

OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

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Battle for the Green Belt
The Oxford Civic Society
Debate

Oxfordshire 2050:
CPRE Oxfordshire offers a
Better Vision for Oxfordshire

**Remembering Alun
Thornton Jones**

OXFORDSHIRE VOICE

Spring 2019

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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 May 2019

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Chairman's voice



CPRE Oxfordshire's 'Campaign to Protect Rural England' continues apace, but we have needed to be fleet

of foot to keep up with unexpected revisions and name changes imposed behind closed doors and without warning by the relevant agencies.

A classic example is the 'Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Growth Corridor', now rebranded the 'Ox-Cam Arc'. It was clear from the outset that the aspirational ideas emanating from Government, handed to the National Infrastructure Commission, then on to Highways England, had not been thought through and were hardly likely to be realisable and certainly not desirable. A million houses on England's green and pleasant land are envisaged, seemingly for the most part to accommodate London commuters. There is little likelihood that even the few obligatory 'affordable' houses, costed at 80% of the market price, would be financially accessible to many local people, let alone the 'key workers' the proposed growth would require.

There has never been any question but that CPRE, both locally and nationally, would oppose the whole idea of a Growth Corridor. We are therefore seeking the appointment of a Parliamentary Select Committee to question the entire set of proposals. Alongside the Oxfordshire Growth Board's 'Joint Statutory Spatial Plan' (JSSP) – now the 'Oxfordshire Plan 2050' – CPRE Oxfordshire has prepared its own vision of the County's future, a 'rural manifesto', to challenge the growth proposed. We are hoping this will give us more traction with MPs and local authorities, as we have yet to have any real indication that the Government or the Growth Board is really listening to the public or key stakeholders.

However, whilst total opposition is the main plank of our engagement, CPRE has also to consider the mitigation of what Government might force on us. We are driven by the desire to do our best by local people whilst guarding the environment and preserving rural Oxfordshire.

Emerging Local Plans continue to be a major concern. We have had important successes in the Vale in defeating a proposed allocation of 1,000 houses in the North Wessex Downs AONB and strengthening the District's heritage policy. However, the Oxford Green Belt remains under considerable threat, much of it caused by national legislation to fulfil the so-called 'unmet need' of the City by neighbouring District Councils. CPRE is putting up strong resistance through consultations and public hearings to major Green Belt housing allocations that would, in Cherwell District, coalesce Oxford/Kidlington/Begbroke/Yarnton, and we are expecting a similar fight in South Oxfordshire in respect of Grenoble Road, Culham and other sites. The emerging City Plan will follow. CPRE's main argument is that the City should use all its vacant brownfield sites for genuinely affordable, sustainable development of appropriate density, which could solve most of the City's housing need at a stroke and save the Green Belt for the enjoyment and well-being of local people.

We continue to be on the front foot in working with GARD (the Group Against Reservoir Development), which opposes the gigantic proposed Abingdon Reservoir on expert technical and environmental grounds. A strong case has been made for meeting the expected need through other means. Thames Water was forced to hold a further round of consultations in view of considerable changes to their Water Resources Management Plan. We now work with other CPRE Branches to challenge the justification of their plans which

relies on support from Affinity Water, itself providing water to millions of households across the South-East. A particular urgent threat is to environmentally precious chalk streams which are a rare phenomenon in Europe.

Finally, many thanks are due to our donors and supporters who ensured that we reached the fundraising target in our autumn appeal. This will help us significantly to finance our work on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, to deliver our Rural Manifesto, and to establish a firm and ongoing presence with the Oxfordshire Growth Board and local MPs and Councillors.

Peter Collins

Chairman

pjcoll@maths.ox.ac.uk

The Chairman's Report can be read, in its entirety, in the AGM papers included with this issue of *Oxfordshire Voice* and on our website.

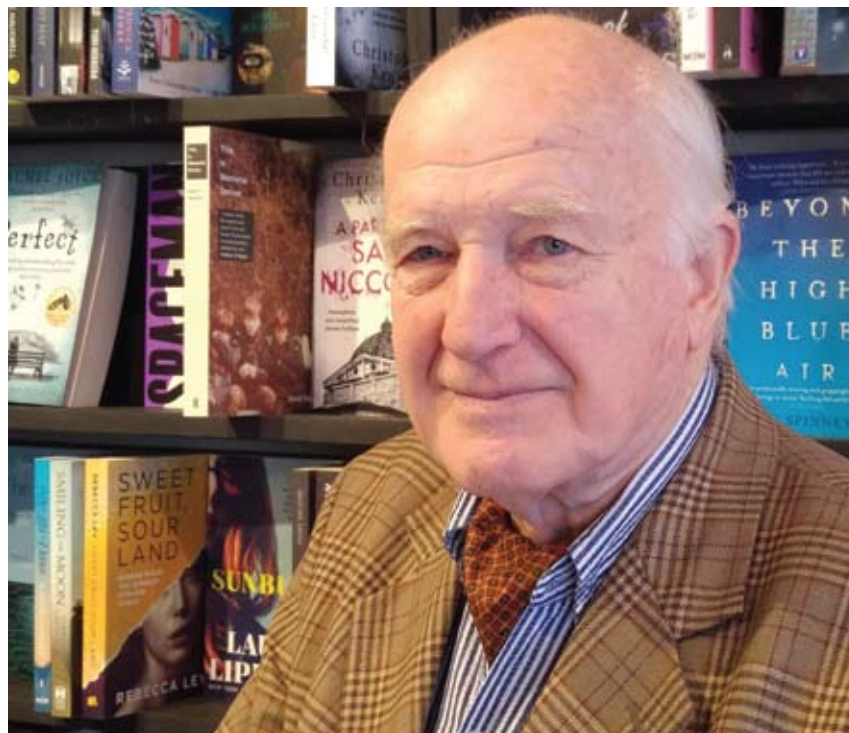
Oxford Green Belt Way

CC Shaun Ferguson



Two volunteers are required for Stage 8 - Hampton Poyle to Beckley (8.2 miles) and Stage 9 - Beckley to Thornhill (4.3 miles). Volunteers would be required to walk the stage at least once a year, ensuring any missing waymarks are replaced, trimming back any overgrown vegetation and reporting any issues. Anyone interested should please contact Gordon Garraway, CPRE Oxfordshire Rights of Way Advisor: gordon@gordonagarraway.plus.com or 01235 522958.

