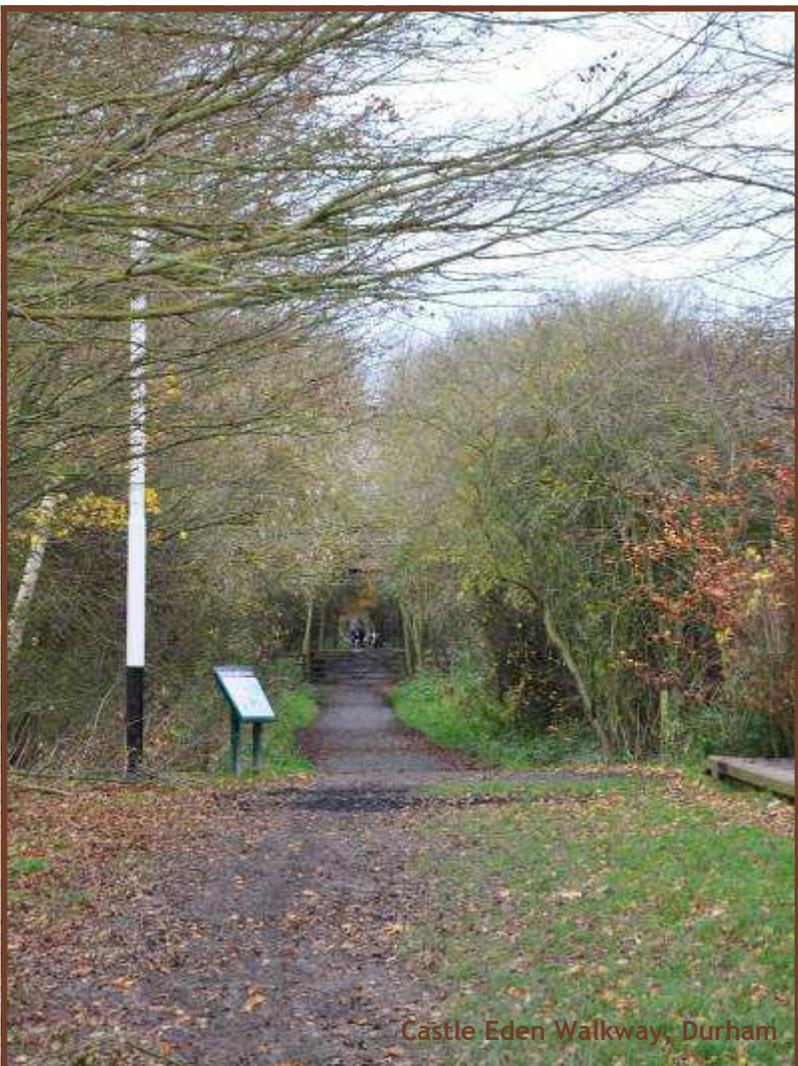




Campaign to Protect Rural England

North East NEwsletter
(formerly Overview)

Autumn 2012



Castle Eden Walkway, Durham

Your Home, Your Voice, Your England



Cheswick Beach, Northumberland



CPRE fights for a better future for the English countryside.

We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving, countryside for everyone to value and enjoy.

Campaign to Protect Rural England - the countryside campaigners

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covering
 Northumberland
 Newcastle
 North Tyneside

Durham Branch

Covering
 Gateshead
 South Tyneside
 Co Durham
 Darlington
 Stockton
 Hartlepool
 Middlesbrough

CPRE Meetings

9th Oct	NE Region
9th Oct	Northumberland
16th Oct	Darlington
20th Nov	Darlington
3rd Dec	Durham
18th Dec	Darlington
15th Jan	Darlington
4th Feb	Durham

Please confirm meeting details before travelling

Campaign to Protect Rural England

CPRE fights for a better future for England's unique, essential and precious countryside. From giving parish councils expert advice on planning issues to influencing national and European policies, we work to protect and enhance the countryside.

