

**Minutes of a meeting of the CPRE County Branches Forum
held in Lavington Street, London on 7th February 2019**

1 Those attending:

Richard Knox-Johnston (Chairman)	Richard Bullen (Hertfordshire)
Susan Lynch (Bedfordshire)	Al Haig-Thomas (Isle of Wight)
John Hudson (Berkshire)	Hilary Newport (Kent/Minutes)
Neil Salisbury (Buckinghamshire)	John Wotton (Kent)
Christine Drury (CPRE)	Debra McConnell (Lancashire)
Tom Fyans (CPRE)	Danny Garvey (London)
Lois Lane (CPRE) (part of meeting)	Lillian Burns (North West)
Elvira Meucci-Lyons (CPRE)	Katie Atkinson (North Yorkshire)
Matt Thompson (CPRE) (part of meeting)	Marin Gaskell (Northamptonshire)
Crispin Truman (CPRE)	Peter Hopkins (Northamptonshire)
Antonia White (CPRE) (part of meeting)	Peter Collins (Oxfordshire)
Richard Nicholls (Dorset)	Malcolm Touchin (Rutland)
Michael Monk (East of England Region)	Janette Ward (South West Region)
Tony Stott (East Midlands Region)	Tim Murphy (Surrey)
Patricia Broadfoot (Gloucestershire)	David Johnson (Sussex)
Caroline Dibden (Hampshire)	Mark Sullivan (West Midlands)
Dee Haas (Hampshire)	Anne Henshaw (Wiltshire)

2 Apologies were received from Avonside, Cheshire, Essex, West Yorkshire and Worcestershire.

3 Minutes and Agenda

The Agenda was accepted, with the addition of the recent Times article on access to the Countryside added for discussion as part of Item 4b.

Due to administrative oversight the minutes of the last meeting were circulated after the meeting rather than before.

4a Purpose Project/Strategy Review/Branding

Discussion on the outcomes to date of the Purpose Project, the Strategy review and the Branding consultation was opened by Peter Collins (Oxon). The Forum's discussion reflected a wide spectrum of views, and points raised included the following:

- Agreement between branches and national CPRE, and organisation-wide 'ownership' of re-branding and re-messaging, is acknowledged to be essential. Branches need to feel that their comments and feedback are being taken seriously; some do not, while others consider there has been ample opportunity for consultation feedback.

- The current focus on branding must not be considered in isolation from the other strands of review that are being undertaken. Some considered that the organisation's name and logo were of lesser importance than the work that CPRE actually does, and there was some concern at the idea that 'campaigning' is viewed externally as negative and combative; many believe that CPRE will suffer if it loses its identity as a 'campaign' organisation. Many branches agree that CPRE's focus must remain on planning and on promoting good and sustainable design. Meanwhile most recognise that messages of positive support and reinforcement of good planning are more effective than criticism.
- There is further a need to recognise that the campaigning work undertaken by CPRE volunteers in branches (on planning applications, local plans, inquiries etc) is different from the campaigning work on national policy undertaken by national CPRE staff, and this can be reflected in a difference in outlook. It is often the work done 'on the ground' to protect specific valued local spaces that gains CPRE its supporters, and we must not lose focus on our effectiveness with regard to planning in our desire to acquire new members.
- While some considered that the reviews were not needed, others considered they were neither radical nor far-reaching enough, and that a 'shake up' of CPRE's engagement with the outside world is necessary.
- Many considered that in order to engage with a wider audience CPRE must embrace the wider campaign issues surrounding climate change, well-being, and the importance of urban as well as rural 'countryside'; there remains, however, a need to articulate better the fundamental importance of 'countryside'.
- There was widespread acknowledgement that some branches lack the capacity to undertake significant campaign work, and this will need to be addressed urgently in any national strategy.
- Members considered that changes in technology, which impact heavily on planning issues relevant to CPRE, should be included in the strategic review. These include transport (including farm vehicles), the wider potential implications of AI, the loss of services such as high-street banks and town/city centre shops. Other areas of importance in the strategic review were considered to include the influence of planning on air quality and biodiversity, and the undemocratic influence of LEPs on planning decisions for major infrastructure.
- In recognising the positive aspects of the work undertaken to date, members welcomed the work done so far deriving a strategy and purpose that will in address a planning regime that is widely acknowledged not to be fit for purpose. The [pressures facing CPRE locally and nationally are intense and increasing, while resources are static or in decline. Our success will depend on finding the right positive umbrella to support a healthy organisation to take this messaging forward.
- In response to the discussion, Crispin Truman outlined the following (see Annex 1):
 - CPRE is a powerful combination of local and national influence, and future progress must represent a partnership of broadly independent charities working as equals.
 - A new approach will address the future priorities of an organisation, which needs to be organisationally and financially robust to survive into the future. Membership and fundraising messages will need to articulate clear reasons for why people should support and care about what we do.
 - The joint outcomes of the Purpose, Strategy and Branding exercises will underpin the re-launch at the end of 2019.