John Histon – new chair of CPRE West Oxfordshire



John is a chartered member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators now retired.

He is a former partner in the commercial Architectural Practices of Covell Matthews Partnership, Covell Matthews International and Covell Matthews Histon. Offices of the group operated in London, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Reading, Burford, Abu Dabi, Jedda, Libreville and Lagos.

Having spent most of his professional life in commercial development, including housing, offices, industrial redevelopment, retail centres and airports, John felt he should put something good back into the environment of this country which is under increasing stress from developers of all types. He wants to ensure our children and their future generation will be able to enjoy an improved quality of life, now greatly endangered. With his great experience of the commercial scene, John feels

he can add a new angle to the saying, 'poacher turned game-keeper'.

CPRE appeals as being an organisation that has a philosophy of ensuring the country as a whole retains its very individual regional characteristics. Yet the body also strives to maintain an urban and rural balance that is vital to the whole character of the diverse English scene. John feels CPRE accepts the need for change and development, but only carried out on a scale and character that maintains the essential rural scene, the country's vital green lungs – for future generations.

John has two daughters: Samantha, a product designer. Sophie, an architect, and five grandchildren. He and his late wife Susan, a graphic designer, set up home in Cheshire over 30 years ago from Nassau Bahamas.

They moved to Burford, Oxfordshire, 15 years ago. John's sports and hobbies, included yacht racing, carriage driving and, more recently, sculpture.

Public fears for countryside and environment over devastating Oxford-Cambridge development plan

Three quarters (75%) of residents living in Oxfordshire believe that plans for major new development across the Oxfordshire-Cambridgeshire region will lead to damage of the local countryside and environment, according to public polling published in March 2019 by CPRE.

The poll, carried out by research company Survation, interviewed 1,500 residents across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire about the Oxford-Cambridge Arc development plan, which could see one million new homes built across the region by 2050.

A CPRE analysis from 2018 demonstrated that in order to build the one million new houses, an area of countryside greater than the size of Birmingham would be lost to development. Despite the scale of the development, the government has given the project its backing without a formal public consultation, or weighing up its impact on the countryside,

people's health, and climate change.

While there is support for some new housing across the Arc, the majority of Oxfordshire residents (61%) do not support the scale of house building proposed. If any development does take place, an overwhelming majority (88%) of residents believe that the housing needs of local people must take priority, and three quarters (71%) believe that more social housing is most needed for the area.

Despite this, CPRE warn that based on current projections, no more than 18% of the locally identified need for affordable homes will be met during the planned period of growth.

'Many local and national politicians are hiding behind a network of bureaucracy and grand claims to push through a massive increase in development, at whatever the cost to the environment, and without any guarantee that local housing needs will be met. There is



clear support for greater transparency on these decisions and we challenge our MPs to respond appropriately.' Helen Marshall, Director CPRE Oxfordshire.

The Government has promised a 'public engagement exercise' this summer. CPRE fears that this will be nothing but a meaningless box ticking exercise and will fail to engage with the range of views that encompass the objections to the proposals.

CPRE is calling for a full Parliamentary Select Committee Inquiry into the proposals, which should look at the potential impact on the local environment and communities, as well as the economies of other areas of the country.

Members Survey Autumn 2018: What Should Oxfordshire Look Like in 2050?

In the autumn edition of Oxfordshire Voice, we asked CPRE Oxfordshire members to tell us what you value about Oxfordshire, what you are concerned about and what you think the priorities should be as we developed our Better Vision for Oxfordshire and provide input into the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Plan).

72% of respondents feel that their views on the future of Oxfordshire are not considered and 71% feel no value is given to the countryside

by local decision makers. This is a reflection of the lack of meaningful public consultation and, where there is consultation, lack of feedback demonstrating how views have (or haven't) been considered.

