

Campaign to Protect Rural England

South East Region eBulletin: News for May 2010

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The Coalition Government

1. The New Policies & Acts

Planning. Reform of the planning system will largely be based on the earlier Conservative Party green paper, *Open Source Planning*, according to the new government's coalition agreement: *The Coalition: our Programme for Government* (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpTPJ>). The agreement says the government will create a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the planning system, at the same time promising longer term radical reform of the planning system to give neighbourhoods far more ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live. It vows to maintain the Green Belt, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental protections, and create a new designation to protect green areas of particular importance to local communities.

National Planning. The *Decentralisation and Localism Bill* will replace the Infrastructure Planning Commission with a Major Infrastructure Unit within the Department for Communities and Local Government, which will work alongside the Planning Inspectorate (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpHpV>). The recently established process of application to the IPC will apparently survive unchanged but the decision-maker will now be a Secretary of State, not commissioners. The coalition agreement says that a "simple and consolidated national planning framework that covers all forms of development and sets out national economic, social and environmental priorities will be created". A National Planning Statement will replace National Policy Statements, and will be ratified by parliament next year.

Regional Planning. The *Decentralisation and Localism Bill* will abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils. Local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) will be new joint local authority-business bodies that will promote local economic development and replace regional development agencies (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpHpV>). However, LEPs "may take the form of the existing RDAs in areas where they are popular" according to the coalition agreement. The RTPI has warned that the abolition of regional planning risks damaging the economy (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpOkp>; New Start: <http://is.gd/cpQkd>). The coalition agreement promises that the Government Office for London will be abolished, and the case for getting rid of the other Government Offices will be considered.

Local Planning. The *Decentralisation and Localism Bill* gives residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue. It will also give communities "new powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services" (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpHpV>). The Chartered Institute of Housing and National Housing Federation both said they backed the localism agenda, but warned that shifting responsibility for development to local authorities must not result in fewer homes (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/cpJoi>).

Housing. The *Decentralisation and Localism Bill* will "create new trusts that would make it simpler for communities to provide homes for local people" and will initiate a review of the way that housing revenues are managed (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpHpV>). The coalition agreement says the government will explore a range of measures to bring empty homes into use and promote 'Home on the Farm' schemes that encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing. Housing sector champions said they were disappointed with the failure to address improving energy efficiency in existing stock and the lack of commitment to zero carbon standards for new homes (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/cpLUx0>).

Landscapes and Environment. The coalition agreement promises to protect wildlife and promote green spaces and wildlife corridors to halt the loss of habitats and restore biodiversity. Governance arrangements for National Parks will be reviewed to increase local accountability.

Climate Change and the Green Economy. The Queen said "Global climate change is one of the biggest challenges the world faces. It is the greatest threat to our common future. This government is committed to tackling climate change both at home and abroad... The Prime Minister has said he wants this Government to be the greenest ever – both in terms of action at home and internationally" (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpI5o>). The coalition agreement promises to "decarbonise the economy and support the creation of new green jobs and technologies". Friends of the Earth said: "Most significantly [absent] is the failure to commit the UK to tougher climate targets - we must slash emissions by at least 42% by 2020 to play our fair share in tackling global warming" (<http://is.gd/cpP56>).

Energy. The *Energy Security and Green Economy Bill* promises to "transform the provision of energy efficiency in the UK by enabling a pay as you save approach for homes and local businesses". It may also regulate pollution from coal plants, deliver a smart grid and establish the green investment bank backed by both coalition parties at the election (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpH64>). Friends of the Earth said: "It is essential that the new legislation delivers on the coalition's election promises, such as a green investment bank and pollution standards for power stations - saying they 'may' be included in the Energy Bill is just not good enough" (<http://is.gd/cpJKe>). The coalition agreement also promises to: seek to increase the target for energy from renewable sources; continue public sector investment in carbon capture and storage technology for four coal-fired power stations; encourage community-owned renewable energy schemes; and to deliver an offshore electricity grid to support the development of offshore wind power (NEF: <http://is.gd/cqQez>).