4b Purpose Project/Strategy Review/Branding: review of Glover Review response

Tom Fyans led an overview (slides appended as Annex 2) of the CPRE response to the recent call for evidence for the independent review of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the 'Glover Review')¹. This was highlighted as an example of the important interplay between planning policy and effective campaign messaging for an issue which is key to CPRE's purpose. Members discussed the recent Times coverage (also Annex 4) of CPRE's findings, released as part of the response to the call for evidence. Many recognised that it is important to highlight the fact that one-third of the UK's population did not have access to protected countryside, while also recognising that un-designated countryside is equally important to many people. The experience of the 'One CPRE' engagement with the Glover review is an example of the strong role CPRE can play in highlighting robust messages for public engagement while still engaging very effectively at the level of policy development.

5 Housing Targets

Tim Murphy led the discussion on calculation of housing targets and the recent CPRE consultation response to the government consultation on changes to the NPPF (paper previously circulated on Jan 29th 2019). CPRE is at risk of being accused of defending countryside at the expense of those in real housing need, particularly in rural and urban fringe areas. There now exists an opportunity to promote the provision of social housing which is beginning to re-emerge on broader political agendas. The current government definition of 'affordable' is too frequently anything but; the provision of decent housing is cannot be synonymous with universal home ownerships when house prices make this impossible. Building more private homes will address some of the issues of housing under-supply, but will not address the issue of unaffordability. The regional disparities in housing affordability are acknowledged, and it is important not to let this debate be dominated by market conditions in London and the South East. Points raised by Forum members included the following:

- The private rental sector is now, by necessity, very much bigger than it was during the periods when affordable social housing was being built at scale; should this market be factored in to CPRE campaigns policy?
- There is no doubt there is a significant under-delivery of social housing (173,000 households are on waiting lists in 91 local authority areas; at the current rate of delivery it will take 130 years to address this backlog, even disregarding the impacts of Right to Buy on social homes).
- The related issues of homelessness and second-home ownership should be considered in CPRE policy generation
- It was suggested that a Task and Finish Group could focus on housing affordability across regions, addressing the issues specific to marginalised populations who struggle to access decent homes. This was agreed by the Forum. Caroline Dibden, Tim Murphy and Al Haig-Thomas offered to serve on this TfG.
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¹ <https://www.cpre.org.uk/media-centre/latest-news-releases/item/5051-new-maps-show-more-than-a-third-of-people-can-t-easily-enjoy-england-s-most-beautiful-countryside>

6 Post meeting correspondence:

Members' attention is drawn to the following publications, either discussed at the meeting or published recently:

- Residential Analysts, 15 October 2018: "A Housing Crisis? More like a series of local crises needing local solutions"
<http://resi-analysts.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/A-Housing-Crisis-2018-10-15-v3.pdf>
- IPPR, February 2019: "This is a crisis: Facing up to the age of environmental breakdown"
<https://www.ippr.org/research/publications/age-of-environmental-breakdown>
- MHCLG, December 2018: "Independent Review of Planning Appeal Inquiries"
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-review-of-planning-appeal-inquiries#report>
- Unicef UK, June 2018: "A Breath of Toxic Air: UK Children in Danger"
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/publications/child-health-breath-of-toxic-air/>
- National Audit Office, Feb 2019: "Planning for New Homes"
<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Planning-for-new-homes.pdf>
- Civitas, February 2019: Rise and Fall: The shift in household growth rates since the 1990s"
http://www.civitas.org.uk/reports_articles/rise-and-fall-the-shift-in-household-growth-rates-since-the-1990s/



**Consultation,
response,
feedback,
progress**



CPRE 2019



Thriving Communities Beautiful Countryside



Shaping the future at CPRE 2018-19

December 2017: 'Shaping the Future'

Network status and relations
Positioning and partnerships
Need and process for Purpose Review
Process for strategy review
Endorsed integrated campaigning
New investment in network support



