

# IN PERSPECTIVE

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NEWSLETTER OF THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE SOUTH EAST • SUMMER 2011

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## From the chair

Steve Avery, Chair, RTPI South East

**Never mind the vagaries of the British summer; it seems there's plenty of heat being generated by the NPPF – and not before time!**

Unlike the Localism Bill, which so far has enjoyed a relatively low key passage through Parliament, the draft NPPF and the return to the old 'presumption in favour of development' has certainly stirred some long overdue public interest in the government's planning reforms.

The one planning tool that everyone understands (and most seem to cherish) is the Green Belt. So you know things must be getting serious when the Telegraph starts sticking up for planners and the Government lambasts the National Trust and the CPRE as a bunch of 'Lefties'.

And perhaps most surprising, following the Cala Homes saga, is the Planning Inspectorate's recent announcement that the draft NPPF is capable of being a material consideration even though it's a consultation draft and the current PPSs and PPGs remain in place. Can you imagine the reaction if a local authority started applying draft planning policies prior to the end of a consultation process, let alone adoption? Whatever else happens, it certainly promises to be an interesting few months ahead!

Meanwhile, and notwithstanding the imminent dismantling of the nation's planning system, your Regional Activities Committee has stuck to the cause and been busy putting together a number of events to promote planning in the Region. We were especially pleased to welcome RTPI President Richard Summers to the Region in June.



It was a very enjoyable couple of days and as always, great to get out and about to see at first hand some of the excellent planning work taking place in our area.

The highlights included a trip to Bracknell Forest Council to see how planners were helping to lead on the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre, a visit to a Code 6 Affordable Homes development by Radian on the outskirts of Windsor and finding out more about the pioneering work of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in developing Neighbourhood Planning. The visit was concluded with an 'Update on Localism' event convened in the opulent surroundings of the Windsor Guildhall where the President was able to provide us with an insightful account of how the RTPI is striving to improve the drafting of the Localism Bill.

Other notable events over the summer have included the inaugural Brighton Rock Lecture in May and a very well

attended seminar on Coastal Planning in July. We are also at that time of the year when we start work on putting together the Annual Regional Awards. The judging panel are busily engaged in assessing the eight entries received this year, all of which are of outstanding quality. So make sure you look out for details of the glittering Awards Evening to be held in November.

As always, none of these events would be possible without people freely volunteering their time. We could always do with more help on the Committee and if you want to get more involved with the work of the Region, either as a speaker, sponsor or host venue, then please do get in touch by contacting

[southeast@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:southeast@rtpi.org.uk)

We hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming autumn/winter events!

**Steve Avery**  
Chair, RTPI South East



## CPD 2011

**The events programme this year has been wide-ranging and very well attended, showing us that our low-cost events are valued by members.**

Following on from successful events on Localism, a masterclass in Planning Inquiries, and the annual enforcement update, there was a useful event on how to start up in consultancy, and a Spring Legal Update – the latter is hoped to make this an annual event. May saw the Annual Rural Update and the new Brighton Rock Annual Lecture, given this year by Professor Mark Tewdr-Jones of UCL. An update on localism was held during the visit of Richard Summers, followed by a wide-ranging event on Coastal Issues, and finally conservation in rural Hampshire. As often as possible, presentations from events go onto the south east regional RTPI website [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_south\\_east](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_south_east) so if you can't attend an event, look at the website for information.

Preparation is underway on the Autumn programme, and the first event will be on 15th September – a debate on the NPPF (see website for further details) – this is likely to be very popular, and places will be limited, so do book early to be sure of a place. October will see the Annual Legal Update to be held again at Landmark Chambers, and on 2nd November, the region is delighted to welcome Niall McNevin, the Director of Planning & Sustainability, from the Olympic Park Legacy Company to give the David Fryer Memorial Lecture at Oxford Brookes University.

November will see the glittering awards evening, venue soon to be confirmed, where winners of the south east regional awards will be announced – a great opportunity for informal networking over a buffet supper. Other events are also planned, and all details will be in the monthly e-bulletins – email [carol.dawson@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:carol.dawson@rtpi.org.uk) if you would like to go on the mailing list to receive this.

Miles Thompson

■ Send us your articles and ideas at [southeast@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:southeast@rtpi.org.uk) or use it to tell us you would rather receive a paper copy. If you work outside the public sector and want to update your email details, contact [southeast@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:southeast@rtpi.org.uk).

Written by RTPI South East Region and designed by Savills



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## PLANNING AID

I joined Planning Aid's team of Community Planning Outreach Co-ordinators on 18th July 2011. Before joining Planning Aid I worked for Rural Community Council of Essex as a Community Engagement Officer where I supported communities in creating Community Led Plans.

