

[sign in](#)[home](#) › [environment](#)[cities](#)[development](#)[UK](#)[world](#)[sport](#)[football](#)[all](#)

Environment

Nightingales v 5,000 new homes: the battle over the woods of Lodge Hill

79

Plan to build on sanctuary for bird celebrated by poets for centuries undermines the entire conservation regime of Britain



Nightingale, *Luscinia megarhynchos*, singing in the woods. The UK population of the bird has declined by 91% since the 1960s. Photograph: Lisa Geoghegan/Alamy

Patrick BarkhamThursday 25 September 2014 12.00 BST

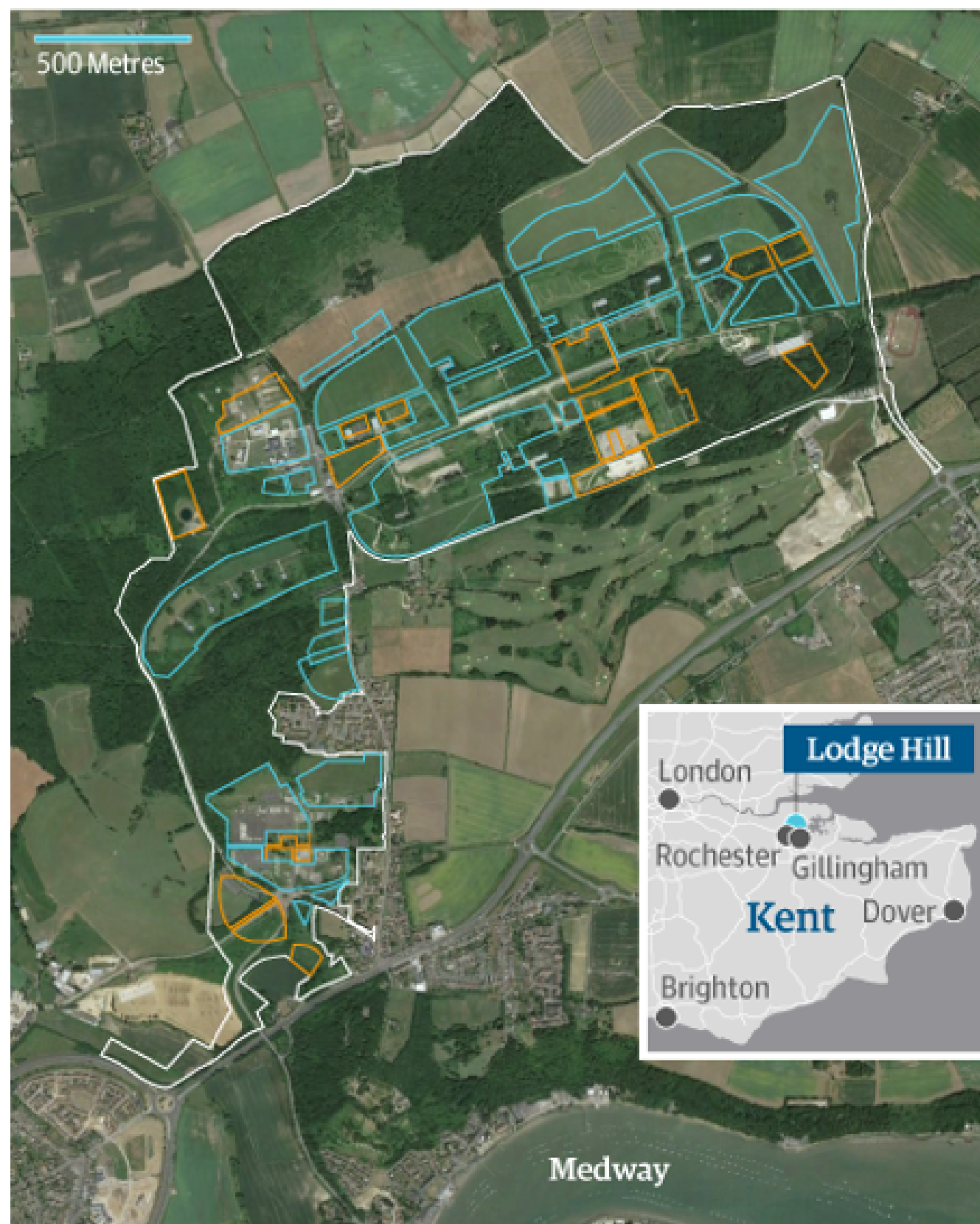
Each spring, Owen Sweeney rises early to listen to biggest population of nightingales in Britain singing in the woods of Lodge Hill.