Countryside & Communities

Purpose project

- Three rounds of internal consultation workshops, plus three surveys
- In-depth interviews with current members (two rounds)
- Focus groups with prospective, potential audiences (two rounds)
- Three nationally-representative YouGov surveys
- Network, staff and trustee steering groups
- Discussion and review at all stages at branch, CBF, regional and national CPRE level
- Regular network updates
- Drafting, commentary, review, redrafting
- Testing of three creative routes for brand
- In-depth Board and President involvement and support
- Professional, expert resource



Countryside & Communities

Branch & Regional Chairs' feedback in proposed identity

79% Branches responded; of those:

- Positive 68%
- Mixed/neutral 24%
- Negative 9%
- No response



Strategy Review

- 2017-18 1 year network discussion
- 2018 Conference Draft 1
- External & internal environment analyses
- Aims approved December 2018
- Draft 2 Green Paper survey & consultations
- March Board Draft 3
- Third check with network
- June Board agree aims, objectives, KPIs

Conference: You said...

Clarity on key areas
Role of 'protection'
Link to nature & biodiversity
Distinction between aims 2&3
'bottom-up' Network role in rural aim



Countryside & Communities

...we did:

Reworded aims
Developed objectives on the planning system, neighbourhood planning, land use, enhancement & designated landscapes, rural infrastructure, farming, network support & fundraising
Stronger focus on campaigning in objectives
First objective: 'better protected landscapes'
Programmes & projects in development



Countryside & Communities

Draft 2 consultations

Climate change
Network resources & capacity
Expertise on volunteering and fundraising
Farming & Land Use
Health & Wellbeing
Prioritise and focus more
Where does network fit in?
Urban and Rural relationship
Matrix layout
County boundaries the best?



Glover Review - CPRE's evidence

5 February 2019



CPRE's submission to call for evidence: Strategic recommendations

CPRE's three priority recommendations that need to be addressed so that the future of our existing National Parks and AONBs is stronger, are:

Greater access

- A bold ambition for every child to visit a National Park or AONB through a school visit before the age of 11 and opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about them, with outreach activities targeted toward schools in areas not currently engaged.
- Engagement with people and communities who may not currently visit National Parks or AONBs

A holistic approach to planning in AONBs

- AONBs with two or more constituent planning authorities should have a consistent set of specific area-based policies, adopted by all the constituent planning authorities in their local plans.

Affordable housing

- New housing development in National Parks and AONBs should focus on meeting identified need for truly affordable homes to support local communities.



Glover Review - CPRE evidence

Wider recommendations

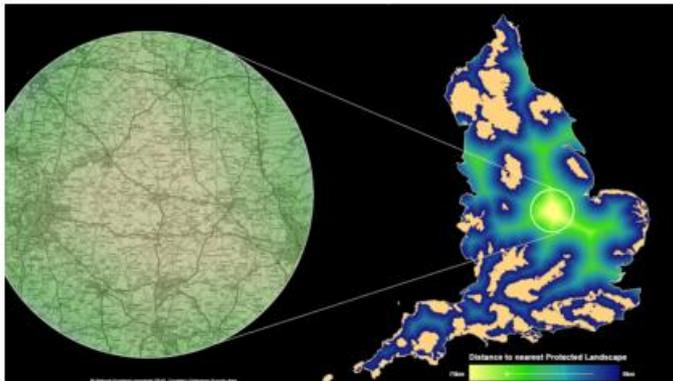
We also made 18 other recommendations covering:

- Nature conservation & biodiversity
- Farming
- Transport
- Future designations
- Resourcing
- Planning
- Governance



Mapping England's National Parks & AONBs

- Commissioned LUC to create maps as part of our evidence to Review
- Showed just how important these landscapes are, but not all can access
- <https://arcg.is/0u4i1n>



One in three cut off from countryside

A third of people live too far from beautiful countryside to be able to enjoy it without hassle, campaigners say.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) wants better public transport routes between the best countryside and urban centres. It argues that big cities and towns including Liverpool, Cambridge, Chester, Leicester and Northampton are more than 15 miles away from any of the 10 national parks and 34 areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Maps published today show that 36 per cent of people in England live beyond a reasonable journey from the country's greatest countryside. Almost half of the most deprived areas are outside of easy reach of the finest natural scenery, CPRE says.

"Regular interaction with the natural world — fresh air, exercise, escaping the stresses and strains of urban living, just being in the great outdoors — is inextricably linked to increased levels of health and happiness," Emma Marriington of CPRE, said.