



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

www.cpreoxon.org.uk

Autumn 2023

Oxfordshire Voice



Improving access to the
Oxford Green Belt Way
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Oxfordshire's rare
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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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Articles, letters, comments and suggestions for articles are welcome. Please contact the Branch Office below. Published November 2022

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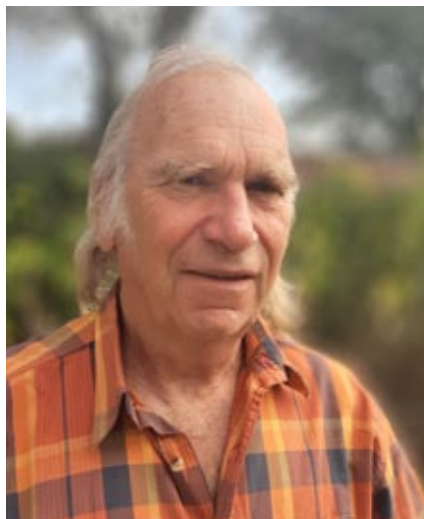
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Chairman's voice



A recent study in The Times newspaper identified that the Wantage Parliamentary Constituency, which ranges from Faringdon in the West to Wallingford in the East, showed between the two censuses in 2011 and 2021, the greatest population growth of any constituency in the country. This growth, which is an increase of about one fifth, is very evident to anyone driving across the area – with huge numbers of new housing. Despite the growth in housing the affordability of homes in Oxfordshire, whether to buy or rent, has got worse (for example the ratio of house prices to earnings has increased from 8 to 10 in this period and is one of the highest in the Country). This all goes to show we cannot simply build our way out of the housing crisis.

The high growth rates in Oxfordshire have their routes in the Oxfordshire 2014 Strategic Economic Plan and Strategic House Market Assessment both of which planned for massive economic growth for the County and led in turn to the Growth Deal between the Councils and the Government and the aspiration for 100,000 new houses by 2030 and ambitious targets in the Local Plans. As we have now seen this is not leading to more affordable, or better, housing for the people of Oxfordshire but an influx of people and (until at least recently) an overheating of the housing market.

In addition these high targets are beginning to be undeliverable. This leads to a shortfall in the Districts' five year housing land supply and passing of speculative and unplanned development applications. CPRE has been campaigning locally and nationally against the iniquitous five year supply rule (building rates are after all in the hands of the developers and not the Councils) and we thought the government had taken on our concerns but the much awaited revision of the national planning policy is yet to see the light of day.

...high growth rates have put huge strains on our countryside

These high growth rates have put huge strains on our countryside and infrastructure. Our medical, care and educational services are struggling, our sewerage systems are overloaded and our roads are now not only congested but falling apart! We live in a finite land. We need land for growing food, for recreation, for transport, for housing and for nature and, in the last few years it seems for solar farms. There is no recognition in the planning system that these conflicting demands need to be balanced in our crowded land. CPRE Oxfordshire is calling for a comprehensive land use and nature recovery plan across the county.

Other important current work centres Nature 2030 (page 9), the Local Plans being brought forward by our local authorities (page 10) and the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (page 11).

I would like to thank all the staff, volunteers and donors for their continued support through the year. With the challenges we have ahead we will be looking to expand our reach and activities so I hope we can rely on your continued support.

Richard Harding
Chairman

WANTED: District Chairs for Cherwell and South Oxfordshire

Could you spare a few hours a month to help co-ordinate a small group of passionate volunteers?

We are looking for two District Chairs to help us in their local patch – one in Cherwell and one in South Oxfordshire.

Our District Committees are vital in providing a first line of support for local communities who have concerns about development

in their area. They also help to communicate information on CPRE's campaigns and activities and identify opportunities for practical countryside improvement projects.

Overall, it's a key way in which we help local people speak up for their countryside.

We have volunteers in place but each of these Districts is now in need of a Chair to provide co-ordination. Could you help?

No specific experience is required as we can provide any training needed, but it would help if you can demonstrate some leadership and organisational experience (either in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The initial deadline is 8 December 2023 but we are happy to accept enquiries on an ongoing basis.