“At 5am in May it’s just glorious - the density of singing is tremendous,” said the retired civil servant, walking through ancient oak woodland as a hobby swooped to catch a hawker dragonfly overhead. “I’ve taken my grandchildren to hear their first nightingale and their faces when they first hear it are just something.”

But the song [celebrated by poets for centuries](#) may fall silent if Medway council and Land Securities, the biggest property developer in Britain, [build 5,000 homes on the Ministry of Defence land](#), which was last year designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England, the government's environmental protection agency.

Lodge Hill housing development

Key | ● Housing ● Public and other buildings



GUARDIAN GRAPHIC

SOURCE: MEDWAY COUNCIL. IMAGE: GOOGLE

The controversial plans have been billed as a battle between a small brown bird and homes for 11,000 local people but environmental groups say what is really at

stake is the robustness of the entire conservation regime: this is the biggest attempt to build on an SSSI in England since the wildlife protection legislation of 1981.

Communities secretary Eric Pickles – a keen birdwatcher – must now make a decision about whether to call a public inquiry into the development against a backdrop of government pressure to build more homes and George Osborne’s reported complaints about “feathered obstacles” to development.

Lodge Hill, once used for bomb disposal training, is described as a brownfield site by Medway council, who earlier this month granted outline planning permission for the homes despite opposition from a planning inspector, local councillors and environmental groups including [the RSPB](#), [The Woodland Trust](#), [Kent Wildlife Trust](#), [Butterfly Conservation](#), [Buglife International](#) and the [Dickens Countryside Protection Society](#).

Advertisement



0€ Internet Flat

Kostenlos mobil surfen & für nur 9 Cent in alle Netze telefonieren. Kein Mindestumsatz.



Sonderaktion

Tolle Sparpreise für alle Haustiere. Regelmäßigen Bedarf vorteilhaft einkaufen!



Anti-Virus 2015

Bietet effektiven Schutz für Ihre persönlichen Daten und Ihre digitale Identität.

On high ground on the Hoo Peninsula, which was immortalised by Charles Dickens and recently fought off London mayor Boris Johnson’s plans for a new airport, Lodge Hill’s unusual history has ironically made it far richer in wildlife than most green fields. Between deep pools once used for underwater training are ancient woodland, rare grassland and old concrete foundations on which bask common lizards, grass snakes, adders and slowworms. Ruined buildings have created 19 bat roosts, there are 10 badger setts and a British Trust for Ornithology survey found 84 singing male nightingales on the site, more than 1% of the UK population, which has declined by 91% since the 1960s.

An environmental survey for Land Securities also identified the Duke of Burgundy, the scarcest butterfly in Britain which is only found in 18 small areas of the country. “It’s a remarkable find,” said Butterfly Conservation’s Nigel Bourn. “We need more surveys to assess the extent of this and other

lepidoptera.”

There have been no moth surveys and the developer’s invertebrate surveys have been “completely inadequate” according to Sarah Henshall of Buglife International. Scientists believe there are more rare species yet to be discovered.

“There’s a lot more than the developers are admitting,” said Sweeney, pointing out where he found bee orchids and common spotted orchids. “It’s clear that the biodiversity riches have been underestimated all over the place. We’re lucky to have it. We say to the council why don’t you switch your mindset – we’ve got a jewel here, why not celebrate it?”



MoD land in Lodge Hill, Medway, north Kent, where Land Securities want to build 5,000 homes, is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Photograph: Graham Turner/The Guardian

The 5,000 homes have cross-party support on Tory-run Medway council and councillors say there are no other large sites in the densely-populated conurbation of 250,000 people where new infrastructure can also be provided. As well as homes for 11,000 people, Land Securities has promised to build three primary schools, a nursing home and hotel, creating 5,000 jobs.

Under the government’s [national planning policy framework](#), building on an SSSI is possible with environmental mitigation and if the development is of national importance and Vince Maple, leader of Medway council’s Labour group, said the homes were a solution to the national housing crisis.

“Medway has 20,000 local residents on their housing waiting list. That’s not acceptable,” said Maple. “I’ve had people knocking on my door saying they are

currently living in a tent in a green space in town. There's a desperate need to tackle this issue."



Two male nightingales try to outsing each other at Lodge Hill

As part of environmental mitigation plans, Land Securities propose to create nightingale habitat on a 304-hectare site in Essex. A Medway council spokesperson said: "The nightingales have only been at Lodge Hill in their current numbers (around 66 pairs) since the army stopped using it recently. They only stay on site for a few months every year and we believe there is every chance an even larger number will decide to colonise the new site which will be available before building works start." [Land Securities](#) declined to comment.