We believe a beautiful, thriving countryside is important for everyone, no matter where they live. Nationally, we don't own land or represent any special interests. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. We'll be stronger by being inclusive - CPRE is for everyone. This differentiates us from organisations like the National Trust and the Countryside Alliance.

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Membership

Enclosed with this *Newsletter* is a leaflet with a membership form. If you are not a member please give thought to joining and supporting CPRE's work, both local and national. If already a member please pass it on to someone you consider would be interested.

Disclaimer: The views expressed within this Newsletter are those of the authors.

Photo credits: Front and back cover, p10, Richard Cowen; p12 CPRE Northumberland

Items for the next issue should be with the Editor by 1st December 2012

Chair's Desk

NPPF and Local Plans

Since my last Report, I think it is true to say that issues regarding the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) are moving on to the next stage, ie, how will it be implemented. Certainly I have relied on it a few times in making arguments in respect of planning applications, what I do not know yet is how these will be accepted by the decision makers. But I think we have to keep pressing to make our case where the NPPF does, or can be interpreted to, support ideas close to our hearts.

We are also now seeing the next stage looming with Local Plans. Here again the NPPF is of vital importance. One issue of fundamental importance to us is Green Belt land. The approach of various councils to this is worrying, not to say alarming. Durham has proposed various deletions that may be small in total, but the Green Belt around Durham itself was drawn very tightly so any loss may be of concern. The Green Belt around Gateshead and Newcastle may be much broader, but so are the proposed deletions. Perhaps in west Gateshead there is some reason for this to try to ensure the viability of existing small former mining villages, but proposals around Newcastle cause great concern. Add to this that, sneaked into the small print almost, is the proposal for a major road from the A69 to the A1 and it only adds to the concerns. This is not consultation, this is development by stealth and we are currently making representations along these lines.

Durham too has proposals for

major roads around the west and north of the City that would encroach in the Green Belt. At least they are "up front" about this and everyone is aware of it. However, the need for these roads is very much questioned and, if they are constructed, there is the great possibility that developers would then consider the roads to be the acceptable development boundary. How many times has that sort of thing happened in the past? But from a personal point of view, I also accept that the A690 through the city centre is a problem. The issue of course is, how much of it is through traffic?

In Northumberland, the Core Strategy is at an early stage, but there are also proposals for some deletions of Green Belt land for housing and employment which we have said must be supported by stronger evidence than currently seen. We are strongly supporting proposals for new Green Belt designation around Morpeth.

In Cleveland of course there is no Green Belt. This in itself is a major ground for concern. Middlesbrough in particular is making provision to develop greenfield land rather than brownfield sites. I believe we need to challenge this strenuously.

The NPPF says Green Belt land should be protected. We must strive to use these provisions to protect such land wherever we possibly can. It is worrying that the Government is again talking of major changes to the planning system that could well attack the Green Belt, a thing the Conservative Party swore to protect.

There is however one provision of the NPPF that may have hidden consequences. It contains many references to "viability". For example, paragraph 47 requires planning authorities to identify specific **deliverable** housing sites for the next 5 years plus 5%, or, if they have fallen short, 20%. "Deliverable" is defined so that it includes that the site is "viable". If a site has to be "viable", does this mean greenfield will always trump brownfield? I sincerely hope this is not the case, especially if grants can be obtained in respect of brownfield sites. However, we have to be able to address this point and I hope we can produce arguments to satisfy the NPPF requirements.

This is far from the only reference to viability on the NPPF. It may not be a concept we have been used to in the past. However, now viability of sites or developments is something we will have to get used to and consider how to address the issue.