Transport. The coalition agreement confirms government support for Crossrail, a national high speed rail network including HS2, and the cancellation of new runways at Heathrow, Stansted and Gatwick. The coalition will make the transport sector greener and more sustainable, with tougher emission standards and greater support for sustainable travel initiatives, including the promotion of cycling and walking. It also promises to "reform the way decisions are made on which transport projects to prioritise, so that the benefits of low carbon proposals are fully recognised".

Aviation. The *Aviation Economic Regulation Bill* aims to "develop a new vision for a competitive aviation industry, supporting UK economic growth and designed within the constraint of the existing runway infrastructure". It will promote competition and perhaps break up BAA's dominance (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpGkK>). Campaigners celebrated as the government announced that the controversial third runway at Heathrow airport has been abandoned and that expansion will not proceed at Gatwick and Stansted. In response, BAA has withdrawn its planning application for Stansted and has stopped work on its bid to expand Heathrow (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpQMn>). John Stewart, chair of campaign group HACAN, said: "It is good news for London... A long campaign has ended in victory." (Independent: <http://is.gd/coXh3>). Plane Stupid's Joss Garman said: "What began with a strong campaign by local people in west London whose communities were under threat from demolition and staggering levels of noise and air pollution, turned into a climate movement opposing airport expansion, and ultimately led to victory" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqHfJ>). It was "the fight of the decade", the Woodland Trust said after BAA's decision to halt expansion at Stansted (<http://is.gd/cpGvY>). Plane Stupid said: "The big beast is dead. While Heathrow and Stansted show we can win, we haven't won yet. The fight now is going to be messier and more regional" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqHnE>).

Rail. The Queen said: “The Government’s vision is for a truly national high speed rail network as part of its programme of measures for creating a low carbon economy, although it recognises that this would need to be achieved in phases. Such a network would include links to Heathrow and potentially other airports to provide an alternative to short-haul aviation.” The government is backing HS2 and said “We will also actively study the options for a link between the new high speed line and the existing High Speed One line” (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpIcx>).

Rural services. The Royal Mail will be part privatised under the *Postal Services Bill* but Post Office Limited which runs post offices will remain in public ownership in recognition of “the important social and economic role played by post offices in communities throughout the UK” (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpGO6>). Launching his Big Society concept, David Cameron said: “We will be passing a law to have a community right to buy — so if communities want to come together to save the last pub, the last post office or to take over that bit of derelict land or derelict building and enable social action that way” (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpHYg>). The government is to explore the potential for infrastructure sharing to speed the rollout of high speed broadband, including to rural communities (No 10: <http://is.gd/cpIkY>).

Quangos. The *Public Bodies Reforms Bill* will abolish and merge quangos, or transfer their functions to central government.

CPRE reaction. CPRE chief executive Shaun Spiers said: “It is encouraging that the coalition government has shown such a strong commitment to the environment. This does not just mean tackling climate change, important though that is. We also want to see effective action to safeguard the nation’s countryside and other green space; to deliver the right kind of housing in the right places; and to improve the quality of our countryside, both our iconic landscapes and the ‘ordinary’ countryside that means so much to people.” (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpPgc>). CPRE’s Ben Stafford said: “We are in for massive and far-reaching changes to how development is carried out... Ministers must remember that a successful planning system is about more than just delivering economic development. Planning is also one of the best ways to bring about genuinely sustainable development that involves local people and protects and enhances the environment”.

2. The New Ministers

Communities and Local Government (<http://is.gd/cpVYw>).

- ◆ Secretary of State: Eric Pickles (Con, Brentwood and Ongar).
- ◆ Minister for Decentralisation: Greg Clark (Con, Tunbridge Wells): responsible for decentralisation, planning policy and big society (the coalition term for people taking greater responsibility for their communities).
- ◆ Minister for Housing and Local Government: Grant Shapps (Con, Welwyn Hatfield). Housing, local government, regeneration, climate change and sustainable development. The Housing Minister will no longer attend cabinet.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Andrew Stunell (Lib Dem, Hazel Grove). Big society, housing and regeneration, community cohesion, race equality, and building regulations.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Bob Neill (Con, Bromley and Chislehurst). Fire and resilience, the Thames Gateway and Olympics, local government and planning.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State: Baroness Hanham (Con). Productivity, procurement and value for money, transparency and data, climate change and sustainable development, and Ordnance Survey.

Department for Food and Rural Affairs (<http://is.gd/cpXnJ>).

