



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

www.cpreoxon.org.uk

Spring 2024

Oxfordshire Voice



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DIRECTORY

Views expressed in the Voice are not necessarily those of CPRE Oxfordshire, which welcomes independent comment.

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Cover: Eynsham's Hedgerow Heroes/Jess Bouwer, Wild Oxfordshire

Articles, letters, comments and suggestions for articles are welcome. Please contact the Branch Office below. Published April 2024

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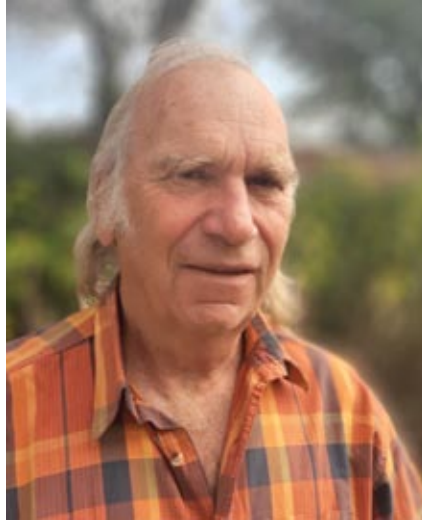
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Chairman's voice



The last year has seen some positives both nationally and locally, including an updated National Planning Policy Framework, with the partial removal of the five year housing land supply rule, strengthening of the Green Belt and the statement that the 'standard method' used to calculate housing need is only advisory. One can see the voice of CPRE in these welcome changes.

Locally, Oxford City and Cherwell are unfortunately still set on excessive growth, but South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse have set themselves on a more moderate path – with a small reduction in their overall housing target and extending the delivery date out to 2041. There are also many other welcome policies in the current draft combined South and Vale Local Plan such as dark skies, tranquil areas and low carbon buildings. We await to see whether these developments survive inspections.

In Cholsey, a 400 house development was thrown out by the Secretary of State on the grounds that the views of local people and their Neighbourhood Plan must be respected. In Cherwell, CPRE successfully challenged speculative housing developments at Chesterton and Ambroseden. Over in the Vale there is no sign of any activity concerning proposals for an intrusive caravan park and in Eynsham the courts have ruled that the Inspector

was wrong to reject the community led plan for low carbon housing at the Salt Cross development. While CPRE can't claim full credit for all these successes it does show that local people are being listened to and campaigning is worthwhile.

Hedgerow Heroes has had another successful year working with 13 communities to plant and restore hedgerows, our Green Belt Stiles project has improved accessibility of the Green Belt Way around Oxford and our Green Belt Planning Seminar attracted over 50 local campaigners and decision-makers.

We continue to work with and support GARD (Group Against Reservoir Development) to oppose the Abingdon Reservoir and have called for a full Public Inquiry into Thames Water's flawed proposals. It was also heartening to see the Environment Agency finally objecting to a proposed housing development on the grounds of inadequate sewerage capacity, at Bayswater Brook, NE of Oxford.

We have been supporting the Stop Botley West solar farm campaign and pushing for stronger policies in Local Plans to make solar panels on roofs mandatory and to discourage speculative solar farm developments on green fields.

This time last year we were planning to dip into our reserves to support our campaigning. Thanks to support of donations and grants (alongside our membership contributions and investment income) we have broken even over 2023. Our staff team do a fantastic job for Oxfordshire, but we do need more volunteers, particularly to help with the District Committees – so please get in touch if you think you can spare some time to help. One excellent initiative we've launched this year is our Student Planning Ambassadors programme. We have teamed up with Oxford Brookes University to recruit three young planning students to help us assess planning applications in the County. This will give the students

Meet our new Student Planning Ambassadors



We are delighted to have appointed three students from the School of the Built Environment at Oxford Brookes University as Student Ambassadors, to support local volunteers in speaking up for the countryside and responding to development applications.

