

Bedfordshire Matters

Bedfordshire Barks
photo competition
winning entry - p4

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Promoting and protecting the countryside
and green spaces of Bedfordshire

Report from the Chair

Gerry Sansom



Last year ended with our 30th Anniversary Fundraising Appeal and as you will read elsewhere in this newsletter our wonderful members and supporters rose to the occasion yet again and we raised over £7,000!

We are so very grateful for the generosity of those who contributed – it will ensure the future of CPRE Bedfordshire for the next few years, allowing us to continue the work we do - protecting Bedfordshire's countryside and urban green spaces.

More than that, we have decided to invest some of the funds into increasing our presence on social media with the objective of widening the reach of CPRE Bedfordshire to involve a younger audience. Please see page 3 for more information.

On a different note, all of us at CPRE Bedfordshire really look forward to organising our prestigious, bi-annual, Living Countryside Awards. Entries closed on the 15th June and our judging team are busy short-listing and then visiting entrants. The awards ceremony itself will take place in The Harpur Suite in Bedford on the 3rd October and we are delighted and grateful that Helen Nellis HM The Lord-Lieutenant of Bedfordshire will be attending and supporting the event, by presenting our awards.

It's our opportunity to recognise the wonderful achievements of local people

across Bedfordshire who have done something special to enhance our countryside, urban green spaces and our environment generally.

The categories are more all-encompassing this year and include: Health & Wellbeing, Local Food & Drink, Young People, Biodiversity & Landscape Improvement, Sustainable Enterprise and Greening Urban Spaces.

We have had a record number of entries and are very much looking forward to visiting all shortlisted projects.

Everyone is welcome to attend our awards evening on the 3rd October, which promises to be a great evening celebrating and promoting the great work which is being done.

Further details can be found on our website www.cprebeds.org.uk/awards



I grew up in Worcestershire, a beautiful county, and my love of the countryside has its roots there. Particularly walking the Malvern Hills with views of the Vale of Evesham and Herefordshire. The

Welcome to new CPRE Bedfordshire Trustee, Paul Jenkins

countryside has provided a positive way of recharging my batteries through my working life. The Lake District became an annual destination for family holidays for many years. I came to live in Bedfordshire with my wife and two children to lead the transfer of adult social care services from the County Council to Luton Borough in 1997. As a Parish Councillor in Turvey I have become more aware of the pressures on the countryside in Bedfordshire

and joined CPRE to contribute to the valuable work being done to defend the countryside against unnecessary and inappropriate development. As these pressures increase, with so many people being denied access to affordable housing where it's needed, it's more important than ever for CPRE to make its voice heard to advocate for more effective and better targeted housing policies at local and national level.

How we can help

We're developing a new section of our website to make it easier for you to find the help you need when responding to planning applications or working on a Neighbourhood Plan. You can find the link on our homepage. It also contains a list of local campaign groups so that you can connect with others in your area.

Please let us know of any other groups that might like to be featured. You can email us at info@cprebeds.org.uk

CPRE Bedfordshire members also have access to the CPRE Planning Hotline and receive Fieldwork, the newsletter from CPRE National Office to help you campaign.

CPRE Bedfordshire People

We could not do all the work that we do, without the hard work and dedication given to the charity by our wonderful volunteers. Lau Tambjerg shares his thoughts.



Lau

A little more than a year ago I became a trustee for CPRE Bedfordshire and being Danish one of the first questions I was asked was: "Is the planning system different in Denmark?"

And as has become clear to me; yes, it is.

I have listened to my fellow trustees describing their fighting with the local plans being developed by both Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough.

Protecting the countryside and our environment is in England much more of an uphill battle – and the pressure for development much higher.

I feel it is more important than ever to get the message out and show the good work being done here by a dedicated group of volunteers. We need to extend our reach; ensuring we have an attractive area to live in and a countryside to enjoy must be in the interests of all.

We are therefore extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to our 30th Anniversary appeal. In the coming year we will be investing some of this money in broadening our appeal by increasing our presence on social media, which is of particular interest to me.

Shelly has already been doing amazing work on regular posts, highlighting images from the photo competitions and creating attention about the Living Countryside Awards. Due to our supporters generosity through our 30th appeal we are now in a position to fund a part-time social media position which means Shelly can devote around 4 hours per week building our profile and reaching more people. These efforts mean that we now have over 1,000 twitter followers and have increased our followers on Facebook by 35% since January.

