

OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

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Care about your local countryside?

CPRE Oxfordshire Trustees required.

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OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

Autumn 2020

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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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Photo: /Rob Bowker

Articles, letters, comments and suggestions for articles are welcome. Please contact the Branch Office below. Published November 2020

District Chairmen

CPRE Oxfordshire Branch

Peter Collins

pjcoll@maths.ox.ac.uk

Cherwell: David Gilmour gilmourdr@aol.com

Oxford: Contact the Branch Office as below

South Oxfordshire: Professor Richard Harding
01491 836425 Prof.Richard.Harding@gmail.com

Vale of White Horse: Contact the Branch Office, as below.

West Oxfordshire:

Jonh Histon jhiston@icloud.com

BRANCH OFFICE

CPRE Oxfordshire, First Floor, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire OX49 5PY (Registered office)

T: 01491 612079

E: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk

www.cpreoxon.org.uk



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Chairman's voice



I should first on behalf of the Trustees like to thank members, in this time of continuing difficulty, for your

great support, made even more apparent in overwhelming fashion in your response to our AGM circular, and unanimously in respect of the proposals concerning elections in the message in which I joined our President, John Harwood. Without the hard work of our Honorary Consultants and virtual office, we should be much the poorer. I would again like to congratulate Helen, Julia and Becky most warmly for all they continue to do for us, still not making the inconveniences that come with unusual times at all apparent. I raise a glass to you all!

I like also to celebrate those Oxfordshire Trustees who give great service, especially if they give us opportunities to thank them again in the future. Such is the very special case of Brian Wood 'who needs no introduction'. He was of course Chairman of CPRE Oxfordshire and you may remember that he was a National Trustee. But do you know that he was a long-time Treasurer of the South-East Regional Group? However, this Oxfordshire treasure is retiring, after so many years, from being our Treasurer. We could all hope to deserve such a retirement: Brian has indeed guarded our finances well, enabling us to continue to punch well above our weight. Thank you so much, Brian. We are glad you are continuing as a Trustee and hence giving us the opportunity in due course to which I alluded earlier.

Have I been trying to soften you all up? Yes, I suppose so; for CPRE – and all of us Englanders – are now facing, in respect of recent

If the Government gets its way, the planning system, even in its most recent NPPF incarnation, will be ripped up...

Government proposals, a great threat to the English countryside and all who cherish rural England and all it stands, and has stood, for. If the Government gets its way, the planning system, even in its most recent NPPF incarnation, will be ripped up – a planning system created in partnership with CPRE in its early days, nearly one hundred years ago. There could be diktat from above with much less in the way of your democratic involvement in new building near you. 'Fast-track' major development designed from a pattern-book could come about, much of it on green field sites.

Invective aside, the centre of the proposals is a much heralded White Paper entitled Planning for the Future, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. You will find much helpful detail on our website and that of CPRE National Centre. Please see elsewhere in this issue.

Otherwise, the Expressway is still paused, though the OxCam Arc proposal for one million houses between the old university cities remains very much on the table, and we are having continuing discussions with the County Growth Board and the Arc Leader's Group, in particular about the proposed Spatial Framework, and trying to affect outcomes in a multitude of directions.

The Green Belt, much threatened by the 'Duty to Co-operate' provision in the current planning arrangements

that so helps the City's proposals, continues to figure high on our list of activities, with the addition of sites in South Oxfordshire to the four thousand houses which would close the Kidlington Gap. Minister Jenrick was content enough to jump in and prevent the South Oxfordshire District Council from stopping their emerging Local Plan, whilst unwilling to do the same when the forecasted City housing need was much reduced. The latest on South Oxfordshire is an Inspector allowing building on seven sites, where six of them (on Green Belt land) had to be classed as 'exceptional' for building to go ahead! I should mention that one good thing about the White Paper is the eradication of the 'Duty to Co-operate' provision!

I want to express how important it is to have good campaigning partners...

