



The countryside charity  
Hertfordshire

# Winter Newsletter 2024



CPRE Patron: His Majesty The King

# Fundraising Appeal - help us fight for Hertfordshire's countryside!

2024 has been a year of political change and with this, a whole raft of announcements from the Government that will put our countryside at risk including the government's recent consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which guides UK planning decisions. See our planning update on page 4 for further information on what the new proposed changes to the NPPF may mean for Hertfordshire's countryside and our response to the consultation.

It is clear that we will need to continue to fight even harder in the coming year, to protect our countryside and green spaces.

This year, as part of our continued fight to protect Hertfordshire's countryside, we've participated in eight Public Inquiries, including:

- The Inquiry for Luton Airport's proposed expansion to nearly double the size of the airport to handle 32 million passengers per year. We continue to campaign against this damaging proposal which would bring more noise pollution, air pollution, road traffic congestion and environmental damage to the surrounding communities and countryside. The government has delayed its decision on the proposed expansion until the new year.
- In April, along with Kings Langley and District Residents Association (KL&DRA) we formed a Rule 6 Joint Objectors Group to participate in the planning appeal Inquiry at Rectory Farm, where 135 dwellings in the Green Belt had been proposed.
- July we participated in the Inquiry into a speculative proposal for 350 dwellings on land east of the A10 in Buntingford, in the designated Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt. Buntingford has experienced massive growth over the past 15 years and a recent spate of speculative proposals seeking to expand the built-up area in virtually all directions.

- Having received positive news that the Secretary of State had dismissed the planning appeal regarding the massive 1,400 dwelling development proposal on land east of Tring, known as Marshcroft, in April, this has now re-appeared in the form of a proposed development site allocation in Dacorum's Local Plan, which means our campaign is back on again.
- We are currently participating jointly with local residents as a Rule 6 Party at the Inquiry for a speculative 390 dwelling development proposed for the Green Belt between Piccotts End Conservation Area, Halsey Field Wildlife Site, and the River Gade chalk stream.

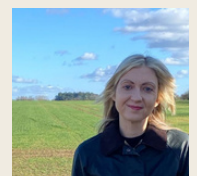
Each Inquiry entails a huge amount of focused work including submission of evidence, and testimony and cross examination of expert witnesses such as CPRE. We do much of our work in-house but of course we must rely on specialist expertise and legal counsel when needed. All of this costs money, both in staff time and external expertise.

In addition to our work on public Inquiries, we have been responding to a wave of District and Borough Local Plan consultations this year, including Hertsmere Borough's Draft Local Plan, which proposed releasing 600 hectares from the Green Belt for residential and commercial development. We have also just recently made representations on the latest draft Local Plan for St Albans District and will shortly do the same for the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, where large areas of the Green Belt are also under threat.

We know that when the proposed changes to the NPPF are finalised and with huge proposed developments such as Marshcroft back on the agenda, 2025 will be one of our hardest years yet. We need your help to win against inappropriate development and protect our green spaces, landscapes and wildlife for generations to come.

We are aiming to raise £10,000 from this appeal to help us cover the costs of representing you - our members - in public Inquiries to protect our countryside. If you are able to help us to continue our work in these difficult times, we would greatly appreciate it.

Any donation makes a huge difference to what we can achieve. You can make a donation directly on our website at <https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/get-involved/make-a-donation/> or see the enclosed flyer with further details on how you can donate.



Abby Coften  
Chief Executive

## Our new Chairman



**It is an honour to take over from Allan as your chairman. His legacy is a stronger organisation fit for purpose. And it needs to be; the forthcoming challenges will be demanding as we face the challenges of a growing population with a finite supply of land. But we have much to reassure us beyond even our own local efforts.**

CPRE, as a national organisation, will celebrate its centenary in 2026 and England would have been a decidedly less pleasant land if we hadn't existed. Consider for a moment: CPRE has been the instigator or principal player in the crucial planning legislation which created the Green Belt which in turn brings discipline to planning and avoids urban sprawl, the plight of many other countries (it is not a simple choice of rural idyll or development but rather the right development in the right place, CPRE's mantra), National Parks, the right to roam, and even the stopping of roadside billboards, the bane of many countries, has been nipped in the bud in this country. The litmus test of these and other milestone achievements is that only 10% of England is actually built on, the same as the land which constitute our National Parks! It seems more because most of us live in urban areas.