But there has never before been a successful relocation of nightingales - which migrate from Africa to their ancestral breeding grounds in Britain each spring - and the [RSPB](#) says there is no evidence the birds will find or survive on their alternative home, which is 14 miles north.



Rolf Williams, RSPB spokesperson at Lodge Hill. Photograph: Graham Turner/The Guardian

“If it’s as easy as Land Securities and Medway council are saying, don’t you think we would have done this already and brought back this rare species?” said Rolf Williams of the RSPB. “This idea that you plant the right bushes and the birds will come is misguided – they are not vegetarians, invertebrate life is crucial, and this may depend on geology and the soil types.”

Williams believes nightingales’ success on Lodge Hill may also be linked to the absence of deer on the Hoo Peninsula. Deer – which are present around the proposed Essex mitigation site – destroy the undergrowth where nightingales nest.

The RSPB is also concerned that the 5,000 new homes will lead to domestic cats predating any nightingales which survive in the woods bordering the development. MoD fences have helped keep out domestic cats until now.

Chris Irvine, a local Conservative councillor who opposes the homes, said that local residents are “absolutely fuming” about the development. “People who have lived here for generations want to be ‘regenerated’. They don’t want this thing that is being peddled to them.”

Alternative housing sites in Medway are deeply unpopular, such the green space of Capstone Valley, but Irvine argued that councillors needed “more long-term thinking about what sort of Medway we want to be building.”

Ultimately, Irvine would like to see Lodge Hill “preserved as a vital green space. As a politician, I don’t want my legacy to be 5,000 homes on an SSSI. I’ve got a 12-

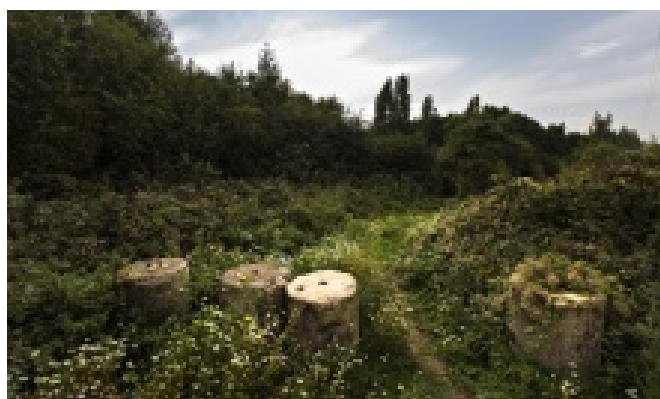
year-old son and I'd like to pass something on to him."

[Conservation](#)[Wildlife](#)[Birds](#)[RSPB](#)[Endangered habitats](#)[More...](#)

Related content



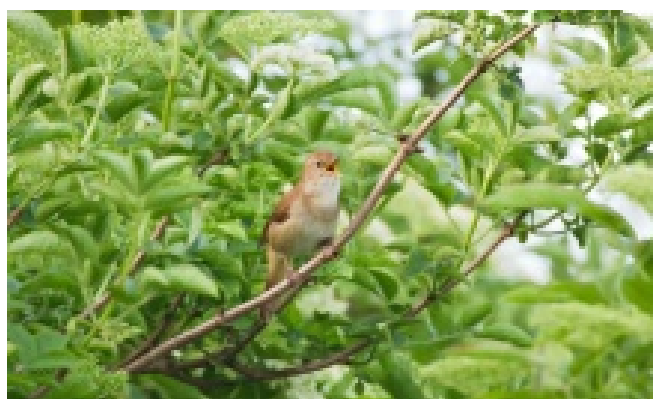
The week in wildlife - in pictures



Land Securities director abandons attempt to become wildlife trustee

18 Sep 2014

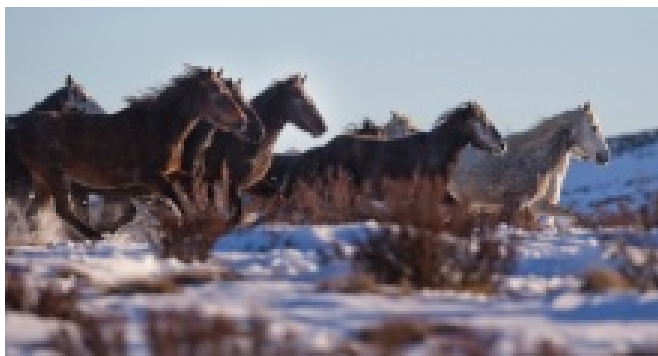
19



Approval to build 5,000 homes on nightingale habitat condemned

5 Sep 2014

42



A time to cull? The battle over Australia's brumbies

20 Aug 2014

95



Laurie Lee's 'tangled woods and sprawling fields' at risk from Cotswold homes plan

