



The countryside charity
Cheshire

CPRE CHESHIRE ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Registered Charity Number 248304

The Principal address of the charity and address for correspondence is:

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The Charity's Governing Documents: The Cheshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is a Registered Charity, no. 248304. The governing document is the Constitution dated 16 February 1996 (updated 15th August 2007).

The objectives of the charity.

The object of CPRE Cheshire Branch is to promote and encourage the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside.

The Branch's activities cover the County of Cheshire which now comprises the Unitary Councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Wirral, Warrington, Halton, Trafford and Stockport.

The Branch's activities are aimed at improving the rural environment in the interests of communities living in rural areas as well as those in Towns and neighbouring Cities who enjoy our beautiful Cheshire Countryside.

The Charity does not make grants to third parties. From time to time the Branch may give support to related charities and parties with similar objectives.

Chairman's Summary of the year

Our Branch continues to campaign for a thriving and beautiful countryside. The object of CPRE Cheshire is to promote and encourage the improvement, protection and preservation of the countryside.

We aim to improve the rural environment in the interests of communities living in rural areas as well as those in Towns and neighboring Cities who enjoy our beautiful Cheshire Countryside. Our activities cover the Historic County of Cheshire which now comprises the Unitary Councils of Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Wirral, Warrington, Halton, Trafford and Stockport.

2021 was dominated by the continuing Covid epidemic which limited our ability to meet in person or run events with members. As the epidemic eases we have started to plan a series of face to face events for members and hope to see you at our AGM.

Throughout 2021 we continued to operate through remote working with both the Executive Committee and Planning Committee meeting regularly and the management team holding weekly Zoom meetings. While we look forward to being able to meet again in person many of these working practices have proved very effective and will be maintained. I would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their contributions and help in working with these ever more familiar remote working methods.

Our Local work continues to champion the Countryside and Environment of Cheshire, and despite the Covid pandemic this work has if anything expanded in the last 12 months, examples from around Cheshire are provided below.

- Responding to the Cheshire East Site Allocation document asking for unjustified development of farmland to be removed and proposing the retention of productive farmland and planting of new woodland, trees and hedgerows.
- Engaging with Cheshire West and Chester's Climate Change Plans to ensure they reflect the needs of the Countryside.
- Establishing a network of volunteers to better champion countryside issues and to become a local 'eyes and ears' of our Charity.
- Challenging the expansion of the Bredbury Industrial Estate, which threatens important Green Belt areas proposed residential developments focused at the High Lane area.
- Campaigning to stop a site of 1,153 hectares at New Carrington for a new road, large-scale housing and employment on peat mossland expressly prohibited from development in the England Peat Action Plan.
- Working with local volunteers in Warrington to respond to its Local Plan Regulation 19 and keeping a watchful eye on the potential impact of HS2
- Working with the Wirral Society and Wirral Green Space Alliance to oppose excess housing in the Countryside while we welcomed the Birkenhead Regeneration Framework to revitalise brownfield sites near Wirral Waters.

Our work would not be effective if we did not promote ways development can be achieved sustainably and this year we have continued the role out of our "Brown Field Tool Kit" to help identify sites that can be reused and campaigning to promote access to and enjoyment of the Countryside.

More details of our work can be found in our Cheshire Viewpoint newsletter which is available on our website <https://www.cprecheshire.org.uk/>.

Derek Goldstraw, our Treasurer, comments that, as expected, we incurred a Trading Deficit approaching £5k at £4,901. This was offset in large part by an increase in the value of our Investments of just over £3.5k at £3,506. We did conduct a review of our running costs during the year and we were able to reduce our costs by well over £2k covering, for example, a reduction in Insurance premium and a reduction in telephone charges (both via offers targeted at charities.) Furthermore, we will continue to minimise costs wherever possible.

Finally, I would like to thank all our volunteers, donors, executive committee and our dedicated staff at CPRE Cheshire, Debbie Janney, our Secretary and Becca Nelson, our Press and Membership Officer for contributing to a successful 2021 in helping to protect the rural countryside and urban open spaces of Cheshire.

Branch Activities

Financial Statement.

Names and address of relevant organisations and advisors to the charity.

Bankers: National Westminster Bank PLC.

The Hon Legal advisor: Mrs Lesley Stuart (Cullimore Dutton), Chester.

Investments: Hargreaves Lansdown, Bristol.

Hon. Independent Examiner: Christine Mann, Sandbach.

Trustees

Chairman – *Peter Raynes; **Treasurer** – *Mr Derek Goldstraw; Andrew Needham (Vice Chairman); Mrs Jacqui Johnson; Mr Peter Moore-Dutton; Rev John Whitehead; Mr Rod Tann, Mr James Cameron.

(* = Investment Trustees also)

The Following policies govern the level of reserves:

The Trustees have determined that we should maintain reserves at a minimum level of £10,000 (and repeated in the section detailing steps to mitigate risks). This is consistent with a wish to ensure we have cover for at least three months running costs and any necessary statutory payments and contractual commitments.

The selection of investments for the charity.

There is no written policy for the selection of investments.

In agreement with the Investment Trustees, they consider that the most appropriate investment is in a portfolio to maintain the capital against inflation whilst achieving a balance between capital growth and income.

The Investment Trustees have powers under the constitution to invest in such investments, securities or property as may be thought fit.

Major Risks to which the charity is exposed; Expenditure exceeds income.

Systems designed to mitigate the above risks

The trustees make bi-monthly checks on the cash flow and forward plan activities to identify areas where they may be able to apply for grants.

Trustees routinely apply for grants from suitable bodies to assist with overhead costs.

Trustees are putting plans in place to attract new members.

Provision is made to ensure that sufficient reserves are in place to cover costs incurred, and in any event should not drop below £10,000.

The organisational structure of the charity.

CPRE Cheshire Branch is an Independent Charity within the CPRE National network.

The Cheshire Branch operates through District Committees mirroring local government administrative districts and Unitary Authorities.

Management

The business of the Cheshire CPRE is managed by the Executive Committee comprising the Trustees nominated at the Annual General Meeting. Nominations are sought from CPRE Cheshire members for these posts. The Chairman is accountable for the day to day running of the branch and is assisted by the Treasurer and members of the Executive Committee. The two part-time staff, the Secretary and Press Officer report to the Chairman.

Districts organisation

We have member representatives in the Unitary Authorities covered by Cheshire CPRE. District members monitor planning applications published by their local Unitary Authority. They comment on applications and campaign against threats to the countryside and where appropriate appear in Public Enquires. District committees offer advice and help to both parish councils and local community action groups on planning matters. They take part in local forums with other environmental groups, business and local authorities. They may respond to consultations on major initiatives such as transport schemes, major retail and employment developments, waste disposal, mineral extraction and renewable energy projects. The Branch provides assistance to the Districts when requested.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Peter Raynes
Acting Chairman