

South Coast Spatial

Spring 2011

Inside this Issue

- > Dates for your Diary 2
- > The Localism Bill 2
- > Towards RTPi Membership 3
- > Local Impact of the RSS Debate 4
- > Localism Bill comes to Reading 6
- > A Day in the Life of a Planner 7
- > Meet the Team 9

The South Coast Young Planners' Network is Back!

Nicki Tippett

Having founded the South Coast Young Planners' Network in 2006, Charlie Collins and the SCYPN Steering Group handed over the reins to the Networks'



Charlie Collins, founder of the SCYPN

new Steering Group, headed by Gemma Christian as Chair, in 2010.

It has to be said, stepping into our predecessors' shoes was a daunting task considering what the SCYPN have already achieved over the years – regular networking events held across the south coast region, the Young Planners' Conference held in Brighton, and regular newsletters and networking opportunities for all members.

Well, we are certainly up for a challenge! With our new logo, we took the

opportunity to re-launch SCYPN with an Assessment of Professional Competence event at The Point, Eastleigh, on 26 January 2011.

With this achievement behind us, we are now looking forward to bringing SCYPN back into action with many more events planned in 2011!

This quarterly newsletter will provide interesting and useful articles as well as events calendars and regular reminders for you to get in touch and get involved.

Young Planners go 'local' in Cardiff

Z. James

Localism in the planning system was the hot topic up for debate in the 2010 Young Planners Conference, hosted by Young Planners Cymru in Cardiff.

Different views of 'Localism' were discussed; from the wider planning policy perspective with a talk from Rosemary Thomas (Welsh Assembly Government), down to a real, local interpretation with a talk from Paul Wimbus ('Lmmas') demonstrating localism in action in this community project.

An international slant on 'Localism' was given by last years'

Young Planner of the Year, Tom Venables (Aecom) who spoke about his experiences in New Orleans and how planning for the City has evolved in the wake of hurricane Katrina.

Other speakers included the RTPi President 2010, Ann Skippers; Carole-Anne Davies, Design Commission for Wales; Chris Potts, Savills; Professor John Punter, Cardiff University and Lee Jones, TACP.

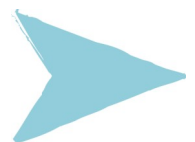
With Friday evening entertainment at the Millennium Stadium and Saturday workshops and study

tours around Cardiff and Newport, this Young Planners Conference provided a great opportunity for sharing ideas, as well as socialising.

Look out for the Young Planners Conference in 2011!



'Making it Local' - Barton Willmore talk Urban Design



Dates for your Diary...

Planning in Uncertain Times

Venue: The Long Room, Oxford Town Hall

Date: Thursday 9th June 2011, 4.30pm

Topics will Include:

- Trends in the property market
- Challenges of the economic climate
- Impacts of the emerging Localism agenda

For further details or to book a place please contact Sophia Thorpe at: sthorpe@mjgleeson.com

This is a Thames Valley Young Planners Network event but is open to all Network members.



Green Infrastructure

Venue: Ashburton Hall, Hampshire County Council, Winchester

Date: Thursday 7th July 2011

The event will be split between two sessions, each with three speakers. An hour break is reserved for networking and buffet.

Session One: 3 - 5pm

Session Two: 6 - 8pm

For further details or to book a place for one or both sessions please contact Gemma Christian at:

gemma.christian@eastleigh.gov.uk

Landscape Institute
South East



The Localism Bill

Fran Pickering

“The time has come to disperse power more widely in Britain today.”

The Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, Coalition Agreement, May 2010

Decentralisation, Big Society, Localism. This political rhetoric may be a vote winner but the practicalities of this radical approach remain untested.

The Localism Bill will set in motion a progressive devolution of power from Westminster to local governments and community groups. Through the reinvention of the planning system, the Coalition Government will attempt to revive local democracy and allow local people greater opportunity to shape and influence the places where they live.

However, despite all the talk of change, the planning system still has the fundamental aim of delivering sustainable development to

meet identified need.

Whilst the ambitions of the Government are laudable, a key dichotomy remains. How can growth be delivered when the ambitions and wishes of developers and local communities are so often at odds?

We are led to believe that this issue will eventually come out in the wash, but it seems that there is still a long way to go. What is known is that through the introduction of this flagship piece of legislation, the Planning System, as we currently know it, will undergo significant change.

