



The countryside charity
West Yorkshire

Annual Review

2019



Chair's Report

Welcome to the CPRE West Yorkshire Annual Review. As usual we have been busy campaigning on Local Plans: 2019 has seen the adoption of Plans in Leeds and Kirklees, and consultations in Calderdale and Bradford. Central Government continues to move the goalposts through planning policy reforms and regular changes at ministerial level, and it is important to keep up with how this affects our local work.

Our countryside has faced several high-profile challenges, from moorland fires to major floods. Our local authorities have declared climate emergencies, and there are commitments to large-scale tree-planting schemes, but there are still a number of road-building schemes and out-of-town developments in the pipeline. The environmental impact of Leeds-Bradford Airport developments and HS2 still remain to be seen.

2019 was also the first year of our two-year “Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire” project. This has already made a huge difference to our work. Our online magazine has brought together fascinating stories and given us chance to make many new friends and contacts. We have worked closely with a number of local campaigns, for example on the future of Esholt Water Treatment Works, and we are now planning a programme of events for the coming year.

My thanks to everyone who has helped us and worked with us this year. We are looking for new Trustees and volunteers to assist with running the charity and developing our work plan for 2020 and beyond.

David Cove - Chair of CPRE West Yorkshire

Page 1	Chair's Report
Page 2	Community Training Workshops
Pages 3 – 4	The Countryside Conversation
Pages 5 – 6	Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire - The First Year
Pages 7 - 12	Planning Round-up
Page 13	Annual Report
Page 14	Accounts

New in 2020

Community Training Workshops

Our new training package, Planning and Campaigning Skills for Local Communities, is now in development and should be ready by late April 2020.

We are often approached by local communities - Parish Councils, Neighbourhood Forums and other local groups – who want to influence planning outcomes in their area. This may be because of a specific threat, such as an aggressive housebuilding proposal, or because they have alternative, creative ideas that they want to promote – for example a new greenspace. Often, a key challenge is figuring out which aspects of the planning system are useful to them, and how best to exert an influence. This is where CPRE's training can help.

The training is modular, so it can include a foundation in the planning system, more specific sessions on Local Plans, planning applications, appeals and campaigning skills. We aim to run up to six courses in 2020, and CPRE is able to cover half of the total cost of the courses itself, thanks in part to a grant from CPRE's Yorkshire & Humber Region. This helps us to keep costs low for the communities taking up the training – and it's also possible for different groups to have a joint session and share costs.

If you are involved in a group who may be interested in signing up for a training workshop, please get in touch.

You can email us through the 'Contact Us' page of the CPRE West Yorkshire website.



The Countryside Conversation

How do we want West Yorkshire's countryside to change for the better in the 21st Century?

West Yorkshire's countryside is fascinating and diverse, and it faces many pressures. How can we work together to bring its amazing cultural heritage, the challenges of a changing climate, and people's needs for wellbeing and prosperity, into a compelling, influential story for our future?



When CPRE is approached by local communities to help defend a piece of countryside against unwanted development, it is usually because that piece of countryside is special to them in some way; for example, places to walk and recreate, and places for wildlife to flourish. It may also concern loss of tranquillity or darkness. The difficulty is that the planning system is not good at valuing those qualities – so we need new tools, and we to widen the range of voices influencing decisions that affect our countryside. In the 21st Century, more people will make their homes and livelihoods in West Yorkshire, our countryside will need to work harder than ever to support their quality of life and the ecosystems that underpin it. But there is no coherent agenda for how to achieve that.

During 2020, we will be using our website to host a conversation, with discussion papers, links to external research, and articles about our own work and the work of other organisations. The members' newsletter will also include updates about this work and how to get involved. This will lead us towards a set of ideas, goals and practical steps that we hope will become a shared plan for West Yorkshire's 21st Century Countryside. Towards the end of the year we hope to run one or more events to showcase the work and keep the conversation moving.



Ways Of Seeing West Yorkshire

The First Year

We are now half way through our two-year “Ways of Seeing” project which has been made possible through national and regional CPRE funding grants. The project aims to gather together stories from the vast range of people and organisations who use and value West Yorkshire’s countryside, so that we can demonstrate how amazing that countryside is. This should help us to campaign better and to make new alliances.