For further info and to express an interest, please email: campaign@cpreoxon.org.uk



Welcome Laura

but ended up founding a music education charity 17 years ago in response to the governments funding cuts to school budgets. It was a vast learning curve of epic proportions, landing me head first into website design, Safeguarding, socials, contracts and a whole host of endless paperwork.

I have recently founded a new charity Henley Community Hub, that will see the renovation of a lovely old building in Henley, into a hub for the whole community.

I am a member of Henley Mermaids, 5 middle aged women who raise money for charity by taking on swimming challenges while politely protesting about sewage pollution threatening our waterways. In the last four years we've raised almost £100k, and are now classed as one of the top five campaign groups on this important issue.

I grew up in Oxfordshire, I am passionate about our environment, and believe our environment and countryside are the foundation of our well-being, and by speaking out, we safeguard our planet for future generations. I'm delighted to be joining the team at CPRE Oxfordshire, and hope that my position within this charity will make some difference to our rural communities, and our countryside."

We were sad to say goodbye to Julia Benning, who has left for pastures new after five years of being our Communications Manager.

However, we are delighted to welcome on board Laura Reineke, as our new Communications & Events Manager. Hopefully she will meet many of you at events and activities over the next few months, and here she tells you a bit more about herself and her motivation for joining CPRE.

"My CV says I'm a non-profit executive with more than 30 years experience in classical music as well

as 20 years experience in teaching. I'm a positive disruptor on a mission to rescue our waterways. With a passion for endurance swimming, I recently swam the English Channel. I'm a columnist for an award winning local paper, I thrive on being busy and specialise in fundraising, digital marketing, campaigning, innovative ideas, violin playing and public speaking.

I'm actually a mum of three grown-ups, and two dogs, living in Henley-on-Thames, packing as much as possible into my day. I'm a professional violinist by trade,



Improving access to the Oxford Green Belt Way

The Oxford Green Belt Way is a fifty-mile circular route exploring the countryside around Oxford. It was created by CPRE Oxfordshire in 2007 to highlight the importance of the Green Belt and is now a recognised route, featuring on Ordnance Survey maps. It offers amazing views of Oxford's 'dreaming spires' and passes through historic villages and stunning countryside such as Foxcombe Hill, Otmoor and Wytham Woods. It also gives direct access to the countryside to some of Oxford's least affluent communities, including Barton and Greater Leys.

This summer, CPRE Oxfordshire has been co-ordinating a major improvement project, increasing accessibility on the Oxford Green Belt Way by replacing nine stiles with accessible, self closing gates at sites in Toot Baldon, Nuneham Courtenay, Cumnor and Wytham. We collaborated with the Countryside Access Team at Oxfordshire County Council to oversee the work, made possible through a grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) with funding from Grundon. We are also grateful to the relevant land managers and owners, who provided access and permissions to allow this work to proceed.

Helen Marshall, Director of CPRE Oxfordshire, emphasised the importance of improving access to the Oxford Green Belt. 'The Oxford Green Belt is the countryside next door to the city and surrounding villages. We

know that spending time outside improves mental and physical health and the grant from TOE has allowed us to improve access and we hope more people will be encouraged to explore this part of the route.'

Ben Heaven Taylor, TOE's CEO, 'Everyone at TOE is delighted to have funded this project which is the type of initiative we love to support. We know grants from TOE make all the difference to grass-roots projects which might not otherwise happen and we're proud to be part of this.'

Cllr Andrew Gant, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Highway Management, said: 'We are really pleased to have been able to work in partnership with the CPRE on this project to improve access along the Green Belt Way. As well as enhancing the experience for people walking the long distance trail, it will also benefit communities who use their local routes on a daily basis. We are delighted the project has been completed.'

CPRE Oxfordshire also co-ordinates a team of Oxford Green Belt Way footpath volunteers to help ensure the route is kept clear and well waymarked, working with Oxfordshire County Council's Countryside Access Team to flag up and tackle any significant issues. We have one or two vacancies and would love to hear from anyone who might be able to spend a little time keeping an eye on a section of the route.