- ◆ Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman (Con, Meriden).
- ◆ Minister of State for Agriculture and Food. Jim Paice (Con, Cambridgeshire South East).

- ◆ Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries. Richard Benyon (Con, Newbury). Responsibilities include water and rural affairs.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lord Henley (Con). Responsibilities include waste, pollution and science.

Farmers generally welcomed the appointment of Caroline Spelman to head Defra. She has a background in farming, particularly in EU policy (Daelnet: <http://is.gd/cpKzg>).

Department for Energy and Climate Change (<http://is.gd/cpQxN>)

- ◆ Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Chris Huhne (Lib Dem, Eastleigh).
- ◆ Minister of State for Climate Change, Greg Barker (Con, Bexhill and Battle).
- ◆ Minister of State for Energy, Charles Hendry (Con, Wealden).
- ◆ Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Lord Marland of Odstock (Con).

Department for Transport (<http://is.gd/cqaVq>)

- ◆ Secretary of State, Philip Hammond (Con, Runnymede and Weybridge)
- ◆ Minister of State for Transport, Theresa Villiers (Con, Chipping Barnet). Rail, London, Crossrail, Olympics, Europe, Aviation.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Norman Baker (Lib Dem, Lewes). Public transport, walking and cycling.
- ◆ Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Mike Penning MP (Con, Hemel Hempstead). Roads, freight and maritime minister.

Department for Business and Skills (<http://is.gd/cqcQ1>)

The team includes:

- ◆ Secretary of State, Vince Cable (Lib Dem, Twickenham)
- ◆ Minister of State for Business and Enterprise, Mark Prisk (Con, Hertford and Stortford). Responsibilities include competitiveness and economic growth, and regional and local economic development

3. The New Budgets

The coalition is planning immediate and swingeing cuts across the government. Planning, housing and the environment are not to be spared:

- ◆ **Communities and Local Government:** £780 million cut. This includes “£150m from savings in the last Government’s housing pledge, while seeking to protect social housing”. This protection is funding for 4,500 social rented homes to start this year (NHF: <http://is.gd/cnk4N>). The Homes and Communities Agency will implement cuts of £230m, including £100m from the National Affordable Housing Programme (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpOh8>; Times: <http://is.gd/cqG5D>). Local authority grants will also be cut. A review of recent commitments to affordable housing has been ordered by the Treasury (Inside Housing: <http://is.gd/cqmGk>).
- ◆ **Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs:** £162 million cut, 5.5% of its 2010/11 budget. Defra said it would have to slash capital programmes across the board and that it could take weeks to finalise details. Cuts would will flood defence funding, surveillance of some diseases, and IT programmes for farmers. Many Defra funded bodies like British Waterways are expected to be hit hard (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqkaY>).
- ◆ **Department for Energy and Climate Change:** £85 million cut, 2.5% of its budget. A number of energy efficiency and microgeneration schemes face cuts or the axe (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqkaY>).
- ◆ **Department for Transport:** £683 million cut. Grants to local authorities will be cut by £309m. Network Rail will have to save £100m and £108m could be cut from Transport for London’s grant.
- ◆ **Business Innovation and Skills:** £836 million cut. Includes £270m from “ending lower value” Regional Development Agency spending (New Start: <http://is.gd/cpQit>).

Defra and DECC said they would have to make cuts to programme budgets to meet their share of savings. Conservation and green building schemes may be severely hit by a significant withdrawal of funding for regional development agencies which subsidise many agricultural, environment and renewable energy schemes. CPRE's Ben Stafford said: "The pledge to cut £600m from quangos looks politically attractive [but] a number perform important functions in the fields of planning and natural environment protection... Swinging the axe too vigorously now could mean greater costs later" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpJGo>). Graham Biggs, chief executive of the Rural Services Network told David Cameron that the cuts in government spending threaten to hit rural areas worst (RSN: <http://is.gd/cqg49>).

