

# SURREY VOICE

Magazine of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England | Summer 2021

## BACK TO NATURE



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# Go-ahead for Surrey Hills AONB review

Natural England, the government agency responsible for the natural environment, announced on 24 June that the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) will be considered for boundary expansion. This is an important announcement and follows years of campaigning by CPRE Surrey to secure the extension of the AONB to take in more of Surrey's most beautiful countryside, allowing it to benefit from greater protection and to be safeguarded for future generations.

The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across a quarter of the county of Surrey and includes the chalk slopes of the North Downs from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east, and extends south to the deeply wooded Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere. Being in such close proximity to London, an enlargement of the Surrey Hills AONB would give greater access to the natural environment. This would help preserve its rural heritage, promote tranquillity and give more access to nature for the benefit of people's health and wellbeing.

Announcing the decision to proceed with the boundary review, Allison Potts, Area Manager for Natural England, said: "The Surrey Hills is an iconic and beautiful landscape encompassing rare habitats from chalk grassland to extensive ancient woodland and is enjoyed by millions of residents and visitors from all across the region. We are very excited to announce proposals to explore an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB, a move we hope will boost nature's recovery and help more people access

one of England's most beautiful landscapes, as we build back greener from the pandemic."

## Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

Welcoming the announcement, Heather Kerswell, Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB Board commented: "We are delighted that work is starting on a proposed extension to this nationally important landscape. I find it difficult to understand why the existing boundary was drawn so incredibly tightly and excluded many beautiful natural landscapes. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to assess how the boundaries should be redrawn to benefit nature and people and to give these areas the protection they deserve. We will be working closely with Natural England and local partners."

This is a vindication of CPRE's firm belief in expanding the AONB. Kristina Kenworthy, Chair of CPRE Surrey, explains how the announcement came about and what happens next: "Behind the scenes Natural England have been working away with the Surrey Hills team to facilitate engagement with stakeholders in what will be a collaborative exercise. CPRE Surrey will be able to constructively engage once the landscape consultants have been appointed, which won't be before September as DEFRA's procurement process takes it time. CPRE volunteers in the five districts within the AONB – Tandridge, Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley, Guildford and Waverley – will be able to get involved, taking our cues from the AONB team.



Panoramic view from Newlands Corner

# Protecting Guildford's countryside for the future

By Alivia Kratke

There have been four generations of Guildfordians since Pewley Hill was spared from development and gifted to the community a hundred years ago. Yet, this year, residents of the town were called upon, once again, to rally round and protect this special area for the generations to follow.

Pewley Down Fields, farmland adjacent to the Pewley Hill nature reserve, and in the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, contains diverse and abundant flora and fauna, and is the chalk grassland home to nesting skylarks and an impressive species diversity of butterflies and moths.

In 1921, Pewley Down's chalk grassland, with glorious views across the Surrey countryside, was gifted to the Borough and "preserved for time immemorial as a playground for the people of Guildford." Such public concern over the sweeping urbanisation of the countryside was reflected in the foundation of CPRE itself in 1926. The north side of the Down remained in use as private farmland. Yet this 37 acres of precious, species-rich grassland came up for sale at auction in May 2021. This raised the possibility of a developer land-banking these fields for future building – even though it is protected by Green Belt policy and within the AONB – an illustration of the public's current distrust of the planning system.

A consortium of local residents – many of them CPRE Surrey supporters – teamed up with Surrey Wildlife Trust and rose to the challenge of securing these fields for the community. Such was the fear of this area once again being threatened by unwanted development that the Save Pewley Downs Field campaign managed to raise over a million pounds in pledges within two months, and was therefore able to purchase the field for posterity, ensuring that it will never be built on.

## Countryside on our doorstep

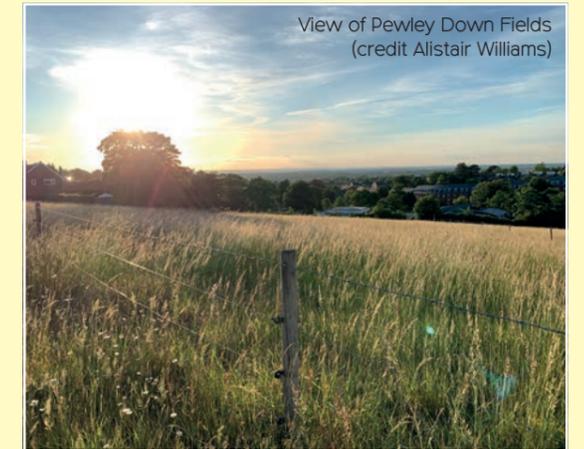
In Guildford, we are lucky to have countryside with sweeping views and green open spaces rich in diverse wildlife habitats right on our doorstep. Our easy access to beautiful and life-enhancing countryside is one of the main reasons the Surrey Hills AONB continues to be voted by The Times as the best place to live in the South East. Yet areas within the AONB and Green Belt in Guildford continue to be under threat from over-development. A short walk from Pewley, by the Merrow Downs, the playing fields of Urnfield are currently facing a planning application intensifying its use for an artificial hockey pitch floodlit by eight columns standing at 13 metres tall – nearly three times the height of a double decker bus. Such visually intrusive floodlighting is both harmful to the natural environment and to our enjoyment of the countryside by day and by night.

It is vital that people continue to rally to the defence of precious and vulnerable open spaces. The Covid-19 pandemic has made us all the more aware of how much access to green space matters. We are beginning to understand the true extent of the health benefits (both physical and mental) that come from connecting with the nature and wildlife around us. Such natural assets as tranquillity and dark skies are vital to our wellbeing.

One hundred years on, the preservation of our countryside remains as important as ever; but history has repeated itself in a wonderful way – through local residents coming together to protect Pewley Down Fields in perpetuity. Let that be an example to all of us.

**Alivia Kratke is a volunteer for CPRE Surrey**

"The key criteria under consideration are whether a landscape has outstanding natural beauty, whether it is desirable to designate and include an area in the AONB for its conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty, and where the extended boundary should be drawn. Natural England will consult with the County Council and those district councils affected by proposed boundary variations, followed by a full public consultation. They will then submit an Order extending the AONB boundary to the Secretary of State for the Environment, for confirmation. The AONB Board are keen to streamline the process, bearing in mind that



View of Pewley Down Fields (credit Alistair Williams)

the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Boundary extension took years to complete. Even once their Order was submitted in 2019 it took DEFRA a further year to confirm the extension in July 2020. However, the result for Surrey's countryside will be worth the wait, with a higher proportion (currently 25%) protected for conservation as a Nationally Important Landscape."

For more information go to the CPRE Surrey website ([www.cpresurrey.org.uk](http://www.cpresurrey.org.uk)) and download the Surrey Hills Boundary Review Report dated 22 June 2021.

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PO Box 865, Godalming, Surrey GU7 9LH

Tel: 01372 700205

Email: [info@cpresurrey.org.uk](mailto:info@cpresurrey.org.uk)

[www.cpresurrey.org.uk](http://www.cpresurrey.org.uk)

Twitter @CPRESurrey

EDITOR: Andy Smith FCIJ

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# FROM THE CHAIR

By Kristina Kenworthy



What do we mean when we talk about Green Space, Open Space, Local Green Space or Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace? Why is some land described as greenfield as opposed to brownfield? Does it matter if land is 'inset' or 'washed over'

by the Green Belt? And is everything up for grabs for housing or are there some areas that must remain open for recreation or conservation of wildlife? It would surely be unthinkable, for instance, if Hindhead, Banstead, Bookham or Chobham Commons were available to meet future development needs. Or for Norbury Park to be turned into an amusement park or Box Hill or the Devil's Punch Bowl to be repurposed for anything other than the conservation of rare habitats and for the landscape's natural beauty. Yet speculative applications keep popping up in Surrey and we are frequently asked how land might be protected. The answer will depend on its location and what designations and policies affect the site – it may be in the Green Belt or countryside beyond. Farmland will require planning permission before any development (unless agricultural) can take place under our plan-led system. Open green spaces may already be protected as parks or nature reserves or as a registered common or village green. The first port of call should always be your Local Plan and, if there is one, your Neighbourhood Plan. You can check out what policies and designations apply by going to Surrey County Council's new Surrey Interactive Map: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/interactive-map>.

Land ownership is irrelevant when applying for planning permission but highly material with regard to current

use and value. Public and private landowners are constantly re-evaluating their portfolios and looking for opportunities to sell land at prices undreamt of a decade or so ago. Sites can only be removed from the Green Belt in *exceptional circumstances* during plan-making but applications for speculative or inappropriate development may be approved if *very special circumstances* exist to justify building in the Green Belt. The benefits of a scheme must objectively outweigh the harms. By which we mean public benefits not benefits for shareholders – Persimmon plc made profits of a billion pounds in 2018. In Surrey, if permission is granted for a housing development, the land value increases by one hundred-fold. These land values have a knock-on effect on the housing market which is dominated by the six largest housebuilders, who control the supply of housing by land banking. There are said to be around one million unimplemented permissions for new homes in England. This manipulation of the housing market is the problem not the planning system, creaking and underfunded as it is. Blame for the failure to deliver new homes, at affordable prices, lies with the housebuilders not the planners.

In the quest for developable plots – allotments, playing fields and forgotten sites of derelict land provide opportunities for cash strapped councils. Barratt Homes' option to buy Poor's Allotments in Leatherhead springs to mind. Or release of recreational land to private clubs, in order to save on the cost of maintenance or building new facilities, which may be a bonus but often leads to an intensification of use, reduction of public access and a loss of biodiversity. A case in point is Mole Valley's BMX track at Ranmore. This has caused a clash between those who want it leased out and those who don't want this green site to be commercialised. Given the outcry, there is hope that the volunteers offering to run it for local kids and



## Why is CPRE so worried about the Green Belt?

Around three quarters of Surrey is covered by the London Metropolitan Green Belt, and the majority of Surrey's Green Belt is rural. As a small county so close to London we are naturally highly protective of our Green Belt. To see large sites taken out of the Green Belt and allocated for housing is painful for local residents. Take, for example, the release for development of the former Wisley Airfield, Dunsfold Park, and Blackwell Farm, which have all been bitterly opposed by local communities. In all, London's Green Belt covers half a million hectares, or 1.2 million acres, so in real terms the percentages losses are still low and it would be short-sighted to think that no land could ever be released through the local plan process.

In last summer's *Planning for the Future White Paper*, the Government attempted to streamline and simplify the planning process in order to deliver more homes. Back in 2012 the National Planning Policy Framework was a reduction of planning policies down to a fifty page document. As anyone involved in planning knows the planning bar has been kept very busy ever since. So simplifying Local Plans to place land in three categories – growth areas, renewal areas and protected areas comes with its own set of complications and inevitable litigation. Ironically the lack of certainty may stall delivery and reduce supply. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has assured us that the Green Belt would fall into the protected category. This is as much to allay the fears of Conservative MPs as it is a nod to CPRE and other Green Belt campaigners. The real rub is in the proposed nationally-determined and binding housing requirements and how much of a constraint the Green Belt will, in reality, provide. With three quarters of Surrey covered, the trend of releasing Green Belt is likely to continue.