Alanna Heywood, Raheem Adepoju and Matthew Clayton are students on the BA Urban Design, Planning and Development programme. As Student Ambassadors they will liaise with our District Groups to help produce CPRE responses to planning applications, hopefully

including site visits and links with parish councils, community groups, and other stakeholders. Our aim is to provide hands-on experience of engaging with the planning system at a grassroots level.

Dave Valler, Professor of Spatial Planning at Oxford Brookes said: "We are grateful to CPRE Oxfordshire for providing such an excellent opportunity to our students. This real-world experience will be invaluable in developing their skills and knowledge and will support their future careers in Planning."

Helen Marshall, Director of CPRE Oxfordshire said "It's fantastic to have these young experts on board to help our volunteers. Hopefully we can also give them some inside experience of what it is like engaging with the planning system from the point of view of local communities."

real world experience and provide CPRE with a new resource.

Sadly Helen Marshall, our Director, is leaving us this year. Helen has been a fantastic ambassador and advocate for CPRE for 13 years. As I write we are putting together the advert for her replacement – she will be a hard act to follow.

After three enjoyable years in the Chairman's role, I will also be stepping down at the Branch AGM on 29 June, in line with our Constitution. I will continue to support CPRE in an advisory capacity, particularly around water issues. I am delighted that my fellow trustee, Susie Mather, has allowed her name to go forward for election as Chair and strongly recommend her to you.

While we've had our challenges in the last year it does seem that local activism is working. Many thanks to our volunteers, staff and donors and we look forward to your support in the coming year.

Richard Harding, Chairman

Join our Green Defenders Network

CPRE Oxfordshire is very grateful to all those who contributed to our Big Give Christmas Challenge Appeal, to support the setting up of our new 'Green Defenders Network'.

Following the success of that appeal, we launched our recruitment drive this Spring. Green Defenders will be our frontline planning volunteers, helping to support the work of our District Committees by bringing local knowledge as well as a passion for protecting our countryside.

Our initial aim is to recruit around 10 volunteers across the county, but ultimately, wouldn't it be amazing to have a CPRE Green Defender in every Oxfordshire parish?

If you are interested in getting involved, we'd love to hear from you.

The time commitment is flexible and only a few hours a month, and we will provide training and support.

The role is open to anyone over 18, and as younger members of our community are currently underrepresented in our volunteer base, we would be delighted to receive applications from the younger end of the scale.

Whether it's to help the countryside, boost your CV, meet like-minded people or just to give something back to the community, please do consider joining our Green Defenders Network.

Take Action!

Ask about becoming a CPRE Oxon Green Defender. To find out more, see our website:

www.cpreoxon.org.uk or contact the Branch Office – 01491 612079
E: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk

Hedgerow Heroes



Wild
Oxfordshire



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire



2023-2024: Over 3km of new and restored hedgerow

Hundreds of volunteers across Oxfordshire have been helping to plant and restore hedgerows over this winter's planting season.

Nearly 400 people from 13 different communities, including Dorchester on Thames, Upper Heyford, Long Wittenham, Eynsham and Cumnor, have all taken part in the **Hedgerow Heroes** project, run in partnership by CPRE Oxfordshire and Wild Oxfordshire.

Together, they have rejuvenated 500m of hedgerow that was in poor condition and planted over 2.5km of new hedgerow.

Helen Marshall, Director, CPRE Oxfordshire said: "It's been an amazing effort by communities all round the county. Volunteering like this can make you feel better, both physically and mentally, and leaves a lasting improvement to our countryside."

"We are hoping that we will get the funding to run Hedgerow Heroes again next winter and would love to hear from any communities that might like to get involved."

Jess Bower, Hedgerows and Partnerships Officer, Wild Oxfordshire said: "Hedgerows are powerhouses for nature. They are essential wildlife corridors and provide food, shelter, and nesting locations for a wide variety of animals. Hedgerows are also becoming ever more important in the face of climate change as they suck carbon from the atmosphere, regulate water during flood and drought events and provide a renewable source of fuel."