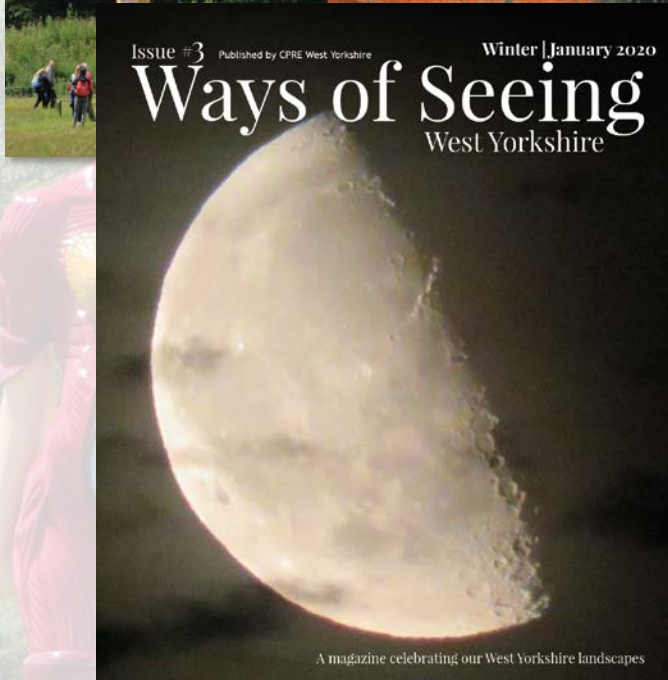
The results so far are really exciting. We have published four issues of our online magazine so far. The magazine has opened up a wealth of new and fascinating connections and conversations for us, with researchers, local conservation groups, artists, philosophers, food producers, runners, wild swimmers – the list goes on. A new volunteer to CPRE West Yorkshire designed issue 3 of the magazine. It was a great opportunity to show case some brilliant local talent, and showed the potential for a whole range of volunteering opportunities. Every new conversation that we have opens up further ones, and our understanding of the cultural landscape of West Yorkshire – what it means to people – is growing all the time.

Before we started, the project foresaw a risk that putting so much time and energy into a ‘listening’ project would restrict our capacity for dealing with the ever-present workload of development threats to the countryside. Instead, we are finding that it is leading us to forge closer relationships with communities who are concerned about planning issues. We’re tending to do more in-depth campaigning, for example in Queensbury and more recently in Silsden (visit our website to find out more), and this is a direct result of the ‘Ways of Seeing’ project.

The project continues apace in 2020, and we always welcome suggestions for stories and images for the magazine and website.