Take Action

Could you be an Oxford Green Belt Way footpath volunteer? To find out more, please contact: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk
T: 01491 612079

Order your **Oxford Green Belt Way Guide** – see page 11.

Give a donation to help CPRE Oxfordshire continue its role as guardian of the Oxford Green Belt Way, for example:

- Refreshing the way markers along the route, to include QR codes with easily downloadable information about the route and the Oxford Green Belt
- Supporting our team of Oxford Green Belt Way volunteers
- Creating opportunities for under-represented communities to explore their local countryside, using the Oxford Green Belt Way.
- Working to digitise our Oxford Green Belt Way Guidebook, to make it more widely accessible
- Responding to planning applications that might impact the Oxford Green Belt Way to seek to avoid, minimise and/or mitigate any harm.

Your donation – however big or small – helps make a difference. For example:

- £10 could pay for 10 new way markers
- £50 could support training and insurance for a footpath volunteer
- £500 could help us organise a community walking event.

www.justgiving.com/campaign/oxford-green-belt-way

We are grateful to the Gresswell Environment Trust for match funding the first £1,000 raised in this appeal.





Hedgerow Heroes!

Jess Bouwer, of Wild Oxfordshire, discussing hedge planting in Ewelme Photo: Wild Oxfordshire

The Hedgerow Heroes initiative, led by CPRE and Wild Oxfordshire, is this year set to work on seven sites across Oxfordshire, including Dorchester on Thames, Great Haseley, Upper Heyford, Ewelme, Wootton by Woodstock, and Foxburrow Wood, Witney. We will be helping these communities both to plant new hedgerows and rejuvenate existing ones, with the aim of involving about 170 volunteers. The project also plans to offer hedgelaying training to empower volunteers in caring for their hedges.

Helen Marshall, Director of CPRE Oxfordshire, said: 'We are really looking forward to working with Wild Oxfordshire and building on the success of previous Hedgerow Heroes projects in Kidlington, Watlington and Eynsham. This time we have been able to support more communities to achieve their vision for local hedgerows, develop a better understanding of the importance of hedges and provide opportunities for practical involvement and engagement.'

It is estimated that in our county alone, we have lost approximately 50% of hedgerows since 1940. We are calling for a 40% increase in Oxfordshire hedgerows by 2050, which would see an additional 3,128km or 198km a year! This equates to 0.5km per parish per year for the next 30 years – a challenge, but achievable.

Hedgerows play a crucial role in supporting wildlife and the landscape. Oxfordshire's diverse hedges hold historical and ecological significance and form an important element in Oxfordshire's landscape, such as the rectangular grid of the parliamentary Enclosure Act hedges, especially well seen from the Ridgeway, and the chequerboard pattern near Otmoor, reputedly the inspiration for the chess game in Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. In the Chilterns and in the former Wychwood Forest, woodland relic hedgerows provide evidence of assarting of ancient woodland.

In short, hedges are amazing!

How you can help

- Take part in the 'Great British Hedgerow Survey' hedgerowsurvey.ptes.org
- Plant a new native hedge or fill in the gaps of an existing hedge this winter.
- Community Groups and schools can apply for free trees from www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/
- For advice <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/action/hedgerow-heroes>

So, how healthy are the hedgerows in your corner of Oxfordshire?

If you are surveying or enhancing your parish's hedgerows, we would love to hear from you. Contact: campaign@cprexon.org.uk

“Oxfordshire’s floodplain meadows are as rare as the Rollright Stones”

Kevan Martin – Long Mead’s Thames Valley
Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project



We all might think we know what a wildflower meadow is from glossy magazine articles that feature them, but there are many different grassland communities in the UK, including limestone grasslands, upland hay meadows, marshy grasslands, acid grasslands, lowland meadows and pastures. One community is as rare as the Rollright Stones, more beautiful even than Stonehenge and still living with us: it is the ancient floodplain wildflower meadow, classified in the British National Vegetation Classification system as ‘mesotrophic grassland 4’ (MG4). Now imagine an area the size of Heathrow Airport broken into small pieces and scattered across the country – that is all that is left of original MG4 floodplain meadows, which are amongst Britain’s most botanically diverse habitat, but now extinct in our culture.

