



The countryside charity
Hertfordshire

31a Church Street

Welwyn

HERTS AL6 9LW

www.cpreherts.org.uk

office@cpreherts.org.uk

01438 717587

Standing up for Hertfordshire's countryside

STAND UP FOR YOUR LOCAL COUNTRYSIDE

A manifesto for the May 2022 local elections in Hertfordshire

CPRE Hertfordshire is the local charity that campaigns to enhance and protect the countryside throughout the County. We stand up for the countryside so that it can continue to sustain, enchant and improve life for future generations.

Planning: a planning system that works for people, nature and the environment

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of creating the right balance between the economy, environment and people, and maintaining the open countryside.

The rejection of the government's Planning White Paper published in August 2020, emphasises the importance of constant campaigning to protect the countryside. In Hertfordshire the recent record-breaking number of comments in Local Plan consultations in Dacorum, Three Rivers and Hertsmere shows the strength of feeling that local residents have for the countryside, and how vitally important they view its ongoing protection.

It is particularly important to protect the countryside in Hertfordshire because very large parts of the County are designated as Green Belt or other protected areas in Local Plans.

We call on candidates to commit to:

- Protect the Green Belt and other designated protected areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Local Green Spaces
- Take up CPRE Hertfordshire's call for a temporary moratorium, pending the government's new Planning Bill, on granting permission for all major development proposals in designated protected areas including the Green Belt
- Use the most recent available data and take into account local circumstances and constraints in formulating projections of housing need
- Prioritise building truly affordable housing and meeting local needs, ensuring that all developments are in sustainable locations - which means locations that are not car-dependent
- Oppose the use of agricultural land and valued landscapes for speculative housing and ground-mounted solar energy installations
- Ensure the protection of Hertfordshire's rare chalk streams and their wildlife habitats

Climate emergency: countryside solutions to the climate emergency

As everyone from councils to countries declares a climate emergency, the impact of climate change is already clear in our daily lives and CPRE Hertfordshire supports nature-based solutions. The countryside can help tackle climate breakdown, bringing benefits to people and wildlife.

We call on candidates to commit to:

- Develop and implement strong local authority policies for climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Promote renewable energy solutions on buildings, not on agricultural land – agricultural land should remain in food production
- Oppose the expansion of airports which cause increased carbon emissions and air and noise pollution over much of Hertfordshire, and destroy residents' enjoyment of the countryside

Public transport: a comprehensive bus network for all Hertfordshire communities

Reliable bus services are essential for levelling up access to jobs, education and services, tackling loneliness and inequality, reducing car traffic, air pollution and carbon emissions.

For communities to thrive and tackle the climate emergency, we need a comprehensive bus network of regularly scheduled services where possible and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) or 'dial up' services in more rural areas.

We call on candidates to commit to:

- Make permanent the new HertsLynx dial up service in North and East Herts and implement similar DRT provision in all rural areas of the county, to ensure that all rural communities have access to public transport at times when they need it
- Ensure that DRT fares are and remain affordable, and subsidised where appropriate
- Urge government to redirect funding from environmentally damaging road schemes to fund reliable and affordable public transport
- Prioritise transport infrastructure investment on sustainable travel, including footpaths, cycleways and bus lanes, and make sustainable transport provision an essential requirement for the approval of new housing developments.

Litter and waste: better fly tipping control and litter clearance

Increasingly, Councils are not maintaining litter clearance or controlling fly-tipping due to lack of resources; this is leading to the unsightly and dangerous build-up of waste on streets, lanes and in the countryside.

A Deposit Return Scheme, promised by government and long-proven to be effective in other countries, would reduce waste in our countryside and elsewhere.

We call on candidates to commit to:

- Prioritise the collection and removal of litter and waste on streets, lanes and in the countryside
- Urge government to speed up the introduction of an "all-in" Deposit Return Scheme.

We believe in countryside and green spaces that are accessible to all, rich in nature and play a crucial role in responding to the climate emergency. CPRE Hertfordshire campaigns for countryside that enriches our lives, promotes our well-being and protects and celebrates the benefits that it brings to all.