

CPRE CHESHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Registered Charity Number 248304

The Principal address of the charity and address for correspondence is:

The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England
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The Charity's Governing Documents: The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is a Registered Charity, no. 248304. The governing document is the Constitution dated 16 February 1996.

The objectives of the charity.

The object of CPRE Cheshire Branch is to promote and encourage the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside.

The Branch's activities cover the County of Cheshire which now comprises the Unitary Councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Wirral, Warrington, Halton, Trafford and Stockport.

The Branch's activities are aimed at improving the rural environment in the interests of communities living in rural areas as well as those in Towns and neighbouring Cities who enjoy our beautiful Cheshire Countryside.

The Charity does not make grants to third parties. From time to time the Branch may give support to related charities and parties with similar objectives.

Chairman's Summary of the year

Our Branch continues to campaign for a thriving and beautiful countryside. The object of CPRE Cheshire is to promote and encourage the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside.

We aim to improve the rural environment in the interests of communities living in rural areas as well as those in Towns and neighbouring Cities who enjoy our beautiful Cheshire Countryside. Our activities cover the Historic County of Cheshire which now comprises the Unitary Councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Wirral, Warrington, Halton, Trafford and Stockport

Our Planning Committee has been active in monitoring major planning applications, building and development proposals throughout the county.

We were successful in engaging new volunteers in planning, the farming sector and green buildings design. However, we are in need of many more volunteers to support our campaigns to protect the Cheshire countryside and promote the involvement of local communities within the new Localism and subsequent Neighbourhood Plans.

Housing supply is a big issue across Cheshire, with ambitious targets for housing numbers threatening the Green Belt and rural areas. Part of the problem is the emphasis on the need for provision for five years housing supply.

To publicise and promote our work we had a stand at Cheshire County Show. Our Cheshire Viewpoint newsletter published twice in Spring and Autumn was issued to farm shops, civic societies, parish councils and environmental groups.

CPRE Cheshire have participated in both the CWaC and CEC Local Plans, and we would like to thank both Lillian Burns and Andrew Wood for representing CPRE Cheshire at the most recent CEC hearings, and decisions will not be made by the Inspector until later on in 2016. The CWaC Local Plan Part I has been approved by the Inspector, but Part II is still an ongoing process.

Our thanks to our CPRE Cheshire President, Lord Grey of Codnor, for letting us hold our annual carol concert at his family Chapel in High Legh. Also our thanks to Peter Moore Dutton for opening up his garden and bluebell woods for our members to enjoy one rainy Saturday in April.

Our Treasurer, Derek Goldstraw, comments that 2015 was clearly a more than satisfactory year. We had a Trading Surplus of £5,164 plus an Unrealised Gain on Investments of £1,196 to give an overall Surplus of £6,360. That position is explained by two main points:

1. Donations were, again, generous and supplement our principal source of income from Members' Subscriptions;
2. Our running costs were less than anticipated since we do strive to achieve value for money.

In 2016, we expect to apply the same vigilance on running costs and hope that Donations continue to bolster our income.

Finally I would like to thank all our volunteers, donors, executive committee and our dedicated staff at CPRE Cheshire, Debbie Janney, our Secretary and Becca Nelson, our Press and Membership Officer for contributing to a successful 2015 in helping to protect the rural countryside and urban open spaces of Cheshire.

Branch Activities

Financial Statement.

Names and address of relevant organisations and advisors to the charity.

Bankers: National Westminster Bank PLC, Poynton, Cheshire.

The Hon Legal advisor: Mrs Lesley Stuart (Cullimore Dutton)

Investments: Hargreaves Lansdown, Bristol.

Accountant: Jordan Pickup, 34 Victoria Street, Altrincham, WA14 1ET.

Trustees

Lord Grey of Codnor. (President); Mr Geoffrey Budenberg (Vice President but not Trustee);

*Mr Roger Parkin (Vice President), Mr Peter Raynes (Vice President), *Mr Randal Hibbert (Vice President).

Chairman - Mr Andrew Needham; Treasurer – Mr Derek Goldstraw; *Mr Martin Dearden, Mrs Yvonne Sanné; Mr Michael Blank (Deceased Sept 2015); Mrs Jacqui Johnson, Mr Peter Evans.

(* = Investment Trustees also)

The Following policies govern the level of reserves:

The Trustees have determined that we should maintain reserves at a minimum level of £10,000 (and repeated in the section detailing steps to mitigate risks). This is consistent with a wish to ensure we have cover for at least three months running costs and any necessary statutory payments and contractual commitments.

The selection of investments for the charity.

There is no written policy for the selection of investments.

In agreement with the Investment Trustees, they consider that the most appropriate investment is in a portfolio to maintain the capital against inflation whilst achieving a balance between capital growth and income.

The Investment Trustees have powers under the constitution to invest in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit.

The charity's major assets: The Investments held by the Charity are detailed in the accounts.

Major Risks to which the charity is exposed; Expenditure exceeds income.

Systems designed to mitigate the above risks

The trustees make bi-monthly checks on the cash flow and forward plan activities to identify areas where they may be able to apply for grants.

Trustees routinely apply for grants from suitable bodies to assist with overhead costs.

Trustees are putting plans in place to attract new members.

Provision is made to ensure that sufficient reserves are in place to cover costs incurred, and in any event should not drop below £10,000.

The organisational structure of the charity.

CPRE Cheshire Branch is an Independent Charity within the CPRE National network.

The Cheshire Branch operates through District Committees mirroring local government administrative districts and Unitary Authorities.

Management

The business of the Cheshire CPRE is managed by the Executive Committee comprising the Trustees nominated at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations are sought from CPRE Cheshire members for these posts. The Chairman is accountable for the day to day running of the branch and is assisted by the Treasurer and members of the Executive Committee. The two part time staff, the Secretary and Press Officer report to the Chairman.

Districts organisation

We have member representatives in the Unitary Authorities covered by Cheshire CPRE. District members monitor planning applications published by their local Unitary Authority. They comment on applications and campaign against threats to the countryside and where appropriate appear in Public Enquires. District committees offer advice and help to both parish councils and local community action groups on planning matters. They take part in local forums with other environmental groups, business and local authorities. They may respond to consultations on major initiatives such as transport schemes, major retail and employment developments, waste disposal, mineral extraction and renewable energy projects. The Branch provides assistance to the Districts when requested.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Andrew Needham
Chairman