

# CPRE Annual Review 2016

## Gloucestershire

Campaign to Protect Rural England

[www.cpreglos.org.uk](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk)



## Chairman's Statement

**M**Y TERM as Branch Chairman has coincided with the 90th Anniversary of CPRE nationally (CPRE Gloucestershire is 2 years younger, so we look forward to celebrating our 90th Anniversary in 2018). It is to CPRE's immense credit that, even though England is now the most densely populated major country in Europe, only 11% of the land area is classified as urban. As our former national President Sir Andrew Motion says in his foreword to "22 Ideas that Saved the English Countryside" - the excellent book produced to commemorate the anniversary - "The English landscape is our great collaborative masterpiece and our greatest gift to the world, greater even than Shakespeare".

CPRE has never opposed development blindly, our principle being that change is inevitable but it should be for the better. There is much Government focus presently on increasing the rate of new house building, with local new housing requirements being identified through the process of Local Plan development. CPRE accepts this need and supports a "plan led" process.

Yet that process is being constantly subverted by unscrupulous housing developers. Even though they have collaborated in preparing the Local Plan, developers will claim that the sites in the adopted Plan are unviable and that the Planning Authority can therefore no longer demonstrate that it can meet the agreed housing targets. Repeated attempts to gain permissions to build

on additional greenfield sites follow. This often results in the wrong numbers of the wrong types of housing being built in the wrong places. And for Planning Authorities to oppose these developers at every stage leads to a huge waste of Council Tax money which could instead be used for vitally needed local services. CPRE nationally will continue to lobby to improve planning policy and, at Branch level, we will continue to fight against inappropriate development proposals.

On a more positive note, in October we were delighted to recognise a record seven projects through the CPRE Gloucestershire Awards as exemplars of good practice, ranging from Gloucester Services on the M5 to the Berry Hill Community Orchard. Each is outstanding



in its contribution to the environment or to the local community.

I have been pleased to have had the honour of being your Branch Chairman. I should like to thank all members for your continuing support for CPRE and, in particular, to our District and Branch volunteers who do so much to help to protect and enhance our countryside. I hope that together we and our successors can be as influential in the next 90 years as we have been in the last.

**Mike Mackey**  
County Chairman



River Wye from Wintour's Leap

# INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS ANNUAL Review highlights CPRE Gloucestershire's major activities during the 2016 calendar year.

The year has been dominated by the following areas of activity:

- Influencing the preparation of Local Plans. In particular, much of the year has again been taken up with participation in the Examination of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy;
- Scrutinising and responding accordingly to contentious planning applications, many of which have been inappropriate speculative housing projects

where the local authorities have been unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites;

- Raising the profile of the Branch and taking forward our recruitment and retention strategy, which is now in the process of review;
- Working with and supporting others towards protecting the rural environment;
- Supporting the work of CPRE nationally and regionally in the South West.

# CAMPAIGNING ISSUES

## Local Plans

**I**N THIS section we report on our main campaigning issues in 2016.



*The Green Belt, looking towards Cheltenham*

DURING 2016, we continued to commit considerable Branch and District resources in responding to consultations on local plans as they progressed. Getting these plans right remains of fundamental importance to the future of Gloucestershire's countryside and of its rural communities. We have continued to encourage communities to produce Neighbourhood Plans but we do not have the resources to engage in detail with individual plans.

We remain concerned at the slow process in producing Local Plans. The Stroud Local Plan, adopted in December 2015, is still the only plan in the County completed to current government requirements.

The examination of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury began in May 2015 and at the end of 2016 was still in progress. The delay in completing and adopting the JCS has meant that the five year housing land supply requirement

cannot be met and in consequence villages continue to be targeted for speculative development which is difficult to oppose.

The Cotswold Local Plan has also caused us some concern, particularly in relation to allocation of land in the principal settlements for far more houses than we consider necessary. In addition, the Plan in its current form will not ensure sufficient affordable homes.

The Forest of Dean Core Strategy was adopted in 2012. The housing and land allocations are now subject to review to ensure compliance with current national government policy. Separately we have continued to raise awareness of the unfinished business to achieve AONB status for the Forest of Dean.

We also made inputs to county-wide consultations on the emerging Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan, and on the Local Transport Plan 3 which is now adopted.

## Planning Casework

AN ESSENTIAL part of our day to day work involves scrutinising planning applications and making representations where development would be particularly harmful. All our Districts are involved. This year has again been exceptionally busy both with planning applications and appeals. Many of the cases involve housing proposals. Our main concerns are typically the sustainability of the location and impact on the landscape. These issues are important everywhere and particularly in our AONBs. In this work we are admirably supported by our planning consultant David Crofts.

