



## An Overplus Omnishambles on the Economic Velociway

*Reading the Hampshire Chronicle for 1824 the other day I stumbled upon the word "overplus". It simply means excess and is a delightful tautology. Sadly, it is a word that has long drifted out of use.*

*Words are of course always being invented and discarded. My personal disappointment is not getting the word 'velociway' adopted by the OED. I conjured up this word a few years back in frustration at those high speed Sustrans cycle ways that have tarmacadamed so many rural bridleways and byways. On velociways, walkers may no longer pause to wonder at the beauty of the countryside without fear of being dinged, honked or hollered at by Lycra clad figures rushing by on velocipedes. These riders, desperate to get to their destination, never seem to recognise that rural England is itself a very special destination if only passed through unhurried.*

*The writers of the TV political comedy "The Thick of It" have had rather more success in getting 'omnishambles' into everyday use. It is the word of the moment as politicians and pundits struggle to find new ways of describing the disarticulations between public policy and the economy. Whenever such disarticulations occur, and let's face it they are frequent, politicians and the unthink tanks hurry to accuse the usual suspects of creating the omnishambles that results.*

*Among the usual suspects being dragged into the economic kangaroo court this summer are the green belt, Heathrow's runways and a Thames Estuary airport. Planning rules, only so recently reformed, have also been hauled back in the dock with fuming ministers demanding a retrial over their alleged mugging of the economy.*

*This witch hunt is something of an overplus, but that matters not one jot to most developers and to the politicians thirsty for good headlines ahead of the expected cabinet reshuffle. Rural England is to them no more than an über-inconvenience getting in the way of profit and economic recovery. That they are wrong does not mean that they will not succeed. As Paul Goodman says in the Telegraph [T](#), it is once again time to fight:*

## LET THE STREET FIGHT BEGIN

Andy Boddington

*To mark its six-year anniversary, the eBulletin has adopted a new style. I hope you like it, but whether you do or not, I am sure that you will let me know, especially if I have created an omnishambles. Views expressed in the eBulletin and its editorial approach, whether overplus or not, are those of its editor and not any part of CPRE. To receive a regular copy please email: [cprenews@gmail.com](mailto:cprenews@gmail.com)*

## The Usual Suspects in the Dock



**A silence ends.** The two weeks of the Olympics brought a welcome silence in political announcements and a near truce in political scrapping. But the flame was barely quenched before George Osborne and like-minded MPs launched a new attempt to rewrite the rule book on the planning system, the green belt and Heathrow. After two weeks of feverish lobbying in the press for favoured policies – a reshuffle is due imminently – both the prime minister and chancellor took to the media yesterday in an attempt to clarify the government's position. While Cameron talked about slashing red tape to get the economy moving, Osborne was more forthright. Paying no more than lip service to coalition policies, he made clear his loathing of planning rules and the green belt.

**David Cameron.** Writing in the Mail on Sunday, the prime minister pledged to slash red tape to boost housebuilding and jobs, and to announce major road, rail and airport expansions in a bid to get the economy moving. He raged against opponents of developments – "a familiar cry goes up: 'Yes, we want more housing; but no to every development – and not in my back yard.' The nations we're competing against don't stand for this kind of paralysis and neither must we" [M](#). Fraser Nelson in the Spectator condemned Cameron's 'housing fallacy': "When the UK recovery comes, then so will the houses... But he can't speed this along: if he tries to, it will end in tears" [O](#).

**George Osborne.** Speaking to the BBC's Andrew Marr, the chancellor said: "I think we can speed up planning. It is absolutely ludicrous that it takes years to get planning decisions in this country. This country, in the current economic environment, cannot afford to wait years for development" [i](#) [i](#) [BBC](#). Pressed on whether developers will be allowed to build on the green belt, Osborne replied: "We published our national planning policy framework in March and we are not preparing to tear that up. But if you look for example at Cambridge, they have been pretty smart about swapping some bits of the green belt for other bits – in other words allowing some development on the green belt if you bring in new pieces of land into the green belt. Those powers already exist but are not widely used" [g](#). Osborne was adamant that extra runway capacity was needed in the South-East: "it is a question of where it should go – Heathrow, a new estuary airport, Stansted, Gatwick – people have lots of different options" [BBC](#). The Telegraph reported that Osborne has told colleagues that Whitehall should be able to withdraw protection to allow sections of the green belt to be built on without local councils being able to order a public inquiry [T](#) [T](#).

### A note on the links

*Just click on blue text or a button [■](#) to read cited articles. Blue buttons link to free articles, brown buttons to sources that require registration, even a fee. Government sources are grey and green groups are equally predictably green.*

## The Green Belt under Renewed Threat

**CPRE President Andrew Motion** – “Now is the time for all those who care for our green belt, and indeed for the countryside as a whole, to stand up for it” [i](#).

