



Hedge Fund to Hedgerows

Following our “40by50” campaign and our publication “Hedge Fund: investing in hedgerows for climate, nature and the economy”, the government has committed to funding over 40,000 kilometres of new hedgerows. It is not the 40 % increase by 2050 but it is a start. But why is it so important?

English countryside is characterised by a soft green landscape, dotted with mature, sometimes ancient trees and carved up by dry stone walls and hedgerows. If we stretched out our 649,715 km of managed hedgerows into a straight line they would encircle Earth 16 times!! They are our largest nature “reserve.”

Hedgerows are a carbon absorbing, biodiversity hotspot. Typically native shrubs and smaller trees with an understorey of flowering plants, they provide shelter, food, nest and roosting sites. Invaluable for pollinating insects and pest control they also mitigate soil erosion and flood risk and improve water and air quality, particularly in urban areas. The hazel dormouse and hedgehogs continue in decline because of hedgerow loss.

So what makes a hedgerow a hedgerow? It is a BOUNDARY line of TREES and SHRUBS, OVER 20 METRES LONG and LESS than 5 METRES WIDE . Gaps are less than 20 metres wide and any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2 metres of its centre is part of the hedgerow habitat.

That habitat is important for 130 of the UK’s 1149 “at risk” species. The brown hairstreak butterfly lays its eggs in blackthorn and pest controllers like wasps, hoverflies and beetles, such as ladybirds and ground beetles, use them for shelter and overwintering. Bats fly along hedgerows when commuting to foraging spots. They are a corridor for moths and

bumblebees, birds and mammals and a migration route for woodland animals facing climate change. At least 30 bird species nest in hedgerows. Bullfinches and turtle doves favour tall hedgerows with lots of trees, whitethroats, linnets and yellowhammers shorter ones with fewer trees. Dunnocks, lesser whitethroats and willow warblers prefer medium or tall with few trees. Marsh Tits use them to commute between woods. Wrens, robins, dunnocks and whitethroats nest in them low down, song thrushes, blackbirds, chaffinches and greenfinches higher up. Grey partridges nest at the base.

Economic benefits? They create employment in hedge laying and biofuel (woodchip) production. Hedgerow rich countryside is significant in tourism. For every £1 spent on hedgerows, £1.73 in economic benefits are generated for farmers in pesticide use reduction and crop yield increases including apples, field beans and oil seed rape.

Thanks to a City hedge fund who gave us £50,000 we and TCV have created new hedgerows on 4 sites in the north west. We have planted 10,000 native hedgerow whips: hawthorn, spindle, blackthorn, hazel and dog rose. We provided educational resources to local primary schools and 314 children dug, planted and mulched. My fellow trustees and I got our hands dirty too and I now know how to assemble biodegradable tree guards!! The children quipped “this is brilliant Miss. Can we come again?” and even clapped and cheered at the end of the sessions. My lasting memory is overhearing a 9 year old, who had clearly been paying attention in lessons, telling another pupil that hedgerows are “really good for bugs and birds and take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere!!” A future member of CPRE the countryside charity?!

Debbie McConnell, Chair

Planning update

Our Planning Director, Jackie Copley, has been supporting volunteers and several groups around the Lancashire, Liverpool City Region, and Greater Manchester to stop needless loss of green space for new development. Of note are the following:

Our volunteers have passed comments back to the CPRE national team on changes needed when the National Planning Policy Framework is updated. Some proposed changes are welcomed, but more focus on environmental protection and more renewable energy subject to landscape sensitivity is important.

Later in the year the way housing requirements are calculated is going to be revised, which we have been campaigning for for a long time. We should plan enough development in the right places, but this ought to be by bringing more brownfield land back into use and this will help to protect high-grade farm land and our dwindling ecology. For CPRE these are top priorities.

Belthorn and Guide

Local people in the small rural villages of Belthorn and Guide are objecting to the inclusion of 40 hectares (or 100 acres) farmland at the Southern Pennine moorland fringe, at the east of Junction 5 of the M55 motorway, as an allocation for warehousing in the Blackburn with Darwen local plan.

The site is currently in Green Belt, and is very prominent, with views of Pendle Hill in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Yorkshire Three Peaks and Blackpool Tower.