Again, I want to express how important it is to have good campaigning partners. GARD (The Group Against Reservoir Development) and the thirty-nine member NNGO (Need Not Greed Oxfordshire) have become valued fixtures. More recently we have joined forces with CDWA (Cherwell Development Watch Alliance) which has done valiant work opposing building in the Green Belt. CPRE Oxfordshire is an active member of the relatively newly formed Oxfordshire Environment Board.

The challenges that our organisation now faces are considerable and we hope to count on our members to continue to campaign with us.

Peter Colins
Chairman

In Memory John Sargent (1933-2020)



It is with much sadness that we report the death of John Sargent at the age of 87 on 30th July. Over the last five years he had been struggling with the effects of advanced Parkinson's Disease. John was one of CPRE Oxfordshire's most faithful members. He sat for many years as a trustee on the Branch Executive Committee, at which he was known for his ever helpful and wise contributions. In addition he chaired the Branch's Transport Committee, which used to meet regularly to review and comment

on all aspects of the County's transport strategy. As a past Branch Chairman I knew that John could always be relied on for his stalwart support both at a District and Branch level, and to provide constructive and telling views to enrich our work to protect the local countryside that we know he so much cherished. In all his dealings I had the highest regard for his good sense, gentle persistence, and absolute integrity.

John had many other varied accomplishments outside his work for CPRE. These included his long tenure as Chairman of Islip Parish Council – he was known locally as "Mr Islip"; the creation and care of a most beautiful garden; and his masterly skills as a carpenter and maker of fine furniture. All in all he will be sorely missed by all who knew him, and not least by his devoted wife, Pat, and the family, who are especially in our thoughts at this difficult time.

Bruce Tremayne
Vice Chairman, CPRE Oxfordshire

CPRE Oxfordshire AGM 2020

Many thanks to all our members who responded to the distribution of our AGM papers by email or post this year. We are pleased to report that the 2019 AGM Minutes and Annual Report and Accounts were approved. There was unanimous support for the re-appointment of the trustees and officers for 2020-21.

We very much hope that we will be back to seeing you at a 'real life' AGM in 2021.

Members' Events 2020

Unfortunately, all Members' events have been cancelled this year. We hope the planned visits will be able to take place in 2021. Details will be provided in the spring edition of Oxfordshire Voice.

CPRE Oxfordshire Trustees required



Do you care about your local countryside? Want to make a difference?

CPRE Oxfordshire is the voice of the countryside in Oxfordshire. Due to the retirement of current members we are looking for a number of new trustees to join our team.

We fight for the right development in the right place and work to protect, promote and enhance our amazing local landscapes and rural character. By volunteering with us you will be helping to find 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 our friendly and passionate charity.

TRUSTEES WANTED

As a trustee you will contribute towards decisions to develop our charity's strategy and policy. You will also ensure our compliance with governance regulations.

We would be happy to hear from anyone with a passionate interest in protecting rural England. However,

to balance the skills of our current team, we would particularly welcome applications from those with experience in law/ IT / human resources /fundraising /marketing, and of course planning and environmental specialists are always appreciated.

If you are interested but would like some time to build up your skills and experience, or just get to know the CPRE Oxfordshire Branch and how we work, please feel welcome to get in touch now with a possible view to coming on board in 2022.

To find out more...

Please contact our Branch Secretary Dorian Grier:
E: dorian.cpre@gmail.com
or leave a message on our office phone: 01491 612079.

Further information and role descriptions can be found on our website: <http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2832-cpre-oxfordshire-trustees-required>

Being a Trustee Dorian Grier

I joined CPRE Oxfordshire as a newbie, having recently retired, moved counties one year earlier and with no Trustee or planning experience.

I have been welcomed into a dynamic, hardworking and committed team who are passionate about protecting Oxfordshire's green spaces at a time when they are under threat from undemocratic growth agendas. Every new volunteer has a great deal to contribute, whether you have experience working for a charity or are a fresh pair of hands.

The specialist core of our work is dealing with planning, conservation and environmental issues and applicants with these skill sets are always sought. We do, however, have a need for other skills. Volunteers coming from backgrounds in IT, finance, social media and legal areas are very much in demand as is the knowledge of our local community heroes.