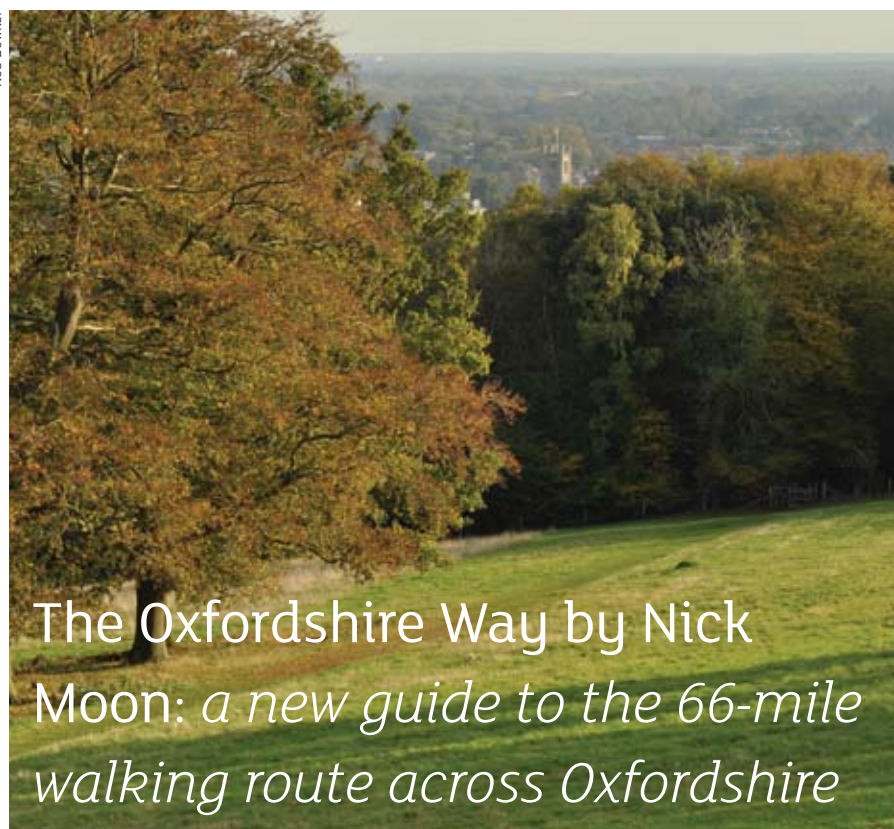
96% of respondents feel the best place for development is urban brownfield land. Failing that development should adjoin an existing settlement before considering a completely new development. Members agree that green field land and the Green Belt are the least appropriate sites for new developments, and 83% agree that building in the AONB is the worst location for new development.

Affordable housing is a clear concern. Members think creating affordable housing should be the top consideration when building new development. Affordable housing was

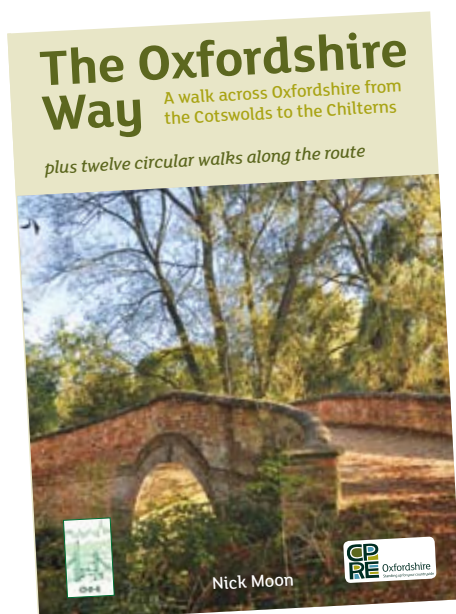
the most mentioned concern when providing YOUR vision for the future of Oxfordshire.

Looking to the future, in 2050 members would like to see an Oxfordshire with nature sites (95%); thriving farms (92%); preserved historic sites and buildings (91%); affordable housing for those who need it (90%).

Thank you to everyone who responded. Your answers have provided an insight into the issues concerning members across the County and will help guide our campaigning work. Everyone who completed the survey had the chance to win one of three copies of 22 Ideas That Saved The English Countryside – The Campaign to Protect Rural England. Book winners were Dr McGurkin, Mr P Hislop, Mr J Taylor.



The Oxfordshire Way by Nick Moon: *a new guide to the 66-mile walking route across Oxfordshire*



The Oxfordshire Way is a walking route from the Cotswolds to the Chilterns, running from Bourton-on-the-Water to Henley-on-Thames.

This new guide to the Oxfordshire Way represents a homecoming for the Way, as the original guide written by the late Alison Kemp was also published by Oxfordshire CPRE in 1978. In the 1990's Oxfordshire County Council 'adopted' the Way, and provided special signposts, waymarks and published their own guide. With recent funding cuts, Oxfordshire CPRE with

the assistance of the Oxford Fieldpaths Society, decided to take on replacing OCC's guide to the Oxfordshire Way, which is now out of print.

In addition to describing the route of the Way itself, this new guide includes 12 circular walks using parts of its route ranging in length from 4.1 to 9.9 miles. The guide gives details of nearby places of interest and is accompanied by Ordnance Survey maps showing the route.

This edition has been sponsored by CPRE Oxfordshire with support from the Oxford Fieldpaths Society.

Copies are available from CPRE Oxfordshire and from selected bookshops, stationers and information centres in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties. The guide costs £10.

To buy a copy direct from CPRE Oxfordshire please send a cheque for £12.00 (includes £2 p&p) made payable to CPRE Oxfordshire to: The Oxfordshire Way Guide, CPRE Oxfordshire, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon, OX49 5PY

Lost & Forgotten Rights of Way – 2026 deadline



Up until 1949, the public had to take court action to prove that a path was a right of way. That changed with the passing of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, which made it necessary for surveying authorities (county councils and unitary authorities) to create and maintain a 'definitive map and statement' of the rights of way in their area. However, many of these rights of way were not recorded.

In 2000, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act was introduced in England and Wales. Section 53 of the Act gives a deadline of 1 Jan 2026 for all claims to a right of way based on historical evidence to be submitted to local authorities and included in the 'definitive' map.

Many disused & forgotten paths will legally be lost if they are not formally recorded as a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway.

The British Horse Society and Ramblers have produced guides explaining how to reclaim lost rights of way. See CPRE website for details: <https://tinyurl.com/y3zydya3>

Becky Crockett & Nick Moon
South Oxfordshire Committee



Need Not Greed Oxfordshire (NNGO) is a coalition of 37 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

Oxfordshire Local Plan round-up

Cherwell

The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 Review seeks to allocate 4,400 houses of Oxford City's so-called 'unmet need' (see below), with 3,900 of these being proposed for Green Belt sites around Begbroke, Yarnton, Kidlington and North Oxford. CPRE has vigorously contested these proposed allocations, working alongside local campaign groups including the Cherwell Development Watch Alliance. The Examination in Public has now taken place and there has been a subsequent consultation on various additional papers put forward by Cherwell District Council. We now await the Inspector's findings.