We have a new government with a much-vaunted policy of reinterpreting the Green Belt and the NPPF which is the overall planning framework. I have been here before when I was national chairman of CPRE between 2008-14. Then as now there was a government determined to challenge the NPPF. No sooner had we familiarised a minister with the facts than he or she was reshuffled and the process commenced all over again but we mitigated the worst excesses of ignorance masquerading as bold policy.

We will have setbacks, developments taking place which shouldn't, creating damage which will be permanent but there will surely be swathes of varied and stunning countryside in our surprisingly rural county for our generation and future ones to enjoy.

Your local team will continue to refine the tools at its disposal be they IT, adding to our cadre of volunteers - although that is really up to you - legacies, cooperating with other bodies and encouraging all, not least the young, to enjoy but not take for granted this precious countryside on our doorstep.

Peter Waine  
Honorary Chairman

### Join Us

If you are already a member, thank you! But if not, then please do join us, becoming a member of CPRE is the best way to help protect, promote and enhance the Countryside for everyone to value and enjoy.

Details of how to join are on our CPRE Hertfordshire website at [www.cpreherts.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-member](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-member) or email the office and we will send you details: office @cpreherts.org.uk



# Planning update



Life continues to be busy in the planning world and the big national news has been the new Government's proposed planning reforms and active promotion of economic growth.

The public consultation on National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) changes finished in September and we believe the Government has been taken aback by the level of response. This has numbered in the "thousands and thousands" according to junior Minister Baroness Taylor who at least is one of ours, having run Stevenage Council for many years.

We have responded both nationally, and separately as CPRE Hertfordshire, and [our response is on our website](#). Needless to say, we are most concerned about the increased housing figures for Hertfordshire which are entirely undeliverable and highly damaging to the countryside, and the loose talk of 'grey belt' without decent definition is worrying. We are already seeing developers submitting speculative planning applications for mass development on highly valued landscapes within the Green Belt, claiming these sites are 'grey belt'.

A significant response has been made to the latest consultation version of the St Albans Local Plan prior to its submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination in Public and we will be doing the same for Dacorum in December. We are expecting a similar consultation for the Hertsmere Local Plan soon, but Three Rivers Council has postponed its submission until 2026 in light of the continuing uncertainty over housing figures. All Local Plans are proposing significant releases of Green Belt so the fight goes on to ensure the most robust reviews possible to protect the remaining countryside.

We continue to appear at planning appeal inquiries, most recently regarding the huge data centre proposed for a site in the Green Belt at Abbots Langley. The major residential appeal inquiry at Piccotts End has been postponed until the New Year, and that will be a big test of the Government's resolve to maintain the Green Belt despite all the talk of encouraging development.

Planning applications for ground-based solar power generation include both arrays and battery storage installations and again protected land is in the firing line. The CPRE line is for massively increased rooftop generation to reduce the need for solar energy generation on open land and the national campaign is gaining widespread support.

We are very sorry to hear that the Fight the Freight campaign for Radlett Aerodrome has had to concede defeat with its High Court challenges. Similarly our joint efforts with Kings Langley Residents Association did not win the day at the Rectory Farm planning inquiry. It is also most regrettable that Dacorum Council has reintroduced the Marshcroft site at Tring into their Reg 19 Local Plan despite their (and our) recent success in defending this site from development at appeal. It would be understandable to be dispirited occasionally but peoples' awareness of the value of the countryside is clear and we increasingly partner with increasing numbers of local groups in opposing unnecessary and damaging development.