It is important to be able to commit to several hours of work each week. We have four 2 hour meetings each year and an AGM, with project work in between. Some Trustees are also involved with CPRE Oxfordshire's District Committees with a further time commitment. On a personal note, we have been very busy this year and having the structure and need for action has been a very positive focus during this socially distanced COVID pandemic.

So if you are passionate about Oxfordshire, hardworking and keen to make a difference, please apply. All people and skills are welcome!

South Oxfordshire Local Plan

The Inspector supports the huge housing targets for South Oxfordshire and erosion of the Green Belt

The inspection in public of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan took place between early July and early August this year. This was the first inspection in the country to be made remotely. The remote inspection actually worked very well – I felt it was less intimidating than a face to face meeting and most participants had an opportunity to make their case.

The core of the new plan allocates sites for over 29,000 new houses between 2012 and 2035 – this includes 5,000 houses to meet Oxford City's 'unmet' need. To achieve this level of development the Plan has five new huge settlements (essentially new towns) in Oxford's Green Belt, as well as a new town at Chalgrove and a substantial expansion of the existing towns and villages in South Oxfordshire.

CPRE contends that these housing numbers are excessive, far exceeding the future needs of the people of Oxfordshire. Such growth would put huge strains on the infrastructure, the environment and communities in the District. Delivery would entail building about 1500 houses a year from now until 2035. This is unlikely to happen with the result South Oxfordshire would lose its five year housing supply and become prey to unwanted speculative development.

Fellow CPRE representative Michael Tyce, myself and others made a robust case for the reduction in housing targets and the protection of the Oxford Green Belt. Despite this the Inspector (Johnathan Bore, the same Inspector that inspected the Oxford City Plan), in his preliminary findings,

made public on 28th August, has accepted the inflated housing targets and confirmed the strategic sites (six of which are in the Green Belt). He also watered down the policy on housing density and made the targets for the market towns and employment land a minima rather than an absolute target (in case we need even more housing!). The allocation for housing in the District now stands at 30,056 by 2035, including Oxford's unmet housing need.

The consultation on the Main Modifications has now closed and we await the Inspector's final report.

There is some chance the Council will not adopt the revised plan in the Autumn and CPRE and others will certainly be alert to any potential for Judicial Review but I fear we are fighting a Government hell bent on increasing housing numbers, a Treasury desperate for economic growth and developers scenting huge profits.

Richard Harding

Chairman

CPRE South Oxfordshire District

Cherwell Local Plan

After Cherwell District Council published the review of its Local Plan to 2040, our committee met by Zoom to consider our reaction. We then sent out a press release and set up an informal subcommittee to draft a detailed response to the review; much of the work was done by Pam Roberts, our vice-chair, with the help of two new committee members, Lisa Cheung and Nick Dolden. We submitted it to the Council in mid-September.

We welcomed the general tone of the review concerning our principal priorities: the protection of our countryside and our villages, and the promotion and preservation of biodiversity and the natural environment.

The review of the plan stresses the

importance of 'valued landscapes' and 'areas of tranquillity' and suggests protecting areas such as Otmoor and the Ironstone Downs. We applaud these intentions and have recommended that many other fine and important landscapes should also be protected.

As for our villages, we have urged the Council to reconsider its rural housing allocation and to close the loopholes that allow developers to get consent for house numbers far in excess of those envisaged in the current Local Plan.

Although the review has some admirable environmental aspirations, it goes nowhere near far enough. 'Sustainability' means more than putting swiftboxes on gigantic new warehouses; the reduction of carbon

emissions needs far more than planting a modest number of trees.

Too often in the past the Council has claimed to promote pro-environmental policies while actually doing the opposite – most notoriously in its huge and unjustifiable invasions of the Green Belt. We have to ensure that this does not happen again. Words in defence of the countryside are good in themselves. But in this period, so crucial for the future of the planet, action is what we need.

<https://cherwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9668/cherwell-local-plan-review-2040-final-web.pdf>

David Gilmour

Chairman

CPRE Cherwell District

Don't De-regulate Planning

Dramatic changes to the planning system put local democracy and the countryside at risk

Rob Bowker



Is the current planning system perfect?