### Cases considered in 2016 included:

- Proposed football stadium and business park close to M5 Junction 13, which is not compliant with the newly adopted Stroud Local Plan
- An application for 186 houses at Berkeley which would affect the setting of both town and castle. The case was allowed on appeal
- An application for 75 houses at Trumans Farm, Gotherington affecting the setting of the Cotwolds AONB, and conflicting with an emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The application was refused but an appeal is pending
- Major developments proposed at Leckhampton which would be highly damaging on landscape and traffic grounds
- The proposed Stowe Hill Quarry extension in the Forest of Dean which has also seen objections from Natural England and has implications for the Minerals Local Plan



David Bayne

*Threatened land at Trumans Farm, Gotherington below Nottingham Hill*

- A 20 acre solar array at Elton where there are issues around landscape impact, heritage assets and enjoyment of the area. The planning application was refused and a subsequent appeal dismissed
- A second planning application for 30 houses at Chipping Campden on an elevated site to the west of the town. The application was refused and an appeal is pending
- Proposed development of 38 houses at Blockley in a location rejected as unsuitable in the emerging Local Plan. The application was refused
- Proposed development of 2350 houses as an urban extension to Cirencester. The issues here are the scale of the development, its layout and building design
- Proposed development of 88 houses at Siddington where we disputed the housing need and were concerned at the impingement on open countryside
- A further attempt (the third) to secure permission for housing at Baxter's Field in the Slad Valley. The application was refused but an appeal is pending
- Proposed development of 150 houses outside the settlement boundary of Minchinhampton. In the event, this application was withdrawn.

In our campaigning, we are guided by a set of Branch Policy Statements which are reviewed regularly. In 2016 we updated our policies on Our Approach, Stone Quarrying and Extraction of Other Minerals, and Farming and Land Management; and developed an additional policy on Building Design.

*The land and historic farmhouse which Stowe Hill quarry would swallow up - and the rock isn't needed*

Brian Jones



# BRANCH ORGANISATION

Stowell Park

**T**HE BRANCH Executive Committee is responsible for managing the affairs of the Branch and administering its funds and assets. The Committee met four times during the year. It is advised by a Management Sub-Committee and a Policy Sub-Committee, both of which met regularly. A separate Group, including independent judges, administers the CPRE Gloucestershire Awards scheme.

During the year our Branch Chairman, Charlie Watson completed his term of office but we are pleased that he has agreed to continue to serve on the Executive Committee as an Elected Member. Mike Mackey, former Chairman of our Forest of Dean District, was elected as the new Branch Chairman at our AGM in May 2016. This was also the opportunity to present national long service awards to Major Tom Hancock and David Bayne who have served the Branch well over many years – this has been a good way for National Office to express their gratitude to both members for their unfailing help and support to CPRE.

Apart from a new Chairman, our Branch Officers have remained unchanged: Richard Lloyd and David Brooke, Vice Chairmen; David Bayne, Secretary;

Julian Oxley, Treasurer; and Elizabeth Bourne, Membership Secretary.

The Executive Committee also benefits from the membership of our District Chairmen, elected and co-opted members, and representatives of kindred organisations.

We continue to maintain a small office in the heart of Gloucester with Lisa Belfield as our Office Manager and Planning Advisor, who is ably supported by Vanessa Paterson as Branch Administrator.

Our CPRE Districts, as ever, have shouldered the burden of our local campaigning, particularly our planning casework. Our thanks go to our District Chairmen and their committees – Prue Vernon, Berkeley Vale; Tom Hancock, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury; Mike Mackey and later Clive Osborne, Forest of Dean; Peter Loveday and later Alison Clifton Barnard, North Cotswolds; Nick Dummett, South Cotswolds; a rotating chairman for Stroud District; and

Jeremy Lodwick in Tetbury.

We are grateful to our former president, Lord Vestey, who invited us to hold our 2016 AGM at Stowell Park. The AGM was chaired by our County President, Dame Janet Trotter. The speaker this year was Jonathon Porritt, founder of “Forum for the Future” who spoke about the then forthcoming referendum on EU membership and its implications for the environment.

In furthering the work of the Branch, the Trustees of CPRE Gloucestershire have been guided by the published advice of the Charity Commission.



## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

THE BRANCH membership includes households, parish and town councils and a number of other kindred organisations. During the year we welcomed 54 new members but that number was exceeded by a loss of 111 members from various causes. This gave us a total membership at the end of 2016 of 1,343, a decline of 4.1% over the year. Gloucestershire Branch is not alone in having to address declining membership: in 2016 only two CPRE branches grew their membership and nationally there was an overall decline in members of 4.5%.