ways of seeing

West York



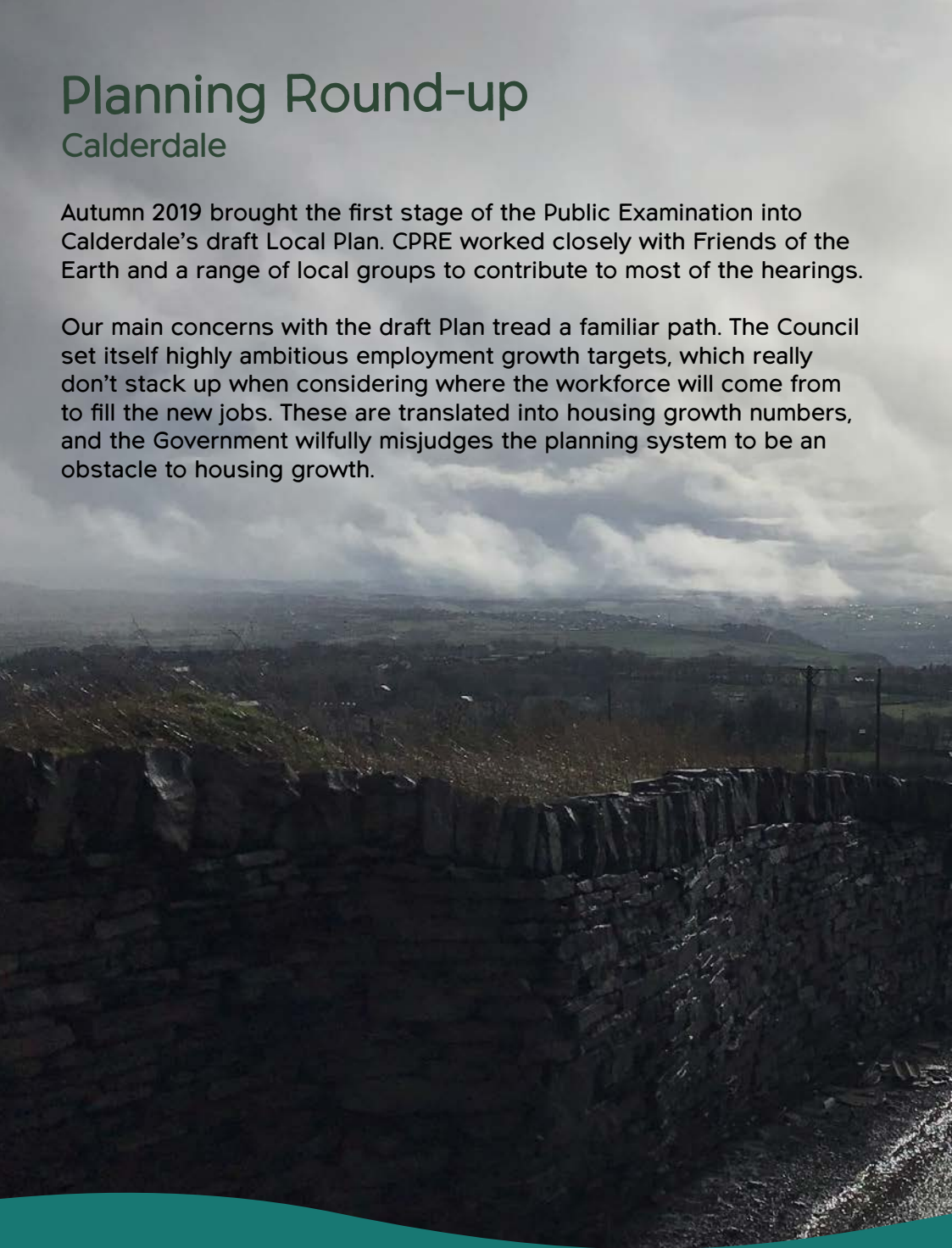
ing our West Yorkshire landscapes

Planning Round-up

Calderdale

Autumn 2019 brought the first stage of the Public Examination into Calderdale's draft Local Plan. CPRE worked closely with Friends of the Earth and a range of local groups to contribute to most of the hearings.

Our main concerns with the draft Plan tread a familiar path. The Council set itself highly ambitious employment growth targets, which really don't stack up when considering where the workforce will come from to fill the new jobs. These are translated into housing growth numbers, and the Government wilfully misjudges the planning system to be an obstacle to housing growth.



The result is an unseemly haste to supply land for housing, which leads to brownfield sites being forgotten and – in Calderdale’s case – the proposal for euphemistically-named Garden Suburbs in the Green Belt between Brighouse and the M62. Combined with a similar approach in Kirklees, Brighouse and Huddersfield will effectively coalesce, separated only by six lanes of motorway.

The Examination Inspector spotted the mismatch between employment and housing growth, but Calderdale’s response has been to increase the housing numbers, and this is now set to impact on additional sites, especially in Northowram, Shelf and Greetland. We will continue our defence of these sites during the second stage hearings.



Bradford

After submitting our consultation response to the Core Strategy Partial Review in 2019, we await the next stage of consultation for this plan, which is due in summer 2020. We were pleased that the draft took a much emboldened approach to tackling climate change, liveable neighbourhoods, creating healthy places and green infrastructure. Taken together, these changes could create a holistic, strategic direction for Bradford that would be an exemplar to other local authorities. It's also very encouraging that Bradford Council is working hard to promote active travel, including the restoration of Queensbury Tunnel in the face of Highways England's dogmatic attempt to permanently abandon the tunnel.

On the other hand, it remains to be seen how this apparent positive shift will translate into proposals on the ground. A large urban extension into the Green Belt in the Tong Valley, combined with plans for a South-East Bradford Relief Road, threaten to eat into lovely countryside in the already narrow gap between Leeds and Bradford. And there is still likely to be pressure for greenfield sites in other areas such as Menston and Silsden, where landscape impacts and car dependence are key concerns.

Also this year, we zoomed in on the planning application to re-develop parts of the Esholt Water Treatment Works site for housing and employment. This fascinating case involved a large brownfield site that needs an imaginative future use, but also great potential for enhancement of the surrounding woodland, as well as Esholt Hall and its landscape gardens which have been hidden away amongst Yorkshire Water's estate for decades. We believe that a good solution is possible, and we're hoping that our concerns will be taken on board.



Kirklees

The Kirklees Local Plan was adopted in February 2019. The combined efforts of CPRE and local activists helped to secure the removal of two damaging greenfield employment sites, one at Cooper Bridge and the other at Clayton West; but three large housing sites, at Bradley, Ravensthorpe and Chidswell, remain in the Plan and have been taken out of the Green Belt, along with further employment sites near the M62 at Cleckheaton. The combined effect of these developments – alongside other site allocations in Bradford, Calderdale and Leeds – will be a very significant reduction in open gaps between the urban areas. It is a further build-up of what CPRE has called the “motorway corridor landscape” which now characterises most of the length of the M1 and M62 in West Yorkshire and beyond. Considering the pressing need to inject life into Dewsbury and Batley town centres, the concentration of new development along the motorway seems desperately shortsighted.

We also campaigned against proposed new quarrying sites that will harm the landscape for generations, around Meltham and Cumberworth. And at Castle Hill the threat of an intrusive visitor centre still looms, though we are optimistic that the combined weight of CPRE’s and Historic England’s objections will eventually lead to an acceptable scheme.

