

# OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

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# OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

Spring 2020

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Views expressed in the *Voice* are not necessarily those of CPRE Oxfordshire, which welcomes independent comment.

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## Chairman's voice



Our Trustees and Staff join me in hoping you and your families are well and continue to be so.

Chairman's Voice is again this year the vehicle for my Annual Report.

In these challenging times, the aims of CPRE are of even greater importance for the well-being of all citizens. This is not a time to wait for a 'new normality' to arrive before thinking beyond our current concerns, in search of opportunities to re-vitalise our efforts to ensure that rural England will be protected and enhanced.

Seeking social-distancing for an hour's walk must for many of you, like me, have taken you from self-isolation to the Green Belt, or to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, or to a valued local green field, to enjoy in quiet, unpolluted air the now seemingly deafening sound of birds' wings, reminiscent of the sound of long ago helicopter rotor blades, and actually to see, evening after evening, the sun halve itself and then disappear into a field or behind the steeple of a village church. We must do our best to ensure that the invaluable assets of our rural oases are protected for all time.

It can be no surprise that CPRE's core activity of planning has even now remained at the vanguard of our work. Throughout the year, the imposition – in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework – of the opportunity for a district to claim a place in a neighbour's Local Plan to meet its housing 'unmet need' has caused great and continuing difficulties for all the districts surrounding the City of Oxford; none more so than in the ongoing saga of the four thousand houses in

the Green Belt which Cherwell District has inserted in its emerging Plan to meet the City's claimed unmet need. The trouble is that districts can choose their own reasons why their proposals are 'exceptional' and hence flout the Green Belt rules, whatever Government Ministers or Party Election Manifestos have promised. The Law for Planning Inspectors when judging Local Plans resides in the Policy Framework, strengthened by formal Government Guidelines. And there is the rub. So, now on the back of Minister Jenrick's intervention to thwart the new regime in South Oxfordshire District's intention to change the District's emerging Local Plan, we are in correspondence with Whitehall, trying to use our art of persuasion, which is also in this case the science of logic, to save a great chunk of the Oxford Green Belt. After all, the Office of National Statistics has recently predicted, in face of expected significant lower levels of growth, that Oxford City's population will actually decline over the next ten years.

The fact that we have partners in the County for some of these endeavours results to a great degree from the hard work of our Officers (now working from home). Members should realise how lucky our CPRE Branch is to have such a talented and effective team, led by Helen Marshall as Director, and greatly assisted by our Communications Manager, Julia Benning, and our Administrator, Becky Crocket. Despite all the inconveniences COVID-19 has thrown at them, we see no diminution in activity or professionalism in anything that they touch, which deserves our heartfelt congratulation. One item in the Office's portfolio is the development of useful relationships with partners who share some of our ideals. To give just three examples: there are now approaching 40 organisations belonging to Need Not Greed Oxfordshire for which our Office supplies driving force and secretarial assistance, we are active in the newly formed Oxfordshire



*Mongewell Park*

Environment Board, and most recently we have worked productively with the Cherwell Development Watch Alliance in respect of the Cherwell Green Belt housing proposals. We are also working closely with local campaign group GARD to continue interrogating Thames Water's proposals for a mega-reservoir near Abingdon. Such proposals are now quite rightly being considered at a more strategic regional level, and we have instigated a CPRE South East regional water network to help us engage effectively.

The major issue that is in one sense dormant is the matter of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc and its Expressway, the latter 'paused' in the last Budget. However, although – as with the Oxfordshire Growth Board's 'Oxfordshire Plan 2050' – much is delayed, steps to ensure that one million houses are built along the Arc by 2050 proceed. The latest manoeuvre, again established in the Budget, is confirmation that a 'Spatial Framework' for the Arc and its surroundings will be introduced. CPRE favours such an approach, but

only if there is full public engagement and appropriate environmental assessment.

Crucial to helping a Chairman of CPRE Oxfordshire carry out his duties is the support he receives from his fellow Trustees, for which I am most grateful. A special thank you this year to our President, John Harwood, for not only his usual wise counsel, but also his assistance in putting together suitable proposals concerning replacing our AGM in July, which cannot now take place and which he would have chaired.

Mark Barnett is stepping down as Chairman of the Vale of White Horse District Committee and I should like to thank him for his service. He will continue to advise us on Natural Capital.