I doubt any of us would answer ‘yes’ to that question. Too much development heading to green spaces rather than brownfield, unattractive and carbon heavy housing and a dearth of genuinely affordable places to live. Plus, seemingly endless consultations, with documents stretching to hundreds if not thousands of pages, but very little actual engagement with local communities.

So, there is much that could be improved.

Indeed, the Government’s Planning for the Future White Paper appears to recognise many of these issues and says it wants to address them.

Sadly, the proposed reforms fall far short of this ambition. Instead, they would see the imposition of top-down targets, with more and more housing directed to existing high-growth areas.

There would be a continued reliance on the market to sort out affordability issues (worked well so far, hasn’t it?) and local input would be severely restricted.

CPRE Oxfordshire’s view is that, taken together, these proposals are a serious risk to both local democracy and our countryside. We have therefore been pleased to join the nationwide

campaign to highlight the likely implications of the reforms and to ask the Government to think again.

Here’s a quick summary of our concerns:

- The imposition of top-down housing numbers.
- Instead of housing numbers being decided by our local representatives, on the basis of evidence, they are

Analysis by Lichfields suggests the figures for Oxfordshire as follows:

	Current standard method*	Proposed new standard method
OXFORDSHIRE	3,192	4,794
Cherwell	756	1,305
Oxford City	603	656
South Oxfordshire	608	723
Vale of White Horse	661	1,447
West Oxfordshire	563	653

**Already significantly above Office of National Statistics Household Projections*

to be imposed nationally. The new calculation starts with a number, 300,000 houses a year + 10% contingency, and then uses a dubious algorithm to arrive at this figure.

- Allocations to local authorities are to be based not on where future growth might be best located, or where need is greatest, but on relative house prices. The higher the house prices, the more houses you will have to build. But builders will only build what they can sell at current prices and are not about to devalue their own markets. Its only effect will be to bring more people to the area, not to address existing local need.
- Calculations suggest that Oxfordshire would be required to build more or less the same number of houses as the current Oxfordshire Housing & Growth Deal, which the Government itself originally said was far greater than the number needed, all the time, every year, for ever, each time from a larger base.

Loss of local democracy

Apart from numbers being imposed with no local say, the new proposals would significantly undermine local democracy in other ways.

Community engagement would be largely restricted to the Local Plan making stage (as it stands, just one six-week consultation!), with the public thereafter losing their ability to scrutinise many individual planning applications.

The introduction of a zonal planning system also raises questions. Would the zoning have to take more account of the number of houses to be built than it would of the need to protect the environment? How could broad brush zoning work in a crowded island where environmental assets are mingled with development? How will it impact on broader plans such as Oxfordshire 2050? How will our Neighbourhood Plans be affected? None of these matters are addressed.

Development management policies, which cover issues such as noise, air and light pollution, rights of way and heritage, would all be set centrally with no apparent scope for local place-based planning.

New settlements, such as garden towns and villages, would be taken out of the Local Plan system and be considered under national infrastructure rules.

Risks to our countryside & green spaces

As proposed, the zonal planning system would weaken protection of green space designated for growth or renewal and offer no additional safeguards for those earmarked for protection. 'Protected' areas as defined by the new proposals would be those with site designations such as the Oxford Green Belt, and our three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and Conservation Areas, but it is not clear what importance would be given to undesignated green spaces near to where people live. Under the proposed zonal system, and in combination

with centralised, high housing targets, these green spaces will be under increased threat of becoming a free-for-all for development. The result of this will be the loss of the crucial functions that green space serves to local communities in terms of health and wellbeing, in addition to its role in mitigating the climate emergency.

Take Action!

Thank you so much to the many of you who have added your voice, by signing the Don't De-regulate Planning petition, responding to consultations, writing to your MP and sharing information with others.

Although the formal consultations are now closed, the debate itself is far from finished so we need to keep up the pressure on our elected representatives. If you haven't yet contacted your MP, please do! (Details of who and how are available on our website or contact the Branch Office if you need any help.)

