



The countryside charity
Cheshire

Cheshire Viewpoint

Newsletter | Spring 2022



Becca Nelson

Blooming hedgerows!

One of the joys of last year was to cycle and walk in the vicinity of our homes in Cheshire to enjoy the splendid display of wildflowers along our hedgerows

This year the Cheshire CPRE is asking members, their friends and families to send in pictures of Cheshire Hedgerows in flower, which we will display on our website and a prize will be provided for the picture judged to be the best.

Our hedgerows have an obvious value as iconic symbols of the English Countryside and few organisations have done more to protect them over the last 100 years than the CPRE.

Cheshire, with its low percentage of woodland, is more dependant than most English Counties on the contribution of hedges and hedgerow trees to its landscape.

However the contribution of hedges to wildlife is also remarkable. These lines of connected unfarmed land are thought to support up to 80 per cent of our woodland birds, 50 per cent of our mammals and 30 per cent of our butterflies.

Hedgerows, and particularly older hedgerows, develop a wide range of plant species as they develop over decades and centuries. This gives them the a great range of flowers and fruit that will bloom at different times to feed insects and invertebrates which in turn provide food for our birds, mammals and butterflies, all within the relative safety of the hedgerow.

Often field and road drainage will follow the line of a hedge

and this adds another environment to allow water loving frogs, toads, and newts to thrive.

Hedgerow trees are particularly important. The older trees provide sites for birds, bats and bees, contain the deadwood that supports invertebrate species, and provide leaf, flower and fruit for a many species. It is thought that over half of the priority species associated with hedgerows are reliant on the presence of hedgerow trees. It is also important that new hedgerow trees are allowed to grow to replace those that quite naturally come to the end of their lifespan.

The CPRE nationally has a unique role in preserving and restoring hedgerows. While we are not able to plant large lengths of hedgerow ourselves we have for many years built up a reputation for providing reasoned argument to Government on how good regulations and planning guidance can improve the environment and also meet the needs of society. This is just as true for hedgerows as for the construction of new homes.

We are campaigning for plans to increase the hedgerow network by 40% before 2050. With new environmental grants being reviewed by the government it is the ideal time to promote greater investment in the ideal green stock barrier.

Our latest campaign can be found on the National CPRE website <https://www.cpre.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/hedgerows/>

Peter Raynes, Chair

Planning news

It's official: the Government U-turned on the planning system changes

Congratulations to the CPRE network for winning the hearts and minds of our MPs, who spoke against proposed reform of the planning system that was deemed harmful. The zoning and assumed permission implied vastly reduced transparency and community engagement in planning decisions. The reforms were officially scrapped in January by Michael Gove who became the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with the final say in planning matters.

We continue to seek improvements in the planning system to ensure when development is planned the environment is treated fairly with other considerations. For example, the way housing numbers are calculated is a key source of frustration as the 'standard method' inflates the quantity of homes planned by being reliant on Office of National Statistics 2014 data with high growth implied and proven inaccurate by 2016, 2018 and 2020 data. When the stringent Housing Delivery Test is applied Councils most certainly fail due to the housing targets being impossible to achieve and this leads to further loss of land in Green Belt for housing delivery. It is an infuriating situation, and it must be stopped.

Wirral Planning Matters: CPRE Cheshire continues to campaign with the Wirral Society and the Wirral Green Space Alliance on the progression of the local plan to avoid needless countryside harm. We have been campaigning jointly for a much lower housing requirement in the next submission draft of the Local Plan, and a focus on brownfield regeneration at Wirral Waters to avoid needless Green Belt land release.

Previously, 12,000 homes were identified due to the flawed 'standard method' calculation (see comments above) leading

to four times as many houses being planned as are needed.

The next local plan is due for Regulation 19 consultation in April subject to Council approval. This is when comments go directly to an independent examination panel. It is expected that interested landowners and developers will push for a higher housing requirement in support of more sites being allocated and in the Green Belt to be accepted as proposed allocations.

Objection to the proposed development of Danes Moss South Macclesfield in Cheshire East

CPRE Cheshire does not usually object to a site allocated for development via the democratic local plan process, however, in this case it decided to do exactly this due to the level of environmental harm that would occur if development of the peat moss is implemented.

