

# RTPI NEWS

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## The Queen rewards retail planning services in new year honours list

Consultant planner and RTPI member Dr John England receives an MBE for helping people get to grips with practical applications of government policy tests on town centres, Nancy Hammonds discovers

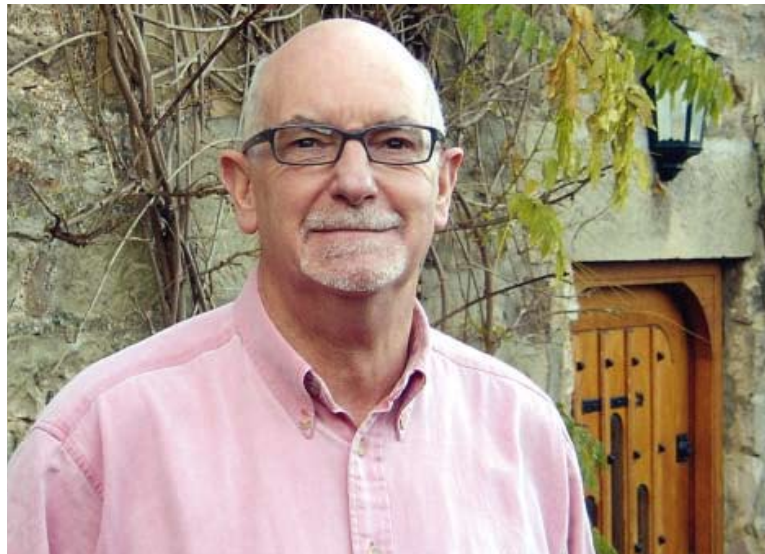
An experienced town planner from North Yorkshire, Dr John Richard England, has been made an MBE by the Queen in her 2010 new year honours list in recognition of his services to retail planning.

England, a member of the RTPI for 37 years, is a director of one of the largest independent planning consultancy firms in the north of England, England & Lyle. He formed this chartered town planning consultancy in Darlington in 1995 with Ian Lyle. Later, they were joined by their third partner, Jeremy Good. The firm is now a limited company with eight planners.

England is recognised nationally for his expertise in retail planning and town centres. He has extensive experience in consultancy work for local authorities, developers and retailers and has widened his field of experience further recently in advising clients on retailing in market towns.

The focal point for his work is in the East Riding of Yorkshire, where he conducted a town centres and retail study to inform the evidence base for the local development framework and to highlight issues and recommendations in market towns. Work has also involved need assessments and policy advice on retail and other town centre uses covering all the main towns in the East Riding. He also collected evidence for the local authority when it was involved in a call-in inquiry for a proposed retail and leisure development in Beverley.

In an interview about his royal accolade England said: "Over recent years, I have developed a detailed knowledge of the practical application of the policy tests in PPS6 *Planning for Town Centres* in my work for clients on retailing and town centres.



England: work has covered policy advice, studies and need assessment



My reputation in applying PPS6 for the benefit of my clients is the main reason I have been awarded an MBE

"I believe that my reputation in applying PPS6 for the benefit of my clients is the main reason that I have been awarded an MBE," he explained. "But in part I think that it is because I have always tried to take a professional approach in providing clients with independent advice on complex policy issues, particularly in my work for local authorities."

PPS6 has now been replaced by PPS4 *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth*. England notes: "It is a happy coincidence that the new PPS4, with its revised policy guidance on town centres, has been published at the same time as my award. I look forward to being able to apply the experience I have gained in retail planning to help clients understand the new policy tests."

England has followed in the footsteps of his father into the honours list, albeit in a different field of expertise. Ken England was awarded an MBE in 1978 in recognition of his

services as a chief superintendent for Durham Police.

John England grew up in Stockton-on-Tees and attended Newcastle University. He began his career in local government planning, mostly with the former Cleveland County Council, where he was a group leader in policy planning. He later joined consultancy WS Atkins' regional office in Middlesbrough in 1987 as head of planning.

It was during this period that he became interested in retail planning consultancy and in 1997 he was awarded a PhD by Newcastle University for research on retail impact assessment, which he carried out part-time. Soon after he followed this up by writing the UK's first book on the subject. *Retail Impact Assessment — a Guide to Best Practice* was published in 2000 by Routledge.

England lives with his wife in Richmond, North Yorkshire, where he continues to specialise in retail planning consultancy for developers, retailers and local authorities across the UK. Last year, he was appointed to the national board of Action for Market Towns in England, whose 1,600 market towns have been hard hit by the recession.