Oxfordshire Local Plan round-up

Cherwell

CPRE Oxfordshire is supporting Cherwell Development Watch Alliance's legal challenge to the Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review, which allocates 4,400 houses on the Oxford Green Belt severely impacting rural communities around north Oxford, as well as the City itself. As we write, there is no news of dates / hearings, but we will be providing updates via our website and social media. See page 5 for news of work already ongoing on the next iteration of the Plan – the Cherwell Local Plan 2040.

Oxford City

Oxford Local Plan 2036 was adopted by Oxford City Council in June 2020, accepting 28,000 houses and increasing the size of the City by over 50%.

South Oxfordshire

See page 5 for an update on the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.

Vale of White Horse

The Local Plan Part 2 2031 was adopted in October 2019. The Council is now initiating work to review its entire Local Plan.

West Oxfordshire

The pre-submission draft version of the Area Action Plan for Salt Cross Garden Village has been published; consultation closed in October.

Oxfordshire 2050 Plan and Nature Recovery Networks

Clare Mowbray

Eleanor Bentall/rspb-images.com



Wittenham Clumps

RSPB Otmoor

Imagine a bird's-eye view over the Oxfordshire landscape, at the century's halfway point. It is probably looking more wooded and there are more houses. Electric cars and trucks are quietly trundling along the roads. But will there be more wildlife?

Perhaps you can make out a succession of beaver dams along the many streams that are now flanked by alders and willows planted in the 2020s to help slow the flow of floodwater. Curlews are flying over floodplain grasslands beside the River Thames and its tributaries – where Cranes and White Storks have also taken up residence amongst groups of Exmoor Ponies and English Longhorn Cattle. Bluebells have spread out from the last surviving patches of ancient forest into naturally regenerating woodlands. People are out and about enjoying natural parks with thriving wildlife, just a short walk from their homes.

Biodiversity is one of the issues this plan is seeking to address

Back to the present. For such a positive future vision of a more nature-rich landscape to start taking shape “on the ground” will require a big investment in nature as part of a global commitment to tackling the twin global emergencies of climate change and biodiversity loss. Action to reverse the long-term loss of nature will be needed from many sectors, with the strategic direction coming from the government's 25 Year Environment Plan. A critical part of this plan – one of six key areas for action – is the rapid development of a Nature Recovery Network, the newish buzzword for landscape scale nature conservation. The Environment Bill currently going through parliament will require local authorities to map these networks and prepare recovery strategies. Following last year's Colchester Declaration, AONBs have made a commitment to do likewise. So, there is now significant momentum to make this happen.

Over recent months Wild Oxfordshire has been supporting our nature conservation community in starting to develop a coherent nature recovery network at the county scale and ensure it is an integral part of the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan. Biodiversity is one of the issues this plan is seeking to address and aims to provide a framework that enables an ambitious and consistent approach to nature recovery across the six authorities in the county. The current stage of work in developing a nature recovery map is the culmination of many months of work. Building on the principles of “bigger, better, and more joined up” established by the *Making Space for Nature* report (Lawton *et al* 2010), the draft map identifies three zones – our core existing wildlife habitats, a recovery zone and the wider landscape. Our existing Conservation Target Areas sit within the recovery zone. This mapping is a work in progress and will be developed further once full guidance is available from government on how local authorities need to prepare these plans.



Anthills at Swyncombe Down SSSI

Restored meadow in the Chilterns

The nature recovery network approach does not change the current level of site protection

One of the key questions to emerge concerns the balance that will need to be struck between the nature recovery network map being used as both a zone of opportunity to restore nature and an area that needs protecting from development. In practise the map will need to achieve both – some areas will offer great opportunity whilst others will need strong protection. What is also clear is that the nature recovery network approach does not change the current level of site protection, this is important to remember, as some designated sites will inevitably sit outside the broad recovery zones mapped.