Local Nature Partnerships

As members may be aware, it is proposed to establish Local Nature Partnerships (LNP's) throughout the country. Five have been proposed in our Region: the Upland Chain LNP which stretches from the Scottish border to Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in Yorkshire; the Land of the Three

Rivers LNP to cover the Durham lowlands and Tyne and Wear south of the Tyne; the Tees Valley LNP; and the Northumberland Lowlands LNP. They have all now been approved. The Three Rivers LNP stretches 12 miles out to sea. Tees Valley LNP is interested in coastal matters but I am told does not have an offshore boundary.

Many of the principles of the LNPs are close to our hearts. Hopefully, we will have some influence on how they make their decisions and they in turn will play an important role in helping to protect our landscape, seascape and biodiversity.

Onshore wind

Nationally, CPRE has now produced a new Policy Guidance Note for onshore wind farms which can be found on its web site. I was part of the Task and Finish Group and I hope that this document does provide us with help in challenging inappropriate wind farm sites. It may not contain everything I would like, but I believe it contains many useful provisions we can refer to when making representations. At present, there is no similar document relating to offshore wind farms although these can also have significant impacts, albeit no doubt in different ways.

Housing

A different CPRE Task and Finish Group is currently working on a new Policy



We are grateful to NFU Mutual for generously supporting this newsletter

Chair's Desk cont.

Guidance Note on housing matters and I will aim to report on its deliberations in the future.

Laura Marsh

Food Web Co-ordinator

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the death of Lara Marsh who coordinated the Food Web mapping projects in Darlington and Hexham. Lara inspired teams of local volunteers to support the survey work and wrote the two reports. Lara was a committed, passionate campaigner who enthusiastically embraced the project especially the opportunity to interview equally passionate local producers. So much less would have been achieved without her. Lara was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2011 and died in August 2012.

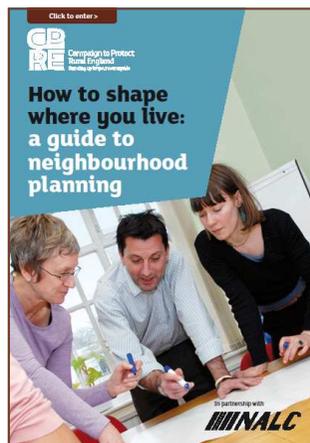
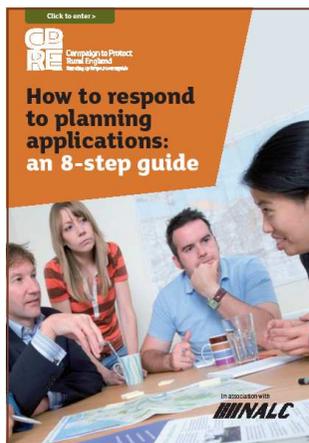
Redcar and Cleveland

On a different note, some may have heard that CPRE Redcar and Cleveland District wishes to join the CPRE Yorkshire Region. While it is disappointing to lose a part of our current area, Redcar was of course always part of Yorkshire before local government re-organisation in 1974. I am sorry at the change but well understand their reasons for wanting to change and wish them well in the future.

NFU Mutual

Finally, I would like to thank NFU Mutual who have come forward to sponsor this *Newsletter* which is much appreciated. Thank you.
Richard Cowen, Regional Chair

Free booklets on planning



Downloadable at: www.planninghelp.org.uk/resources

Green Belt - Is the Government sticking to its promises?

In both the 2010 Coalition Agreement and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published this March, the Government stated clearly that it attaches great importance to the Green Belt and will seek to maintain its existing high levels of protection. But recent events have led to serious questions as to whether a damaging U-turn is on the way that would dramatically change the landscape of England.

The vast majority of Green Belt is open countryside, much of it still rural in character despite being close to major cities such as Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham and London.

Eric Pickles, the Communities and Local Government Secretary, has gone some way to fulfilling his commitment to abolish the regional policies that, in his words, 'worst of all threatened the destruction of the Green Belt'. Regional policies proposing to develop Green Belt land in south Bristol and Hertfordshire have not been taken forward.

