



Inside: Mega Poultry Farms, Local Plan Review update, District News, “My Shropshire” and advance news of the date and exciting venue for our AGM in July.



## Can you be our Eyes and Ears?

We are looking for Members throughout Shropshire who can keep an eye (and ear!) on significant local planning applications that are controversial or inappropriate and let us know about them? It would take a few minutes each week—if you can help us, please contact our Administrator, Sarah Jameson [admin@cpshropshire.org.uk](mailto:admin@cpshropshire.org.uk) or 01547 528546

# Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review



**T**hanks again to everyone who sent in consultation responses for Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review. There has been no feedback yet from the Council and the next round of consultation may not now happen until the Summer. This is because of the volume of evidence base work that Shropshire Council is currently commissioning and because it will be engaging with Parish Councils, including about the guidelines for Community Hubs.

Our own full 66-page CPRE Shropshire submission (which can be downloaded from our website) has heavily criticised the Council's Preferred Options:

- The Council's targets of 28,750 new houses over 20 years, and at least 300 hectares of new employment development, are far too optimistic. The genuine need is for no more than 18,000 houses, although the Government's contentious new method of calculating "need" requires a figure of 25,400. ***How can an increase of over 20% every 20 years be considered to be sustainable?***
- The Council has over-ruled what people said they wanted at the first round of consultation because it says it has new evidence.

- Part of that supposed new evidence is economic figures which the Council has come up with part way through the process and has therefore not properly consulted on. The maths supporting these economic options is highly suspect and the main underlying report has been rather amateurishly produced.

***The Council's calculations of employment land requirement may well be double what is needed.***

- The scoring system used by the Council to designate 40 "Hub" villages has been panned by anyone who has looked at its detail. These (and the further 40 groups of hamlets which are expected to opt for "Cluster" status) are the settlements likely to take the ***7,875 houses earmarked for the rural areas.***
- Not enough emphasis is placed on increasing the stocks of affordable/social housing, or on housing for the ageing population. ***This is the real "housing crisis".***
- One of the unstated drivers for this desire for incessant growth is the Council's cash-strapped finances following the Government's savage cuts in Local Authority funding. ***It seems iniquitous that our beautiful county should be under threat because of the austerity cuts.***

On top of these stated targets there is also the possibility of further development at so-called strategic sites. These are the **Ironbridge Power Station site**, the **Clive Barracks site at Tern Hill**, and at unspecified potential **"Garden Village" settlements.**

***"Some of the proposed sites are bound to be controversial"***

The next and last consultation (before the Plan is finalised and goes to Public Examination, maybe at the end of the year) will include actual sites that have been put forward. We are now told that this stage probably won't be until Summer. Some of the proposed sites are bound to be controversial as they are put forward by landowners and developers themselves.

Before then, we should get the results of a Green Belt Review that the Council has commissioned in order potentially to release Green Belt land to allow some of the above development to happen, particularly along the M54 corridor. There are already plans afoot for a possible **10,000 house "Garden Village" in the Green Belt round Tong**, so campaigners there will be anxiously awaiting the Green Belt Review proposals.

## Pylon (and wind farms): a threat to the landscape of North Shropshire

Since plans were first announced by National Grid in March 2011, the north of Shropshire has been under threat of a giant 50m high overhead 400kV pylon line which would run for 50km from Cefn Coch in Montgomeryshire to the existing 400kV line between Oswestry and Ellesmere. Only 8km are proposed to be put under-ground, around Meifod.

But these pylon plans have been in hibernation since September 2015 when the Government initially refused permission for four huge new wind-farms in Mid Wales, which would need this 400kV line to get their power out. However, the biggest two of those windfarms (Carnedd Wen and Llanbryn-mair) appealed the decision, which was therefore sent back for re-determination in October 2016. Astonishingly, we are still waiting for the Government to announce its updated decision. Until it does so, National Grid will not say whether it can lift this threat to the Shropshire landscape.

