

## CPRE Rutland News Update – January 2021

To all members

First of all, let me wish you all a very happy and markedly less challenging New Year! I hope you are managing to stay healthy and that we will all have the opportunity to meet up again before too much longer.

### Planning Reforms Campaign

I outlined in my Annual Report the Government's proposals to reform the planning system and CPRE's fairly serious concerns with much of the content. The national campaign continues; the government has accepted that the housing needs formula, the so-called 'mutant algorithm', must be changed to redress the balance between urban and rural development. We continue to argue against many other aspects of the proposals. National CPRE recently launched our 'Vision for Planning', which sets out how we believe the planning system should be updated. This is an initiative by a group of 18 organisations, led by CPRE. The virtual launch meeting was attended by Housing Minister, Chris Pincher, MP, and the Chief Planner at MHCLG, Joanna Averley, together with over 200 others, including MPs, civil servants, sector organisations and national journalists; the meeting attracted coverage in the press and on the Today programme.

### Rutland 2036 Project

The main activity in our project has been to respond to the Rutland Local Plan consultation. Based on the significant professional input from our consultants, we sought to persuade RCC that the serious shortcomings in the plan should be addressed before proceeding any further with the consultation, in order to avoid what was to our mind a significant risk of failure at the public examination. Our concerns were, of course, dismissed, and the consultation continued. We then followed up with a really substantial response, and are now awaiting further updates.

The Housing Needs Survey, which we piloted in Uppingham, has now been completed. We had a response rate of around 10%, and the results provided some interesting insights into likely needs in the county. These have been shared with RCC and also with the Uppingham Homes Community Land Trust, who are taking them into account in defining their development plans. We intend to make the survey commercially available such that other authorities might make use of it in furthering their own plans.

The third strand of work in the project is to develop a statement of vision for Rutland. The new (interim) Chief Executive at RCC, Mark Andrews, is also keen to produce such a statement, based more on ideas than on specific plans, and to develop this through conversations with residents, businesses, etc. in the county. We have so far held two meetings with RCC officers to discuss this and have agreed to work with them as part of the recently agreed Future Rutland Conversation, which has just been announced. This has meant adjusting the timescales for the work, and we now expect to see some useful output this summer.

### Annual General Meeting

As you know, we were unable to hold our AGM last year. We have now fixed on 23<sup>rd</sup> May as the provisional date for this year, although this date is inevitably dependent on any ongoing health restrictions. The new national Chairman, Simon Murray, has agreed to attend. Further details will be provided in due course. We are proposing some amendments to our constitution, and it is intended that the revised version will be made available to members for approval at the AGM.

## Christmas Quiz

We moved our Christmas Quiz to the new web-site, with a view to securing wider circulation. Unfortunately, takings were nonetheless somewhat down on previous years, perhaps due to teething problems with the technology, but also, no doubt, because of the pandemic restrictions. All the same, we had two fully correct solutions submitted, and the prize has been split between them.

## Web-Site

Our new web-site is now up and running, at <https://cprerutland.uk>. Please take time to look at this if you can, where you will find campaign news and details of upcoming events.

## CPRE's Star Count 6-14 February 2021

CPRE conducts an annual exercise to assess light pollution across the country, and we would like as many people as possible to take part. Stargazers will be asked to count the number of stars they can see from home (with the naked eye) within the constellation of Orion, and submit their count on our website at <https://www.cpre.org.uk/starcount>. Further details will be available on this web-site as we approach the start date.

You don't need a telescope or any equipment to take part. This year, given the coronavirus pandemic and current lockdown restrictions, we're asking supporters to take part from home only, to stay safe while doing so, and not to travel to take part. This could mean taking part from a garden, balcony, doorstep or even bedroom window, and with their household only.

The number of stars visible within the constellation of Orion is a good measurement of the amount of light pollution, and can be compared with previous years' data to show how our ability to see truly starry skies is changing. We'll also use the data to produce an interactive map of the nation's view of the stars.

Star Count will take place during the darkest skies from Friday 6 February – Sunday 14 February, inclusive. Star Count is taking place with support from the [British Astronomical Association](#).

## And Finally ...

Thank you again for your continued support. I hope we will be able to meet up again at our AGM later this year, if not before.

Malcolm Touchin  
Chair, CPRE Rutland  
January 2021