**CPRE Chief Executive Shaun Spiers** – *George Osborne “should avoid meddling with the planning system. The Treasury doesn’t understand planning and the interventions of Treasury Ministers always end in tears. The Chancellor should stick to his job of trying to fix the British economy, and let the planning system do its job of ensuring that necessary development goes in the right place”* [t](#).

**Coalition chancellor George Osborne** – *[We can permit] “some development on the green belt if you bring in bring in new pieces of land into the green belt. Those powers already exist but are not widely used”* [BBC](#).

**The attack.** On 23 August, the Daily Mail reported that the “Treasury is prepared to ‘have a fight’ with green campaigners” and aims to “seize chunks of the greenbelt to build housing” [t](#). The Financial Times claimed that ministers are scheming to allow redesignation of areas of green belt so long as they are replaced but will deny the proposals amount to a “wholesale change of the green belt” [FT](#). Other reports: [t](#) [t](#) [t](#). In response, Downing Street said the policy remains that stated in the coalition agreement of safeguarding the green belt [t](#) [t](#).

**CPRE hits back.** On Bank Holiday Monday, CPRE published a map revealing that England’s green belt is threatened by 35 developments of 81,000 homes, as well as roads, industrial parks, mines and airport expansions – development that could bury an area the size of Slough. Writing in the Telegraph, CPRE chief Shaun Spiers told George Osborne to “stop interfering”. Accusing him of trying to blame planning regimes for “bigger economic difficulties”, he complained that Osborne has “no serious understanding of planning, nor any desire to gain one.” Spiers pleaded: “We must not focus solely on numbers or see house-building principally as a means to economic growth. The homes we create should be well designed, reasonably spacious – and in the right places” [t](#). All the major media outlets covered the [CPRE press release](#) including [i](#) [g](#) [BBC](#) [t](#) [FT](#).

**Reaction.** The Telegraph Leader on 24 August cycled through the history of the green belt, pointing to its cameo role in the Olympics as a “testament to the success of a 65-year-old planning policy” [t](#). Shadow environment secretary Mary Creagh was more diffident about the green belt and countryside protection: “It’s clear that the Tories are increasingly out of touch with anyone who cares about the countryside. I have been clear that there are no no-go areas for us and we are committed to creating a rural economy that works for working people” [i](#). CPRE’s Kate Houghton was among those writing letters in to the Guardian defending the green belt in response to a polemic by Ian Birrell [g](#) [g](#). In a letter to the Times, Shaun Spiers said: “The Government has only just got its new planning reforms in place. They are geared towards putting local people at the heart of planning. The Chancellor should calm down and allow these changes to bed in, rather than plotting Whitehall-driven land grabs in the green belt” [t](#). The Telegraph’s Geoffrey Lean claimed that the government is gunning for the green belt and ministers’ plans to streamline 6,000 pages of planning guidance will be much more damaging than the NPPF [t](#).

## A Third Runway at Heathrow?

**Proponents.** Housing minister Grant Shapps headed the queue of those pleading the case for a third runway during August. He said Britain must build the runway if it is to remain a “great trading nation” [t](#) [t](#). Former chancellor Alistair Darling also backed a third runway [i](#), and was followed by Tory Tim Yeo who insisted the project will give the Government “a sense of mission” [t](#). The Telegraph Leader and John Longworth, director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce were among those nodding in agreement [t](#) [t](#). See also [t](#) [O](#) [FT](#).

**Opponents.** Amid the debate, Green MP Caroline Lucas, environmental pundit George Monbiot and Lib Dem MP Julian Huppert seemed rather lonely voices in making the case against expansion of aviation capacity [g](#) [g](#) [O](#). James Murray and Channel 4 demolished MP Tim Yeo’s claim that the inclusion of aviation in the EU emissions trading scheme means the environmental objections to expansion at Heathrow are “disappearing” [BG](#) [4](#). The BAA said it expected a noise compensation regime will be introduced if a third runway is given the go-ahead [FT](#) [t](#).

**The Coalition.** As the press speculated on whether Transport Secretary Justine Greening would continue running her department after the expected cabinet reshuffle, Richard Wellings of the Institute of Economic Affairs told the Financial Times that her position was “untenable... It would make sense to replace her” [FT](#) [t](#) [i](#). After Greening threatened to resign if the coalition backed a third runway, Downing Street unsuccessfully sought to end speculation: “The coalition parties have made a pledge not to have a third runway and that is a pledge that we will keep” [PA](#) [i](#) [g](#) [t](#) [BBC](#) [FT](#). Richmond MP Zac Goldsmith remains vehemently opposed to the runway [O](#). Over the weekend, the Financial Times suggested that David Cameron and Nick Clegg will ask an independent commission to review the future of Britain’s airports in a bid to calm the increasingly fractious row [FT](#).