With unemployment overall in the region rising by a third more than in the UK as a whole, shop vacancies have increased and empty shops are getting harder to let. Action for Market Towns is providing research, lobbying and helping to promote the sharing of good practice between towns, working locally with town partnerships and town councils to bring renewed vitality to town centres.

Nancy Hammonds is editor of RTPI News and the institute website at [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

# Norfolk coastal path hosts mission of mercy for Help for Heroes supporters

A brother wounded in Afghanistan has prompted a group of friends to gear up to help the charity that assisted in rehabilitation, explain Dave and Liz Beighton

Six intrepid planners and a non-planner friend are preparing for a gruelling hike of nearly 80km along the north Norfolk coast to raise sponsorship funds for the Help for Heroes charity, which provides support for injured members of the armed forces.

Their mission of mercy began after young soldier Nick Beighton — a captain serving with the Royal Engineers and posted to Afghanistan in September 2009 — was seriously injured by a bomb while on foot patrol in the Helmand province. Just six days after his 28th birthday and less than a month after arriving there he lost both legs and shattered his pelvis in the blast.

He was flown home to spend ten days in the critical care unit at Selly Oak Hospital, in Birmingham. After two more months in hospital, he was moved to the armed forces rehabilitation centre at Headley Court in Surrey where he began the difficult task of learning to become mobile again.

While at Selly Oak, and later at Headley Court, Help for Heroes gave him a lot of help. The charity offers incredible support to wounded members of the armed forces, including raising significant sums to invest in the centre's facilities.

This has inspired the seven of us to gear up for a gruelling sponsored walk along the Norfolk Coast Path over the weekend of 20-21 February to raise money for the Help for Heroes charity. The walk is equivalent to almost two marathons.

The choice of charity was never difficult. The work that our armed forces do is unparalleled in any other profession. That it is carried out with such enthusiasm and endeavour makes it all the more astonishing and often very difficult to comprehend for those of us with more routine jobs in the world of planning.

What has always been clear to all of us, however, is a solid determina-



Charityteam: donations will support work for wounded armed forces members such as Nick Beighton (below)



tion to recognise this effort in whatever way possible and at the same time to support the excellent work of Help for Heroes.

We set out with the intention of raising £1,000. But the response and support so far has been overwhelming, including generous donations from strangers, and we hit that target with pledges within a week. Our target now is to simply raise as much as we possibly can for this very worthy cause, which for obvious reasons is close to our hearts.

Our journey will start at Hunstanton and pass through Wells-next-the-Sea, Sheringham and the Norfolk Coast area of outstanding natural beauty, breaking the journey midway at Stiffkey. We will finish at the end of the pier in Cromer more than 75km from our start point, where we will look forward to enjoying a well deserved drink and a chance to rest our weary feet.

We met at an East of England RTPI sponsored Young Planners networking night out in Bedford in 2001 and the other party members at Rochford District Council in Essex, where we began our careers. We all became good friends and have remained in close contact, although

our careers have taken us along various paths through different sectors and councils.

As well as ourselves, the party comprises husband and wife team Chris and Deborah Board. They met at Rochford and are now director of DC Planning in Colchester and principal planner at Babergh District Council respectively.

Former Rochford colleagues Hannah Baker, now an associate at Indigo Planning, and London Borough of Havering planning control manager Helen Oakerbee are also part of the group. Meanwhile, a special Hike for Heroes group has been set up on the social networking website Facebook to allow people to follow our endeavours and leave messages of support.

*Dave Beighton is a principal planner at Forest Heath District Council.*

*Liz Beighton is a principal planner at Suffolk Coastal District Council and forms part of the Felixstowe Futures team. Anyone wishing to sponsor the walk should visit [www.justgiving.com/Hike-for-Heroes](http://www.justgiving.com/Hike-for-Heroes). Further information can also be found at [www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3284&ap=1](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/3284&ap=1)*

# Planning Aid survey reveals rewards and opportunities

Transport, minerals and Gypsies and travellers skills are on the volunteer wishlist this year, says *Ben Lee*

Anyone considering volunteering for Planning Aid England this year should read its latest volunteer survey findings. Almost 85 per cent of respondents said they would recommend volunteering for the service, with 75 per cent saying they had enjoyed their experience.