In the coming time Shelly and I will work to create a social media strategy. This strategy will seek to reinforce our current messages and to improve interaction with our members and followers.

To succeed in our efforts, we need your help. So, if you are on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, please follow us and please do like and share our posts, so we can get the word out further.



Shelly

How you can help

There are many ways you can get involved with the work we do. You could:

- Volunteer – we are looking to expand the work we do. We are looking for volunteers to join us in a number of interesting and varied roles. Please see our website for the latest opportunities, there are many ways to give your time to help the branch
- Become a trustee – we have a vacancy for an Honorary Secretary
- Become a member or introduce friends and family to CPRE Bedfordshire
- Follow us on social media, like and share our posts
- Make a donation

Please see our website for more information about any of these ways to help CPRE Bedfordshire grow and be able to do more across the county.
www.cprebeds.org.uk

Bedfordshire Barks! photo competition

CPRE Bedfordshire is delighted to announce that the winning entry in our Bedfordshire Barks! photo competition is Eddie & George taken by Steph Webb at Flitwick Moor. (see front page)

Our judges also selected three runners up.

- Archie enjoying the leaves in Bedford Park (Gavin Sims)
- Heather in Ampthill Great Park (Hannah Bryant)
- Wellie at Barton Hill Farm (Whizz Middleton)

We asked to see photos of dogs enjoying the beautiful Bedfordshire Countryside.

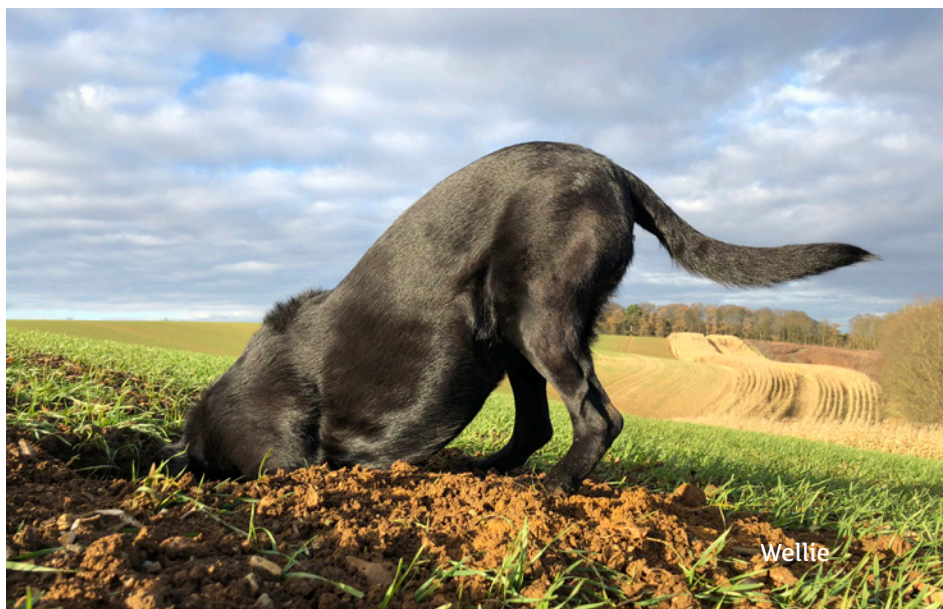
The response was amazing and our judges were faced with a tough task.

After much deliberation, Eddie & George were selected as the winners. Covered in mud, with their tongues out, there was no doubt in the judges' minds just how much enjoyment this photo captured.