In determining planning applications for 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt, we have seen 'enabling development' creeping into permissions for schools and charities to finance rebuilding or renovations by building hundreds of houses in the Green Belt. The developments by Howard of Effingham School and Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People, in partnership with Berkeley Homes, are prime examples. Yet, recently the Jockey Club's application for 318 homes and a new hotel at Sandown Park, to enable the transformation of the nationally-important racecourse at Esher, was blocked at the highest level. Elmbridge Council had originally turned it down on the grounds of harm to the Green Belt and lack of affordable housing. When the developers appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, local MP Dominic Raab, in support of his Esher constituents, wrote asking his Cabinet colleague Robert Jenrick to 'call in' the scheme for his decision. The Secretary of State obliged and gave substantial weight to the harm to the openness and character and appearance of this part of Surrey's Green Belt, leading him to refuse the developer's appeal. This is a positive example of how the Green Belt policy of constraint on development being can be applied to good effect.

cherish it for its rich biodiversity, will succeed in getting it designated as a Local Nature Reserve instead.

### Brownfield v Greenfield

The Ministry of Defence is a major landowner and Surrey Heath makes no secret that it is looking at all available brownfield land and publicly-owned land to meet the borough's future development needs. CPRE welcomes the choice of brownfield first when it comes to finding sustainable sites for building new homes. However, not all brownfield sites are derelict industrial estates on the urban fringe.

The tarmac runway at Three Farm Meadows (formerly Wisley Airfield) is brownfield land, the rest is open farmland that served the purposes of the Green Belt magnificently. Despite Wisley Action Group's long campaign, supported by CPRE Surrey, and Ockham Parish Council's legal challenge, the site was removed from the Green Belt and allocated for development in the Guildford Local Plan in 2019. It was swiftly sold on to Taylor Wimpey who now have the opportunity to transform this disused site into a new settlement. There has to be provision of a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate the recreational pressures on Wisley and Ockham Commons (part of the Thames Basin Heath SPA). Future inhabitants will benefit from living in a new community in rural Surrey – from disused airfield to housing estate.

Dunsfold Aerodrome in countryside beyond the Green Belt has suffered the same fate.

We supported the Chobham Society in resisting proposals for a Garden Village at Fair Oaks – with its consequent loss of the airfield, local employment, open countryside and an alarming lack of infrastructure to support new community of 2,000 dwellings in the Green Belt. While the applicants withdrew in early 2020, their stated intention is to bring a revised scheme forward for what they regard as the most "suitable strategic site for allocation in the emerging Surrey Heath Local Plan."

Godstone Garden Village is a Tandridge Council-led project to build 4,000 new homes in the district's Green Belt. The planning inspector found the Local Plan deeply flawed and, for now, it is back to the drawing board. But the push to build 'Garden Communities' on greenfield sites in Surrey's Green Belt has not gone away, nor will it while the national edict to build 300,000 houses per annum remains.

### Nature recovery

In Surrey we have two European sites of nature conservation: The Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment

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Special Area of Conservation (Habitats Directive) which is designated as the only area in the UK of stable box scrub growing on chalk slopes where the river Mole has cut through the North Downs; and the Thames Basin Heath (TBH) Special Protection Area (Wild Birds Directive). The latter is a network of highly protected heathland important for ground-nesting birds. Designation of conservation areas restricts development and requires mitigation measures to avoid harm to internationally important habitats supporting rare species. While nature conservation designation is not dependent on land use, the scenic quality of the landscape or planning policies, there will often be overlap. Take Norbury Park, farmed and wooded, rich in biodiversity, accessible as part of Surrey's Countryside Estate and managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. It lies in the Green Belt, Surrey Hills AONB and Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC. Protected by these policies and designations, sensitive land management should ensure conservation of its landscape, habitat, farmland and recreational uses for future generations. We are also fortunate in Surrey with the National Trust owning and managing places like Headley Heath, Reigate Hill and Gatton Park, Holmwood Common and Leith Hill, to name but a few.

Some landowners chose to reserve areas for nature – for the pursuit of country sports or just for conservation's sake. The current trend for 'rewilding', following the excellent lead and success at the Knepp Estate in Sussex, can be a viable alternative to conventional farming. It is not for every farmer and we have yet to see how DEFRA's new mantra of 'public money for public goods' will work once agricultural subsidies have been phased out. Environmental Land Management Schemes are the start of incentivising people to farm in an environmentally intelligent way by promoting landscape recovery and local nature recovery. It is essential to do this if we are to fulfil our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and for farmers to remain as both food producers and stewards of our countryside.

Planting woodland and hedgerows is vital and even roadside verges can provide rich habitats if allowed to flourish. We can all stop buying bags of peat, using pesticides and go easy on the mowing. Our gardens can be safe havens for plant and animal species as well.

**National Nature Reserves** are at the heart of DEFRA's programme of Nature Recovery and we have four NNRs in Surrey: Chobham, Thursley, Ashted and South London Downs. Ashted Common NNR is grassland with around 1,000 ancient oaks on London Clay, and together with Epsom is also an SSSI and Local Nature Reserve. It is owned and managed by the City of London Corporation. As recently as 2018, the South London Downs National Nature Reserve was designated by Natural England. It is 417 hectares, including 153 of SSSI, of chalk downland and jointly managed by Croydon Council and City of London Corporation. It provides wonderful recreational

and educational opportunities for Londoners and Surrey residents alike. Surrey has forty two **Local Nature Reserves** which can be selected, declared and managed by local authorities or by Surrey Wildlife Trust. An LNR is an open space with wildlife or geological interest and it might well have been a brownfield site – like Inholm's Clay Pit in North Holmwood. This old clay quarry for brick making is now a mixture of open grassland and a new woodland, with a south-facing slope providing an ideal habitat for rare butterflies.

There are five Local Nature Reserves in Elmbridge – Claygate Common, Esher Common, Molesey Heath, Stokes Field and West End Common, and we should be encouraging councils to declare more such sites across Surrey to aid nature recovery.

### Village Greens or Local Green Spaces?

Registration as a Town or Village Green is a complicated process under the Commons Act 2006. But once designated that land is protected as if it were an ancient common. Surrey has over 24,000 acres of registered common land – a higher percentage than any other county. Land that is already held by a local authority for the purpose of recreation as a park, informal open space, for playing fields or allotments can be voluntarily registered as a Town or Village Green. In Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, the Town Council has registered two of its recreational areas as village greens, thus protecting them from development. The Open Spaces Society, which is based in Henley, has a campaign to get more councils across the country to follow suit.

Private landowners are unlikely to register land as a town or village green but local residents may be able to establish prescriptive rights under S 15 of Commons Act 2006 (see glossary)

Land at The Dell in Fetcham in Mole Valley, was the subject of such a successful application for village green status in 2010, the only objector was Persimmon plc. This was before the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 put an end to applications to register land that have been earmarked for development.

In Elmbridge, an application has been made to register Stokes Field Nature Reserve and One Tree Hill, known as Stoke's Field. Assuming the land has not already been identified as suitable for development we trust that it will qualify for registration as town or village green.

Following a case in Wootton Bassett, where land was in an area identified in the Core Strategy for potential

## 100 Club winners

CPRE Surrey is delighted to report that the latest **100 Club** draw has been held and a CPRE member in Esher has won the top prize of £367.20, while one of our members in Guildford has won the runner-up prize of £91.80. There were 153 entries in all, generating a grand total of £918 annually for the charity. The **100 Club** is a great way to support CPRE Surrey and to be in with a chance of winning cash prizes in the draw if you are not already a member, please contact our Hon. Treasurer, John Goodridge, email [jgoodridge@cpresurrey.org.uk](mailto:jgoodridge@cpresurrey.org.uk), for further details.

## GLOSSARY

**Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)** – Statutory purpose of the Surrey Hills AONB – to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the designated landscape.

**Brownfield** means 'previously developed land' (PDL) in urban or suburban areas. In Surrey PDL in areas of open countryside has led to development on footprint of former airfields, nursery gardens, hardstanding and outbuildings.

**Commons or Common Land** – registered as common land under the Commons Registration Act 1965, in Surrey the County Council is the commons registration authority. Rights of common are enjoyed by Commoners. Could be a private landowner, the National Trust, Ministry of Defence, or local authority.

**Environmental Land Management Schemes** – Three schemes to provide public money for public goods: Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery from DEFRA.

**Green Belt Policy** – The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. Construction of new building is considered inappropriate and by definition harmful. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations. See NPPF.

**Greenfield** – Any land that is undeveloped/unbuilt on and usually means agricultural land.

**Green Space** – Tends to mean parks or natural areas in an urban setting with public access.

**Local Green Space** – Paras: 99-101 NPPF: discretionary designation in plan making where the green space is: "(a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves; (b) demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and (c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land."

**Local Nature Reserves** – Local councils can select, declare and manage a site as a Local Nature Reserve.

**National Nature Reserves** – Statutory designations established to protect some of our most important habitats and provide opportunities to learn about the natural environment.

development, and could not therefore qualify for registration, there is an option under paragraphs 99-101 in the NPPF to designate land as Local Green Space. This gives the land the same level of protection as if it were within the Green Belt. This could be relevant for villages that are no longer washed over by the Green Belt or in built-up areas where open space is cherished by local people. Or where land cannot be registered as a town or village green but is equally deserving of protection as valued open space as if it were in the Green Belt.

Mole Valley is proposing a number of areas for designation as *Local Green Space* in its next iteration of the local plan – one of which is Leach Grove Wood. The registration of Leach Grove Wood as a village green was quashed by the Supreme Court on the basis that it was incompatible with the purpose for which NHS Property Services held the land – even though there was no actual conflict between the provision of medical services at Leatherhead Hospital and

**National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949** – Established statutory designation and purposes of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as National Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** – Sets out Government's planning policies to achieve Sustainable Development. NPPF sets out the framework for Plan Making, Delivery of homes, Conserving and Enhancing Natural and Historic Environment, Climate Change, etc – search: [NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://www.nppf.gov.uk/).

**Open Spaces Society** – Defending open spaces in England and Wales since 1865. It has a helpful website and continues to promote protection of public open spaces, registration of Town & Village Greens and public rights of way. Check out the Open Spaces Society's website: [www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk).

**Plan Led** – Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that "where in making any determination under the planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicates otherwise."

**Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGs)** – To provide recreation opportunities in a natural environment as an avoidance strategy for harm to Thames Basin Heath SPA. Example of a new SANG: Windlesham – 15 ha. of Windlemere golf course rewilded with three wildflower meadows and four ponds, fenced off conservation area with Crested Newts, and paths for dog walkers and joggers.

