



Campaign to Protect Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

LANCASHIRE VOICE

The newsletter of the Lancashire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England
Spring/Summer 2019

NEW SOURCES OF PLANNING SUPPORT FOR MEMBERS



National Parks 70th Anniversary Walk, Castleton

Nick Thompson and Jackie Copley represented CPRE Lancashire at a walk to celebrate 70 years of National Parks on March 22nd. It was a sunny day and over 100 people from different backgrounds took part, including the usual suspects of CPRE, ramblers, Friends of the Park District, Peak National Park Rangers, RSPB, Wildlife Trust, National Trust and also representation from more diverse groups including wheelchair users, and Mosaic a group set up to help people from different ethnic backgrounds to enjoy countryside walks. This inclusive walk was also attended by Matt Baker of Countryfile, to be screened on 7th April. We were delighted to talk to such a wide range of people and learn about the different benefits everyone gains from the protection and enhancement of our National Parks.

As well as our normal Planning updates and news, this issue we are focusing on ways that our members can get more involved with CPRE Lancashire Branch - we can achieve so much more to protect our countryside by working together.

The **CPRE Planners' Portal** and **Planners' Discussion Forum** are new initiatives aimed to facilitate knowledge sharing, identification of common themes and issues, and supporting each other in order to make CPRE's work most effective, and any staff or volunteer in the CPRE network who is involved with or has an interest in planning or related activities is invited to join and feed into the new CPRE Planners' Portal and the forum. We hope you welcome this new initiative and are keen to be involved to make it a real success.

Planners' Discussion Forum:

<https://cpreplanning.vbulletin.net/home>
Trending discussions as we went to press included: Housing Delivery Test - housing requirement figure query, Natural England seek views on their standard advice (29/3), State of Brownfield 2019, the future of CPRE's **Planning Help** website.

Planners' Portal: <https://www.planningabc.xyz/>

Current articles/case studies on: Rufford Landscape Character Assessment, Peel's Proposal for over 1000 Houses in Bolton's Green Belt, up-to-date local plans.
For further advice contact planning@cpre.org.uk.

Can we keep in touch with you via email?

Can you help us to reduce our costs? We can save money if we send our newsletters and communicate with you by email. It costs nearly £1 (postage and envelope) for every single newsletter we send by post!

Any money we can save on our running costs means more to put towards our vital campaigning work to protect Lancashire's countryside. If you would like to opt in to receiving our communications by email instead of post, please email info@cprelancashire.org.uk, or sign up by visiting <http://eepurl.com/dEkBFv> (or if you have a smartphone, scan the QR code below to visit the webpage). Thank you.

Member events

We are working on a new programme of rural events for members, which we plan to unveil in early summer 2019. If you would like to get involved in planning walks or would like to make any suggestions for possible events, please contact us - details on the back page!



ARNSIDE AND SILVERDALE AONB PLAN DOCUMENT

CPRE Lancashire welcomes new plan for Arnside and Silverdale AONB



Arnside and Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Arnside and Silverdale Area AONB straddles North Lancashire and South Cumbria. As an AONB, it should enjoy the highest levels of protection for its landscapes and natural beauty. But as CPRE's report, "Beauty Betrayed", shows, even these protected places are increasingly being targeted for major housing development, which is threatening the character of some of our finest landscapes. CPRE Lancashire is therefore very happy to support the new planning policies being developed for the Arnside and Silverdale AONB by Lancaster City Council and South Lakeland District Council. This is a pioneering new approach – the first time a separate plan has ever been made for an AONB. It is "landscape-capacity led", meaning that, unlike in most development plans, the special qualities that make the landscape and the villages within it worthy of national recognition really do get the priority and protection they deserve. However, it still allows for opportunities for smaller scale development to help meet local needs and keep the communities that live there thriving. The DPD comes into force on May 9th.

AGM: 23rd May, Mere Sands Wood

Following a brief meeting, join us for a spring visit to Mere Sands wood with activities and cake!

Our AGM (Annual General Meeting) will take place on the afternoon of 23rd of May at Mere Sands Wood Nature Reserve. Come along and see the lovely reserve, managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust. You can visit the hides with our local ornithologist and see the many species of birds. Kingfishers anyone? Or would you like to go pond dipping? The ponds there have been specially set up to allow for safe and easy pond dipping by everyone – young and old, wheelchair users and the able bodied. It is great fun and you may see anything from caddis fly larvae to great crested newts!