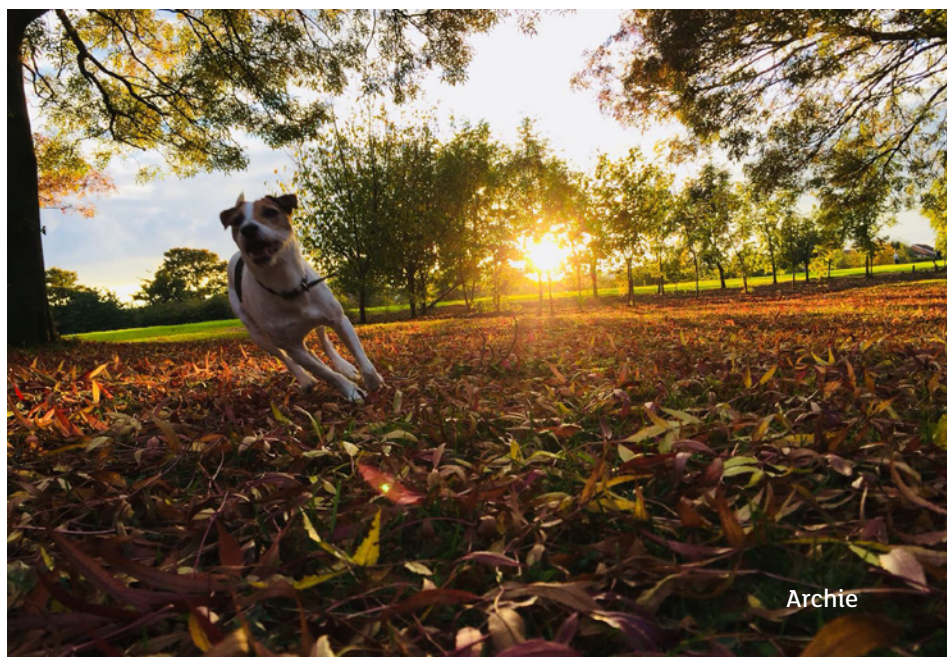
[You can see more of the entries in our Facebook album Bedfordshire Barks!](#)



Heather



Wellie



Archie



We would like to thank local pet photographer Katrina Wilson for her kind support of the competition and providing the prize for the winning entry of a full professional pet photo session, a complimentary mounted 12x8" print and locally baked dog biscuits. The runners up are able to take advantage of a discount when booking a photo session with Katrina.

www.katrinawilsonphotography.co.uk

Local Plans

CPRE Beds success as new town at Sharnbrook/Colworth removed from Local Plan 2035

Bedford Borough Council have emailed Town & Parish Councils explaining that their Local Plan 2035 which has just finished its final public consultation is to be put on hold because the proposed New Town of at least 4,500 new homes (bigger than Amptill) at Sharnbrook / Colworth will not be able to be developed due, the council say, to noise issues from the nearby Santa Pod Raceway.

Susan Walls, Branch Manager for CPRE Bedfordshire said: "This is a great success for CPRE Bedfordshire – together with the campaign group Keep North Beds Green, Souldrop Parish Council and local residents from Souldrop, Sharnbrook and the villages of north Bedfordshire. We have fought against the



proposed Sharnbrook/Souldrop New Town which would have been built on beautiful open countryside.

We have always believed that this was a seriously flawed proposal which would have had a massive impact on Souldrop, Sharnbrook and the villages of North Bedfordshire.

There is a note of caution however - this is not the end of the battle – there is

still an outside chance that the New Town may go forward and we remain very concerned about any potential alternative sites that BBC may choose to develop."

We are building a resource section on our website, to help local action groups. To find out more, follow the How Can We Help you? Link on the homepage: www.cprebeds.org.uk/campaigns

Is Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) Complicit in Land-Banking on a Grand Scale?

In 2014, CBC gave planning permission for a huge development of 5,125 houses to be built on a 262 hectare site in Houghton Regis called Houghton Regis North, site 1.

5,125 homes is equivalent to a New Town almost 30% larger than the town of Amptill.

4 years later and hardly a brick has been laid on this site despite CBC stating, as a reason for planning permission being given on agricultural land in the Green Belt, that residents were "in desperate need of new homes". The lack of building on the Houghton Regis North site has been one of the main reasons why

CBC were unable, until very recently, to demonstrate that they had a 5 year forward housing land supply.

This allowed developers to put forward and win speculative planning applications across Central Bedfordshire which local people and CBC were unable to defend.

Now, quietly and without any detailed explanation of the reasons to support their decision, CBC has stated that they do not see that any development will take place on this hugely valuable site in the near future.

CPRE Bedfordshire is extremely concerned with this decision – it could have huge implications for future planning policy and CBC's ability to

show, in the future, that they have a 5 year forward housing land supply. It will lead to far more land being allocated for development than is really necessary.

We will be asking CBC for full details of their decision, how and why it was taken and by whom and if planning permissions will now be withdrawn from the developers concerned. Developers are continually saying that they can build more homes if they are given planning permissions – this case proves CPRE's argument that developers are refusing to build out permissions they already have in order to keep house prices high – depriving Bedfordshire residents of desperately needed homes.