But now, it's over to you, our members! Although experience over the last hundred years does not suggest that major productive changes in the way of the world are imminent, there could be perhaps an opportunity soon for

a catalyst to improve the way we live and, for CPRE to give force, through its own visions, of how better protection could be given to the countryside and the lives of rural communities. We know already that more of us are likely to work from home, maybe far from our former offices (though the conviviality of the workplace should not be underestimated!). Whilst considering the (at least partly) public-spirited COVID gesture of the private hospitals, where is the Minister on a white charger to offer Government subsidy to members of the House Builders Association to assist the nation by building only truly affordable houses to meet local needs for one year, say? I don't mean you to take such a mad-cap idea to heart, but would you consider 'thinking out of the box' for a few moments and let me know of any, perhaps cherished, ideas you may have which, in the current circumstances, might just help CPRE take a lead further to protect and enhance rural England.

**Peter Colins**  
*Chairman*



# The value of wellbeing

**The value of our green spaces, countryside and Green Belt have never been so tangible. Who hasn't been grateful for the freedom that getting outdoors has offered as our one form of daily exercise? In Oxfordshire we are lucky that the majority of us can access green spaces within a reasonable distance, and most of us are not obliged to drive to reach some space to breathe.**

Access to the countryside and green spaces clearly has a role to play in encouraging healthy lifestyles, supporting recovery, well-being and building resilient communities. Just being able to see an open green landscape, even in a picture, has been proven to be a health benefit in itself.<sup>1</sup>

People exercising outdoors report higher feelings of wellbeing, and lower feelings of stress or anxiety, than those doing the same activity indoors.<sup>2</sup>

Defra has estimated that if everyone had access to sufficient green space the benefits associated with increased physical activity could save the health system £2.1bn per year.<sup>3</sup>

The particularly strong planning controls provided by Green Belt policy provide a clear distinction between town and country on the edge of England's largest and most historic cities and contribute to a good quality of life within them. And yet, the Oxford Green Belt is constantly under threat from development. If the Green Belt is at risk, what's the future for the undesignated open countryside which many of us have been enjoying?

In 2019 the Office for National Statistics published research showing



that living near green space adds an average £2,500 to urban property prices, while having an open view of greenery can typically add £4,600: the nearer the green space the higher the premium.<sup>4</sup> Not surprising then, that the land of most benefit to everyone, not just those who are lucky to live nearby, is the land most sought after and endangered.

2016 CPRE research showed that Green Belts have particularly high concentrations of public footpaths and country parks, compared to the countryside as a whole. The Oxford Green Belt provides 591km of footpaths and is the countryside on the doorstep for Oxford residents and surrounding villages.<sup>5</sup>

Recent planning decisions across Oxfordshire have failed people and communities: nearly 20,000 houses are proposed to be built on the Oxford Green Belt, including 4,400 between North Oxford, Begbroke and Yarnton.

Access to open countryside and parks surrounding towns has already been damaged by infrastructure development, particularly of major roads. These roads can form a physical and/or psychological barrier for residents who want to access the countryside and, in some cases, can ironically make driving to get there a necessity. Further development and infrastructure can only make access more difficult for existing residents and those tempted by the new homes planned for the future.

At a time when our green spaces have really proved their worth as an asset isn't it appropriate our government and local councils do more to protect and enhance them? The fact that Green Belt land is protected gives us the chance to make even more of it. We do not face a binary choice between building houses or keeping it as it is. There is a third way: working towards a Green Belt that is even better used by people and even richer in nature.<sup>6</sup>

1 UK National Ecosystem Assessment, The UK National Ecosystem Assessment: Synthesis of the Key Findings. UNEP-WCMC, June 2011, pages 18, 23 and 25.  
2 Thompson Coon, J. et al, 2011, Environmental Science & Technology, 45, 1761-1772  
3 Defra, 2010, Defra's climate change plan. Department for Environment, Food and Rural affairs, London  
4 Office for National Statistics, Valuing green spaces in urban areas: a hedonic price approach using machine learning techniques, October 2019  
5 CPRE and ADAS, Nature Conservation and Recreational Opportunities in the Green Belt, 2016  
6 In defence of the Green Belt, Dieter Helm, April 2015 - <http://www.dieterhelm.co.uk/assets/secure/documents/Green-Belt-Paper-.pdf>



# CPRE selects Hogacre Common Eco Park for pilot landscape project



*Hedgelaying workshop at Hogacre Common, Autumn 2019*

**Hogacre Common Eco Park is a rural oasis a mile from Oxford City Centre within the Oxford Green Belt. CPRE Oxfordshire is supporting the 14-acre community space by providing funds for various initiatives. These include training courses, planting a forest garden, improving access and installing information boards to offer a greater understanding of the site and projects.**

The project is being funded by the Essex Trust, as part of a National CPRE pilot landscape improvement project.