Welsh campaigners have been much more strident in their opposition to these pylon plans than folk in Shropshire. They have been ably encouraged by their tenacious Montgomeryshire MP Glyn Davies, who realised way back in 2005 the iniquities that the reviled Welsh Government TAN8 policy on windfarms would wreak. It is well worth reading his recent blog which vividly encapsulates the animosity that National Grid has engendered by its actions over the whole sorry saga (<http://glyn-davies.blogspot.co.uk> - see under Monday 29 January 2018: Letter to National Grid Chairman and reply).

He says that, amongst other things, National Grid's incompetence has turned the people of Mid Wales against renewable energy. Although wind power may not be the whole answer to the challenge of global warming, that is an unfortunate consequence of this long-running story.

## Shropshire's Green Belt under threat

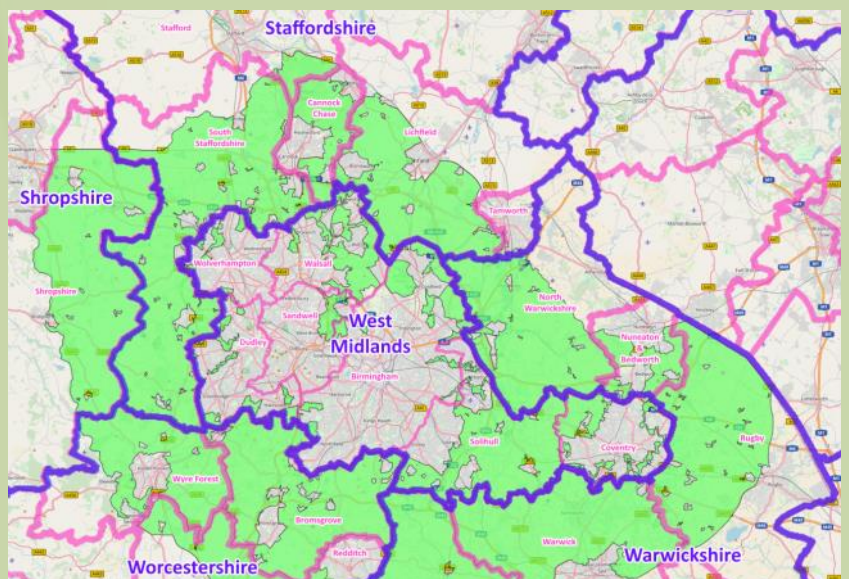
Shropshire's Green Belt includes all the county south of the A5 and east of Telford, Bridgnorth and Highley. As noted elsewhere a Green Belt Review is currently underway, the sole purpose of which is to justify releasing for development land that is currently protected by Green Belt status. This may well determine the fate of Tong, the historic little village near Shifnal threatened to be swamped by the mooted Garden Village complex around it.

Another current threat is in the far south-east corner of the county, at **Shiple**y. Seisdon Quarry, some two miles across the border in Staffordshire, is about to close and the operator wants to open up a new quarry at Shiple, hard up against ancient woodland. Shropshire currently doesn't need the proposed sand and gravel (it has enough reserves elsewhere). The Woodland Trust says no development should happen within at least 100m of the wood; Natural England's standing advice is for a 50m buffer; the applicant proposes only 15m.

The NPPF is meant to restrict development in the Green Belt, and round Ancient Woodlands. CPRE Shropshire is monitoring developments; we shall see.

## What is Green Belt?

- Modern Green Belts were established in 1955 to prevent urban sprawl and to stop towns and cities from joining up.
- About 10% of Shropshire is in the West Midlands Green Belt; this is one of 14 separate areas of Green Belt covering 13% of England (6,000+ miles<sup>2</sup>); mostly open land and countryside around the largest/most historic towns and cities.
- Green Belt land is supposed to be permanently protected through strict regulation "unless there are exceptional circumstances". However, building on Green Belt does still go ahead. There are constant threats all over the country to Green Belts, including the above two threats in Shropshire



West Midlands Green Belt (from Wikipedia, OpenStreetMap and DCLG).

# Mega Poultry Farms:

## A blot on the landscape or the future of farming?

In Herefordshire, Shropshire and Powys there has been a huge increase in the numbers of Intensive Poultry Units (IPUs) for broiler birds or egg-layers during the last few years.

An intensive poultry unit is defined as a warehouse housing over 40,000 birds and while Herefordshire tops the league, our county of Shropshire is now not far behind.