In addition to landscape issues there are also harms arising to flooding, ecology and highway and traffic concerns relating to the B6232 Haslingden Road.

Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' Joint Development Plan

Since November 2022, Jackie has been attending the examination of the Greater Manchester 'Places for Everyone' Joint Development Plan for the areas of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. Before Christmas, the thematic policies were given an airing. Jackie made the case that the housing and employment requirements are 'needlessly' too high leading to the release of 2,661 hectares of Green Belt.

In the New Year, the examination resumed with 40 site specific hearings, where Jackie spoke out against several cross-border sites due to Green Belt harm and other harms

New national role for Jackie Copley

Our Planning Director, Jackie Copley, is now splitting her working week between National CPRE and CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester.

As Planning Policy Lead for CPRE the countryside charity, Jackie will be determining the charity's planning policy for England as a whole (so every CPRE Group), feeding into CPRE's campaigning and lobbying. She will be working in this role three days per week. Jackie will continue to work for CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester for the other two days per week, focusing on significant county-wide spatial planning work and

arising.

Jackie has also provided guidance to local people to raise key issues to the three examiners. Later, new Green Belt additions will be sought, including the land at the moorland fringe north of Horwich Golf Course in Bolton. Previously developers achieved consent for housing on part of the golf course, but it is important the moorland fringe is maintained open and free from development.

Samlesbury and Cuerdale

Samlesbury and Cuerdale Parish Council called on Jackie's help to compile a response to the Central Lancashire Preferred Option Local Plan, which includes the Cuerdale Garden Village requiring the release of 293 hectares of Green Belt land currently in use for agriculture.

The proposal would entirely urbanise a rural part of South Ribblesdale, with harm to openness, local rural character, and cultural associations.

Previously Jackie submitted an objection letter to a speculative planning application, which led to the Council deciding to place a holding objection, subject to talks with neighbouring authorities.

Bretherton Neighbourhood Plan

Jackie has also been commissioned to draft a Neighbourhood Plan for Bretherton a small rural village in Chorley. The area is characterised by flat agricultural fields in arable use. This linear village has an agricultural heritage and ecology that is important in terms of declining farm bird species.

The local pet food business is a key employer and it is looking at options for a community-renewable energy project. A key problem for local people is the lack of a reliable bus service connecting to the rest of the Chorley area.



paid consultancy work, such as neighbourhood plans and representing opposition groups in their fight against inappropriate development.

For us as a local branch, this is a very important development as it secures our future financially. We have pared our costs to a minimum, increased our income and invested money and other resources to try and improve our financial position. This new role for Jackie enables us to continue on a stronger footing and to stay in the black notwithstanding current difficulties for the charitable sector, which is struggling as the cost of living crisis, changing donation patterns and fewer voluntary hours bite.

Congratulations to Jackie on this appointment!

Your local CPRE group needs you!

Do you care about the countryside? Biodiversity? The climate crisis? Do you like dark skies full of stars? CPRE The Countryside Charity needs new volunteers for its Lancs, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester Group. We need you!

There are a number of new, exciting volunteer roles now available with CPRE Lancashire, Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester.

Volunteering with us is a fantastic way to help us to stand up for the countryside, championing environmental issues such as the climate emergency, renewable energy, biodiversity and sustainable transport, and working to make sure that necessary development happens in the most appropriate locations.

Governance roles

Chair

Debbie McConnell, our current Chair, comes to the end of her term in office in September 2023, so we are seeking a proactive and committed individual who can spare a day or two per week to determine strategy and future development and growth, to support the team, to network, to inspire and to lead.

We need someone who will support our fundraising, membership and engagement initiatives, build relationships and represent CPRE at national meetings with other Chairs of county CPREs, at meetings of local Nature Partnerships and at meetings with our CPRE colleagues in London who determine the national policies and campaigns, lobby and work with other environmental groups such as the Green Alliance and the Planning Coalition.

If you would like to find out more, please contact the Branch Office and request a copy of the recruitment pack.

Trustee

We really need more people on our small but effective team covering Lancashire, Liverpool City Region & Greater Manchester. The challenge is that we have lots to do but not enough people to do it!

Our workload is increasing, so every trustee is “hands on” doing our core work on rural issues such as affordable homes, transport, renewable energy, food and farming and on the protection of the countryside, green belt and green space from inappropriate development.