This is a tremendously worrying situation as, if accepted, it would set a precedent for allowing Oxford to pursue a highly aggressive growth strategy (whatever the consequences) and to target the Green Belt as the best place to accommodate this.

Oxford City

The draft Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and we are waiting to hear the dates of the Examination in Public. The Plan claims Oxford needs 28,000 houses over the period to 2036 but that it can meet less than 9,000 of these within its own boundaries, creating a shortfall of over 19,000 houses that it is expecting its neighbouring Districts to pick up. CPRE's view is that the housing numbers are exaggerated, but that Oxford could meet all of this need by releasing land held back for employment for housing instead, and by building at a density appropriate to city living.

South Oxfordshire

The draft Local Plan has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and we are waiting to hear the dates of the Examination in Public. The Plan includes proposals for over 28,000 new houses 2011-2034, representing over a 50% uplift on 2011 housing stock and a build rate of 2.5 times that previously

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Consultation on the vision for the Oxfordshire Plan (Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan) closed in March 2019. The NNGO response can be read in full on the NNGO website: neednotgreedoxon.org.uk.

In summary NNGO stated:

- Growth must be justified in terms of the benefits it will bring.
- Social equity implications for Oxfordshire and other parts of the UK should be considered.
- Sustainability should be firmly embedded as a core objective.
- The timetabling of the Plan and its relation to the Expressway need urgent clarification.
- The governance and accountability for the Plan needs to be transparent and locally accountable.
- There must be transparency on how responses to consultation are used and how the next stages of the Plan process are revisited, improved and refined.
- A publicly accessible interactive map of the whole County should be prepared showing the impact of proposed developments.
- The requirements of our 'climate emergency' should be given greater prominence.
- Differences between the consultation document signed off by our local councils and the final publication version require explanation.
- We need a commitment to a fully funded and robust green infrastructure strategy and action plan.

NNGO responses to the Oxon Plan

2050 Statement of Community Involvement and Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report consultations can be found on the NNGO website.

The No Expressway Alliance (NEA) has been formed by groups opposed to government plans for an 'Oxford-Cambridge Expressway'. This new road, whatever route may be chosen, would have disastrous impacts on Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The Local Industrial Strategy

NNGO understands that the draft Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) is with Government for consideration. The document makes startling claims about the ability to create 108,000 net new jobs in the county by 2040. Since Oxfordshire effectively has full employment, this inevitably means a significant increase in population to take up these new roles.

NNGO has written to Oxfordshire MPs asking that Oxfordshire's Local Industrial Strategy is subject to full public consultation and environmental assessment (preferably through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 process) prior to adoption.

Big Green Day Out

NNGO will be helping to kick off Oxford Green Week on Saturday 8th June, 10am-5pm, Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3AS. Come along for a family friendly day packed with live music, great food, stalls, various activities and information dedicated to promoting sustainability in and around Oxford.

achieved. These figures are not based on local need, but the exaggerated proposals of the Council's Growth Deal with Government, the unproven need of Oxford City (see above) and an additional number thrown in on top seemingly just for good measure. It is clear that this level and rate of growth cannot be achieved without significant harm to our local communities and the environment, not least because a substantial proportion of the housing is proposed for the Oxford Green Belt including major sites at Culham, Grenoble Road and Bayswater Brook. This is in direct conflict with the wishes of local residents, the vast majority of whom wish to see the Green Belt remain open and protected.

Vale of White Horse

Public hearings on the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 took place in front of a Planning Inspector in 2018, and there has been a subsequent consultation on main modifications. CPRE has argued for the retention of Shippon within the Green Belt, supported the proposed withdrawal of the housing allocation at Harwell (within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), and questioned a housing allocation at Fyfield based on the implications for air quality. We are pleased to see that some of the wording on landscape and heritage policies has been tightened up, in line with earlier CPRE recommendations, but have suggested some further improvements, particularly in relation to Dark Skies. Our full response is available on our website. We now await the Inspector's report.

West Oxfordshire

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 is now adopted and in place. A Scoping Opinion is currently being sought for the Environmental Impact Assessment for the new garden village at Eynsham.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be appearing at the forthcoming Oxford City and South Oxfordshire Examinations in Public (the public hearings into the Local Plans) to seek to challenge the overall figures and the Green Belt allocations, as part of protecting our county's rural character.

Battle for the Green Belt

OXFORD CIVIC SOCIETY DEBATE

In April 2019 the Oxford Civic Society hosted a debate proposing that: release of Green Belt to meet housing need benefits the common good without undermining the enduring purpose of the Green Belt.

Former City Council Leader Bob Price argued that Green Belt land should be released to help meet housing need.

Defending the permanence of the Green Belt, and promoting the prioritisation of urban brownfield sites, was CPRE Oxfordshire trustee Michael Tyce (pictured below).

In the 1930s urban sprawl was eroding the fine balance between town and country.

CPRE campaigned then for the creation of Green Belts. In 1955 an Act of Parliament gave Local Authorities the powers to create them. The Oxford Green Belt was set up in 1958 and from the very beginning there was tension between City expansionism and containment of it.

The City twice sought to extend its boundaries over the Green Belt surrounding it. Expansionism was constrained because the Green Belt lies within the territory of neighbouring District Councils. All that changed in 2014 with the advent of the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Under Growth Board direction, the Districts that once protected the Green Belt are now opening it up to Oxford's long-term strategy of urban sprawl, with plans to build on Green Belt land right round the City's edge.