Update on Local Plans - The Big Picture across Bedf

Bedford Borough Council (BBC) Local Plan 2035 now on hold and being reconsidered

This is due, BBC say, to noise issues regarding the proposed Sharnbrook/ Colworth New Town (minimum 4,500 homes) caused by the nearby Santa Pod Drag Circuit.

CPRE Bedfordshire strongly objected to the New Town proposal for a wide range of reasons.

BBC say that they will now look at more new sites submitted by developers since the last draft of the Local Plan 2035 was submitted for public consultation in April 2018. New sites could include "Bedford South" an area of land from

Kempston Hardwick to the Cardington Airship Sheds which, developers say, could accommodate between 2,500 to 9,000 new homes.

This would require a further detailed public consultation – email sent by BBC to Town and Parish Councils informing them of the situation can be found on the CPRE Bedfordshire website: www.cprebeds.org.uk

BBC's position is now chaotic and confusing.

BBC say that a decision will be made in the next few months.

CPRE Bedfordshire's fear is that the delay will be used to further increase housing numbers on sites which are unacceptable to local people as part of the Mayor's stated approval of the National Infrastructure Commissions plans for huge development across the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Bedford – Cambridge Corridor. This could be done by introducing a review of the sort identified by CBC – see below.

Forthcoming Mayoral elections could be influencing decisions.

Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) agreed in April to go ahead with the Local Plan 2035 which proposes approx. 40,000 new homes (incl. Luton's "unmet need")

This despite receiving a massive 6,300 individual responses from residents and others to their Pre – Submission Local Plan 2035 Consultation of which around 90% objected to the Local Plan.

CBC clearly don't understand the concept of local democracy.

The Submission version of the Local Plan 2035 has now been submitted for approval and a Government Inspector has been appointed.

CBC have said that it is their intention to review the Local Plan 2035 six months after it has been accepted by Government. This in order to take account of further increases required as part of the Government's National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) plans for development across the Oxford –

Milton Keynes – Bedford – Cambridge Corridor.

CBC say that this could increase housing numbers by a further 20,000 to a massive 60,000 new homes i.e. equivalent to 15 towns the size of Ampthill.

This brings into question the democratic viability of the Local Plan 2035 itself which could be meaningless after the review – local residents would be justifiably shocked and amazed at a process which takes no note of local opinion.

The Leader of CBC has already stated his agreement to the NIC proposals despite growing local opposition.