**Thames Estuary Hub.** After the Downing Street statement, the BBC’s political editor Nick Robinson wrote “talk of an airport on Boris Island... will now begin in earnest” [BBC](#). Earlier Boris Johnson, riding high after the Olympics, had accused the Government of ‘pussy-footing around’ over plans to build another London airport and reduce the strain on Heathrow. “The attempt to try and long-grass it for three years into the other side of the [2015] election is just not realistic. Totally mad and it won’t work” [t](#) [O](#). Environmentalists did not agree: “There is something Boris, and indeed every other Conservative politician who has recently undertaken a reverse ferret on airport expansion in the south east, is guilty of concealing – the climate change impact of continued aviation expansion” [BG](#). Research commissioned by Medway Council showed the Thames Estuary gets three times more fog than Heathrow [BBC](#). A Kent councillor backed the estuary hub plan [BBC](#). A new airport in the Thames estuary could be built within 14 years, only two years longer than would be needed to build a third runway at Heathrow, according to a report for architects Foster + Partner [t](#) [t](#).

**Other schemes.** The Independent on Sunday said an anonymous business consortium was preparing ideas for a four runway airport near High Speed 2 or the Great Western railway in Oxfordshire or Berkshire [i](#). An open letter from West Midland MPs and business leaders said the government should expand regional airports and resist pressure to concentrate on Heathrow [O](#).

## CPRE South East Focus



Area of rejected glasshouses at Almodington (courtesy of The Almodington Association)

**Almodington victory.** CPRE Sussex and local residents are celebrating after an application for 50 acres of glasshouses at Easton Farm on the Manhood Peninsula was rejected at appeal **PE L**. The planning inspector concluded: “the serious impacts of the development on the character and appearance of the area are severe.” Georgia Wrighton Director of CPRE Sussex said we “fought hard and stood up for the distinctive landscape and unique tranquillity of the Manhood Peninsula, which once lost to commercial glasshouse development would have been lost forever.” The inspector placed great reliance on the NPPF, especially its definition of sustainable development, concluding: “The harm to the environment would not be outweighed by overall economic benefits of the scheme.” The inspector also disparaged highways plans, criticising the cutting back of hedges and complained that additional traffic and larger HGVs will detract from tranquillity and reduce safety. Protestors condemned West Sussex County Council for not objecting to the highways proposals **L**.



Warneford Hospital Playing Field by Lorna Morrison.

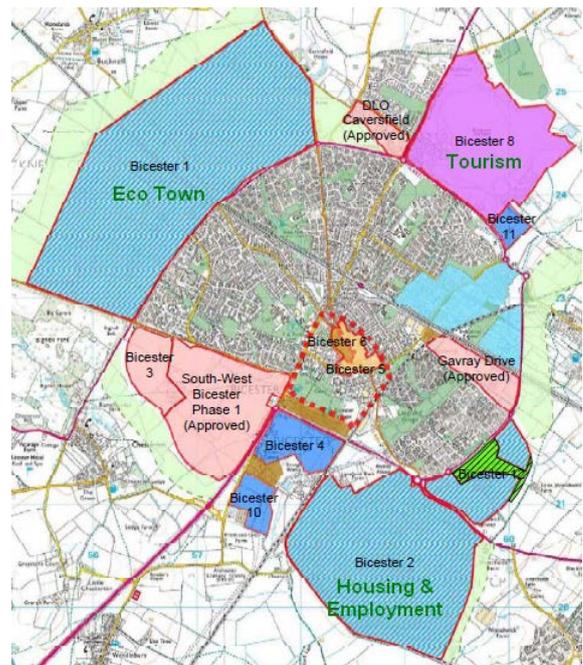
**Oxford.** Detail from one of nine artworks commissioned by CPRE Oxford. The exhibition runs from 3-8 September and draws attention to green spaces in the city in imminent danger from development.

**Dover heritage.** CPRE Protect Kent has called on Dover District Council to amend its heritage strategy to emphasise that the use of heritage assets to promote regeneration objectives is only fitting when it enhances and does not threaten those assets **PE**.