You can watch our Hedgerow Heroes 23-24 showreel on www.youtube.com (just search Hedgerow Heroes).



Long Wittenham

The full list of Oxfordshire communities involved in Hedgerow Heroes 2023/4 is:

Cumnor CofE Primary School, Dorchester on Thames, Ewelme, Eynsham, Harwell, Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, Great Haseley, Kelmscott Manor, Kidlington, Long Wittenham, Upper Heyford, Witney and Wootton by Woodstock.

Our grateful thanks to all our hedgerow volunteers – definitely Heroes in our book!

Take Action!

If your community would be interested in taking part in Hedgerow Heroes next autumn, please do get in touch.

T: 01491 612079

E: campaign@cprexon.org.uk



Kidlington

How leasehold reform can unlock the potential of rooftop solar

Rooftop solar can help us reach net zero while protecting our countryside, but we need to look at how it could work for renters and landlords.

Property ownership and rooftop solar

There are three sectors of housing ownership in England: freehold, leasehold and rented. Placing solar panels on the roof of a freehold property is mostly in the control of the owner and therefore fairly straightforward. But in the private rented sector there are few incentives for private landlords to install solar panels as the warmth, comfort and reduced bills don't benefit them.

We need the government to do more to support and encourage both freeholders and private landlords to embrace rooftop solar. This has huge potential to bring about clean energy across England, as estimates show that around 30% of the housing stock in England is either owned by private landlords or a leasehold property.

Estimates obtained by the management company of a block of some 180 south facing flats on the South coast suggested solar power would be very cost effective. The block uses some 90,000 kwh per year for communal lighting, lifts and to pump water. A local solar panel installer estimated that solar panels on the roof could supply all the communal electricity with a cost around £74,000 for the installation a cost of around £400 to each leaseholder. The payback period would be 16 months and after that the leaseholders could profit from exporting electricity to the grid. The savings/profit over 20yrs would be £1.5m.

Barriers to progress

But, even if an enlightened freeholder wanted to install rooftop solar on their block, they could be met with opposition. As Prof Susan Bright

University of Oxford has noted, leaseholders can object to the installation of solar panels, even when agreed by the management company or all other leaseholders. On top of this, private landlords are usually unable to pass the cost on to their tenants as this work is often regarded as 'improvement' work, which means there's a lack of incentive to make the move.

On the other end of the scale, leaseholders who wish to install rooftop solar are faced with obtaining the approval of the landlord, in the case above, this was a finance company. But the law is weighted in favour of the landlord. The lease indicates that the landlord can refuse the request without giving a reason, can charge rental for the space and also charge for any expert advice they need from lawyers, engineers, and the like. In addition, as Prof Bright points out the leaseholders may be faced with the inability to pass on the costs through increases in service charges.

How to address the challenges

We need to understand just how much potential solar capacity is lost due to the barriers that exist in the rental and leasehold sector. Research which quantifies that – and demonstrates how other countries have encouraged solar power – would help.

The National Infrastructure Commission (which informs the government on major infrastructure decisions) should come forward with proposals on how solar can be maximised in the rental and leasehold sectors.

The National Adaptation Programme (NAP), which sets out how the government can adapt to climate change, should incorporate the following:

- Bring forward regulations to ensure individual leaseholders

cannot block or oppose energy efficient improvements to leasehold buildings.

- Incentivise landlords whether they be private landlords or freeholders of leasehold property to install energy efficient measures and penalise those who do not through taxation.
- Introduce measures to ensure that if the majority of leaseholders in the property want solar power then the freeholder cannot unreasonably refuse or exploit it for their own gain.
- Ensure that solar power and other energy savings devices are incorporated into new builds.

The system of access to the cheap electricity through solar power is inequitable, with renters and leaseholders at a considerable disadvantage. But if the government is ready to commit to generating clean and affordable electricity, the potential for harnessing the sun in the UK is also not to be underestimated.