The timely publication of a *Nature Networks Evidence Handbook* by Natural England will help shape our approach to this all-important task. One of the handbook's findings that caught my eye was "a need to develop

a number of Large Nature Areas (c.5-12,000 ha) that will provide centres from which wildlife will brim over into the countryside". Dorset AONB are already showing the way with a new partnership-based Purbeck Heaths 3,331ha "Super" National Nature Reserve. Have we got an area that fits the bill in Oxfordshire? Ray Valley and Bernwood Forest maybe?

The development of Oxfordshire's Nature Recovery Network is overseen by the county's Biodiversity Advisory Group, with extra support from a Steering Group chaired by Wild Oxfordshire. Mapping work is led by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre. Do get in touch if you would like to know more.

Mike Pollard

Nature Recovery Networks lead at Wild Oxfordshire and Chair of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network Steering Group.

The Colchester Declaration

https://landscapesforlife.org.uk/application/files/7815/6326/2583/The_Colchester_Declaration.pdf

Oxfordshire 2050 Plan

<https://oxfordshireplan.org/>

Nature Networks Evidence Handbook

<https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2020/03/06/natural-englands-new-handbook-on-creating-a-nature-network/>

"Super" National Nature Reserve

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-first-super-national-nature-reserve-created-on-purbeck-heaths>

Challenging the Arc

Whilst work on the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway may have been ‘paused’, that doesn’t mean the broader development proposals for the region, including 1million more houses, have gone away.



Behind the scenes (with the doors locked and curtains drawn) our local authority leaders are in serious discussion about it all. Indeed, it is quite possible that, by the time you read this, the Government will already have re-confirmed its commitment to the project through the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Here’s what we know so far...

The OxCam Arc Leaders Executive Group – a travesty of democracy

All local authority leaders across the Arc region (Oxon, Bucks, Beds, Northants & Cambs) came together to form an ‘Arc Leaders’ Group’. This included our 6 Oxfordshire authority leaders, but there were no terms of reference and meetings were held behind closed doors.

It seems this was too big a group to work effectively so a sub-group, the ‘Arc Leaders Executive Group’ was established. Only three out of six of our local Oxfordshire authority leaders are

on this – Ian Hudspeth for the County Council, Emily Smith (Vale of White Horse) and Barry Wood, (Cherwell). So, it seems the City, South and West Oxon residents are further disenfranchised. Again, the meetings are held behind closed doors and the minutes are not published.

However, after much pressure from CPRE and Need not Greed Oxfordshire, the terms of reference for both these groups has now been made available.

These state that ‘the purpose of the Arc Leadership Group is to enable strategic leaders from Local Authorities, Universities and LEPs across the Arc to steer and guide the Arc collaboration effort being undertaken with Government to define, develop and ensure success of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc.’

This raises more questions than answers.

On whose authority are our local council leaders pursuing this course

of action? As far as we know, local people have not been asked their view of the OxCam Arc. When there has been, albeit limited, consultation such as on the Expressway, residents have resoundingly rejected the proposals.

Why are the universities and Local Enterprise Partnerships involved? And if there is space for them, then why not Local Nature Partnerships? Where is the voice of the environment?

And what is so secret about this work that the public must be kept at bay?

An Arc-Wide Economic Prospectus

CPRE has been told that we should not be concerned – there is no need for the Leaders’ Group to follow normal democratic process as it is not a decision-making body.

However, we have also learnt that the Group has spent £25,000 of public money commissioning an Arc-Wide Economic Prospectus to feed into the Government’s Comprehensive



Spending Review. That sounds to us like some decisions have been taken!

The prospectus is effectively a marketing document aimed at the Government to pitch for Comprehensive Spending Review money with the ambition to double the economy of the Arc by 2050. Meanwhile, local people are being completely excluded from the process and the priority is growth, not broader development considerations.

OxCam Arc Spatial Framework

We understand that as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Government is likely to re-confirm its commitment to the Arc and to announce the creation of an Arc-wide 'Spatial Framework'. This would be a high level development plan for the area – it is unlikely to be statutory, so it would not be subject to rigorous or independent examination, but it would set the framework under which other Local Plans would have to operate. It seems likely there will be public

consultation on this over the autumn, but we will have to wait and see what form this takes.

