



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
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Cheshire CPRE Celebrates Light Pollution Victory

After three years of campaigning[1], the Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England[2] celebrated a victory last week as light pollution became a Statutory Nuisance[3]. The countryside campaigners gave the new law[4] a warm welcome, but said the time has now come to snuff out the problem at its source.

CPRE is calling on the Government to stick to its commitment [5] to prevent future light pollution through strong planning policy.

‘Thanks to the new law, some people will at last be able to take action if their lives are being blighted by selfish, wasteful use of light. But the only logical long-term solution is to design light pollution out of our lives,’ said Richard Bass, Chairman of Cheshire CPRE.

‘If planning policy is makes it clear that new development should not add to light pollution, we will stop a generation of children from growing up without seeing the dark, star-filled skies we used to take for granted.’

CPRE’s *Night Blight* campaign for dark skies, run with the British astronomical Society, features maps created using weather satellite data showing the increase in light pollution between 1993 and 2000. According to the data, the North West is the most light-saturated region in the country[6].

‘Our Night Blight campaign maps created a great deal of public interest, as they clearly show the scale of the problem, especially in our region. Stamping out light pollution doesn’t mean putting an end to lighting used for safety and security, or for highlighting attractive buildings: it is about preventing badly designed and poorly directed lighting from wasting valuable energy and creating a glow in the skies. CPRE now looks forward to strong planning policy from the Government to halt light pollution.[7]’ Mr Bass concluded.

For further information on the work of Cheshire CPRE, visit their website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk, or ring the Branch Office on 01606 835046. Copies of CPRE’s *Night Blight* satellite maps of the North West and the UK are available from the Branch Office, or can be downloaded the CPRE national website at www.cpre.org.uk.

-ENDS-

NOTES FOR EDITORS

[1] CPRE initiated a major campaign – *Night Blight!* - in 2003 in conjunction with the British Astronomical Association and the Campaign for Dark Skies. One major objective was to secure light pollution as a Statutory Nuisance. This has now been achieved. Another objective is the planning out of light pollution using the Government's system of Planning Policy Statements.

[2] CPRE, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, is a charity which promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England. We advocate positive solutions for the long-term future of the countryside. Founded in 1926, we have 60,000 supporters and a branch in every county. President: Sir Max Hastings. Patron: Her Majesty The Queen.

[3] On Thursday 6th April 2006

[4] Section 102 of the *Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, 2005*.

[5] On 17 March, in a written response to a question raised at a meeting of the National Planning Forum on 9 March, ODPM officials confirmed that the Government intends 'to draft a new annex to PPS23 [*Planning and Pollution Control*] to provide advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise the adverse effects of external lighting'.

[6] Data from CPRE Night Blight Campaign (2003):

In North West region between 1993 and 2000:

- Light pollution increased 35% - far higher than national average
- Region lost almost half its areas with truly dark skies
- Amount of land that is light-saturated in Cheshire and Lancashire rose 50%

[7] A consultation on the draft light pollution annex to PPS23 is expected this summer.

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