About the author

Susan Kerrison PhD lives in a leasehold property on the South Coast. Last year she took part in one of the Environmental Law Foundation's 'law clinics', which looked at the legal issues around solar in leasehold properties.

A longer version of this article is available at: www.cpre.org.uk/opinions/how-leasehold-reform-can-unlock-the-potential-of-rooftop-solar/

Take Action!

CPRE Oxfordshire is calling for a rooftop solar revolution. Please ask your local councillors and prospective parliamentary candidates about this issue and whether they will support us.

Not just a walk in the park



View over Oxford near the Signal Elm



Over the last year, local pals Jamie Barber and Nicola Schafer (above) have been walking the Oxford Green Belt Way, a route created by CPRE Oxfordshire. Here Jamie kindly recounts their experiences....

Nic and I are old friends, going back to university days. Back then we were more adept at watching daytime TV as housemates than in doing any kind of strenuous activity (more Supermarket Sweep than ‘epic expedition’, you might say), but over the last couple of decades we’ve discovered a mutual love of walking. Despite living relatively close to each other, with the pressures of family life we found that we hadn’t properly caught up in a loooooong time.

Until fate intervened. Late in 2023 I found myself unexpectedly ‘unbusy’ due to a fallow spell between jobs and, combined with Nic’s flexibility as a freelance filmmaker, we had some relative freedom on weekdays. And with walking a great way to catch up in an unrushed, unstructured and uninterrupted way, what better than to put our best feet forwards and simply go for a walk.

In many ways, the timing was decided for us. But even so, it must be said that winter is an amazing time to walk, providing an opportunity to appreciate the framework of the landscape with views through skeletal trees largely

unencumbered by leaves and foliage. The fresh air on your face after the largely indoor excesses of the festive season. As long as you have the luxury to avoid walking on days forecast for downpours...

We chose the Oxford Greenbelt Way (affectionately referred to hereafter as the OGW). I’d stumbled on a guide in a bookshop years before. After making quite a few enquiries my wife was lucky enough to find a copy in a charity shop (Oxfam in Summertown, Oxford, treasure seekers). It became our ‘go to’ and we came to view the lady on the front cover as our walking companion, busily scrumping fruit from a sunny pathway somewhere on the route.

For those readers considering potential long-ish distance walks, the OGW has other advantages that, for us, appealed to a combination of laziness, practicality, and OCD. Nic lives in South Oxfordshire and is relatively mobile. I live in Oxford and the OGW passes literally within walking distance of my front door. And this leg is the Stage 1 start which appeals to my inner completer-finisher. There’s something extremely attractive about starting at the start and finishing at the end of a very well-defined route.

The walk is also enticingly divided up into sections of manageable length for a day’s yomp which you

can easily swap around, as we did to avoid the need for waders along the Thames Path at Abingdon during the height of January flooding. As well as not having to worry about accommodation, if you live within spitting distance of Oxford you can pack the kids off to school, walk for a day, maybe even squeeze in a post-walk pint, and still make it home in time for tea. Just make sure you do your homework and check bus route numbers and train routes in advance – Oxford is admirably well served and wherever you decide to end each stage you shouldn’t be too far from public transport. And while some transport options involve changing in Oxford, not every journey needs to go through the city centre – you can skirt the edge or even take advantage of routes which go pretty much end to end.

From a practical perspective the OGW is generally well signposted, and there seems to currently be an effort underway to replace some of the older stiles with new metal gates [CPRE Oxfordshire’s gates for stiles project]. Having said that, there were inevitably a couple of points where we were saved by having an OS map on mobile. Though to be honest it wasn’t as if we were miles from civilization at any point so the consequences of a ‘scenic route’ detour wouldn’t have been too dire.