CPRE Gloucestershire has a Membership Recruitment and Retention Strategy. It was developed in 2012 to address this slow decline in net membership year on year. The Strategy was successful in growing numbers in its first year, but has proved less effective than we had hoped. During the year we agreed to establish a paid post that will include a focus on recruitment and retention matters. The appointment is planned for early 2017. In addition we have maintained contact with National Office to explore opportunities for a joint initiative in this area.

Our District Committees have continued to arrange visits for our members to which guests are also welcome. These are designed to be informative as well as to provide a social occasion. In 2016 they included an opportunity to see Giffords Circus in rehearsal, visits to gardens on Bredon Hill, and a number of farm tours. In addition, some of our District Committees took stalls at their local country shows in the summer and autumn months to promote the work of CPRE and recruit new members.

In 2015 we introduced a new category of Associate Membership for all parish and town councils who are not full CPRE members. Early feedback in 2016 suggests that strengthening our links with parish councils in this way will prove beneficial.

Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury District members visit Nosehill Farm

# WORKING WITH OTHERS

**W**E HAVE continued to work with other groups. This is an important part of our campaigning – and we would like to work with more. We already benefit from the input of the kindred organisations represented on our Executive Committee; and we have good contacts with these and other organisations through specific initiatives. Activities have included:

- A second planning training day organised jointly with the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils and designed for both CPRE members and parish councillors. The event covered the basics of the planning system with an emphasis on development management and planning appeals.

- Membership of a group of environmental organisations who have produced A Vision for the Severn Estuary restored as a healthy functioning ecosystem, providing more benefits for people and retaining and enhancing the unique environment of this special area. Part-funded by the Branch, an Advocacy Coordinator has been appointed to promote

the Vision over the next two years.

- A continuing joint research programme with the University of Gloucestershire, designed to increase understanding of the lower Severn Vale. A steadily expanding GIS is progressively providing better evidence to underpin our campaigning in this part of Gloucestershire.

- Membership of the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (LNP), bringing together voluntary sector and statutory bodies to inform strategic environmental priorities in the county. The LNP has been involved in early discussions with Highways England to design an appropriate road scheme for the controversial A417 “missing link” in order to secure environmental benefits as well as resolving long standing traffic congestion and safety issues in this sensitive location.

- A place at the Cheltenham Literature Festival in October featuring CPRE’s 90th Anniversary book **22 Ideas that saved the English countryside**. The event took the form of a panel discussion and questions from a capacity audience. It was chaired by Sir Simon Jenkins with panellists Oliver Hilliam - author, Alice Thomson - Environmental Correspondent from ‘The Times’ and our Vice-Chairman, Richard Lloyd.

- We have maintained good internal links and have continued joint work with both CPRE National Office in London and with CPRE SW. For example:



*At the CPRE-GAPTC Planning Training Day*

- Charlie Watson has recently been re-elected as Vice Chairman of the CPRE County Branch Forum and has contributed on behalf of National Office to joint Local Plan studies with the Town and Country Planning Association.

- Richard Lloyd is a member of the CPRE National Policy Committee. He also represents CPRE nationally on the Professional Steering Group developing the Charter for Trees, Woods and People.

- We are continuing to part-fund a research post in CPRE National Office dealing with housing policy. The work has led to the publication of a series of Housing Foresight reports which have been well received. Our thanks go to CPRE Kent Branch who have agreed to pick up most of the funding for the remaining period of this work.

- We funded, and served on the Steering Group, for the project to produce good practice guidance on the aesthetic aspects of photovoltaic installations on buildings. Two publications have been produced: detailed good practice guidance aimed primarily at designers, manufacturers and installers of PV systems; and a short guide, in the form of 10 design tips, primarily aimed at homeowners.