There is growing concern that they are doing long-term damage to both the human and the natural environment. Organisations such as Compassion in World Farming have been campaigning against them on animal welfare grounds whereas CPRE and our neighbours in Wales (CPRW) focus on their environmental impacts, including the landscape.

The Environment Agency (EA) issues permits to allow applicants to operate a specific number of units provided certain conditions are met, but it is Shropshire Council who decides to allow or refuse any specific application and who must assess whether or not the effects of the installation, once oper-

ating, will have deleterious effects on the landscape, the biodiversity, air and water quality, road use, and local residents' quality of life.

Any application for IPUs where the sheds will house more than 85,000 broilers or 60,000 egg-layers requires an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted, carried out by professionally qualified individuals. This is because developments of that size are classed as 'Schedule One' under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2011, alongside large chemical installations, nuclear fuel processing plants and crude oil refineries, thereby indicating how potentially damaging they are considered to be to the environment.

### Noise & odour

Associated noise and odour can be extremely damaging to local residents. Noise levels can in principle be measured with calibrated instruments, but are a controversial issue; people living down quiet country lanes do not normally have HGVs rumbling past during the night, disrupting their sleep, or continuous noise from high speed roof fans which have to be open in hot weather to cool the birds.

There are no calibrated instruments currently available to measure odour and so assessments are based entirely on theoretical models and not supported by authenticated empirical data; the thresholds set as acceptable in the models used have little validity in the experiences of many people living near to a mega poultry unit.

Chicken manure has a high ammonia concentration which can itself be harmful, capable of destroying foliage and having serious implications for people with respiratory problems. So there should be assessments of ammonia, especially since it is an element that can be objectively measured. Manure is produced in large quantities; DEFRA advises that 1,000 broiler birds produce 1.5 tonnes of ex-

#### [According to the Compassion in World Farming UK factory farming map, Shropshire has:](https://www.ciwf.org.uk/factory-farm-map/)

- ◇ **the second highest number of indoor reared meat/table chickens (13.3+ million birds) in the UK. Herefordshire has 16.7 million and has the highest concentration.**
- ◇ **second highest number of indoor-reared egg hens (1.3+ million birds)**
- ◇ **tenth highest number of indoor-reared dairy cows (2,000+)**
- ◇ **23,000+ indoor-reared pigs**

Source: <https://www.ciwf.org.uk/factory-farm-map/> (July 2017)

creta per month. What happens to the manure, where it will be stored and how and when it will be transported all need to be documented. Poor manure management can result in pollutants leaching into local watercourses and contaminating rivers.

Most applications include proposals for mitigating the undesirable effects of the proposed development, by means of the design and layout of the buildings, the technology employed and usually by some sort of 'landscaping'. They use trees, hedges, and bunds, or embankment. None of these are permanent; trees can die or be removed at any time. Most native trees are deciduous so provide less screening in winter and can be vulnerable to ammonia and heavy levels of dust.

The problem for many of us is that we often disagree with the judgements and decisions made by Shropshire Council in allowing applications. We may question the weight given to the assessments made by applicants, and question the thresholds of emissions that are deemed to be acceptable; we query the acceptability of impacts on people and much-loved local landscapes, and suggest the development be sited elsewhere.

## Some Shropshire examples

In April 2017, Shropshire Council granted planning permission for a poultry unit housing up to 100,000 birds in the Clun Valley. One protester remarked that "one came up against Officers and Councillors who held fast to a regressed and philistine view of the countryside as a site of intensive agriculture at any price."

Recently a controversial IPU at Tasley on the outskirts of Bridgnorth, which will house up to 210,000 birds has also been approved by Shropshire Council, in spite of over 230 objections referring to odour, toxicity, noise, pollution, traffic and water contamination

There is also a body of opinion that considers IPUs and the industrialisation of farming producing cheap meat are simply unethical and should be stopped. That view has gained support from recent exposures in the press of unsafe processing practices. It will probably, however, need a marked change of public attitude or the advent of a widespread infection, such as we saw with BSE, to make 'industrial' chicken meat unpopular.