What were the best bits of the



View across Sunningwell

Oxford Green Belt Way guide

Copies of the Oxford Green Belt Way guide and other walking guides to the Oxfordshire Way and the d'Arcy Dalton Way are available on-line from Walking Pages and Blackwell's. To obtain a copy direct from CPRE Oxfordshire, please send a cheque made payable to CPRE Oxfordshire to CPRE, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY, incl. details of where to send the guide/s.

Oxford Green Belt Way- £11.99
Oxfordshire Way – £12
D'Arcy Dalton Way – £12
Price includes £2 postage & packaging.

For further information email:
 administrator@cprexon.org.uk
 T: 01491 612079

OGW? I think we'd both agree that watching a line of extremely pompous peacocks holding up the HGV traffic in Nuneham Courtenay has to rank right up there for a comedy moment. The view from Garsington across Oxford was truly memorable, especially as I hadn't appreciated that such a vista existed so close to where I live. And sitting eating a sandwich with a view across Sunningwell, complete with llama farm on Stage 3 made me question whether I'd ever be able to go back to lunch in a work canteen.

Picking sloes to make sloe port (yes, the internet assures me it is a thing) just after Radley and watching the birds at the Abingdon Lock feeders having their lunch as we had ours were moments that will certainly stay with me. And obviously a sustaining pint (to 'rebuild carbohydrates' you understand...) in the Boat Inn in Thrupp just makes you wonder why you can't do the same every Wednesday lunchtime. We also enjoyed the "History and Nature" notes in the guidebook which added another dimension to the walk, discovering more about places of interest such as Matthew Arnold's Signal Elm, the Oxford Canal and Swinford Bridge – as well as being an excuse to catch our breath and get out the flask of coffee.

I should own up at this point (maybe I should have owned up earlier?)

that we've not actually finished the walk yet. Having extended the Wolvercote leg to finish in Kidlington rather than Hampton Poyle, we now only have the final day and about ten or eleven miles to go. Once we can find a window in our new work commitments, we're fully expecting a triumphant tickertape entrance into Thornhill Park and Ride, complete with commuters looking on in bemusement but probably joining in the applause anyway. We're also hoping to solve one remaining mystery. Hopefully, we'll discover during the final day's walk just exactly where the picture on the front of the OGW guide was taken, so we can recreate the carefree scrumping pose of our 'literary' companion as a fitting photographic finale.



Cheeky pub stop

Solar farms update

CPRE Oxfordshire responded to the Pre-application consultation on the massive Botley West Solar Farm (full response available on our website). As well as concerns about the significant loss of Green Belt and productive agricultural land and the overall landscape impacts, we also highlighted the inadequate consultation process and called for it to be re-run. However, we understand that developers PVDP intend to submit the project to the Planning Inspectorate in the summer, for consideration under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime.

CPRE Vale of White Horse has objected to solar farm proposals at both Denchworth and Cumnor. CPRE Cherwell has also objected strongly to a proposed solar farm at Noke, which would impact the Otmoor RSPB reserve. This is due to come to planning committee in June.

IMPACT

REPORT 2023

Thank you! Your support helped us achieve all this.....

Countryside Improvement

Oxford Green Belt Way

Via our 'Gates for Stiles' project we have replaced 10 stiles with accessible gates. With thanks to a grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, with funding from Grundon and delivered in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council.

Hedgerow Heroes

£50,000 funding for Hedgerow Heroes used on hedgerow creation and restoration. Delivered in partnership with Wild Oxfordshire, working with 6 local communities.



Protection & Enhancement of the Countryside via Planning

- We contributed to National CPRE's response to Government planning reforms, leading to significant changes in the Five Year Housing Land Supply rules, and reducing opportunities for speculative development.
- We responded to 3 major Local Plan consultations, challenging Oxford City & Cherwell's push for aggressive growth figures.
- Our Planning & the Green Belt seminar was attended by 50 local councillors & officers.
- District Committees have monitored and responded to local planning applications across Oxfordshire. e.g. We managed to get external lighting conditions included on a range of planning applications, protecting our dark skies.
- CPRE Cherwell successfully challenged speculative housing developments at Chesterton & Ambroseden.
- We launched our Student Planning Ambassadors Programme, a new initiative with Oxford Brookes University. The first 3 young recruits are now on board.