Evidence gathered by CPRE shows that a new series of threats to Green Belts are emerging. Local councils across England propose claiming 'exceptional circumstances' to accommodate new development. Over the next 20 years, these developments could lead to 80,000 new houses plus over 1,000 hectares of warehousing - or an area of Green Belt land the size of Slough being built on. Many proposals are in northern regions with plenty of brownfield land available for development close by. Durham is a particularly worrying example which we

talk more about in this newsletter, but a similar picture is emerging in places such as Chester, Dewsbury, and Southport, as well as in other places more typically under pressure such as Bath, Leighton Buzzard and Reigate.

We need more new housing. But there is plenty of brownfield land available - enough for 1.5 million new homes at the last count in 2009. And nearly twice this amount of brownfield land is available in addition for new commercial and industrial development. The Green Belt, apart from all its other benefits, does much to ensure we use these sites first. Very small areas (no more than 7-8% of the national total area) of the Green Belt are in fact 'brownfield sites', usually current or former hospitals, factories and airfields. Many are set in open space or parkland. Often the buildings can be and have been sensitively redeveloped without losing the overall feel of open countryside. The NPPF has made it substantially easier for these sites to be redeveloped in future. Contrary to what Durham County Council proposes, it should not be necessary to release large areas of Green Belt countryside for development.

We have highlighted our concerns in a national media campaign since September, and are currently petitioning Eric Pickles to hold him to his promises, 1,700 people have already written to the Minister as a result. For more on CPRE's campaign for the Green Belt, visit www.cpre.org.uk.
Paul Miner MA MRTPI FRGS, Senior Planning Campaigner, CPRE

County Durham Plan – *Have your say*

Consultation until 2nd November 2012

Durham County Council launched *The County Durham Plan: preferred options* document, plus a number of supporting documents, at an event on 10th September 2012. This was attended by planning officers who presented the document which will set the scene for planning in County Durham in the future. Stuart Timiss, Head of Planning, stressed the County's intention to consult fully on the *Plan*.

Its size precluded detailed discussion, but there was a brief outline particularly on the economic and housing issues. Perhaps lead among the economic issue was that Durham City should be the driving centre for economic growth (which would then have housing implications), but other towns needed growth as well.

The economy and housing are certainly controversial issues, particularly intrusions into the Green Belt around Durham City, including two relief roads. Housing and economic sites were identified in the *Plan* with Aykley Heads being identified as a Strategic Economic Site. It was also stressed that prime economic sites were likely to be along the A1 and A19 corridors.

Attendees were divided into various groups to consider these aspects of the *Plan* and in the group which I was part of there was discussion on:

- ensuring economic sites had proper infrastructure installed;

- the suitability of Aykley Heads (generally felt that this is the case but I raised issues regarding access);
- the situation concerning the Durham Green and Rail Freight sites at Bowburn/Tursdale (including a relief road for Bowburn);
- the potential Hitachi may bring to the area. (It appears the proposed film studio at Seaham is far more ephemeral so no guarantee re economic benefits can be guaranteed here);
- objections to the proposed relief roads and intrusions into the Green Belt (and the possible need for a Plan B);
- making better use for tourism of our diverse landscape including Coast, Dales and World Heritage Site at the Cathedral;
- possible double counting for housing numbers (eg are Newcastle and Gateshead relying on people staying in their authorities and Durham relying on them moving to Durham);
- ensuring sufficient affordable housing is provided (including applications for lower percentages than specified and recent government announcements);
- the siting of executive housing - should there be further sites to the proposed one at Lambton?

- green infrastructure to link proposed housing to town centre facilities (eg a proposed housing site at Newton Aycliffe is on the opposite side of the A167 from the town's facilities)

Clearly, the *Plan* covers far more than just these issues. But these are important ones and there is no doubt that some of them are highly controversial. But now it is known what the proposals are and it is the time for the people of Durham to consider them and make their

comments known - Durham County Council is waiting to hear.

