

# REVIEW

SUMMER 2013

NEWS FROM THE SUSSEX BRANCH OF THE CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND



**Brighton Marathon** Madeleine Voice raises £1000 for CPRE Sussex!

**Futureproofing** MP's follow up

**Sussex fields up for grabs**

What it means for your countryside if a local plan is not in place

**The National Park Authority**

A strong guardian for the South Downs?



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**Madeleine Voice** the goddaughter of Nic and Andrea Packwood ran her first Brighton Marathon in April in memory of her godfather **Nic Packwood** – a great supporter of CPRE Sussex. She completed the course in 4 hours and 37 minutes and raised over £1000 for the charity. We are all thrilled at her success. *Front cover: Madeleine Voice and Andrea Packwood. Photographs: Colin Leeves*

Published by CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust, the Sussex branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. The opinions expressed in the Review are those of the individual contributors and do not reflect those of the branch.

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Lord Egremont

### Vice Presidents

Margaret Moore  
Gerald Summerfield

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Georgia Wrighton

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# UPDATE



## “The times they are a-changing”

The trouble with writing my report is that, given the time-lag for publication it's out of date by the time you read it!

That's why we're increasingly using our website, Twitter and Facebook, and running a Blog. The news gets round much quicker and builds support for campaigns.

Mind you there's no substitute for people on the ground. Most of Sussex is without an up to date Local Plan, leaving the countryside desperately vulnerable. We need more members to scrutinise and influence Local Plans. Please consider being the 'eyes and ears' of Sussex, there's plenty of support available.

The Branch is changing. Liz Beeney our Senior Office Administrator retired in February after 17 years of dedicated service. Lesley Wilson is now covering the role, we hope you'll get to meet her at the AGM. You'll see from the AGM papers that we're changing our legal charity status and bringing in a new Constitution. We're also reviewing our budget and structure to make us more effective. Finally a number of trustees will be stepping down at the AGM and I will not continue as Chairman – a job I have enjoyed very much. We're actively looking for new recruits.

### Rodney Chambers Chairman



It's been a tremendously energetic and exciting few months since the last Review. We're looking to the future, updating our strategy and involving many past and present volunteers, Trustees and staff in the process. In the next Review we'll be able to report on the key decisions that will allow us to look forward to a robust and resilient campaigning future.

In March we held an exciting conference 'Futureproofing' to tie in with the anniversary of the National Planning Policy Framework and the CPRE report 'Countryside promises: Planning realities'. The report is a worrying indicator of what's to come in an era where unless Councils have up to date Local Plans in place, national policy weights decisions in favour of development. Please see our article on page 4 to find out more.

Finally, a massive thank you to Madeleine Voice who ran the Brighton Marathon for us in April (featured on the front cover). Madeleine ran in memory of her beloved godfather, Nic Packwood, who died last year. Nic was a passionate supporter and volunteer for CPRE Sussex for many years. His strapline “*We have to protect it, or lose it!*” are words we'll never forget.

### Georgia Wrighton Director



# FUTUREPROOFING

Georgia Wrighton

The CPRE Sussex Spring Conference 'Futureproofing' saw Shoreham Ropetackle Arts Centre filled with more than 90 people all fearful of the effects of government policy on the future of the countryside.

The Conference heralded the start of a dangerous era for Sussex. It marked the end of a one year period for Councils to get Local Plans in place 'or else', before the government's 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' means that applications will be approved unless the disadvantages outweigh the advantages dictated in the new government planning policy, the National Planning Policy Framework. The Conference coincided with the national CPRE report 'Countryside Promises: Planning Realities' which shows that one year on, the NPPF has allowed communities to be overruled time and time again, allowing damaging development to sprawl across precious countryside.

Only one Council in the County has an up to date Local Plan in place, Wealden District. This means that most of Sussex is up for grabs unless we stand together to insist that only the right development, in the right place gets planning approval.

CPRE was founded in the 1920s, campaigning for a rural planning system when the argument was already being won for better planning in towns. Housing and other development was springing all over a countryside with no controls. Landowners advertised their plots for unregulated housing development proclaiming 'Why not build your own house here?' Buildings were ill designed and often comprised of old railway carriages and pre-fabricated sheds.

**CPRE Sussex is not anti-development. We want to see well planned development the community needs in a way that involves local people and ensures high quality and good design.**

But we do not want to see a backwards slide into 'have a go' development, allowed only because it purports to bring short term economic returns instead of long term, sustainable growth.