Planning & Environment News

4. Planning

Supermarkets. Tesco is planning a major expansion of its store building and the development of four "mini-villages" in the South-East of England. The chain plans a £1.6 billion 12-month store-building programme that would see a 258 new stores across the UK - a 29% increase in the number of stores opened last year and a 41% rise in the amount of selling space. Sir John Sorrell, the outgoing chair of CABI questioned the quality of the proposed developments. "Our concern is not only the quality of this kind of development - which is generally very poor - but the way in which architecture and places are created in the image of the retailer." Four mixed-use sites planned for Bromley-by-Bow, Dartford, Streatham and Woolwich would see hundreds of affordable homes built near a Tesco store and, in some cases, schools, parks, hotels and libraries (Planning: <http://is.gd/bWzAG>; Guardian: <http://is.gd/bWzCH>). CABI has published a review of supermarket design, criticising in particular the scale of the developments and the quality of housing provision (<http://is.gd/coovG>).

Around the South East. Retrospective planning permission has been granted for a riding school in the High Weald AONB near 'Pooh sticks bridge'. GOSE may call it in (Grough: <http://is.gd/cqQpK>). Winchester's new council leader wants to shelve controversial plans to build a 'knowledge park' at Bushfield Camp (Hampshire Chronicle: <http://is.gd/cpJ4x>).

5. Housing

Eco-towns. A former town planner for Vale of the White Horse is claiming the consultation process for the Bicester eco-town was flawed (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/cqRsz>). Whitehill Bordon eco-town may be an early candidate for a referendum (BBC: <http://is.gd/cqQFH>).

Empty housing. Some 84,000 properties are sitting empty across the South East as the number of people on housing waiting lists rises above 200,000. Kent's No Use Empty scheme is trying to bring more back into use (Kent News: <http://is.gd/cpLxe>).

Design. CABI called for a new design standard for all housing arguing: "the design quality of new housing underpins the success or failure of a community" (<http://is.gd/cpJVK>).

6. Landscapes, Tranquillity and Environment

Fly Tipping. A new project to assess the scale of fly-tipping has been launched by CPRE Hampshire. The scheme, in conjunction with the NFU and CLA, will use volunteer reporters ("Fly-spotters") and will test out different ways of reporting fly-tipping. It will look at the problem on farmland as well as on public land and bring together the work of the District Council and Environment Agency to advise farmers and land managers how to cope with the problem (24dash: <http://is.gd/cqPDT>; East Hants DC: <http://is.gd/cqPIp>).

Tranquillity. The Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise (HACAN) has called for an annual day of silence to commemorate the eruption of the Eyjafjallajökull volcano (EP: <http://is.gd/bUNBU>). The M40 Chilterns Environment Group (M40CEG) presented its proposals for reducing noise from the M40 motorway to the Department for Transport (EP: <http://is.gd/c62q8>).

Green Belt. Plans for an urban extension into the green belt south of Oxford are set to be scrapped along with the South East Plan. CPRE Oxfordshire campaign manager Helena Whall said: "This is the end of building in the Green Belt in the south of the city but may well open a can of worms north of Oxford as far as we're concerned" (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/cqT6o>). The Core Strategy for Reigate and Banstead has been withdrawn following concerns over intrusion into the green belt (Get Surrey: <http://is.gd/cqS2c>). Councillors in Runnymede are hoping the scrapping of the South East Plan will halt plans for 2,500 new homes in the green belt at Longcross (Get Surrey: <http://is.gd/cpLlj>; Staines News: <http://is.gd/cpLqs>). Residents have petitioned Elmbridge Borough Council against building an underground hotel in the green belt (Get Reading: <http://is.gd/cpLKd>). CPRE Cambridgeshire has called for Cambridge Airport to be restored to the green belt after plans for 12,000 houses on the site fell through (Cambridge News: <http://is.gd/cpY4J>). CPRE is calling for a green belt to be established to control the expansion of Peterborough, in response to plans to build 25,000 more homes around the city (Evening Telegraph: <http://is.gd/cpYda>). Planners have approved expansion of Bristol Airport. Its now down to the new Secretary of State Eric Pickles to decide whether the development in the green belt can go ahead (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpQZN>).

Benefits of green space. Opening access to often forgotten transport paths like disused railway lines and historic canal routes would restart an urban renaissance, think tank Demos said in a report that called for a "participative landscape" (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpOp6>; Demos: <http://is.gd/cpOBg>). A study by the University of Essex has shown that a small 'dose' of just five minutes of nature every day will benefit people's mood, self-esteem and mental health (Planning: <http://is.gd/cqRIg>; University of Essex: Report: <http://is.gd/cqRPE>).