Meanwhile the neighbouring Councils are seizing chunks of the Green Belt for their own growth allocations with a large new town on green riverbank near Culham, and major incursions at Berinsfield, Radley, Abingdon and elsewhere.

People in need of housing must be housed and if no reasonable alternative is available Green Belt land should be considered. But actual housing need can be met without touching Green Belt land. Local Councils are planning to dismember the Green Belt in pursuit of a maximum growth strategy, exactly what the Green Belt was designed to prevent, and contrary to public interest.

Michael Tyce, CPRE Trustee

The full version can be read at:
tinyurl.com/yy79eanh



Remembering Alun Thornton Jones

28 November 1927 – 16 October 2018



Alun was a committee member of CPRE Oxfordshire for some 40 years, and a member of the Executive Committee of the

Oxford Preservation Trust, particularly representing its Marston Area Committee.

Alun was an alumnus of Lincoln College, Oxford, and originally learned his surveying and map-making skills during his post-graduate studies in Classical Archaeology at Oxford University. He was a Fellow of the British Cartographic Society.

In 2015, CPRE Oxfordshire was delighted to help support an exhibition of Alun's maps and drawings that was held at Lincoln College,

organised by Alun's life-long friend Christopher Hawgood. This remarkable retrospective featured five decades of work for CPRE and the Oxford Preservation Trust and showed how valuable this body of material is, not just for the maps themselves but as a social history of Oxfordshire's rural communities and environmental campaigning.

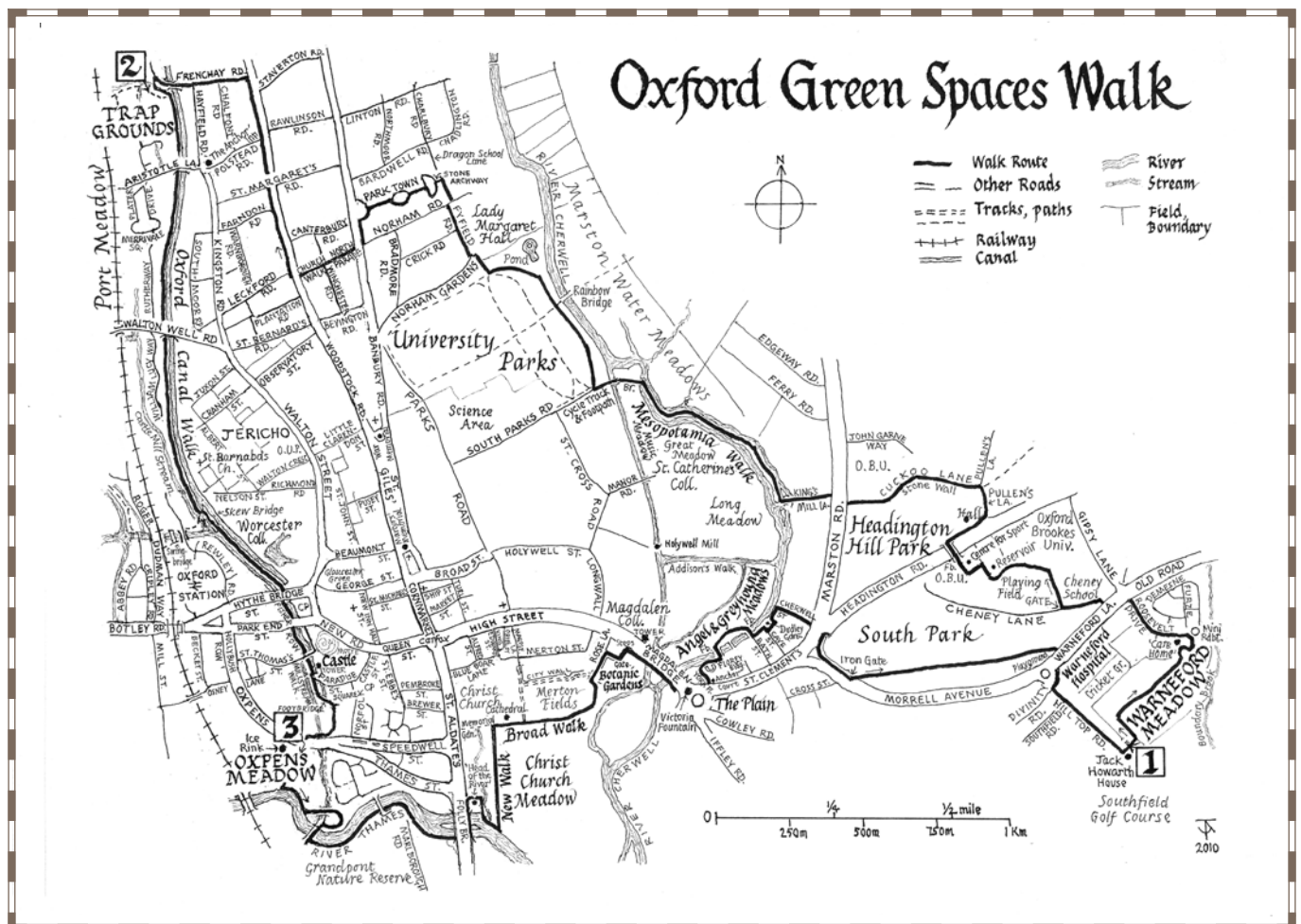
The exhibition subsequently moved to County Hall for several months, officially opened by Cllr John Sanders (then Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council), allowing councillors and visitors to appreciate the depth and breadth of our county's historic environment.

