



The countryside charity  
Cheshire

# Cheshire Viewpoint

Newsletter | Autumn/Winter 2021

Lockdown Walk, Marbury Park - Pat Dyson



## Hedgerow campaign

Hedgerows are an iconic part of the Cheshire Landscape and have been a focus for CPRE Cheshire for many years, so it is good to see the National charity taking up hedgerows as a major campaign.

The changes in agricultural support which will follow leaving the EU present an opportunity for a new balance between funding good ecology and food production. Both are necessary, and we should never forget that these changes also affect the welfare and lives of all those who live off farming.

The National campaign explains that hedgerows provide a haven for wildlife and plants and improve the beauty of the landscape, but do not prevent farming and the productive use of adjacent fields. They are however more expensive and difficult to maintain than simpler barriers, and can justifiably be supported by Government for the public benefit they create. Our Vice-Chair, Andrew Needham, attended the parliamentary launch of the 'Hedge Fund' report on behalf of CPRE Cheshire.

CPRE Cheshire will be supporting this campaign to promote interest in hedges and the quality of our hedgerows. We are currently contacting other interested organisations and charities. We know that there is a wealth of expertise in our membership, and would like to hear from Members and friends who wish to get involved. There is also a specific volunteer role for an organiser of the awards scheme, full

details of which are available on our website, or by contacting the Branch Office.



The image above shows a Robin in a beech hedge in Poynton, taken by Ean Davies and one of the runners up in our 2021 Photography Competition. The dense foliage of beech provides an excellent habitat for native birds and mammals.

In 2022 we plan to hold hedgerow awards to promote good hedgerow management as well as hedgerow safaris and walks, do get in touch if you are interested.

Peter Raynes, Chair

## Local Plan round-up

### Cheshire East Local Plan Inquiry

As we went to press, Planning Manager Jackie Copley and Lillian Burns were representing CPRE Cheshire at the Cheshire East Local Plan Inquiry.

Our response challenges the assumption that there is a necessity to release Green Belt land as 'safeguarded' land for future development. Cheshire East has seen a great deal of house building take place already, with around 2800 new homes completed per year between 2017 and 2020, according to a media release by Cheshire East Council. We also urge the council to make all of the policies in the plan more responsive to the rapidly changing environmental, economic and health scenarios surrounding it.

### Cheshire West and Chester

A response to the latest consultation was submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council, considering environmental issues.

A key part of CPRE's vision is a low carbon countryside that mitigates and adapts to the impacts of climate emergency. Therefore, we welcomed the opportunity to comment on whether changes are required to the current review on the Cheshire West and Chester local plan.

Since the Local Plan Part 1 was submitted in 2013 with a 'growth focus at all cost', we have increased evidence from the scientific community on the climate emergency being due to human impact, with stark warnings of the need for urgent action necessitating a full review of the Local Plan.

### Warrington

Warrington Borough Council has published the Proposed Submission Version Local Plan (2021)

It is out for a six week consultation from Monday, 4th October until Monday, 15th November. You can find a copy, including detailed map, in your local library, or view online: [www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.warrington.gov.uk/localplan). There will also be a series of public consultation events at the South Stand Concourse of the Halliwell Jones Stadium - visit our website for full details.

It is important to respond as after the consultation all the information, including comments, goes to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for a public examination by an Inspector appointed by him to consider the soundness of the Plan. CPRE Cheshire will be taking part in the consultation. - Jacqui Johnson

### Greater Manchester Places for Everyone consultation

We welcome the fact that under the Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' spatial plan less countryside will be lost to development when a joint development plan covering the nine local planning authorities is adopted to enable sustainable development.

The ambition to be zero carbon by 2038 is laudable given the declared climate emergency. The amount of proposed land in Green Belt being released for development has been halved since the 2016 version because of the brownfield preference for development, which CPRE recommended. However, there are still improvements to be made. Read the full response on our website.

## Wirral Walk

Dr Andrew Read, who organises regular walks for CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester, led walkers around a fantastic circular route from West Kirby to Thurston Hill on 3rd October, carefully planned to show off the Wirral countryside at its best.

We set out from West Kirby railway station to walk up Grange Hill, where a volunteer told us about the history of the war memorial. From there we proceeded through woodland on Caldy Hill to Stapledon Wood, then on for a picnic lunch at Royden Country Park.

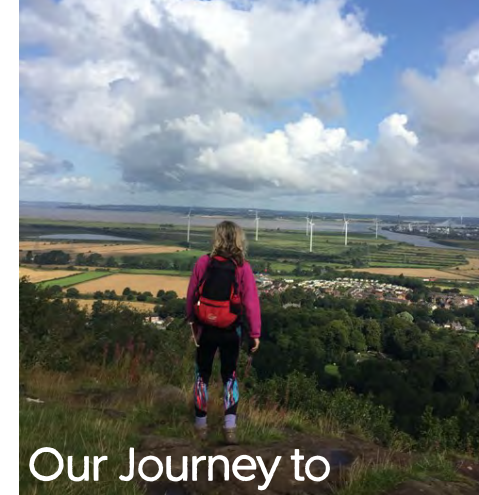
The bracken, heather and gorse were all beautifully colourful as we walked along Thurston Common, and about half of the group climbed to the top of Thor's rock before we continued to marvel at the views from Thurston Hill (image at bottom).