## Planning in the South East

**Local plan progress.** The core strategy for Woking has been found sound. The inspector recommended its housing targets should be expressed as a minimum and the affordable housing policies should be clearer **O LG L**. After an unexpected u-turn, Aylesbury Vale cabinet has approved plans for 6,000 homes, 3,000 less than expected and well below the South East Plan target **L LG**. A bitter row with Natural England and the RSPB has forced Medway Council to review its core strategy plans for a 5,000 home stand-alone community at Lodge Hill, north of Chattenden. Natural England had lodged a last minute objection that the site could be included a site of special scientific interest based on evidence from the RSPB **P LG**. A developer hoping to build at Burghfield Common near Reading is to launch a legal challenge to the adopted West Berkshire core strategy **L**.

**Local plan consultations.** Maidstone Borough Council is consulting on its Strategic Site Allocations and the Draft Integrated Transport Strategy (closes 1 October) **LG**. Cherwell District Council is consulting on its Local Plan and Bicester Masterplan (closes 10 October) **LG**. The plan confirms housing levels will be in line with the South East Plan and that Bicester is envisaged to develop into a garden city with extensive new development to the south west. RAF Bicester is expected to become a heritage centre but the council has accused the Ministry of Defence of trying to sell the site for housing **P**.



**Pinewood** Shepperton has confirmed that it will submit a new application for expansion of its Buckinghamshire studios in the autumn, but the new proposal will not include housing. A previous bid to build 1,400 homes in the green belt was rejected by Eric Pickles at the beginning of the year. After a recent consultation workshop, **Stop Project Pinewood** said the company seemed to think “people here weren’t happy about Project Pinewood was because of the housing aspect of it, but it was because it was on Green Belt land **L P**.”

**Wealden** District Council says that is working to address problems caused by limitations on development within the seven kilometre boundary of the Ashdown Forest due to the requirements of European Union Habitat Regulations **L**.

## Planning

**Regional strategies.** The communities department told the *eBulletin* in August that there is no timetable for the abolition of regional strategies. The remaining **strategic environmental impact assessments**, including that for the South East Plan, are expected to be published in a matter of weeks rather than months. There is nevertheless growing doubt within the planning community whether the abolition will be completed by 2015 when the Coalition Agreement expires.

**Infrastructure.** The Infrastructure (Financial Assistance) Bill due later in the year will give the green light to £40 billion of construction projects by using the government's low interest rates to underwrite them. To qualify, the projects must be "nationally significant", ready to start construction within 12 months, financially credible and "good value" for taxpayers **BBC**. A report from **The Infrastructure Forum** called for people living near to developments to be paid compensation to help "depoliticise contentious developments" **O**.

**Local plans.** English Heritage has published a guide for local authorities on how to create a sound local plan within the historic environment elements of the NPPF **EH**. It says: "Local Plans should include a clear and positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in the area, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats." The Cabe team at the Design Council is **stepping up its efforts** to support local authorities preparing local plans **DC**. Discussion on the Planning Advisory Service Forum suggests that Planning Inspectorate is insisting that its **model policy** on the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development is incorporated into all new local plans **O**. Inspectors have also insisted on its inclusion in waste strategies **P**.

**Neighbourhood plans.** Greg Clarke announced a new £10 million fund for neighbourhood planning. Councils can apply for up to £30,000 per plan **GOV**. CPRE and NALC have been given extended funding to support neighbourhood planning until March 2013 **CPRE**. Turners Hill parish council in Mid Sussex is to extend consultation after residents complained they were not being kept informed **L**. Wycombe Council is in disagreement with Daws Hill Residents Association over the boundaries of the neighbourhood plan area **PP** **P**. Maresfield Parish Council has made a formal application to Wealden District Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area **LG**.

**Revoking planning.** The Supreme Court ruled that local authorities can take into account the need to pay compensation when revoking planning permission **PP**.

**Habitats.** Defra is consulting on amending its guidance on the application of the Habitats Directive has allowed projects which have an adverse effect on a European site to go ahead on grounds of "imperative reasons of overriding public interest" (closes 30 October) **GOV**.

**Heritage.** The number of historic environment staff employed by local authorities in England has fallen 5% during the past year, and is down 25% since 2006 **P** **FT**. Eleven planning and heritage bodies, including CPRE, **have written** to the culture department expressing serious concern over the shortness of the consultation period on plans to change the system of listed building consents. The consultation took place over the Olympics and is now closed **O**.