Biodiversity. The RSPB is planning is to replace nature reserves with "multifunctional green spaces" on old landfill sites, alongside motorways and next to the local sewage works as part of its *Futurescapes Programme*. The tidal Thames region is one of the major schemes currently under way (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/cpLFu0>; Planning: <http://is.gd/cqRzu>). 99% of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest directly managed by the Forestry Commission are in top target condition (<http://is.gd/cpM7A0>). Is the crisis honey bees over as more survive winter? (Independent: <http://is.gd/cpRxs>). The Government "sneaked out" a report showing that Britain is failing to halt the decline of many of its highest-priority wildlife species and habitats, from the red squirrel, the juniper and the common skate to chalk rivers and coastal salt marshes, campaign groups say (Independent: <http://is.gd/cpTjX>). Walkers and cyclists have been asked to disinfect their boots and tyres after visiting ancient woodland to prevent the spread of Acute Oak Decline (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/cqHAL>). Jon Capes who manages Hatherden House Farm near Andover, Hampshire has been named the South East's most wildlife friendly farmer (RSPB: <http://is.gd/cqHLb>).

UK Landscape Award. Natural England and other bodies have launched a competition to find the UK's best landscape. "The landscape might be newly-created, it could be the improvement or renewal of an existing landscape or perhaps it has brought new life or community involvement to an existing place. All types of landscape - urban, rural, peri-urban (urban edge), suburban, coastal, agricultural, industrial, designed, natural, cultural, appealing to or designed for children - might be eligible to enter" (<http://is.gd/cqonF>).

Around the South East. The white cliffs of Dover are to receive a £1.62 million landscape grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (Planning: <http://is.gd/cnkio>). A conservation project to help save the plant juniper from extinction has been launched near Bognor Regis (BR Observer: <http://is.gd/cpKFG>). Badgers in Hampshire are spurring artificial sets built to relocate them from the Gosport Fareham busway (The News: <http://is.gd/cpMeu>).

7. Transport

High Speed Two. George Monbiot complained the carbon case for HS2 doesn't stack up (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpKan>). CPRE's Ralph Smythe responded: "A case for a new high-speed railway can only be justified as part of a much wider strategy of shifting people on to rail from roads and the air, and to use the planning system more to help people travel less... Where sustainable travel has been taken seriously, the step change in rail use has been spectacular" (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpK6c>). Colin White, planning officer of the Chilterns AONB Conservation Board has labelled CPRE as 'naive' for its positive stance on the proposals. He said: "They are taking the stance that it would lead to regeneration in other areas but they're not about that, they are about protecting rural England. They have been bought off by the Government's stance of trying to minimise the impact on the Chilterns by going through tunnels and cuttings." CPRE responded: "The CPRE has never been a Nimbyish, reactionary organisation, you have to look at all of the planning as a collective, as what's best for the countryside" (Bucks Herald: <http://is.gd/cqShK>). Aylesbury MP David Lidington has asked for a meeting with new Transport Minister Philip Hammond to express concerns over the proposals (Bucks Herald: <http://is.gd/cpIZk>). Shirley Judges of the Chilterns AONB Conservation Board said the project was "a vanity project" which British politicians only wanted because other European countries have high speed trains (Local London: <http://is.gd/cqS7M>).

Aviation. A High Court judge said that a freight facility at Carlisle Lake District Airport and a full environmental impact assessment was required for future airport expansion because it was "a foot in the door" (Planning: <http://is.gd/cqoK9>).

Roads. CPRE Swindon has lost a battle against M4 junction changes in the Appeal Court (Swindon Advertiser: <http://is.gd/cpRT2>).

Cycling. Boris Johnson has launched a plan for a cycling revolution in London including cycling superhighways (Planning: <http://is.gd/cpLOD>; Independent: <http://is.gd/cpQPC>).

