



Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
CHESHIRE

# CPRE CHESHIRE BRANCH

## ANNUAL REPORT 2004

### 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 J Astins  
Mr R Bass  
Mrs L Burns  
Mr J Hill

Mr R Macklin  
Mr P Needham  
Mr K Parker  
Mr R Parkin

Mr G Parry  
Mrs Y Sanné  
Mr C Shaw  
Mrs J Stainthorpe

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 R Race  
(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

Mr A Jurgens

Col G E Sparrow

## Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004

### **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**

The Branch's Transport Campaign Group were heartened early in 2004 to learn that Cheshire County Council had listened to their and to local residents' lobbying and were planning to place the A34 Alderley Edge Bypass in a deep cutting beneath the West Coast Main Railway Line rather than over it on a high road bridge which would have despoiled the landscape.

More good news was the moving forward by Cheshire County Council with a 'Quiet Lanes' pilot project in Macclesfield Forest. Quiet Lanes were adopted by the County Council as part of their first five-year Local Transport Plan directly as a result of lobbying by the Transport Campaign Group (TCG) and now Macclesfield District are involved in helping to work up the details. Both the TCG and the District Group contributed to a consultation on the scheme.

Bad news was the surprise announcement by the Department for Transport in July that they were considering the construction of a tolled express motorway to run roughly parallel to the M6 through the whole length of Cheshire and Staffordshire. CPRE realised that the majority of the public were unaware there was a consultation taking place on this concept and therefore made it the focal point of their exhibitions at the summer shows. Well in excess of 20,000 CPRE leaflets funded by the Branch were distributed to homes, at the shows and at meetings to increase awareness of the threat to the countryside and the wider environment. CPRE and other bodies also lobbied, successfully, for the consultation period to be extended and in the end more than 5,000 individual responses and over 3,000 names on petitions were submitted – most of them opposing the plan. CPRE's objections were based on the enormous land take, the environmental impacts and the disbenefits of the country's first tolled motorway around Birmingham.

A major piece of planning work and campaigning for the Branch during 2004 was taking part in the Cheshire Structure Plan partial revision process. CPRE were an important player throughout, not only contributing to formal consultations but meeting with officers, and we are hopeful our input will result in more sustainable housing, land-use and transport policies.

In addition to its normal schedule of meetings, the TCG met on two occasions during the year with the County's Environment Policy Manager and in November contributed to the scoping consultation on the second five-year Local Transport Plan. CPRE wants to see robust strategic environmental appraisals carried out, better quality consultations with a longer time scale and feedback on them, less emphasis on road-building, less emphasis on the construction of massive car parks in Green Belt and more emphasis on public transport, walking and cycling and the provision of 'soft measures' such as green travel plans, car clubs and safe routes to school. In addition, CPRE is calling for the re-instatement of a walking officer (combined with the role of equestrian officer) and for a dedicated rail officer to be appointed – as exists in Lancashire.

Also during 2004 the three northern Development Agencies published their version of the government's 'Sustainable Communities Plan': 'Moving Forward – the Northern Way'. This strategy, which was developed in camera, is aimed at improving the economic performance of the North of England and promotes many sound policies such as better integration of policies and urban regeneration. However, it also talks about extended 'city regions' with links into rural areas and promotes major road-building and the renovation of housing stock which CPRE is keen to ensure does not translate into inappropriate new roads schemes or developments in Green Belt. The Northern Way concept will be tested through the new Regional Spatial Strategy process and Cheshire Branch will be working closely with the CPRE North West Regional Group to try to ensure that only the more sustainable aspects prevail.

District campaigns have covered such diverse subjects as wind turbines, waste disposal, water treatment, electricity transmission towers, the establishment of park and ride sites in inappropriate locations and the protection of Green Belt and Ince Marshes. In Trafford District, CPRE was involved in the successful restoration of Brooks Drive in Timperley and in the Crewe and Nantwich CPRE's campaign against the inclusion of two greenfield sites through the Local Plan process has borne fruit, saving 80 acres of land on the outskirts of Crewe from urban sprawl in favour of brownfield development.

## **Training, Membership and Social Events**

In October the Branch organised a very well-received planning seminar which was attended by 60 people from Parish and Borough Councils as well as the County Council, in addition to members. It was a useful exercise in demystifying the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the many changes it has wrought in the planning system.

The Snowdrop Walks kindly hosted by Sir Richard and Lady Baker Wilbraham at Rode Hall in February were enjoyed by thousands of visitors, and raised a lot of money for CPRE and other charities. The AGM was held in May at the interesting venue of the Anderton Lift. Some seventy people attended, including several who joined CPRE on the day. The Chairman hosted a barbecue in August, attended by about 30 members. The sun came out, and it was a happy and relaxed occasion. A Christmas Cheer event was held in December, attended by 90 members and friends, again kindly hosted by the Baker Wilbrahams.

The Branch represented CPRE at all the main shows held in Cheshire during the summer. These are regarded mainly as an opportunity to recruit new members: this year, 130 new members joined the Branch. We are not so good at retaining members, though, and 106 people relinquished their membership during the year. Canvassing opinion on the M6 Expressway was the other big thing at the 2004 shows.

The landscape writing competition was successfully held for the second year in succession. The competition gives CPRE a lot of visibility in "Cheshire Life", and this relationship is valued very highly.

## **Hedgerow Award Scheme**

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

### **Special Award**

Lady Mather on behalf of the late Sir William Mather, Whirley Hall Farm

### **First Year awards**

Tom Whalley, Tabley Hill Dairy Farm, Tabley Hill

Paul Slater, Dandy Farm, Adlington

Alan Baskerville, Lapwing Hall Farm, Withington

John and Mark Walton, Stockley Farm, Arley

### **Second Year Awards**

Alan Clare, Red House Farm, Dunham Massey

David Johnson, Greenhills Farm, Lower Whitley

Christine Marsh, Daresbury Estate Office, Daresbury

## **Financial Review**

The second year of the fundraising initiative raised over £12000, which combined with donations and an increase in membership subscriptions contributed to minimising the operating deficit of the charity to around £5000. The appointment of a Press and Membership

Officer accounted for £8000 of expenditure which the trustees consider to be acceptable as part of the drive to promote the charity more effectively.

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 2005 to:

support the management and administration etc., of the charity and particularly the running of the Branch Office, including the employment of the Press and Membership Officer 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 £2324 in the year is satisfactory. The market value of the portfolio increased by £4000 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 8 to 15.

### **Finally and most importantly, thanks to our volunteers**

We employ a secretary for mornings only and the Press and Membership Officer 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 on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2005.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Bass". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Richard Bass  
Chairman

