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CHESHIRE

PRESS RELEASE

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Picture attached: Walkers during CPRE's last heritage walk in May.

Walk with CPRE to discover our rural heritage

The Campaign to Protect Rural England[1] is inviting local residents to join them on a harvest-tide ramble to discover more about our rural heritage. The environmental charity's group in Crewe and Nantwich is following up its popular spring walk[2] with an exploration of two fascinating churches set in the lovely Cheshire countryside.

Walkers will be collected by coach from Nantwich, and driven to Cholmondely Castle, where they will learn more about the history of St Nicholas' Chapel, dating from the 13th century. A five mile walk to a 17th century inn should work up a healthy appetite for a buffet lunch, followed by a walk to Old Chad, Tushingham, to explore this unusual 17th century church, which still keeps its ancient hearse in a separate 'Hearse House'.

CPRE's Rev John Whitehead, who is organizing the walk, said: 'This is a wonderful opportunity to explore the architecture of two unusual churches, and to learn more about the rural communities they served, and the traditions of harvest-tide.

'Research published by CPRE last week shows that only 30% of Cheshire's countryside can now be classed as undisturbed[3] – a haven from noise, urban sprawl and visual intrusion. Most of this countryside is within Crewe and Nantwich, but even here, the area where we can experience real tranquility has shrunk dramatically in the last few decades. Walkers will therefore be able to see at first hand why CPRE is campaigning to protect our valuable rural assets,' he continued.

For those who would like to visit the churches but are unable to take part in the walk, Rev Whitehead is making arrangements for coach travel between the sites, exploring an additional church while the walkers catch up.

The coach will leave Nantwich Civic Hall at 9.30 am, returning at around 5.30 pm. To book a place, call Debbie Janney at CPRE's Cheshire Branch Office on 01606 835046 between 9 and 12 Monday – Friday. The day costs £14 each, including coach travel, lunch and admission to the grounds at Cholmondely For more information contact Rev Whitehead on 01270 812607.

'Our last walk was very popular, so it is advisable to reserve your place early. However, we will keep a waiting list in case of cancellations,' Rev Whitehead concluded.

-ENDS-

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. Its Patron is HM The Queen and its National President is Bill Bryson. For more information see the CPRE Cheshire website at www.cprecheshire.org.uk and the national CPRE website at www.cpre.org.uk. CPRE's Cheshire Branch was founded in 1928, two years after the National CPRE charity began. While it is a part of the National CPRE organisation, Cheshire CPRE is a registered charity in its own right.

[2] CPRE's 'Churches in the Fields' walk in May took in Baddiley Church and Woodhey Chapel, and was attended by 52 people. Rev Whitehead aims to develop a regular programme of similar walks, taking place twice each year.

[3] CPRE's new 'Intrusion' maps, released on 10th September 2007, show an alarming loss of Cheshire's undisturbed countryside. The maps show the impact of disturbance resulting from road and air traffic, and visual intrusion resulting from creeping urbanisation, from the 1960s to 2007. The shadow of intrusion from increased traffic and development falls over a much wider area than the sites they are located at. If nothing is done to halt the loss of our undisturbed countryside, the future looks very bleak indeed.

CPRE's study shows that in the 1960s, the around 40% of land in the present Cheshire County area was disturbed by urban intrusion. By the early 1990s, this had crept up to almost 60%. Alarmingly, in 2007, almost 70% of the area now suffers from intrusion.

The picture in the northern areas beyond the Cheshire County border is even bleaker: In Warrington and Trafford, there is now no land that could be described as undisturbed countryside. 99% of the Halton and Stockport areas now suffer from intrusion, and in Wirral, the area suffering from intrusion has increased by 40% since the 1990s alone.

Maps for Cheshire can be seen at CPRE's website www.cprecheshire.org.uk

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