25 May 2014

83

in depth



10 steps to the perfect Tory speech



Schoolgirl jihadis: the female Islamists leaving home to join Isis fighters



The UK's first zero-waste restaurant: simple, sustainable and not 'superchef'

Featured Comment

Guardian Pick

82

As well as proposing to "move the Nightingales to Essex, Land Securities have also suggested moving the 30ha of wildlife-rich grassland to an adjacent farm. This is ludicrous, not least because a significant chunk of the grassland is in a mosaic with the scrub the Nightingales occupy. The site where the grassland is to be moved, has also been identified by English Heritage as a highly valuable historic feature, where The Royal Engineers invented trench warfare in 1914. So two incredibly important features will be destroyed in one go.

And this is the real story of Lodge Hill. A military site since 1870, it's wildlife and historic value go hand in hand. It is precisely because it was used, first for building and storing naval artillery shells, then more recently for training sappers to clear mines (and IEDs), that it escaped the wholesale removal of wildlife from the farmed landscapes of Britain.

[Show more featured comments](#)

All Comments (79)

[View unthreaded](#)

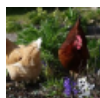
This discussion is closed for comments.

View oldest ▼ first

« ‹

1 2

› »



Miles King

25 Sep 2014 12:36

Guardian Pick

82

As well as proposing to "move the Nightingales to Essex, Land Securities have also suggested moving the 30ha of wildlife-rich grassland to an adjacent farm. This is ludicrous, not least because a significant chunk of the grassland is in a mosaic with the scrub the Nightingales occupy. The site where the grassland is to be moved, has also been identified by English Heritage as a highly valuable historic feature, where The Royal Engineers invented trench warfare in 1914. So two incredibly important features will be destroyed in one go.

And this is the real story of Lodge Hill. A military site since 1870, it's wildlife and historic value go hand in hand. It is precisely because it was used, first for building and storing naval artillery shells, then more recently for training sappers to clear mines (and IEDs), that it escaped the wholesale removal of wildlife from the farmed landscapes of Britain.

Wildlife thrives at Lodge Hill - not just the rare but the common. There is a hum of grasshoppers and crickets in the Lodge Hill meadows, that is a long vanished English summer sound. Butterflies abound, bouncing forward from the meadow swards with each foot step. I saw more Silver-washed fritillaries in one day there than anywhere else I have been. It is a magical place.

I have written about it many times on my blog eg here <http://wp.me/p3vKib-3K> and here <http://wp.me/p3vKib-ft>.

If we lose Lodge Hill to housing, it will undermine the entire approach to protecting nature sites in England. But we will also lose something that lies at the heart of England's story - our love of nature, and the importance of our history to our identity.

[Report](#)

dr8765 [Miles King](#)

32

Good luck in your fight against the philistines.

I don't know the area, but I cannot believe that there are "no other large sites" as is claimed. It's more likely that other sites might be politically less convenient to develop or produce less profit for the developer.

[Report](#)

kevessex [Miles King](#)

9

Thanks for your good work.

I used to play on the marshes in Dagenham , beautiful habitat. Destroyed by housing.

Personally , I oppose increasing the density of population in South East , England.

Habitat is important for health of people and our wildlife and eco system.

[Report](#)

kevessex [Miles King](#)

4

Just to add , I used to love listening to the skylarks in Dagenham , now almost completely vanished.

[Report](#)



Bigchin

25 Sep 2014 12:46

40

...we are already Europe's most densely populated country. Why make it worse ?

We should be looking at ways to PROMOTE wild areas and life. Quality NOT quantity, that only makes the rich richer.

'A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its animals.' ~ Mahatma Ghandi

[Report](#)



SmallCoot

25 Sep 2014 12:58

33

In claims of moving Nightingales to Essex, Land Securities are exposed for being one of two things - liars or idiots.

[Report](#)

ChrisAlmighty

SmallCoot

12

How about lying idiots? Works for me.

[Report](#)

kevessex

SmallCoot

3

How will they move the nightingales , in an Owl removal van.

I expect more from the Conservative party , the party with most of its support in rural and semi rural constituencies.

[Report](#)



MythicalMagpie

25 Sep 2014 13:05

26

Is there a housing crisis? Or is it only that successive governments have relied on building houses to artificially prop up a flagging economy? Why are people having to preserve their savings from inflation by sinking them into property building and ownership? Why is our government not creating opportunities for people to invest and grow savings by supporting manufacturing and industry across the country and in a wider range than just house building? They manage to do that in Germany, so why not here? There is huge scope for building on brownfield sites, just not in the south. It's all just more short term thinking, boom and bust. Meanwhile the north stagnates and once our heritage is gone it can never be replaced. There is never anyone who plans for a long-term sustainable future. There are major issues with maintaining standards of living in this country at their current level, but this is not the solution.