*Continued on back page >*



Poultry farms in the Shropshire landscape: In this instance, some care has been taken to reduce landscape impact. It is sited behind the Nesscliffe bypass, shielded from it by an embankment and hedge. On the three other sides, it is surrounded by a high bank which has been planted with numerous saplings. The roof is green, the walls dark. (Photo © Selby & David Martin)

# District Focus

## Telford & Wrekin

The District CPRE group is made up of Borough Councillors, Parish Councillors, members of CPRE and other local organisations who have an interest in the protection of green and rural spaces.

Officially formed in 2017, we now meet four times a year to discuss planning matters, the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan, how to support other communities, events and such matters.

We are always keen to get new members on board and support local groups who wish to protect green and rural spaces and welcome them to any of our meetings. *We are currently looking for volunteers to take roles such as Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraiser and Planning Volunteer. Are you interested?*

As we are still a relatively new group we are still growing so if you know of any ways you can help us it would be greatly appreciated. Please get in touch!

### Meeting dates for 2018 are:

**Tuesday 5th June, Tuesday 4th September and Tuesday 4th December. Venue: Edgmond Village Hall at 7pm. All welcome!**

**Contact: Connor Furnival (Chair):**  
[cpretelfordwrekin@gmail.com](mailto:cpretelfordwrekin@gmail.com)

## In the Running for CPRE Shropshire!

As well as heading up our Telford & Wrekin district, Chair Connor Furnival is a half marathon runner and he will be putting on his running shoes to raise funds for CPRE's Shropshire Telford & Wrekin district in the Ironbridge Half Marathon on Saturday 25th March. **Please sponsor his run by going to our website, clicking on the link which will be up soon at [www.cpreshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cpreshropshire.org.uk)** Good luck Connor!



## Shrewsbury



Sunset on River Severn Willow at Frankwell © Sarah Jameson

The Shrewsbury group met on the 15th of February 2018, and welcomed to the meeting two members of the Shrewsbury Civic Society. The Society has kindly offered the use of the Bear Steps meeting room for future CPRE meetings.

The Shrewsbury group and the Civic Society have common ground and hope to work more closely together in future. Meantime, we still seek more enthusiastic supporters to join us and particularly anyone with planning or land management experience. Can you help?

It is pleasing to report that confirmation has been received from the council planning dept that threatened land off Nobold Lane Shrewsbury is designated as a Wildlife Site, which should give it a considerable amount of protection from future development.

Large developments around Shrewsbury are a cause for concern as infrastructure to support them is lacking and this is a point the local group will be raising at every opportunity.

There was further discussion on the proposed North West Relief road and Selby Martin has supported the objection sent into the Dept of Transport by Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Not only will there be the loss of swathes of beautiful countryside, but also the noise pollution which the road will bring. We will continue to raise this latter issue at every opportune moment as Shrewsbury in particular is under threat from this development and any dualling of the A5.

**The next meeting of the Shrewsbury District Group will be on Tuesday 24th April at 6pm at Bear Steps in the centre of Shrewsbury. If you would like to join the Shrewsbury District group please contact us (see back page).**

# “My Shropshire”

**A**s one of the newest members of CPRE, I have not always lived in Shropshire, though I think in my own way I have always considered it home. My journeys to Shropshire began in my youth, where Easter breaks included trips to Ludlow. My father, an admirer of the poet A.E. Housman, was often reciting to me lines of his poetry, and before long I had memorised one of my favourites- ‘*Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now.*’ Years later, and my parents have now bought their retirement home in Ludlow, so Shropshire truly is my home now.

For my own part, I’m a second-year Durham university student, and I hope to offer a new perspective from the younger generation whilst simultaneously encouraging younger people to become more conscious of the importance of the rural environment.

One of the reasons I have joined, and would like to help, CPRE is because to me the countryside has an exquisite power over the human imagination, and this power ought to be protected. In a turbulent world with a distrust of politicians at an all-time high, I find that nothing is more cathartic than being fully immersed in nature and the beauty of the countryside. A walk around the Shropshire hills is to experience an inoculation of tranquillity and repose. After all, it is Housman who writes that places in Shropshire ‘are the quietest places under the sun.’

It goes without saying that the scenery of Shropshire has inspired many previous individuals: Housman, Mary Webb, Wilfred Owen, D.H. Lawrence and Charles Dickens, and that’s only the writers.

