



The countryside charity
Leicestershire

What's new!

Newsletter | November 2025



Leicestershire Countryside News

Over the last 6 months we've been busy building a strategy for growth to increase our charitable impact, including recruiting a new Branch Development Manager, working with communities, building partnerships and creating our marketing plan.

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Chair's Round-up

In my first year since I became Chair of the branch, my initial focus was to understand the status of what the branch was doing and then decide how it should evolve to meet today's challenges and those of the future. This required us to pivot to a new direction because of the scale and complexity of the issues faced by our countryside, our community, policymakers and businesses.

Now halfway through year two of my tenure, we have defined a clearer, more concise and more compelling direction. We now have a succinct purpose, mission, strategy and three integrated campaigns, all designed to make real progress towards the vision which was set out by the branch in recent years.

All of this information will shortly be posted onto the branch website and the trustees and I would welcome feedback from all members on the direction we have set and what needs to be done at a practical level to bring it all to life. The rest of the team and I are now determined to do the right thing, find the best ways of working and – crucially – make it happen in the real world. We would be delighted if any and all members would like to get involved. Our countryside needs us all to play our part.

“Never has protecting the natural world been more crucial, more urgent and more local so I draw your attention to our work with NESO within this newsletter. We have the opportunity to make our children proud of our decisions and now is the time to act.”



AGM Invite: 04 Dec 2025

The next AGM will be held on 04 December. Please join us as a valued member, where you'll be able to meet new team members and learn more about our next steps.

Members will very shortly receive an invitation for the 2024/25 AGM and how to access relevant information beforehand. The trustees encourage all members to join and participate in the meeting and look forward to discussing progress and plans for the branch with you. We do hope you are able to join us at this important meeting.

If you are unable to attend, please ensure your voice is heard by writing to one of the trustees via the email below to invite them to represent your interest & your proxy vote.

Email info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk either: (a) to confirm your attendance on the videoconference, or (b) to nominate the Branch Chair or another trustee to have your proxy vote.

There is a Charity Commission requirement to have a minimum number of people present (in person or via proxy vote), so it is important for the future of the branch to ensure members' interests are taken on board and your attendance or proxy vote will be greatly appreciated.

The Growing Team Promoting, Protecting & Enhancing Leicestershire's Countryside

PJ SURANI, BRANCH DEVELOPMENT

NEWLY APPOINTED



As the new Branch Development Manager, PJ is dedicated to building strategic partnerships that lay a strong foundation for CPRE Leicestershire's exciting growth. With a deep appreciation for the region's diverse landscapes, she is passionate about the charity's mission to champion sustainable planning and protect our rural spaces for future generations.

Living in Charnwood, PJ considers it a privilege to have some of the county's best walks right on her doorstep—trails she frequently explores with his miniature dachshund. An avid outdoor enthusiast, she also enjoys hiking, paddleboarding, and camping across the region. When she isn't working to advocate for the countryside, PJ stays active in her local community through volunteering, tending to her garden, tackling DIY projects, or relaxing with a good book.

ANNE THOMAS HUGHES, STRATEGY & GROWTH



Anne has extensive experience over 27 years in business start-ups, growth, marketing, tech, HR and operations.

A strong believer in community action, Anne is inspired by the large population across Leicestershire that clearly appreciate the Countryside and feels confident that this is a positive engagement route for CPRE Leicestershire.

She is passionate about conservation and encourages nature and wild spaces within her own environments, whilst continuing to learn and share knowledge.

JOIN OUR TEAM

Do you have a passion for promoting, protecting and enhancing the countryside?

We are keen to expand our board of trustees & volunteers with members of the community who want to make a difference.

Enthusiasm and having the time to participate in leading the work are the main criteria.

We'd specifically love to hear from people with skills & knowledge in planning (solar power, roads, buildings), marketing, volunteer management & community engagement

JOHN MARRIOTT, PLANNING EXPERT



John enjoys the countryside and he joined CPRE in 2019 after reading about proposals for an A46 Expressway around Leicester. He is concerned that national and local transport and planning policies are heading in the wrong direction to tackle congestion and Climate Change. Current plans support development, mainly on

greenfield land in areas that rely on car use. A key driver for this approach is land banking and maximising profit from land value increases. He has a long-standing interest in transport and how people travel and a career as a Chartered Engineer morphed into planning. He considers that far too many decisions are not supported by evidence or critical analysis. One such project is HS2 and he welcomes the decision to abandon Phase 2 which has continued to blight the county.