**Surrey Nature Partnership** – Promotes Biodiversity and Planning in Surrey to ensure that development within the county protects and enhances the biodiversity which underpins our Natural Capital. CPRE Surrey is hoping to be part of this partnership in future. <https://surreynaturepartnership.org.uk/>.

**Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area** – Internationally important habitat for birds, nesting sites for Dartford Warbler and Nightjar.

**Town or Village Green** – Prescriptive greens under Section 15 of the Commons Act 2006 – "Land can become a town or village green where a significant number of the inhabitants of any locality, or of any neighbourhood within a locality, have indulged as of right in lawful sports and pastimes on the land for a period of at least 20 years." And they continue to do so at the time of the application to have the land registered. Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 – provisions to restrict the right to register land as town or village green where land is has been identified for potential development.

the wood's recreational use. Had Leach Grove Wood been in private ownership its registration as village green would have stood.

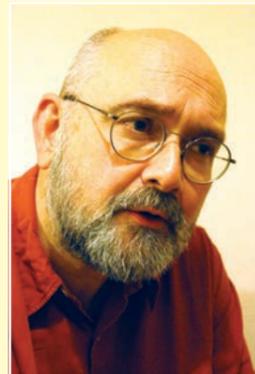
In Woking, a large area of the village of Mayford was allocated for housing and removed from the Green Belt. We wrote to the council suggesting that the northern part of the allocated site should be designated as a Local Green Space, to provide a green gap separating Mayford from urban Woking, and to protect it for its recreational use and ecological value. Do consider this new designation of Local Green Space for both neighbourhood and local plans.

Writing about how we might protect our green spaces is complicated and this article can only provide a few pointers. So please feel free to ask any questions by email or telephone as we are always happy to help if we can

**Kristina Kenworthy is the Chair of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England**

# Never give up, never give in!

By Andy Smith



“Because natural beauty is so prodigal, because so much of it is free, we are in danger of disregarding it, like the air we breathe. It is perilously easy to lose all consciousness of it.” So wrote the architect Sir Clough Williams-Ellis in 1928, in his book *England and the Octopus*, published to rally English men and women to the defence of the countryside and to resist

the tidal wave of development and urbanisation then threatening to engulf it. To Williams-Ellis, the octopus was the great metropolis of London, gobbling up fields and villages, and “shrivelling up the old England.”

Williams-Ellis was not a lone voice. His polemic served as an early manifesto for the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, of which the town-planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie was honorary secretary. Abercrombie and Williams-Ellis may not be exactly ‘household names’ today (although some may know Sir Clough in

connection with Portmeirion, the Italianate village that he designed and built on the North Wales coast, perhaps best known as the setting of the 1960s television series *The Prisoner* starring Patrick McGoohan). But as pioneers of countryside protection they certainly deserve to be.

CPRE in those early days aimed to bring together everyone concerned to “preserve beauty and to see that what is added to the face of the land is not unbeautiful.” In 1929, a joint letter to *The Times*, endorsing CPRE’s campaign against excessive and insensitive development, was co-signed by Stanley Baldwin, Ramsay MacDonald and Lloyd George, the leaders of the three main parties in Parliament. In it they made clear that despite their differences, “on one subject we speak with a united voice – namely, in advocating the preservation of our countryside in its rich personality and character.”

In the decades that followed, CPRE – “the Amenity Protectionists” as Williams-Ellis described the organisation – campaigned for the establishment of ‘Green Belts’ to preserve the character of towns, and to give city-dwellers easy access to the countryside. This campaign led to the creation in 1955 of the London Metropolitan Green Belt, which now covers around three quarters of Surrey. They also called for statutory protection for the nation’s most beautiful rural landscapes; and this was achieved in 1949 with the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, and the designation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, such as our own precious Surrey Hills, in 1958.

## Sacrificed

Despite these successes, the threats have not gone away, as we in CPRE Surrey know only too well. The London Green Belt, created to provide permanent protection for the Capital’s ‘green lungs’, is being sacrificed for development on an unprecedented scale. And with CPRE preparing to mark its centenary in five years’ time, we need to recognise that the important gains made in the mid-twentieth century have, quite suddenly, become rather vulnerable in the twenty-first. Indeed, in the words of the late John le Carré (author of *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*) writing on CPRE’s 90th anniversary in 2016: “The enemy is everywhere. He is the unscrupulous property developer with an army of lawyers. He is the faceless entrepreneur who lobbies in high places for his right to erect wind turbines and mobile phone masts. He is the politician who unlocks the last restraint on our rush to destroy the most precious heritage we share: our vanishing English countryside.”

Now, in 2021, the developers’ assault on Surrey seems unrelenting. (And that goes for the other ‘Home Counties’ too, for in this we stand side by side with

CPRE groups throughout the South East of England.) Yet we have a powerful message to deploy against those who would concrete over our fields and farms. The fact is that the London Metropolitan Green Belt, so important to us here in Surrey, has been an outstanding success. It has done, until now, precisely what it was supposed to do: to prevent urban sprawl. If this Green Belt hadn’t been created in the 1950s it is highly likely that our nation’s capital would by now have expanded in the same way that growing American cities like Los Angeles have done. Indeed, without the Green Belt, Greater London today would stretch from Brighton to the Wash, an uninterrupted swath of development sprawling over the whole of the South East, and East Anglia too. (Yes, that’s how big Greater LA is!)

It is not only the Green Belt that has made the difference, of course. The Surrey Hills AONB covers an astonishing 160 square miles of our county, providing statutory protection for Surrey’s most beautiful landscapes and preventing inappropriate development from encroaching on the spectacular North Downs. And as you will read elsewhere in *Surrey Voice*, our longstanding campaign to secure a much-needed expansion of the AONB has at least received a formal go-ahead from the Government, so that even more of Surrey’s most precious countryside can be brought under the protective fold of the AONB. Together, the Green Belt and the AONB are absolutely crucial in protecting Surrey’s green spaces.

Those who deride the Green Belt, and who seek to undermine our democratic planning system with its concept of development constraints, dismissing these things as mere ‘bureaucratic red tape’ and ‘obstacles to economic growth’, either fail to understand how and why these protections were put in place to begin with, or else they are wilfully misrepresenting the situation to serve a political or commercial agenda. Indeed, there are several influential think-tanks and pressure-groups, some of them part-funded by the housebuilding industry, whose campaigns of lies and disinformation about the planning system have plumbed such depths that they might be considered on a par with the ‘fake news’ churned out by Putin’s Russia, Communist China, and former President Trump!

## Mobilise

This is why, now, in 2021, CPRE is needed more than ever, especially here in Surrey where the



development pressures are so intense and where local authorities seem to lack the backbone to resist arbitrary and unsustainable housing targets. Due to politicians’ continual desire to ‘overhaul’ the planning system, and developers’ ruthless determination to gobble up as much of the Green Belt as they can, the threats to the preservation of Surrey’s countryside are greater now than ever before. However, the story is not all doom and gloom. I believe that a huge ‘window of opportunity’ has opened for us, and that, in 2021 and the years ahead, CPRE’s preservationist message can resonate with the majority of the general public in a way that it never has before. We have the chance now to ‘mobilise the masses’.

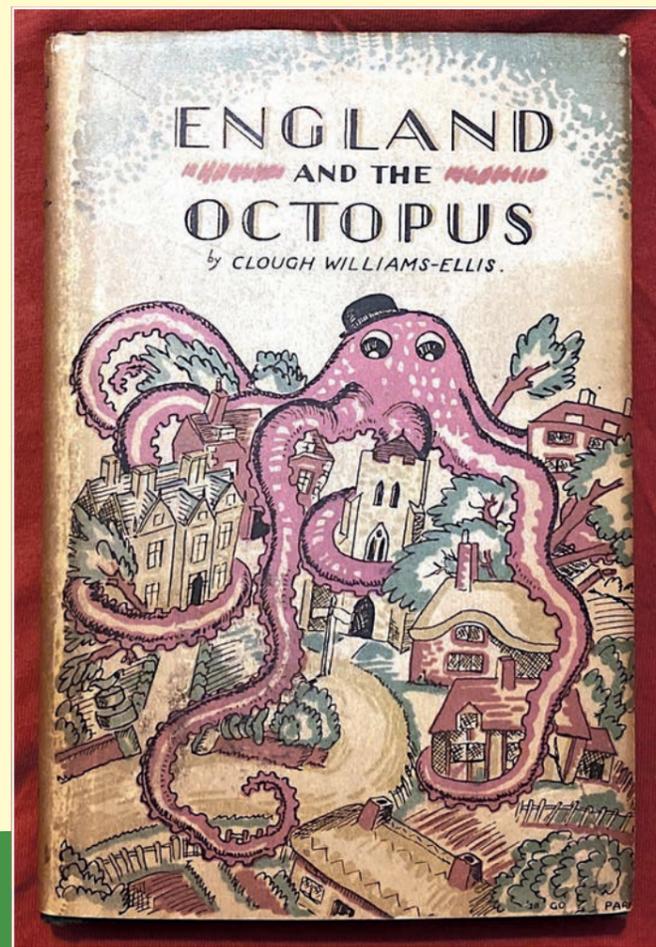
Thanks to the Covid-19 lockdown, more and more people have had the chance over the last year to enjoy the splendours and the sanctuary offered by our countryside, and to appreciate all the many advantages of ready access to green spaces and fresh air. And thanks to overseas travel restrictions, many more families are this year holidaying ‘at home’ in Britain’s glorious countryside. Millions now recognise the benefits of having unspoilt, undeveloped countryside to explore, and green spaces on their doorstep in which to unwind. The value of our ‘green and pleasant land’, for people’s health and wellbeing, is at last being properly appreciated. We are all reconnecting with nature as never before.

That is why we, in CPRE Surrey, must not let up for one moment in our ongoing campaign to protect rural England. Indeed, from now on, we must fight all the harder.

**Andy Smith is Director of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England**

You can read Andy’s “Rural Ramblings” every month in *Surrey Life Magazine*

**SURREY LIFE**  
surreylife.co.uk



# 4x4s causing damage to Surrey Hills

Off-road motorised vehicles are having a major impact on the Surrey Hills. The popularity of these activities through the woods and commons of the AONB, with new tracks being illegally carved out on private land, has increased during lockdown and creates tension with landowners and leisure users. The use of off-road, quad bike and 4x4 vehicles is strictly prohibited throughout the AONB, unless on a designated Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT). Damage by illegal off-road vehicles negatively impacts the myriad of species that call the Surrey Hills home. Recent developments have seen Surrey Police tackle rural crime in the area by seizing un-licensed 4x4 vehicles, handing out warnings and securing prosecutions.

Reports of damage caused by off-road vehicles were made in June in Mole Valley, following the discovery of muddy tyre tracks and circular markings throughout The Gallops on Mickleham Downs. This tranquil area, managed by the National Trust, is regularly frequented by local dog walkers, and forms part of the popular Box Hill Hike trail. Large rutted, muddy tracks were left behind, with grass churned up and damaged, marring the beautiful ranging views across the Downs. The recent wet weather further exacerbated the problem, with sodden ground more readily damaged. Not only does this kind of destruction look unpleasant, it creates highly dangerous conditions for other people using the local routes, including walkers and cyclists.