Peat moss is scientifically proven to be a significant natural store of carbon. Nationally, The Climate Change Committee recommends 79% of peatlands should be restored by 2050 to support the Government's international legally binding commitments on climate change. Another material consideration is that Cheshire East brought forward the development of its Environment Strategy as the UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency on 1 May 2019. The Local Plan was adopted before this date. If development occurs, it will lead to the emission of a significant amount of greenhouse gases. The development of the site will also cause substantial harm to biodiversity of rarity.

In our letter to the Council, we highlighted the planned development will pose a significant risk to the rare ecology, including the UK's second most threatened species of bird, the Willow Tit, identified as breeding there in 2021. Therefore, we recommended that Cheshire East Council rethinks the development decision and decides not to allow the development in the future



Michael Buchanan

CPRE Cheshire would like to acknowledge our sincere thanks for the generous legacy of £10,000 left to the charity by former member, Michael Buchanan.

Michael Buchanan was an active member who took a special interest in HS2. Those of us who took part in a walk along the Trent and Mersey canal from Whatcroft in 2017 will remember being welcomed into the Buchanans' beautiful garden for refreshments and a group photo after

a very interesting walk, at which Ros Todhunter pointed out the many signs of ground instability which make the mid-Cheshire brine fields such a challenging site for the construction of a high speed railway.

This generous legacy will be used to help CPRE Cheshire to continue to employ Jackie Copley, a professional planner, to support our members in responding to planning applications and feeding into local plan consultations, to try to ensure that necessary development takes place in the least damaging and most sustainable locations.

Jodrell Bank Observatory: CPRE Cheshire expressed huge support for planning policy protection for the Jodrell Bank Observatory in the Supplementary Planning Document consultation. The site and its consultation zone are in a rural setting of Cheshire East. New development must not create electrical interference that harms the efficiency of the telescopes, the heritage significance, or the landscape.

The JBO was founded in 1945 to pioneer new science of using radio waves for the exploration of the universe instead of visible light. The 66m Transit Telescope made the first ever identification of a radio object outside our own galaxy - the great nebula in Andromeda. It was superseded by the Lovell Telescope in 1957 but is recognised by UNESCO for its outstanding universal value and was awarded World Heritage Site status in July 2019. Understandably the people of East Cheshire are proud of this heritage.

Proposed expansion of Bredbury Industrial Estate into Green Belt: CPRE made a representation against an appeal against Stockport Council's refusal of the application, highlighting Green Belt and other environmental harms, in support of the local community group. Andrew Gwynne MP articulated other local community concerns including traffic congestion, increased air pollution, loss of an important and beloved greenspace along the Tame River Valley.

Update: Appeal dismissed! Jackie Copley commented 'It's heartening to see greenspace openness and landscape character protected for future generations.'

HS2: CPRE Cheshire will consider the HS2 Phase 2b: Crewe to Manchester Environmental Statement documents for the areas of Hough to Walley's Green; Wimboldsley to Lostock Gralam; Pickmere to Agden and Hulsheath; Broomedge to Glazebrook; Risley to Bamfurlong; Hulsheath to Manchester Airport; Davenport Green to Ardwick; and Manchester Piccadilly Station and where there are understood to be particular issues of importance to CPRE it will voice concerns.

Ordinarily CPRE supports increased investment in strategic rail, but arguably alternative options exist to invest in the existing rail network to improve rail connectivity with northern towns and existing rail network to improve rail connectivity with northern towns and cities with much less environmental harm, saving woodland, nature reserves and land in our Green Belt. Consequently, it is considered that the proposed route of the HS2 track and the station location in rural areas is harmful to a significant level. Therefore, CPRE Cheshire remains opposed to its development.

Meeting with Charlotte Nichols, MP: CPRE Cheshire representatives held a useful meeting with Warrington North MP Charlotte Nichols in March, discussing plans to improve active travel connections within Warrington and to make better use of the Green Belt, and HS2 (Charlotte strongly opposes the Golborne Link). We support strategic plans to connect parks and green spaces in the Green Belt around the town to improve access to recreational green spaces and safe walking and cycling routes for residents.

Warrington Planning Matters

Users of **Warburton Bridge** will be aware of proposals to increase the toll from 12p to £1 per journey, and change its legal status, potentially leading to people taking longer routes to avoid paying the toll fee, increasing congestion and journey times. The consultation is open until May 10th.