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY

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Campaigning for the Countryside

- Campaigned county-wide for a spatial strategy for renewable energy.
- Our petition signed by 600 people lead to local councils agreeing to develop a Local Area Energy Plan.
- Botley West - Partnered with Stop Botley West Campaign group to challenge this monstrously large solar farm proposal.
- Abingdon Reservoir - Continued to challenge Thames Water's case for this mega-reservoir, and have joined campaign group GARD in calling for a Public Inquiry.
- Supported other local campaign groups including Friends of Stratfield Brake and those opposing the HIF1 Didcot to Berinsfield road scheme.

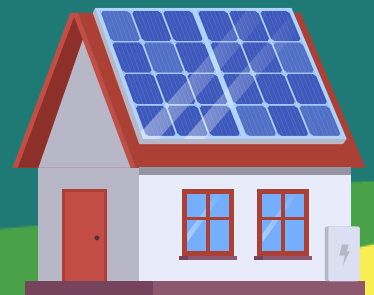
Supporting Networks



- Need Not Greed Oxfordshire - we provided the secretariat for this coalition of 36 local groups working to put community and environment at the heart of planning.
- Environment and Nature - we are an active member of the Oxfordshire Environment Board and have a seat on the Policy Group of the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership.
- Nature 2030 - we have joined with other local environmental charities to call on all political parties to adopt five landmark policies for nature's recovery ahead of the 2024 General Election.

Community Engagement

- Over 40 volunteers gave a total of over 4,368 hours.
- Engaged with over 100 delegates from parish councils and local community groups.
- Supported National CPRE's Star Count event.
- Attended & hosted events including Wychwood Forest Fair, the Oxford Green Fair & local talks, walks & visits.



Leave a gift in your will

Your gift can ensure that the countryside is rich in nature, accessible for all and protected for the future. A future where local communities get a say on what gets built where they live, brownfield sites are recycled, valuable Green Belt is saved, farmland protected and dark skies are enjoyed by all.

Our promises to you:

- We'll always treat you and your wishes with respect and confidentiality.
- Your legacy will be in capable hands. We've been successfully enhancing, promoting and protecting our beautiful Oxfordshire countryside since 1931. We'll continue to work in your name for many more generations.
- We appreciate gifts of any size, and we'll ensure your legacy will make lasting impact.
- If you choose to let us know about your gift, we can stay in touch and keep you informed of our plans, events and the work we do.

If you have any queries about leaving a gift in your will to CPRE, we are always available to answer your questions honestly and openly.

If you would like to leave a gift to CPRE Oxfordshire, here is the essential information you will need for your solicitor:

Name: Campaign to Protect Rural England, Oxfordshire
Address: CPRE Oxfordshire, First Floor, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire
Charity number: 1093081

Abingdon Reservoir – call for Public Inquiry

CPRE Oxfordshire is backing campaign group GARD's calls for a Public Inquiry into the Abingdon Reservoir and has written to the Secretary of State for the Environment to request this.

Thames Water has consistently failed to engage with the strong evidence presented to it about both the harm the reservoir would cause and the viable alternatives that would offer more adaptable and scalable solutions.

Water from the river Thames and its tributaries will be used to fill this 150 billion litre reservoir. The water would then be used to supply London, Southern Water and Affinity Water but provides no new water for the region. The £2billion plus cost would be much better spent fixing leaks and our creaking sewage system.

We need a Public Inquiry to make sure these matters are properly explored and any decision on the reservoir is fully transparent.

CPRE Oxfordshire has been challenging Thames Water's case for this mega-reservoir for the last 20 years, including through a previous Public Inquiry in 2011 which ruled the reservoir inappropriate.