Continuing on footpaths to Caldy Village, we then swapped green fields for cliffs and the beach as we walked from Cubbin's Green back to West Kirby, finishing the walk by strolling around the edge of the Marine Lake.

There were around 30 walkers in attendance, ranging in age from students to retirees, and it was great to see how sociable everyone was, with lots of animated conversation. For many it was the first organised walk since before Covid, and the walk was shared to the Ramblers and Manchester Weekend Walkers groups as well as CPRE.

A group of international students taking part in the Erasmus scheme also took part, all of whom love hiking and wanted to get to know the English countryside close to their temporary homes in Liverpool.



## Our Journey to Sustainability

Members are invited to join us at Chester Cathedral on 6th November, when we will be exhibiting as part of the 'Our Journey to Sustainability' event, alongside other charities and local councils.

The CPRE Cheshire stand will focus on how the countryside can make a difference in mitigating climate change, from re-wetting peat to soil management, renewable energy to increasing resilience.

If you are in Chester between 10 and 5.30 on November 6th please do come along to the Cathedral to say hello to our volunteers. We would love to hear your views.

## Environmental Land Management Schemes webinar

We are hoping to arrange a webinar focusing on the new ELM scheme (the replacement for Common Agricultural Policy payments) in November or December 2021 to which members are very welcome.

We have invited speakers from DEFRA, the Country Landowners Association and the National Farmers Union, and CPRE's Graeme Willis will also give a summary.

Full details will be on our website and social media pages when the date and details have been finalised.

## Christmas cards

We are delighted to announce that CPRE Cheshire will be selling CPRE branded charity Christmas Cards this year, featuring a range of designs including 'Adventures in the Snow', pictured above, taken by Robin Dearden.

There are six designs, and each pack contains 10 cards, featuring the national CPRE logo and some information about the charity on the back of the card. The packs are priced at £5.50 per ten cards, which includes the cost of postage and packing.

Sending a CPRE card is a great way to spread the word about the charity, as well as spreading Christmas joy!

To see all the designs, please visit our website: <https://www.cprecheshire.org.uk/2021-christmas-cards/>



Wirral Walk: view from Thurston Hill

# Restoring Wetlands at Birch Moss Covert

Trafford Wildlife Volunteers are working to restore Birch Moss Covert to its former damp glory. I joined the group on a showery September day to find out more about the practical work that the group is doing at its twice-weekly work parties.

## Why regenerate wetlands?

Mosslands can play a vital role in the fight against climate change, but they are one of the most threatened and degraded habitats in the UK. Birch Moss Covert Nature Reserve is part of Carrington Moss. The reserve is described as 'degraded raised bog', and is managed to provide a habitat for water voles displaced by the construction of the Manchester United training ground adjacent to the site; a buried impermeable barrier forms the core of a bund surrounding the site on three sides, keeping the water in to allow aquatic habitats to develop.

Three tasks were on the cards today; the birch trees that give the reserve its name are sucking the moisture out of the ground, so one ongoing task is to remove birch seedlings and saplings.

The team are also working to enhance the habitat for the Willow Tit, a red-listed bird which is already present on the site. As well as creating nesting habitats, as seen in the image to the right, they are clearing areas of the reserve and transplanting brambles, which the willow tits love, to the areas cleared of birch saplings from other areas of the site.

I was amazed that the reserve was so peaceful; despite being situated between Broadheath and Carrington, so close to the Manchester conurbation, I heard only the occasional rumble of a passing car to momentarily disturb the tranquillity.



In the 1880s, Carrington Moss was described as 'a level expanse of purple ling' – common heather. As well as nurturing the heather currently growing, the group has obtained funding for 200 heather plants, and the other task that was taking place was preparing the ground for them. I spent a very rewarding hour or so with a garden fork, digging out the rhizomes that make bracken so resilient, in order to give the heather the best chance of survival once it has been transplanted to its new home.

Despite visiting Birch Moss Covert twice weekly, so much more could be achieved with more workers. Trafford Wildlife Volunteers have a strong core of regular volunteers, but would welcome new members.

If you would like to get involved, visit the website ([www.trafford-wildlife.co.uk](http://www.trafford-wildlife.co.uk)) or email [traffordwildlife@gmail.com](mailto:traffordwildlife@gmail.com) to find out more. I thoroughly recommend it!

Becca Nelson



Join in.  
[cprecheshire.org.uk](http://cprecheshire.org.uk)

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