In 2010 the local community came together to undertake low carbon projects on land previously used as a college sports ground. The space has

been transformed and now provides a thriving food garden, beekeeping, Forest School site, orchard, newly created lowland meadow, hazel coppice and a developing community woodland.

CPRE Oxfordshire is delighted to be involved with Hogacre Common. It's a working demonstration of how Green Belt land can be used by local communities: increasing environmental awareness, improving physical and mental health, providing hands-on opportunities to get involved and learn new skills whilst encouraging practical climate change actions.

For more information visit [www.hogacrecommon.org.uk](http://www.hogacrecommon.org.uk)



## Oxfordshire Local Plan round-up

### Cherwell

Consultation on the Proposed Main Modifications to the Partial Review of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 closed in December 2019. Main Modifications and supporting documents were approved by Full Council and submitted to the Inspector in February 2020.

We now await the Inspector's report, but he has already indicated that he will approve the building of 4,400 houses in the Oxford Green Belt around Kidlington, Begbroke and Yarnton, effectively coalescing these areas with each other and north Oxford. It is possible final approval of the Plan may come before Cherwell Council at its meeting on 20 May.

### Oxford City

Following public hearings in December 2019 independent Local Plan inspectors identified various amendments, or Main Modifications, necessary to ensure the Oxford City Local Plan is 'sound'.

Final consultation on the Main Modifications of the Plan closed in March 2020. The consultation responses are available to view on the Oxford City Council website. We await the inspector's conclusion.

CPRE Oxfordshire urged the Council to release employment land and increase housing densities to save greenfield and Green Belt land, reduce commuting and help tackle the climate emergency.

### South Oxfordshire

Following the newly elected Council's decision to review the submitted draft Local Plan back in June 2019, the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, intervened in October 2019 preventing the potential withdrawal of the Plan.

The Secretary of State has now directed South Oxfordshire District Council to progress its Local Plan through examination, to be adopted by December 2020.

CPRE Oxfordshire is concerned that this intervention questions the whole Local Plan examination process and overtakes local democracy.

### Vale of White Horse

The Local Plan Part 2 2031 was adopted in October 2019.

The Council is now initiating work to review its entire Local Plan, starting with a consultation on its Statement of Community Involvement which ran in April 2020.

### West Oxfordshire

The consultation on a new Area Action Plan (AAP) for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village closed in October 2019. A summary report is being compiled and will be available on the West Oxfordshire District Council website. A final pre-submission draft Area Action Plan is being prepared ahead of further public consultation planned for this year.



**Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 39 local groups and individuals that have come together to campaign for a future that respects the views of local people, plans for 'need not greed' and protects the environment. The secretariat for the group is provided by CPRE Oxfordshire.**  
**To find out more visit: [www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk](http://www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk)**

### Vale of White Horse Statement of Community Involvement

NNGO does not normally comment on individual Local Plan issues but wanted to raise concerns about a process that will inform Local Plan development across all our Districts.

Consultation on the Vale of White Horse Statement of Community Involvement closed in April. It will plan how communities within the Vale will be able to influence planning policy, including the Local Plan. It will also set out how anyone interested will be able

to comment on planning applications for development.

NNGO has concerns that, despite the appetite to involve communities, key documents, such as the Housing Needs Assessment currently being developed for the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan could be prepared without being subject to public debate and subsequently presented as 'evidence' dictating Local Plan housing numbers.

We must at all costs avoid a repeat of the 2014 Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment that was drawn up behind closed doors but contained

aggressive and unrealistic growth targets that subsequently dictated the content of District Plans.

There should be an option to provide for the natural growth needs of the existing population. Any growth proposals over and above the need arising from natural growth should be clearly identified as such and open to public debate.

NNGO welcomes the intention to engage as wide a range of the local community as possible. We would like to see open engagement with all interested parties, including residents, on targets before they are set, with action and feedback demonstrating how their views are considered and the plan modified accordingly.

