

Norfolk's night skies under threat from light pollution, say parish councils

CPRE Norfolk's recent survey of all parish and town councils in Norfolk has revealed that nearly two-thirds are concerned about levels of light pollution in their area, with many expressing fears that Norfolk's wondrous dark skies are under threat from excess night-time lighting.

The survey revealed that the most common causes of light pollution in the countryside are from residential security lighting, road lighting, floodlighting of churches and sports facilities and excessive lighting from industry, farms, schools and garages. The survey also looked at street lighting trends in Norfolk. David Hook, CPRE Norfolk's Light Pollution Campaign Co-ordinator, said, "Anyone living in the countryside can tell you about obtrusive night-time lights in their local area. Nevertheless, it was also heartening to read that many parish councils do take regular action on light polluters, either through the planning system or by contacting local owners directly."

The full results of the survey are available from the CPRE Norfolk website or by contacting the branch office on 01603 761660.



Norfolk's beautiful night skies must be protected from light pollution
Photo: Morston Quay by Steve Lansdell, Sky Photography

Light Pollution: A Problem that CAN be solved
CPRE Norfolk's campaign to protect our dark skies has been given a new impetus following last year's funding of almost £10,000 from the Big Lottery Fund. As well as our survey of parish and town councils (see right), the funding has enabled us to produce and distribute new Light Pollution Guidance notes and organise a conference at the University of East Anglia on Wednesday June 10th. With speakers from the British Astronomical Association, CPRE National Office and Norfolk County Council, the conference will demonstrate how architects, professionals and the public can make sensitive decisions about lighting to minimise light pollution. Delegate rates are £25, with a reduced rate of £15 for parish councils and CPRE members.

CPRE Norfolk Awards 2015 – Application Forms now available (but closing date imminent)
We are now inviting applications for our new CPRE Norfolk Awards which return this year in a new format and with three specific categories; The Askham Award for Creative Use of Existing Land or Buildings (*sponsored by Cozens Hardy*

LLP); The Boldero Award for Access to and Interpretation of the Countryside (*sponsored by Gallyons Country Clothing*) and The Corbin Award for Engaging Young People with the Countryside. Further information, judging criteria and application forms are available from the Branch Office or on the CPRE Norfolk website. The deadline for applications is **Friday 29th May 2015.**

The CPRE Norfolk 2015 AGM....will take place at 2pm on Monday July 20th at the Great Hospital, Bishopsgate, Norwich. It will be followed by a talk, 'Revealing Landscapes', by Ben Cowell, Regional Director of the National Trust in the East of England. All are welcome; please contact the Branch Office on 01603 761660 to confirm your place. Further information about the AGM, nomination procedures and the standing officers will be sent directly to all CPRE Norfolk members.

NEWS ROUND-UP

A better future for Norfolk's footpaths

CPRE Norfolk, together with the Ramblers and other stakeholders, have been taking part in a series of workshops with Norfolk County Council to find a solution to the problem facing Norfolk footpaths. Budget cuts and a two-tier management system have left many footpaths in the county neglected and overgrown and the Council are keen to explore new ways to address the problem. The workshops have been thought-provoking and encouraging and we are optimistic that the footpaths of Norfolk will benefit as a result.

Challenging the candidates about rural issues

As we go to print, the outcome of the 2015 general election remains unknown, but whichever candidate for Broadland is ultimately successful he can be in no doubt about the issues of concern to the electorate. A CPRE Norfolk hustings event at Horsford Village Hall in April enabled constituents to challenge the candidates on some of the issues facing rural areas. The Northern Distributor Road (NDR), affordable homes, energy policy, and local decision-making in the planning system were all hot topics at the event which was attended by Keith Simpson (Conservative), Stuart Agnew (UKIP) Andrew Boswell (Green), Steve Riley (Lib Dems) and Chris Jones (Labour). The debate was chaired by CPRE's Head of Government and Rural Affairs Erica Popplewell.

Costwold Outdoor discount for CPRE supporters

CPRE members and volunteers can now kit themselves out for a little bit less, following a new discount which has been agreed with outdoor specialists Cotswold Outdoor. The company has agreed to provide a discount of 10% on their full price products (sold online and in store) for CPRE members and a higher discount of 15% for all our volunteers. Please show your membership card instore to receive your benefit. We will also be having a promotional event at the Norwich Branch of Cotswold Outdoor on Theatre Street on Saturday June 6th to help raise awareness of CPRE's activities.



Lucy Downing of tourism organisation Visit North Norfolk helps students consider the challenges facing rural areas

Photo: Terry Stanford

Conference puts rural issues on the agenda

Sixty GCSE students from five schools across Norfolk attended CPRE Norfolk's inaugural conference for schools at Fakenham Academy in March. The conference, *Battle or Balance: Setting priorities for land use in rural Norfolk*, aimed to raise awareness and understanding of the key issues affecting Norfolk and its rural communities. The students had the opportunity to debate and discuss a range of topics including 'Changes to Rural Communities: how many and what types of houses will we need in the future?', 'How can we, or should we, satisfy our energy needs?', 'How can we feed a growing population?' and 'What are the advantages and disadvantages of tourism in rural areas?'

Experts and professionals from Natural England, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Visit North Norfolk, Savills, Cornwall Energy, Citygate Developments, Nortons Dairy, Kings Lynn Borough Council as well as CPRE Norfolk, acted as facilitators for the discussions sessions. The conference enabled the students to apply their human and physical geography knowledge to real-life situations as well as developing an understanding of the pressures the countryside is facing from competing demands.

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And finally: The Trustees of CPRE Norfolk would like to extend their warmest thanks to James Parry, CPRE Norfolk's Chairman, who will be stepping down at our July AGM, after five years in the role. James has steered the charity through difficult times and his contribution, good humour and enthusiasm have been immeasurable.