Without the countryside, what is going to inspire the next generation?  
We will have nothing left to kindle our creativity

and innovation. Whilst protection of our countryside is vital for our wildlife systems, I would also like to put forward a selfish argument: the preservation of our landscapes is essential for our wellbeing also.

Shropshire oozes with myths, legends and history. Everywhere you go there is a story to be told. A trip to St Bartholomew’s church in Tong for example, will show you the supposed grave of ‘Little Nell’ the fictional character of Dickens’s ‘*The Old Curiosity Shop.*’ A more stupendous view would be a walk to the Stiperstones, where the ‘*Devil’s Chair*’ awaits you (here, legend has it that this is the place where all the witches and evil spirits gather). The line of quartzite tors glistens in the sunlight; the last Ice Age made the rock subject to constant freezing and thawing and we are now left with a scree of sharp teeth-like edges. It’s certainly a chilling place.

*“Without the countryside, what is going to inspire the next generation?”*

A visit to sites like these in Shropshire and you cannot help but feel like you are a part of something more than just nature; it truly does have ‘a strange effect on the imagination’ (Lawrence, *St Mawr*, 1925).

Shropshire countryside is both my home and something special to me, and without the likes of CPRE, I fear we would be quick to lose its intrinsic qualities. Mary Webb speaks of Shropshire when she says ‘I have been fortunate...in being born and brought up in its magical atmosphere.’ It has an ambience that I’m sure all of us would very much like to keep intact.

**Ffion Cartwright**



(Continued from page 4 : Poultry Mega Farms)

The economic argument propounded by applicants for broiler units that they are of economic benefit to the county's population has never been objectively tested or proven. The processing plants employ a fair number of people but with increasing mechanisation, the labour force is unlikely to expand markedly. Individual farms even with four or more units rarely add more than one or two jobs in the long-term. Business rates are not applicable to these large industrial type barns, nor do the owners have to pay road taxes on their vehicles which are heavy users of local roads. Unlike other types of development no tariffs (e.g. 106 money or CIL) are charged to off-set the effects of the development. So where are the cost/benefit analyses to support the claim that these intensive poultry farms are of benefit to us all?

With huge uncertainties around the future of farming and Brexit some farmers, particularly those working marginal land in the hills, are already looking into diversifying their farm businesses into other forms of livestock rearing, and these include intensive pig and poultry enterprises.

CPRE will continue to campaign against industrial scale poultry units that harm the landscape and the environment and which negatively affect the quality of life of local residents.

**Do you live near a mega poultry unit? What is life like? Or have you managed to object successfully to a local poultry unit application? Do get in touch and let us know on [admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk](mailto:admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk)**

*With many thanks to Ros Bradbury of CPRE Herefordshire and to Stella Voysey of CPRE Shropshire.*



(Photo © Selby & David Martin)

**SAVE THE DATE!**

## CPRE Shropshire AGM 2018

We are delighted to announce that Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, will be the venue for our 2018 AGM on **Monday 2nd July**

The evening will include a talk on Humphrey Repton and his landscape work at Attingham, followed by a buffet supper in the Coach House and an optional evening guided tour of the grounds. More information in the next newsletter!

### CPRE Shropshire: contacts

**Membership Secretary/Administrator**  
Sarah Jameson / 01547 528546  
[admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk](mailto:admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk)

**Communications & Press**  
Cally Ware / [cally.ware@btinternet.com](mailto:cally.ware@btinternet.com)

**Website:** [www.cpreshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cpreshropshire.org.uk)

#### CPRE Shropshire Districts:

**Bridgnorth:** Stella & David Voysey  
[david.voysey@jacd.co.uk](mailto:david.voysey@jacd.co.uk)

**Oswestry:** Charles & Sally Green  
[charleswgreen@msn.com](mailto:charleswgreen@msn.com)

**Shrewsbury and Atcham:** Roger Carlyle  
[cye1936@gmx.com](mailto:cye1936@gmx.com)

**Telford and Wrekin:** Connor Furnival  
[cpretelfordwrekin@gmail.com](mailto:cpretelfordwrekin@gmail.com)

CPRE Shropshire: charity number: 218782