The Council has arranged for the *Plan* to be presented at a number of centres throughout the County during the consultation period and is proposing to release a CD to cover the *Plan* and the event's discussions.

In addition CPRE Durham would very much like to hear your views. If you have any thoughts and/or would like to be part of our deliberations e-mail cpre.durham@yahoo.co.uk
Richard Cowen

Durham County Council - Spatial Planning Team

Tel: 0300 026 0000

E-mail: spatialpolicy@durham.gov.uk

The *Plan* it is available in libraries and council offices and on Durham County Council's website.

Web page for the *Co Durham Plan* document:

http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/lp/lp_po?tab=files

and for the appendices and maps:

<http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/lp/lpa?tab=files>

and there is also:

<http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/>

which lists and links to an assortment of supporting documents, namely:

[County Durham Infrastructure Delivery Plan.](#)
[Community Infrastructure Levy & Preliminary Charging Schedule;](#)
[Lambton Estate Supplementary Planning Document;](#)
[North of the Arnison Centre and Newton Hall Supplementary Planning Document;](#)
[Aykley Heads Supplementary Planning Document;](#)
[Sniperley Park Supplementary Planning Document;](#)
[Sherburn Supplementary Planning Document.](#)

Durham County Council is running a number of events for the public and the web page for the events list is:

<http://durhamcc-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/lp/ev>

Durham Report

This year has been noticeable for the number of applications for single wind turbines. Some of these have been in very sensitive areas such as Baldersdale, a gem of a valley in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Altogether there have been three applications here, one has been approved that is at the eastern end of the valley, another refused (although an accompanying application for a solar array was approved) and one, for a small turbine by the Hury Reservoir, is yet to be determined. But there has been a rash of similar applications for turbines of all sizes throughout the County.

So far as major wind farm applications are concerned, the Windy Bank and Sheraton applications remain undetermined. A new application for 5

turbines has been made at Wingate Grange. An application has also been made to remove the condition relating to noise caused by excess amplitude modulation at Lamb's Hill, Stockton, which is of significant interest and is as yet undetermined.

There have also been a few applications recently for generating renewable energy from waste. The major scheme at Newton Aycliffe has of course been approved, as has the small scheme at Old Quarrington (which may now have lapsed but the applicants are considering a revised application for the production of gas rather than the generation of electricity). But similar applications have now been received by Durham County Council for sites at Trimdon and Hutton Magna.

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This sort of application may also raise issues for CPRE. It is likely that any future application will be for a small unit (up to 500kw). CPRE has two relevant policies. The first is its Waste Policy prepared in 2006 which

Co Durham Plan - other information

Monday 15th October 12
Bearpark Action Group meeting
Bearpark Methodist Church, 7.30 pm.

Wednesday 17th October
Co Durham Residents Association
AGM and conference on the plan, Brandon
Community Centre, 9.30 am-2.30 pm.

City of Durham Trust: www.durhamcity.org/

Petitions against removing Green Belt:

<http://democracy.durham.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=48&RPID=748800&HPID=748800>

Durham Green Belt Campaign: www.digitaldemocracy.org.uk/campaigns/3913

Abbreviations

ANOB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

LP Local Plan

CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England

MP Member of Parliament

LDF Local Development Framework

NPPF *National Planning Policy Framework*

LNP Local Nature Partnership



Baldersdale

Northumberland AGM

– Brinkburn Priory

For their Annual General Meeting (AGM) outing at the beginning of August this year, Northumberland Branch of CPRE chose to visit a venue resonant with the weight of English history. Brinkburn Priory on the banks of the River Coquet can trace its lineage back to around 1135 AD when it was founded as an Augustinian Monastery.

Over the years the Priory has suffered many vicissitudes including dissolution by Henry VIII in 1535 and falling into a state of collapse by 1700. However its fortunes revived in the 19th Century when the Cadogan family restored the church along the lines of the original medieval structure. A manor house incorporating parts of the original monastery was constructed adjacent to the church.

