



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
CHESHIRE

CPRE CHESHIRE BRANCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2003

Legal and Administrative information

The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England
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Governing document

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 object of CPRE Cheshire Branch shall be to promote and encourage for benefit of the public the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside within boundaries of the Branch as defined below and its towns and villages and the better development of the rural environment.

The boundaries of the Branch are approximately those of the County of Cheshire as constituted from time to time plus Wirral Metropolitan District, Warrington, Halton, Trafford Metropolitan District and the Metropolitan Borough of Stockport.

Trustees

Mrs L Burns	Mrs P Pangburn
Mrs B Cooper	Mr K Parker
Mr M Hambleton	Mr R Parkin
Mr J Hill	Mrs J Stainthorpe
Mr C A Jurgens	Mrs Y Sanné
Mr R J Macklin	Col G E Sparrow
Mr P Needham	

Trustees are appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Branch

Bankers

National Westminster Bank plc, Poynton, Cheshire.

Hon. Legal adviser

Mr David Mason
(Messrs Birch Cullimore)

Investment adviser

Mr M J Seal
(Messrs Brewin Dolphin Securities)

Holding Trustees

(Appointed under the Constitution to hold investments)

Mr R C Budenberg
Mr A G Curtis
Mr R B Hyde

Auditors

Mesrs Clarke Nicklin Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors
Grove House, 227/233 London Road,
Hazel Grove, Stockport, SK7 4HS

President

Lady Baker Wilbraham

Vice-Presidents

Mrs J Astins
Capt M W Broom
Col G E Sparrow

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2003

Aim

Our objective is to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of Cheshire by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

Structure

CPRE has a national office based in London and nine Regional groups. There are branches in every county, which are registered charities in their own right. Cheshire Branch has District Committees mirroring local government administrative districts.

Operation

We are a campaigning organisation with the benefit of a professional workforce at national and regional level using research and evidence to define policy, alongside a strong in-depth volunteer organisation working at region, county and local level to implement and monitor policy and planning legislation, support initiatives which benefit the countryside and oppose those which threaten it. Where our interests overlap, we work with other organisations such as Friends of the Earth, CPRW (Campaign to Protect Rural Wales), Cheshire Landscape Trust, National Trust etc.

Management

The business of Cheshire CPRE is managed by the Executive Committee comprising the Trustees who are nominated at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations are sought from the sub-committees, the Districts, the Treasurer and other members of the Branch.

Districts

We have representatives in nine districts who contribute to strategic consultations on Local Plans, often appearing at Public inquiries to present their views. They are part of local strategic partnership forums with other environmental, business and local authority groups attempting to ensure CPRE principles are considered in local strategic and policy decisions. They respond to consultations on major initiatives such as road and transport schemes, major retail and employment developments, waste and planning guidance matters. Day by day, members monitor planning applications lists, comment on applications and campaign to bring threats to the countryside to public attention. District committees offer advice and help to both parish councils and local community action groups on planning matters.

Campaigns

Cheshire CPRE appointed a Campaigns and Recruitment Manager in April 2003 with the objective of increasing membership, recruiting additional volunteers and raising the organisation's profile.

- We appeared at major Cheshire summer shows and events and so were introduced to at least 250,000 people, raising our membership by 4.3% against a national trend of falling membership
- In conjunction with Cheshire Life we held a Landscape Writing Competition, launched in the November 2003 issue, with the winning entries featured in March 2004

- To widen our appeal to younger people we ran a ‘Follow that Star’ competition during Advent in conjunction with Jodrell Bank, to raise awareness of light pollution
- Nationally CPRE have launched an initiative to bring about fundamental change in the way people think about development and change in the countryside. This is implemented locally by our involvement in Landscape Character Assessments, and supporting the production of Parish Plans and Village Design Statements
- We are campaigning across the county against inappropriate development – specific campaigns are reported in our twice-yearly newsletter ‘Cheshire News’, press releases, our website www.cprecheshire.org.uk and District newsletters.