A major local battleground is the continuing insistence by government planning inspectors on the use of top-down regional housing figures, despite the abolition of the South East Plan. Communities in Sussex want to see housing figures produced for their local area, involving people in deciding need and demand, not outdated figures applying to sub-regional areas not relevant to the locality. We're also concerned that local authorities rushing to get their Plans in place and in fear of top down figures being foisted upon them, are less inclined towards involving communities working on Neighbourhood Plans or seeking to influence major development. The 'Duty to Cooperate' intended for local authorities to 'share' their development pressures, seems far from effective and lacks teeth.

So what are we doing about all this? We've written to all Sussex MPs, Planning Minister Nick Boles and Communities Secretary Eric Pickles asking for key changes. We want to see an extension to the 'grace' period

allowed for local authorities to get Plans in place before government policy leaves the gate open for damaging development. Local Plans take up to 3 years to produce under proper democratic process. It's just common sense that the 12 months allowed isn't enough.

**We want to see the long-dead promises of community control revived and local authorities supported to produce their housing numbers locally. We want to see communities and neighbourhoods at the heart of the planning process so that a Neighbourhood and community-led approach is possible. We want to see the right infrastructure planned in tandem.**

We've called for the reinstatement of the 'brownfield first' policy so that greenfield land is the last resort instead of the easy win. We want to see land banking recognised. Developers riding out the recession by holding onto land means that local authorities can't count it towards the 5 year supply of housing it must prove is immediately available. We've called on the government to allow this land to be counted as land deliverable in the medium and longer term.

The Growth and Infrastructure Bill going through Parliament won't make it any easier to put housing need at the heart of planning for Sussex. It fast tracks developers' ability to cut out or reduce the affordable housing they provide if they can make a case on grounds of viability. Whilst public spending on affordable housing is reduced, who is going to fill the gap? If the local Council don't agree, developers can take their case to central government with the likelihood of a more sympathetic ear.

Proposals in the Bill also give developers the option of having their major housing developments decided by central government if Councils are declared 'poor performing'. Government may decide to 'fast track' damaging major business and commercial developments, pushing out local decision making.

I think the message is clear. It's the job of us all to make sure that people and the environment come first in planning for Sussex, that's why we're here isn't it?



Nick Herbert MP, Arundel & South Downs



CPRE National Office archive



# BEXHILL LINK ROAD

Jan Goodey

As the £100m plus Bexhill Bypass comes a step closer, the road builders and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) face further delays as campaigners gear up for a further round of protests.

To date there have been four anti-road protest camps along the route, the last main one, Camp Decoy, evicted after protracted resistance high up in the 100ft trees for two days at the end of January.

Clearance work initially took campaigners by surprise as it was scheduled to start in January but began a month earlier. With the majority of trees on the route now destroyed (around 600) the work has had to stop for nesting season: March 1 to August 31.

The planned 5.6km single carriageway would cut a swathe through Combe Haven Valley, one of the most treasured and tranquil stretches of wetlands and reed bed systems in the south east.

As well as the direct action there are allied campaigns from the Bexhill Link Road Resistance (BLINKRR), the Hastings Alliance, Combe Haven Defenders and Crowhurst Villagers' Group.

Dave Howley of the Crowhurst Villagers said: "We have lobbying, letter writing and an ecology group which looks at bats and other

sightings of rare birds. Also how the holding ponds for the road will disrupt valley habitats."

Michael Bernard of BLINKRR added: "The council have put up bird boxes for barn owls, but that's been it. In the meantime 1,000-year-old hedges are being destroyed."

BLINKRR appeared in the High Court on April 11 for an injunction preliminary hearing to stop the forthcoming road works on the grounds that they will damage the '1066 battle site' and that the council doesn't have the planning permission.

ESCC states that the current clearances are 'non-material' which is disputed by BLINKRR which believes that flood arrangements, tree and hedge destruction, and bridge re-workings are 'material' matters.

BLINKRR also argues that the ESCC haven't given an adequate run-down of the valley's rare birds. (Birds and their nests are protected at all times under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. If you believe that a bird's nest is being damaged by tree/hedge work then call a Wildlife Crime Officer on the non-emergency number 101.)