TONY SIMPSON, HONORARY TREASURER



Tony joined CPRE in 2017 and became Honorary Treasurer soon afterwards. He is a qualified Chartered Accountant and has worked within Finance for the NHS since 2005, but his passion is the preservation of the countryside of his beloved Leicestershire. He is a keen cyclist, and his travels have taken

him all over the county, making it clear to him that the natural environment is under threat from development and needs to be protected. Having stood down as Treasurer in 2023 after six years in the role as required by the Branch Constitution, he was re-elected in January 2025 and brings extensive skills, knowledge and experience to the branch.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM, BRANCH ADMINISTRATOR



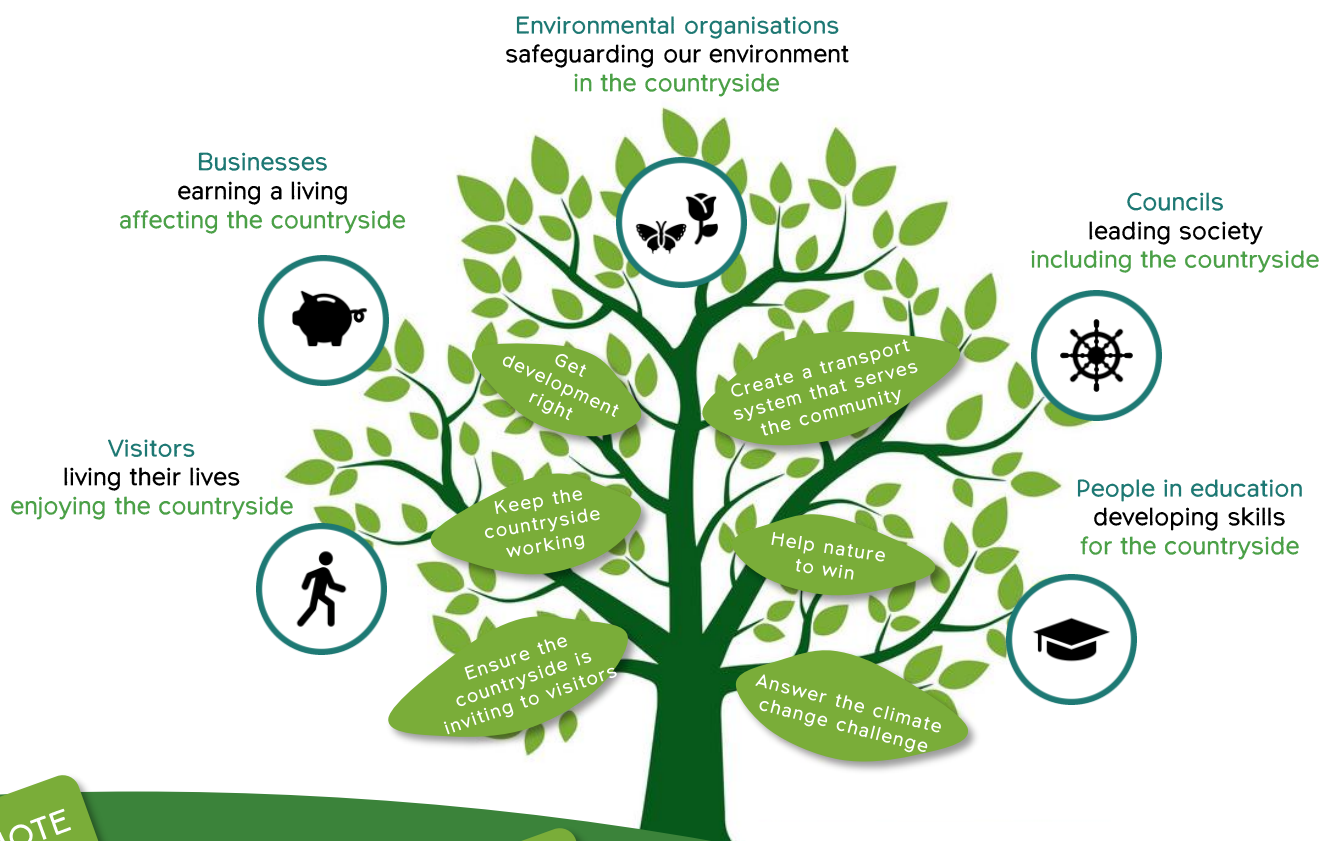
Sarah grew up in the far west of Cornwall then rural Oxfordshire and spent much of her childhood exploring the local countryside. This gave her a lifelong love and respect for nature which continues to this day. Now living in the East Midlands she still gets out in the countryside as much as she can. Sarah has had a varied career,

having worked in the commercial and higher education sectors before moving into the voluntary sector. After more than ten years working for an environmental NGO on direct marketing campaigns and events, followed by a longer-than-expected career break as a stay-at-home mum, she is delighted to be back among like-minded people, working to protect the natural world on our doorstep.