Bedfordshire as at May 2018

**Period: 2015 – 2035
(Luton 2011-2031)**

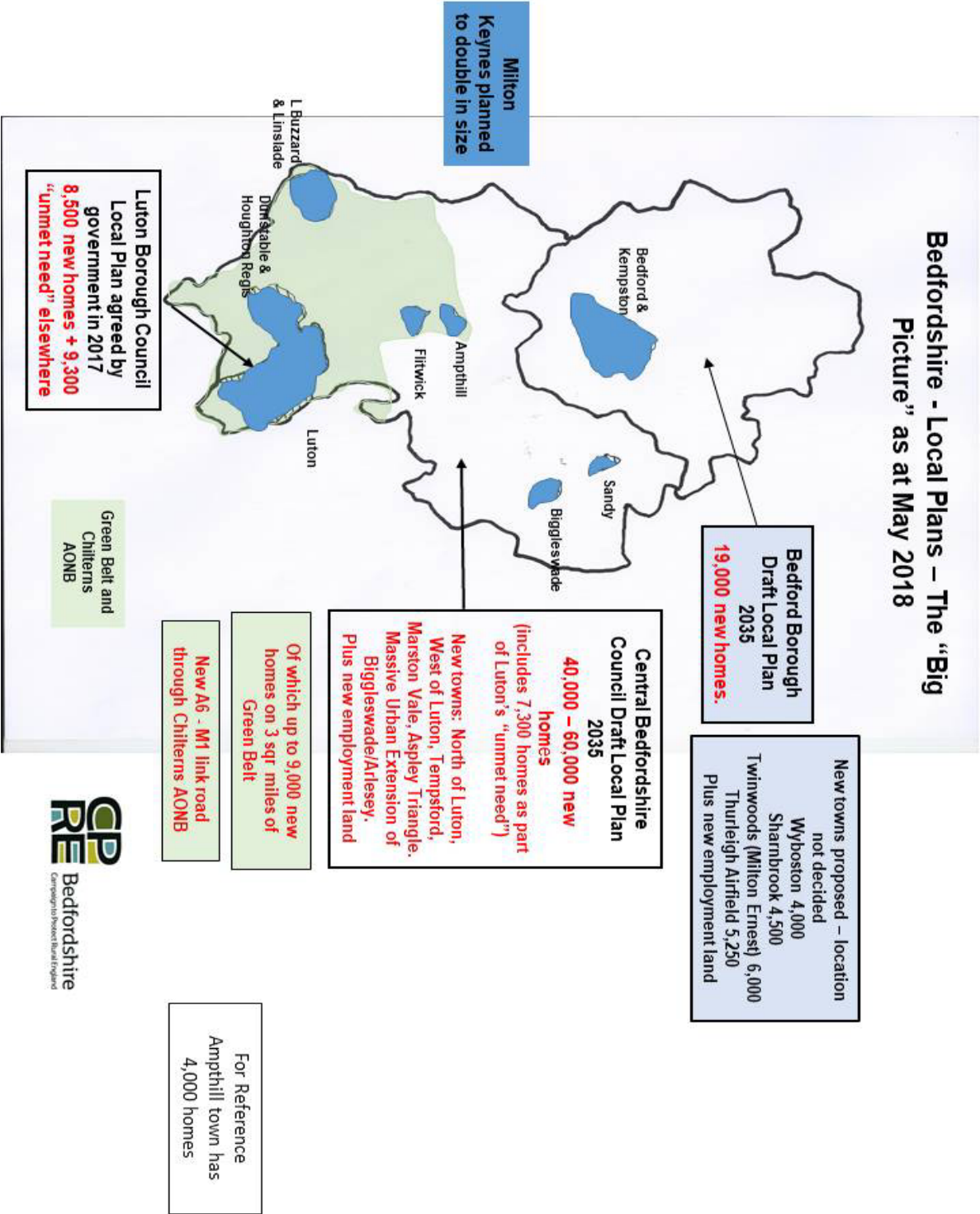
Total number of new homes planned for Bedfordshire between 67,500 and 87,500

(equivalent to between 17 and 22 new towns the size of Ampt Hill)

Plus possible further increase due to Government revisions to calculation basis

THE HOUSING NEEDS OF ALL THE PEOPLE OF BEDFORDSHIRE CAN BE MET WITH LESS THAN 50% OF THE 67,500 NEW HOMES.

Remainder for people to be encouraged to move to Bedfordshire from elsewhere in the UK



Bedfordshire and neighbouring counties – a comparison of size, population and population density:

County	Population	Rank (pop)	Area (in km ²)	Area (sq. mi.)	Rank (area)	Density (people/km ²)	Rank (dens.)
Bedfordshire	664,500	36th	1,235	477	41st	537	13th
Buckinghamshire	799,200	30th	1,873	723	32nd	426	22nd
Cambridgeshire	849,000	27th	3,389	1,309	15th	250	34th
Northamptonshire	733,100	33rd	2,364	913	24th	310	29th
Oxfordshire	683,200	35th	2,604	1,005	22nd	262	33rd

Source: Wikipedia. Office for National Statistics (ONS) 22 June 2017 – Mid 2016 estimates

There are 47 ceremonial counties in England.

- Bedfordshire is one of the smallest counties in England (ranked 41st of 47) and yet has one of the highest population densities in England (ranked 13th)
- The massive number of new houses proposed by Government and

Bedfordshire Local Authorities will further substantially increase the population density of the county which is already substantially higher than that of all the neighbouring counties as shown in the table below

- It is the people of Bedfordshire that will suffer from this unsustainable planning policy

- To take just one example - the Environment Agency is already warning of the dire consequences of future water shortages and Bedfordshire is one of the driest areas in the country

[Join us in our work to promote and protect the countryside and greens spaces of Bedfordshire](#)

Neighbouring Oxfordshire County Council has recently agreed with Government, after much detailed discussion, to build 100,000 new homes in their Local Plan.

- Oxfordshire is twice the size of Bedfordshire
- Oxfordshire has half the population density of Bedfordshire
- Bedfordshire ranks 13th in terms of population density among the 48 counties of England
- Oxfordshire ranks 33rd

(Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS))

On the basis of this, Bedfordshire should be building a maximum of 50,000 new homes – between 26% and a massive 43% less than that currently proposed.

The Government and Bedfordshire's Local Authorities are planning for between 67,500 and 87,500 new homes in Bedfordshire over the plan periods.