Imagine the topography of the floodplain where water seeps through, around and over the land, making for the main river. Here it fills a tiny depression, there it dampens a higher piece of ground, but over there is a small rise which is only inundated when it floods. These small changes in ground level over a vast area are what produce the particular diversity of wet-loving and

dry-loving species and the floodplain meadows’ resilience. With up to 40 different plants per metre square, they are rare botanic ‘hot-spots’ in our nature-depleted land.

Until the mid-20th century, you could have walked along the Thameside from Lechlade to Oxford through blooming swathes of sneezewort, pepper saxifrage, dodder dicks, crested dog’s tail, eggs-and-bacon, jack-go-to-bed-by-noon – their many affectionate names as colourful as their flowers, showing how cherished in common culture they used to be. Indeed, they provided dyes for our clothing, flavourings for our drinks, and medicines to cure us from disease. Meadowsweet, for example, whose key ingredient is salicylic acid, was developed for use in aspirin. They were known by farmers as the ‘hospital fields’ since the nutrients of their many varied plants meant healthy livestock and low vet fees (and still do for the few farmers that own them).

Since Saxon times, humans have been an integral part of maintaining this botanic diversity, by taking hay and grazing the aftermath. Today, only a tiny handful of people ever set foot in their glorious summer tapestry of flowers and grasses,

which means that we can’t muster the great public campaigns for their protection that threats to ancient woodlands, great crested newts or even curlews do. Few people appreciate the critical role that floodplain meadows can play in our 21st century fight against climate change and biodiversity decline. They provide food for an equally diverse range of animals, including some of our most threatened. (Their decline has already led to the extinction of the marsh fritillary butterfly in Oxfordshire). Their highly absorbent soils play a critical role in flood management. They filter our water, they remove pollution and they store carbon in their soils more effectively, and more securely, than forests. Indeed, new research from the Open University suggests that their carbon storage capacity is only exceeded by peat bogs – another threatened habitat.

Unlike other biodiverse habitats such as ancient woodlands and wetlands, floodplain wildflower meadows provide all these ecosystem services (as we now call them) while continuing to play a fundamental role in 21st century food production. They supply nutrient-rich fodder for sheep and cattle – and without the need for costly inputs of fertilisers,

weed killers and insecticides (or the associated production, fuel and manpower costs). Furthermore, in this era of unpredictable weather, they provide a very resilient crop, unlike the monocultures ryegrass or arable crops, which get wiped out in a flood or a drought. The great diversity of meadow plants means that in wet years one set of species flourish and in dry years other species flourish, so the crop never fails.

Today, only a 30-acre fragment of Long Mead remains. Yet these floodplain wildflower meadows are an unique and irreplaceable part of our cultural heritage, no less than Stonehenge and the Rollright Stones.

To stem this seemingly relentless loss, we are using the seed from Long Mead's Saxon-era meadow to begin the long process of restoring riverside fields along the Thames and Cherwell, with the goal of connecting up the remaining fragments of ancient meadow to create a wildflower

meadow corridor. Upstream and downstream of Long Mead over 150 acres have been restored in the last few years. In 2020, Long Mead's Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project (TVWMRP) spread Long Mead's seed on Christ Church Meadow and in 2021, began the process of restoring Merton College's Music Meadow and Great Meadow on the Cherwell.

These are no 'quick fixes'. According to research from the UK's Centre for Hydrology and Ecology, the majority of meadow species are predicted to take 150 years to colonise a restored site and indeed restoration often fails. So, we understand that we can't reproduce these 1,000 year-old floodplain meadows in our lifetime, but we do understand that the multiple benefits they provide have become even more valuable as biodiversity losses mount and global warming impacts every aspect of our natural world. Perhaps they will emerge again in their rightful place in our rural landscape.

Botley West & Renewables Update

We are expecting the formal pre-application public consultation on the mega-sized Botley West Solar Farm towards the end of this year – possibly live at the point you read this. Please see our website/social media channels for latest updates and guidance on how to respond. Meanwhile, it was good to see Merton College having a change of heart and withdrawing its land from the proposal.