Our Campaigns

Community, Councils and Commerce

Our purpose is to **PROMOTE**, **PROTECT** and **ENHANCE** the countryside in Leicestershire. Our mission will be undertaken around three integrated campaigns: Firstly, engaging with the community of over 1,000,000 people in the city and county to encourage greater involvement in protecting and enhancing the countryside. Secondly, continuing to campaign for positive policy design and decisions by planning authorities. Finally, we will start to engage with local businesses to encourage them to implement their environmental policies in a responsible way. We will also collaborate with like-minded organisations who have a similar vision to ours.



PROMOTE

Community

Our COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN strives to **promote** & increase engagement in the countryside by all sections of society. This will also promote the physical and mental health benefits of getting out and about into the fresh air and the glorious surroundings on our doorstep. We hope this will stimulate wider community involvement in responsible countryside stewardship and encourage people to get involved in projects which will benefit the countryside and their community.

PROTECT

Councils

Our COUNCILS CAMPAIGN is focused on **protecting** the countryside by influencing policy from concept all the way to implementation. Our Planning Committee will be guided by the trustees, with content provided by a pool of experts in planning, land use, roads, buildings, energy, water and telecommunications. They will support local councils & work with policymakers during the analysis stage, respond to formal consultations and then be a positive advocate for good policy design and implementation.

ENHANCE

Commerce

Our COMMERCE CAMPAIGN will start to develop working relationships with other organisations, from businesses in the city and across the county, to like-minded charities, all working together to **enhance** the countryside. In an era when environmental impact is increasingly important to investors, we will work with businesses to help them to implement their policies in a way that promotes responsible stewardship of the natural world and the hosted infrastructure which is essential to society's prosperity.

Protecting the Countryside with NESO



The countryside charity
Leicestershire



Change is coming

The way electricity is produced and moved around the country is changing.

In the future, our homes, businesses and lives will use much more electricity, such as for electric cars, heat pumps for heating homes, factories and offices and for manufacturing.

Increasing demand

In order to find the best way to meet this increasing demand, NESO is carrying out a review of all land in Great Britain. This is to help to identify the locations where more electricity is needed (e.g. cities) and where would be the best places to site the power stations (e.g. solar, wind, gas, nuclear) and the wires, pylons and substations that connect them together into a single, nationwide system that keeps the lights on.

The NESO team has a huge amount of work to do and the people of Leicestershire can help them to help us.

Joined-up Planning

The national plans will consider the social, environmental and economic factors affecting what will go where across Great Britain.

These plans will then be cascaded into an integrated regional view (for Leicestershire, that's the East Midlands) and then local policies will be used to make planning decisions. These decisions will also be influenced by Westminster policies, such as the Land Use Framework, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

Prioritise land use

If our national, regional and local energy infrastructure plans suitably classify and prioritise all land types, we can enjoy the benefits of cleaner energy, as well as protect our precious countryside and agriculture.

Jobs & Prosperity

Power station owners and operators have a tremendous opportunity to embrace innovation in their choice of land and technology. This is a unique opportunity to show responsible stewardship while creating jobs and prosperity in Leicestershire and across the country.

Do Nothing?

If we wait, the decisions will be made elsewhere on our behalf. We can influence the design or we will get what we're given.

Now is the time to collaborate with national policymakers, our regional neighbours and between the local community, MPs, councils and businesses across our city and county.

Protecting the Countryside

What can we do?

The diagram below shows the three opportunities we have. Firstly, to classify all local land by reference to existing data, such as the outputs from the 'Local Nature Recovery Strategy' and the 'Collaborate to Accelerate Net Zero' project.

Then, we can prioritise how land should be used, e.g. rooftops and car park canopies before permanently sacrificing agricultural land.

Finally, taxpayers can help to encourage businesses to do the right thing via financial incentives. If we collaborate responsibly, the benefits are substantial, such as: (1) responsible stewardship of land and infrastructure, (2) the people get safe, reliable, affordable and clean energy, (3) NESO and local policymakers have plans that effectively and efficiently deliver the infrastructure society needs and (4) businesses are able to invest with confidence, due to increased certainty in their plans.