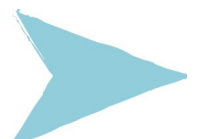
The Localism Bill Select Committee finished its

consideration of the Bill on 10 March. The Bill will now begin its Report Stage, where MPs will be given the opportunity to debate the content of the Bill, and suggests further amendments or new clauses. However, a few key points look set to endure the parliamentary ping pong.

▶ Regional Spatial Strategies, together with regional housing targets, will be abolished.

▶ Modification of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to ensure part of the financial gain from development is reinvested back into the affected neighbourhoods.

Continued on page 3





Continued from page 2

▶ Statutory requirement for pre-application community engagement for major applications.

▶ Greater freedom for Councillors to take part in the local debate on schemes before they reach planning committee.

▶ Introduction of Neighbourhood Planning through Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) and Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO).

▶ NDPs must be in line with legal requirement and in-conformity with guidelines and the strategic vision for the local area. Subject to approval through a local referendum and a formal

examination, the planning authority will then be obliged to adopt the plan.

▶ NDOs will allow communities to approve development in their local area without requiring normal planning consent.

▶ Abolition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission, regional government office and regional development agencies.

The RTPI believes it is especially important to ensure that planning legislation is clear, unequivocal and not open to constant challenge.

The RTPI website provides a detailed chronology of its ongoing [re-](#)

[sponse](#) and suggested amendments to the Bill. These include recommendations on how to make the neighbourhood planning system less complicated, provisions to ensure fairer outcomes for those involved/affected by development, consideration of whether a truly spatial National Policy Framework should be a statutory document, and proposals about how to bridge the gap between national and local planning.



Greg Clark's blue sky thinking

Following the Report Stage the Bill will undergo its Third Reading in the Commons before it is progressed to the House of Lords. Ministers would like the Bill to receive Royal Assent in July 2011 but it seems that this may now be a very ambitious target.

The views expressed are that of the author and do not represent the opinions of either the SCYPN or RTPI.

Towards RTPI Membership

Daniel Ramirez

Walking the path toward chartered membership of the RTPI can be a daunting and sometimes confusing task but, fear not, the SCYPN have teamed up with the RTPI Application Assessors team to provide a helping hand to all current and aspiring Licentiatees.

In January, the SCYPN hosted the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) event at The Point, Eastleigh. The event provided a unique insight into the RTPI application process and provided the opportunity for candidates to increase their understand-

ing of the APC process.

The evening kicked off with a presentation by Tracy Lloyd, RTPI Head of Membership and Careers, who provided useful hints and tips to ensure an APC application has every chance of ending in successful election.

This was followed by a series of short workshops with current Licentiatees and recently elected members of the RTPI to discuss the various components of the APC submission.

As someone about to begin a course in Spatial Plan-

ning, I personally found the evening extremely useful in understanding what is required of the Licentiate and how one can begin to prepare toward membership of the RTPI.

Following the success of the January event, the SCYPN will be running a series of related sessions to coincide with APC submission dates in 2011. These events are open to all Licentiatees, potential candidates and Mentors.

Keep an eye out on the SCYPN website for future APC events.

'Keep an eye out on the SCYPN website for future APC events'

Local Impact of the RSS Debate

Daniel Ramirez

Cast your mind back a few months and you will remember a certain legal battle between the Secretary of State (SoS), Mr Eric Pickles, and CALA Homes. In response to the rather sparse CLG letters of May 2010 and July 2010, CALA Homes fought a successful High Court challenge to have the SoS decision to revoke Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) overturned.

Peter Village QC, acting on behalf of CALA, argued that it was not within the legal remit of the SoS to remove RSS under section 79 [6] of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Furthermore, the removal of RSS would need to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. On both counts, Mr Justice Scales ruled in favour of CALA which effectively resulted in the reinstatement of RSS as part of the statutory development plan.

Not to be outdone by CALA, CLG released a third letter, dated 10 November 2010, stating that High Court ruling changed very little and that the 'Government's intention to abolish Regional Strategies in the Localism Bill should still be regarded as a material consideration'. CALA lodged a second chal-

lenge, but this time failed in its attempt to have the announcement quashed. A judicial review of this decision has been sought by CALA, although this is not due to be heard until mid-2011.