[Report](#)

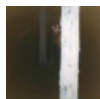


QueenBoadicea

25 Sep 2014 13:13

28

They want the site because they can promote it as country dwellings and charge double the price for the inferior shoe boxes that are built there. This government has been the worst ever, not only for the economy, but for enviromental issues as well.

[Report](#)**Albert Ravey**

25 Sep 2014 13:18

50

If this is allowed to go ahead, the repercussions for our most precious sites throughout the country could be devastating. It would mean that the National Planning Policy Framework contains not merely a loophole, but a get out clause that would allow massive destruction for the most trivial of ends. Developers will just trot out the usual "it creates jobs; it makes money" mantra and this will be considered to trump the most important scientific, conservation or cultural arguments. Building on an SSSI is simply not acceptable. If this goes ahead, every single SSSI effectively loses all protection. Credit to Councillor Irvine for seeing the bigger picture:

As a politician, I don't want my legacy to be 5,000 homes on an SSSI. I've got a 12-year-old son and I'd like to pass something on to him."

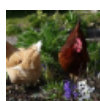
Indeed. Shame so many of his colleagues are not able to see that.

[Report](#)**Michael Coleman**

25 Sep 2014 13:25

56

Build on the bloody golf course if you have to build somewhere.

[Report](#)**Miles King**

25 Sep 2014 13:43

21

thanks. Of course there other large sites. Lodge Hill was chosen because it was surplus MoD land, and the Mod, despite knowing the site had considerable wildlife and historic value, went ahead with the development plans. Thanks to RSPB and Natural England, the value of the site for wildlife was recognised at the last minute and the site was notified as an SSSI.

[Report](#)

FatCat08**Miles King**

7

The MoD consists of people paid to kill other people. Wildlife will naturally get short shrift.

[Report](#)

shundarnagin**Miles King**

2

Lodge Hill was chosen because it was surplus MoD land, and the Mod, despite knowing

the site had considerable wildlife and historic value, went ahead with the development plans. Thanks to RSPB and Natural England, the value of the site for wildlife was recognised at the last minute and the site was notified as an SSSI.

MoD land, so public land, but what say have we given in these sell offs? The MoD has some of the most important wildlife sites in the UK if they only seek to maximise the commercial value of excess land it could be disasterous for many other MOD sites.

[Report](#)

Msfberg

25 Sep 2014 13:44

16

There is so much agricultural land used to grow food yet the nation is suffering an obesity epidemic. Its obvious not all this land is needed to produce an over-abundance of cheap food so why not build on intensively cultivated arable land of zero wildlife value?

[Report](#)

shundarnagin

25 Sep 2014 13:46

34

"Medway has 20,000 local residents on their housing waiting list. That's not acceptable," said Maple. "I've had people knocking on my door saying they are currently living in a tent in a green space in town. There's a desperate need to tackle this issue."

In a system when growth is king we are continously fed this disingenuous guff that we have to have no alternatives, but to destroy the natural environment. People like George Osborne fail to grasp the simplist fact that we are totally dependant on the natural world for our existence.

[Report](#)

 kevessex shundarnagin

4

Precisely.

But the Conservatives are totally dependent on house builders for financial backing ?

[Report](#)

 eyesandears kevessex

2

Not true. They are also largely funded by the equally charming hedge fund industry.

[Report](#)

Persianwar

25 Sep 2014 13:55

1

Ah yes, lots of people concerned about protection.....of their house prices!

There is always a reason why you can't build in an area. Not in my back yard, protect the birds, the newts or whatever. More houses have to be built and they have to go somewhere. Older generations have restricted supply to keep their house prices up. It is time to build.

[Report](#)

Elbowpatch **Persianwar**

21

Keep on building, keep on putting more and more cars on the road and strain on everything. What is the end game? Humanity at ALL costs?

[Report](#)

KingHenry007 **Persianwar**

1

Is the south east not crowded enough for you... You want a population of 200 million and zero green space, no farms, all imported foodwell that is the future of this madness

[Report](#)


FatCat08

25 Sep 2014 14:01

3

Nightingales in my back yard. Must be an acronym there somewhere...

[Report](#)

Albert Ravey **FatCat08**

2

Construction undermining nightingale territory SSSI. Might be an acronym there as well.

[Report](#)


FredNacker

25 Sep 2014 14:06

4

Here is the reality. We have a planning system imposed in 1946 which restricts city boundaries and village ones to the size they were when we had a population of only 48 million. Now we have 64 million and going on 70 million. It is utterly unconscionable to force human beings to live in dystopian overcrowded conditions to preserve some 1940s vision of the countryside. I don't give a tuppenny toss about small brown birds and neither do most people who are forced to live in overcrowded, very expensive cities.