Policy

Cheshire CPRE contributes to policy development at all levels of government, with regional activity becoming increasingly more demanding. Major areas of work in 2003 included responding to consultations on:-

- District and Borough Strategic Studies
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill
- Planning Policy Statements
- South-East Manchester Multi-Modal Study (SEMMMS)
- Alderley Edge Bypass
- Chester Transport Strategy
- Cheshire Structure Plan Alteration
- NWRA Proposed Strategic Park and Rides
- NWDA Regional Strategic Sites
- Regional Assembly Studies
 - Merseyside Greenbelt
 - West Cheshire and North Wales
 - M56 corridor
- A556(M) Landscape and Environmental Assessment Study
- Manchester Airport Strategic Documents
- Aviation White Paper
- Market Town Surveys
- Draft Equestrian Strategy

Hedgerow Award Scheme

Our President, Lady Baker Wilbraham presented 10 awards to the following Cheshire farmers and landowners at the Annual General Meeting, in recognition of the quality of their hedgerows:

First Year awards

Alan Clare, Red House Farm, Dunham Massey

Christine March, Daresbury Estate

David Johnson, Greenhills Farm, Lower Whitley

Stuart Powell, Cross Farm, Nether Alderley

Second Year Awards

Friends of Brooks Drive, Timperley

Rixton Reserve, Warrington (run by Warrington Borough Council)

Chester Zoo

Mark Ritchie, Noakes Farm, Old Breakin, Churton

Financial Review

During the year the charity received a legacy of £1000 and the first year of a fund-raising initiative raised £4000, which was pleasing. Membership income increased by £900 and the appointment of the Campaigns and Recruitment Manager accounted for £6000 of the charity's expenditure. The benefits derived from this appointment will be reviewed by the trustees during 2004.

Overall the charity had an operating deficit of £4214 which was attributable to the day to day running of the Branch Office. For 2004 the Branch Office has a budgeted operating deficit of £13000 which it is hoped can be reduced by further fund-raising initiatives in particular.

The unrestricted funds of the charity are identified in note 13a to the financial statements. These funds, including the special reserve fund, are designated funds held by both the Branch Office and the District Committees, which will be used in 2004 to:

- support the management and administration etc., of the charity and particularly the running of the Branch Office, including the employment of the Campaigns and Recruitment Manager and the Branch Secretary;
- support the cost of campaigns being undertaken to challenge various development planning proposals, green belt and transportation issues.

The special reserve fund represents the investment portfolio which provides essential income for the charity through dividends.

The restricted funds (note 13b) are retained primarily to support specific transportation issues associated with the A6 (M) project.

Reserves Policy

At present the charity has no free reserves. The trustees are aware of the desirability to establish free reserves and have sought professional advice to develop a fund-raising strategy to raise additional funds. The trustees are of the opinion that due to the nature of the charity's activities and the current level of income, free reserves are unlikely to be established for some time.

Investment Policy

The trustees, who have powers under the constitution to invest in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit, consider that the most appropriate policy is for investment in a broad based portfolio which will maintain the long-term purchasing power of the capital against inflation whilst achieving a balance between capital growth and the generation of income for the charity.

The trustees consider that the income from the investments of £2366 in the year is satisfactory. The market value of the portfolio increased by £4500 during the year.

The investment strategy is reviewed annually by the trustees in conjunction with the Investment Committee and the Investment Adviser.

Statement of Trustees Responsibilities

Law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Charity's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year.

In preparing those financial statements, giving a true and fair view, the Trustees should follow best practice and :

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Charity and which enable them to ascertain the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 1993. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Auditors Report and Financial Statements follow on pages 7 to 14.

Finally and most importantly, thanks to our volunteers

We employ a secretary for mornings only and the Campaigns and Recruitment Manager works two days a week. The business of the Branch is managed by the Executive Committee whose support and advice is much appreciated. Policy work, monitoring planning applications, representing CPRE at shows and events are just a few of the many activities carried out by our volunteers who give unstintingly of their time and resources.

A huge thank you to all of you; it would not be possible to continue protecting our precious countryside for future generations without your help

Trustees Annual Report approved by the Trustees 24th March 2004 and signed on their behalf.

Jean Stainthorpe
Chairman