***See the full NNGO response on the website.***



# Transports of delight?

## Expressway in limbo

Rumours of the death of the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway have been exaggerated! Despite promises of cancellation from various sources, the Government announcement alongside the Budget in March said only that it had been 'paused' whilst alternative options are being considered.

This in itself should be considered an achievement given the original gung-ho attitude towards the project. CPRE Oxfordshire would like to thank all its members and supporters for their help in raising awareness of the damaging nature of the Expressway proposals. And particular thanks to our fellow campaigners in the No Expressway Group, for their amazing dedication and professionalism in helping to make sure local voices were heard at the highest level. This included a drop-in event at the Houses of Parliament, co-hosted by Layla Moran MP, that we were pleased to support.

## So, what next?

How much should we read into the fact that the latest information on the Highways England website describes it as a route from the M1 to the M40, not to the M4 as previously?

It seems entirely possible that in Oxfordshire, the Government may switch to investing in improvements to existing roads, particularly the A34. This is surely something we can all

support in principle even if there may be much discussion over the detail.

Meanwhile, our communities and countryside are left in limbo by this lack of clarity. For example, it is hard to see how Oxfordshire 2050, the long-term strategic development plan for the county, can possibly be agreed without a final decision on this matter.

## Electrification of East West Rail?

The route between Bedford and Cambridge has now been announced. Encouragingly, the Department of Transport (DoT) has confirmed in a letter to CPRE that the case for electrification is being reconsidered. The East West Rail company is reviewing three options: full route electrification; Central Section (Bedford to Cambridge) electrification; and a Central Section electric/hybrid rolling stock solution. Electrification had previously been 'de-scoped' for the Western Section (Bicester to Bedford) due to capital costs. However, the DoT has also confirmed that passive provision is being made during construction so that electrification can subsequently be introduced, subject to value for money and affordability.

## England's Economic Heartland Draft Transport Strategy – coming soon!

EEH (England's Economic Heartland) may be a new acronym for you, but

it is now one to remember. This is the 'Sub-national Transport Body' for the region, with a responsibility to develop the area's long-term transport strategy. Oxfordshire's representatives on the EEH Leadership are Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader, Oxfordshire County Council, and Jeremy Long, Chair, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Last year, EEH consulted on an outline of the new Transport Strategy, running until 2050. Key messages emerging from the consultation included many that CPRE put into its own response, such as:

- The need to be bold – not business as usual
- Putting environment at forefront of strategy, including response to the climate emergency
- Reducing the need to travel
- Increasing emphasis on sustainable modes.

CPRE has now been invited to join a small group of organisations to act as an Influencers Group, to inform further development of the Transport Strategy. The final document is due for consultation in summer 2020, subject of course to any delay caused by the broader challenges the country is currently facing. Please keep an eye on our website / e-newsletter for further information.

# The Oxford-Cambridge Arc *steamrollers on...*

**The Government has announced that a Spatial Framework for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc will be created, although it is not yet clear how this will be taken forward. Our view is that such a spatial strategy may be helpful but must not be used as a way of the Government pushing through its development targets without reference to the views of existing local residents or taking adequate account of the environment and climate change.**

So far, the Government appears to remain committed to the major development proposals for the Arc: new transport links and urban development to create over 1 million new houses and 1 million new jobs. This would mean a doubling of the population and housing stock in the area by 2050.

The March Budget also said the Government would explore and develop the case for four new Development Corporations in the Arc at Bedford, St Neots/Sandy, Cambourne and Cambridge, including plans to explore the case for a New Town at Cambridge. It is worth noting that even all of these together could only cope with a fraction of the 1 million houses proposed, so the growth impacts on the area as a whole would remain significant, if not to say overwhelming.

CPRE believes there are other parts of England, particularly in the Midlands and northern regions, that need regeneration and so merit investment far more than the area of the Arc. For example, recent analysis of ONS (Office of National Statistics) data undertaken by think tank IPPR North shows that nearly half of all jobs created in the last 10 years have been in London and the South East, despite only a third of the population living in that region. The Government and the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), which has led policy work on the Arc to date, have not properly considered the impact of their emerging proposals for growth, migration, regeneration and infrastructure spending on these other regions. CPRE believes that this should be an essential part of any strategic planning process for the Arc.