The time is now!!!

The British energy system has experienced many substantial changes in recent decades. If we work together, we can deliver what is needed by the community, by policymakers and by businesses. **We have the opportunity to make our children proud of our decisions and now is the time to act.**

Take Action!!

Recent Largescale Impacts on Leicestershire Countryside

West Leicestershire (Twycross area)

Norton Heath Development
Opposition to 10,000 houses in
beautiful Leicestershire
countryside.

ACT NOW

Mountsorrel Area

The proposed expansion of
Mountsorrel Quarry. See details
of the proposed expansion and
learn how you can act.

ACT NOW

North Leicestershire (Diseworth Area)

Respond to the proposal for the
new settlement of 4,250 new
dwellings along with
infrastructure.

ACT NOW

Read the latest CPRE Guide:
**How to Respond to
Planning Applications**

READ NOW



2026 is a BIG year for CPRE Leicestershire

2026 marks the centenary of CPRE and the 90th birthday of the Leicestershire branch.

We are planning a series of events and publications to mark this historic celebration, both in Leicestershire and across the country.

This is expected to include exhibitions, social media campaigns, interviews with influential people and discussions are underway with Buckingham Palace officials to see how our Patron, King Charles III would like to join in the celebrations.

The whole year will bring tremendous opportunities to become more impactful in everything we do and to set ourselves up for success throughout our second century, starting in 2027.



Get ready, get your wellies on for 2 miles of hedgerow

We're kickstarting our celebration in early 2026 with hedgerow planting. Our mission is to add 2 miles of new native hedgerow across Leicestershire.

That's about 20,000 trees!!

YOU are invited.
Click to join us!

Working with Communities

While many people can easily visit some lovely countryside locations or even be fortunate enough to live or work there, for some, it isn't as straightforward.

Our Chair is also a Non-Executive Director of another charity for people with severe learning disabilities (The Camden Society, part of Thera Trust) and he worked with the leaders of that charity, the people supported, their families and their support workers to have a very enjoyable trip to Bradgate Park.

The people supported and their families expressed their appreciation for making a day in the countryside a reality and helping with everyone's mental and physical health.

A great example of why no one should be left behind and everyone should be able to experience and cherish our precious countryside.

Are you connected to a local charity that could benefit from a partnership with CPRE Leicestershire? Contact Us, we'd love to support you too!

[CONTACT US](#)



We're recruiting for a Planning Expert

The Planning Officer will be passionate about protecting the countryside to support CPRE Leicestershire's work across the full range of land use planning issues, providing input to the consultation processes on the preparation of Local Plans and will comment on major development proposals.

They will also assist in developing and executing campaigns, building relationships with local communities and providing key information so that they can become self-sufficient via online webinars and in-person events.

This is a part-times, self-employed role that would suit those with a strong background in Planning, already acting as consultant or wanting to work as a contractor in this field.

Please pass this information on if you know someone who would be suitable or, if this sounds like you, **[contact us to find out more](#)**



Email: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk

Web: cpreleicestershire.org.uk

Your countryside needs YOU!

Everything the branch does is focused on promoting, protecting and enhancing the countryside.

We can all make a difference

Regardless of what skills, knowledge or experience you have, the countryside will benefit if you get involved in volunteering. There are over a million people living and working in the city and county. If just a small proportion of society became active in looking after the natural world, we could make an enormous difference!

Trustees

The current trustees would welcome more people to join them. The branch needs leaders in the following:

- ✦ Planning Committee Lead
- ✦ People – recruitment, volunteer management
- ✦ Fundraising - income generation
- ✦ Legal Advisor
- ✦ Marketing – raise the profile of the branch
- ✦ Projects – direct-impact countryside work

Volunteers

ANYONE with a passion for the natural world can play a meaningful role in what we do! Here are just some of the opportunities available:

- ✦ Planning professionals – solar, wind, roads, housing, development planning, land use, etc.
- ✦ Project volunteers:
 - ✦ Tree & Hedgerow planters
 - ✦ Nature restorers
 - ✦ Project leaders
- ✦ Marketing volunteers

...and more!

Promote: Marketing & Support teams will help raise our profile, inspire the community and promote the Countryside

Protect: The Planning team will help deliver our support and guidance services to members and partners to help protect the Countryside

Enhance: The Project team will restore hedgerows and plant trees. They will also build further wildlife habitats, such as ponds and wildflowers.

Get in touch: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk



YOU are invited!
Please join us!

Email: info@cpreleicestershire.org.uk