



The countryside charity  
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

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CPRE Oxfordshire  
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## CPRE OXFORDSHIRE - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1. About CPRE Oxfordshire

CPRE fights for a better future for the English Countryside. We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance our beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy.

Campaigning throughout England is carried out by county-based branches and local district groups, which aim to influence decision making on a range of environmental and land-use issues.

CPRE Oxfordshire was one of the earliest CPRE Branches, established in 1931. Although affiliated to national CPRE, it is an independent charity entirely dependent on local members and supporters for our income and volunteers.

Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East, with more than half of its residents living in small towns or villages. But the challenges are coming thick and fast. Growth targets envisage 85,000 more jobs and 100,000 more houses 2011-2031- the equivalent of 2 new Oxfords- with inevitable environmental and social pressures.

Rural communities are under threat from large-scale inappropriate development nevertheless combined with a lack of affordable housing, cuts to public transport and pressure on services.

CPRE fights for the right development in the right place.

At CPRE Oxfordshire:

- We monitor and respond to hundreds of local planning applications.
- We campaign to influence local and national policies.
- We give advice and support to parish councils and local campaign groups.
- We promote solutions such as re-using already developed land or increasing housing density.
- We take action to improve the countryside and help rural communities, such as creating and maintaining walks like the Oxford Green Belt Way and the D'Arcy Dalton Way.



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## 2. History

The Campaign to Protect Rural England Oxfordshire Branch was founded in 1931 at a meeting in Oxford and the author of the 39 steps, John Buchan, became its first Chairman. There was a fear at that time that the beautiful countryside of Oxfordshire with its rolling green fields and ancient woodlands and timeless villages would become threatened by the need to build more houses for a growing population and more roads to meet growth in motor vehicles. There was little or no planning system to control such growth, and it was due to the early members of CPRE Oxfordshire that those challenges were met and resisted.

Since that time, CPRE Oxfordshire has played a significant role in the shaping and protection of the county, including helping in the formation of the Oxford Green Belt and our three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, establishing a number of long-distance walking trails, and supporting successful local campaigns such as protecting Radley Lakes and defeating the proposed Cogges Link Road at Witney.

## 3. People

The Branch is overseen by a trustee board - the Branch Executive Committee (BEC).

Local planning issues are handled by our five District Committees which reflect our local authority borders ie Cherwell, Oxford, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse. The committee members are all volunteers, who between them scrutinise virtually all local planning applications, responding as appropriate. They also lead on seeking to influence local authority planning policy, with support from the Branch.

The Branch currently employs a Director (28 hours a week), a Communications Manager (15 hours a week) and an administrator (12 hours a week).

The Branch is also supported by a network of volunteer consultants who cover specialist areas such as farming, transport and water.

## 4. Branch Office

The Branch Office is in Watlington, South Oxfordshire and under normal circumstances is manned Monday and Wednesday mornings, and other mornings when the Director is available.

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