"It is awful to see this careless destruction of the local area," says Councillor Hazel Watson, who chairs



Damage caused by off-road vehicles in the AONB

the Surrey Hills Byways Working Group. "The grass and woodland of Mickleham Downs is an important haven for wildlife and plant species. Damage caused by off-road vehicles is a major threat to the Surrey Hills AONB and I urge the local community to alert Surrey Police to any antisocial behaviour taking place in our countryside spaces."

Reports of antisocial crime can be made to Surrey Police via their online reporting tool: <https://www.surrey.police.uk/ro/report/asb/asb/report-antisocial-behaviour/>.



## Funding boost for nature recovery

DEFRA has announced a new fund to benefit nature recovery across England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including the Surrey Hills. The 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' scheme will provide grants to farmers and land managers in the Surrey Hills AONB for one-off projects to make improvements to the natural environment, cultural heritage and public access on their land. Grants will be awarded that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change and provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the Surrey Hills landscape and its cultural heritage. Projects could include creating ponds or other wetland to support a variety of wildlife; conserving historic features on a farm, such as lime kilns; promoting connectivity between habitats or even action to reduce carbon emissions or use of plastics on farms.

Nature is in catastrophic decline, due in the main to urbanisation, agricultural practices, pollution, and climate change. The 2019 State of Nature report found that 41% of UK species are declining and one in 10 is threatened with extinction. The positive message from this report is that we know why our pollinators and other insects are dying and that concerted action



from government, local authorities, food growers and the public can reverse these devastating losses.

Heather Kerswell, Chair of the Surrey Hills Board, says: "The Surrey Hills AONB is enjoyed by millions of people every year and has increased in popularity over the pandemic and with no sign of this trend declining we need to make people aware that this is a living and working landscape that also supports a huge range of habitats and species. By supporting our farmers and land managers we can help protect the Surrey Hills and support our local communities. This scheme provides a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference to nature recovery and I urge our Surrey Hills farmers and landowners to apply for funding."

Co-ordinated by the Surrey Hills AONB Board, the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme is open to all farmers and land managers (including from the private, public and charity sector) within the AONB and is open applications now and will run until March 2024. For further information and guidance go the website [surreyhills.org.uk](http://surreyhills.org.uk).

# How our Green Belt is being eroded

## The triple whammy of housing targets, 'enabling development' and viability assessments

By Tim Murphy

The Borough of Epsom & Ewell lies immediately south of the capital and has a long boundary with Greater London. Its Green Belt is under at least as much pressure from development as anywhere else in Surrey. However, to date there have been very few incursions into the previously undeveloped countryside around Epsom & Ewell.

In 2019 the Borough Council approved, by the casting vote of the Committee Chair, a planning application to build 46 apartments on the site of an existing racehorse training stables in the Green Belt on the northern edge of Epsom Downs, together with upgraded training facilities and the provision of affordable housing for the stable lads. It was claimed that the apartments, which were all to be sold at market prices, were necessary to pay for the improvements to the stables and for the subsidised housing. The viability assessment which was used to justify this claim was never made publicly available. CPRE Surrey asked whether enabling developments should be used to justify the upgrade of a commercial facility such as a racing stables, particularly when the facility in this case had been allowed to deteriorate.

In fairness to the committee members, it was a hotly debated application and there was considerable

concern among councillors that, if the Council approved this application, it could open the floodgates to many other similar proposals. What convinced some of the members to approve the application was, firstly, the need for Epsom to have first-class horserace training facilities, so that it would be 'competitive' with places such as Newmarket and Lambourn, and secondly, the pressure on local authorities such as Epsom & Ewell from the Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government to allow the construction of very many more homes that have been built in living memory. To ensure that the training facilities and the affordable housing would actually be built, the approval was accompanied by an extensive Schedule 106 Agreement designed to ensure that the market housing would, in the main, only be completed once the other elements of the development had been constructed.

Subsequently, the applicant proposed substantial amendments to the 106 Agreement which, essentially, would mean that all elements of the development would be built concurrently, thereby weakening the agreement's original purpose. In June this year, Epsom & Ewell Council's Planning Committee agreed to these changes despite the fact that many of the hundreds of residents who had objected to the original application were also opposed to the changes to the Schedule. So, a combination of Government pressure for places like Epsom & Ewell to allow more residential development, together with the opaqueness of viability assessments and the rationale behind 'enabling development', means that another piece of our precious Green Belt is being nibbled away.

**Tim Murphy is a Vice-President and former Chair of CPRE Surrey**

# FARMLAND SOLD OFF

CPRE Surrey Director Andy Smith has written to Guildford Borough Council urging swift action to prevent further development on farmland at Wanborough. The land in question, comprising over 100 acres of open landscape, lies on and below the northern slopes of the Hog's Back. The site was bought last year, then parcelled up and auctioned off in lots. It is believed there are currently more than 40 individual owners. Citing 'permitted development' rights, the new owners started putting up small buildings on the land, purportedly for agricultural purposes. Wanborough Parish Council pressed Guildford Borough Council to serve an Article 4 Direction to remove the usual permitted development rights for small developments, including fencing. This the Borough Council eventually did, and rightly refused permission for development, and a subsequent appeal by the owners was dismissed, but as building work had already gone ahead without permission it has now become a case for the council's enforcement officers.

Andy explains: "The impression was given when this land was sold off in small plots that there was development potential at Wanborough. However, it is Green Belt land partly in the Surrey Hills AONB and partly in the Area of Great Landscape Value and it is, rightly, protected. This is not the first time something like this has happened in Surrey's countryside. Unfortunately, Guildford Council were rather slow off the mark in dealing with it, hence the situation we are in now. And so it falls to the council's already-overstretched Enforcement Team to deal with."

He adds: "Multiple ownership of land like this is a real problem. CPRE has made clear to Guildford Council that we are happy to work with them to support any efforts they make to address the Wanborough situation. We know that the Parish Council and Surrey Hills AONB Board are extremely concerned. CPRE members should be on alert for any other similar situation arising around Surrey, with Green Belt and AONB land being parcelled up and auctioned off in small plots. If you are aware of anything like this happening in your area, please notify your local council immediately and urge them to move fast."

# OUR SURREY STORY

By Tim Oliver



Surrey is a great place. Close to London, blessed with amazing countryside and with a proud history of innovation. We also have outstanding universities, cutting-edge businesses, world-class arts and culture, and active communities, all of which make Surrey 'the' place to live, work and visit.

The vital research and development that goes on in Surrey drives a diverse economy. Our world-leading digital, IT and science businesses work with and alongside our universities and make the county the perfect home for talented people and growing minds. As a result of the last 18 months, these individuals are now looking for a new work/life balance, one that benefits from close proximity to London, while also offering rurality and natural environment.

Yet, despite its undeniable appeal, Surrey is sometimes taken for granted for what it offers, what it values, what it delivers locally and nationally, and the opportunities it presents. We wanted to better understand why that is and how we can change people's minds on Surrey, so they see it as a place that surprises, stimulates, and abounds with ingenuity, design, and creativity. That's why we have spent the past year doing a piece of research to really listen to what people think about Surrey – both the good and the bad.

This work emphasised Surrey's strengths as an innovative future economy, and its natural landscape and lifestyle. The research also showed that the county was seen as old, boring, and inward-looking; disjointed as a place and fearful of change.

## Thriving communities

It highlighted the importance and scale of the challenge to get people who believe in Surrey's huge potential to help develop a new and unifying identity that

emphasises our distinctiveness and character, and celebrates our thriving communities and hidden gems. It also demonstrated that we need to start championing Surrey more firmly locally, nationally and internationally as a destination – a thriving economic, social and educational centre, a place to live and visit, if the way Surrey is perceived is to change.

The 'Think Surrey' project is the first part of this and is about working with our communities and businesses to create a real purpose; a sense of identity and belonging that plays to Surrey's diversity and strengths, and to create a legacy for successive generations. By changing our thinking and by doing things differently, we can make better use of our assets; establish influence; build confidence; cultivate and encourage strong leadership; develop new relationships; and bring business and place together.

For these efforts to be successful, we need a real team effort, whether that's to rebuild local economies, address health inequalities around the county or



support and deliver a greener future. We must join forces to forge this single identity for Surrey. To set up this work we collaborated with partners and businesses to develop a unique story for Surrey that showcases our strengths and puts the county firmly on the map.

To celebrate this first milestone of the project, over 250 business, education, politics, charity and tourism leaders came together on 9 June to launch the Surrey Story. The event introduced the exciting long-term campaign to give Surrey a unifying identity, to foster a sense of pride and belonging, attract investment, business and tourism, and ultimately deliver more opportunities for the people who live and work here.

Our Surrey Story articulates the distinctiveness and character of the county, highlighting what makes us special and how we can develop and promote it.

The Story shows that while hidden in the countryside and woodland, Surrey is a hotbed of talent and technology that develops leading edge technologies to innovate our future economy. With an economy larger than that of Birmingham, Liverpool or Leeds, the county is home to major businesses and a myriad of entrepreneurial success stories energised by our proud history of innovation, research and pushing the boundaries of technology.

## Quality of life

As we move to a new balance which prioritises quality of life and liveability, the natural environment of the place will make it stand out as a destination for start-ups and SMEs. The opportunity

to work closer to or from home, near our powerhouse universities, close but not in London with international travel on the doorstep, and with wide open beautiful spaces just minutes away, is hugely appealing. Together, we need to draw more attention to these benefits that allow Surrey to stand out from other places in the UK.

The Surrey Story also emphasises why the county is such a fantastic choice to experience a 'local' environment that promotes, and encourages, health and wellbeing which is so important for us all.

We want to be known as a place that all ages and abilities can enjoy and discover, and the great thing about Surrey is the sheer diversity of experiences on offer.

From adventure parks, fantastic walking and cycling routes to heritage sites, museums, National Trust properties and a vibrant cultural and arts scene that sits at the heart of Surrey's identity – there is something for everyone.

We want Surrey to use its relationships, location, influence and success to benefit the UK but more importantly the people who call it home. A unique and collaborative identity for Surrey will underpin our economic recovery work and provide a new way for people to work in partnership to improve and support the lives of people in Surrey.

Readers of *Surrey Voice* can become part of this important story as we look to make the most of what the county has to offer. To learn more about 'Think Surrey', email [thinksurrey@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:thinksurrey@surreycc.gov.uk) or take a look at [www.thinksurrey.org.uk](http://www.thinksurrey.org.uk).