The building is now managed by English Heritage and is well worth seeing. On the day of the AGM the weather was warm and sunny and

made for a delightful and interesting visit.

On leaving the Priory the group moved on to the nearby Anglers Arms, another very attractive venue, for the AGM. In his Chairman's address, Phil Bell thanked members for their continued hard work, noted the many challenges facing CPRE in the coming year, and emphasised that CPRE must take greater visibility and accessibility to the populace of Northumberland.

Following the AGM an excellent meal was served by the staff of the Anglers Arms. An enjoyable evening ensued with much convivial discussion, and with members somewhat reluctant to depart at the end of a very pleasant occasion.

Thanks are due to our Treasurer Norman and Secretary Eileen for arranging this event.

*Les Ashworth
CPRE Northumberland*



Northumberland CPRE Members at Brinkburn Priory

Newcastle/Gateshead

– One core strategy

Readers who saw my earlier report on the "One Core Strategy" earlier this year will remember that an extended consultation period closed in January, by which time we had submitted a 13 page detailed commentary on the draft Strategy. At the end of June, the Cabinet of Newcastle City Council issued a response to the consultation that contained quite a lot to please us but raised a major new problem. The Cabinet also called a further consultation period, to end of 13th September. There appears to be no activity by Gateshead Council.

The new document contained many good things from our point of view. The housing numbers were considerably reduced, especially in Callerton Park, where the proposed number of houses was reduced from 6,500 to 3,000 and the development was to be based on the existing three villages instead of the entire Park being designated a new development area. The proposals for Salters' Lane, close to the Gosforth Wildlife Park, which had aroused fierce local opposition, were abandoned. However, substantial invasion of the Green Belt to build houses is still planned.

In the meantime I had identified numerous campaign groups that are involved in opposing various aspects of the Strategy, especially invasions of the Green Belt. I decided, with the support of CPRE North-East and CPRE Northumberland, that we should try and call a meeting of these groups

under CPRE auspices to see whether we could co-ordinate our future actions and exchange information among the various groups. The first meeting took place at the end of August under my chairmanship to discuss responses to the second consultation. At this meeting a major new problem emerged, thanks to detailed research by former MP Jim Cousins and others: that buried in the appendices to this document was a proposal to build a new road around the North-Western quadrant of the City, linking the A69 road to Hexham with the A1 Northern route towards Morpeth. This proposal aroused widespread opposition at the meeting and after. A series of further meetings have been called to review progress.

I drafted a response to the second consultation, which has been added to by Nic Best and Phil Bell in the light of the protest group meetings and was submitted in time for the end of the second consultation on 13th September. In the meantime, Richard Cowen and I have both written to the Council querying the proposed new road and questioning the propriety and legality of the consultation or perhaps non-consultation on this matter. So far we have received only a form letter in reply, which states that our views will be considered after the closure of the second consultation. Further developments are awaited with interest!

*Howard Elcock
Vice-Chairman, CPRE North-East*

Stockton, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool

All three local authorities are presently in the midst of preparing their new Local Development Framework Core Strategies. Stockton and Middlesbrough councils are working on a Local Development Framework (LDF) review with both their recently produced LDFs being declared invalid by the Government due to a shortfall in their 5 year deliverable housing supply. This has resulted in a number of public consultations to which CPRE has enthusiastically responded. Hartlepool Council is presently converting their earlier 2006 Local Plan to the new LDF Core Strategy format.

With the lack of a valid LDF all three councils have been inundated with large-scale housing development planning applications on greenfield sites, with developers attempting to take advantage of the present black hole in local policies, coupled with the pro-developer policies introduced by the Government in their National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It is unlikely effective local policies will be in place until after the Councils adopt the new LDFs in late 2013 or early 2014. Unfortunately, the local policies will also have to conform to the Government's pro-developer NPPF, requiring CPRE to continue fighting for the protection of our green fields against inappropriate development.

