

HOUSING DEBATE HOTS UP IN NORFOLK



Development is encroaching on Norfolk's green fields

Sign up to CPRE's Charter for the Countryside
Over 15,000 people have now signed up to CPRE's new Charter for the Countryside supporting our call for a return to a truly democratic planning system which prioritises brownfield development and delivers affordable housing where it is needed.

If you share our concerns about the future for the countryside, sign up to our Charter now, using the enclosed postcard, and encourage your friends and family to do so too. The more signatories we have to the Charter, the more powerful our voice when lobbying politicians and decision makers.

Solar farms out of favour

The government finally appears to be recognising the disastrous impact solar farms can have on the countryside. Energy Minister Greg Barker has written to all local authorities, stating that he plans to crack down on inappropriately sited solar farms that do not take into account environmental considerations such as

Norfolk's political leaders continue to support the dogma that 'all growth is good', but this is not the message that resonated at the CPRE Norfolk Alliance meeting at the end of last year.

The public meeting was an opportunity for anyone concerned about the housing and infrastructure growth proposed for Norfolk to voice their opinion and to discuss how the CPRE Norfolk Alliance might move forward given that our responses to consultations seem to be ignored.

Overwhelmingly parish councils and community groups represented at the meeting expressed frustration that they felt powerless and disenfranchised, with Norfolk decision-makers appearing to dismiss their concerns. Amongst the key decisions taken on the night was that the members of the Alliance would formally oppose the Northern Distributor Road. It was also agreed that CPRE Norfolk will lobby Norfolk MPs and local councillors to make them aware of the perceived lack of democratic decision-making within the county, and demand that they properly consider the views of rural communities.

landscape and visual impact, heritage and local amenity. His colleague Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, is also concerned that insufficient weight is being given to the views of local communities and environmental considerations when planning appeal decisions are made. He intends to investigate a number of renewable energy schemes that were initially refused planning permission but have subsequently gone to appeal.

Dates for your Diary

April 16th - May 10th: CPRE Norfolk Anniversary Open Days
April 23rd: Fundraising concert at Voewood

May 10th: Volunteers Event at Clermont House
July 21st: CPRE Norfolk AGM
For more information on any of these events, please contact the Branch Office on 01603 761660

CAMPAIGNS ROUND-UP

Litter wardens report increase in fast-food litter

CPRE Norfolk's dedicated army of litter wardens continues to fight the battle against litter and fly-tipping throughout the county.

The wardens report annually on their activities and recent feedback drew attention to the increasing problem of litter from fast food outlets, presumably thrown from cars, often a couple of miles from the outlet where it has been sold. We will be contacting fast food outlets over the next few months to discuss ways they can persuade their customers to dispose of their rubbish responsibly.

Protecting our paths

We are extremely pleased that Norfolk County Council is proposing to increase the amount of money available for maintaining public rights of way across Norfolk.

This proposal, contained within NCC's recent *Putting People First* budget consultation, is recognition that their existing footpath maintenance programme is unacceptable, and causing frustration and annoyance to walkers across the county. CPRE Norfolk have been raising awareness of the problem of inaccessible footpaths for the past two years and we are delighted to see the Council responding to our concerns.

Exploring our Footpaths

Volunteers in four parishes who have been researching the history of the footpaths in their area will be celebrating their findings with a series of events this spring.

The research was co-ordinated by CPRE Norfolk in association with UEA and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The events include a Walking Weekend on April 5th/6th in Beachamwell featuring wildlife expert and writer Mark Cocker, a creative writing workshop (March 23rd) and a wildlife walk (April 12th) in Reepham and an exhibition in Horning, also on April 12th.



Voewood, near Holt. The stunning venue for our Spring fundraising concert

A MVSICALL BANQVET at Voewood

We will be stepping back over four hundred years in our next fundraising concert, when tenor Andrés Hernández-Salazar performs a selection from *A MVSICALL BANQVET*; a varietie of delicious Ayres, Collected out of the best Authors in English, French, Spanish and Italian. This musical 'hit parade' from 1610 includes pieces by John Dowland and Giulio Caccini, amongst others. Andres will be accompanied by lutenist Jamie Akers, who has performed with many leading ensembles and soloists including the Scottish, English and Irish Chamber Orchestras and the English National Opera.

The concert will take place on Wednesday April 23rd from 6pm til 8pm at the breathtakingly beautiful Voewood, which has been painstakingly restored and decorated in an eclectic style by its current owner Simon Finch. There will be an opportunity before the concert to explore the ground floor and Grade I listed gardens of this fascinating Arts and Crafts house. Tickets cost £25 for CPRE members (£28 for non-members) and includes light refreshments on arrival. Spaces are limited so please call the Branch office on 01603 761660 to reserve your tickets.

Changes to CPRE Norfolk's Constitution

CPRE Norfolk's Executive Committee is looking to update our Constitution to make it more relevant to how the Branch operates today. Details of the proposed changes will be sent to members in June, together with information about this year's AGM, and how you can nominate and elect Committee members.



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

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