

CPRE Leicestershire
Annual Report 2024/25

1. Introduction

The purpose of CPRE Leicestershire is to promote, protect and enhance the Leicestershire countryside for the benefit of today's community and future generations.

This purpose has historically been achieved by monitoring, commenting and supporting (or objecting, as appropriate) to local plans, policies and planning applications. The branch also advises on Neighbourhood Plans and responds to local and national consultations. These matters are often brought to the branch's attention by CPRE members, councils, the media and local communities.

Moving forward, these foundations will be further developed in order to become more impactful, through active engagement and collaboration with the community, with policymakers and with businesses and other like-minded organisations.

2. 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

It is managed and run on a voluntary basis, by a committee of trustees, who serve 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 Annual General Meeting (AGM).

3. Trustees

During the year, Paul O'Donnell, Rowena Reid and Rahoul Naik stood down as trustees due to their need to focus on other life commitments. The branch thanks them for their input and wishes them well for their future success.

Rahoul played a significant role in developing the branch vision over the years and he has indicated an interest in staying involved in its implementation. His continued support will be greatly appreciated.

In order to focus on a new business opportunity, Rita Bullivant has taken a 12-month leave of absence and remains a trustee of the branch. The board looks forward to her return, in due course.

The board was delighted to welcome back Tony Simpson as Honorary Treasurer. Tony brings extensive experience in both the branch and financial matters and his return will help to secure strong financial foundations for the future work of the branch.

The board is also thrilled to welcome Anne Thomas Hughes to the branch as a new trustee. Anne brings a huge depth and breadth of skills and experience in business leadership. She has already made an impact with the design of the branch strategy and the board is looking forward to her continued contribution.

John Marriott continues to provide his extraordinary depth of understanding in development planning and the board would like to thank him for his continued extensive work and looks forward to helping him increase the capacity in the planning team.

Adrian Jarvis has continued his early work with the trustees to develop the branch's direction and looks forward to continuing to work with them when developing the branch in the coming years.

Sarah Cunningham continues as our Branch Administrator and she has established some strong foundations for keeping the branch organised. She will be further supporting the branch as it develops its capacity and capabilities in future.

Following these changes, the trustees at March 2025 were as follows:

- Adrian Jarvis, Chair (appointed July 2024)
- Tony Simpson, Honorary Treasurer (re-appointed December 2024)
- Rita Bullivant
- John Marriott
- Anne Thomas Hughes (appointed December 2024)

4. Branch Activities

The risks and issues facing the countryside today and in future are immense.

The volume, scale and pace of local developments is increasing, yet the capacity and capabilities of the branch to promote sustainable development are considered to fall well short of what is needed in future.

Due to this mismatch, it became a clear imperative to structure the branch's work around targeted campaigns, within a clear, concise and compelling organisational strategy, designed to increase the impact of the branch's work.

The review of the branch and the high-level design of its future are complete and we are now focusing on implementing the changes, starting in 2025/26.

The annual priorities are as follows:

- a. 2024/25 (DIRECTION)
 - i. Pause & reflect
 - ii. Directional pivot
 - iii. Stakeholder focus
- b. 2025/26 (FOUNDATIONS)
 - i. Integrated campaigns
 - ii. Build the team
 - iii. Centenary plans
- c. 2026/27 (TURNAROUND)
 - i. Widespread buy-in
 - ii. Joined-up thinking
 - iii. Early impacts
- d. 2027/28 (ACCELERATE)
 - i. High profile
 - ii. Welcomed by our presence
 - iii. Case studies
- e. 2028/29 (GROWTH)
 - i. Front-and-centre
 - ii. Role model
 - iii. Rinse & repeat
- f. 2029/30 (TRANSFORMED)
 - i. Mission accomplished
 - ii. 2050 trajectory
 - iii. New blood

5. 2024/25 – Our DIRECTION

- a. **Pause and reflect** – Take stock of the current situation (2024), the need to prepare for the future and the sense of urgency

A diagnostic exercise was undertaken by our new Chair following his appointment in July 2024.