**Tim Oliver is the Leader of Surrey County Council**



# The day Planning became ‘quite interesting’

By Keith Tothill and Tim Murphy

On 17 June 2021 the Government saw its 16,000+ majority in the Chesham & Amersham constituency turn into an 8,000+ majority for the Liberal Democrats after a by-election campaign in which planning and housing pressures in the area, and development threats to the local countryside, were the pivotal issues. Why was this, and what is the relevance of this parliamentary by-election in Buckinghamshire for us here in Surrey?

There has, in fact, been a great deal in the newspapers and on the radio and television news over recent months about the Government’s attempts to increase the number of houses built across the country. Surely it’s a good thing to build more dwellings so that more people, especially the younger generation, can get a decent home? If so, why are so many people, including environmental organisations such as CPRE, concerned about the way that the Government is going about getting more houses built, particularly in the Home Counties?

Ministers’ chief concern appears to be to increase housebuilding numbers. The Government has a target of 300,000 new homes per year between now and the mid-2020s, a very large increase on recent levels. We do indeed need more homes to alleviate the housing crisis which, is, essentially, a crisis of affordability. However, it is at least as important to ensure that the right types of houses are built and that they are in the right places. The last time that 300,000 houses were built, over half a century ago, approximately half were subsidised (mostly council housing). To assist it in getting more housing built, the Government issued new Planning Guidance

back in 2012. Local authorities were required to produce Strategic Housing Market Assessments or SHMAs. The SHMAs were not meant to arrive at housing targets and they were not expected to take account of environmental or planning constraints such as the Green Belt. What the SHMAs, not surprisingly, found was that, particularly in areas of high demand, the housing figures in Local Plans were too low. In the event, the SHMAs were found to be highly complicated and time-consuming, giving rise to contentious debates at Local Plan examinations.

## Flawed reasoning

So, in 2018 the Government introduced what it called the Standard Methodology (SM). This based ‘Housing Need’ figures on projections as to how household numbers would increase in a particular area, taking into account ‘natural’ growth and migration, but, controversially, also included consideration of the relative affordability of housing in that area. The flawed reasoning was that, by building more homes, the price of housing would fall. There is, in fact, no evidence that this will happen, as house builders will simply hoard land rather than release so many houses onto the market that their prices will drop.

However, for areas such as Surrey, the SM meant a further increase in housing targets. Apart from the unacceptable impacts on the countryside, the housing figures derived from the SM are, in all probability, impossible to achieve due to the lack of capacity, personnel and skills in the housebuilding industry. The figures also rely on household figures which are increasingly out-of-date and inflated, particularly in an area such as Surrey.

Subsequently, Ministers produced an ‘algorithm’ to ensure that the 300,000 homes per annum target could be reached. Overall, the South East of England would have needed to produce even more houses than under the previous methodology, and this led to a political reaction against what came to be termed the ‘mutant algorithm’.

At a House of Commons debate last October, politicians from all the main political parties, and particularly here in the South East, voiced their strong objections to the irrationality that lay behind the mutant algorithm. The Government then dropped the algorithm and reverted to the still extremely high numbers contained in the Standard Methodology. What the controversy over the algorithm did was to raise awareness in political circles of the unpopularity of the very high housing numbers being wished on areas such as Surrey. This opposition had already shown itself in local election results in districts such as Tandridge, Waverley and Guildford in 2019.

There is some encouragement to be taken from the latest statements from Ministers on this topic. On 25 May this year, the Government issued the following response to a *Times* front page article on house building targets (the *Times* report was based on work by CPRE):

*“The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government say there is no legal requirement for areas to meet the new house building targets. To compare housing delivery in different parts of the country based on housing need formula is to misunderstand the nature and purpose of these numbers, that’s not how they work – the numbers mentioned are a starting point for local councils to help them understand how much housing is needed in their area and are not legally binding. Put simply it is a measure of an area’s housing need against which Councils must consider their local circumstances and supply pipeline. Councils draw up a local housing target taking into account factors including land availability and environmental constraints such as Green Belt. Protecting Green Belt is a priority.”*

The fact remains that local councils feel obliged to demonstrate that they can meet the housing figures derived from the SM in their Local Plans, fearing that, otherwise, their Plans will be rejected by Planning Inspectors at Local Plan hearings. And this brings us back to recent local election results here in Surrey, and the Chesham & Amersham parliamentary by-election. It is evident from these results that residents in the South East are increasingly demonstrating at the polls that they are not prepared to see their cherished countryside lost on the basis of irrational arguments about building more to lower house prices. They are not prepared to see out-of-date figures used to justify housebuilding rates two, three and even four times those of the recent past. Perhaps 17 June 2021 will go down as one of the more significant dates in the history of planning.

Keith Tothill and Tim Murphy are Vice-Presidents of CPRE Surrey

# Gatwick’s Big Enough

By Peter Barclay



For many people, one surprising effect of the Covid-19 lockdown has been to experience tranquillity at last. (Tranquillity = defined as a peaceful, calm state, without noise, violence, or worry). This is particularly so for those living near airports and under flight paths. There are younger generations who have never before experienced the quiet and calm that now surrounds Gatwick.

Accompanying these noise benefits has been significantly cleaner air. And of course, although unseen, there has been a reduction in carbon emissions. Even as lockdown eases and road traffic returns (recent reports quote traffic figures up to 104% of pre-pandemic levels due partly to the reductions and restrictions on public transport) the rural areas around Gatwick Airport are still comfortably peaceful. Nightingales were heard this year in at least two locations actually on the airport itself.

Gatwick is operating at a fraction of its normal levels. Currently (June 2021) around 30 to 40 flights (that’s in and out total) per day (with 100-150 at the weekends) compared with between 800 and 900 flights per day back in 2019. Forecasts on the return to normal levels (if ever) range from two years to five years. Gatwick themselves forecast a return by 2025. And with it, bang goes today’s tranquillity. The industry often tells us that aircraft are getting quieter. True but there are, firstly, far more of them and, secondly, many aircraft fleet replacement programmes commenced in the last couple of years and those aircraft will be with us for anything up to the next 20 years at least.

## Passenger numbers

Then there are the plans for growth. In 2018 the owners of Gatwick Airport published their draft Master Plan outlining growth plans to take the airport up to nearly the size of Heathrow. Runway plans, involving increased flights on the main runway and development of the current emergency runway, will take annual flight numbers from 285,000 pa (2018) to 390,000 pa (2032) – a 37% increase. This will bring about an increase in passenger numbers in the same period from around 46.0m to 70.0m – an approximately 48% increase.

Despite the dramatic fall in traffic, despite the forecast slow recovery scale, despite the far greater awareness of the impact of aviation on people’s health through noise and air pollution effects and despite growing concerns about carbon emissions including stark warnings from the Government’s own advisory body, the Climate Change Committee, Gatwick Airport’s owners are rather gung-ho in proceeding to apply for their growth plans to go ahead. Although the programme is running around 18 months late, we are told to expect a public consultation in ‘late summer’ and for the formal DCO (development consent order) to be submitted in about one year’s time.

And so we need to get busy. A campaign group was set up by GACC (Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign) in 2018 to challenge the application under the title ‘Gatwick’s Big Enough’. Naturally all activity was paused in March 2020 with the exception of a certain amount of background research work. GBE is now being resuscitated. The core membership was the majority of community noise & environmental groups around Gatwick and we are now in the process of engaging with environmental bodies such as CPRE to move forward the whole process of challenging Gatwick’s unsustainable growth plans.

Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign, better known as GACC, are the principal community group representing residents, local councils and community groups around Gatwick since 1968. For further information, go to: [www.gacc.org.uk](http://www.gacc.org.uk).

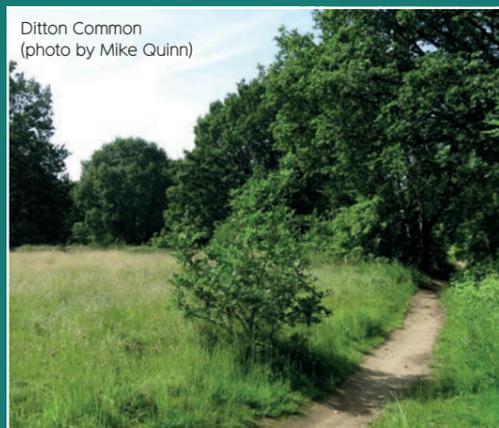
Peter Barclay is Chair of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign (email: [info@gatwicksbigenough.org](mailto:info@gatwicksbigenough.org))

## Greens are good for you!

Countryside campaigner Kate Ashbrook, the General Secretary of the Open Spaces Society, was the guest speaker at the annual general meeting of CPRE Surrey-affiliated Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents’ Association. She took the opportunity to issue a rallying call for people in this development-pressured area of Surrey to “act now to save your precious green spaces” and in particular urged residents to register more village greens.

“Open spaces are under unprecedented threat of development, particularly as the Government is dismantling the planning system,” she said. “But you can get ahead by identifying now any land in your community which might be eligible for registration as a town or village green. You need to find land which local people have enjoyed for informal recreation for 20 years, without challenge or permission, gather the evidence and apply to Surrey County Council to register it. Then the land is saved from encroachment, and local people have rights of recreation there. However, once land is identified for development it is too late. So you must act now.”

Kate explained that in some cases it might be possible to persuade a benevolent landowner, such as a parish council, to voluntarily to dedicate open space as a green. “Or you can argue that a prospective developer should dedicate a green in mitigation – it’s not good enough just to provide green space for the new residents: a town or village green provides recreational space for everyone, for ever,” she added. “In this world which favours developers we need to act quickly to save our spaces.”



# Leading the recovery of our night skies

By John Evans

The mid-summer nights are short in the Surrey Hills and there is little true darkness. Still, at the top of the sky the bright stars Vega, Deneb and Altair frame the so-called Summer Triangle. From the darkest locations, you might just glimpse the star clouds of the Milky Way extending from the southern horizon, climbing to the height of the sky before dipping away towards the North. Civilisations remote from one another in time and location have given it many names: the Silver River of Heaven, the Way of the Grey Goose, the Field of Stars, Fish leaping in the Shadows ... each name evocative, reflecting in its own way something of the nature, pre-occupations and world-view of the people who conferred it.

These civilizations, whenever and wherever they flourished, could take the starry sky for granted in a way that we no longer can. In that respect, for all our technologies, we are the poorer. We pollute our skies with light that has no function or social purpose, burying the stars behind luminous waste – and throwing away precious resources in the process.

But there are now some grounds for optimism. The evidence confirming the damage that light pollution does – to human well-being and biodiversity, by driving climate change and waste – is no longer seriously disputed. The cultural and environmental vandalism and avoidable destruction of natural beauty that light pollution entails are now more widely recognised. Concern over its multiple ill effects has become mainstream.

Public understanding of the issues remains patchy, however. The belief that brightly lit streets and premises are needed in order to stay safe and combat crime survives, even though study after study has shown it to be unfounded. Lighting up the night has become

habitual, even expected. But science now tells us that this seemingly harmless habit comes at serious cost.