As well as the sought after injunction, BLINKRR has sponsored

**The planned 5.6km single carriageway would cut a swathe through Combe Haven Valley, one of the most treasured and tranquil stretches of wetlands and reed bed systems in the south east.**

a forthcoming question to the parliamentary select committee on sport and culture in a bid to save the valley and landing site/ encampment/battlefield, as they see it.

A recent setback has seen English Heritage (EH) turn down the arguments put forward that the Battle of Hastings was in Combe Haven and not near Battle. EH claims it is on this land they own near Battle and that the BLINKRR argument is based on 'supposition'; a claim disputed by Dave Howley:

"We're going to be asking a parliamentary committee and archaeological group to have a look at this. The EH panel of experts is supposed to be independent but we don't believe it is."

In a separate action Combe Haven Defenders arrived at the Department for Transport (DfT) on April 8 and 9 to peacefully search for, copy and distribute documents on the Bexhill Link Road recommendations – the 'first and the worst' of over 190 new road projects. Campaigners were claiming a 'significant victory' after the DfT subsequently agreed to release recommendations about whether or not public money should be used to fund the road. Gabriel Carlyle, Combe Haven Defenders spokesman said, "...the DfT's own civil servants suggested that the Department should consider cancelling the project and were highly critical of the exaggerated picture of the Road's merits put forward by East Sussex County Council." They believe George Osborne and the Treasury overruled Norman Baker MP at the DfT and recommended the road go ahead despite DfT misgivings.

Former Council leader Peter Jones, claimed that the road "will make it possible to build 1,200-2,000 new homes plus a business park of 50,000 sq metres and more than 3,000 new jobs and economic benefits valued at £1bn".

## THE LATEST

Protestors are preparing for the next phase of direct action now the road has been bludgeoned through by George Osborne despite Dept of Transport misgivings, now public following campaigners' protracted yet successful Freedom of Information requests. Stalls and leafleting have been commonplace in Bexhill and Hastings along with route walks in the valley.

Meanwhile East Sussex County Council (ESCC) without controversial leader Peter Jones has applied to itself (as the planning authority) to make a 'non-material amendments' (NMAs) to the road: cutting out pedestrian/cyclist/horse-rider bridges, diverting the greenway, eliminating a bus lane, and reducing the width of verges and flood storage. And all this hardly non-material to the red and amber list bird populations that will be decimated from the valley west of Adams Farm through to the Filsham Reedbed - Yellowhammers, Lapwing, Linnet, Skylark, Song Thrush, Turtle Doves Bullfinch, Dunnock, Mistle Thrush, Reed Bunting, Stock Dove Whitethroat and Water Pipits.

**Objections can still be made.**

Latest planning documents show just how devastating the land-take of road will be with 'haul road, temporary water crossings and compound locations'. This translates as: 6m wide 'haul roads'; temporary bridges; compounds; and huge areas for topsoil storage, giving the lie to ESCC's much vaunted two-lane road, largely utilising old railway cuttings.

Said cuttings near Sidley figure large in a letter sent recently to the Bexhill Observer from 12-year-old resident, Taliesin Bourne:

**"I am very sad that it is cutting through our beautiful landscape which we are meant to be saving. It is one of my favourite walks."**









# RAVILIOUS, CPRE AND THE SOUTH DOWNS

Andy Boddington

Today, we cannot resist filling our rural landscapes with clutter. Road signs, masts, pylons, drilling rigs, jarring housing developments and brash industrial buildings far too often detract from the soft beauty of rolling hills.

No artist has captured the gentle spirit of the South Downs better than Eric Ravilious. He grew up in Eastbourne and, in his thirties, he returned to Sussex to paint the gentle curves of the Downs. A shy man, described as having an extraordinary pan-like charm, his landscape paintings and woodcuts portray the Downs with a sense of simplicity and tranquil emptiness.

Ravilious did not paint an innocent view of nature. His countryside is one of ploughed fields, a working landscape tended by farmers. Invariably uncluttered, to the modern eye Ravilious's scenes seem almost a blank canvas waiting to be filled with jumble.

Today, we cannot resist filling our rural landscapes with clutter. Road signs, masts, pylons, drilling rigs, jarring housing developments and brash industrial buildings far too often detract from the soft beauty of rolling hills. That's why the National Park is so important but it is also why CPRE is needed. Older than the national parks themselves, CPRE has long been the leading opponent of clutter and bad development.

It was the Council for the Preservation of Rural England that in 1929 urged Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald to create national parks, including part of the South Downs. The Downs were overlooked and had to wait ninety years for designation.