Commercial Committee update

In our drive to earn more money for CPRE Lancs and its causes our Commercial Activities team has been very busy! Thanks to all our members who are already supporting us through membership of the 100 Club, our new lottery. Tickets are still available for the remainder of 2019; visit our website to find out more.

In addition to this, we have taken the following actions:

- We have set up a "donate" button on our website so people can give quickly and easily;
- We have registered with **Amazon "Smile"**. If you shop on Amazon please log on to Amazon "Smile": a percentage of what you spend automatically goes to us! You do not need to do anything extra: when you first go on you will be asked to nominate your chosen charity. We are listed on the website as "The Campaign to Protect Rural England Lancs". Pick that and job done - there is a link on our website to make it even easier! You only need to do that once. Afterwards, every time you spend on Amazon Smile a percentage comes straight to us;
- We are organizing a **livestock farm visit** for our members. You can talk to the farmer about their work and the challenges of 21st century farming, see the animals, watch the amazing automated milking in operation – the cows milk themselves! – and have a really nice day in the countryside;
- We will be leading a guided walk on a section (don't worry, not the whole route!) of the **Greater Manchester Ringway**, which connects the city with its surrounding countryside;
- We are looking at a "**starry skies**" night wherein a local astronomer will show you the different constellations, identify the pole star and show you the planets! Because of light pollution it is becoming increasingly more difficult to enjoy the spectacle of a black sky smothered in millions and millions of stars. Once you have seen such a sight you will never forget it! There are parts of the north west where dark skies are still the norm. All we then need is a cloudless night! Watch this space!
- We are also organizing a "**fungi foray**". Interested in fungi? Toadstools? Mushrooms? Would you like to see chanterelles growing under a beech tree canopy? Penny bun (known in Italy as porcini)? Morels? Hen of the woods? [More information to come!](#)

Get more involved: join our networks!

Our **Eyes and Ears Network** helps us achieve our mission by informing us of any local issues of concern. This does not require any specific planning expertise, and simply means paying attention to issues affecting the countryside or green spaces in your local area, informing the CPRE team of your concerns, and where possible helping us work on solutions. All you would need is access to a computer, a spare hour or two each week, and a passion for supporting the countryside.

We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help us with our work in standing up for the countryside. Would you be willing to join our **Helping Hands Network**, providing vital hands-on help to the charity. This could be anything from volunteering at events, to helping spread our message to new audiences or to supporting campaign or fundraising efforts. Please do get in touch if you have some spare time and energy to get involved! Contact details on back cover.

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

CPRE responded to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) Revised Draft, January 2019. Overall, we are pleased with the positive amendments to this version of the framework, which will guide strategic planning decisions over the next 20 years. We recognise that GMCA has listened to the vast majority of people who objected to Green Belt loss, and that many Green Belt allocations have now been removed, and there are proposals to create 69 new parcels of Green Belt, with an improved focus on brownfield land reuse. This will ensure that the countryside of Greater Manchester is better protected and enhanced for future generations.

The benefits of the rural landscape are wide, and include related jobs in farming and food production, natural capital services, including a network of habitat for our wildlife and flood-resilience to assist climate change adaptation. However, we think there can be much more greenfield land saved from needless development.

CPRE commissioned an economic analysis (report can be downloaded from our website, as can our response to the GMSF consultation) to inform our response to the GMSF. We have a number of significant concerns, such as the economic growth rate assumed being unreasonably high, particularly given the ongoing economic uncertainties which are recognised in the Revised Draft GMSF, but perhaps not extensively enough, as the result of Brexit and wider global economic shocks. This in our view has led to inflated jobs and housing figures.

The preference for brownfield land being developed in advance of greenfield is of real merit and we applaud GMCA for this approach. That said, we remain concerned that there are too many brownfield sites which under the Revised Draft GMSF have little or no prospect of being brought forward for development. Despite the Government's National Planning Policy Framework, 2018, introducing Section 11 to make more effective use of land, including brownfield, combined with recently introduced Brownfield Registers, we see sites defined as "unsuitable" as undervalued. We think GMCA could use its devolved powers to more effectively unlock the potential of these wasted sites and in doing so more greenfield, including Green Belt, land could be spared from needless development.

In our response, we present our ideas for targeted action by suitable partnership approaches including community-led regeneration in the future. We hope that in practice, more "grot spots" could be cleaned, developed and/or greened to make a more meaningful contribution in the future. We think everything that is possible must be done to optimise the societal value of all brownfield land so it may be fruitfully reused.