“The fact that volunteers enjoy it and are prepared to recommend it are two great incentives to join up,” says Planning Aid England volunteer and skills manager Shereen Shafi. “Our volunteers are the lifeblood of the service,” she adds.

“They help us extend our capacity to help economically disadvantaged and socially excluded people and communities. By acting independently and impartially, they build the public’s confidence and capacity to get involved with planning.”

Planning Aid England has 1,056 volunteers at the time of the survey. One-third of respondents have more than 20 years’ experience in planning, with 37 per cent aged between 25 and 34. Their skills lie in appeals, public inquiries, urban design, environment, community participation, housing, development plans and development management.

It is this range which gives Planning Aid England the ability to respond and relate so effectively to its clients’ needs. This exclusive pool of competence is not offered for free anywhere else in the UK.

“Our volunteers freely bring their professional experience and knowledge,” Shafi points out. “Without them we would not have been able to deliver support, advice, training and raising awareness about the planning system to more than 31,000 people last year.”



**Planning Aid: seeking volunteers**

Planning Aid England carries out an annual survey of its volunteers to establish an up-to-date picture of the extent and nature of volunteering. This information helps regions allocate assignments.

The RTPI membership remains the main source of volunteers and the responses this year showed a mix of altruistic and professional reasons for signing up. The most popular reasons cited were that it is a good thing to do or to learn new skills, while 75 per cent were motivated because Planning Aid is a potential source of continuing professional development.

Skills gaps remain in the fields of transport, minerals, Gypsies and travellers and renewable energy, so any members with these skills looking to make a difference should consider offering their services.

*Ben Lee is the RTPI’s Planning Aid communications and public affairs officer. Shereen Shafi can be contacted on 0121 214 2909 or at [volunteers@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)*

# RTPI Bulletin Board

## Nominations now open for George Pepler Award

The biennial George Pepler International Award is presented to young planners under the age of 30 who wish to take on a short period of study on a particular aspect of spatial planning. It is open to candidates living in the UK who wish to visit another country and to overseas candidates wishing to spend time in the UK. To apply, candidates have to submit a statement describing the nature of the study they wish to carry out, together with an itinerary. The RTPI will nominate three judges and the successful candidate will receive £1,500 — two-thirds before the study visit and the balance afterwards and on submission of a report. The award is not confined to members or students of the RTPI. For more information, please email [awards@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:awards@rtpi.org.uk)

## RTPI Yorkshire region changes address

The RTPI Yorkshire regional office has moved to The Studio, 32 The Calls, Leeds LS2 7EW. The telephone number is 0113 204 2464 and fax is 0113 389 9871. The office is open from Monday to Wednesday only. At other times, email Tony Ray at [asray007@btinternet.com](mailto:asray007@btinternet.com). For more information on conferences, seminars and YORnet events, please visit [www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi\\_yorkshire](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_yorkshire)

## Notice of members’ deaths

The institute notes with regret the death of RAE Cummins (South West), D Hick (Yorkshire), S Samuel (London), JW Tanner (overseas) and B Taylor (North West). We offer our condolences to their families and friends.

## Event

### Key Planning Issues for 2010

29 January. The Hatton, 51-53 Hatton Garden, London. This conference, chaired by DCLG chief planner Steve Quartermain, will look at future changes to the planning system. Key speakers including the Infrastructure Planning Commission’s Paul Hudson, Home Builders Federation director of economic affairs John Stewart, Drivers Jonas head of sustainability Jon Lovell and RTPI acting director of policy and partnerships Matt Thomson will give their views on the impact of new legislation on both private and public sector planners. Cost: £489 + VAT; members £389; licentiates, students, retired and unemployed members £140 + VAT. To book, email [services@rtpiconferences.co.uk](mailto:services@rtpiconferences.co.uk) or call 0845 082 1171.

### Delivering Housing in a Fragile Market

29 January. Armada House, Bristol. Planning will undoubtedly take centre stage in the industry’s revival, but this will require commitment to tackling climate change impacts. Conference speakers will examine development economics and new sustainability standards and how we can deliver in turbulent times. Cost: £75 + VAT; retired members £31; students £21. For more information, contact Helen Clarke on 01823 250822 or email [southwest@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:southwest@rtpi.org.uk)



**RTPI**

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# Key Planning Issues in 2010

29 January 2010 • London

- Climate change
- Planning for the economic recovery
- National Policy Statements
- Infrastructure Planning Commission

**Conference speaker:**

**Steve Quartermain**, Chief Planner, Communities and Local Government



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