Alun drew the original proposal-maps for the long-distance Oxfordshire Way, and later the proposal-maps for the 50-mile circular Oxford Green Belt

Way; both of these have subsequently been adopted by Oxfordshire County Council, and are shown as long-distance routes on Ordnance Survey maps.

A selection of maps drawn by Alun were published as a book *Alun Jones's Maps* (now out of print) in 2002 by CPRE Oxfordshire, and he was the map-maker for the Oxford Heritage Walks series of guide-books, which are published by the Oxford Preservation Trust.

CPRE Oxfordshire now holds the 2015 exhibition panels and would be happy to hear from any organisations or venues that might be interested in displaying them on a temporary or permanent basis. Conversations have been held with the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Oxfordshire History Centre, and we hope that this may in



time ensure the preservation of the unique collection of materials, including thousands of photographs, that Alun created over his lifetime.

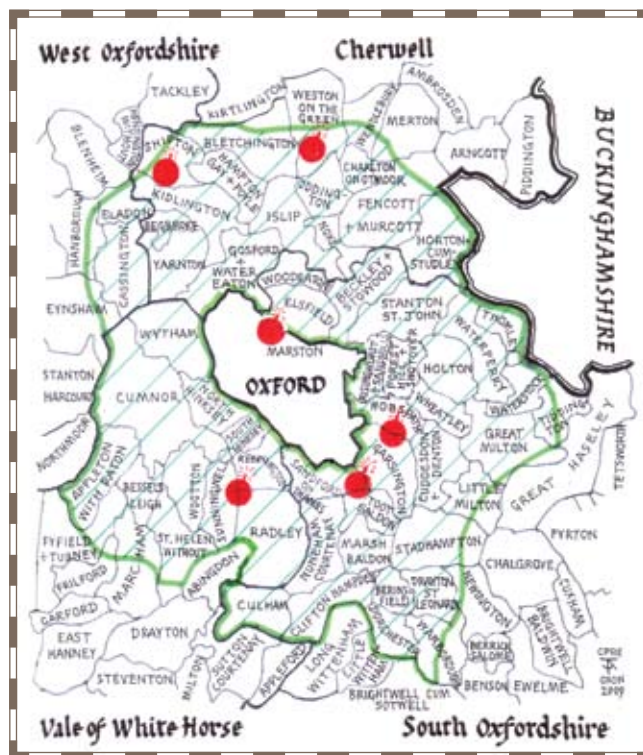
'Alun was an absolute pleasure to work with – charming and unassuming, but with a wealth of knowledge and expertise that he was always happy to share. We shall miss him very much, but he has left a treasure trove of material to benefit future generations.'
Helen Marshall, Director CPRE Oxfordshire.

Maps and Me and CPRE

In 2006 Alun launched his book *A Cartographer's Record of the History and Landscape of Oxfordshire* at CPRE Oxfordshire's 75th Anniversary celebration. Following the speech Alun gave at the event he was asked to put pen to paper.

'I had written in my Preface what I would have said; but it seemed right to say some words on the maps, and on the importance of recording our landscapes, urban and rural, before they irrevocably disappear. I have been asked to write some more of the way the maps came into being; so let's start with the beginning of an idea!

In 1968 the then Rights-of-Way Committee continued to indicate possible Long Distance Routes across the County and organised County Walks to publicise these suggestions. The interest shown gave rise to the idea of a Large Sponsored Walk, to be organised by CPRE on a twenty-mile circuit of Public Fieldpaths, and very carefully controlled by a system of check-points and marshals. The Sponsored Walk maps became a redrawing of Ordnance Survey information (I had a License to use O.S. material) with additional information for walkers; every inch of the proposed route had been inspected and reported upon for obstructions, lack of stiles, missing signposts, etc. The need was



for a clear, informative A4 map, given to every walker. I decided to draw and write all of it. I do not like mixing typefaces and handwritten material; I use varying nib-widths in calligraphy as well as cartography to produce a map which combines the rhythm and attraction of Mercator's Italic script, contrasted with the compression of a narrow thin-line script, with the varying lines and conventions of the graphic map. And it had all to be in black-and-white for economy in production.

I had, (like many medieval cartographers!) collected up material for maps from information made available by others; now, I went forth alone and walked the ground...

The result of the first Sponsored Walk was a resounding success. There followed nine further Sponsored Walks organised by the "Save the Countryside" Committee of CPRE Oxfordshire and other Societies who gave me information on Natural History (BBONT) as well as the route details (CPRE). I added material on buildings, archaeology and local history, and decorative headings to make the route maps complete. The

culmination of map work on Rights of Way came with making the Maps and Guide Book for the Oxfordshire Way, involving Alison Kemp, Rowland Pomfret and myself.

From about the mid-70s there arose a need for guide-map leaflets to the places at which the Branch held Events. Up to then, I had, (like many medieval cartographers!) collected up material for maps from information made available by others; now, I went forth alone and walked the ground, armed with camera, draft base maps (usually of A4 sheets of enlarged 25-inch maps of the first Edition O.S.), 0.25 mm. technical drawing pens and

0.5 mm pencils, measuring tapes for added detail, quadrant to determine tree heights, scales and - vitally - plastic coverings for clipboard and me. I have records of completing field surveys of, for example, Minster Lovell, West Hendred, and Haseley Court in continuous pouring rain, camera worn within coat except when shooting; A4 tracing paper overlay for notes made with stylus between raindrops.

Garden/park surveys with Mavis Batey (CPRE committee member as well as then Secretary of the Garden History Society) as guide-mentor were mind-opening experiences of garden history and design; I would make later visits to finish the map draft. The Town and Village maps included buildings on the Listed Register as well as history and field names. At home I would write the title lines, draw the map and then work out how much information I could include while keeping a visual balance between map and text. And so to the printers, usually at the very last minute.

