11/16 on Highways impact grounds but appealed with a hearing dated 4th April. At Planning meeting on 31/1/17 it was decided to drop the Objections and the same plan is resubmitted for today 21/2/17 with the same application as 034600 with Transport information to address the refusal issues. (033633)

Whitestone. Outline Plan for 360 homes off Eastboro Way approved on 1/11/16 but to be resubmitted today for S106 contribution to be reduced from £490,581 to £398,607. (033926)

Camp Hill. Phase 3 development for 163 homes approved on 10/1/17 following a site visit. (034128)

St Nicolas, Corner of Longshoot and EastBoro Way. Approval on 10/1/17 for 329 homes. This is land which was to be returned to Green Belt in the 2006 Core Strategy (034334)

Rear of Numbers 194 - 262 The Longshoot for 120 homes approved on a smaller plot than in the outline and 034361 submitted and approved for a further 35 homes on the extra land. I did point out at the hearing that over 1,000 homes have now been approved in 5 cul-de-sacs behind 130 even numbered homes without further Highways Infrastructure on an already busy road. (034360)

Longshoot. An application is in consultation for 850 further homes by to be accessed from the Longshoot, increasing the urban sprawl on Countryside land to the A5 County Boundary with Leicestershire. (034615).

Thanks to our planning volunteers Jean, Mike, Nicholas, Brian, Jim F, Jim C, Mick, Michael from Ramblers, Sir Andrew, our chairman, and Mark Sullivan, our Technical Secretary.

HS2 *****!

From Hope (or should that be hell) to Royal Assent

A busy few weeks for the acolytes of "Le Grand Project" that is HS2.

Firstly they had to bat away the criticism in a letter signed by amongst others, Jeremy Paxman, asking that the House of Lords kill off the bill. Then it was reported in mid February that the company of the current and future HS2 Chief Executive, CH2M, had been awarded the £170 million contract to be 'Phase 2 delivery partner'. This is the same company that was awarded the same contract on Phase 1 - but hey ho, the company was awarded a contract worth £70m and they have been paid £104m - an increase of a point or two below 50%!

Why is it that our Government, the Department of Transport or the Finance and Services Committee fail to see this project is a gravy train for big businesses and one that is so completely out of control. Remember when Lord Adonis first unveiled the idea: a 250mph train service between London Euston and Birmingham, and onwards to Leeds and Manchester - at a cost of £30 billion! A snip!

Now we seem to have adopted 'new hospitals' as a useful unit of spending, that £30bn was an awful lot of hospitals: quite how many depends on whether you are building a small mental health unit in Cornwall that cost £7.0m or undertaking a total reconstruction of St Barts in London at a cost of £1.1bn.

Surely it must be of some concern to those that govern us that the £30bn figure has now risen to £56bn, a near doubling of the costs, equating to a lot of hospitals!

But Royal Assent was granted at the end of February marking the final legislative step before full civil works can begin. 'HS2 will be the world's most advanced passenger railway and the backbone of our rail network', trumpeted Transport Secretary Chris Grayling. 'Royal Assent is a major step towards significantly increasing capacity on our congested railways for both passengers and freight; improving connections between the biggest cities and regions; generating jobs, skills and economic growth.'

What of course Mr Grayling fails to address is the current debacle that is the state of our existing railways. Imagine being a commuter on one of the lines from hell that is run by Southern Railway; or you're on one of those clapped out diesel belching trains that run on so much of the nation's network. How do they feel about the money being spent on the shiny new HS2 and a dearth of it being spent on their lines and trains - just imagine.

And that's always been one of our points. Apart from the destruction of the countryside that HS2 will inflict (and it will be enormous!), why are we building this unnecessary line that will serve to benefit so few of us, the public. There are so many better ways of spending money on the rail network that would ease congestion, increase capacity, generate jobs and improve connectivity between our cities in the Midlands and the North.

Short of adopting Swampy-esque tactics (remember him and his mates with their tunnels and tree chaining antics in the 90s around the Newbury bypass) and becoming an eco-warrior I am at a loss as to what the opponents of the great white elephant that is HS2 should do. A former colleague and editor of this magazine, Brian Grix, has organised a letter writing campaign to the Prime Minister and MPs and well done to him.

The tragedy is that absolutely no one will be held responsible for the debacle that will be the result of this project - a loss making railway with trains running half full of the business elite and a final sell off on the cheap to the private sector, as happened to HS1. And maybe that thought and resultant guilt might lead to the damascene moment on the part of our Government to see off the hellish HS2 - but don't bank on it!

Myles Thornton



LONG MARSTON DESIGNATED A GARDEN VILLAGE



The recent announcement that the Long Marston Airfield development is to be granted "garden village" status is very interesting - but what does this mean in practice? From initial investigations - not much. A modest amount of money has been allocated (£6m over the next two years spread across 14 sites equals £428,571.00 for Long Marston) The proposals for Long Marston are as follows.