The OxCam Expressway

Although officially paused, the National Infrastructure Commission continues to push for the Expressway to be put back on the agenda. The Oxfordshire Growth Board wrote to the Transport Minister Baroness Vere in September seeking clarification on the Government's position. We remain concerned that the road may instead be brought forward by stealth, through seeking incremental additions to the road network.

CPRE Oxfordshire's view

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a purely notional concept with no justification in geography or history. It is intended entirely as a promotional device to justify overdevelopment and (as its leaders agree) will be one of a plethora of similar notional concepts – the Midlands Engine, the Northern Powerhouse – competing for development and the associated

Government financial incentives that go with it.

This is simply not a suitable or appropriate strategy for Oxfordshire, a predominantly rural County with virtually full employment, and an unmatched cultural heritage.

We call on our local authorities to withdraw immediately from the OxCam Arc Leaders & Leaders Executive Groups, and to reject both the Arc-wide economic prospectus and the concept of an Arc-wide Spatial Framework. The focus should return to the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan, the strategic spatial plan for the county, which is the appropriate level at which to be discussing and agreeing the future of Oxfordshire, engaging with local communities through a proper democratic process.

Take Action!

Challenge the Arc – please write to your local councillor and MP to share your concerns.

Please help us keep local voices at the centre of planning for the countryside

This year, more than ever, we have had reason to be grateful for our wonderful Oxfordshire countryside

At CPRE Oxfordshire, we are particularly thankful for all those people across the years who, like you, have helped us to protect and look after this countryside, so that it is there for future generations to enjoy.

In these challenging times, CPRE Oxfordshire continues to fight to put local voices at the heart of plan-making:

- We are alerting our local MPs and Councils to the dangers of the Government's proposed changes to the planning system.
- We are monitoring and challenging the work of the otherwise invisible

OxCam Arc Leaders' group and gearing up to respond to the likely Government-led OxCam Arc Spatial Framework.

- We are fighting the countryside's corner in Local Plan-making including, as a last resort, supporting legal action where necessary, such as Cherwell Development Watch Alliance's judicial review challenge to the allocation of 4,400 houses in the Oxford Green Belt.
- With thanks to our amazing District volunteers, we continue to monitor and respond to inappropriate local planning applications, such as

the proposed fuel depot at rural Hornton.

With your help, CPRE Oxfordshire will continue fighting for a democratically accountable planning system that puts the views of local people at its heart, so that together we can ensure our countryside is cared for and protected for future generations.

This has of course been a tough year for individuals and charities alike. If you are able to make a donation to CPRE Oxfordshire please visit our JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/cpreoxon/donate>



Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 39 local groups and individuals that have come together to campaign for a future that respects the views of local people, plans for 'need not greed' and protects the environment. The secretariat for the group is provided by CPRE Oxfordshire.

To find out more visit: www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk

The NNGO coalition has been active over the summer seeking to input the views of its 39 members into the strategic decision-making for Oxfordshire.

This has included responses to consultations on:

Planning for the Future: Government White Paper proposing major changes to the planning system.

England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport Strategy

Oxfordshire 2050: OpenThought

All of these responses are available on the website www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk

As 2020 draws to a close, we are turning our minds to some of the big upcoming issues for next year. This includes the next consultation on the Oxfordshire 2050 Spatial Plan. We are really keen that local people get a proper say in this process, not just the usual tick-box consultation, and have already written to Oxfordshire's Parish Councils asking them to think about how they might engage their communities in the debate.

Assuming circumstances permit,

we are also expecting local council elections in May 2021, in Cherwell, West Oxfordshire, Oxford City and at County-level. We have made early contact with the leaders of the local political parties urging them to consider how democratic planning, with a proper balancing of economic, environmental and social considerations, should feature in their manifestos.

If you represent a local community action / planning group and would like to find out more about how you can add impact to your views through the NNGO coalition, please see our website for details.

Oxfordshire Voice

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Branch Office

CPRE Oxfordshire, First Floor, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY (Registered office)

T: 01491 612079

E: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk

CPRE Online

Oxfordshire: www.cpreoxon.org.uk

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