The thematic information map can be a great visual aid to the work of CPRE as well as interesting and I am glad to be able to help!

Alun Jones, 2006

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Rob Bowker

To read *A Better Vision for Oxfordshire* in full visit our website cpreoxon.org.uk

The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (the new title for the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan) will set the development framework for the county for the next generation. This makes it critical for the protection of our rural character and environment. It's also being used as a pilot for other areas, so the pressure is on to get it right not just for Oxfordshire but the country as a whole.

So far, the signs aren't good. Despite over a year of promising to find a way of involving informed stakeholders such as CPRE, the good words have yet to be matched with any action from the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

A Vision for developers & big business, not Oxfordshire residents?

We have now had a consultation on the 'Vision' for the Plan. This did a reasonable job of identifying some of the issues – environmental degradation, lack of genuinely affordable housing, pressure on infrastructure and services including rural isolation.

However, the consultation document took as read the growth proposals up to the mid-2030s, and beyond that we are put at the whim of the Government's Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor proposals – including the new Expressway and the

unprecedented levels of development that it is intended to unlock.

The overall objective of the Plan appears to be to facilitate vast levels of growth – a doubling of population and housing stock by 2050 – despite there being no discernible link between these proposals and how they will actually solve any of the identified problems. Common sense tells us that this rate of growth would actually be far more likely to exacerbate the situation.

Call for Ideas

A 'Call for Ideas' was also put out as part of the Plan preparation, principally focusing on asking developers and landowners to put forward sites for development, but also seeking spatial proposals relating to the environment and social concerns.

CPRE Oxfordshire has proposed a feasibility study into Green Belts for Bicester and Didcot, to encourage urban regeneration and protect the surrounding villages and countryside.

We also supported the Oxfordshire Environment Board submission which calls for enhancement of the county's Conservation Target Areas as part of a Nature Recovery Network.

We look forward to hearing how these proposals will be assessed and taken forward by the Oxfordshire Growth Board.

Next Steps

We expect the next round of consultation – which should include proposals for broad areas for growth – around June/July.

We understand that this is likely to include a full Review of the Oxford Green Belt, with potentially some substantial alterations being proposed to push the inner boundary out some way from Oxford with a possible expanding of the outer boundary to 'compensate'. We wait, rather nervously, to see.

A Better Vision for Oxfordshire: an alternative approach

CPRE has proposed an alternative solution, making the County's rural character the fundamental starting point from which decisions about the future development of the County should be made. We believe development should be well planned and sensitively executed to protect and enhance Oxfordshire's countryside so that anyone living in Oxfordshire in 2050 can experience the rural character of Oxfordshire which exists today.

Oxfordshire's countryside, towns and villages are at the heart of its environmental, economic and social well-being. Local people, not unelected quangos such as the National Infrastructure Commission, should be in the driving seat.

Our guiding principles, and means of realising our Vision, are that:

- The amount of development, and its timescale, should be based on natural growth and migration;
- Brownfield land should be developed first. Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) land should be developed as a last resort under proven exceptional circumstances;
- Genuinely affordable housing should be made available, in perpetuity, to address local need;
- High densities of development should become standard, to avoid losing more land than necessary;
- Any new communities must be sustainable and existing rural communities need investment to support services and infrastructure;
- Job creation should reflect Oxfordshire's existing skill base while addressing areas of need to reduce unsustainable commuting.

Future development needs to balance the County's economic growth with protecting the County's rural character and environment. Oxfordshire is set to grow at five times the national rate, CPRE considers that growth on anything like this scale would be incompatible with preserving the rural nature of Oxfordshire.

Planning for Oxfordshire should prioritise the needs of communities and therefore residents should be given opportunities to decide the future of Oxfordshire. Younger members of the community, who will live with the consequences of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, should be proactively involved.

CPRE Oxfordshire will be asking councillors, MPs, the LEP and business leaders to consider an alternative Oxfordshire Plan. You can also be part of our Vision. Do you agree we should:

- Have a plan for how our environment is going to be protected and enhanced?
- Develop Oxfordshire based on natural growth and migration not arbitrary targets?
- Ensure housing densities make best use of land?
- Support more affordable housing in rural areas to meet local need?
- Stop urban sprawl, the coalescence of villages and prioritise brownfield sites?
- Create employment that reflects our county's needs and skills?
- Strengthen neighbourhood planning so that local communities can have their say about local plans and location of development?
- Put residents at the heart of decision making, not unelected quangos?
- Work to protect the cultural capital of Oxfordshire?
- Develop and invest in transport strategies that reduce congestion, increase public transport and support cycling?
- Recognise the importance of our environment in underpinning a healthy economy?
- Protect rural tranquillity including dark skies and dark landscapes?

What can you do?

Write to your MP: writetothem.com

Engage with the Oxfordshire Plan: oxfordshireplan.org

Donate: The Oxfordshire Plan 2050 is one of the most significant pieces of work that CPRE Oxfordshire has ever had to engage in and is enormously demanding in terms of time and resource. We thank all those supporters who contributed to our appeal for funds at the end of last year, to help support this work. If you would like to make a donation, please visit justgiving.com/campaign/CPREOxfordshire2050

Members Events 2019

Thursday 6th June 6.30-8.00pm
Visit to Wykham Park Farm,
Wykham Lane, Banbury
OX16 9UP

Hosted by John and Julia Colegrave

We shall be taken on a trailer tour of this 800-acre mixed farm with its cattle (including pedigree Longhorn), sheep, permanent grass pasture, arable and market gardening including asparagus. After the tour refreshments will be provided, a roast joint (beef or pork) with bread rolls and an option of cheese, and drinks. While we are enjoying this hospitality, John hopes to conduct a lively discussion on the current state of farming. *No charge, donations to the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution (R.A.B.I.) would be welcome. Unlimited places, please let us know if you are attending by 31st May. Call 01491 612079 or email administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk*

Saturday 7th September
2.30-4.30pm
Crockmore House Gardens,
Fawley, Henley-on-Thames
RG9 6HY

Joint visit with Oxfordshire Gardens Trust

We shall be given a short talk followed by a guided tour by the owner, Julia Kirkham, of this garden designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole. The grasses for which this garden is noted should be at their best. The visit will be followed by tea and cakes.