The Park Authority is now two years old and is already a major influence on the 627 square mile area it oversees (210 square miles are in Hampshire). It embraces the sandstones of the Western Weald and the chalk of the South Downs, contains around a thousand protected nature sites and is home to 110,000 people.

Eric Ravilious would find the busyness of today's National Park unsettling. Former dark skies have been lit by the glare of light pollution. The Park Authority is surveying the pockets of darkness that remain in the hope of being accredited as an international dark sky reserve. In the thirties, when Ravilious painted at the cottage of artist Peggy Angus in the shadow Beddingham Hill, the South Downs were already a destination for walkers and motorists. Now tourists spend 46 million 'visitor days' in the park every year, loading demand on facilities, eroding paths and creating putting on habitats and rare species.

Tourists cannot be shooed away. Urban dwellers need rural spaces to relax. The local economy needs the £464 million a year spent by visitors in the park area. The downside is that Ravilious's empty country lanes are now often crowded with traffic. This is the closest national park to London and the majority of visitors arrive by car. With at least 66 million car trips per year into the park, it's no surprise that sustainable transport



is a priority area for the Park Authority. It is currently asking for ideas to promote walking, cycling and public transport. Planning is one of the biggest challenges the Authority faces. It must work with the existing borough, district and county councils, not all of which are comfortable with the park's overriding powers. Already there is friction with Brighton and Hove City Council over developments at the edge of the Downs. Planners must maintain the £2.23 billion economy of the park area, get urgently needed affordable housing built and facilitate the demands of tourists. Yet over-development will damage the

very attractiveness that tourists and residents seek, as well as undermining the environment and economy of our newest national park.

**We may never quite recapture the quiet serenity of Ravilious's landscapes. But we can maintain the character of one of the most beautiful places in England.**

The South Downs National Park Authority must take the lead and it is for CPRE to be its collaborator and watchdog.

*Downs in Winter, Eric Ravilious, 1934. Image courtesy of Towner, Eastbourne.*



*A Church under a Hill, Eric Ravilious c. 1931  
© Trustees of the British Museum*



## Chairman's report

2012 has been a year of significant changes to the planning system. There have also been changes to the activities and staffing of the Branch. The Localism Act introduced the concept of Neighbourhood Planning and came fully into force on 15th January. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force on 27th March.

The Department of Community and Local Government (DCLG) funded a training scheme for Neighbourhood Planning, delivered through CPRE and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). We ran several seminars to help Parish Councils get started.

CPRE Sussex appeared as a Rule 6 party at an appeal against Chichester DC's refusal to permit a 53-acre glasshouse development on the Manhood Peninsula. The appeal, which bridged the introduction of NPPF, was refused much to local relief.

Stuart Meier, our first Director, resigned at the end of March but appeared at the above appeal until mid April. In July Georgia Wrighton, appointed from a strong field of applicants, took up post as Director, rapidly establishing herself as a leader and Branch spokeswoman for on a number of key environmental issues.

Our AGM was held on 10th July at Brinsbury College. The agricultural theme was led by two speakers, Jonny Morris who manages the agricultural estate of Brighton and Hove City Council and Jane Cecil, General Manager of the National Trust for the South Downs. Stephen Hardy and Michael Brown (both solicitors) have joined the Board of Trustees.

Throughout our area we are scrutinising the Local Plans of our District Councils, concentrating particularly on projected housing numbers. We assert that the abolition of Regional Government with its top-down planning system has given local authorities the freedom to plan according to local needs. We have commissioned research into the basis of housing projections in Horsham and Crawley District.

We are increasingly using information technology. Our website has been updated, we now have Twitter and Facebook accounts and a Blog. We have attracted a number of younger volunteers who have helped to raise our profile in the Press, also helped by our links with the Journalism Course at City College, Brighton & Hove.

Membership has increased through the conversion of supporters (regular donators to the National Organisation but not attached to a branch). Nevertheless the long-term trend in membership is downwards and we are doing our best to recruit new members and volunteers

Finally I express my thanks to Liz Beeney and Sas Drury who have ably kept the administration of the Branch on an even keel throughout. I have as always been supported by my fellow Trustees and a team of volunteers who have brought great expertise and commitment to the work of the Branch.

