



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside

Your 2018 review

**Helping our beautiful
countryside thrive, together**



Thank you from all of us!

We're delighted to look back at 2018 and share some of the ways you helped promote, enhance and protect our beautiful countryside.

From saying 'NO' to fast-tracked fracking, to kicking littered bottles and cans out of our countryside, **your support truly made a difference.**

None of the successes in this booklet would be possible without your generosity. We hope you enjoy reading about them and that you feel proud of what you've helped to achieve – and excited about what we can accomplish together for our countryside in 2019!

How you're making the countryside even more beautiful

We're celebrating a cleaner, greener future for our countryside, following a historic victory against litter that you helped us win.

Every day, 35 million plastic bottles and 20 million aluminium cans are sold – with too many ending up as litter in our countryside.

Finally, after **10 years** of determined CPRE campaigning, the government agreed to a deposit return system for drinks containers in England.

This new system truly has the potential to help make litter in our countryside a thing of the past. We're now working hard to ensure that it covers **all** bottles and cans, to have the greatest impact on our hedgerows, waterways, woodlands and landscapes.

“I'm thrilled we'll finally see the many benefits a deposit system will bring, not least the absence of ugly drinks containers in our beautiful countryside.”

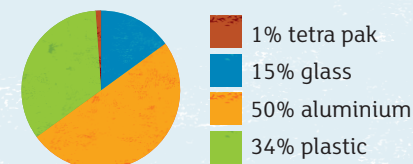
Samantha Harding, CPRE's Litter Programme Director

Public swap trash for cash

We organised 35 litter picks as part of our nationwide 'Green Clean' to tidy up the countryside and get people accustomed to how a deposit return system for drinks containers would work in practice.

Hundreds of volunteers turned out to help, receiving 10p for each drinks container returned to our nifty **mobile reverse-vending machine** (pictured right). As well as helping communities clean up their local green spaces, we wanted to highlight the astonishing variety of cans and bottles discarded, to demonstrate why we need a system that covers containers of **all shapes, sizes and materials**. This will prevent the drinks industry from finding ways around the system.

Fact! 11,212 littered drinks containers were collected by volunteers taking part in our nationwide 'Green Clean'.



More good news on plastic bags

With your help, we took another big step towards ending the blight of plastic pollution in our countryside. Following the huge success of the campaign we spearheaded to introduce a **5p charge for carrier bags**, the government announced that it will **extend the scheme** to all retailers. Previously, smaller retail businesses with fewer than 250 employees had been exempt.

Fact! Plastic bag usage has dropped more than **85%** since we helped introduce the 5p charge in 2015.



Together we're saying 'NO' to fast-tracked fracking

With your support, we swung into action when the government announced major new proposals to allow fracking to **bypass the normal stages of the planning process** and reduce the ability of local communities to influence fracking applications.

We delivered a series of **powerful campaign actions** to make the government think twice.

- We launched an online petition to Secretary of State, Greg Clark, that drew **200,000 signatures**.
- Our online activists sent **10,000 letters** to council leaders asking them to oppose the proposals.
- We contacted **500 MPs** to persuade them to attend a crucial fracking debate in Westminster.
- We **polled Conservative councillors** around the country, revealing that **80%** opposed the government's fracking plans.

- We rallied **19 organisations** to publish an open letter to the government demanding they drop the proposals.



“These proposals would make getting planning permission for exploratory drilling for shale gas as easy as building a conservatory, regardless of huge opposition from communities. They also ignore the many risks fracking poses to our countryside and environment.”

Lucy Hawthorne, CPRE's Head of Campaigns



“For four years, our community has opposed an application to frack because of the impact it will have on our village, surrounding countryside and local wildlife. I'm delighted CPRE has taken such a strong stance against the government's outrageous fracking proposals.”

Barbara Richardson, CPRE Supporter



Sounding the alarm on climate change

In October, the UN warned that the world is on track for a 3°C rise in global temperatures. This is the **single greatest threat to the future of England's countryside**, which will bear the brunt of the impact of climate change. We immediately called on the government to put measures in place to ensure future generations will **inherit a countryside that is sustainable, biodiverse and thriving**.



You're standing up for our iconic landscapes

“To create a brighter future for our protected landscapes, we're highlighting the positive effect they can have on our health and wellbeing. We're campaigning for ways to make this astonishingly beautiful countryside more accessible for everyone.” **Emma Marrington**, CPRE's Senior Rural Policy Campaigner

Championing 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the landmark Act of Parliament that led to the establishment of our **treasured National Parks**, legislation that CPRE played a vital role in securing. To coincide with this milestone, **we submitted evidence to a major national review** of England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to help ensure these iconic landscapes remain beautiful for generations to come.

Defending To protect swathes of the **South Downs National Park** near Arundel from being destroyed by an enormous road scheme, we partnered with nine other organisations to urge a government review of Highways England's damaging proposals.

Protecting CPRE **Worcestershire helped save 15 acres** of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty from a caravan park development.

Persuading With your support, we influenced the government's review of the National Planning Policy Framework, helping us restore **the highest level of protection** for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



You're pressing for more affordable homes to help our rural communities thrive

Across much of the countryside, communities are being steadily eroded by an **acute lack of homes** that young families and workers can afford.

We combined forces with housing charity, Shelter, to expose how a planning loophole was enabling developers to dodge their commitments to build low-cost housing in the countryside.

Our research showed that in one year alone, in rural councils we examined, **almost half of planned affordable homes were cut** as a

result of the loophole.