Although Botley West's size dwarfs all other proposals, that doesn't mean that there aren't other solar farms that would also have a very negative impact on the countryside. Cumnor is the latest parish to feel the heat (if you'll excuse the pun!) with two large solar farm applications in the pipeline, in addition to the area of the parish that would be impacted by the Botley West proposal.

Earlier this year, after pressure from CPRE, all our local authorities agreed to produce a Local Area Energy Plan with work to be led by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Theoretically at least this was going to include consideration of some kind of spatial strategy for renewables – much needed in our view as this would help put local communities back in charge, not speculative landowners. Importantly, it could enable a clear prioritisation of rooftops and brownfield sites, rather than the 'easy win' of greenfield. Sadly, since then things have gone very quiet! However, we are continuing to seek answers from OCC about the terms of reference and timescales for this work, and how they will be engaging with residents and local groups.

Take action!

Please tell your local MP and councillors that you support renewables done well, based on a land-use strategy which prioritises previously developed land and avoids productive farmland, Green Belt and other designated areas. Find out who to contact at

www.writetothem.com



Take action! Long Mead Wildlife Site is at risk! The power cable for the Botley West solar farm is currently proposed to cross the Thames exactly at this site, cutting straight through this amazing location. Please look out and respond to the next consultation on this hugely damaging scheme (see p7).

The HIF1 Road scheme – ‘business as usual’ and a new attack on local democracy?

In July, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Planning and Regulation Committee (P&RC) discussed the ‘HIF1’ proposal for a £300 million new road connecting the A34 with the Oxford to Reading road. Despite recommendations for support from their own transport department the P&R committee refused permission for this plan after two days of discussion.

The minutes are very clear and eight reasons were given for refusal, making it obvious just how bad this plan is. The Committee had the delegated power to determine this application as per the Standing Orders of the County Council. The meeting was informed at the time by OCC’s legal advisor that the decision was clear and final.

However OCC refused to issue a ‘Decision Notice’ and claim therefore that there was no decision. The idea that production of a single piece of paper is more important than a legal and valid committee decision was the first indication of how the County Council Cabinet are prepared to undermine their own democratic processes. OCC have failed to answer questions about the legal basis for their stance and are trying to paper over the serious splits in the so called ‘Fair Deal Alliance’ on this issue.

The application was then ‘called in’ by the Government so there will be a public inquiry in January where the reasons for refusal will be discussed. This means that OCC no longer has jurisdiction over this matter.

However OCC’s Cabinet are continuing to push for the road proposal. In September they held a special and much shorter meeting of the P&RC with a rather different group of councillors. They nodded through an agreement that they would adopt “an overall neutral position” at the public inquiry,



despite their eight reasons for refusal. Had they acted in this way in support of a private developer’s proposal there would rightly have been outrage but objecting councillors have been pushed to stay silent.

All this means that when the inquiry takes place the County Council will be doing little or nothing to spell out the case against this destructive plan which runs directly against their own climate and transport plans. It will be up to the local parish councils, the Oxfordshire Roads Action Alliance, Oxford Friends of the Earth and CPRE to seek to make that case, and we will be facing expensive and well-briefed legal experts for OCC.

This is of course not just about the road, a huge viaduct and a massive new bridge over the Thames. The scheme would enable thousands of new homes around Culham, Clifton Hampden and areas north

of Didcot, raising the likelihood of a ‘South Oxfordshire Sprawl’ of poorly planned car-dependent housing estates filling the gaps between Abingdon and Didcot.

We need new homes. But we also need to fulfil our responsibilities to our countryside and the climate challenge. It’s not one or the other. We need a clear strategy for developing settlements based around good facilities and proper public transport. Two of the most affected settlements – Culham and Appleford – both have underused rail stations. It’s not just about building roads to new houses – it’s about creating a sustainable future and good places to live. Our councils talk a lot about this: it’s time they turned talk into action and gave up on the HIF1 ‘business as usual’ way of doing things.

Chris Church,
Oxford Friends of the Earth

Abingdon Reservoir: it's back and it's bigger. Please act now!