In housing, the main priority should be providing the affordable housing needed by existing residents supported by sustainable public transport. The scale of development proposed by the NIC and endorsed by the Government is too great in terms of what the Arc area should be expected to sustain. According to the NIC, around a quarter of the total new house-build across the Arc (200,000 houses) will be to address anticipated levels of buying by London

commuters, for which we see no justification, especially as many will be unaffordable if in line with post-2012 figures.

We want development on brownfield land in the principal urban areas to be prioritised, at an appropriately high density to make best use of scarce land resource and create settlements that have better access to services and infrastructure.





# Farming rises to the coronavirus challenge

**National Farmers Union (NFU) South East spokeswoman Isobel Bretherton explains the challenges facing farmers at the start of the outbreak, as the impact of coronavirus began to be felt.**

With tractors hard at work in the fields, lambs enjoying the sunshine and the clocks going forward it almost feels like a normal spring.

Except, of course, everything is far from normal.

The NFU has supported farmers through many challenges in its 112-year history but nothing quite like this, with supermarket shelves stripped of food, most non-essential businesses closed, outdoor shows and events cancelled and millions of us ordered to stay at home because of an invisible virus.

It's hard to believe it is only two months since a government adviser suggested agriculture wasn't important. Now agricultural workers are categorised as key workers, essential to feeding the nation.

The past few weeks have highlighted

the strategically important role that farming and food production play in all our lives. British citizens stockpiled more than a billion pounds worth of produce within a week, apparently. Farmers have been working flat out, with the rest of the food chain, to help maintain food supplies in supermarkets and other food stores during a prolonged period of unprecedented demand.

There has been a huge increase in sales of eggs, meat, vegetables and other produce, both direct from the farm gate and delivered to people's homes. There is no doubt that British farmers and growers, particularly those in the farm retail sector, with farm shops and butcheries, have come to the fore, being inundated with customers.

The NFU have joined with government to launch a major recruitment drive to encourage British workers to fill the void left by some 70,000 seasonal workers, the vast majority of whom are now barred from travelling here from Europe.

The NFU has been working with Defra so that food destined for our decimated service sector can switch to the retail sector instead.

This crisis has also reinforced farming's place at the heart of our rural communities, with farm businesses supporting the many local groups set up to help the elderly and vulnerable.

There will be some serious challenges to overcome in the short term. Labour availability remains a major concern in our region, despite the encouraging response there has been to appeals to help plant and harvest our food.

Meanwhile, farm businesses with small labour forces could be badly affected if someone within the business self-isolates or is infected with Covid-19.

We need to ensure our vital farm-to-fork infrastructure remains operational, including the hauliers, abattoirs, meat processing plants, pack houses and mills.

Above all, we need to be mindful of the mental health of everyone involved, looking out for each other at a time when all social gatherings are at a standstill. In the longer term, the strategic importance of our industry should never be taken for granted again.

The high food safety, animal welfare and environmental standards farmers adhere to must be protected in future trade negotiations, so that our essential food and farming sector is not undermined.

We need to look at our food supply chains, to build in greater resilience at every link in that chain.

And ultimately, British farmers must be given the tools to deliver a productive, resilient and sustainable agricultural sector that meets the expectations of the UK public – producing safe and affordable food, looking after our environment and valued countryside, and contributing to productive and robust economic growth.

We have come through many challenges and we will come through this, but one thing is for sure. Britain will need its farmers in the months and years ahead.

# The South East's water companies come together to improve regional planning



**I**t has been an interesting year for a hydrologist! 2018 was a dry year in the south of England so we started 2019 with low river and well levels, particularly in the chalk streams on the Chilterns. The first part of 2019 was similarly dry in the Thames valley – until June when it started raining. In June and July we had floods in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire but there was quite a north-south divide with comparatively low river flows in the Thames and talk of hosepipe bans. And, of course, we had record high temperatures – which pushed up the demand as people watered their gardens and this caused quite a supply problem – not that there was not enough water overall but local pipes and reservoirs couldn't cope with the demand. Then in late September the weather really changed and we all got substantial amounts of prolonged rainfall, so by November the rivers in the Thames Basin had returned to normal. Again the Thames valley escaped the worst of the floods, which sadly hit the north and west really hard. Now, in mid-April, I'm sitting looking over my garden, where it hasn't rained properly for over a month, and I'm worrying whether my vegetable

seeds will ever germinate!

