



## **CPRE Leicestershire Annual Report and Financial Review December 2022 to November 2023**

### **Introduction**

The main activities of CPRE Leicestershire are to promote and encourage the improvement and protection of the Leicestershire countryside for the benefit of everyone. These activities are achieved in part by monitoring and commenting on planning applications, many of which are brought to our attention by CPRE members, Parish Councils and the public. The Branch also advises on Neighbourhood Plans and responds to local and national Consultations.

### **Structure and Governance**

CPRE Leicestershire is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), which is a financially independent charity related to the National CPRE charity, and is managed and run, on a voluntary basis, by a Committee of Trustees. Serving on a continuous basis for a maximum of six years, they are selected by the Committee subject to confirmation of their positions annually at the AGM.

### **Trustees**

It will be all change for the Branch this year. The Branch Chair, Tony Stott, and the Branch Treasurer, Tony Simpson, have reached the end of their 6-year tenure of being a Trustee.

Tony Stott became active in the Branch in 2003, having been a member of CPRE since 1978. He now completes a second term as Chair and as a Trustee and feels it is time to “hand over the reins” of the role of Chair. He wishes to take a back seat on his volunteering involvement with the Branch and spend more time with his family and enjoying more holidays bird watching. He has been a pivotal presence for the Branch as he has a wealth of knowledge and has kept the Branch going over the years. He will be greatly missed in his role as Chair but will remain as a volunteer for the Branch and will oversee the formal launch of the Branch Vision.

In accordance with the requirements of the Branch Constitution, Tony Simpson, having served the maximum allowable term of 6 years as Trustee and Honorary Treasurer, is standing down from both roles. Tony joined the Branch in October 2015, became Charnwood District Treasurer in December of that year, and joined the Branch Committee as Trustee and Branch Treasurer in February 2017. Tony has provided an invaluable service to the Branch.

In May 2023 Helena Edwards decided to step down from her role as Trustee, and apart from being a Trustee she was also heavily involved with Charnwood District Group. It was noted from the Charnwood District Group Minute Book that Helena had been involved with that group as far back as 1997, so her total involvement with CPRE Leicestershire extended to at least 26 years. Helena was a keen member of the Branch, and her input and knowledge are really missed.

In August 2023 Caroline Pick, who was a previous Trustee, stepped down from her role as the Vision Project Manager. Caroline has been instrumental in getting the Vision “off the ground” and the Branch wishes her well in the future as she will now have more time to enjoy her garden and the Leicestershire countryside.

### **Following these changes, the Trustees are:**

- John Marriott
- Rita Bullivant
- Rahoul Naik
- Martin Cooper (appointed March 2023).



In March 2023, the Branch welcomed Martin Cooper as the new Volunteer Coordinator Trustee. He brings expertise to support the growth and development of CPRE Leicestershire through his knowledge of volunteering. Jill Prior continues in her role as Committee Administrator.

The Branch continues to use the services of Gerald Kells, a consultant, whose knowledge and expertise is a huge bonus to the Branch when responding to consultations.

### Branch Activities 2023

The Branch is as busy as ever and continues with the use of virtual Zoom meetings for all Branch meetings and similar activities.

Below is a brief overview of the main Branch activities since the last AGM.

<b>Branch 2022/23 AGM</b>	In January a virtual Branch AGM was held with 16 members attending.
<b>Hedgerow Project</b>	In January, the Branch learnt about the art of hedge laying at Mill Field Forest Garden in Thurmaston. This is one of the projects supported by CPRE's Hedgerows Heroes scheme, which the Branch supported.
<b>Charnwood Local Plan Examination</b>	<p>In February, hearings for the Local Plan Examination were resumed and the Branch submitted further evidence and attended hearings on housing and transport. The main areas of concern were related to the distribution of Leicester's unmet housing needs, the plan's vision, objectives and development strategy, Climate Change and the Natural Environment, housing numbers, needs and land supply as well as transport and infrastructure.</p> <p>In June it was noted that the Local Plan had not been approved as the Inspectors had requested some changes due to not being satisfied with the viability or the transport deliverables with further hearings expected.</p>
<b>Leicester Local Plan</b>	<p>At the end of February, the Branch submitted its response to the Leicester Local Plan consultation. The Branch concentrated on a limited but key set of what it saw as central issues. These revolved around the housing numbers as well as the lack of a coherent and joined up strategic approach to Climate Change across the Plan and its failure to recognise Climate Change as a key strategic priority. The Branch called for a Strategic Climate Change Policy to provide a central focus to this issue. Related to this was a failure to demonstrate the need for an effective and extensive sustainable transport network and a failure to provide a deliverable transport strategy in which the need to travel by car is reduced. There was a lack of links around the location of developments, planning, transport and Climate Change, especially carbon emissions which were a major concern.</p> <p>Although it is vague, the Plan refers to the Council's commitment to Leicester being net zero by 2030. It was unclear whether this was a hope or strategic level target, but in either case it was there with no appreciation of the scale of what needs to be done. There was no indication within the Plan on how much Leicester needed to do to reduce its annual per capita emissions per annum to achieve this 'monumental challenge' which needs to be achieved in less than 8 years.</p> <p>In May and August the Branch attended a virtual meeting with the Planning Policy Team at Leicester City Council to discuss the significant objections that the Branch had raised.</p>



