

## Standing up for Hertfordshire's Countryside

7 January 2013

### PRESS RELEASE

#### A NAIL IN THE COFFIN FOR 'LAND FRAUD'

Countryside campaigners CPRE Hertfordshire greeted with satisfaction news of a successful prosecution of two men engaged in a 'land banking' fraud. At Isleworth Crown Court last December they were sentenced to six years and seven years in jail. 'Land banking' involves the sale of small plots of ex-agricultural land at very high prices. Purchasers are persuaded that the land will become available for housing development. In this case that was never going to happen.

CPRE Hon. Director Kevin FitzGerald said:-

*'We have many examples of this in Hertfordshire<sup>1</sup>. Most sites are in the Green Belt, and therefore there is a presumption against development. Prices for small plots, typically 0.2 hectares, have ranged from £20,000 to £80,000. In most cases, because of the location, they will never be built on. As local authorities produce their strategic development plans for the next twenty or so years we note that none of them include any of these sites. The result is that we have a large amount of land lost to agriculture and useless for anything else. Some sites have become overgrown and an eyesore. It is just amazing how gullible people can be and how ready to part with their cash when sold "get-rich-quick" schemes which are obviously too good to be true. When they learn the truth they should demand their money back.'*

- ends, Notes to Editors follow -

#### Notes to Editors

1. See attached list, dating from May 2008.
2. CPRE Hertfordshire's principal aim is to safeguard the natural environment of the county, especially the Green Belt and other protected areas. We also seek to protect the built

environment, particularly historic settlements and buildings. Our President is Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO. We have around 1800 members. [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk)

3. CPRE Hertfordshire is the County Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. CPRE fights for a better future for the English countryside. We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. Founded in 1926, President: Sir Andrew Motion, Patron: Her Majesty The Queen.  
[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)
4. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Kevin FitzGerald, Hon. Director, CPRE Hertfordshire, tel. 07949 338044, email [office@cpreherts.org.uk](mailto:office@cpreherts.org.uk)