Professor Richard Harding, Chair, CPRE Oxfordshire says: "Whilst securing sustainable future for water in our region is critical, and this proposal could seem like a simple solution, it will have massive environmental and carbon costs. We need more flexible solutions, offering longer-term resilience, while protecting our countryside and all who live and use it.

Take Action!

Please sign and share the CPRE Oxfordshire and GARD petition against the reservoir:
<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/p/stopTWreservoir>



Au revoir...

After 13 years as Director of CPRE Oxfordshire, I will be hanging up my boots and placards later this summer. As the politicians say, it's the point to spend more time with my family! We are currently recruiting a replacement and hopefully can ensure a smooth transition. I shall be sad to leave as working with CPRE and its amazing volunteers and

supporters has been a real privilege. Thank you all for your help and hard work looking after our wonderful countryside for the benefit of others – it is appreciated. I shall of course be continuing to follow and support CPRE's activities and hope that many of our paths will continue to cross in the future.

Helen Marshall
Director, CPRE Oxfordshire

Getting the right policies in place to protect the future of our countryside!

Local plans continue to progress and it remains our priority to respond to consultations to ensure that we get our views across and the right policies to protect the countryside in the coming years.

Oxford City are pressing ahead with overinflated housing numbers

The Draft Oxford City Local Plan 2040 Reg 19 consultation closed in early January 2024. As we expected, the plan included the overinflated housing numbers from the widely criticised Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) report. At this Reg 19 stage there is little opportunity for us to comment on content as we are only permitted to comment on the Plan in relation to legal compliance, soundness and duty to cooperate. We made these representations on several policies and registered our interest to be updated and permitted to speak at the Inspectorate stage. The Plan has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and we await the announcement of an inspector(s) and a proposed timetable for their review.

Cherwell also have exaggerated housing numbers

The Cherwell Local Plan 2040 had a Reg 18 consultation closed at the start of November 2023. This, like the Oxford City Plan, also uses the overinflated housing forecast from

the HENA report. Cherwell plan to accept the Oxford City overspill in their district pushing up the housing figures from 14,840 to 25,860, an increase of almost 75%. The draft plan also proposes a development on The Moors, a Green Belt site near Kidlington, which we are strongly opposed to and feel could easily be accommodated elsewhere with more efficient use of brownfield sites.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse... there is more to support

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse issued their Joint “Preferred options” consultation on the Local Plan 2041 just before Christmas, with the consultation closing at the end of February. This Plan is one of the better ones we have seen and there were several things that we could support, including a proactive Dark skies policy, something we are delighted to see and have been campaigning for over several years. There are also some good policies covering sustainable and net zero development which we hope will lead to development which is fit for the future and respond to our climate emergency.

On the housing front we support the Councils’ measured approach to housing numbers which means that no new strategic allocations are required. We support their resistance to further Oxford city overspill housing numbers, which we believe are overstated and that

need could be met within the city by allocating sites to homes instead of employment. We are also pleased to see the removal of the Chalgrove site but would like to see a similar review of the sites that were allocated inside the Oxford Green Belt. We still consider the requirement for an additional 17,000 homes in South Oxfordshire, with a further 14,390 in the Vale of the White Horse excessive and that Oxford City could do more to manage its own need. We have called in our consultation response for a constrained approach that further consideration be given to accepting the Oxford overspill previously agreed.

West Oxfordshire timescales have slipped

West Oxfordshire District Local Plan 2041 consultation; “A focused consultation on ideas and Objectives”, ran from 30 August to 25 October. We are encouraged that; “The most recurrent themes include the need for improved infrastructure to support new housing, the preservation of green spaces and the countryside, and the prioritization of brownfield sites for development.” We were expecting some preferred policy approaches to be consulted on in late 2023, but this has now slipped back with a further Reg 18 consultation on preferred policy options/approaches envisaged in June 2024. We hope this delay will give time for them to act and include some of the consultation feedback priorities.