Our weather is certainly capricious! Of course our climate has always been variable but there is no doubt that now our weather is getting warmer and, when it does rain, the rain is more intense. This climate change is clearly going to put additional strain on our water supply. With an increasing population and climate change we need to increase our supplies of water for the future. We also need to ensure that nature is well looked after, for example, our internationally unique chalk streams must be protected.

The water companies are charged by the Government to produce regular Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs), which look into the future and develop projects to supply their customers in the decades to come. The most recent Thames Water Plan envisages a major new reservoir just south of Abingdon, as well as demand management and reducing leaks. For many years CPRE Oxfordshire has been engaging with Thames Water on its plans through their stakeholder forums, we are aided in this by GARD (Group Against Reservoir Development). We

have repeatedly questioned Thames Water's population forecasts – which rely on Local Authority Local Plans, which are at best 'aspirational' and always in excess of the Governments own population forecasts. We also question their lack of ambition in reducing leakage and household consumption. In the last year Thames Water has now changed its tune somewhat and now justifies the building of the reservoir to supply Affinity as well as Thames Water customers.

With the increasing interest in moving water between regions and water companies a co-ordination body of the water companies, Water Resources South East (WRSE), has become more active and plans to develop a Water Resource Management Plan for the whole of the South East are in train. In March WRSE published its Future Water Requirements for South East England [www.wrse.org.uk/public-documents](http://www.wrse.org.uk/public-documents). While CPRE welcomes a regional (and national) approach to water planning, unfortunately this initial document is woefully inadequate as it merely splices together the Water Companies existing assessments. So, for example, it projects that the population of the South East will increase from the present 20 million to 29 million by 2100 – this is twice the Office of National Statistics projection for this area!

To respond effectively to this enhanced regional planning, a Water Network Group has been established between CPRE Branches across the South East to share knowledge and information, with CPRE Oxfordshire providing the secretariat. We will be critically assessing the industry's plans for water supply and the future protection of the environment.

**Richard Harding**  
*Chair CPRE South Oxfordshire*



## OPINION:

# Build a better planning system



In times gone by there was generally a balance between local and government ambitions, with both sides, although not necessarily agreeing with each other, at least respecting their positions. That situation appears to have changed.

When the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first introduced a very well-known and senior Oxfordshire MP said that people need not be alarmed, estates of houses would not be tacked onto existing villages. That promise has not been kept.

The government has a blanket aim to build 300,000 houses per year. That target is unlikely to be met when the housebuilding industry is set up to build about 200,000 houses. It is unlikely to have the workers or the facilities to build more. And why should it when it is profitable as it is. The target of 300,000 means that, whatever the limitation of any scheme they promote, the claim can always be made that it is a contribution towards the government target.

We would prefer smaller schemes of well-designed houses built to

complement existing neighbourhoods. What we are getting are largish estates of identikit housing which of course the industry is tooled up to produce, and which are therefore the most profitable.

There are examples where government has overruled local opinion. The most obvious is in South Oxfordshire where the elected council has had its revised plan rejected by the Secretary of State, and the decision taken up to government level.

In a CPRE survey people voted to preserve the Green Belt. Yet Inspectors

have decided that Oxford City's unmet need (about which there is much doubt) justifies building on the Oxford Green Belt.

Neighbourhood Plans were sold on the basis that they would give villagers a say where houses should be built. From a personal perspective, in my village the Neighbourhood Plan Committee decided that rather than identify sites it would define the criteria by which sites might be chosen. This was rejected by the Examiner who made it clear he would not approve the plan until sites were identified. The village already has one large estate and two other developments are pending. It is clear that Neighbourhood Plans are agreed only if future development sites are defined.

It would be much better if government could act in consort with elected county district and village councils rather than highhandedly ignoring or over riding them. The operation of planning would be easier for everyone and there is a chance that we would end up with developments people could be proud of and pleased with.

**Brian Wood**  
*Treasurer*

CPRE Oxfordshire's vision is that development should be well planned and sensitively executed to protect and enhance Oxfordshire's countryside. Whilst we recognise the need for more housing in the county, we continue to pressure the Government, County and District Councils to build housing based on natural growth and migration rather than inflated targets. Brownfield land should be developed first. Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) should be developed as a last resort under proven exceptional circumstances.