The majority will be for people who will be encouraged to move to Bedfordshire from elsewhere in the UK.

This will massively increase population density, already one of the highest in England, and have a devastating impact on the countryside and urban green spaces and the quality of life of the people of Bedfordshire.

WORDSEARCH ANSWERS

EYEWORTH
EVERTON
EVERSHOLT
ELSTON

EGGINGTON
EDWORTH
ROXTON
RISELEY
RIDGEMONT

RENHOLD
RAVENS DEN
RADWELL
PULLOXHILL
POTSGROVE

PODDINGTON
PEGSDON
PAVENHAM
COPE
COLMOWORTH

COCKAYNE HATLEY
CLOPHILL
CHELLINGTON
CHALGRAVE
CADDINGTON

Luton Borough Council (LBC) – Local Plan 2011 – 2031, agreed by Government in 2017

Total housing requirement established as 17,800 new homes. However, there is only sufficient land in the Borough for 8,500 new homes so the shortfall of 9,300 homes are to be built in Central Beds (7,300) and north Hertfordshire (2,000).

According to the Inspector who dealt with the LBC Local Plan the figure of 7,300 was agreed by CBC and it has since been incorporated into the CBC Local Plan 2035.

Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted by CPRE Bedfordshire to Local Authorities have established that the entire housing needs of all the people of Bedfordshire can be met with less than 50% of the housing proposed in the Local Plans.

The Government's National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) is proposing:

1 million additional homes and a population increase of 1.9 million people across the Oxford - Milton Keynes – Bedford – Cambridge Corridor the corridor is less than 100 miles in length.

1 million homes is equivalent to 20 cities the size of Cambridge.

1.9 million people is equivalent to 2 cities the size of Birmingham.

This is planning madness.

Forthcoming events

Sunday 2nd September,

we have a visit to Dunton Community Garden for a walk around their site. Nestled in the heart of Dunton village lies a hidden gem.... a beautiful organic garden of one and a half acres - designed and tended by local people. There are plenty of fruit and vegetables growing, space for children to run around, a family picnic area, willow domes for hiding in, a wildlife patch, fruit trees and so much more.

To book a place please email events@cprebeds.org.uk or call 01234 353331

Wednesday 3rd October

is our Living Countryside Awards Evening in Bedford. More details are on our website www.cprebeds.co.uk/awards

Thursday 1st November

– we will be hosting a quiz evening in the White Horse pub in Bedford.



easyfundraising
.org.uk

Did you know that when you shop online - from your weekly shop to your annual holiday - you could be raising a free donation for CPRE Bedfordshire?

Shop with any of over 3,300 well-known retailers via the easyfundraising website and a percentage of what you spend is passed to CPRE Bedfordshire at no additional cost to you.

Retailers include Amazon, M&S, Vodafone, eBay, Tesco, Viking and many more. Please register to support us today at - www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/cprebeds.

It's really simple, and doesn't cost you anything - thank you for your support!

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Route Options Consultation - Impact on Woburn Area

A consultation on the Expressway Route Options (see table below) took place during March to May 2018. A CPRE Working Group, consisting of representatives from Oxfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire branches supported by National Office, submitted a joint response to Highways England. Whilst the joint response highlighted CPRE's opposition to the expressway proposal on principle due to a range of negative environmental impacts, Option C was the

option that CPRE decided was the "least worst".