The conclusion of this analysis identified a need to build on the foundations (e.g. the Vision Document), set a new direction and make changes to prepare the branch for an increasing future workload.

The long-term organisational strategy will be delivered in our 6-year transformation programme (2024/25 to 2029/30), guided by clear annual priorities.

b. **Strategic Pivot** – Refresh the branch and prepare for the future

The direction of the branch has been pivoted by the board of trustees and it is summarised in the following ‘strategic architecture’:

- i. **Our purpose:** Promote, protect and enhance the countryside for today’s community and future generations.
 - ii. **Our mission:** Responsible stewardship with increased prosperity.
 - iii. **Our vision:** The vision document was approved by the board of trustees and it will be used as a foundation to focus and prioritise the branch’s work. It will be published on the website following the final design work which is nearing completion.
 - iv. **Our strategy:** Following approval of the vision, a branch strategy has been developed which will be used to guide the annual workplan, starting with integrating the campaigns, building the team and preparing for the 2026 centenary.
 - v. **Our campaigns:** We have established three integrated campaigns around the following:
 - Community – Promoting the countryside with the people of Leicestershire.
 - Councils – Protecting the countryside by working with policymakers at all levels.
 - Commerce – Enhancing the countryside with local businesses and like-minded organisations.
- c. **Stakeholder focus:** There are nearly 1.1 million people living and working in the city and county. It is their interests (and those of future generations) and broader public opinion that will guide everything we do across all three campaigns.

Our future work will target the best outcomes from our stakeholders’ stated perspectives. This is with a view to increasing the profile and impact of the branch’s work in the coming years.

In broad terms, everyone should be able to identify themselves in one or more of the following groups:

- i. Visitors living their lives, enjoying the countryside.
- ii. People in education, developing skills for the countryside.
- iii. Policymakers leading society, including the countryside.
- iv. Environmental organisations safeguarding our environment in the countryside.
- v. Businesses earning a living, affecting the countryside.

6. 2025/26 – Our FOUNDATIONS

a. Integrated campaigns – Shape the debate and make a difference

In April 2025, we started to transition away from setting direction for the branch and we moved into implementation mode, via the three integrated campaigns.

These campaigns are intended to provide a home for each part of the branch's purpose, i.e.

- i. The COMMUNITY campaign is focused on PROMOTING the countryside to everyone. Its goals are to encourage people:
 - To improve their physical and mental health.
 - To engage in responsible stewardship of their local environment.
 - To actively participate in countryside projects.
- ii. The COUNCILS campaign is focused on PROTECTING the countryside and encouraging sustainable development via the evolving planning system. Its goals are:
 - To influence national, regional and local policymakers.
 - To support local communities.
 - To positively advocate for good decisions.
- iii. The COMMERCE campaign is focused on ENHANCING the countryside alongside local businesses and like-minded organisations. Its goals are:
 - To support businesses with their environmental policies.
 - To encourage investor interest in environmental responsibility.
 - To collaborate with like-minded charities.

b. Build the team – more members, volunteers, trustees and executives

The profile of the branch in the public consciousness is too low. While some people are familiar with the rich history of CPRE and its great achievements, it is unfortunate that some people have never heard of it.

That needs to change and we have nearly 1.1 million local people who have a shared interest in what we do. That interest might be from benefiting from the branch's work or becoming directly involved in what we aspire to achieve.

The demographic profile of membership (locally and nationally) is skewed massively towards the older generation. We need to do much more to attract the interest of younger people who will inherit the countryside in future decades. We need more of the following:

- Members.

- Volunteers to be active in all three campaigns and building the branch.
- Trustees to guide the work, i.e. advice, guidance, challenge and support.
- Executives to run the branch on a day-to-day basis.

In addition to membership subscriptions, the funding of the branch benefited from a generous legacy (donated in early 2025) and this will enable us to invest in our future.

The first appointment will be a Branch Development Manager during 2025. That person will be the lead executive in preparing the branch for the future.

Some early stakeholder engagement activities in 2025 have so far included the following organisations. We will continue to work these people with a view to creating mutually beneficial support, collaborations and partnerships.

