



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
CHESHIRE

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PRESS RELEASE

Chester residents say 'Hands off our Green Belt'

The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England[1] is delighted at the response they have had so far to their campaign to protect Chester's beleaguered Green Belt. The countryside charity won lottery funding to mail over 12,000 homes in the area[2], alerting residents to threats to the Green Belt, and encouraging them to fill in postcards telling the Government what their Green Belt means to them.

By the end of the first week, postcards were flooding in to the charity's National Office from Chester residents keen to let the powers that be know how much they value the space around their city.[3]

Many came from parents who fear the surrounding countryside will no longer be there for their children to enjoy when they grow up. 'It is a beautiful area of countryside I enjoy walking and cycling through with my children' said one respondent, 'If we build on it, where will our children's children spend time with their parents? Presumably, they can look it up on the Internet & see how it used to be!'

Another commented 'I want my children to grow up seeing wildlife in its natural surroundings, not only from books!! Chester is a historical city that will be ruined forever if turned into one large conurbation.'

Many expressed dismay that the ample supply of brownfield sites was not being used for development: 'Some areas could be redeveloped instead of cutting into valuable green belt – once it's gone, it's gone!' and another wrote, 'There are plenty of brownfield sites for housing. Please leave our Green Belt alone!'

Others were concerned at the lack of good sense displayed in proposals for development, 'We are most upset by the proposed building of houses on the Countess of Chester Hospital site, land needed for hospital's future expansion. How short-sighted can the Government get!'

In addition to the messages of support, CPRE has also gained new members as a result of the mailing campaign, and some generous residents have made donations to help fund its efforts. 'We are a membership-based charity,' said Richard Bass, Chairman of Cheshire CPRE, "That means we rely on subscriptions and donations to fund our work, which is mostly carried out by dedicated volunteers. It's wonderful to welcome new members who care about Chester's Green Belt setting, and to see just how much support there is for retaining it."

CPRE volunteers have been out in villages around Chester hand-delivering the last of the envelopes. "We still have some areas to get to, where the lottery funding didn't cover the postage," said Mr Bass, "So if anyone in the Saughall area feels strongly about the issue and would like to take some fresh air and exercise while helping us get our message out, we'd be very glad to hear from them."

To offer your services, join CPRE, or obtain more information on the problems facing Chester's Green Belt[4], call Cheshire CPRE on 01606 835046, email info@cprecheshire.org.uk, or visit their website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk.

- ENDS -



CPRE volunteers Bailey Lock and Rhiannon Lewis getting the Green Belt message to Chester residents

Notes for editors:

[1] The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. For more information and archive of press releases see the CPRE Cheshire website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk and the national CPRE website at www.cpre.org.uk

[2] The bulk of the mailing went out by post from 2nd – 21st January 2006 to 12,000 homes in the Chester Green Belt. Volunteers have been hand-delivering a further 1500 envelopes. The exercise has been funded by the National Lottery Awards for All scheme.

[3] The Cheshire campaign follows a successful national CPRE campaign last year, marking the 50th anniversary of the Green Belt concept, and aims to get the next 50 years off to a good start.

[4] More on CPRE's Green Belt campaign in Cheshire is on www.cprecheshire.org.uk, and on the national campaign at www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/planning/greenbelts/index.htm

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