



The
countryside
charity

CPRE Policy Committee volunteer recruitment pack 2022



Welcome from Simon Murray, CPRE Chair



Thanks for your interest in joining CPRE the countryside charity's Policy Committee

Our charity has been advocating for a thriving, beautiful countryside rich in nature for almost 100 years. We believe that the countryside is for everyone, and will play a crucial role in our nation's response to the climate emergency. We aim to influence government policy, and raise the profile of countryside issues such as the climate emergency, affordable housing, protecting the green belt, sustainable farming, land management and transport.

From our earliest days we've shaped government countryside policies, from the creation of National Parks to recently trying to prevent damaging changes to planning legislation. You can read more about our history and successes [here](#).

The Policy Committee has played a vital part in our successes, advising CPRE's Board of Trustees on the policies which form the backbone of our campaigning. You'll be joining at a time of renewal and innovation for the Policy Committee, reflecting equally exciting changes in CPRE as a whole. We've undergone a transformation, giving us a new strategy, brand, website, and stronger organisational values.

We've reviewed how we develop policy, confirming that our policies must be evidence-based, politically savvy and build a persuasive platform from which to campaign for our vision for the countryside. We confirmed the scope of the Policy Committee in ensuring our policies will work and are true to our charitable objectives. Also, that in developing policy, in addition to considering the contributions of our network of 41 local CPRE charities across England, we should work more systematically with external partners and be focused on the needs of our beneficiaries. Planning is a priority for us. Recently it's become even more important with the government's proposals to deregulate the system. We lead a coalition campaigning for upcoming planning legislation to deliver for people, communities and nature. Policy Committee has been a key adviser on handling that campaign. We've also updated our Green Belt policy and supported an audit of new-build housing quality. But it isn't all about planning. The Committee led a programme to develop holistic policies on the climate emergency, and engages in discussions about sometimes controversial issues such as renewable energy. During 2022, we'll be considering the impact of policy changes on farming, rural transport and the biodiversity crisis.

The countryside is the heart and soul of England. It can offer answers to many current problems. Nature-based, environmentally-sound solutions are often missed in the rush for short-term gain, or because society fails to understand their true value. To understand and communicate those opportunities the Policy Committee needs a range of expertise: these are complex, multi-faceted issues. That's where you come in. We're seeking the best people to join our endeavour to make the countryside appreciated as the asset it truly is. You can read more about what expert knowledge we're seeking in the 'skills, knowledge and experience you'll need' section below.

I hope this candidate pack inspires you to get involved in our work to ensure a thriving countryside for everyone.

Simon Murray, CPRE Chair

The role

Could you join our Policy Committee and help us to achieve our vision and ensure the long-term success of our charity? Policy Committee volunteers have an essential role in contributing towards the future direction of CPRE policy development.

We're looking to fill three vacancies on the committee in summer 2022 with people who have expert knowledge to contribute to the advice the committee gives on policy matters to CPRE staff and the Trustee Board. Your advice will be informed by CPRE's staff, its wider membership (the CPRE Network) and other sources. The advice will be a vital component of the considerations of the Board when making policy decisions.

You'll contribute towards reviewing policies according to the policy cycle to ensure they continue to fulfil our vision, values and long-term strategy as external circumstances inevitably change.

You'll also help to set, monitor and evaluate a work programme for the committee.

Who we're looking for

As a Policy Committee volunteer, you'll be advising on finding positive solutions for the issues facing the countryside and the environment. By applying your skills and experience you can make a real difference and be a central part of a passionate charity, determined to make a change.

You'll have expertise and knowledge in one or more of the specialisms listed in the 'skills' section below and will be willing to share them generously in a constructive and supportive way, engaging in vigorous debate and acting as a critical friend to improve CPRE's policies.

You'll be mindful of the needs of our beneficiaries and be confident in proposing realistic new ideas about how our policies can help to shape a better future for them.

We're keen to ensure our committee is as diverse as possible and represents our society as a whole. We welcome applications from groups which are under-represented in CPRE, including women, people with a disability and people of colour.

Policy Committee members initially serve a three-year term and may serve six years in total.

Please be aware that a governance review is underway and there may be changes in how policy is developed and implemented. We're therefore looking for volunteers who are open-minded and flexible to new ways of working.

What you'll be doing

- Contributing your expert knowledge to inform the content of policy and the committee's advice on policy matters.
- Acting as a 'critical friend' to improve CPRE's policies.
- Considering and advising on the impact of CPRE's policies on our beneficiaries.
- Undertaking occasional research with others to inform specific policy decisions and content.
- Keeping up to date with innovations and developments from your area of expertise, and understanding the consequences and impact for the countryside and rural communities.
- Occasionally participating in sub-committees and policy development workshops, working groups or consultations as chair, observer or expert participant.
- Taking part in annual updates, auditing and review of policies.
- Maintaining contact with relevant staff teams and other Policy Committee and board members.