<p><b>Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI)</b></p>	<p>On the 12 June 2023 CPRE Leicestershire formally registered its interest in (and opposition to) this proposal made by Tritax. This was followed in October, prior to hearings late in that month, with the Branch submitting detailed objections and evidence regarding our concerns about Transport and Access, Environmental and Amenity Impacts and Need in conjunction with those of Sapcote Parish Council.</p> <p>The Branch has concerns about the potential increase in traffic and raised objections to the proposal, including that the need had not been properly established; the extent to which the rail network will be underutilised; direct and indirect traffic implications on local village roads as well as the M69 and M1; inability to demonstrate that the site would have good sustainable transport access; impact on walking and cycling provision; impact on landscape and biodiversity not being adequately addressed; loss of countryside; landscape impacts; loss of footpaths; access to open countryside; and increase in light and noise pollution.</p>
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During the past year, the Branch has also been involved with other issues, including:-

- Logistics at Watermead Business Park.
- Mountsorrel quarry expansion.
- Charnwood Forest anaerobic digester.
- Thrussington’s habitat loss.
- Solar Farm applications in Muston, Shepshed and Belvoir Castle.
- Cossington concerns on the Winston Churchill oak tree.

In addition, we have been increasing our social media presence, led by Rahoul Naik, one of our Trustees.

**National CPRE**

National CPRE have many campaigns underway including:-

- Dark Skies and Star Count
- State of the Green Belt 2023: A vision for the 21st century
- Hedge life Help Out project (in collaboration with The Tree Council) (May 2023)

Information on these campaigns can be found on the national website [www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk).

Various Trustees have attended a range of national/regional meetings including sessions of the Planning Campaign Group, Branch Chairs drop in chats with National CPRE Chair, the new CPRE Assembly and various other webinars and training events.

**What 2024 and beyond will bring.....**

Our key focus for 2024 will be launching the Vision in Spring 2024 to all members, interested parties, MP’s, Councillors and many more. Further information will be provided in 2024.

The Branch is actively looking for more Trustees and volunteers. If you feel you could offer some of your time, more information can be found on our website [www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk](http://www.cpreleicestershire.org.uk).

Besides recruiting a new Chair, Trustees are especially needed to focus on the following areas :

- Planning.
- Fund Raising.

Finally, the Trustees of CPRE Leicestershire would like to wish all members a Happy Christmas and a prosperous 2024.



## Financial Review: year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

The Branch's full Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, including a detailed analysis of income and expenditure, are disclosed in a separate report, which (subject to the approval of the members) will be filed with the Charity Commission. The main points to note are as follows:

- The Charity recorded a surplus of £5,811 on its regular activities for the year, compared with a deficit of £834 in y/e 31/3/22. At the beginning of the financial year a deficit of £3,967 was forecast – hence the result was £9,778 better than anticipated. The main reasons for this variance are as follows:
  - No donations were forecast but £12,700 were actually received, including a single legacy of £12,500.
  - On the other hand, the Branch's share of national income was only £5,150 compared to a forecast of £6,100 - £950 lower than expected.
  - Most categories of expenditure showed a lower actual total than had been forecast, including Marketing & Communications (£1,000 forecast, only £54 actually spent) and Subscriptions (£190 spent against a forecast of £790).
  - Conversely, two items of expenditure were much higher than forecast – Consultancy (£8,256 spent against a forecast of £5,000) and Administration (forecast to be £1,500 but actually £2,616).
- In addition to its regular activities, the Charity also incurred costs of £1,182 in the year on the Leicestershire Vision. As all income relating to the Vision had been recognised in the previous financial year, this gave additional expenditure for the Charity as a whole of that amount, resulting in an overall result for the period of net income of £4,629, as can be seen in the Accounts. The remaining £8,079 to be spent on the Vision is expected to take place in financial year 23/24.
- The assets of the Charity at 31/3/23 amounted to £50,977, compared with £46,348 at the end of the previous year. This total comprised bank balances as follows:

	<b>As at 31/3/23</b>	<b>As at 31/3/22</b>
Business account	18,875	4,093
Savings account	32,102	42,031
Charnwood District account	-	224
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	<b>50,977</b>	<b>46,348</b>
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- The Charity had no amounts either receivable or payable at 31/3/23.