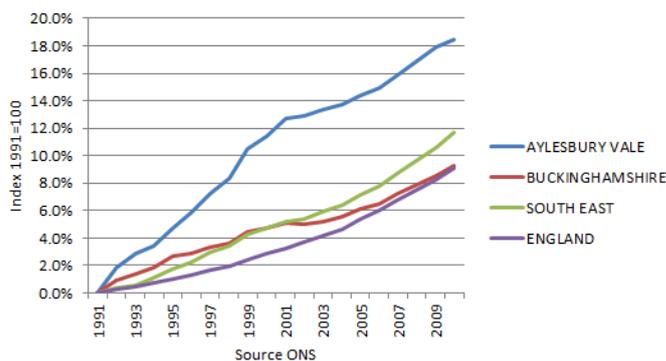
## Housing

**House numbers.** The bleak data show that government initiatives have made little change to house building. Housing starts in England in the second quarter of 2012 were 10% down on the previous three months at 21,540 homes. In the previous year, the biggest fall in housing starts was in London, where starts fell 22%. The greatest number of starts was in the South East, accounting for 18% of all starts in England **P** **GOV**. Just 3,080 affordable homes were started in the three months to June, the lowest since 2002 **24**. CPRE's Shaun Spiers said: "The country does need many, many more new homes than we are currently building, but there is no evidence that the planning system is stopping us building them. We are not building enough new homes because individuals cannot get mortgages and public investment in new housing is inadequate" **O** **FT**. The Homes and Communities Agency published its first statistical return which shows that social housing providers own 2,586,115 homes, a 2.4% increase on the total for 2011 **GOV**.



**How many homes?** The Local Housing Requirements Assessment Working Group has published an excellent online tool for planners: *What households where* **O**. Campaigners will find the tool easier to use than most sources of population, migration and household statistics. The graph below is for Aylesbury Vale.

Chart C2: Population change compared with county, region and England



**Houses as infrastructure.** Angus Walker explored a suggestion in the Daily Mail that George Osborne wants to let "ministers rather than local councils decide where to build hundreds of thousands of houses by reclassifying them as projects of national importance" **O** **ft**.

**Montague.** Sir Adrian Montague delivered a report to the government calling for affordable housing requirements to be waived to aid private let developments **24** **GOV**. The **Policy Exchange** called for expensive social homes to be sold to pay for cheaper ones. The policy found favour with Grant Shapps, David Cameron and the Telegraph, but not the Chartered Institute of Housing **CIH** **O**.

## Reviving Town Centres

**Stalled housing schemes.** The communities department launched a consultation on proposals to allow developers to renegotiate Section 106 obligations agreed prior to April 2010 . Some 1411 housing schemes of over 10 units (totalling 75,534 units) with planning consent are stalled. While nearly two-thirds of these will be within the scope of the new policy, the **impact assessment** is lukewarm on its impact: “changes to allow for renegotiation of section 106 agreements to take place sooner may, at the margin, be of benefit to some sites currently on-hold.” The department has appointed teams of brokers to renegotiate stalled schemes, including in Ashford     . Developer contributions to affordable housing are likely to be the first casualty of renegotiation . A 22,600-home regeneration scheme that has been stalled for several years at Kent Thameside will go ahead after Grants Shapps hosted negotiations. He is planning to call in developers, quangos and council leaders on other stalled housing projects     .

**Housing roundup.** CPRE **Cambridgeshire** welcomed plans for 5,000 houses on former Alconbury airfield for saving greenfield  . CPRE **Cornwall** has have joined with other groups under the *Our Cornwall* banner to challenge Cornwall Council plans for 48,000 houses .

### Housing in the South East

**Oxfordshire.** Residents are opposing plans to quadruple the size of the hamlet of Mongewell. Arnold Grayson of CPRE **Wallingford** said: “It is not a suitable site to build so many homes here in the Chilterns AONB” . **Bicester eco-town** developer A2Dominion has published an artist’s impression of the first eco houses  (below).



Bicester eco town

**Sussex.** Residents demonstrated against the 700 homes at Eastbourne proposed in Wealden core strategy . Hailsham residents are furious that Wealden planners have been given approval for a 35 home development on a greenfield site at Ersham Farm .

**Kent.** Developers have **submitted a planning application** for a 5,750 home ‘garden suburb’ at Chilmington Green, Ashford, Kent. It could cover 415 acres and be built in four phases over 20-years .



Chilmington Green

**Planning policy.** The communities department has abandoned plans to ease planning restrictions on security shutters for shops. After a consultation prompted by last year’s riots, the department concluded that it would be a “disproportionate over-reaction”  . Eric Pickles has approved **permitted development rights** that will allow two flats to be created in office or storage space above shops .

**Levies.** The Association of Convenience Stores (ACS) called for councils to levy a ‘supermarket tax’ on shopping centres and supermarkets as concerns grow that many small shops could close if business rates rise next April . Elmbridge Borough joined Poole and Mid Devon councils in dropping plans for a higher rate of Community Infrastructure Levy for large retail stores .