We urged the government to use the rewrite of the National Planning Policy Framework to address the issue and our campaigning paid off – they closed the loophole! **Thank you for making this important victory possible.**

“We'd like to say a big thank you - your gifts helped us close the loophole that was putting developer profits before the needs of rural communities.”

Lois Lane, CPRE's Policy and Research Adviser

Fact! 360 pubs, 81 post offices and 52 schools closed their doors in the countryside between 2012 and 2016. These pillars of rural life are increasingly at risk of closing unless more young people and families have access to affordable homes, so that they can stay living in, and contributing to, their communities.

Keeping rural communities alive

When schools are lost in the countryside, young families move away and villages can suffer greatly. **CPRE Northumberland** helped to keep their rural communities vibrant and thriving when they campaigned successfully to **save 14 schools** from a proposed cull by the local county council.



“The open countryside of the Green Belt acts as the “green lungs” of our urban areas. To take away land from these green lungs is taking something of immense value from our children, something they would surely not thank us for.”

Paul Miner, CPRE's Head of Strategic Plans



You're defending our 'countryside next door'

England's Green Belt provides countryside and a breath of fresh air for **30 million people** who live in nearby towns and cities. But we published **alarming new evidence** that

460,000 houses are planned for land that will be released from the Green Belt. We also highlighted these homes won't help to solve the housing crisis as **78% won't be affordable** for the people who actually need them.

With your support, we're pushing for an end to speculative Green Belt development.

Proving we shouldn't sacrifice green fields so readily

Our analysis of the government's national Brownfield Registers showed that at least one millions new homes could be built on previously developed land - confirming CPRE's previous estimates. This would prevent the unnecessary loss of countryside and help protect the Green Belt. We're therefore calling on the government to push brownfield to the front of the queue for new developments.



Positive solutions CPRE Lancashire developed and launched **free Brownfield Toolkits** to help communities identify previously developed sites in their area which could be used for new housing, helping to reduce pressure on their Green Belt and local countryside.

Leading the way to a better farming system

We welcomed the **first new Agriculture Bill for 70 years**, which included a number of measures that we championed. Among them is a shift towards **rewarding farmers for environmental stewardship** and the public benefits they deliver, rather than for the amount of land they own.



‘Paying farmers for protecting and enhancing our landscape, soils and countryside is a step in the right direction to restore our environment, produce more food sustainably and ensure our countryside is thriving and healthy in years to come.’

Graeme Willis, CPRE's Senior Rural Policy Campaigner

Enhancing Concerned about the county council's 2050 vision, **CPRE Gloucestershire** launched *There is a Better Way*, outlining their alternative. This included proposals for: eco-housing; investing in local towns; protecting the county's environment and making it more accessible. They also recommended for national park status for the Cotswolds and designating the Forest of Dean as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

You called for stronger protections for hedgerows

When a report was published revealing that **hedgehog numbers have plummeted by half since 2000**, we linked the decline to the increasing loss of our hedgerows – a well-loved feature that stitches together the patchwork of our countryside.

With your support, we're calling for stronger legal protections for hedgerows – and to see them restored and well managed – to help preserve the beauty, history and character of our countryside.



Our hedgerows are also the favourite bolthole of the rural hedgehog.

Fact! Incredibly, hedgerows weren't officially given protection until Hedgerows Regulations were introduced in 1997, following a CPRE campaign.

2019 and beyond: creating a brighter future for the countryside and us

‘I'd like to add **my personal thanks** for all your incredible support in 2018. Every success you read about in these pages could not have happened without you.’

Alongside winning these **important victories for the countryside**, we've also been developing a new strategy and identity for CPRE. With your continuing support, it can help us achieve even more for our green and open spaces, as we build towards our centenary in 2026.

Below, I'd like to share with you three key themes from our plan of action that we believe will help us take even bigger strides towards **our vision of a beautiful and thriving countryside that enriches all our lives**.



Without a doubt, 2019 and beyond are set to be a really exciting time for CPRE. With you by our side, we're looking forward to creating a brighter future for our countryside that we can all benefit from and enjoy.’



Crispin Truman, CPRE's Chief Executive

Our plan of action

Promoting, enhancing and protecting a thriving countryside for the benefit of everyone.

Nationally, and locally, through the CPRE network, we'll achieve positive and lasting change in our countryside in these key ways.

Connect

We'll **connect people with the countryside** and promote ways it can improve all our lives, no matter where we live. We'll campaign for its protection and enhancement, and for greater access too, so that everyone – including people living in towns and cities – can enjoy the benefits of our countryside.

Promote

We'll **promote rural life** with a practical vision for people and the countryside in the 21st century. We'll work together with rural communities to find solutions to the many critical issues they face, from housing, transport and farming, to developing a thriving rural economy.

Empower

We'll **empower communities** and inspire local people to play an active role in shaping the future of their countryside. We'll support communities and help build their capacity and skills, so they have a greater say about – and influence over – decisions made in their local area.

Some more inspiring numbers from 2018 you helped to achieve

We showed that brownfield sites across England could provide enough land to build a minimum of **1,052,124** new homes.

200,000 people signed our petition to stop the government's proposals to fast-track fracking.

CPRE Hampshire's country lane clean-up collected **76kg** of litter.

CPRE London created noise maps for **885** London parks, and made policy recommendations to lessen the impact of traffic noise.

CPRE Cambridgeshire's campaigning saved **175** acres of prime farmland near Hinxton from being turned into a business park.

In 2018, CPRE and our countryside campaigns were mentioned over **1,000** times in newspapers, on television and on the radio.

30 mentions of CPRE in parliament – that's more than once a fortnight.

Thank you!

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