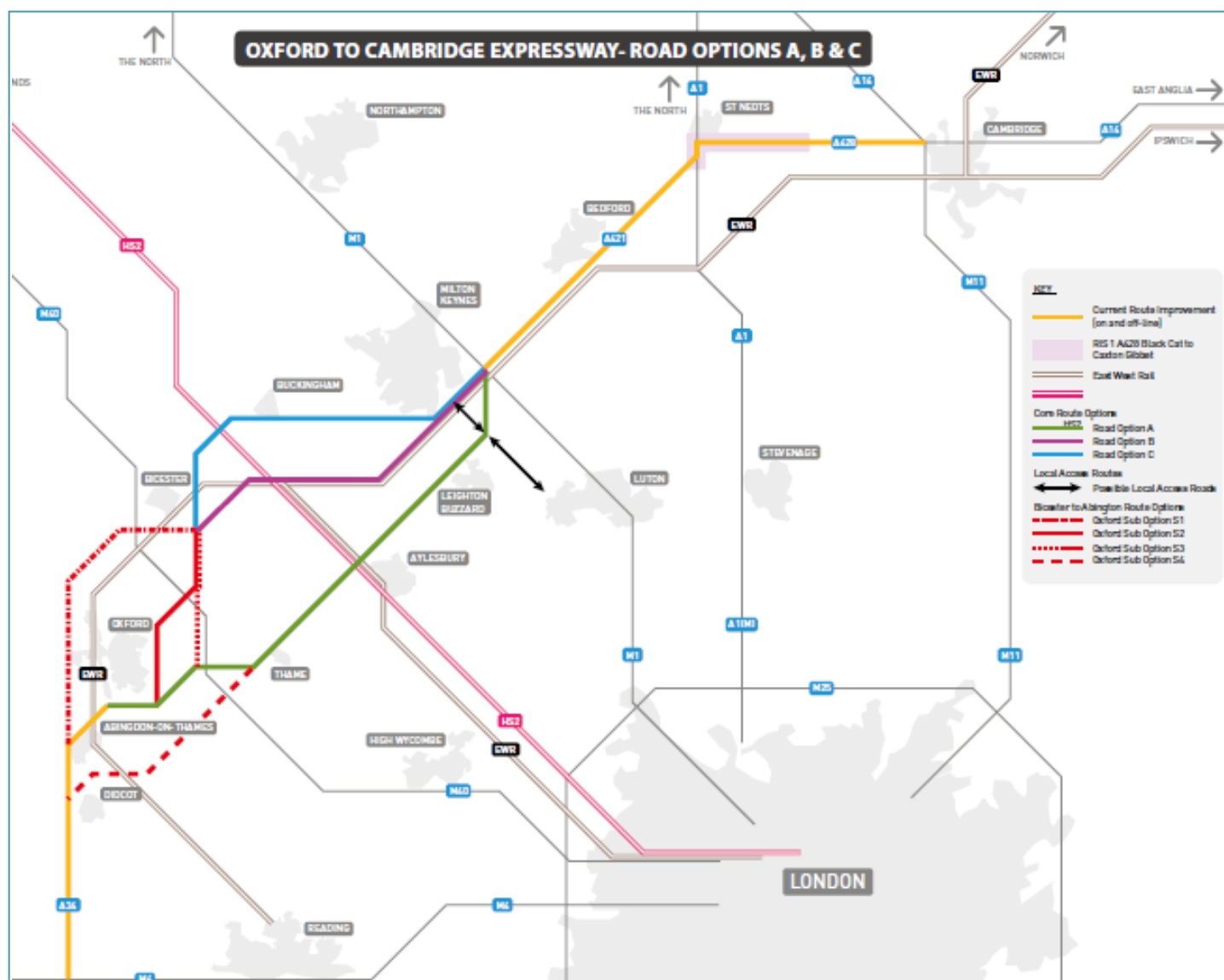
We are concerned to learn, through a Freedom of Information request, that Central Bedfordshire Council have expressed a preference for Option A, taking the view that this option is the most attractive in terms of journey time savings and best performing in terms of socio economic benefits.

CPRE Bedfordshire takes the view that this option is unacceptable as it presents

particular threats to the countryside in the area between Woburn, Woburn Sands and north of Leighton Buzzard which includes the Greensand Ridge.

You can find the Working Group's response to the corridor consultation on; <http://bit.ly/CPREBedsOxCam>

More information and a more detailed map can be found on our website www.cprebeds.org.uk/news



Branch News

AGM

We were delighted to welcome members and non-members alike to our AGM which was held in the Howard Room at Bedford Corn Exchange on April 17th.

During the AGM CPRE Bedfordshire Chair Gerry Sansom gave a presentation highlighting the vast numbers of houses being proposed for Bedfordshire and the impact that would have.

Following the business side of proceedings, Professor Paul Leinster CBE, Cranfield University gave a talk on Accounting for the Natural Environment in the Oxford Cambridge Growth Corridor - a practical approach. The question posed was how should we value, protect and enhance the natural environment

around us? Attendees were amongst the first to hear more about Natural Capital and the work that the Bedfordshire Local Nature Partnership is doing in conjunction with the other Local Nature Partnerships across the Oxford – Cambridge Corridor to develop a proof of concept for a natural capital investment plan across the area.

Following the talk there was plenty of time given over to questions and discussion of the points raised. CPRE Bedfordshire was not promoting the idea of Natural Capital which is a very controversial concept, but opening the window on current Government thinking.