**Planning permissions.** Tesco secured its 14th store in Reading after a planning inspector ruled local objections were outweighed by the benefits. A convenience store owner reacted angrily: “They might as well change the name Reading to Tesco Town”  . Traders expressed concern for local high streets after South Bucks Council gave planning permission for a Tesco superstore at Taplow outside Maidenhead . Eric Pickles rejected an out of town superstore in Lancaster  . Developer Peel Group is to take Hyndburn Borough Council to the high court over its refusal to allow a wider range of goods to be sold at the Trafford Centre, an action MP Jack Straw argues could undermine Blackburn town centre . An out of centre superstore on a brownfield site at Newport, Shropshire has been given permission on appeal. The developers claim the decision “provides clarity on interpreting the NPPF guidance. The sequential test, the relevance of the PPS4 practice guidance for retail proposals and the importance of a brownfield-first approach are all recognised in this decision”  . The BBC reported on the **No to Costa** campaign against the eponymous coffee chain’s attempts to locate within the “independent coffee republic” of Totnes . Costa succeeded in gaining planning permission .

**Regeneration.** Grant Shapps launched the £1million Future High Street X-Fund which will reward towns with the most innovative high street regeneration schemes since May 2011 .

**Portas pilots.** In Cornwall, Portas called for Liskeard town centre to focus on “social shopping”, giving people a different and exciting experience that supermarkets could not provide .



The Portas Pilot in Margate is reported to have “descended into farce”. Scheme managers have resigned, accusing the Portas TV crew of stoking up disagreements between the town team leadership and businesses     .

**Pubs.** Research found that less than a third of councils in London and the South East have planning policies to protect pubs from redevelopment . Richard Lemon reviewed recent appeals and concluded that the NPPF is already influencing appeal decisions positively but it will not stop some pub conversions .

## Landscapes, Food and Farming

**Green space.** Surrey Heath CPRE welcomed a decision by a planning inspector to permit only minimal fencing on Chobham Common. Surrey Wildlife Trust must get further planning permission if it wishes to extend the strongly opposed scheme [L](#). Hastings Country Park is threatened by uncertainty over whether its single farm payment will continue [L](#). The Friends of Warneford Meadow in Oxford, which was saved from development by town green status, are trying to purchase the site [L](#). Campaigners hoping to save Kingsmead Field in Canterbury from development have submitted an application to register the land as a town green [L](#). CPRE Cornwall wants the county's AONBs upgraded to National Park status [L](#). Fields in Trust warned that playing fields could be cut by 15% because of government plans to scrap a legal requirement for how much outside space schools must provide [BBC](#) [T](#) [G](#).

**Green belt.** Alasdair Rae complained that "there is no open, shareable map of the national green belt and more importantly, with existing data, it's not possible to make one" [G](#). CPRE Warwickshire condemned the Coventry Gateway development around the airport for "tearing a huge hole in the green belt" and "looking more like cloud cuckoo land than sustainable development" [BBC](#). CPRE Chester is among those opposing plans for 2,000 homes in the city's green belt. Ann Jones said the plans would be "would be a complete reverse of the policy of protection which has been so successful in maintaining the unique character of this historic city and its rural setting" [L](#).

**Gypsies and travellers.** A developer is to appeal after his application for five gypsy and traveller pitches in the green belt at Old Windsor was rejected [L](#) [L](#). The communities department has issued new guidance on removing illegal encampments [PP](#).

**Footpaths.** Natural England launched a consultation on the first South East link of the English Coastal Path stretching 60km Ramsgate to Folkestone [L](#) [T](#). The Ramblers are warning that the South Downs Way could be threatened by the planned shake up of national trail management [L](#). Norfolk County Council is trialling using mobile phones to enable walkers to monitor the state of footpaths [L](#). A planning inspector ruled that a footpath at Marlow, blocked since 2004, must be reopened [L](#). The state of the nation's footpaths created anger in the Telegraph: "Briar and thistle, nettle and thorn block a third of public rights of way in some areas" [T](#).

**Light pollution.** Lights are to be turned off on the M1 in Bedfordshire [L](#). Light pollution is blurring the distinction between Yorkshire's rural and urban areas, with contamination underestimated and going unchecked. CPRE is concerned contamination across the region is going unchecked, with some people, businesses, local authorities and others illuminating properties and streets without considering the environmental impact [L](#).

**Ecosystems.** A report for Defra on Environmental Stewardship says the scheme promotes ecosystem services, food security, pollination and pest control [L](#). Defra is extending the options farmers can use under the scheme, providing support for hedgerow restoration in lowland areas [L](#). George Monbiot debunked Defra's Ecosystem Markets Task Force saying payments for ecosystem services look like a prelude to the greatest privatisation since inclosure [G](#) – see also Paul Kingsnorth's incisive views on "neo-environmentalists" [G](#).