There are many benefits to becoming a volunteer for CPRE. Many of our volunteers say they have learnt new skills, that the role complemented their professional and family life and improved their confidence. Some also report that it's made them happier and helped them with future aspirations.



The skills, knowledge and experience you'll need

To be successful in this role we expect you'll bring specialist knowledge, such as technical and/or professional skills gained through working or volunteering in one or more of the following areas:

- Town and Country Planning.
- Agriculture and forestry.
- Economics, particularly relating to rural economies.
- Business skills, particularly for rural businesses.
- Local application of policies and their impact on the countryside and rural communities.
- Environmental sustainability (including energy).
- Landscape and landscape designations.
- Leisure, recreation and countryside access.
- Rural social and community development.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Generalist policy-making expertise and government relations.

We're also keen for volunteers who have a broad interest, or are willing to learn more, about a wide range of countryside policy issues. You may also be asked to consider taking part in sub-committee meetings and workshops on a voluntary basis.

The Committee meets quarterly and this is usually mid-week for about three hours. These are a mix of online and in-person meetings and travel expenses are provided. There'll be reading and preparation to undertake ahead of meetings, so we expect this role will require a time commitment of approximately half a day per month.

There's an opportunity for anyone interested in this role, to informally observe the next Policy Committee meeting on Tuesday 5 July. This will be a hybrid-meeting so you can attend online, or in person at our London office on Provost Street.



About us

CPRE is a membership organisation made up of a national charity and a network of 41 county-based local charities in England.

CPRE campaigns for a beautiful and thriving countryside that is valued, enjoyed and accessible to everyone by:

- Connecting people and the countryside so that everyone can benefit from and value it.
- Promoting rural life to ensure the countryside and communities can thrive.
- Empowering communities to improve and protect their local environment.

Although the pandemic has been a difficult time for CPRE along with many other charities, we've made fantastic progress:

- Our petition calling for reliable rural bus services gathered 51,540 signatures and the online launch of our [Every village, every hour report](#) was attended by 190 MPs, peers and key stakeholders including the government minister responsible for the National Bus Strategy.
- Our planning campaign has reversed some of the damaging threats proposed in the government's white paper, such as lifting the small sites cap for affordable housing and securing guarantees for local democracy in the planning process. We also appear to have removed the risk of a damaging zoning-based approach to planning.
- After a well-attended parliamentary launch for our [Hedge Fund report](#) on hedgerows, we've gained over 50 parliamentary champions. We've also trained over 50 of our supporters in how to lobby their MPs for more hedgerows.

You can find out more about what we do [on our website](#).

Our values

Open

We are inclusive and respectful of everybody, no matter who they are or where they live. Our countryside is for everyone and so are we.

Connected

We value lasting and effective relationships. We invite and encourage collaboration to find what is best for the countryside we love.

Trusted

We use evidence, knowledge and experience to influence positive change. Others believe what we say because they know we can back it up.

Inspirational

We bring ambition and determination to everything we do. We channel our passion to motivate others and encourage them to act.

How to apply

If you'd like a pre-application chat, then please email Richard Simmons, Policy Committee chair on RichardS@cpre.org.uk. You can also contact other committee members who are happy to share their experiences: Cate Mack at cate.norwood@gmail.com or Kaley Hart at kaleyh@blueyonder.co.uk.

You should apply online via our [CPRE Volunteering Hub](#) where you can share your motivation for the role and upload your CV. The deadline for the first round of applications is **Monday 4th July** (however, we'll be running a rolling recruitment through summer as we are looking to fill three vacancies).

We'll invite shortlisted candidates for an informal interview, either online or at our London office in early summer.

If you require any special arrangements or assistance in making your application, or at interview, then please include this in your online application. If you have any queries, please contact the volunteering team at volunteeringteam@cpre.org.uk.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

At CPRE we believe it is our responsibility to strive for a society where all of us can be ourselves and feel able to reach our full potential, whatever our identity and background.

We will ensure that our organisation and all we do is open to everyone and that we actively address any barriers to participation by any group.

Our case for the countryside depends upon having the broadest and most diverse and inclusive public support possible, because the countryside will benefit from the engagement and attention of people from all backgrounds.

We value all the people who work or volunteer for us and who join CPRE, and we want everyone to be able to reach their potential with us. This means listening to and understanding people's views, creating a working environment where everyone is treated with respect and able to contribute fully. And it means making sure everyone feels included and valued for their talent, knowledge and experience.

Useful links

[Our vision](#)

[Our achievements and history](#)

[Our strategic plan 2020-2026: a summary](#)

[Our year: a review of 2020-21](#)

[Resources](#)

[Volunteer privacy policy](#)

[CPRE Volunteering Commitments](#)

[CPRE's Leadership Statement on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)