The disdain for regional tier Government was well publicised throughout the Conservative election campaign of 2010. Furthermore, the removal of RSS was a key message of the Coalition Government Agreement, so the Pickles letter of May 2010 should not have come as any great surprise. However, what has astounded most was the manner in which the RSS was removed. Suffice to say the lack of any transitional arrangements to bridge the gap between the old and new planning regime has been far from impressive.

For the planning industry, the implications of this legal battle are stark. Although RSS have been reinstated as part of the statutory development plan, the weight that should be attributed to the regional policies remains a highly contentious issue. No doubt planning barristers up and down the country will be salivating at the prospect of the extra business. However, the motivation behind the CALA challenges was unfortunately not a compassionate attempt to ease the headache of planning practitioners, rather, the legal contest centres on the pursuit of planning permission for a 93.1ha site for 2,000 homes at Barton Farm to the north of Winchester.

By most people's standards Winchester is an attractive place to live, but all too often desirability



Save Barton Farm Group gather in protest outside Winchester Guildhall

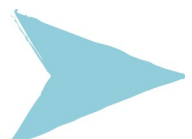
is coupled with problems of housing affordability and land supply. Barton Farm has an extensive planning history but this particular appeal was a result of the non-determination of an outline planning application ([09/02412/OUT](#)) in 2009. The site has been promoted in various forms and was refused planning permission both in 2000 and 2005. It was also selected as a reserve major development area in the Winchester District Local Plan Review (2006) and more recently the site was identified as a Preferred Option for development within the Winchester Core Strategy.

Unfortunately for CALA the decision making process for their application has transcended the change of Government and introduction of the Localism Bill. With the demise of the South East RSS, the South East Plan (SEP), almost a certainty, Winchester City Council (WCC) has set about a 'localist' approach to the review of housing requirement in the district through its [Blueprint consultation process](#).

Continued on page 5



Eric Pickles MP, SoS





Inside the Barton Farm Inquiry

Continued from page 6

The Blueprint consultation is still in its early stages and it remains unclear whether the locally derived figures will result in an increase or decrease in the housing requirement for Winchester District from that prescribed in the SEP. If the consultation demonstrates that the housing target should be significantly reduced, the justification for Barton Farm will certainly be brought into question. However, if the results of the consultation indicate that the housing requirement should in fact be increased, given the land supply limitations of Winchester, the case made by CALA will undoubtedly be reinforced.

It takes a brave soul to challenge the SoS, but the reinstatement of the SEP was integral to the Barton Farm case being built by CALA. Set against the SEP housing target, there is agreement that Winchester cannot presently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This neatly explains the gravity of Mr Justice Scales's decision for CALA Homes. With regards to Barton Farm, the options available to the developer were few. Either; continue to hold the site for an indeterminate length of time or; take the offensive and seek grant of planning permission through appeal. The economic argument

(together with eroded patience) act for compelling justification for CALA to reach for the latter of the two options.

There are many planning issues surrounding this Inquiry but, ultimately, the decision will boil down to a couple of key points (1) the extent of the housing shortfall and (2) whether the release of Barton will be able to address this deficit in the short-term.

Both the appellant and WCC have derived radically differing housing land supply figures. The view taken by Inspector Christine Downes on how much (or little) housing

'As far as the SoS is concerned, the issues surrounding Barton Farm are not just planning related but are as much a political and ethical conundrum.'

land is available will also need to be considered in the context of oversupply. The SEP provides that, outside of the South Hampshire sub-region, Winchester District must provide 275 dwellings annually or 1,375 dwellings over a five year period. To permit a development over 2,000 dwellings to compensate for a 5-year housing land deficit of between 490 (CALA estimates) and 220 (WCC estimates) may be considered to be overkill. Indeed, the lead-in time for the appeal site is such that only 150 units are capable of being delivered within the 5-year period.

However, CALA argue that the appeal site would provide a longer term strategic direction for growth for Winchester and that the 'consideration of the medium to long term housing land supply is clearly material where...the site is large and will be delivered over a greater than five year time span'.