8. Energy, Waste and Water

Climate Change & the Carbon Economy. The combined global land and ocean surface temperature was the warmest on record for both April and for the period from January to April (NOAA: <http://is.gd/ceXyf>; Edie: <http://is.gd/cpPkI>). David Cameron pledged to make his coalition the "greenest government ever" and committed central departments to a 10% cut in emissions over the next 12 months (EE: <http://is.gd/cpY0B>). Popular concern about climate change has declined significantly, following this year's harsh winter and rows over statistics on global warming. Only 62% of Britons interested are in subject, down from 80% in 2006 and support for nuclear power is growing (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqhx9>). A Met Office study says Britain is heading for water shortages and crop failures as extreme droughts like that of 1976 become more frequent (Independent: <http://is.gd/cqGrv>).

Grid. National Grid yesterday announced a £22 billion investment plan over five years to transform the grid into one fit for a new decarbonised energy future (EE: <http://is.gd/cpRsr>).

Renewables. Ecotricity proposes to build nine 79-metre turbines at in Upper Arncott, near the M40, Oxfordshire (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/cqQbw>). Fields in Gloucestershire's rolling countryside may soon be covered by thousands of solar panels. CPRE said that it would be better to place banks of solar panels on factory and warehouse roofs and above car parks. It said that some solar farms in the countryside could be acceptable, depending on the quality of the landscape (Times: <http://is.gd/coSxs>). Consultation has begun for a 15-acre solar energy farm on a green-field site in Cornwall, planned to be the first of several in the area taking advantage of the current subsidy (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpVhM>). A new study suggests that offshore green energy could make UK net exporter of power by 2050 (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpM2i>; Monbiot: <http://is.gd/cpLYx>). The Crown Estate announced plans for an additional 2GW of offshore wind capacity (NEF: <http://is.gd/cqQiA>).

Nuclear. EDF Energy said that it has received sufficient reassurances from the energy and climate change secretary, Chris Huhne, to continue planning for a new generation of nuclear plants in Britain (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqGGp>).

Water. Hosepipe bans could become more frequent if South East Water presses ahead with a proposed new strategy for the region, Protect Kent said. Deputy director Sean Furey said: "The biggest thing is that the water companies really haven't worked together that well. We still have five serving the county and there's not much evidence of joined-up thinking between them" (Kent News: <http://is.gd/cpRHI>).

9. Rural Affairs, Farming and Food

Farming. A report commissioned by Defra and Natural England says that farmers who make the commitment to land management schemes aimed at protecting biodiversity and the natural environment also provide additional income, employment and other social benefits for their local communities, thus strengthening rural communities and sustaining local jobs (Farming UK: <http://is.gd/cpMk4>). New Defra farm minister Jim Paice has confirmed badgers will be culled to combat bovine tuberculosis in cattle (FWI: <http://is.gd/cpS3f>).

Local food. Community food enterprises can play a role in helping to tackle the challenge of climate change through empowering local people and communities to take action. Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of the Plunkett Foundation said: "Community food enterprises help people to take ownership of their food and where it comes from. This feeling of ownership has helped many to take on the challenge of climate change through a variety of community-led initiatives and enterprises" (Plunkett: <http://is.gd/cqSyk>). The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners claims that councils are using a loophole in century-old law to get out of their statutory duty to provide land for allotments (Telegraph: <http://is.gd/cqH94>).

Communications. The Commission for Rural Communities has published a toolkit to help local councils communicate effectively with their communities (RSN: <http://is.gd/cqgiX>).

10. Campaigning

People. Christine Drury has returned as Chairman of CPRE South East. Welcome back! Matthew Spencer is the new director of the Green Alliance (<http://is.gd/cqQxW>). A survey for the Commission for Rural Communities shows that Rural Advocate Stuart Burgess is a great asset but that the Commission could engage with its stakeholders more effectively (RSN: <http://is.gd/coX4y>).

Walking for Green Spaces. CPRE Oxfordshire has organised a sponsored walk which follows a nine-mile route through Oxford's green spaces and will raise money for several city conservation groups. The walk also marks the launch of a new CPRE project to map every green space in the city (Oxford Mail: <http://is.gd/cqSZh>). CPRE was among groups on a biodiversity walk to protest against Manchester Airport's plans to expand onto nearby green belt land (Knutsford Guardian: <http://is.gd/cpuKp>).

Trumped. Opponents of Donald Trump's proposed golf resort in Scotland claim they have thwarted his plans through the mass purchase of land (Guardian: <http://is.gd/cqHqN>).

CPRE South East eBulletin

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