We can not keep crowding millions and millions of human beings into ever more dense concrete hell holes. We have let in five million immigrants in the last fifteen years. That number is five times the population of our second city Birmingham. We need at least five more mega cities.

[Report](#)

Baldsparrow **FredNacker**

21

A world that does include all the space needed for "small brown birds" is not a world worth living in unless your horizons stop at the TV and the football. If it takes a bit of crowding to preserve that, then it's a price worth paying. There are plenty of other green fields that have little environmental value or biodiversity that can be built on before such unique sites as this have to be destroyed for no purpose.

[Report](#)

SolsThatIt **FredNacker**

0

Part!

[Report](#)

bramhall **FredNacker**

4

Why don't you call for stopping third world mass immigration which is largely about importing poverty and unemployment and giving welfare benefits.

[Report](#)

FredNacker **bramhall**

3

I absolutely do call for it, and I do so regularly. I think we have a huge amount of so called 'family reunion' abuse from South Asian families, who bay and large insist that their youngsters born and bred in the Uk marry foreigners whom they have never met, ensuring a constant stream of non-English speaking backward villagers are streaming in here every year. There are plenty of British south Asian young people already here that they could marry, but they aren't allowed to by their families.

[Report](#)

Albert Ravey **FredNacker**

9

I don't give a tuppenny toss about small brown birds

Well I do and so do millions of other people. If everyone in this country had been like you, we would have no culture.

[Report](#)

FredNacker **Albert Ravey**

0

As things are, small brown birds take precedence over human beings. Millions of people are condemned to live in extraordinarily expensive, squalid, overcrowded cities, the boundaries set in stone by a 1940s planning structure when the population has grown through unpopular mass immigration by fifty percent from the times when the restrictions were imposed. The young can't buy because the costs (through shortage) are impossible, and those in rented accommodation pay extortionate sums. This has to stop. We must build at least a million new homes, but to put us back to the situation we ought to be in, the number is probably at least

three million. This would be about four times the housing stock of Birmingham. If we do not do this, dystopian horror lies ahead.

People like you who prioritise small brown birds and pleasant views above your fellow men and women are monstrous nimbys and nothing more. It may well be that soon, the local authorities build an incinerator in your backyard and cover your 'views' with concrete blocks for asylum seekers. It will only be justice, if they do.

[Report](#)

Albert Ravey **FredNacker**

1

| We must build at least a million new homes

| If we do not do this, dystopian horror lies ahead.

I think you added a "not" in the second sentence that shouldn't be there

| People like you who prioritise small brown birds and pleasant views above your fellow men and women are monstrous nimbys and nothing more.

Thanks for the cartoon abuse. I will spare you my thoughts on idiots who use the word "nimby", but will give you my opinions on "prioritising people". Once we cover the place with rabbit hutches in which people sit there watching crap on telly and maybe once in a while looking out the window at their ugly car sitting on a concrete driveway, we will have created hell. People do need prioritising - they need spaces to walk in and places they can connect with nature and get away from the usual grind of being sold shit. You talk like you are some great humanist yet you demand misery. Your final sentences say everything about you.

| It may well be that soon, the local authorities build an incinerator in your backyard and cover your 'views' with concrete blocks for asylum seekers. It will only be justice, if they do.

You are full of hate and offer nothing but despair. You also don't take any notice of what people are saying. Let's summarise this:

1/ This is not about "views"; it is about the most important site for nightingales in the country and a designated Site of Specific Scientific Interest.

2/ Anybody who dismisses the nightingale as a "little brown bird" needs to get out more (while they still can). If you get no pleasure from nature and are only interested in your TV and the stuff you can buy, I pity you, but people like you should never be allowed to drag society down to your level.

3/ This is also not about preventing housebuilding altogether; it is about prioritising house

building in a sensible way so that we don't get them spewed all over irreplaceable places while millions of properties lie empty and there are acres and acres of ground which has no great value at all. I doubt many of the people who want houses will be able to afford the kind that will be built on Lodge Hill. Instead, they will go to the usual buy-to-let sharks who see these things as "investments" rather than homes. Deal with that and you may find that the need to destroy the very country we live in may vanish.