## Wasteful

And then there is the waste ... in the absence of informed lighting practices, we dissipate public money in a way that is avoidable and harmful. There is something absurd about spending public money in a way that pollutes and does actual harm to the people who contributed it. It is a fair bet that, if asked how public money should be spent, no-one would call for some of it to be sprayed up into the sky. But that is what we continue to do.

At long last, these concerns are driving responses not just at local levels but by national governments and more widely. In France a strong national policy controlling light pollution came into law in January 2019. On 9 June this year, the European Parliament, as part of their *Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing Nature back into our Lives*, called on the Commission “to set out an ambitious reduction target for 2030 on the use of outdoor artificial light and to propose guidelines on how artificial light at night can be reduced by the Member States.”

In the UK, there is universal acceptance within environmental and other informed groups – the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies, for example – of the need to regulate the use of artificial light at night, but there is still no national commitment to doing so.

The *La Nuit est Belle* project in Switzerland was a flagship, local initiative that, for one night in May, handed back the natural night to more than a million people and re-acquainted them with something of its magic and tranquillity. Through the Surrey-based Dark Skies Matter initiative, we were delighted to show support for our European friends.

## Switched-off

On 21 May this year, street lighting in the City of Geneva and surrounding districts, joined by the neighbouring French city of Lyon, was left switched off. This was a reprise of an event first held two years earlier. This time, the uptake was greatly increased – the first event had proved popular with communities, businesses and other stake-holders. It had been genuinely informative and had achieved widespread, public endorsement for its cultural and environmental message. The event showed how easy it is to reduce light pollution and its noxious effects – simply by switching lights off.

While some artificial light at night is useful, much of it is not: householders add to ambient pollution by illuminating the walls of their semis as if they were chateaux on the Loire, councils provide street-lighting in places and at times when there is no need,

purporting to provide a service while adding to pollution and leaking their constituents’ council tax pointlessly away into the night.

It is worth noting in passing that LED street-lighting can make light pollution worse rather than better unless it is managed in an informed way. White LEDs are cheap to run but the blue component in their light is harmful environmentally. To minimise the ill effects of artificial light at night, LED fittings should be warm in tone, of full-cut off design and as dim as possible consistent with doing the job. Even then, they can pollute their surroundings and the sky by reflection from pavements and other surfaces.

To minimise light pollution and its ill effects, we need to turn some prevalent assumptions on their head. Instead of the comforting thought that lighting up the night is the mark of a vibrant, developed society, we need to recognise that it is, in fact, the mark of a society lagging behind current knowledge and failing to meet its duty of care for people, wild creatures and the environment. The evidence suggests that, if we care about our world, we should adopt a presumption of no artificial light being provided except where there is a genuine, over-riding need.

Given Surrey’s environmental credentials and aspirations, the light pollution situation across the county is something of an embarrassment. In the Surrey Hills, we have daytime landscapes of unsurpassed beauty. By night, this beauty falls away, not because night is any less beautiful than day but because, when daylight has left the sky, the hills appear silhouetted



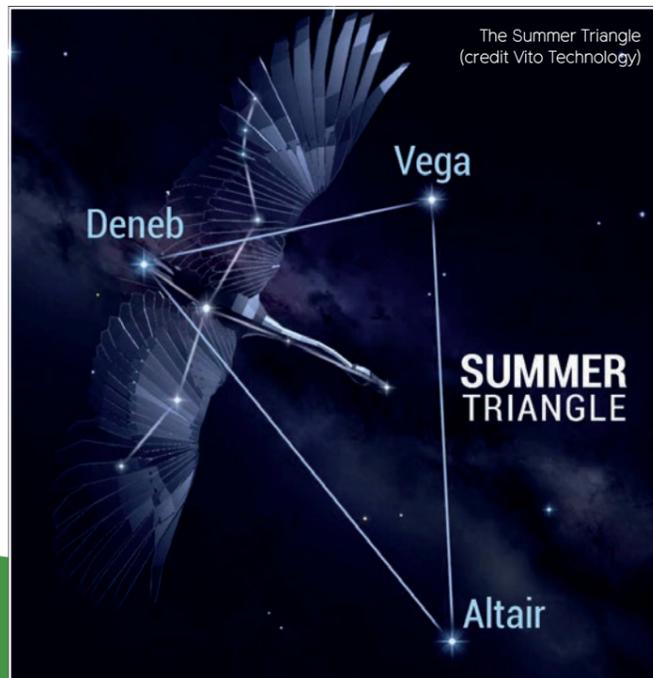
against a background of waste light from neighbouring villages and towns. Even their darkling slopes are sometimes degraded by this same light scattered and reflected from clouds.

Light cannot be ring-fenced – wherever we live, we are custodians of the night in remote places lit by no light of their own. We owe it to these places, to the people who live in them, the many who visit them, to the wild creatures whose lives our waste light disturbs, to do something about this. What better way to start the ball rolling than a *La Nuit est Belle* style event – ‘The Night is Beautiful ... in Surrey’?

With the Geneva experience to draw on, and Surrey’s own incomparable wealth of commitment and expertise, we are brilliantly placed to mount an informative and inspiring event of our own. We can be leaders and winners in this, setting an example to other authorities and regions by taming our waste light and recovering the night-time beauty of our tranquil places.

**John Evans is the Coordinator of Dark Skies Matter**

## This is a great opportunity for Surrey to lead the way!



# Gunpowder Mills restored

Important conservation and restoration work has been completed at Chilworth Gunpowder Mills, improving access for visitors at this important heritage site. The mills were closed 100 years ago after the First World War but had been in constant use for almost three centuries since they were built in 1626 by the East India Company.

A tranquil rural site by the Tillingbourne stream, ideal for picnics, it is nowadays hard to imagine that this was a hub of industrial activity for the best part of 300 years, and that dangerous work was done here developing explosives! The Gunpowder Mills are now a scheduled ancient monument, owned and managed by Guildford Borough Council, which acquired the site in the 1970s to maintain it for free access, ecological and recreational benefits as well as for its unique historic interest.

The recent work has included repairs to the mill buildings, improvements to three bridges, strengthening of earth and brickworks, rebuilding of the sluice, the clearance of overgrown vegetation and the removal of graffiti. A second phase of conservation work, to build new handrails to the steam powered mills, repair the culvert and brick spillway to further improve drainage, and create two additional information boards, is currently being planned.

Altogether the site comprises more than 100 buildings, many of them dating from the seventeenth century.

Chilworth was in fact one of the largest gunpowder mills in the country. The mills played a key role in the English Civil War, when Chilworth supplied gunpowder to Parliamentary forces. Since closing in the 1920s, the Mills gained a new lease of life in the 1940s and '50s when, owing to the nationwide housing shortage after the Second World War, families in need of a home took to living in some of the disused cottages and mill buildings, which became known as 'Tin Town'. There was no electricity supply, so lighting was by paraffin lamps. And with no mains drainage, very basic outside toilets were used. By 1963 the site was unoccupied again.

The site is approximately 70% wet woodland, which is listed as a priority habitat in the UK



biodiversity action plan. It is dominated by willow, alder, and hazel trees, interspersed with older standards of yew, Scots pine, maple and oak, plus hawthorn, ash, blackthorn, elder and holly. Among the wildlife found at the site are common toads, dormice, several species of bat, and a number of nationally scarce species of moths.

A 'Chilworth Gunpowder Mills Heritage Trail' leaflet is available from Guildford Council, and a PDF version may be downloaded from the council's website: [www.guildford.gov.uk/article/19506/Chilworth-Gunpowder-Mills](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/19506/Chilworth-Gunpowder-Mills).



## A natural burial at Clandon Wood By Juliette Williams

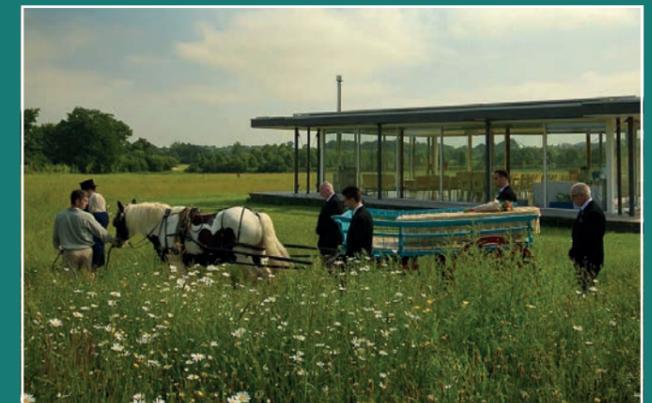
Celebrating a person's life should be the most significant and meaningful way we can remember them after death. It should offer a chance to join in grief, yet also to celebrate their values and beliefs, remembering with gratitude and affection, their passions, loves and life. Often, however, the formality and institutionalisation of traditional funeral plans and services seem to be the only option available. This is not actually the case, there is an alternative. I believe that every person should have the honour and opportunity to be buried and remembered in a manner fitting to how they chose to live their life. Choosing a natural burial site, such as Clandon Wood near Guildford, is not only an eco-conscious funeral option but also promotes the opportunity to have a celebrant who will, with sensitivity and complete flexibility, offer you choice. Choice to celebrate and remember, choice to plan a funeral that reflects how the person lived their life, choice to have a truly personalised ceremony at a natural burial site surrounded by wildlife.

A celebrant can help in many ways with suggestions for symbolic ceremonies in harmony with the deceased life. A walker may be accompanied to the grave with map co-ordinates, a craftsperson with natural threads or cords to loop together for everyone to hold around the graveside. Wildflower seeds can be scattered, or even a picnic held around the graveside where memories can be shared. Planning your own funeral options need not always be a decision your own family makes after your death. If you feel that a natural burial reflects your life and values, a celebrant will meet you to discuss how you would like to hold your funeral and celebrate your life. This is not only a way to ensure your wishes are followed, but also a way to save your loved ones from the pain and bureaucracy of traditional funeral planning. A natural eco-conscious funeral, with a celebrant holding a ceremony reflecting your life story, in a beautiful wild meadow in Surrey, could be the perfect solution.