### Rodney Chambers

Chairman, CPRE Sussex Countryside Trust

## Trustees' Report

The financial statements presented by the Trustees are drawn up in accordance with current statutory requirements, the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in 2005, the Charities Act 2011 and the Branch's governing document.

### Trustees

#### Chairman

Rodney Chambers

#### Vice Chairman: West Sussex

Dr Roger Smith

#### Vice Chairman: East Sussex

Stuart Derwent

#### Hon Treasurer

Peter Lansberry

#### Hon Secretary

Prof Edmund Critchley

#### Executive Committee

#### Members

Michael Brown

Justin French-Brooks

Stephen Hardy

Penelope Hudd

John Kay

Christopher Lewis

New Trustees are appointed after a review of the skills required and are drawn from individuals who have relevant backgrounds. When appropriate trustees consult other like-minded organisations for nominations. New trustees are provided with an introduction to the Charity.

Stephen Hardy was elected as a trustee in July 2012 and Michael Brown co-opted at the Executive Committee Meeting of 23rd October 2012

### Constitution, objectives and activities

CPRE Sussex is an unincorporated association and The Branch's governing document is "The Constitution of the Sussex Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England" approved by the AGM in 2003. The Branch is restricted by its Constitution from undertaking any substantial permanent trading activities.

### Public benefit reporting

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

### Sussex Countryside Trust

Sussex Countryside Trust, is a company limited by guarantee, to protect the use of the name. That company has not yet carried out any activities and it is not currently expected to do so during 2013.

### Financial review and reserves

The Chairman's report included in these accounts gives a full description of the activities and results for the year. The trustees consider that the level of reserves is adequate to support the current activities for the next two or three years, and are actively reviewing the future funding to ensure that CPRE Sussex can continue to be an effective voice for the future. The trustees review the financial and other risks when appropriate.

### Trustees' Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the years. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:-

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enables them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable precautions for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Committee of Trustees on 11 May 2013 and signed on its behalf by:

**Rodney Chambers**  
Chairman

Charity number: 265028  
Company number: 7780611



Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2012

These figures are extracted from the full Trustees' Report and financial statements which have been independently examined by Mr C R Tyler of Clark Brownscombe Limited who gave an unqualified statement in May 2013. The Independent Examiner has confirmed to the Trustees that the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2012. The Trustees' Report and financial statements were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 11 May 2013. They will be submitted to the Charity Commission. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of CPRE Sussex. The full Trustees' Report, Independent Examiner's Report and Financial Statements may be obtained from CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5HG.

Balance Sheet at 31 December 2012

Abridged Financial Information

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2012	Total 2011
Incoming Resources	£	£	£	£
CPRE Members Branch Share	25,344	-	25,344	25,469
Investment Income	2,578	-	2,578	2,797
Legacies	2,615	-	2,615	39,843
Donations	8,214	10,000	18,214	25,493
Gift Aid	344	-	344	2,877
Other Income	6,600	-	6,600	1,951
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>45,695</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>55,695</b>	<b>98,430</b>
Resources Expended				
Costs of generating funds				
Costs of generating income	1,810	-	1,810	1,505
Costs of Charitable Activities				
Costs of furtherance of the objects of the charity	72,477		72,477	80,372
Governance Costs	2,084	-	2,084	2,411
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>76,371</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,371</b>	<b>84,288</b>
Net Incoming/ (Outgoing) Resources before Transfers	(30,676)	10,000	(20,676)	14,142
Gains/ (Losses) on Investment Assets				
Unrealised and Realised	7,347		7,347	(4,809)
Net Movements in Funds	(23,329)	10,000	(13,329)	9,333
Fund balances at 1 January 2012	258,567	5,927	264,494	255,161
<b>Fund balances at 31 December 2012</b>	<b>235,238</b>	<b>15,927</b>	<b>251,165</b>	<b>264,494</b>

	2012	2011
Fixed Assets	£	£
Tangible Assets	631	1,527
Stock and Bond Investment	67,583	60,997
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	<b>68,214</b>	<b>62,524</b>

Current Assets		
Debtors, Prepayments and Deposits	7,450	9,989
Short term deposits	170,020	169,700
Cash at bank and in hand	7,192	24,323
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>184,662</b>	<b>204,012</b>

Less Creditors		
Amounts falling due within one year	1,711	2,042
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>182,951</b>	<b>201,970</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>251,165</b>	<b>264,494</b>

Capital Funds		
Income Funds		
Restricted	15,927	5,927
Unrestricted	235,238	258,567
<b>Total</b>	<b>251,165</b>	<b>264,494</b>

COOL, GREEN & CHEAP

Working in harmony with the land

It was a pleasure to meet Duncan Baker-Brown, Director of BBM Architects at his offices in Cooksbridge. Duncan is somewhat of a legend in these parts for practicing sustainable design and construction that doesn't cost the earth. Duncan uses local materials like sweet chestnut and sheeps wool in his buildings, supporting work on the land and helping to protect precious landscapes "It's all about local labour, materials- if you look at the South Downs we have more materials than you can shake a stick at. And we have an amazing diversity of materials."