[Report](#)

FredNacker **Albert Ravey**

1

You CHOOSE to ignore the situation virtually all of our young are in: They pay at least twice in real terms what I paid for my housing in the 1970s as a young man. Twice is typical for the nation as a whole. If we look at the south east it is considerably more. This is utterly unconscionable. They are severely impoverished by this and it is purely down to shortage of housing stock a situation created by two things: The migration of at least five million people to this country since 1998, and planning and fiscal rules which actively frustrate the building of low cost homes except in the form of concrete tower blocks inside the footprint of 1940s British cities - cities that were already crowded then and now with an additional 50% of UK population over the 1945 level (48 million) impossibly crowded.

Birds? Not many youngsters renting a house at £1200 a month, buying one in London for a now average half a million pounds, or living in overcrowded squalor in multi occupancy bed sits will be that bothered about little brown birds. Only those living on the high hock are bothered about that Albert. MY children's generation 28 - 35 are working every hour to live far less well than I did forty years ago.

[Report](#)

Albert Ravey **FredNacker**

0

| You CHOOSE to ignore the situation virtually all of our young are in:

Please read my third point. We don't need to build in sites such as this.

And, again, I would ask what exactly is the sort of country you envisage? You think nature is a luxury? It isn't.

[Report](#)

Baldsparrow **FredNacker**

0

Quote: "People like you who prioritise small brown birds and pleasant views above your fellow men and women are monstrous nimbys and nothing more"

How many times do we have to repeat this ... people have brains and mobility and the ability to live anywhere they want to, whereas wildlife, small brown birds and all, do not. They need a certain set of features in their habitat in order to live ... they cannot simply move down the road

like we can. As the dominant species on the planet have a responsibility to our small brown birds.

Report

FredNacker Baldsparrow

0

Who cares? I doubt that many of the under 40s who can barely afford a roof over their heads are going to choose the bird's comfort over their own. It is utterly unconscionable to be hand-wringing over birds while human beings by the million are living in VERY over-priced, over-crowded accommodation because we have allowed five million foreigners to come to the country over the last fifteen years without building houses. We NEED the houses and we need them NOW. The joke is that the eco-freaks that witter on about things like this are the same ones advocating taking in as many foreign waifs and strays as can clamber onto a cross channel ferry. They even advocate opening Europe's borders to the Middle East and Africa.

Report

Baldsparrow FredNacker

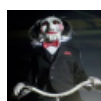
0

It is not at all unconscionable - it is the right thing to do. Just what, I really want to know this, will life be like in your overbuilt world where there is wildlife, no birds, no butterflies, no flowers oner than garden roses? Would it be worth living in at all. This is nothing to do with being an eco-freak (whatever that is), this is about trying to preserve the very, very little part of the wild world that has not already been destroyed ... just look around you, man. Can't you see what we have lost already. Do you really not care?

But on the practical side of things, the housing development in question here is not going to provide ANY accommodation for the needy, it's going to be another habit-destructive, expensive development for those who can already afford expensive housing. Can't you see that?

As for the immigrants - you profess to care for people so try to care for those from even more disadvantaged countries who are coming to seek the same things you are banging on about. Or do you only care about English people?

Report



Elbowpatch

25 Sep 2014 14:36

8

This is why I cannot again vote Green due to their wanting uncapped mass immigration which is already a disaster for British wildlife. We need to be trying to attain food security but have to import to keep up with demand and intensive farming is on the rise as a result. There are many other downsides from increased road kill (1 vertebrate killed for every 9ft of road per day - this includes birds, frogs, shrews etc).

The Greens only care about Humanity. Can you imagine the demand on housing and NHS in another decade? What is the end game - keep on building, increasing congestion and devastating

once magical southern Britain?

[Report](#)

[DeanMorrison](#) [Elbowpatch](#)

3

So the Greens are concerned for humanity, while it seems UKIP and the other parties are more concerned about roadkill?

And that's a bad thing for the Greens?

Frankly yours is one of the more bizarre posts I've seen on CiF.

[Report](#)

[Albert Ravey](#) [Elbowpatch](#)

0

We need to be trying to attain food security but have to import to keep up with demand

No we don't. We have to import because much of our diet is made up of things we can't grow in this climate. We have more than enough of the stuff we can grow and have an obesity epidemic, not a starvation one.

[Report](#)



[PaulMan](#)

25 Sep 2014 14:40

12

You can either have mass immigration, or environmental conservation. You can either have the Green Party, or people with a grasp of reality. It really is either, or. Not both.

[Report](#)

[DeanMorrison](#) [PaulMan](#)

4

According to some we've already had years of mass immigration.

I didn't realise that was because the Greens had been running the country. Or are Blair, Brown and Cameron in fact Green moles?

What's Farage's stance on this by the way?

Since Nightingales are migrants is he keen to be shot of them? Coming over here singing at all hours of the night? And shouldn't the Duke of Burgundy bog off back to Burgundia? ;)

[Report](#)



[davknigh](#)

25 Sep 2014 14:53

23

So once the entire country is built and paved over, then what? Give the developers their head and

this is what will happen, so much for the "green and pleasant land".