In better news, we have reported in “Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire” magazine about the inspiring work of Holme Valley Connections, and it was also heartening that Kirklees Council responded constructively to the passionate campaign to rethink the Holmfirth Town Centre road scheme.



Leeds

After a long haul, Leeds now has an adopted Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. This is good news for the protection of unallocated sites from the ‘planning by appeal’ that we saw for several years, and especially good news for Parlington, where an ill-conceived ‘Garden Village’ proposal has now been scrapped. However, Aireborough Neighbourhood Development Forum is currently pursuing a legal challenge to proposed site allocations in their area, and other communities have also expressed concerns about the way Neighbourhood Plans seem to have limited influence.

Leeds City Council have committed to making Leeds carbon neutral by 2030, and have established a citizens’ jury to examine evidence. It is also encouraging that the Leeds-Bradford Airport link road has been scrapped, at least in part because it is incompatible with climate response. What we need now in Leeds is an early review of the Local Plan that rises to the challenge set by this exciting desire for a sustainable future, and we are now finding ways to join in the grassroots movement that is growing in the area, in the hope of having real influence on the next Local Plan.



Wakefield

In February 2019 we submitted our response to the Initial Draft Local Plan Consultation for Wakefield. You can read this submission on our website under 'Wakefield Planning Matters'. We noted that Wakefield is distinctive in having a 'rural core', and its character is strongly defined by landscape, art and food – not least the Rhubarb Triangle. Wakefield's countryside also has relatively good public transport access compared to other areas. But there is still a tendency for new development to rely on new and upgraded road corridors and greenfield sites. We have been investigating the fragility of Wakefield's rural identity in the Spring issue of our WoS magazine...

The next consultation stage for this development plan is likely to take place in May, after the local elections. We will be examining how our concerns and suggestions have been addressed in the Publication Draft Plan.



Annual Report

President	John Denham
Chairman	David Cove
Hon Treasurer and Trustee	Charles Tunbridge
Hon Secretary and Trustee	Michael Church
Trustees	Robert Bamforth
	Margaret Dale
	Marion Temple

Member Stats

Our overall membership reduced by 21 members in 2019 and we are facing tough challenges ahead. We hope that the work we are committed to doing through the project and the community training workshops, will support new membership opportunities in the future.

We warmly welcome our 11 new members. We hope that you will enjoy being part of the CPRE West Yorkshire Branch.

Household	294
Organisation	7
Parish/Town Council	15
Individual Life	8
Joint Life	2
Individual Over 65 Life	0
Branch Life	3
Total	329

Volunteering

We are looking for new volunteers to support the work of the Branch. There are a range of roles and ways to get involved.

If you would like to find out more, please speak to any of our Trustees or get in touch via the contact page of our website.

Accounts

CPRE WEST YORKSHIRE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR TO 31ST DECEMBER 2019

	2018	2019		2018	2019
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Bank Interest	446.12	367.40	Postage	221.28	312.04
Donations and Legacies			Design New Web Page	520.08	516.00
CPRE Quarterly	6,974.58	6,816.94	Consultancy Fees	11,799.17	28,111.94
CPRE Grant		15,000.00	Insurance	409.66	409.66
CPRE Region Grant		2,500.00	Printing & Stationery	177.13	128.94
Y & H Grant		2,600.00	Data Protection Fee		35.00
			Room Hire	427.60	103.20
				<u>13,455.09</u>	<u>29,616.78</u>
			Surplus/(Deficit) for year	<u>-6,140.22</u>	<u>-2,332.44</u>
	<u>£7,420.70</u>	<u>£27,284.34</u>		<u>£7,422.22</u>	<u>£27,284.34</u>

CPRE WEST YORKSHIRE BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2019

	2018	2019		2018	2019
CURRENT ASSETS			ACCUMULATED FUND		
HSBC Current Account	556.27	2,606.43	Balance brought forward	30,692.17	24,551.95
United Trust Bank	23,857.15	19,474.55	Surplus for the year	-6,140.22	-2,332.44
Yorkshire Bank	138.53	138.53			
	<u>£24,551.95</u>	<u>£22,219.51</u>		<u>£24,551.95</u>	<u>£22,219.51</u>

I have Independently examined the above accounts for the CPRE West Yorkshire Branch for the year ended 31st December 2019 and I certify them to be in accordance with the books, papers and explanations given to me.

John N Jacklin B. Com.
Date: - 9th March 2020

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Tockholes, Darwen,
Lancashire, BB3 0LX



The countryside charity
West Yorkshire



Photo: Hebden Bridge (Andrew Wood)

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