The Lynton River Association is to challenge a decision by Eric Pickles to allow larger ferries to ply between the estuary and the Isle of Wight. The judicial review will only proceed if the LRA is awarded a protected costs order [L](#) [L](#).

**Planning permission.** The Save Woolley Valley Action Group won a High Court battle over the development of a rural beauty spot in part of Somerset. The row was over outhouses and a pond built without planning permission in an AONB. Mrs Justice Lang declared the council had "misdirected itself in law" when it concluded poultry units were not development subject to planning control [L](#).

**Community growing.** Advice to inspire communities to spot a plot of disused green spaces in their local area to use for food growing was published by Eric Pickles [L](#).

## Transport

**Rail.** IPPR said the government should stop delaying fuel duty increases and instead invest in improving rail and bus services and reducing fares [BC](#). As fare rises averaging 6.2% were announced, the Campaign for Better Transport urged the government to support to rail commuters by intervening to hold down fares [BC](#). Green groups accused Virgin of ditching its green ambitions as it announced flights between London and Manchester [BC](#). The plans came after Virgin lost the West Coast franchise to First Group, a decision that Richard Branson is to challenge in the high court [OO](#).

**High Speed 2.** The Department for Transport has cut the Landscape Impact Value for the route of HS2 by up to 90% [T](#). A 2010 assessment from HS2 Ltd said the 109-mile route would cause an estimated £4.3 billion of damage to the landscape, including just under £1.1bn in the Metropolitan green belt and Chiltern AONB. The new assessment by the DfT estimates that the impact damage is just £957 million, 78% lower, £114 million in the green belt and AONB. The DfT said the earlier figure was "not directly comparable" to the more sophisticated exercise it had now carried out [L](#). The five judicial reviews against the scheme will be held over eight days from 3 December 2012 [L](#). Alison Munro head of HS2 said those in favour of the controversial London-Birmingham line have been forgotten, and that noise and blight will be less damaging than feared [G](#).

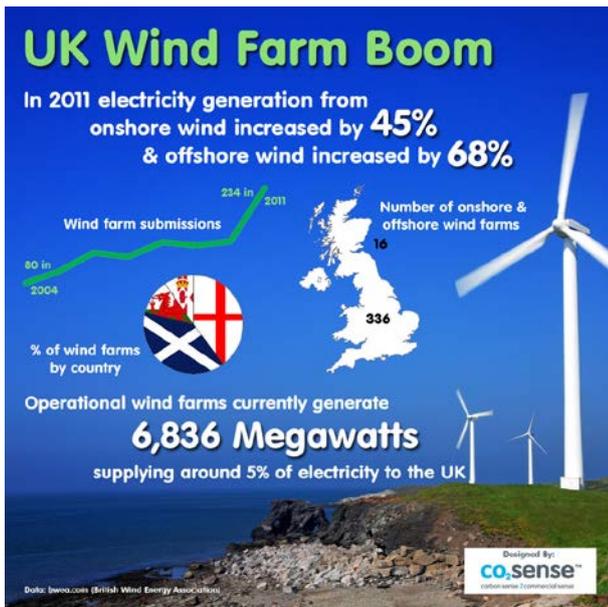
## Campaigning

**Deaths.** Frank Raymond, long-serving CPRE Oxfordshire member and chairman of the Henley and Mapledurham District committee, and branch energy consultant. Glyn Thomas, for 12 years chairman of CPRE Dover branch [L](#). Tom Holme, who until recently was chairman of CPRE Essex [L](#).

**People.** Oxfordshire farmer Poul Christensen will continue as chairman of Natural England until the end of 2013 [O](#). Dame Helen Ghosh, currently permanent secretary of the Home Office, will be the next National Trust director-general [O](#).

**Events.** 3-9 September: Zero Waste Week. 24-30 September: Rural Housing Week. CPRE Sussex will be on a panel discussing fracking on September 6 [L](#).

## Energy, Water and Waste



**Wind potential.** A report from IPPR, *Beyond the bluster*, says that wind power can significantly reduce carbon emissions, is reliable, poses no threat to energy security, and can provide a significant proportion of the UK's electricity supply with minimal impact on the existing operation of the grid [BG](#). James Delingpole followed blogger Guido Fawkes in being derisory about the neutrality of the report [T](#) [O](#). Earlier, RenewableUK's Maria McCaffery attacked "misinformation peddled in the media about wind energy" [BG](#).