150 to 200 homes each year up to 2037 (up to 4000 homes) Primary Schools, Community Facility, Neighbourhood Centre, Western Relief Road, Secondary School, Sports facility, Offices, Transport infrastructure

Studying the developers plan (Cala Homes Long Marston) shows this site to be more or less self-contained with the layout organised into groups of houses with green spaces and walk ways and a central open area designated "the village green"

This is what any respectable developer would have suggested for such a site. So what is the point of calling this a garden village and putting forward such a small financial incentive?

It is difficult to see how this can be a village in the true sense of the word. The main problem will be movement of cars and people. The area is already becoming congested so with an extra traffic, gridlock can be expected. The developer has promised money for the western relief road, will this help anyone travelling to Stratford to the shops?

The employment projections

suggested by the developer are just that - suggestions. It is difficult to see 4345 new jobs being created on this site. One of the driving forces is as always money. The developer estimates and extra £104 million pounds will be generated. Nearly all of this into the coffers of the District and County Councils by way of rates, business taxes and infrastructure levies.

What is the ideal village? On the surface much is included in the Long Marston village but will it be a true English village.

If we look at another garden village within our area, Bournville in Birmingham, we see a different picture.

Bournville was created in the later half of the 19th century by the Cadbury Brothers as a place for their employees which would be close to the chocolate factory and very importantly be a good, healthy, well designed, convenient and almost self-sufficient place to live.

Those founding principles still hold good today and the independent Bournville Village Trust manages the Conservation Area with an understanding of the of resident's needs.

Most of the original housing remains intact with recreation areas and large (by modern standards) gardens.

The Village is well served by transport and benefits from close proximity to schools, hospitals, employment opportunities and the, cultural

amenities in Birmingham city (only 3 miles away).

One wonders if Long Marston garden village will enjoy a similar illustrious history into the 22nd century.

It looks to be part of the Estate Agents marketing blurb rather than a true affirmation of intent.

John Wharam





CHARLECOTE PARK

Charlecote Park is very near to the village of Charlecote and about 8km south of Warwick. The 105 hectare site comprises some formal gardens and pleasure grounds around the house, and extensive parkland. The house itself is Listed Grade I and other buildings and objects are also Listed.

The mid nineteenth century entrance has brick and stone piers and wing walls with ornamental wrought-iron railings and there are carved stone heraldic beasts on tall brick piers.

The avenue ends at a sixteenth century brick, two-storey turreted gatehouse, which formed part of Sir Thomas Lucy's remodelling of the house, and which leads to the forecourt to the east of the house.

House

Charlecote House is on a terrace on the east bank of the River Avon in the centre of the park. The red-brick, two-storey house was built between 1551 and 1560 by Sir Thomas Lucy and George Hammond and Mary Elizabeth Lucy added a west range in 1829-37. It overlooks the river and contains a dining room and library.

The Great Hall inside has a barrel-vaulted ceiling made of plaster painted to look like timber and is a

the setting for a collection of family portraits. Other rooms have richly coloured wallpaper, decorated plaster ceilings and wood panelling. There are also magnificent pieces of furniture and fine works of art, including a contemporary painting of Queen Elizabeth I.

The house also has a display of carriages and a period laundry and brew-room.

Grounds

George Lucy's changes to the garden conformed to the fashion of the time by removing formal features and creating a landscaped vista. At this time the main road to Stratford crossed the River Dene near the stables. Permission for a new road was granted and it was soon diverted over a new bridge, and so the flow of vehicles was removed far beyond the garden.

The first Sir Thomas Lucy planted the great double avenue of limes which still stretches away from the house to the south west.

The rough split-oak palings that surround the parkland are of a type thought to have first been put up in Elizabethan times; the style is perpetuated by the National Trust.

The garden was completed by Colonel George Lucy between 1695 and 1700.

In about 1750 Lancelot Brown (1716-83) drew a rough plan of the grounds of Charlecote on the reverse of a plan for Packington in Warwickshire. Recalled about 1757, Brown built the cascade south-west of the house and regraded the banks of the River Dene.

Once the unfashionable water garden had been filled in, Brown created a raised lawn and planted it with the cedars of Lebanon which are there today.

The National Trust has reinstated the parterre behind the house overlooking the river in 1995.

Surrounding the house on all sides, the park remains a managed deer park with herds of fallow and red deer.

History

Sir Walter de Cherlecote, an ancestor of the Lucy family, inherited the estate in 1189. The family adopted the name Lucy in the following century. The Lucy family has shaped the house through wealth and loss. There are portraits of every generation of the family throughout the house and they all have a story to tell.

William Shakespeare has been alleged to have poached rabbits and deer in the park as a young man and been brought before magistrates as a result. But

it is unclear whether there were actually any deer in the park at that time.