We want greater access to green space for all so inclusion and

diversity is high on our agenda. We also cover a breadth of broadly environmental campaigning including on the climate and biodiversity crises, fracking, pollution including light pollution (dark skies) and cessation of peat extraction.

You do not need to be knowledgeable about environmental issues or the countryside, but must have relevant experience, and enthusiasm and commitment to our work. If you grew up on a farm or in a rural area or live there now you may bring lived experience and we want to hear from you. If you live in the suburbs or in a city but are passionate about the countryside and nature we want to hear from you!

Could you produce content for our newsletter or run our events? Would you like to oversee our website and social media accounts? Could you manage our planning volunteers or our recruitment and data resource? Every trustee has their own role. Training opportunities are available and you will be encouraged to take them up. It is essential that you can work comfortably online as we all work from home.

Ideally you will be between 30 and 50 years of age but we will consider older and younger people. Applications are particularly welcome from people of colour, the LGBTQ+ community and the less able bodied as we wish to increase the diversity of our Board.

Other roles

We will soon be advertising for volunteers to fill the following roles:

- Planning Volunteer Manager
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Events Organiser
- Content Creator
- Communications Volunteer
- Website Manager
- Social Media Volunteer
- Fundraising Volunteer

If you think that any of the above roles would be of interest to you, or you would like to find out more prior to these roles being advertised, please email us on info@cprelancashire.org.uk, or phone **01772 378831** to arrange a time for an informal chat.



GM Ringway update

Work on the GM Ringway, our National Lottery Heritage Funded project working in conjunction with the Ramblers, continues apace.

Over the two years of the project, the GM Ringway, which has been designed using existing footpaths and rights of way, will be fully established. The team have been working hard behind the scenes to get everything in place to start to recruit volunteers, develop an app and website and publicise the project.

May is National Walking Month and the GM Walking Festival offers a brilliant opportunity to lace up your walking shoes and adventure on the GM Ringway. Whether you're out with your family, taking a solo walk with the dog, or joining one of the organised events this month, we want to know about it. We have some fantastic groups and teams leading walks with us, and whatever your level of walking, we have a walk for you!

<https://tinyurl.com/GMRingway-events>

We will shortly be looking for enthusiastic volunteers to fill specific roles, from route testing to community input, as well as taking part in walks for the festival to help record and survey participants. If you'd like to find out more, please sign up for the volunteer newsletter:

<https://tinyurl.com/GMRingway-Volunteer>



Meet the team

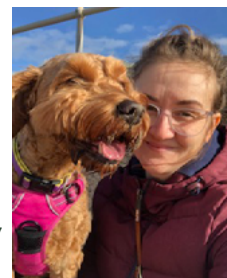
Project lead: Dr Andrew Read

Members will recognise Dr Read as an established volunteer with CPRE who has led many fantastic walks for us across our region. The GM Ringway was Andrew's idea, and he now leads the team implementing the project. Andrew

is also Director and Lead Consultant at Walking Projects Plus, a team of specialist researchers and subject experts supporting public sector, charity and business clients on digital, research, and implementation projects in the recreational walking and active travel fields.

Lauren Buckley – Project Officer

As project officer, Lauren is responsible for the day to day project management, monitoring and evaluation, budget management and supporting the team. She does the vital work of keeping the project on track and on time! She lives in Worsley with her dog, Penny.



Sarah Irving – Community Engagement Officer

Sarah is the link between the community and the project. She creates networks and connections between other groups and organisations throughout Greater Manchester. She works with them to co-create walking events and activities along the GM Ringway route (and

features, such as parks, canals, woodland and reservoirs) to highlight the beautiful things in Greater Manchester. She is also found chatting on social media and sharing people's stories and photos in the e-newsletter. Sarah will be there if you want to volunteer with the project. She will help you find the right role and support you in making the most of it. Outside of the GM Ringway, Sarah is a travel and outdoor writer, cat sitter and avid walker. She usually explores the lesser visited spots in Greater Manchester and enjoys learning about the region at the many museums, art galleries and heritage sites in the area.



Dr Andrew Read

Join in.

www.cprelancashire.org.uk

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The countryside charity
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