**Juliette Williams is a qualified celebrant**



Juliette Williams



Funerals at Clandon Wood Nature Reserve and Natural Burial Ground (images courtesy of Clandon Wood – [www.clandonwood.com](http://www.clandonwood.com))

# The £168bn Green Belt housing scam A personal view by Phil Partridge

Every scam has its patter, to sound sufficiently plausible, to catch enough people. Nowadays this is what we hear constantly, in one form or another, from the developers' political allies: "Everyone knows we need lots of houses, to cope with high demand, and that means, reluctantly, that we have no choice but to use some Green Belt land, which after all is no longer needed." We get wise to scams, and create our own 'counter patter', backed up with facts. So, here is my suggestion on what we could all use in response to the above nonsense:

The goal to build 300,000 new houses every year is unnecessary, and is environmental madness. The ONS population stats and household projections disprove the need for this scale of building. These statistics are reinforced by Covid-19 and Brexit factors, e.g. the hospitality sector reporting that a million people (mostly EU migrants) have left England in the last year. Also, the housing numbers are not the community-led, sustainable, affordable housing that we actually need; they are purely

Year	England Population	Population Increase	Houses
2021	56,989,570	-	-
2022	57,282,105	292,535	126,858
2023	57,557,521	275,416	119,435
2024	57,816,890	259,369	112,476
2025	58,060,235	243,345	105,527
2026	58,297,244	237,009	102,779
2027	58,527,723	230,479	99,948
2028	58,751,651	223,928	97,107
2029	58,969,496	217,845	94,469
2030	59,181,798	212,302	92,065
2031	59,389,102	207,304	89,898
2032	59,592,225	203,123	88,085
2033	59,792,005	199,780	86,635
2034	59,988,992	196,987	85,424
2035	60,183,914	194,922	84,528
2036	60,377,815	193,901	84,085
TOTAL	-	3,388,245	1,469,317

## 300,000 is at least treble any provable 'need'

The column 'Houses' is population increase divided by 2.3057, which is the average no. of people per house, from ONS 2018 projected population at 2021, over ONS number of dwellings in England – 24,412,096.

Office of National Statistics population projections fell from 2014 to 2018, putting the projected 300,000 new houses a year at 3 times what is needed 'to keep pace with population'.

A further fall is expected with Brexit and Covid (a 'One Million Exodus of Europeans' is quoted in the hospitality sector). This cancels out numbers on Council waiting lists (nationally 1.2 million – but inflated anyway by e.g. people registering on several lists, and names not deleted once places found). They add numbers for affordable housing – but big developers don't deliver that, as it's low profit.

The better use of existing housing is conveniently ignored e.g.:

- Usually empty 2nd homes
- Usually empty investment property
- 1's and 2's wishing to downsize, 'blocking' family homes
- Owned but derelict / empty homes
- Pathfinder homes – faltered Govt. 'housing improvement'

**Before building, especially on Green Belt, why is Government putting no effort into exploring such other options?**

about developers building for their own highest profit. As CPRE research has shown, there are more than enough brownfield urban regeneration opportunities across England, so we should not be releasing Green Belt land for new housing. But this fact is carefully hidden.

Such myths about 'housing need' and 'inevitable loss of Green Belt land' are peddled solely for the benefit of developers, whose profits are estimated as follows:

- For all-England c.£360 billion on brownfield, plus c.£150 billion more losing c.100 square miles of Green Belt land
- In Surrey alone, it is c.£7.6 billion on brownfield, plus c.£7.5 billion more, losing 6 square miles of Green Belt.
- Across the London Metropolitan Green Belt, the figure is c.£100 billion on brownfield, plus c.£68 billion more by losing 45 square miles of Green Belt, destroying 'the lungs of London'. Is that something to boast, as we host the COP26 climate summit?

Having profited so much in the past, developers exert enormous political pressure now, **which we must oppose.**

## Brownfield opportunities are played down to help justify use of Green Belt land

"There are over 66,000 hectares of brownfield sites in England" – *Sustainable Build (Eco Friendly Housing)*

"London Borough councils own approximately 36,700 brownfield sites across the capital" – *London Land Commission*

However London's Brownfield Registers show only 2-3% of this. How can Councils claim to "use Brownfield first" with so little effort spent to find such land, which is also 'self-renewing', due to high-street decline, pubs closing, etc.

In the **London Borough of Enfield** local groups united to identify brownfield sites locally and update the borough's Brownfield Register. They found over twice the area of usable land as had been registered, and showed how housing targets could be met without losing Green Belt land.

**Here in Surrey's districts, we can do the same as Enfield, especially if interested people and groups work together on it.**

## £1 million profit for every 4 (not needed) Green Belt houses

A developer's maxim has long been "One third land costs, one third build costs, one third profit." So, for a £480,000 house (not unusual in London/SE) what are the profits, if built at average, low (greenfield), or high (brownfield) costs?

Per House	Land Costs	Build Costs	Invest	Sale Price	Profit £	Profit %
<b>Brownfield</b>	240,000	160,000	400,000	480,000	80,000	20%
<i>Note: Land detox, land regain costs</i>						
<b>Average</b>	160,000	160,000	320,000	480,000	160,000	50%
<b>Green Belt</b>	80,000	160,000	240,000	480,000	240,000	100%
<i>Note: 'Banked' land clear, economies of scale</i>						

This level of temptation of such reliable high returns **often within 12-18 months**, is clearly impossible to resist for the financiers, large investors and developers, and politicians in their shadows at many levels.

*(continued on next page)*

# Saving Whitehall Farm from the diggers

By Kristina Kenworthy

CPRE Surrey is supporting the Stroude Residents' Association and the local action group Residents Against Gravel Extraction (RAGE) in objecting to the planning application by Cemex to extract sand and gravel at Whitehall Farm (Egham / Virginia Water). The farm was identified in the Surrey Minerals Plan in 2011 as a preferred site but CPRE believes that the proposal would do undue harm to the local environment.

The consultation has caused great alarm for those living and working in and around Egham and Virginia Water, and for very good reason. In our view there are planning, environmental, economic and legal constraints that make it highly unlikely that extracting and processing sand and gravel from this part of the Thames Valley, in the London Metropolitan Green Belt, could or should ever be permitted. The Surrey Minerals Plan 'safeguards' sites to protect them from other forms of future development. Safeguarding this farmland carries no presumption that it will be quarried. There may be a case one day that makes mineral working viable, as well as environmentally acceptable, but not as things stand today. Given the proximity of residential development, the hotel at Great Fosters (a Grade I Listed historic building), the nearby Air Quality Management Area, and Heathrow Airport, it is arguable that Whitehall Farm has already been rendered unsuitable for excavation.

Currently it is good quality agricultural land, rich in biodiversity and providing public access and recreational benefits for local residents. The roads are unsuitable haulage routes, there is the risk of flood and the cumulative impacts of this and other forms of development, mineral or otherwise, in the area. Surrey County Council, as the Mineral Planning Authority (MPA), has to consider the significant adverse impacts arising from the workings of minerals at Whitehall Farm and act in the public interest. Working this site as Cemex propose would be intolerable for people living and working nearby. There may be commercial demand from the building industry, but will Surrey County Council be satisfied that there is an overriding need to destroy Whitehall Farm? The council is committing public money to the Thames Valley Flood Scheme, where huge quantities of sand and gravel will be dug out to alleviate flood risk. There has to be an evaluation of what this mitigation project will produce before any realistic assessment of the need to win and process the minerals at Whitehall Farm can be made.

In the 10 years since the Minerals Plan was published, our understanding of the effects of global warming, brought about through industrial activity and greenhouse gas emissions, threatening the natural world upon which all forms of life depend, has reached the point where it is at the heart of every informed discussion and decision. The impacts of any industrial activity and exploitation of natural resources must be viewed in the context of climate change and our commitments to expediting a net zero carbon economy.

**Kristina Kenworthy is Chair of CPRE Surrey and an environmental lawyer**



## THE NUMBERS – Across 15 years

SEE NOTES:	1*	2*	3*	4*	5*	6*	7*	8*	9*	10*	11*	12*
Elmbridge	-589	-255	-13	9,495	475	4,760	238	0	2020	0.00	0.76	1.14
Epsom & Ewell	2,215	961	48	8,655	433	46	2.3	86	2020	151	0.69	0.01
Guildford	181	78	4	11,805	590	7,235	362	1,437	2020	2,514	0.94	1.74
Mole Valley	328	142	7	6,795	340	3,523	176	113	2017?	197	0.54	0.85
Reigate & Ban	8,721	3,782	189	9,660	483	1,010	51	548	2017	959	0.77	0.24
Runnymede	3,345	1,451	73	7,965	398	4,061	203	1,512	2018	2,646	0.64	0.98
Spelthorne	904	392	20	9,090	455	1,070	85	0	2017?	0.00	0.73	0.41
Surrey Heath	-874	-397	-19	4,920	246	1,050	75	1,430	2020	2,502	0.39	0.36
Tandridge	4,053	1,758	88	9,690	485	5,025	251	1,060	2020	1,855	0.78	1.21
Waverley	1,403	609	30	10,185	509	1,021	51	3,770	2020	6,598	0.81	0.25
Woking	-2,353	-1,020	-51	6,465	323	1,263	63	453	2020	794	0.52	0.30
<b>SURREY</b>	<b>17,334</b>	<b>7,518</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>94,725</b>	<b>4,736</b>	<b>31,144</b>	<b>1,557</b>	<b>10,409</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,215</b>	<b>7.58</b>	<b>7.48</b>

LONDON Green Belt	470,541	204,079	10,207	1,109,599	55,485	231,282	11,571	57,124	-	99,963	100	68
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>3,388,245</b>	<b>1,469,508</b>	<b>73,475</b>	<b>4,500,000</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>937,969</b>	<b>46,898</b>	<b>495,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>866,250</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>225</b>

- KEY:
- 1\*: ONS 2018 Population Increase – 15 years
  - 2\*: ONS 2018 Houses
  - 3\*: ONS 2018 (Ha)
  - 4\*: Government Houses Target – 15 years
  - 5\*: Government Land (Ha)
  - 6\*: Government Green Belt Houses
  - 7\*: Government Green Belt (Ha)
  - 8\*: Brownfield Reg \*\*15 (Ha)
  - 9\*: BrF Reg Year
  - 10\*: Brownfield Enfield (Ha)
  - 11\*: Brownfield Profit – £Bn
  - 12\*: Green Belt Extra Profit – £Bn

- NOTES: (all standardised to cover the 15-year period from 2021 to 2036 – NB: not all data available / found!)
- Columns 2 and 3: Houses = Increase / Average people per dwelling (above), Hectares = Houses / 20 (1 Ha = 2.47 acres)
  - Columns 4, 5, 6 and 7: Based on LHNA 2021 'including city / urban uplift' and CPRE's 'Safe Under Us' Green Belt numbers
  - Columns 8, 9 and 10: Based on Local Authority Greenfield Registers, \*\*15 to standard, / 20 for Hectares, 75% Enfield uplift
  - Columns 11 and 12: Based on the £480,000 house and profit margins (above).

*(continued from previous page)*

You will see that the Government apparently believe, and want us to believe that e.g.:

- Surrey Heath, Elmbridge and Woking need 21,000 houses overall, to cope with drops in population!
- Surrey needs 95,000 houses to cope with a population increase that could be housed in 7,500!
- That across London's Green Belt, despite the available 57,000 hectares of brownfield that could supply the projected need for new housing 5 times over, we need to lose 45 square miles of Green Belt – **when it is really NONE AT ALL!**

## We need people power now:

To identify and register the brownfield sites that do exist, to spot early and oppose Planning Applications threatening our Green Belt, contact CPRE Surrey about our brownfield campaign and sign up to take part in one of CPRE's Brownfield Toolkit Workshops.

**Phil Partridge is a volunteer with CPRE Surrey and the London Green Belt Council**

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy of Surrey CPRE.