Stockton

The Yarm area of Stockton has had its share of bad news with the Morley Carr Farm application (350 houses) being approved by Stockton Council. However, a last minute action by the local MP, James Wharton, requested the application be referred to the National Planning Casework Unit for them to consider the basis for an MP call-in to

the Secretary of State. Other large-scale proposals and applications are in the pipeline - Allens West (845 houses), Ingleby Barwick (250 houses), Urray Nook (up to 570 houses), Kirklevington (735 houses) and Mount Leven Farm (350 houses plus 100 bed Care Home). All of these applications are proposed for greenfield sites.

Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough had a number of large-scale applications "minded to approve" by the planning committee but were kept on hold pending a decision by the Highways Agency investigating the impact on its strategic road system. They released their holding direction in early September, allowing the Council to proceed with an "approved" decision. These include Stainsby Hall Farm (350 houses), Rose Cottage Farm (106 houses) and Grey Towers Farm (295 houses), all on greenfield sites. In a last minute bid to emulate the Stockton MP, the local MP, Tom Blenkinsop, prevailed upon to request a referral to the National Planning Casework Unit for the Grey Towers Farm application. The result of both call-ins will, at best, be a successful rejection of the applications and, at worst, a stay of execution for a few months more.

Hartlepool

Hartlepool is faced with similar large-scale applications. Our Hartlepool representative is very deeply involved in saving valuable green space in an application for 2,500 houses on the south west boundary of Hartlepool.

It's a busy time for all CPRE representatives in the three districts. Many thanks to all those actively involved.

Bob Mullen

East Cleveland

Wind Power

As in many other areas proposals and applications for wind power are on the increase. We have had, and are having, a number of these to deal with---3 individual turbines and 3 wind farms.

The 3 individual turbines are all within close proximity to each other on high ground between the A171 and A174, both major roads leading towards Whitby. Each is at a different stage of the application process. The first has been turned down, on appeal, the second was recently turned down by the Council but will be appealed, whilst the third is awaiting a decision. Based on the Council's decisions, so far, I anticipate that this application will be turned down and then appealed.

Regarding wind farms, following on from the Beacon Moor proposal—we are still awaiting removal of the test mast—and the Saltburn proposal, both referred to in the Summer issue, we now face the prospect of 6 x 125m turbines sited within 2kms of the northern edge of Guisborough. This site is within close proximity to ancient settlements and within 200-300m of a number of farms. This proposal has only just been disclosed by Banks Renewables and we are awaiting their scoping application.

Housing

There have been no developments regarding the proposed estate at Marske. However, an application has been submitted—and opposed—for an estate on rural land, on the edge of Guisborough, which is outside the limits for development defined in the Community Development Plan and the

Local Development Framework (LDF). If accepted this would set a potentially dangerous precedent for this rural area as the Council would find it difficult to refuse any future applications. One problem is that Redcar and Cleveland Council does not have an identified 5 year housing supply, consequently it is open to landowners selling plots for housing anywhere in the Borough, even if it is outside stated limits. Effectively it is 'open season' for developers. Also, the Borough is down on its housing provision so is under pressure from Central Government to rectify this situation.

Future of Redcar and Cleveland District Group

Our district group now has a strong nucleus of 6 members. It certainly makes life easier having this level of support. Inevitably, new people bring new views and ideas. This group feels that we should be linked to North Yorkshire rather than Durham. The rationale is that Redcar and Cleveland was previously part of North Yorkshire and we are all Yorkists. Discussion has taken place between the respective Chairmen, with Richard Cowen giving this move his blessing. We have been accepted by North Yorkshire, so we are starting to integrate with them. Therefore, this will be my final contribution to the NE *NEwsletter*. There is some personal sadness in this move, as I was recruited by Durham many years ago and have some good links in the Branch, but I do support the views of the new members. Take care everyone and keep up the good work.
Stuart White

