



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
CHESHIRE

Victoria Buildings
Lewin Street
Middlewich
Cheshire CW10 9AT

Tel/fax: 01606 835046
Email: info@cprecheshire.org.uk
Website: www.cprecheshire.org.uk

President
Lady Baker Wilbraham

Patron
H.M. The Queen

Registered Charity no. 248304

PRESS RELEASE

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CPRE wins lottery funding to fight for Chester Green Belt

The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England[1] has won lottery funding to make sure the Green Belt gets its second half-century off to a flying start by mailing over 12,000 Chester homes[2] alerting residents to the threat their Green Belt is facing.

CPRE was instrumental in bringing about the well-known piece of planning legislation, which was 50 years old in 2005. They marked the anniversary with a national campaign[3] to raise awareness of the threats the Green Belt is facing and to encourage local authorities in areas without Green Belt to designate land around urban areas to prevent urban sprawl into the surrounding countryside. The Cheshire campaigners are following this up to start the Green Belt's next fifty years with a campaign of their own to protect the Green Belt around Chester.

The massive mailing includes a letter from Cheshire CPRE Chairman, Richard Bass, highlighting the potential loss of Chester Green Belt brought about by changes to planning policy at Government and Regional levels. "A substantial area of Green Belt in the Countess of Chester Health Park has already been transferred to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to facilitate development, and the proposed fifth park and ride site would take a further 25 acres of Green Belt at Mannings Lane" Mr Bass said, "Yet the City Council's own figures show they have a surplus of brownfield sites and vacant buildings which ought to be made use of to meet housing and employment needs without destroying Chester's historic rural setting."

The mailing includes a free-post postcard for residents to complete to let the government know how much their Green Belt means to them, and encourages recipients to join CPRE and help them in their work to protect the countryside in Cheshire.

The project was made possible by funding from the National Lottery, "CPRE is a membership-based charity, and we usually rely on membership subscriptions and donations to fund our work, which is carried out mostly by volunteers," explained Mr Bass. "Making residents in and around Chester aware of the need to protect their Green Belt is a very important task, but without the funding we won from the National Lottery scheme, we would have found it very difficult to get this message across to so many people."

For more information on Chester's Green Belt problems, call Cheshire CPRE on 01606 835046, email info@cprecheshire.org.uk, or visit their website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk.

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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 mailing will go out from 2nd – 21st January 2006 to 12,000 homes in the Chester Green Belt, with volunteers hand-delivering to as many additional homes as possible. The exercise has been funded by the National Lottery Awards for All scheme.

[3] More on CPRE's Green Belt campaign nationally can be found at www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/planning/greenbelts/index.htm

Further Information:

Cheshire CPRE Press & Membership Officer
Clare Lewis
Mob: 07731 659 786
clareandlewis@hotmail.com

Cheshire CPRE Branch Secretary
Debbie Janney
01606 835046 (9 – 12 Mon – Friday)