Find out more on our website:
www.cprelancashire.org.uk

BROWNFIELD FIRST TO SAVE OUR GREEN BELTS

CPRE research finds brownfield sites in Lancashire could meet the need for over 120,000 new homes

Rebecca Pullinger, who carried out the research for CPRE, commented 'Building on brownfield land presents a fantastic opportunity to simultaneously remove local eyesores and breathe new life into areas crying out for regeneration. It will help to limit the amount of countryside lost to development, and build more homes in areas where people want to live, with infrastructure, amenities and services already in place. Councils have worked hard to identify space suitable for more than one million new homes. But until we have a brownfield first approach to development, and all types of previously developed land are considered, a large number of sites that could be transformed into desperately needed new homes will continue to be overlooked. The government, local councils and house builders must work hard to bring these sites forward for development and get building.'



Standing up for Manchester's Green Belt. Photo: Alfie Ogg

St Helens Local Plan

CPRE Lancashire responded to the St Helens Local Plan consultation. We hope that the Plan will progress towards adoption without delay, as in our experience, greenfield land in the countryside, particularly Green Belt, is more vulnerable to development without the protection of an up to date, and adopted local plan, steering development to the most sustainable locations. However, we did make a number of comments, as we felt that the plan overestimated the need for provision for jobs and housing, and the plan would have been improved by a genuine brownfield first policy. The current plan does not make the most effective use of land, which conflicts with the NPPF.

CAMPAIGNS IN BRIEF

Roseacre Wood Fracking Site refusal upheld at appeal

CPRE had previously maintained an objection as highway safety impacts were insurmountable. In addition, the proposals raised further negative impacts with harm to rural character, hedgerows, tranquillity and local amenity. We are delighted that the Inspector dismissed Cuadrilla's appeal for Roseacre Wood.

Ribble Valley Conservation Area

In 2017 CPRE Lancashire objected to a very large 'dance studio' being built in the rear garden of a small cottage due to harm to the purpose of the Wiswell Conservation Area. However, Ribble Valley planners had not applied Article 4 Direction to the property so the ancillary building was allowed under permitted development rights. Now the developer has applied for a change of use via a planning application and has submitted an accompanying heritage statement, to which CPRE Lancashire objects on a number of grounds. It underplays the significance of the Conservation Area designated in 1972 and other land use considerations, such as highway and traffic safety concerns.

West Lancashire's Local Plan Preferred Options – flawed evidence

We agree that it is vital that sufficient homes and jobs are planned for and delivered through the Local Plan process. But frankly, when we read the Council's Preferred Option document that proposes a brand new local plan up to **2050**, for more than 15,000 homes and 190 hectares of employment land to be developed primarily on prime farmland in the Green Belt, we were aghast. Our response can be downloaded from the Branch website in which you can read all our objections and recommendations.

Portside North Inquiry

Jackie Copley was commissioned by Frack Free Ellesmere Port and Upton, the Rule 6 Party, to represent opposition to a shale exploration application. The proposal site is situated on Portside North in Ellesmere Port. Although an urban location, it was considered as a matter indirectly relevant to CPRE in that should the use was allowed, the employment use would be displaced elsewhere and probably require greenfields in countryside to be allocated instead.



Manchester Public Meeting, 26th March

More & better brownfield regeneration

CPRE's public meeting brought together, politicians, academics and members of the public to look for a consensus on how best to ensure that development is targeted on brownfield land where possible, as well as considering other ways to ensure best use of derelict land by greening if development is not appropriate.

Speakers included CPRE's Chief Executive, Crispin Truman, Councillors Derek Long (leader of St Helens Council) and Paul Dennett (leader of Salford City Council), Professor Graham Houghton, and CPRE's Jackie Copley and Rebecca Pullinger. Following introductions from each of the speakers, and an outline of the findings of CPRE's recently released 'State of Brownfield' report, the panel each outlined their own position on the topic of freeing up brownfield for development, following which questions were asked from the floor on a number of topics.

CPRE's 'State of Brownfield' report found that across the country, there is enough brownfield land available to build over a million new homes; for each brownfield site that is developed, a similar amount of land in the countryside or Green Belt can be protected, so this is a vital, but sadly under-used resource.

In order to make best use of suitable brownfield land, CPRE is urging the government to introduce a genuine 'brownfield first' policy, which ensures that suitable previously developed or under-used land is prioritised for redevelopment over green spaces and countryside. Clearer definitions and guidelines must be given so that the registers act as a true pipeline, identifying all possible brownfield sites and recording their suitability for uses other than housing, including uses that protect the biodiversity or heritage value of sites where applicable.



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