*A sixth Housing Foresight report was issued in 2016*



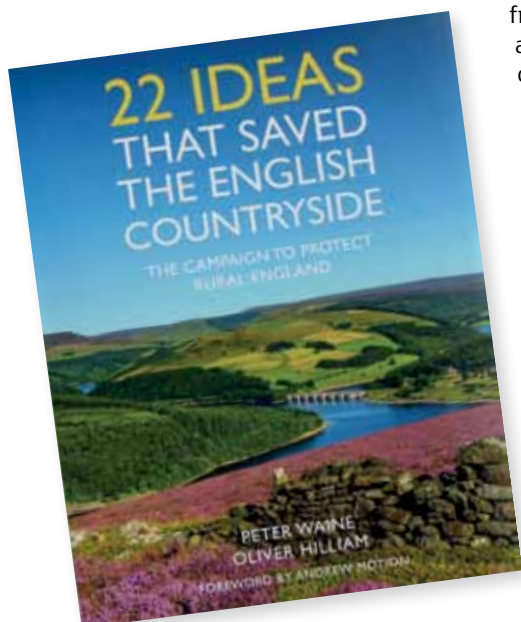
*The River Severn at Slimbridge*

Richard Lloyd

- Mike Mackey is our formal representative at meetings of CPRE SW, while Richard Lloyd continues to chair the Rural Economy Topic Group and Bob Brown the Topic Group on Minerals.

- Mike Mackey, Richard Lloyd, David Brooke and Lisa Belfield attended the CPRE Autumn Conference in Birmingham where shared areas of concern were discussed by all CPRE branches.

- We continue to have good working relations with the Cotswolds Conservation Board and the Wye Valley AONB Partnership.



# PROMOTING OUR MESSAGE

**W**ITHOUT GOOD communication our campaigns will fail to reach the decision makers we are trying to influence: the promotion of our campaigns and views is thus fundamental to our work. We have continued to maintain good links with the media and as part of this we issued six press releases during the year, matched by articles in journals and interviews on radio and television. We are always conscious that we could do more.

We had the able assistance of Nicky Godding Communications in the first part of the year to help with our media work, and Viva Communications in the latter part. At the same time Rachel Reeves, our Campaigns Manager, maintained our members' e-bulletin and developed other promotional materials. She also

refreshed and improved the Branch website.

We are pleased with the use made of our website – [www.cpreglos.org.uk](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk) – which has become a first point of reference for members, supporters and others who are interested in our views. The site is comprehensive and includes our press releases, newsletters, policy positions and information on the main issues with which we are concerned.

Our informative and attractive newsletter, Gloucestershire Views, remains an essential element of our communications under the direction of David Bayne (editor) and Colette Brownrigg (designer). Two editions were circulated to members and others in the spring and autumn, with both printed and web-based versions available.

## OUR AWARDS

**S**EVEN CPRE Gloucestershire Awards were made in 2016, bringing the total since the Awards scheme was launched in 2007 to 51. The Awards celebrate projects which have brought outstanding benefits to Gloucestershire's environment, people and local communities.



**1. Berry Hill Community Orchard**  
An attractive community orchard created largely by volunteers from an area of waste ground leased from the Forestry Commission



**2. Gloucester Services**  
A new motorway service area which has set the highest standards of design and sustainable construction and is a joy to use



**3. Renishaw Innovation Centre**  
An exemplar of sustainable design incorporating an extensive solar array on the roof and walls complementing the architecture of the building



**4. Re-ordering of St Michael and All Angels, Tirley**  
An historic church lovingly restored with great care and sensitivity after extensive flooding, creating a building more suited to present needs



**5. Stroud Rural Sustainable Drainage Project**  
An innovative project to reduce flood risk in the Stroud valleys, slowing water flow by simple measures such as "leaky dams"



**6. The Green Shop, Frampton on Severn**  
A new shop on the edge of the village green, carefully designed in this sensitive location and stocked, as far as possible, with local produce



**7. The Walled Garden Project, Stratford Park, Stroud**  
A delightful new garden and learning centre in the Walled Garden adjoining the Museum in the Park, largely created by volunteers.

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

## CPRE Gloucestershire Branch

Summarised Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2016

	2016	2015
<b>Income</b>		
Branch Share of National Subscriptions	23,404	23,318
Interest and Investment Income	4,928	5,612
Legacy (net of legal costs)	0	12,022
Donations	150	655
	<u>28,482</u>	<u>41,607</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Contractors Fees	17,820	16,469
Postage & Telephone	1,417	1,588
Printing & Stationery	1,245	1,977
Office Rent and Service Charges	3,467	3,467
Insurance	1,325	1,298
Travel & Meetings	1,487	959
Subscriptions	1,050	1,107
Newsletters	4,003	3,908
Public Relations	2,190	2,445
Merchandise	2,840	0
Awards Scheme	1,152	800
Annual Report and AGM	1,473	1,326
Reporting Accountant	394	394
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,036	716
Planning Consultancy	4,340	18,971
Contribution to Head Office Housing Post	29,167	33,224
Solar Panels Project	11,515	0
Severn Vision Project	2,000	0
	<u>87,921</u>	<u>88,649</u>
Deficit for the Year	(59,439)	(47,042)
Gain on Investments	23,127	171
General Fund, brought forward	293,936	340,807
General Fund, carried forward	<u>257,624</u>	<u>293,936</u>
<b>Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2016</b>		
<b>Assets</b>		
Investments	277,754	254,626
Debtors	5,862	6,093
Bank Account	84,665	142,640
	<u>368,281</u>	<u>403,359</u>
<b>less Current Liabilities</b>		
	10,657	9,423
	<u>357,624</u>	<u>393,936</u>
<b>Financed by</b>		
General Fund	257,624	293,936
Fighting Fund	100,000	100,000
	<u>357,624</u>	<u>393,936</u>

