

REVISED 24.06.2020



The countryside charity
Surrey

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023

Purpose:

We are the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Our aim is to protect, promote and enhance the countryside and natural environment of Surrey.

Mission:

We work with local communities and their elected representatives to find positive and lasting ways to enable our countryside and nature to thrive - today and for generations to come.

Vision:

Our goal is for a beautiful and vibrant countryside that sustains our wildlife, contributes to public health and wellbeing, and enriches all our lives.

Our heritage

We are an independent charity but are also part of a nationwide network, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). The national charity was formed in 1926 as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England. In 2026 the whole CPRE network will be celebrating 100 years of work to protect the English countryside.

In the run-up to the centenary there will be many activities throughout England to mark this milestone anniversary and to celebrate CPRE's campaigns and achievements; we therefore have a unique opportunity to raise our profile locally here in Surrey, to recruit new members and volunteers, to build our resources, extend our reach and expand our organisation.

We in CPRE Surrey are immensely proud of the National charity's past and we continue to be inspired by the principles and passions that motivated the charity's founders 100 years ago. We particularly remember that CPRE was a pioneer of the Green Belt concept that has been absolutely vital in preserving our countryside and open spaces here in Surrey, where three quarters of the county is covered by the London Metropolitan Green Belt.

Our strategic goals 2020-23

The following strategic aims will direct our work for the next 3 years. We will:

- **Champion our Green Belt and countryside**
- **Promote sustainable land use**
- **Tackle the climate and ecological emergency**
- **Build CPRE's capacity and mobilise volunteers**

Champion our Green Belt and countryside

We will promote the value and benefits of Surrey's countryside so that more people can experience, understand and enjoy this precious resource. This will help us to create a stronger voice to protect and enhance our cherished countryside and especially our Green Belt, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value.

CPRE Surrey wants more people to access and connect with Surrey's countryside. We will champion the importance of accessible green spaces for local people, and for visitors, and will work with councils and communities to ensure that new housing and infrastructure development is planned in such a way as to protect and enhance Surrey's green spaces. In particular, we will highlight the vital importance of fresh air and green spaces for people's mental health and physical wellbeing, and the crucial role of the countryside in agriculture and food production.

CPRE Surrey wants to see Surrey's landscapes and green spaces better protected, so that more people can benefit from access to the countryside near to them. We want to see more efficient use of land, and for more land to be dedicated to green space and nature. And we want to see local councils come forward with plans that deliver the right development in the right places. We will work in partnership with local community groups and parish councils, and with 'umbrella groups' such as the London Green Belt Council, to make the case for the protection of green spaces.

Promote sustainable land use

CPRE Surrey will make the case for a more balanced, environmentally sustainable use of land in our small county, as this is our most precious natural resource. We will campaign vigorously to protect Surrey's Green Belt, and countryside beyond the Green Belt, from all inappropriate development, and will seek to ensure that all land serving Green Belt purposes is retained within the London Metropolitan Green Belt and not sacrificed for development. Once these open spaces are lost, they are gone forever.

We will therefore campaign for a 'brownfield-first' policy in all Surrey districts, encouraging previously developed sites to be regenerated rather than sacrificing greenfield land. To do so, we will help local communities identify suitable

development sites, that are not of high biodiversity value, in the urban areas. We will also advocate the adoption of high-quality design standards for all new developments in Surrey, both in rural and urban areas, to improve the environmental sustainability of the county.

CPRE Surrey will engage with farmers and rural businesses to promote local agriculture and food production, because a thriving farming community is vital to the long-term sustainability of our countryside and its biodiversity. We will campaign alongside our partners to ensure that Surrey has clean air and water, tranquillity, and true darkness at night – with significant reductions in harm from pollution, noise and light disturbance. We will encourage local councils to provide better facilities for walkers, cyclists and riders, and to promote better public transport services. We will help communities retain the rural character of Surrey's villages and will campaign for quiet lanes.

We will actively promote nature conservation, wildlife protection and biodiversity. We will work with our partners to protect Surrey's countryside and quality of life from the impact of traffic congestion on our roads, and from the continuing threat of new runways at Heathrow and Gatwick airports, and increases in flights over our county. We will engage with local communities to protect woodland and open spaces in Surrey from environmentally harmful schemes for hydrocarbon exploration and extraction.

CPRE Surrey will make the case for a more balanced approach by local councils to communities' social, economic and environmental needs, recognising that degrading the county's natural environment through over-development and loss of green space will ultimately harm our economy by damaging Surrey's quality of life. We will challenge inappropriate housebuilding targets and the methodologies that give rise to them.

Tackle the climate and ecological emergency

We recognise the scale and seriousness of the threat to Surrey's countryside from the climate and ecological emergency. Wildlife habitats are under threat and many of our native species are facing extinction. The climate emergency is degrading the natural environment, resulting in the loss of soil fertility and biodiversity. CPRE is concerned about the fragility of vital eco-systems and believes that protection of Surrey's countryside requires a firm commitment to tackling climate change.

We will work collaboratively with our partners through the Surrey Climate Commission and the South East Climate Alliance to address the impact of the climate and ecological emergency on the countryside of Surrey, and to explore the role that our local countryside and green spaces can play in mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change. This will be an increasingly important part of CPRE's work in the next three years.

Build CPRE Surrey's capacity and mobilise volunteers

CPRE Surrey will engage with communities across the county to involve more people in improving their local environment through volunteering and local action. We will collaborate with a variety of local and regional partners and communities through joint initiatives on neighbourhood planning and placemaking to achieve better results for the environment and countryside.

We will seek to create new opportunities for people to enjoy, promote, enhance and protect their countryside, offering more ways for people to engage directly with CPRE Surrey's work and campaigns, raising awareness of the value of the countryside to us all. We will work in partnerships that focus on areas where Surrey's countryside is most at risk, helping local communities to ensure they have a greater say in the future of their environment.

In order to do this, we need first to build CPRE Surrey's own skillsets and capacity. At the heart of our strategy are our people – our supporters, volunteers, donors, staff, and partners. We will expand our charity's volunteer base and improve the training and mentoring of our volunteers. We will offer new ways for volunteers to get involved and make a difference. To attract new members, donors and regular givers, we will make more people across the county aware of us and increase their understanding of the Surrey countryside and its relevance to everyone's lives.

We will ensure that we communicate in the best ways possible with those who share our vision, using new and creative ways of reaching out to the widest possible audience throughout Surrey. We aim to achieve year-on-year growth in CPRE Surrey's membership and supporter base and to generate new income through active fundraising campaigns, so that we can invest further in delivering our mission and vision.

Andy Smith, 24 June 2020