Thames Water has announced that not only will it continue with its proposals for the Abingdon Reservoir but that it intends to revert to its earlier plans for a 150 billion litre reservoir.

That's 50% larger than the proposal Thames Water consulted on earlier this year, which received overwhelming criticism from the public, MPs and Oxfordshire's local authorities.

It's also 50% larger than the reservoir rejected at Public Inquiry in 2010.

Thames Water has ruled out entirely the proposed Severn Thames Transfer, which CPRE believes should be explored first as a more adaptive and less environmentally destructive option.

Would you trust this company to make the right decision on infrastructure?

Thames Water's appalling record of managing sewage pollution and destroying the health of our rivers is well-known and recent public reports have questioned the financial stability of the company.

No wonder they are tempted by a reservoir option which would add a massive bonus to their balance sheet, irrespective of whether this is the right decision for sustainable long-term water supply and dismissing the impact on Oxfordshire's countryside and local residents.



Take Action!

We understand the final decision now rests with the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Rt Hon Theresa Coffey MP. You can contact her at DEFRA via defra.helpline@defra.gov.uk

And please include your local MP:

lailya.moran.mp@parliament.uk
(Abingdon)

david.johnston.mp@parliament.uk
(Wantage)

or see www.writetothem.com

For further information, please visit the GARD campaign website www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk

Thames Water's finances aren't a good enough reason to trash our environment – whether that's sewage or a mega-reservoir. Please speak up now!

NATURE 2030

The **State Of Nature** report, released on 27 September, shows that nature in England is on the brink. With 59% of farmland birds lost, 44% of moth species have been lost since 1970 and nearly 1500 species are at risk of extinction. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with more than one in seven native wildlife species facing extinction and more than 40% in decline. Against a Government target

of protecting 30% of the land and sea for nature by 2030, just 3% of land and 4% of sea is effectively protected for nature in the UK. As the most rural county in the South-East of England we clearly have a responsibility to protect and nurture our countryside. As the county grapples with rapid development and its impact on our natural environment, CPRE is supporting a coalition of organisations, in the

nation-wide Nature 2030 campaign. Together, we are urging the public to add their voices to the growing chorus demanding that politicians prioritise nature in the lead-up to the next general election.

www.oxeb.org.uk/nature-2030



Planning updates

Local Plans

Strong policies in the Local Plans prepared by our councils are key to keeping our countryside open and ensuring sustainability for future generations. There's lots going on at the moment so please keep an eye on our website/social media for the latest information and make sure to have your say.

Oxford City

By the time you read this, we expect Oxford City's Local Plan to be out for consultation. We are anticipating that this Local Plan will include the highly inflated housing numbers we have seen in the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HENA) report published earlier this year. This will create huge development pressure, not only on green spaces within the City but also on the surrounding Green Belt, as the City is once again looking to surrounding Districts to pick up their overspill.

The heavy criticism of this report from CPRE and many others seems to have so far fallen on deaf ears but we continue to press our case. Forecasts should be based on the Government standard methodology and brownfield sites in the city should be allocated to homes not jobs.

Cherwell

Earlier this autumn, Cherwell District Council ran a consultation on the Preferred Options for its Local Plan 2040.

There was lots to welcome in terms of the emphasis of the plan on tackling the climate emergency and the part the countryside can play in this. The key points we raised were:

- The housing numbers which form the basis of the plan are not fit for purpose, pushing up the housing figures over this 20 year period by 11,000 in comparison to the Government's standard

methodology. (CDC is using the HENA report prepared jointly with Oxford City – see above.)

- A land use strategy, including renewables, must be developed urgently to underpin the plan. We need a genuine brownfield first policy (including 'rooftops first' for solar).
- The proposed removal of land from the Green Belt at Kidlington is unjustified and should be dropped from the Plan.
- The low numbers of Local Green Spaces identified suggest that the system is not working well and that more support needs to be given to communities to help bring these forward.
- Proposed policy on employment land is significantly weaker than the existing Local Plan policy and should be revisited.

Our full response is available on our website. The next version of the Plan is not expected to go out for consultation until Autumn 2024.