Not surprisingly this high profile site has given rise to strong local opposition. The Save Barton Farm Group (SBFG), a well mobilised and organised group of over 5,000 registered members, has spearheaded the campaign to resist development at the site for the best part of a decade. To a certain extent SBFG epitomise the Coalition Government's ethos of 'local' planning. The resistance of top down housing numbers, the will to shape the character of the local area and a resurgence in local democracy; these are all facets of the 'Big Society'. As far as the SoS is concerned, the issues surrounding Barton Farm are not just planning related but are as much a political and ethical conundrum.

As this case goes to the heart of the of Coalition Government's proposals to Local Planning, no doubt Mr Pickles will be waiting with trepidation for the Inspector's Report. However, don't expect a timely decision as the SoS is likely to delay his response until the outcome of the most recent CALA challenge.

The public inquiry completed its sitting on 28 February, and was closed in writing by the Inspector on 21 March 2011.

The views expressed are that of the author and do not represent the opinions of either the SCYPN or RTPI.

Localism Bill comes to Reading *Nicki Tippett*

On the 15 March, the University of Reading played host to the first joint event of 2011 between the Thames Valley Young Planners Network and the SCYPN. Fifty delegates attended including planners, students and lecturers from the University.

Ann Skippers, of Charisma Planning and former President of the RTPI got the evening off to a great start. Ann voiced her support for the Localism agenda but expressed concerns with the legislation as currently drafted; many of these which are echoed



Ann Skippers on the Localism Bill

in the [RTPI response](#) to the Bill. Ann also highlighted the clear contradiction between the Government's Localism and Growth agendas, and envisaged that further changes to the planning system may be introduced following the April 2011 budget.

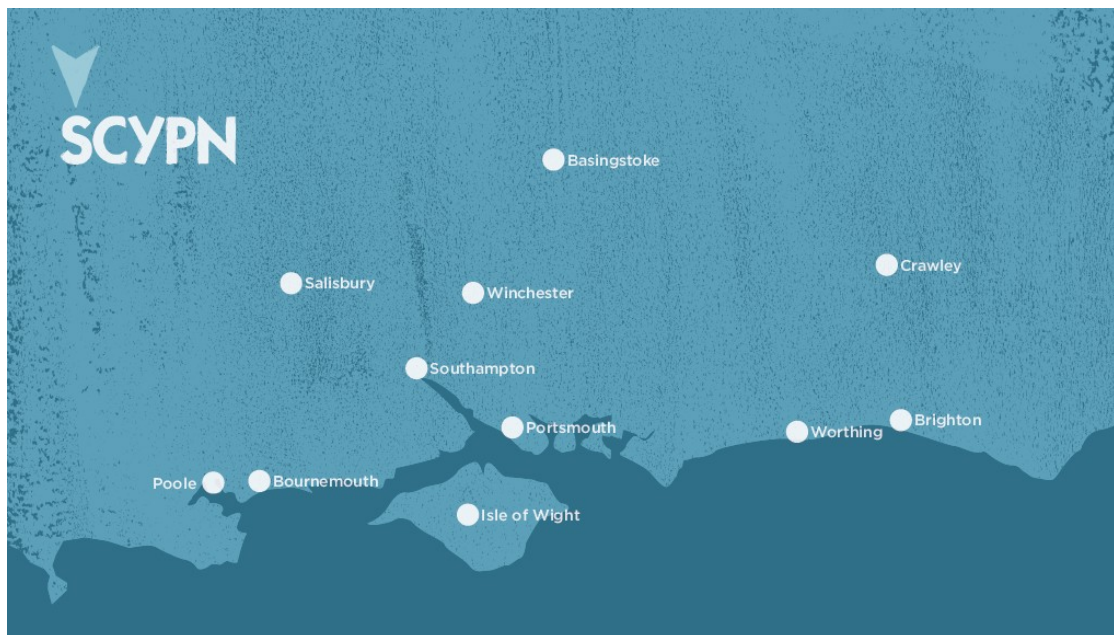
Kirsten Berry of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) then provided her insight into the future of minerals and waste planning. In a similar vein, Kirsten raised concerns regarding the neglect of strategic planning in the Bill and the problems of applying a neighbourhood approach to resource planning at a larger than local scale. Warning that the policy vacuum left by the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategies could lead to a lengthy period of "planning by appeal", she also highlighted the need for the Localism Bill to strengthen the Duty to Co-operate to ensure that strategic planning can continue its important function.