The 'new' Charlecote, completed by the first Sir Thomas Lucy in 1558 was one of the first great Elizabethan houses in England.

After the deaths of both Mary Elizabeth and Henry in 1890, the house was rented out by Henry's eldest daughter and heiress, Ada Christina (d 1943). She had married Sir Henry Ramsay-Fairfax, (d 1944), who on marriage assumed the name Fairfax-Lucy.

From this point onwards, the family began selling off parts of the outlying estate to fund their extensive lifestyle, and in 1946, Sir Montgomerie Fairfax-Lucy, who had inherited the residual estate from his mother Ada, presented Charlecote to the National Trust in lieu of death duties. Sir Montgomerie was succeeded in 1965 by his brother, Sir Brian, whose wife, Lady Alice, researched the history of Charlecote, and assisted the National Trust with the restoration of the house.

Various Sources acknowledged, especially National Trust and Historic England

Mick Jeffs

THE HOUSING WHITE PAPER

Protecting the countryside is “what we do” and we do this by commenting on planning applications where appropriate to do so. Our comments have to be based on current planning law as set out in both Government planning policy and in the Core Strategy/ Local Plans which all Local Authorities have to use in deciding applications.

In February the Government published its’ Housing White Paper which sets out the proposed frame work for future planning policy. It is now out for consultation until May 2nd. After then it will become a Bill and eventually an Act. So it is essential that CPRE is right in there with our well researched comments on the proposals as they will affect the countryside.

These include building more and more homes, where they are to be built, prioritising the use of brown field land, protecting the Green Belt, giving communities a stronger voice in the provision and design of new housing, encouraging higher densities where appropriate, boosting local authority planning capacity to improve the speed and quality with which applications are

handled, infrastructure provision, and using permissions already granted rather than applying for additional permissions.

CPRE National Office has set up a consultation with all County and Regional Branches to feed in our comments to National Office so that it is a “One CPRE” response to Government. The consultation is in two stages, with a day conference in London in between, to build a powerful response.

Warwickshire planning subcommittee chose two of our most experienced planning volunteers, Jean Walters and Mike Lane, supported by Technical Secretary Mark Sullivan, with Peter Langley and Brian Douthwaite in attendance, to complete our first stage response on 15th March. Mike and Mark will attend the London meeting on 29th March and we all meet again in April to complete the second stage.

Brian Douthwaite, chairman CPRE
Warwickshire planning subcommittee

DOES COVENTRY REALLY NEED TO BUILD ON THE GREEN BELT?

In the proposed Local Plan Coventry Council wants to build 42,000 new houses. Of these some 25,000 would be on land now Green Belt. On what basis?

The official population projections (by the Office of National Statistics) say that the population of Coventry is going to grow nearly twice as fast any other cities in the West Midlands and Warwickshire up to 2031. Is this credible? Why would explosive growth happen in Coventry and not elsewhere? A close look shows some strange figures.

The consultants employed by Coventry and the surrounding local authorities have projected an exaggerated birth rate and underestimated the death rate in the city compared with figures recorded by the National Health Service for the last few years. The effect of these false figures is to pump up the population number with 20,000 phantom individuals - for babies who are not born, and for old people who have already died.

Then we find that the Office for National Statistics has had a particular problem estimating population in Coventry. Their research has produced an overestimate of 25,000 over a 20 year period.

The most important feature of the projections for Coventry is that virtually all the growth is from “international migration”

So what is this huge net international immigration, around 4-5,000 every year to 2031? It arises from one very controversial and wholly unreliable projection, of students from abroad.

The ONS and the Government insist that every year 90,000 non-EU international students arrive in Britain and stay - that is, they do not leave despite being on student visas which do not entitle them to stay in the UK after graduating. This is based on tiny sample size and has been criticised by both demographers and a Committee of MPs as being “little better than a best guess”.

Scaling this number of down to Coventry, we calculate that ONS will be counting 3700 illegally-overstaying students as additions to the figures every year. Over 20 years, this inflates the projected population of the city by a massive 74,000 people. As result this

projection a massive ‘need’ for housing is identified and the Green Belt is condemned.

But the facts about Coventry’s student population show a very different picture.

These figures show that international students do not stay in Coventry or adjacent authority areas after finishing their courses. Six months after graduation, 95% of those with jobs are no longer resident in Warwickshire. So the ONS projection, on which Coventry bases its housing requirement and demand to release Green Belt for development, is completely wrong. If the City Council used the information available from the body responsible for data on students, it would not be threatening its Green Belt.