West Oxfordshire

In late summer, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) consulted on the 'Ideas & Objectives' for its emerging Local Plan 2041. The consultation was fairly high level with, for example, no detail given on the precise wording of any policies or numbers of houses required. Our full response is available on our website.

We supported the overall objectives, including tackling climate change and creating attractive, accessible and thriving places, and hope these will now be developed with precise and strong policy wording to limit any "wiggle" room for developers.

A number of housing scenarios were presented, and we favoured the option of a hierarchical approach where numbers are split on a descending scale depending on size of settlement, with limited development of villages and less again in small villages. However, it is difficult to comment constructively without knowledge of the actual housing numbers being proposed.

We have argued strongly that WODC should not use the overinflated and highly criticised housing numbers presented by Oxford City and should also resist accommodating Oxford City housing "overspill" (see above).

Finally, there was an opportunity to put forward ideas and opportunities within the process. We encouraged parishes to put forward Local Green Spaces (LGS), community areas, nature recovery areas and / or carbon capture possibilities (such as new hedgerows and woodlands). Although the consultation will have ended prior to you receiving this copy of Voice, we would encourage you still to put forward any ideas of this nature you may have locally.

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse

The Preferred options consultation on this Joint Local Plan is now expected in January/ February 2024. South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have both heavily criticised the inflated housing numbers put forward by Oxford City and made it clear that they will resist taking any of the City's excess housing need, the "Oxford overspill" in their districts.

National News

CPRE has been working hard on producing a National Manifesto in readiness for the next General Election. As a Branch, we have been inputting our views. The manifesto outlines four key areas of priority for the countryside, climate, communities and wildlife.

- A planning system for people, planet and nature
- Fixing the broken housing system for rural communities
- Enhancing the countryside next door
- Rooftop renewables – a common sense revolution

Do check out www.cpre.org.uk if you want to look at this in more detail.

In Memory

Theresa Elsome
May 1940 – June 2023

Theresa joined the Henley/Mapledurham district committee in 2007 representing the Whitchurch Hill area, joining the new South Oxfordshire District Committee when it was created in 2016. Although she resigned from the committee in 2019, she returned as a village representative in 2022 keeping an eye on planning issues in the Whitchurch Hill area.

She was involved in many local organisations. Theresa was passionate about her village, the Chilterns and South Oxfordshire countryside, and preserving the beauty of our area and the heritage of our villages.

We are extremely grateful for the donations received in memory of Theresa and thank her family for suggesting CPRE Oxfordshire.

Margaret Drage
1934 – 2023

Margaret Drage was a member of the Henley & Mapledurham Committee representing Turville & Fawley. She served as their secretary for many years and joined the South Oxfordshire District Committee until 2019 when she reluctantly moved from her beloved Chiltern Hills, to be near her family in Wilton, Salisbury.



NNGO is the coalition of around 30 groups of all sizes, working together to try to ensure a development strategy for the county that focuses on meeting real need in a sustainable fashion, rather than overly aggressive housing and jobs targets.

www.neednotgreedoxon.org.uk

Over this year, NNGO's priority has been work on the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). This document, drawn up by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, has had very limited public engagement but will be key evidence influencing jobs and housing targets when our Councils bring forward their Local Plans.

As a result of campaigning by NNGO and other supporters, some significant progress has been made, driving a greater focus on net zero, the environment and social inclusivity. Critically, the SEP

commits to delivering economic growth 'within existing county-level ambitions with regard to net jobs creation and housing delivery (as set out in the Local Plans developed by the Local Planning Authorities)' – in other words, we hope, our local authorities will be back in charge rather than the unelected Local Enterprise Partnership.

We wait to see the final outcome (due Nov 2023) but meanwhile our thanks to all those campaigners and supporters who have leant their voice to this campaign.

Shopping for Christmas?

Help your loved ones enjoy their countryside! Our three different walking guides make great stocking fillers...