Places limited to 20. Cost £20 (£15 for members of OGT). Book by 23rd August, please send cheque payable to CPRE Oxon to CPRE Oxfordshire, First Floor, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire, OX49 5PY.

Details of all members events will be available on our website.

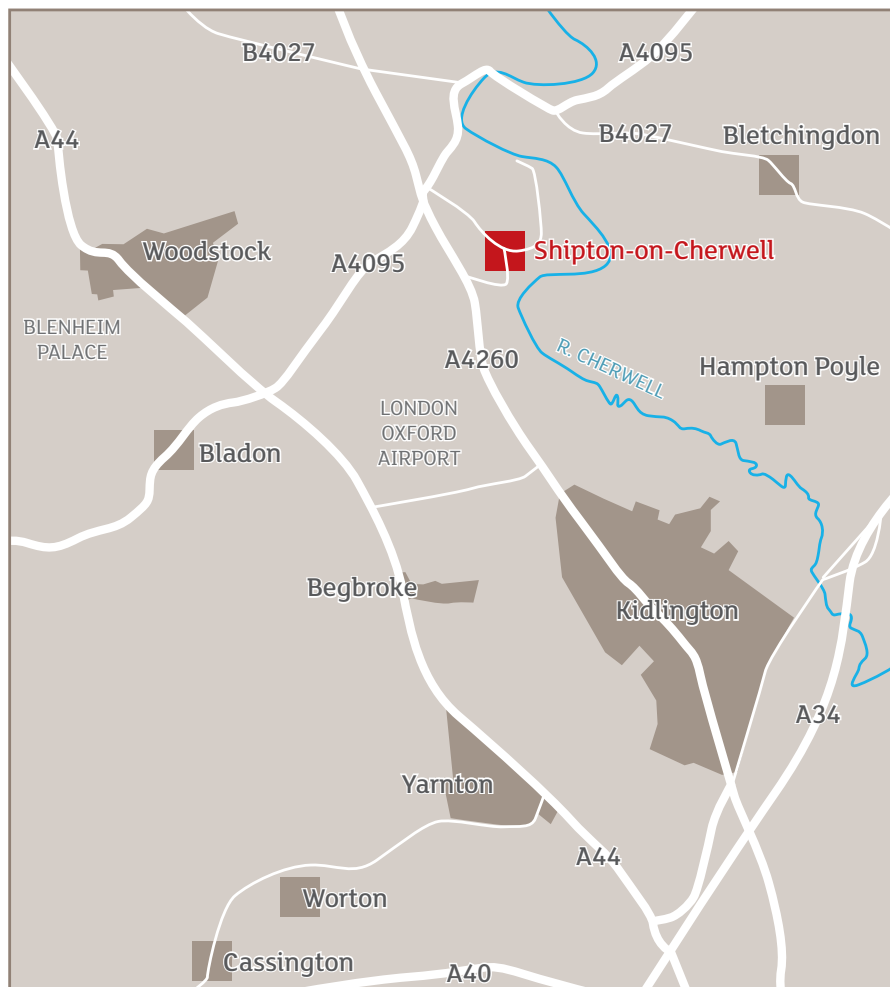
CPRE Oxfordshire Branch AGM

The Annual General Meeting 2019 will be on Saturday 6th July 2019 at 2.30pm in Shipton-on-Cherwell Village Hall, Shipton-on-Cherwell, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 1JP

This year's AGM pays tribute to Oxfordshire's 2,600 miles of footpaths and rights of way. CPRE has recently published new editions of *The Oxfordshire Green Belt Way* and *The Oxfordshire Way* guidebooks. Our venue provides an opportunity to walk a section of the Oxford Green Belt Way prior to the AGM, see below for details.

Refreshments will be provided after the AGM and talk. There is limited parking at the village hall, this will be reserved for those with limited mobility – please contact us if you need a space.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – Stagecoach S4 Banbury-Oxford service operates once an hour on Saturdays. Visit www.stagecoachbus.com for full timetable.



Pre-AGM Oxford Green Belt Way Walk



© Roger Sweet

A circular walk including a section of the Oxford Green Belt Way will take place prior to this year's AGM:

Saturday 6th July 2019 at 11am, meeting at Shipton-on-Cherwell Village Hall, Shipton-on-Cherwell, Kidlington, Oxfordshire OX5 1JP.

The route is about 4 miles on relatively level walking with some stiles. The ground could be muddy after rain, please wear appropriate footwear and clothing.

It would be appreciated if walkers could find alternative parking in the village.

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|---------|---|
| 11am | Meet at Shipton on Cherwell Village Hall, where lunch orders will be taken. |
| 11.15am | Set off |
| 1.15pm | Refreshments at Annie's Tea Room |
| 2pm | Depart Annie's |
| 2.15pm | Arrive at Shipton-on-Cherwell Village Hall. |

The walk will be limited to 20 walkers and MUST be booked in advance. Please contact us if you would like to take part.
Tel: 01491 612079 Email: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk

Oxfordshire Voice

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