A check on whether there is a massive population increase in Coventry can be made by seeing how many new houses have been completed each year in the city. If the population had been growing by 5,000 a year since the 2011 census, which is the rate the Local Plan is based on, there would have been some 2,200 built annually. But actual completions have been an average of 930 a year. And if population was growing and the number of houses was not, house prices would be rocketing because demand would be exceeding supply. They aren’t. In fact, Coventry is one of the cheapest and most affordable places in the country to buy a house. There is no evidence of a shortage of housing.

The true population growth is likely to be much much lower. It looks to be not more than 25,000 over the whole 20 years 2011 to 2031. That means a need for about 10,000 additional houses. This number can be accommodated by redevelopment, conversions, and use of land within the city. No Green Belt needs to be built on at all.

There is no justification for high numbers which are being used to explain building on a huge area of Green Belt both within the city and outside its boundaries.

Thanks to Merle Gering for this valuable insight into myth of population figures. More information on this controversial subject can be obtained from Mark in the office



Is this egg fresh?

The best way to check if an egg is fresh is to carefully lower the egg into a bowl of water and watch what happens next. If the egg lies on its side at the bottom of the bowl, it is completely fresh. If the egg stands up and moves a little, its not completely fresh but still edible. However if the egg floats on the surface of the water it is very stale and not fit to eat.

This due to the amount of air in the egg. The older the egg, the more air it will absorb hence the buoyancy test.

Which way to hang a horseshoe?

They are still plentiful in the countryside and are believed to bring good fortune, particularly if hung over a doorway. But which position is best for your share of this good fortune?

With the ends pointing upwards you should attract and then hold on to the good luck. The theory says that the benefits are held within the horseshoe.

If you subscribe to the other opinion and hang your horseshoe with the ends pointing down, then your share of the good fortune will cascade down on to you.

Maybe you should experiment. Please let us the outcome!

Thatched Roofs

Here in Warwickshire we have many hundreds of old (and sometimes new) thatched roofs. They are picturesque, practical and add character to the buildings and the surroundings.

Originally the thatch was a simple and inexpensive way to provide a roof. Today this is not the case. The thatch retains the benefits but does have some drawbacks. The thatch will need replacement every forty or fifty years. The skilled craftsman able to complete the work are available but have to charge a “rate for the job” which reflects the time needed and the quality of the thatch. Wheat straw is often used. The more traditional Norfolk thatch is still used and

has a longer life but carries an extra cost.

Within many towns thatch is no longer seen. In Stratford, for example the thatch was outlawed after a very serious fire back in the 16th century. In those days the houses were built close together and if the very inflammable thatch caught fire it would spread rapidly. Nowadays the material is treated with a flame retardant, but care is necessary to avoid the risk of fire.



The pitch of the roof is usually at 45 degrees or more to allow water to run off easily. The wire netting used is not to hold the thatch in place but to stop birds (and other creatures) from making nests.

On some ridges you may have seen examples of birds or other small animals created from the thatch. Originally these were provided by the thatcher to indicate he had been treated well by the owner.

The eaves are an important part of the construction. They have to be long enough to allow the water run off and avoid damaging the walls. Some eaves had extra ornament built in to deter eaves dropping which was possible with some types of thatch due to the hollow formation of the reed.

The large overhanging eyebrow windows found on many older buildings were provided to avoid the owners being affected by moonlight. It was said that if moonlight fell on to your bed while you were sleeping you wake a “lunatic”.

If you have any other country sayings or items of interest please let us know

Website

Our website is undergoing reconstruction. Please bear with us, we should be up and running soon

Facebook

Why not visit our facebook page and 'like' us, keeping up to date with weekly posts
www.facebook.com/cpre.warwickshire

Twitter

Follow our new and exciting twitter feed at @protectwarwicks

E mail

If you would like to receive our occasional news or event announcement emails but currently do not get them, please send an email to Alan Palmer at membership_cp_re_warwickshire@outlook.com.

Sponsorship

CPRE Warwickshire is looking for funding to maintain this publication and to help preserve the Warwickshire landscape.

If you would like to donate or advertise in this publication, please contact the office in Warwick 01926 494597

CPRE Membership

As a member you will receive:

The CPRE membership magazine Warwickshire 'Outlook' three times a year. Your chance to find out about planning developments and influence decisions in Warwickshire. News about the local branch and half-price entry to a number of England's finest historic houses and gardens.

If your membership has lapsed, please make sure you renew in 2017. We need new and existing members to support our work to protect the Warwickshire countryside.

Subscription: Recommended minimum is £36 per year. The more that you can pay, the more we can do!

To become a member of CPRE Warwickshire, please phone the office on 01926 494597 for an application form or visit www.cprewarwickshire.org.uk. Thank you.

Introduce a new member!

Do you know anybody in Warwickshire or the West Midlands - a friend, relative or a neighbour - who might be interested in joining the CPRE? If you introduce them to us and they sign up, we'll send you a £20.00 Marks and Spencer voucher as a thank-you gift.

Just contact the Warwickshire office for full details and an application form.



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