Duncan is well-known for re-using waste in construction. "For every 5 houses we build, 1 goes to waste" he explained, the result of a culture of oversupply. He's urging us to "Think outside the bin" by building The Waste House at University of Brighton. Working with student carpenters and company Mears' apprenticeship scheme he's demonstrating that one person's waste can be another's resource. Reducing consumption reflects Duncan's focus on energy efficiency too

"Our projects don't rely on renewables. With sensible use of materials and orientation, you get a property that doesn't produce as much energy in the first place."

Where he uses renewables, they're incorporated elegantly into the design, like the glass solar roof panels used for a client in Hadlow Down (pictured).

Duncan's message is that "Green needn't cost more than the norm". He explained that raw material prices are increasing, and that there's a cost to sending waste away to be burnt, much of it overseas. Duncan uses South Downs company New Life paints, putting left over paint to good use and reducing costs. Duncan warns that rules on VAT aren't helping to breathe new life into much loved buildings. Zero rating on new build stacks the odds in favour of demolition.

Georgia Wrighton in conversation with Duncan Baker Brown



So what inspired Duncan? "I was brought up on a farm in West Essex at a time when major new roads were ploughing through the area. One day, I was out walking with my Mum and we looked out over Epping Forest and we could see the City of London in the distance. I asked my Mum "What would stop London encroaching into Abridge?". "The Green Belt", she replied. From that moment on, Duncan had an appreciation of the Green Belt and the importance of working in harmony with nature. How many stories from our own youth inspired us to protect the countryside?

We very much look forward to meeting Duncan at our AGM in July.





# You're invited to our 40th AGM

At The Meridian Hall,  
East Grinstead  
On Wednesday 10th July 2013  
Meeting starts at 10:30 am  
(Coffee 10:00am)



The formal business of the meeting will be followed by a talk from architect Duncan Baker Brown, senior partner at BBM Sustainable Design and Senior Lecturer in the University of Brighton's School of Architecture who will share with us his passion for innovative architecture that's kind to the environment and discuss the potential for a new vernacular architecture in Sussex.

The meeting and Duncan's talk will take place in the morning and will be followed by a delicious buffet lunch served at £14.00 per head.

## Following lunch:

Chris Nunn from Ashplats Woods Conservation Group will talk briefly about the interesting history of East Court Estate and the conservation work in Ashplats Woods followed by a two mile guided walk through Ashplats ancient woodland. The wood is hilly and, depending on the weather, the ground underfoot could be muddy; so sturdy footwear is essential.

Alternatively, members may prefer to join the East Court gardener, Jenny Watson, in a short tour of the gardens followed by a gentle walk along the Centenary Nature Trail, led by Lorna Train.

Or, members are welcome to simply relax and enjoy at their leisure the magnificent parkland grounds, Memorial Gardens and the stunning views from the Meridian Hall Terrace.

**If you would like to attend, please complete and return the enclosed booking form by Friday 28th June.**

(Please submit Agenda items and nominations for the Executive Committee in writing to the office by Monday 3rd June 2013).

Copies of the Agenda and the 2012 Minutes will be available on the day. To request them in advance please contact the office by e-mail –

**info@cpresussex.org.uk**

or by phone **01825 890975**

## Travel Directions:

**The Meridian Hall, East Court Estate,  
East Court, College Lane,  
East Grinstead, RH19 3LT**

East Court is best approached by car off College Lane accessed from the following – A22 (Uckfield), A22 (Godstone), A264 (Crawley) and A264 Tunbridge Wells roads.

A map can be found at **[www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk/contact-us/location-map](http://www.eastgrinstead.gov.uk/contact-us/location-map)** or is available on request. There is ample free parking on site. The glorious Meridian Hall building, home of East Grinstead Town Council, is a short distance from the town centre and railway station.