Our longer term continuing efforts at Gilston and East of Luton (Cockernhoe and Tea Green) show that we are keen to maintain pressure even when it appears that development decisions have been taken. We will challenge decisions consistently at all stages where we believe they are inconsistent and inappropriate and where local councils are taking insufficient notice of their residents' concerns.

Chris Berry  
Planning Manager



**Speculative development site in Hertsmere - this is not the 'grey belt'. Photo: Ian Stewart**

## Local Plan Overview

District Plan	Comments & Key Milestones	Potential Adoption
Broxbourne Local Plan 2018-2033	Due for review 2025	Adopted June 2020
Dacorum* Local Plan 2024 -2040	LIVE: Reg 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation in progress 4th Nov to midday on 17th Dec 2024	2025
East Herts District Plan 2011-2033	Due for review 2023	Adopted Oct 2018
Hertsmere* Local Plan 2024 to 2040	Additional Reg 18 consultation completed May 2024. See <a href="#">CPRE Hertfordshire response on our website</a> Reg 19 consultation expected soon.	2025
North Herts Local Plan 2011-2031	Due for review 2023	Adopted Nov 2022
St Albans* Local Plan 2024-2041	Reg 19 Publication Local Plan consultation closed on 8th Nov 2024. See <a href="#">CPRE Hertfordshire representations on our website</a> .	2025
Stevenage Local Plan 2011-2031	LIVE: Partial Review consultation (Reg 19) in progress 21st Nov 2024 to 29th Jan 2025	Adopted May 2019 - Partial Review in progress
Three Rivers* Local Plan to 2041	Reg 18 consultation for Part 4 'Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option Protecting More Green Belt Land' completed Dec 2023. See <a href="#">CPRE Hertfordshire response on our website</a> . Reg 19 consultation postponed until 2026.	2026/27
Watford* Local Plan 2021-2038	Due for review 2027	Adopted Oct 2022
Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan 2016-2036	Due for review 2026	Adopted Oct 2023
South West Herts* Joint Strategic Plan to 2050	Reg 18 consultation completed Nov 2022. See <a href="#">CPRE Hertfordshire response on our website</a> . Vision and Objectives endorsed by the councils Nov 2023. Consultation on scale and pattern of growth expected in 2024.	TBC
Hertfordshire Minerals & Waste Local Plan to 2040	Reg 18 consultation completed Oct 2022. See <a href="#">CPRE Hertfordshire response on our website</a> . No date yet for Reg 19 consultation.	TBC

\* Five district councils (Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers & Watford) are working on the **South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan** supported by Hertfordshire County Council <https://www.swhertsplan.com/>

**Reg 18 Public Consultation:** Early stage consultation – may include Issues and Options, Preferred Options and first draft plan.

**Reg 19 Public Consultation:** Pre-submission draft plan – representations invited as to whether the plan is legally compliant and meets the test of soundness in the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF.

**Examination:** Public hearing held by independent Planning Inspector to assess merits of Submitted Local Plan Policies and their soundness.

## AGM

**Our Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 5th October in the beautiful surroundings of the Woodhall Estate in Watton-at-Stone.**

Following a welcome by Thomas Abel-Smith, Managing Director of the Woodhall Estate and our President, Sir Simon Bowes-Lyon, the Chairman and the Chief Executive gave their reports and we welcomed our new Chairman Peter Waine. Despite the many challenges to Hertfordshire's countryside this year and our concerns regarding the government's proposed changes to the planning system, we were happy to report on a number of significant wins for the countryside. Our work protecting Hertfordshire's green spaces continues to be at the heart of what we do, often working closely with local campaign groups to support them and continue the fight against inappropriate development.

This year we also celebrated our Children's Art Competition with an exhibition and a ceremony to award the winning artists with their certificates and prizes. We were fortunate to have local nature author, Elena Mannion, join us for a talk on her children's nature books (available to buy on our website) and to present the children with their prizes.