To complete the seminar, Max Wind-

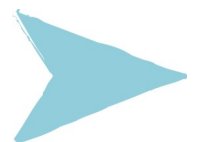
Cowie of Demos (an independent think tank and research institute) spoke of the Government's thinking on the Big Society. Referring to a research study of Balsall Heath and Castle Vale, two deprived Birmingham communities that have come to represent the [Big Society in Action](#), Max spoke of perceived inflexibility of planners and the resulting reassessment of the decision making structure by central Government. Through the method of "choice architecture" communities will be incentivised and gently "nudged" to encourage them to make right choices for themselves.

Each presentation represented contrasting viewpoints and generated a plethora of questions from the floor.

Many thanks to each of the three speakers and the Alina Congrave (event chair) from the University of Reading, without whom the event would not have been the success that it was.



Is this your area? If so, join the South Coast Young Planners Network





A Day in the Life of...

Name: Frances Pickering

When did you graduate? BSc (hons) 2006, MSc 2010

Which University did you graduate from? BSc – Bristol University,
MSc – University College London

What Degree did you study? BSc Social Policy, MSc Spatial Planning

Where do you work? Savills

What is your current job title? Planner

What hours do you work?

The general working day is 9 until 6 but it is often the case that I go to work earlier and finish later. I work the best in the mornings and also like to get in when there are not many people around so that I can get my head down and on to the daily tasks

Why did you enter your current career?

After finishing my undergraduate I knew that I was interested in how society works and I wanted to work in a job that made a difference (as I am sure most of us do). But I was stuck for how to apply this to my working life. I knew someone that worked at the Council in Southampton and they asked me if I had ever thought about Planning as a career ... I had not. I looked into planning to see if it was the career for me. I decided that there were many elements of planning that interested me and felt it closely reflected many of the subjects of my undergrad. I therefore decided to meet with a planner to learn a bit more about the role and what my daily duties would be.

How did you enter your current career?

I signed up to the Southampton City Council temping agency in the hope that I would get a position in the planning department to get a greater understanding of what the role entailed. Whilst I waited for this role to arrive I worked as a

recruitment consultant to earn some money, but I knew this was not the career for me. Whilst working I decided to ask Savills (who I had worked for in the past) whether I could undertake some work experience in their planning department. There was an opportunity for me to work with the team for a week where I could attend meetings and go on some site visits with the planners which would provide me with a brief insight into the daily life of a planner. I loved it! I was then offered a position in the Southampton City Council planning department where I would work for business services with the opportunity to shadow planners when the opportunity arose. This was great experience and I am very pleased I decided to work for the Council which was invaluable experience. Whilst working at the Council Savills asked if I wanted to be involved in a major urban extension project they had just won, I was thrilled that my Planning career was off to such a positive start. Once working for Savills I decided to undertake a Master in Spatial Planning, which I have now completed and I am working towards my Accredited Professional Competency (APC).

What does your job involve?

My job is extremely varied and changes daily. Since joining Savills I have been involved in a number of small scale planning applications. Continued liaison with the local au-



Fran Pickering, *SCYPN* Treasurer

thority, statutory consultees and the general public has been key drivers to their success. I have also worked on and been a key contact for a major urban extension site in Hampshire which has recently gained a resolution to approve at committee. I have also written a number of representations on behalf of clients as part of local authorities' Local Development Frameworks whilst also attending Havant Borough Council's Examination in Public for their Core Strategy, at which Savills represented one of their major clients. I have also written a number of socio-economic chapters for various Environmental Impact Assessments and have written a range of technical reports for submission with applications. My job also involves organising and attendance at a range of consultation events to ensure the public and stakeholders are properly informed about development within their local area. Local knowledge is also invaluable to ensuring a successful project that is appropriate for the area.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

What do you do in a typical day?

I work on a diverse range of projects, so my days are quite varied. I may be out on site to understand the context of a project, or at a meeting with statutory consultees or local authority planners, gathering their views one day and then writing a desktop based report for an application the next. I am also involved in the South Coast Young Planners Network so on occasion I can be assisting other steering group members arranging events or writing articles for the newsletter in the evenings.

What skills/knowledge do you need to be successful in your job?