AGM 2018



Gerry Sansom at the Planning Workshop

Planning Workshop

In March, we held a Planning Workshop for local councillors and interested individuals at St Cuthbert's Hall in Bedford. It was very well attended and we received some great feedback from many of those who attended.

In the morning Paul Miner from CPRE National Office introduced the planning system, local and neighbourhood plans and talked about recent changes in national planning policy, affordable housing and green spaces.

After a delicious (and plentiful) hot lunch delegates took part in an interactive exercise led by Trustee Susan Lynch. In small groups they discussed grounds for opposing a real life planning application before feeding back to the whole room. Concerns were raised about a variety of issues including transport, infrastructure and pressure on local services.

Lastly, CPRE Bedfordshire Chair Gerry Sansom provided an overview of the current position across the county looking at local plans and proposed developments.

And Huge thanks to....

Helen Greer, Julia Jones and Tony Kellett, who have recently left the branch, for all their hard work and dedication to CPRE Bedfordshire

Throughout the day there were plenty of opportunities for questions which was appreciated by many of those attending – as was the opportunity to talk with other councillors across the county about common concerns.

The event was kindly supported by Norris & Fisher Insurance Brokers.

We are planning more talks and workshops. If you have or feel there is a particular area of interest, please do get in touch and let us know.

Get Involved

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our branch – we rely enormously on their skills, commitment and enthusiasm to do the work we do. We have a varied of roles available and we'd be delighted to discuss these in more detail with you.

Contact us on 01234 35331 or find more information on our website www.cprebeds.org.uk/how-you-can-help

You can help save the countryside from as little as £3 per month

Help protect the countryside by becoming a member of CPRE. We all need the countryside – whether it's for fresh air, delicious local produce, beautiful landscapes, or vibrant towns and villages – the countryside is invaluable. By joining CPRE, you are helping to ensure that a beautiful living countryside thrives for generations to come.

CPRE membership is from £3 per month, but giving at a higher level will help us do more to protect the countryside.

Becoming a member is easy go to www.cprebeds.org.uk to join online or download a membership form.

Villages of Bedfordshire wordsearch

Hidden in the grid are 24 Bedfordshire villages. How many can you find? (Hint – they all begin with the letters C, P, R or E!) answers on page 8

P	O	W	O	T	S	L	E	E	D	E	N	O	N	C
L	R	A	D	W	E	L	L	L	P	Y	L	O	E	H
L	I	E	A	S	T	H	Y	P	N	E	E	T	D	R
I	S	C	N	R	O	X	T	O	N	W	T	A	S	I
H	E	A	W	H	C	N	T	C	O	O	L	E	N	D
X	L	M	D	T	O	G	L	L	T	R	O	V	E	G
O	E	P	E	D	N	L	U	O	G	T	H	O	V	M
L	Y	T	S	I	O	N	D	P	N	H	S	R	A	O
L	U	G	D	T	B	E	R	H	I	M	R	G	R	N
U	E	D	W	O	R	T	H	I	D	L	E	S	G	T
P	A	V	E	N	H	A	M	L	O	O	V	T	L	T
C	N	O	T	R	E	V	E	L	P	C	E	O	A	F
E	G	G	I	N	G	T	O	N	O	L	U	P	H	I
C	R	O	N	O	T	G	N	I	L	L	E	H	C	L
P	Y	E	L	T	A	H	E	N	Y	A	K	C	O	C

Leave A Legacy

If you enjoy the beautiful countryside of Bedfordshire, please consider leaving a gift to CPRE Bedfordshire in your will.

Your legacy, no matter what the amount, will help us in our work to protect the countryside of Bedfordshire. Information about how to include CPRE Bedfordshire in your will can be found on our website.

www.cprebeds.org.uk/how-you-can-help/leave-a-legacy

About us

Campaign to Protect Rural England is a national charity that exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

We have 60,000 supporters, a branch in every county, eight regional groups, over 200 local groups and a national office in London. CPRE is a powerful combination of effective local action and strong national campaigning.

Our Patron is Her Majesty the Queen. Our President is Emma Bridgewater.

Bedfordshire Matters is the biannual magazine of Bedfordshire's CPRE branch. CPRE Bedfordshire is a local independent charity who works to protect and promote the countryside and urban green spaces of Bedfordshire.

Registered Charity No: 1023435



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