At the end of the day, Operations Director at the Woodhall Estate Mike Treffry took attendees on a guided walk of the Woodhall Estate to share the restoration work that has been completed on one of our important chalk streams. The River Beane flows through the Estate, and Mike discussed the new river channels and reedbed that have been created, and the future plans to further protect wildlife habitats on the Estate.

One of our attendees, remarked:

*'Wasn't it a lovely day, last Saturday! I enjoyed the AGM, the tea, the Children's Art presentation and especially the guided walk. I hope next year's AGM will be held at Woodhall again, so that we can see what they have achieved in rerouting the River Beane. Please thank everyone involved.'*

We hope to welcome all of our members next year to our AGM and will share the date as soon as possible in 2025.

More information can be found on our website:

<https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/news/countryside-day-2024/>

## Join the 100 Club and protect the countryside!



Autumn colour in Worrnley Woods  
Photo: E Hamilton

We want to carry on doing the important job of protecting the countryside, which is where you can help by joining the 100 Club. You don't have to be a member of CPRE Hertfordshire to take part.

Here's how it works. Each month you pay a minimum of £1 and are entered in our monthly draw. One share in the 100 Club costs just £1 per month (£12 per year) and you can hold up to five shares. 50% of the monthly contribution goes in prizes and 50% helps us do what we do best – standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside!

Please join today! Go online to the CPRE Hertfordshire website, find the Get Involved section and go to 100 Club for more information. (Or just [click here](#) if you're reading this online). Even if you do not win a prize, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your contribution will help protect the local countryside.

### CPRE HERTFORDSHIRE OFFICERS AND STAFF

President: Sir Simon Bowes Lyon, KCVO

Honorary Life Vice Presidents: Dorothy Abel Smith, MBE, Nicholas Halsey TD, DL, Dr Mervyn Miller, Anthony Eastwood, David Irving, Elizabeth Hamilton, Kevin FitzGerald TD, DL, Peter Waine

Honorary Vice President: Ralph Abel Smith

Officers: Hon. Chairman: Peter Waine, Vice Chair: Alison Young, Hon. Treasurer: Steve Wiltshire

Board of Trustees: Peter Waine, Alison Young, Elizabeth Hamilton, Steve Wiltshire, Adam Hopwood, Allan McNab, Kruna Vukmirovic, Paul Harding, Andrew Anastasiou, Catherine Roberg

Staff: Chief Executive: Abby Coften, Planning Manager: Chris Berry, Planning Assistant: Linda Brookes, Office Manager: Gill Bryant

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Registered charity number: 1162419.

Bankers: Barclays Bank plc, Welwyn Garden City

CPRE Patron: His Majesty The King

## Children's Art Competition - the winners



2024 Winner Y 3-4

We received our highest ever participation from Hertfordshire schools this year in the Children's Art Competition with the theme of 'Why I love the Hertfordshire Countryside'.

The art competition is extremely valuable to CPRE Hertfordshire as it enables us to connect children with nature and get them thinking about the importance of the green spaces around them. Over 40 schools entered the competition and over 250 selected artworks were put forward. There were many outstanding entries which made it very hard to pick the winners!

The winners were presented with their prizes and certificates at our awards ceremony on the afternoon of the AGM. Details of the results and all the winning artwork can be viewed on our website.

Our Children's Art Competition will be running again next year so make sure you look out for further details in the New Year.

## Digital map launch

We are delighted to announce that phase one of our new digital map of countryside threats is now live on our website and can be found at

[www.cpreherts.org.uk/countryside-threats-map](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk/countryside-threats-map)

Our new interactive map shows the locations and details of those planning applications since January 2022 where we have responded. By adjusting the layers, you can also easily see if a location is in the Green Belt and/or the Chilterns National Landscape (AONB). Later phases will add proposed local plan allocation sites and other information to our new map.

Sign up to our e-newsletter on our website [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk) to be the first to hear when phase two of our digital map launches.

We hope our map will help keep you informed of planning applications in your area. Visit our website for further advice on how to influence and respond to a planning application.

## Leave a legacy of kindness

Help us protect Hertfordshire's countryside for generations to come.