Motorway service area proposal (j11 M62): Jacqui Johnson will speak on behalf CPRE at the appeal. The proposed site is in the Green Belt.

Six:56 Warrington, a proposal for warehousing in the Green Belt, has been approved, adding to the number of warehouses in the area. This may be called in, in the light of it being a Green Belt site.

Land use and Net Zero

According to the International Panel for Climate Change, agriculture, forestry and changes to land use accounts for up to 25% of greenhouse gas emissions. How can we reduce this?

A number of measures have been proposed by the Committee on Climate Change in order to help the UK to meet its Net Zero commitments. Perhaps the biggest proposed change to our landscapes is the pledge to increase UK forestry cover from 13% to a minimum of 17% by 2050, which would entail planting roughly 30,000 hectares of new woodland (both broadleaf and conifer) annually. Agroforestry, which aims to plant trees on agricultural land whilst retaining its agricultural function, could be responsible for a quarter of the carbon savings. Alongside this, faster growing bioenergy crops can deliver savings in carbon emissions, and have a role to play in Carbon Capture and Storage measures.

Restoring former or degrading peatlands by creating conditions by which they become wetlands again stops them from releasing greenhouse gases into the air as they dry out, as well as creating habitats to support biodiversity. If 50% of upland peat and 25% of lowland peat is re-wetted, this would leave the best and most productive land available for food production.

Farmers can reduce their own contribution to climate change by using controlled release fertilisers, improving the health of livestock and slurry acidification, as well as adopting new practices such as no-till farming, which benefits soil health and biodiversity.

And as consumers, if we reduce consumption of the most carbon-intensive foods (beef, lamb and dairy) by about 20% per person, and reduce food waste, we could reduce cattle and sheep numbers by around 10% despite projected population growth, which would save 7MtCO₂e of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions annually.

Andrew Needham

(pictured below helping out at his daughter's farm in Shropshire)



Events

Sandstone Ridge walk and talk:

1.30, Wednesday 27th April

Cheshire Candle Workshops, Higher Burwardsley

CPRE has long supported the aspiration of the Sandstone Ridge Trust to establish the Ridge as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Our spring walk has been planned to give members the chance to experience the natural beauty of the area for themselves! Join us to explore countryside around Higher Burwardsley before tea and cake and a talk from Professor Andrew Hull of the Sandstone Ridge Trust bringing us up to date on progress in establishing the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

There will be a choice of two walks:

Peter Raynes and Andrew Hull will lead a two mile circular walk to Waste Hill. The route is straightforward, with just one steep climb, although there may be muddy sections if it has rained prior to the walk taking place. The path follows part of the Sandstone Trail, passing along quiet lanes and through woodlands, with good views of the surrounding countryside.

Andrew Needham will lead a gentler walk around the flat country tracks looking at the variety of hedgerows for those who would prefer to avoid a steep climb. This route is paved throughout and will take approximately one hour.

3pm: tea and cakes at Chandlers Cafe

We will then all meet up at Chandlers Cafe at the Cheshire Candle Workshops, where Professor Hull will speak. Booking is essential, and the cost is £7.50 per person, to include tea or coffee and cake.

Please return the booking form to secure your place.



Annual General Meeting: 2 - 4.30pm, 11th May 2022

Willington Hall Hotel, Tarporley

Speaker: Dr. Hilary Ash

Following a short AGM, we will listen to a talk from Dr Hilary Ash on the importance of wildlife protection and the role of nature recovery.

Dr. Ash has lived on Bromborough on the Wirral since the early 1980s, having read botany at the University of Oxford before completing a PhD at the University of Liverpool. Her initial research project was an investigation into the way that native plants grow on industrial waste sites, and she has brought that expertise to her role as Honorary Conservation Officer for Wirral Wildlife, as well as in her professional career as a botanist carrying out surveys, creating management plans, and working on habitat creation in urban areas.

Tickets to attend the talk, followed by tea/coffee and cake, are priced at £8.25 per person. To book your place, please return the enclosed booking slip.

Strategy Meeting: September 2022

Members who are interested in volunteering with CPRE Cheshire or would like to feed into our strategic planning are invited to a strategy workshop, to take place in autumn 2022. Please email info@cprecheshire.org.uk if you would like to take part or find out more.

Sandstone Trail: Fureya Nelson-Riggott



Join in.

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