Copies of the full independently examined accounts will be available at the AGM

## Treasurer's Report

WITHOUT THE benefit of any legacies our income in 2016 relied entirely on subscriptions and investment income. This meant that, with expenditure at almost the same level as in the previous year, the annual deficit was £12,000 higher than in 2015, though this was more than made up for by the increase in the market value of our investments. This left total funds down by £36,000, in line with planned annual reductions over the next few years. However, the contribution to National Office for their housing research post will be very much smaller from 2017 onwards, which will release resources for other local projects.

*Julian Oxley*



**Gloucestershire**  
Campaign to Protect Rural England

## CPRE GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH TRUSTEES

The Trustees of the Branch are the Branch Officers, Elected Members of the Executive Committee and CPRE District Chairmen. CPRE Stroud District currently has a rota of short-term chairmen and thus de facto is not represented by a Trustee.

**Mr Mike Mackey**  
*Chairman*

**Mr David Bayne**

**Mrs Elizabeth Bourne**

**Professor Patricia Broadfoot**

**Mr David Brooke**

**Ms Alison Clifton Barnard**

**Mr Nick Dummett**

**Major Tom Hancock**

**Mr Nick Holliday**

**Mrs Rosealeen Lane**

**Mr Richard Lloyd**

**Mr Jeremy Lodwick**

**Mr Peter Loveday**

*(to September 2016)*

**Mr Clive Osborne**

*(from May 2016)*

**Mr Julian Oxley**

**Mrs Prue Vernon**

**Mr Charlie Watson**

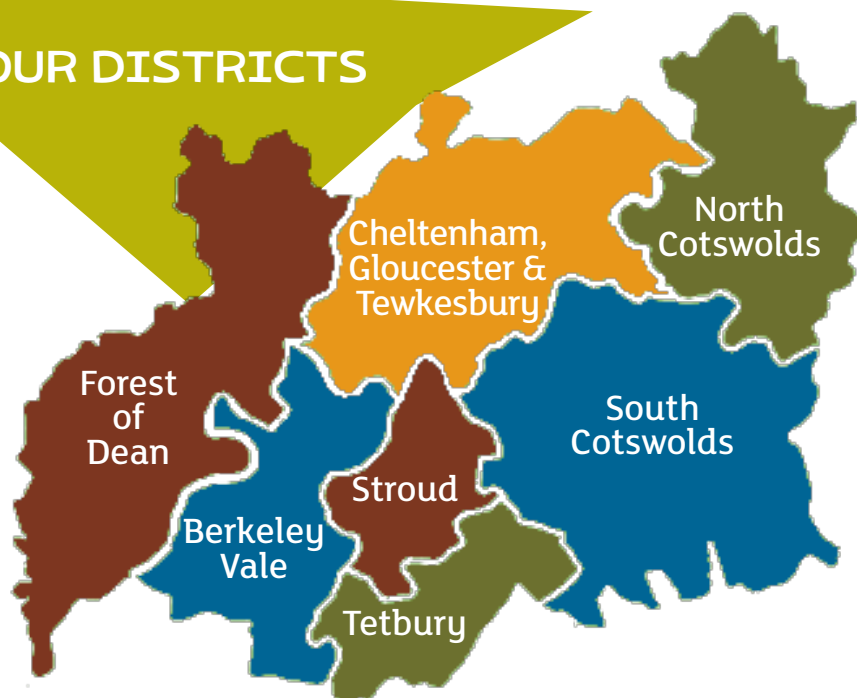
**T**HE GLOUCESTERSHIRE Branch of CPRE promotes and encourages, for the benefit of the public, the improvement and protection of the Gloucestershire countryside and its towns and villages, and the better development of the rural environment. It acts upon any matters affecting the planning, improvement and protection of the countryside and landscape.

[www.cpreglos.org.uk](http://www.cpreglos.org.uk)

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## OUR DISTRICTS



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