Project management skills are essential especially in the private sector. Much of the daily task of a private consultancy planner is ensuring the team are up to date with planning issues, checking plans and ensuring the team are communicating effectively. Communication is also essential as a Planner often has to attend meetings with the local authority and stakeholders as well as attend public consultation events where we have to provide information to a variety of people. Some may know much about planning issues whilst others may not and it is essential for a planner to be able to communicate

with all groups. Time management is also a key skill as you are never working on one project alone. Team work and leadership is therefore also key to ensure tasks are completed on time and by the most appropriate person. Planning is very varied so it is very important to have a grasp of all of its different aspects, but equally it is also important that you recognise that someone may be more knowledgeable on a subject and therefore would be better equipped to carry out certain tasks. Attention to detail and other important writing skills assist in ensuring a project's success. Being up to date with planning issues, especially Government changes, is also a must in any planning role.

What are the best points about your job?

I really enjoy working on a diversity of projects with a range of people, including planners with different specialisms, clients and other professionals. It is always an excellent feeling when an application you are working gets approved, but it is also satisfying when you are working on a scheme that you truly believe will make a positive contribution to people's lives.

How do you feel your career might progress in future?

I feel that I have a great planning career ahead of me. I think it is now time to work out a few areas that I am most interested in and try and

form a specialism in planning. I see myself staying in the private sector and I am looking forward to one day managing my own team and urban extension projects.

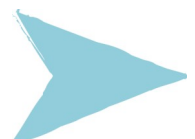
What advice do you have for students and graduates interested in a career as a Town Planner?

I think it is important to do your homework and research all the different areas of planning to make sure it is the career for you. It is also a good idea to try and obtain some work experience for a company as this was very helpful for me when trying to decide my career path. There are many different aspects of planning but try and keep your options open and enjoy!

What is your funniest/most comedic moment in Planning?

Public consultation events are always very interesting. I have had some absurd comments regarding proposals for development. Planning Sans Frontiers is also a great event to attend!

If you are on the look out for a new planning role, check out these useful job resources.





Meet the Team

Gemma Christian



SCYPN Chair

Gemma is a Planning Policy Officer at Eastleigh Borough Council. She studied Planning Practice and Research at Cardiff University and joined the SCYPN Steering Group in November 2008 and became chair in 2010.

Daniel Ramirez



Newsletter Editor

Daniel is a Planning Policy Officer at Fareham Borough Council. He studied Geography at the University of Birmingham and graduated in 2008. He has worked at Fareham since mid-2010 and will be starting a part-time Masters in Spatial Planning at UCL in September 2011.

Nicola Tippet



Membership & Communications

Nicola joined the SCYPN Steering Group in July 2010. She is a Minerals and Waste Policy Planner at West Sussex County Council. She studied Geography at Southampton University and has a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Westminster.

Luke Bennett



Secretary & Web Administrator

Luke joined the SCYPN in January 2011. He is a Trainee Planning Policy Officer at the Borough of Poole. He studied a BA degree in Geography at Southampton University and has worked in planning since 2009. Luke will be starting a part-time Masters in Spatial Planning at UCL in September 2011.

Meet more of the SCYPN team in the next edition of South Coast Spatial or visit the [SCYPN Website](#)

Sponsorship

The SCYPN is always on the lookout for new sponsors. Through the national Young Planner Network we can assist in providing excellent publicity and exposure for your company. If you are interested in working in partnership with the SCYPN please contact Fran Pickering at: fpickering@savills.com

We would like to thank our current sponsors for your continued support.



Get Involved!

The SCYPN is now in its 5th full year of operation. The network was established in November 2006 and has now grown to over 300 members.

Membership is open to all young planners in the South Coast Region - from Poole in the West to Brighton in the East.

The SCYPN is always looking for new members and fresh ideas. If you are a young professional working or studying in the planning sector and located on the south coast then this is the network for you.

Membership is free so there is nothing holding you back.

To become a member of the SCYPN or for further information contact Gemma Christian at: gemma.christian@eastleigh.gov.uk

If you would like to become a contributor to the SCYPN Newsletter contact Daniel Ramirez at: dramirez@fareham.gov.uk



RTPI
mediation of space · making of place

We're on the Web!

www.rtpi.org.uk/south_coast_young_planners/



Find us on facebook



follow us on twitter



@RTPIYPs