Land is not an endless resource: conserving, maintaining and improving our landscape is essential. This can only be achieved through long-term, collaborative planning. Planning for Oxfordshire should prioritise the needs of communities and therefore residents should be given opportunities to decide the future of Oxfordshire.

# Members' Events 2020

In light of the Covid-19 outbreak once we are able to confirm that an event will take place, we will confirm your place and only then will payment be required.

To express an interest please contact: Becky Crockett, administrator@cpreoxon.org, uk 01491 612079 (please leave a message if necessary).

Payments can be made by cheque payable to CPRE Oxfordshire. For BACS payments, please contact Becky Crockett.

Details of travel, parking, access etc will follow.

## Wednesday 15th July Tour of Nuffield Place (National Trust) & afternoon tea

Meet outside entrance 2.00pm  
Nuffield Place is off the A4130 between Nettlebed and Wallingford  
You may picnic in the gardens beforehand or have lunch in the tearoom, please order lunch in advance.

Number 15 – 30

Cost: Entrance £7.75  
(free to National Trust members),  
optional afternoon tea £10.00

## Friday 11th September Visit to Oxford University Press Museum and Guided Walk around Jericho ending at St Barnabas Church

Meet at Oxford University Press (OUP) Museum, Walton Street, 10.30am  
Dr Maw, OUP Archivist will lead a 45 minute tour. Walk to finish by 1.00pm.

Maximum number 15

Cost: £7.50, includes donation to St Barnabas Church

# CPRE Oxfordshire AGM 2020

Unfortunately in the current circumstances, members will appreciate that it is not possible to hold the CPRE Oxfordshire AGM in the normal way. Further information and AGM papers are being sent to members either by email or post during June. Please contact the Branch office if these are not received. Responses to papers to be returned by 31 July 2020.

## Introducing Technical Bulletins

CPRE Oxfordshire has produced the first in a series of Technical Bulletins. Each will provide detailed information on specific areas of planning and help you prepare responses to planning applications.

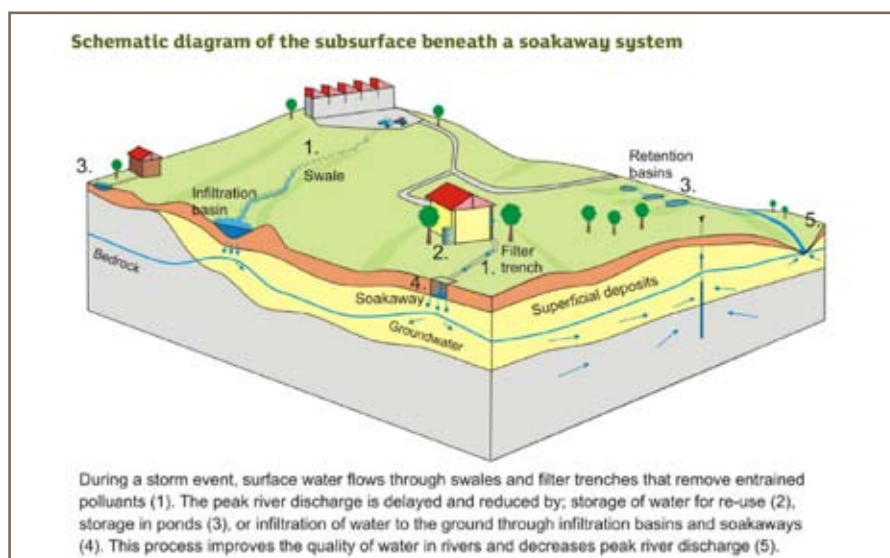
### The first bulletin looks at the **Drainage Aspect of Planning Applications.**

CPRE Oxfordshire is concerned that the impact of new development on existing drainage services, both surface water and foul drainage, is currently overlooked within the planning system. This puts strain on local drainage strategies with local rivers bearing the brunt. Ultimately surface water finds its way to local streams and rivers potentially

causing flooding. In the event that mains sewers are unable to cope with foul drainage, water companies are permitted to release untreated sewage into rivers potentially causing significant environmental damage.

You have local knowledge and may be in a position to challenge some of the assumptions and conclusions made in the planning application process. You can let the statutory consultees (such as the County Council, the Environment Agency or the local water authority) know about material facts and your information will help them judge the validity of the planning applicant's information.

Download the leaflet from our website here: [tinyurl.com/yco65q3h](http://tinyurl.com/yco65q3h)



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