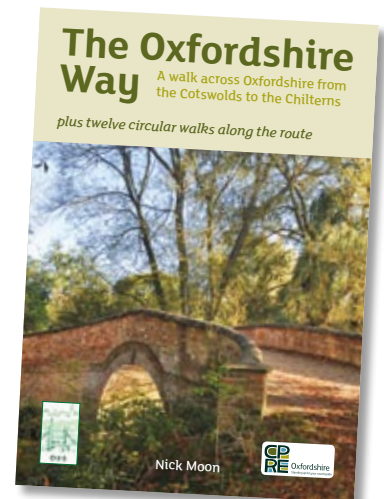
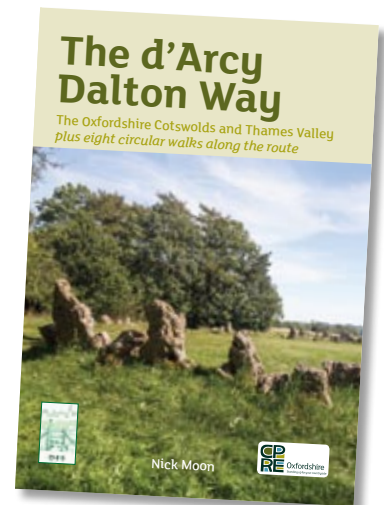
Copies are available from selected bookshops, stationers and information centres in Oxfordshire and surrounding counties. It is also available on-line from Walking Pages, and Blackwell's.

To obtain a copy direct from CPRE Oxfordshire, please send a cheque made payable to CPRE Oxfordshire to CPRE, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY, incl. details of where to send the guide/s.

- Oxford Green Belt Way- £11.99
- Oxfordshire Way – £12
- D'Arcy Dalton Way – £12

Price includes £2 postage & packaging.

For further information email: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk or telephone 01491 612079.



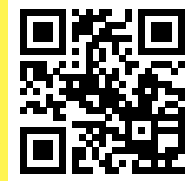
The Big Give Christmas Challenge

– one donation, twice the impact –
help us launch our Green Defenders Network

28 November – 5 December Donate via: tinyurl.com/2mn6ttkj

Double the value of your gift! During this week, all donations made to CPRE Oxfordshire via the Big Give Christmas Challenge will be match-funded up to the value of £4,500 (£9,000 in total).

Simply scan this QR code to visit our Big Give donation page



This is a one week only challenge. Please do consider making a gift during this time as it will unlock additional match funding and make an amazing difference to our work.

Oxfordshire Green Defenders Network

Money raised will help us launch our Oxfordshire Green Defenders Network.

The planning system can often seem confusing and overwhelming. People may not be aware of development decisions affecting their area until the bulldozers turn up. We need a way of giving people who already have the knowledge of their local countryside the skills and opportunities to input into local planning decisions.

Our 'Green Defenders Network' will establish a network of volunteers across Oxfordshire who can champion the countryside in local planning decisions. Our volunteers will be given the training and support needed to get involved themselves and to help their communities as well. By being part of a team, they will be able to share information and experience and form a strong, practical advocacy network for the

countryside. We will particularly seek to recruit younger volunteers (under 30s) who are often under-represented in planning.

With your support, our Green Defenders Network will create a group of individuals empowered to put their local knowledge to work for the benefit of their community and the countryside.

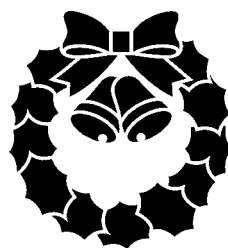
Every donation matters

During this week only, every donation, no matter its size, will be doubled – up to our target of £4,500 which will generate £9,000 in total. Can you help us meet the challenge?

What do you need to do?

1. Add a calendar reminder for your diary for 28 November, including this link: tinyurl.com/2mn6ttkj
2. Have your debit or credit card details ready when you make your donation
3. Tell others! Please pass on this message to anyone you think might be interested in supporting us and having their donation doubled.

Remember: The link for donations will go live on our Big Give Christmas Challenge portal on Tuesday 28 November and will run until Tuesday 5 December – see: tinyurl.com/2mn6ttkj



theBigGive.org.uk

Thank you so much and a happy festive season to all our supporters.

Oxfordshire Voice

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