Email [office@cpreherts.org.uk](mailto:office@cpreherts.org.uk) or  
call

01438 717587 for more information

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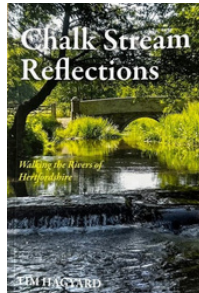
The future is in your hands: [www.cpreherts.org.uk/legacy](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk/legacy)

## CPRE Hertfordshire Merchandise

You can see our full product range and order online at <https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/get-involved/merchandise/> and pay with your debit or credit card or use the order form enclosed with this publication to pay by cheque or BACS. £4 p&p per order.

Please support us by placing an order today. Each sale helps fund our work to protect, promote and enhance Hertfordshire's countryside.

Chalkstream Reflections. In 2020, former CPRE Hertfordshire Planning Manager Tim Hagyard set out to walk the entire length of each of Hertfordshire's chalk streams. These globally-rare and precious waterways, and the wildlife habitats that they support, are under tremendous pressure from increasing abstraction and pollution. Tim wanted to explore the health of these rivers and enjoy their beauty. The book is enjoyable and educational but with a serious message and Tim weaves his personal reflections and recommendations into vivid descriptions of his experiences during the walk. £11.99

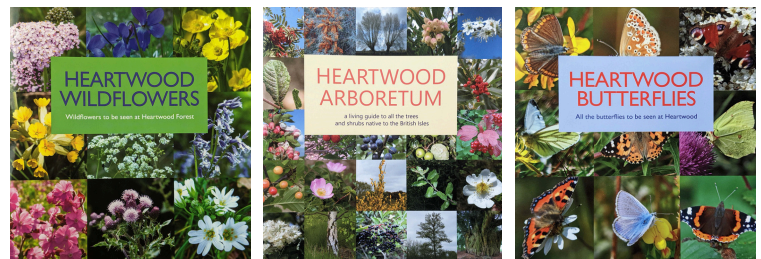


## Books

Old Oak & Little Acorn £12.99, and The Happy Hedgerow £10.99, charming children's books by local author Elena Mannion, with detailed full colour illustrations by Erin Brown. They cover important conservation themes and are suitable for children aged from four.



A trilogy of beautiful full-colour guidebooks produced by the Heartwood Monitoring Group of volunteers at Heartwood Forest. Each book is a high quality paperback packed with photographs and descriptive information to make species identification easy. £9.99 each



Heartwood Wildflowers, covering 170 species of wildflower that grow in Hertfordshire

Heartwood Arboretum, covering all 60 species of trees and shrubs native to the British Isles, most of which can be found across Hertfordshire

Heartwood Butterflies, featuring 30 species of butterflies to be found throughout the county

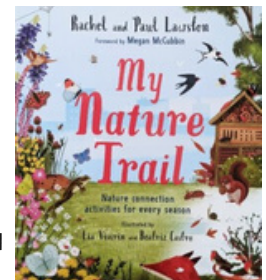
## Blank Greetings Cards - perfect for every occasion

Children's nature art - pack of 5 with one each of 5 different images taken from our popular Children's Art Competition. Size A6. £4.00 per pack



My Nature Trail, £10.99, a beautifully illustrated book which will captivate budding young nature lovers (and their adults). It's packed with a variety of fun outdoor nature activities, and will help children develop skills and knowledge about wildlife and conservation.

A high-quality paperback, 80 pages, original edition, published in October 2023. It's the perfect gift for young children or grandchildren. Suitable for children aged from three.



Four Seasons - four each of 2 exclusive Hertfordshire scenes per pack. Spring Bluebells and Winter Sunset or Summer Meadows and Autumn Mists. Cards measure approx. 15cm square. All images by award-winning photographer Chris Howe £8 per pack



## Heavy Cotton Tote Bags

Eye catching and functional, they also make great little gifts.

Approx. 36 x 41cm with long handles to fit comfortably over the shoulder. £4 each