Judy Crockett

Judy very sadly passed away from cancer last November and is much missed by all at CPRE Oxfordshire, both as an extraordinary ambassador for CPRE and as someone on whom you could rely for enthusiasm, good humour and wise advice.

The threat of Stone Basset new town led Judy to join CPRE in 1989, and a few years later she was invited by Frank Raymond, neighbour and the then chair of the Henley and Mapledurham district committee to join them. Judy took over from Frank as chair in January 2007, and became vice-chair of the merged CPRE South Oxfordshire District in 2016 until resigning in September 2023 due

to ill-health. During her time with CPRE Oxfordshire Judy served as branch Trustee, was on the Branch Management Committee and along with Gill Salway helped organise and run many membership events. Judy enjoyed meeting fellow members at these events. CPRE was a cause dear to her heart which she diligently championed, scrutinising local planning policies, planning applications, and tirelessly campaigning for the protection of the countryside and dark skies. In September she dictated a last email to the local MP to express her concern about climate change and the environment. Judy would have been so pleased to see the inclusion of protection of the Landscape and Dark Skies within the emerging Vale & South Oxfordshire Local Plan.



CPRE Oxfordshire AGM 2024

2.30pm, Saturday 29 June

The Jarvis Doctorow
Hall at St Edmund Hall,
Queen's Lane,
Oxford OX1 4AR

Google map:

<https://tinyurl.com/52bsn6k8>

Members and non-members very welcome (although only members are eligible to vote).

Members should find hard copies of the AGM agenda enclosed with this newsletter. This year, we have decided to save both funds and carbon by providing only the Agenda in hard copy in the first instance.

Full information, including a list of candidates being put forward for election, last year's AGM minutes, our Annual Report and Accounts and a Proxy voting form, will be available on our website from early May. A link to this will be sent by email to those members for whom we hold email addresses. However, if you would like hard copies sent to you by post, we will be very happy to provide these – just contact the Branch Office: T: 01491 612079 or E: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk

Speaker: Professor Rosie Hails,
Nature and Science Director,
The National Trust



After the AGM, we are delighted that our speaker will be Professor Rosie Hails, Nature and Science Director at The National Trust. We are in the midst of a nature and climate crisis. The response required includes profound land use change. As a major land owner in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, The National Trust is developing a strategy to become net zero in carbon by 2030. Rosie will describe the journey they are on, and how they are using scientific evidence to respond to the nature and climate crisis at scale. Part of this involves the creation of seventeen Nature Accelerators across the National Trust estate, including the Buscot and Coleshill Estate just outside Swindon.

Garden Open Days 2024 in aid of CPRE Oxfordshire

£10 per head, £5 for under 16s,
under 10s free. Teas available –
donations welcome.

Further info on both events will
be available on our website
shortly. To register your interest:
E: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk
T: 01491 612079



Wednesday 5 June, 3pm-7pm
College House, Stanton St John
The 800-year old St John the Baptist Church forms a unique backdrop to this wonderful garden, complete with fruit trees, walled garden and even the odd guinea fowl! June should be the perfect time to see the herbaceous borders in all their glory.

Sat 6 July, 2.30pm-5pm
Coopers & Woolstone Lodge, Woolstone
Two wonderful gardens, within walking distance of each other, together offering topiary, herbaceous borders, wild garden, vegetable garden, rock garden, stream and open views across countryside and White Horse Hill.

Members' Events 2024

We will be running a series of events for CPRE Oxfordshire members and their guests over the summer including:

- A return boat trip from central Oxford to Iffley, including a visit to St Mary's Church
- A visit to the Viridor waste to energy plant at Ardley

- A Friday farm walk at Farm-Ed regenerative farming centre, near Chipping Norton.
- A walk along Dornford Lane drovers' road in West Oxfordshire

Dates and prices to be confirmed.
If you would like to register your interest in advance, please contact the Branch Office: T: 01491 612079
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Oxfordshire Voice

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