[Report](#)**iamwright**

25 Sep 2014 14:56

0

People's wellbeing are more important than some birds that some dead poet larked on about. He obviously had a room over his head and full stomach, else he'd have been in the workhouse with no time to write such silly nonsense.

I am hugely against the "wellbeing" of some bat, slug or bird preventing property development. The interests of people should come first.

[Report](#)

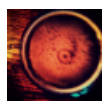
Baldsparrow**iamwright**

29

But it does not have to be an either-or decision. Build the houses elsewhere ... if necessary use some featureless corn fields which are much more prevalent than SSSI's and irreplaceable important wildlife habitat.

Anyway, you talk about the wellbeing of people - to many of we "people" wellbeing includes the presence of healthy populations of " ... some birds that some dead poet larked on about". Who would want to live in a world where such things were not commonplace? The "interests of people" go far, far beyond having a tacky box house and two cars and the TV.

You are a sad person, I think. Or a developer?

[Report](#)**Snarlygog**

25 Sep 2014 15:01

11

If Tesco and other Land bankers actually free up there stock for housing then we will not have to concrete over the last bits of rural England

[Report](#)

KingHenry007**Snarlygog**

0

Yes we will, if house building continues at current rate to build for immigrants etc

[Report](#)**Calidris**

25 Sep 2014 15:04

0

What's up with the shockingly broken typeface?

Has such poorly rendered type been tested on commonly used screen readers?

Does such poor type rendition even conform to accessibility standards?

[Report](#)**Merv Lamb**

25 Sep 2014 15:14

15

The Article does not go Far enough, I live in Medway and besides The Nightingales the site also homes many other endangered species, rather like Wiltshire Plain its little access to Public while in Military ownership allowed some of our rare species to survive.

But remember just a couple of weeks prior to the Medway Council had been protesting about The Estuary Airport and the effect on Wildlife it would have, but the reality of the situation was they were sitting on Plans for one mass urban sprawl to London,, with 45000 houses to build on The Hoo Peninsula. But Visit Medway Towns itself and you will find that all sites previously used for Industry have been built on very recently, but infrastructure is a shambles. Medway Hospital is already in Crisis and these proposed developments will solve nothing while we have open doors and people moving out of London to the suburbs, The Average Medway resident cannot afford the housing if the truth be told.

[Report](#)**ghettofun**

25 Sep 2014 15:35

5

These pricks haven't got a clue. They'd do better to buy up a few farms and build the houses there rather than destroy these brownfield sites. Harking on about the nightingales is a mistake too. Useful as a flagship species they are probably the easiest of the species to accomodate if they can plant up a bit of deer-free and fenced ground with a range of native and near-native (sweet chestnut) species. It's all the rest of the stuff, reptiles, insects and plant communities that have vanished from farmland that are far more difficult to conserve and / or re-establish elsewhere.

[Report](#)**tankerton**

25 Sep 2014 16:08

10

In order to accommodate people without destroying what's left we must:

1. get control of our borders.
2. build higher. Lots of local authorities still build 2 storey houses. All new development should be minimum 3.

[Report](#)**bananatruss**

25 Sep 2014 16:45

4

Don't build on greenfield sites

Use brownfield sites

OK how about here

Nope that brownfield site isn't brown enough

[Report](#)

Albert Ravey **bananatruss**

12

It's a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Look it up.

[Report](#)



bramhall

25 Sep 2014 17:00

11

Unfortunately the priority for all governments over the last 15 years had been to facilitate the population of the South East to grow as fast as possible by all means possible, including mass non EU immigration of poor people and the provision of welfare benefits for people to have large families. Against this overriding objective of maximising the population, concerns about wildlife, amenity, countryside, resources such as transport infrastructure, pressure on housing, school places, health services, hospitals etc are of no consequence, and the concerns of people living in the South East are to be largely disregarded.

[Report](#)



penelope123

25 Sep 2014 17:24

14

I live next to the ancient woodlands which also extend to Lodge Hill. It is teeming with wildlife and has many unusual insects and birds, including the famous colony of nightingales. I do not think we should cut down these ancient woodlands, which were here back in the Domesday Book, as they are irreplaceable! There is a lot of free land on the Hoo peninsula which could be built on instead which does not involve cutting down trees. What happened to the planned development at Nothfleet, which currently has an access road to nowhere?

[Report](#)

« ‹

1 2

› »

Environment

The Guardian

1 Earth has lost half of its wildlife in the past 40 years, says WWF

2 Can Narendra Modi bring the solar power revolution to India?