- **COMMUNITY** (the local people): Parkrun, British Orienteering, Ramblers, Bradgate Park, The Camden Society.
- **COUNCILS** (the policymakers): MPs, Melton Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council, Parish Councils (Sapcote, Long Watton & Diseworth, Freeby, Thurcaston & Cropston), National Energy System Operator.
- **COMMERCE** (the businesses, charities and delivery groups): Harborough Woodland, Sport in Desford, Lloyds Bank & Sainsbury's (via The Woodland Trust), Leicestershire County Cricket Club, Charnwood Forest Geopark, The National Forest, Everards, University of Leicester.

It is still early days, but the responses so far to our reinvigorated campaigns have been interest, curiosity and support.

c. Centenary plans – 100 years since 1926 and 100 years to 2126

CPRE was established in 1926 and the Leicestershire branch was established in 1936. There will be national centenary celebrations throughout 2026 and we will also prepare for our 90th branch birthday too.

The national office has developed a plan for a series of activities throughout 2026, including celebrating 100 years of history (with our patron, the King taking a high-profile role), setting our aspirations for the next 100 years and using this snapshot as a catalyst for growth.

The previous Chair, Tony Stott, will be contributing his substantial insight of CPRE's history into the Leicestershire plans to mark the 100th/90th birthdays.

During 2026, we will also take stock of progress, check the suitability and effectiveness of the new strategy and adjust it, as necessary, to prepare for 2027 and beyond.

Any members who would like to play an active role in any aspect of any of the campaigns are encouraged to contact the trustees or Branch Administrator at the following email address:

info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk

Your countryside needs you!

7. National CPRE

During 2024, national CPRE focused on the following campaigns:

- a. Rooftop solar power – prioritising rooftop solar on new buildings.
- b. Government – building relationships with the new government and advocating cross-party recognition of the value of the countryside.
- c. National Planning Policy Framework – shape the debate around rooftop solar, affordable and social rent homes, brownfield priority build, protecting our green spaces and countryside.
- d. Planning system – planning democracy and balancing economic growth with sustainable growth.
- e. Energy transition – clean energy infrastructure while protecting nature.
- f. Hedgerow Heroes – continue the national project to plant and restore hedgerows to make a local impact.
- g. Affordable homes – calling for government to diversify the housing industry with more emphasis on affordable homes in sustainable places.
- h. Our countryside next door – commitment to protecting the Green Belt.
- i. Making a local impact – introducing ‘Countryside Day’ to promote local countryside projects.

More information can be found on the national CPRE website, here:

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/2024-cpres-impact/>

Financial Review: year ending 31st March 2025

The Branch’s full Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025, including a detailed analysis of income, expenditure, debtors and creditors, 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’s total income for the year being greater than £250,000, the Accounts have been prepared using the accruals basis rather than the receipts and payments basis as in previous

years, as required by financial regulations. The most obvious difference is the inclusion of receivables and payables in the year-end balance sheet along with bank balances.

- The Charity recorded a surplus of £280,580 on its regular activities for the year, compared with a surplus of £21,491 in y/e 31/3/24. The increase was entirely due to legacies received - the single donation of £280,159 received in 24/25 (referred to in the 2025/26 section of the Annual Report above) compared to the two legacies received in 23/24 with total £25,530.
- In addition to its regular activities, the Charity also incurred costs of £369 in the year on the Leicestershire Vision. As all income relating to the Vision had been recognised in the year to 31/3/21, this gave additional expenditure for the Charity as a whole of that amount, resulting in an overall result for the year of net income of £280,211, as can be seen in the Accounts. The remaining £7,254 to be spent on the Vision is expected to take place in financial year 25/26.
- The net assets of the Charity at 31/3/25 amounted to £358,199, compared with £77,988 at the end of the previous year. These balances comprised the following:

		As at 31/3/25	As at 31/3/24
Bank accounts:	Business account	314,549	35,544
	Savings account	42,839	42,400
Receivables		1,756	900
Payables		(945)	(856)
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		358,199	77,988
		<hr/>	<hr/>