**Wind farm policy.** Cornwall Council has issued planning guidance on renewable energy projects: "While generating more renewable energy is tremendously important for Cornwall, this needs to be in harmony with our fantastic heritage and landscape" [O](#). The [guidance for onshore wind farms](#) confirms that "the AONB designation is not necessarily a constraint on renewable energy development. Developments are encouraged provided that they do not have a significant adverse impact on the AONB." The Planning Inspectorate has told Wiltshire Council it must consult on a controversial amendment to its core strategy that imposes a minimum distance between housing and turbines. The [Wiltshire Clean Energy Alliance](#) claims that the policy conflicts with paragraph 97 of the NPPF [L](#). The Scottish government issued a new set of guidelines on best practices for wind farm planning applications [O](#). An architect claims that the visualisations prepared by wind farm developers make turbines look smaller than they are in practice [T](#).

**Wind tranquillity.** Research by the University of Bradford suggests that wind turbines have an impact on people's perceptions of tranquillity. "It was not only the noise and visual intrusion of the turbines themselves, but the buildings and service roads in and around the site that had probably affected people's perception of tranquillity. It was this industrialisation of open green spaces that reduced their ability to be restorative" [L](#).

**South East Wind.** Pressure is growing on Navitus Bay wind farm developer Eneco to provide more information about its proposals off the coast of Dorset [L](#). Sellindge Residents Association in Kent is engaged in an angry clash with Ecotricity over publicity materials for three turbines near the village [L](#).

**Wind schemes.** CPRE Mid Devon has welcomed withdrawal of a plan for 20 turbines between Tiverton and Bampton [L](#). South Hams District Council has quashed planning permission for a wind turbine in south Devon after agreeing that it should have demanded an environmental assessment of the proposal [P](#). A second wind farm threatens the moors of Wuthering Heights [ftl](#). The National Trust is to fight the Atlantic Array wind farm off the north Devon coast [L](#) [L](#). An application has been submitted for the world's biggest offshore windfarm, 339 turbines covering 300 square kilometres off Caithness [g](#) [BBC](#) [BG](#). A 26-turbine wind farm on the Island of Lewis has been scrapped due to fears of harming birdlife [BBC](#).

**Renewables.** David Cameron has instructed officials to look into proposals for a £30bn barrage across the Severn estuary, but wildlife groups remain sceptical about the scheme [BBC](#) [BG](#) [i](#) [O](#). Christopher Booker questioned links between politicians and renewable energy [T](#). A report from Chatham House suggests that fracked shale gas could undermine investment in renewables [O](#). A report by the [Low Carbon Innovation Coordination Group](#) predicts that by 2050 offshore wind could deliver up to half of UK electricity generation [O](#) [O](#).

**Green economy.** The [Green Alliance](#) said the green economy was worth £122bn in 2011, employs nearly a million people and has been consistently growing at 4-5% since the financial crisis of 2008 [BG](#).

**Biomass.** Angus Walker examined the difficulties faced by Southampton council in holding a referendum on a proposed biomass plant [O](#). DEC is consulting on using wetlands as a source of biomass for energy generation [BG](#).

**Drop the Bag Habit.** CPRE, Keep Britain Tidy, the Marine Conservation Society and Surfers Against Sewage launched a campaign for a levy on single use carrier bags in England [CPRE](#) [BBC](#) [BBC](#). The Carrier Bag Consortium attacked the campaign's "unfounded" environmental claims [O](#), an issue that was debated in the Guardian [g](#) [g](#). A survey by *Which?* suggested that 56% of consumers would be happy to pay 5p for a single use bag [ftl](#).

**Recycling.** [Friends of the Earth](#) warned that the UK is facing a natural resources crisis that will drive up costs and "pile pressure on already fragile and depleted ecosystems" unless there is more recycling [BG](#). A reduction in household waste and an increase in recycling have led to a decline in waste to landfill in England of 11% [O](#) [O](#). The government seems reluctant to introduce landfill bans, for example for food and wood [O](#).

**Incineration.** The difficult planning process for the controversial King's Lynn incinerator continues. Eric Pickles has called in the application and will hold a public inquiry due to "substantial regional and national controversy" [BBC](#) [BBC](#) [O](#) [L](#).

**Water.** Richard Aylard, sustainability director for Thames Water, said that even after all the recent rain the natural storage basins deep below ground remain in the red in four out of the seven river areas [O](#). Wessex Water has appointed Dame Fiona Reynolds as the chairman of its sustainability panel [O](#).

CPRE South East eBulletin is written and edited by Andy Boddington. To receive a regular copy or to alert us to news, please email [cprenews@gmail.com](mailto:cprenews@gmail.com).