

favour of expansion; owners, businesses, government policy, users etc. We don't give up, we keep fighting but realistically we have to accept how strong the opposition is.

EiPs have achieved quite a bit. North Herts have been told to look again at their plan, this is partly due to our input. Where would we be if we didn't campaign at all? It makes people stop and think, the Green Belt is dear to us. An Inspector has criticized one council on not being clear on exceptional circumstances to take land out of the Green Belt for development.

Sometimes the worst doesn't happen in the end but if you don't fight for the countryside it will be at the bottom of the priorities. Some Local Authorities have a growth agenda to attract new people to their area.

To summarise, we have had successes, we have the ear of the media, we do make people sit up and think about the issues, it could be a lot worse without people like us, we give help and advice to others. It is good to see you here supporting us. It has been a busy year and there are still major battles to be fought

Myth and legend says "young people will be against us as they need somewhere to live" - but they love the countryside too.

6. **HON. TREASURER'S REPORT:** John Newbury said it was his second AGM as Treasurer. The summary accounts were published in the Annual Report and a copy has been issued today.

John talked through the accounts. He said we do need to actively fundraise and thanked everyone for their donations and fundraising activities, they will continue to be vitally important to CPRE Hertfordshire as we move forward.

He formally proposed the adoption of the accounts for the 12 month period ending 31 December 2018.

Proposed: John Newbury
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Paul Brenham

7. **APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT:** The Chairman had great pleasure in proposing the re-appointment of Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO. His influence and support are invaluable.

Proposed: Richard Bullen
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Elizabeth Hamilton

8. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

The Chairman and Hon Treasurer are happy to stand for re-election:

Chairman Richard Bullen
Proposed: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Davina Malcolm

Hon. Treasurer John Newbury
Proposed: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Richard Bullen

The appointment of Kevin FitzGerald as Hon. Director

Proposed: Richard Bullen
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Reg Norgan

9. **ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

The Chairman said we are losing two trustees this year and thanked both Eliza Hermann and Rick Sanderson for the wonderful service they had given over the past 6 years and for continuing to volunteer with us.

Simon Odell and Michael Nidd are eligible for re-election and have agreed to stand.

Proposed: Richard Bullen
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Dorothy Abel Smith

The Chairman confirmed we need new Trustees and proposed Allan McNab who has a wealth of experience with other charities and is passionate about protecting the Green Belt.

Proposed: Richard Bullen
Carried unanimously

Seconded: Michael Nidd

10. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS OF THE ACCOUNTS:

Proposed: John Newbury proposed the appointment of Wagstaffs. **Seconded:** Richard Bullen
Carried unanimously

11. ADDRESS

Richard Bullen introduced Tom Fyans, CPRE Deputy Chief executive and Director of Policy & Campaigns.

Tom thanked us for inviting him. He introduced himself by saying he has been at CPRE for 3 years, his background is in campaigning and political campaigning. He is enjoying the challenge and has spent time consulting on the CPRE Strategic Plan 2020-2026. Due to growth and finances all branches and National Office face the same problems. We have reserves but not a lot of new income, we are over reliant on legacies but not replenishing membership. It has been in decline for 40 years and in the long term we need to make changes to become more attractive.

Tom talked about the Strategy and outlined the main aims:

1. Connect more people to the Countryside
2. Promote Rural Life (and support more than at present - we have few staff addressing rural issues and more doing planning. More resource is now available to support branches with Rural Life)
3. Empower Communities - we are investing in our network of branches with a new Volunteer & Partnerships team to support development of the network
4. Grow our Capacity - ensure financial viability of the organisation and try to grow our capacity. This is our major challenge as without more diverse funding we can do everything we would like to

He said a priority running through the strategy is the Climate Emergency, it is extremely significant and we do need to be able to respond to it.

He introduced the new brand which has re-vamped how we look and communicate. It is more modern and forward thinking. It promotes the benefits of the Countryside, wellbeing etc., is not as technical and is more positive. Tom talked through the different strands of the strategy and showed a PowerPoint presentation.

He said we need to balance our work, still protect though planning but also promote the countryside and tell a positive story in a different way to hopefully attract more support. We need to appeal to families and others who want to get involved in the countryside but not in planning.

Tom talked about the challenges and opportunities with the Green Belt threats and about the campaigning done at National level to keep the Green Belt protected.

Richard thanked Tom for a very interesting and informative talk.

Richard spoke about Climate Change and said if your local authority has declared a climate emergency please ask them what they are doing to mitigate plans to the avoidance of climate change.

Richard asked if there were any questions for Tom.

Q. Paul Elliott - do you go to Party Conferences, do they listen and take on board what you have to say?

A. Tom Fyans - Yes, Lib Dem, Conservative, Labour and we also talk at fringe meetings on the Green Belt. Local councilors talk about Green Belt and we give them a hard time and hold them to the promises they make. Do they listen? I do make sure I ask the difficult questions but I do not always get the right answers.

Q. Michael Nidd - they seem to have forgotten in CPRE about aviation as a mechanism for transport, it is potentially far more damaging to the climate, why? Why not more focus on aviation?

A. Tom Fyans - we used to have more capacity to work on infrastructure, we do not have it now. We do support local branches where we can, both financial and media/national lobbying, but we do ask branches to take the lead.

Q. Michael Lewis - given the investment made what targets have been set to increase membership and funds?

A. Tom Fyans - 5-10% in the first year then it gets higher. The Board are clear we expect to see a return on the investment.

Q. Michael Lewis - with reference to Green Belt and Brownfield, should there be a positive policy to develop Brownfield sites first?

A. Tom Fyans - Brownfield First is our primary argument to the Government, we are getting there slowly, the brownfield register has now been reintroduced. The message is getting through but it is hard work as Greenfield sites have higher profit margins.

Q. Steve Baker: It is great to see more emphasis on the countryside and the benefits, young people are key to this (Greta Thunberg) and influence through children. Is there an opportunity for CPRE to get involved in this campaign, kids love the countryside?

A. Tom Fyans - we encouraged support of the climate strike on the 20th and recognise the legitimacy of young people's voices.

Q. Steve Baker - I do not believe the NPPF is stronger now.

A. Tom Fyans - the problem is it can be interpreted however you want, perhaps I am being too optimistic.

Q. Steve Baker - one key fact is that this country is still selling more houses under the Right to Buy scheme than are built or provided for the people who need them to live in. Nothing is done about that deficit. The Green Belt threat is a direct result of the Government's inability to provide houses in the right place for the right people. This needs to be addressed whilst also looking at Climate Change.

A. Tom Fyans - we are commissioning more research into Right to Buy and will call for more social housing in the right place.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

John Davis suggested looking at the people who benefit from the Countryside - Ramblers Association etc., and engaging with them. He also thought that everyone was struggling but retirees might be a good demographic for membership recruitment.

13. CLOSE OF MEETING:

Richard Bullen ended the meeting by thanking Tom Fyans for giving the address and thanking everyone for coming.

He mentioned that the Hertfordshire Awards Scheme is held annually and if anyone is engaged in facilitating people getting into the countryside they could nominate in 2020. Details will be posted on the website in the New Year.

The meeting closed at 4pm and was followed by tea and homemade cakes.