# Music in the Surrey countryside

By Stuart Millson

The great English composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, is well-known to all who walk the Surrey hills.

His early years at Leith Hill Place, and his lifelong association with this part of the Home Counties, almost make him 'the Surrey composer'. But it is, perhaps, worth remembering that 'RVW' was not the only musician to find inspiration in this county of contrasts. Larks may have been ascending on the road to Dorking, but a contemporary of Vaughan Williams – William Alwyn – created in symphonic sound an impression of the local countryside.

Alwyn achieved a great deal of fame in the 1930s and '40s, a promising figure in the English musical renaissance. Film buffs may know his name: he wrote for a number of cinematic classics of the time, including a very fine hour-long sequence for a (superior) propaganda film of the Second World War, *Our Country* – which also included a script by the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas.

A sense of folk music – lonely places, old ways of doing things – appears in the music, although there is that clear, emphatic sweep of orchestral tone-painting, firmly in the Vaughan Williams mode. In truth, Alwyn is more closely associated with East Anglia (an annual festival at Blythburgh – his home – perpetuates his name) but he did celebrate Surrey, with a work entitled – *Blackdown, A Tone Poem from the Surrey Hills*.

Written when he was just 21 years of age (the year was 1926, the same year that CPRE was formed) and a youthful professor of composition at the Royal Academy of Music, *Blackdown* was first performed in Guildford, a town which in those days had a thriving music school which presented a series of concerts. Alwyn introduced the work:

"The pastoral opening depicts the quiet beauty of the wide expanse of country which stretches as far as the eye can see. The oboe ushers in a tune which, like a breeze, disturbs the calm. The breeze freshens to a blustering gale, swaying the pine trees in the 'Temple of the Winds'..."

The countryside near Haslemere is the setting for Alwyn's evocation, and it is exciting to know that a brand-new modern recording of the work has now been made, on the Chandos record label by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, conducted by Rumon Gamba. Chandos has also been at work, recording the Fifth Symphony of Malcolm Arnold – a larger-than-life figure of mid- to late-20th-century

music, and a man equally at home writing for the St Trinian's films in the 1960s as anything 'serious' for the concert hall. Arnold is often associated with Cornwall – he moved to the West Country in the '60s and, for a time, found a new lease of life there. Yet his Fifth Symphony, first performed in 1961, was written at his home in Richmond.

As far as is known, there is no sense that the composer was writing about his surroundings, but it could be that the town and its riverside setting by the Thames were all conducive to the artistic life and process, as the Richmond years were certainly marked by an intensive productivity.

## Charm and innocence

Arnold's Fifth Symphony in particular shows – in one work – the whole spectrum of his artistic character: from the charm and innocence of the opening movement, where a tune played on a celeste gives a feeling of spring; to the dark depth of the slow movement and finale, but not before we have enjoyed a breezy, almost whistling-along theme in the third movement. The Fifth builds to a staggering climax, with enormous cymbal clashes and great brass chords, and then at the last moment – just when you think that affirmation is the last word – Arnold signs off with a thoughtful few minutes of orchestral softness and introspection.

At first, the critics were baffled by the work, with one poisoned pen suggesting that it was a study in 'disintegration'. However, what is often seen as shocking or bewildering is, in later years, more properly understood, and so it is that Malcolm Arnold has provided some of modern English music's most ambitious and satisfying works.

To end this brief glimpse of the musical highways and byways of Surrey, we should travel back to pre-war Surrey, to a pageant held in celebration of the work of the Dorking and Leith Hill District Preservation Society, where Vaughan Williams used some of the material destined for his Fifth Symphony – first heard in its entirety during the Second World War – for a masque at Milton Court, Dorking.

The pageant (which also attracted the participation of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, whose band played 'I vow to thee my country' – music by RVW's friend, Gustav Holst) saw an 'Exit of the Ghosts of the Past', to tunes and ideas which would in Vaughan Williams's war symphony bring benediction and hope to a nation experiencing its darkest hour.

**Stuart Millson is a freelance writer on music and the countryside**

# OBITUARIES

## Max Rosenberg

The death of Max Rosenberg, after a battle with cancer, is a great blow to CPRE Surrey. He was a devoted and tireless CPRE campaigner and had been involved with our activities in Surrey since 2012.

He joined the Board of Trustees of CPRE Surrey in 2016 and he also chaired our local Mole Valley group, a role which he performed with good humour and dedication. He helped the charity to focus on ecology and his depth of knowledge sprang from a love of wildlife. In addition, his membership of Surrey Wildlife Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, RSPB and East Surrey Badger Protection Society attest to the strength of his commitment to protect our native wildlife.

Max worked as a committee member and subsequently as Chair of the Leith Hill Action Group which, with CPRE's support, fought for over seven years against proposals by Europa Oil & Gas to drill for hydrocarbons at Coldharbour in the Surrey Hills AONB. Thankfully these efforts were eventually rewarded by success.

Max then turned to helping others in Brockham, Dunsfold, Horse Hill, and in the Sussex Weald in campaigns to halt the exploration and extraction of fossil fuels in our countryside.

He was also a founder member of the steering committee for the Capel Neighbourhood Plan, and an executive committee member of the Aviation Environment Federation and member of the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign and Plane Wrong.

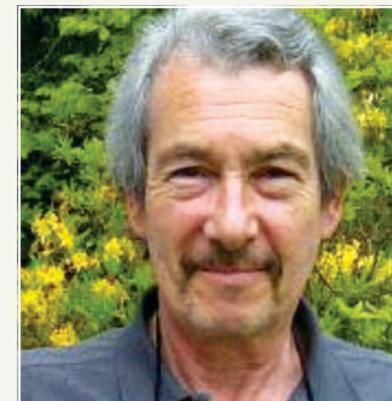
Having retired as a teacher, Max had been free to pursue his many passions and interests and enjoy life in the Surrey Hills with his partner of 48 years, Annette. He had

both warmth and wisdom, and his enthusiasm meant he was great fun to work with and very well-liked.

He will be greatly missed, both for his contribution to CPRE and all the other organisations that he was involved with in and around Surrey.

But most of all by those of us who will remember him for his perfect manners and lovely smile.

**Kristina Kenworthy**



Max Rosenberg



Peter Ainsworth

## Peter Ainsworth

We are sorry to report that Peter Ainsworth, a former Trustee of CPRE Surrey, died of a heart attack in April at the age of 64.

Peter was MP for East Surrey for 18 years, between 1992 and 2010, and was a strong supporter of countryside protection and the Green Belt in particular. He always took a strong interest in rural matters and was at one time Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

After standing down from Parliament, Peter became Chair of the Big Lottery Fund, Plantlife, the Churches Conservation Trust, and the Heritage Alliance, and was a Board Member of the Environment Agency.

A great enthusiast for the music of British composers, especially those inspired by England's countryside, he was a co-founder of the English Music Festival, Vice-President of the Arthur Bliss Society and a Trustee of the Elgar Foundation.

We well remember Peter's contributions to discussions about the work of CPRE Surrey and his challenging but always constructive ideas.

**Tim Murphy**

**NEW ADDRESS:** Please note the new address and telephone number of the **Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England** – CPRE Surrey, PO Box 865, Godalming, Surrey GU7 9LH. Tel: 01372 700205.

# Community action in Guildford

By Ben McCallan

Zero Carbon Guildford is a new local charity, formed from a collaboration of representatives from social and environmental groups and enthusiastic individuals, to drive community-led organising on the climate and ecological crisis. We're opening a physical premises in the town centre which will be used to support projects, organisations and individuals in taking action to help the planet, and emphasises the critical need for communities to pull together to act on climate change.

'Zero', as we're naming this vibrant community hub, will provide practical and easy-to-implement solutions that individuals, businesses, and organisations can employ to reduce their emissions and waste footprints. We will provide resources within the hub, in combination with work in the community, building cohesive and ambitious strategies to mitigate climate breakdown.

This will include protecting and restoring the ecosystems, tackling fuel poverty through community energy, and developing food security strategies through a combination of community growing, innovative high yield growing techniques (like aquaponics and vertical farming), and schemes such as farm-to-plate produce.



A significant part of what we are aiming to do is about supporting existing and new projects to help the environment – from community gardens to bike repair workshops, the space will provide a place to meet, hold events, and collaborate.

The project will be able to access resources, learn from each other, and contribute towards an ecosystem of local, community led action much greater than any project on its own.

Our best shot at a habitable planet is to begin working as a whole community, across political divides and demographics, designing strategies that ensure our most vulnerable residents, neighbours, and friends form the core of a climate action plan. So we need as many people involved in building community cohesion as possible, and we'd love for you to bring ideas and passion to the project, just email us at [info@zerocarbonguildford.org](mailto:info@zerocarbonguildford.org), or register for our mailing list on our website, [zerocarbonguildford.org](http://zerocarbonguildford.org).

We *can* avoid the worst of the climate and ecological crisis. But we must start now. And we must put care, community, and collaboration at the very heart of our plans.

**Ben McCallan is Chair of Zero Carbon Guildford**

## NEW SERIES OF ONLINE TALKS

*"The science tells us so clearly that if we keep expanding airports, the future for our children is just unspeakably grim."*



Local action group **CAGNE (Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions)** has organised a series of 'virtual' talks entitled 'Time is Ticking'. Co-hosts are Friends of the Earth and the Sussex, Surrey and Kent branches of CPRE. The talks will run up to and through the UK hosting of COP 26 ([www.ukcop26.org](http://www.ukcop26.org)) in Glasgow in November. Each talk will feature expert speakers on a number of topics, all relating to Gatwick Airport's plans to rebuild its emergency runway as a second runway. Gatwick Airport intends to go to the public with a consultation later this summer, with a view to lodging a Development Consent Order planning application with the Government, early in 2022.

The talk on **Thursday 30 September** is on 'Our Natural World' with Sarah Ward, Living Seas Officer from the Sussex Wildlife Trust, explaining how our oceans are a carbon sink, alongside Sir Charles Burrell with his views on the rewilding project at Knepp and how it fits with a regional Nature Recovery Area.

**Thursday 21 September** showcases Dr Gary Fuller from Imperial College, with his report on air quality around Gatwick and how the Airport impacts 'The Air that We Breathe'. He will be joined by the Woodland Trust on the importance of trees to air quality.

**Wednesday 3 November** is the turn of future generations to discuss their concerns for the planet and how Gatwick's expansion plans will impact their future. Entitled 'The Concerns of Future Generations' this event will be chaired by the West Sussex Youth Cabinet, together with Friends of the Earth's Laura McFarlane-Shopes. It will be an open forum for youth in Sussex, Surrey and Kent to freely discuss the climate emergency.

The last talk in the series will be on **Thursday 25 November** and will be chaired by CAGNE. It will focus on 'Alternative to Flying for Pleasure' with director from Flight Free, Anna Hughes.

All talks can be booked at [www.cagne.org](http://www.cagne.org).