Planning Aid is providing focused Community Planning outreach support to communities in the 20% most deprived areas in England. The South/Central East target areas are: Hastings, Thanet, Brighton and Hove, Portsmouth, Southampton, Luton, Ipswich, Eastbourne, Tendring, Harlow, Shepway, Swale, Havant, Southend-on-Sea, Fenland, and Waveney.

Volunteers are central to the service delivering on the ground, and with that in mind, I am co-ordinating two volunteer meetings for the area to discuss the new service and the role of the volunteer. These will be: 5.30 – 8.30pm 13th September Hove or, 14th September Cambridge.

Our advice line 0330 123 9244 provides free and independent advice to all callers. Eligible callers who require further help will be referred to a volunteer to work on their case.

If you are aware of any communities that would benefit from our service, you would like more information about the service or to attend one of the volunteer meetings please contact me.

Email: stella.meesters@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Tel: 0203 206 1894

**Stella Meesters,**  
Community Planning  
Outreach Co-ordinator

## PLANNING SUMMER SCHOOL

**It's that time of year to remind you all that this year's summer school will be taking place this year from 3rd-7th September in Swansea.**

The focus this year is "Planning with Communities" with workshops and papers on community engagement, producing joint core strategies, strategic planning as well as study tours. Given the increasing importance of river systems and "blue infrastructure" you might be particularly interested to hear the winner of the International Scholarship, Clare Healy from Arup, will present a paper on the "Seoul 'Lost River' Project on the 7th September. Who knows, you might be inspired to apply for next years scholarship.

Planning Summer School is run by planners for planners, and the ethos established over 75 years ago of "a short time each

summer to reflect and exchange ideas" is as relevant as ever. I would guess that most of us, whether as individuals or as organisations, are under more pressure than at any time before, in my working life at least, to do more for less and to cut budgets.

This is where Summer School can help, it will provide up to 20 hours of CPD and will leave you refreshed and recharged and hopefully having rediscovered your verve for planning!

This year we have built on what makes Summer School special but adapted it to meet current needs - two days each of elected members' and planners' school, with a crossover "summit day" for both planners and members (and ideal as a day ticket). Bookings can be made via:

[www.planningsummerschool.org.uk/](http://www.planningsummerschool.org.uk/)

## ANNUAL RURAL SEMINAR - BRIGHTON 2011

**Delegates from both the public and private sector from across the region gathered at the new Huxley Building of our hosts Brighton University for this year's event on 12 May.**

Fenella Collins, Head of Planning at the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), got the afternoon going with an account of the CLA's position on the forthcoming National Planning Framework (NPF). With Neighbourhood Planning in prospect there is a need for the NPF to be written in clear English and not jargon, so it can be used by the ordinary people who will need to use them to develop Neighbourhood plans.

Mike Harris, Senior Principal Ecologist with Thomson Ecology, gave a varied talk. He started with an update on the new government's emerging approach to the treatment of ecological matters in planning: all the wildlife legislation is under review and the outline of a new regime is expected in a White Paper later this year. This is expected to

set out further details about 'Biodiversity Off-Setting', which will seek to introduce a more strategic approach to mitigating the impact of new development on ecological capacity.

The afternoon finished with Teresa Gittins, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Services at 'Action in rural Sussex' (AirS). Teresa reminded us of the long heritage of AirS and similar rural associations and that 'localism' and 'the Big Society' are nothing new, especially not amongst rural communities.

(Please note : the full reports and all three speaker presentation slide shows can be found on the RTPi South East pages of the RTPi website).

Our thanks go to our three speakers, our host Dr Samer Bagaeen of the School of Environment and Technology at the University of Brighton and to all who attended.

**Miles Thompson,**  
RTPi South East vice-chair and  
CPD Co-ordinator

## THAMES VALLEY YOUNG PLANNERS' EVENT HERALDED A SUCCESS

A Thames Valley Young Planners' event held on 9th June in Oxford provided a successful CPD and networking opportunity for young planners across Oxfordshire.

Nearly 40 delegates attended the event, which featured a range of speakers who presented on key topics including current trends in the residential land market and the impact of the emerging Localism Bill upon the planning profession.

Guest speakers included Matt Davis from Savills Development in its Oxford office, Matt Bates from the Planning Policy department of Oxford City Council and David Coates, Planning Director of Kingerlee Homes, based in Kidlington.

Richard Summers also attended the event as part of his Presidential Tour of the South East Region and made a keynote speech on the RTPi's response to the Localism Bill.

Alison Wright of Savills' planning department in Oxford, who led the event, adds, "I was very pleased that the event was so well attended and that Richard was keen to show his support. Given the high attendance and positive feedback from delegates, I hope that Savills can make this an annual Oxford event!"

The Thames Valley Young Planners' Network (TVYP) would like to thank Savills and Oxford City Council for sponsoring the event.