

Can you Help?

The work of our charity would be impossible without volunteers, now more than ever. The importance of the countryside is hitting the headlines - nature, food, climate, clean air and places that are healthy and enjoyable to live in. But so too is news of huge threats to local democracy and accountability.

We think the best way to campaign on these issues is firstly to do more to showcase how important our countryside is; and secondly to press ahead with our core campaigns to influence decision-making.

We really need volunteer help with three types of activity:

- Running the charity – We need a few individuals willing to steer the organisation and oversee our work, including fundraising.
- Communication and storytelling – If you have creative skills, then there's sure to be a story you can tell or can help bring other people's stories to life, to help with our projects and campaigns.
- Influencing planning – at the moment we rely on paid consultancy and a handful of committed volunteers, but there is always more work to do.

There are good opportunities for professional planners who have retired, and CPRE is also a great place for planning students and graduates to gain experience. If you're interested in volunteering and would like to know more, please email:

info@cpwestyorkshire.org.uk

CPRE West Yorkshire,
49 Lighenfield Lane,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire
HD4 7DT
Charity number: 500481



Member Newsletter

Summer 2020



Welcome to the Summer 2020 Newsletter

First and foremost we hope that you, our members and your friends and loved ones, are keeping well. No doubt some of you will have been affected more directly than others, but these are strange and unsettling times for all of us.

For the countryside, we're seeing some potentially huge challenges emerge. People are valuing and using the countryside in greater numbers, which is wonderful, but also causing a rise in antisocial problems like flytipping and fires. The importance of being able to access and enjoy the countryside on our doorstep – most of it in West Yorkshire protected by Green Belt – has been thrown into sharper focus.

At the same time, many of you will have seen news of Government proposals to further weaken the planning system in an attempt to speed up the economic recovery. What is really at threat here is local democracy and people's ability to have a say in the decisions that affect where they live. Democracy – trust in the system - has always been at the heart of CPRE's campaigning, and we will now need to put renewed energy into defending it.

As a charity, the challenge is that our work is needed more than ever, but this can stretch our resources thinly. With this in mind we're delighted to welcome a number of new members who have joined us recently. In this newsletter we'll be explaining our proposals for an online AGM later in the year, and also asking you to help spread the word in our quest to recruit new volunteers to help with our work. We also have our regular planning round-up, and an update on our Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire project.

Finally, please join us in wishing Charles Tunbridge, our longstanding Trustee and Treasurer, a speedy recovery. Charles fell ill in March and has been recuperating since then. We hope that he will be able to be inflicted his sense of humour on us again soon.

Planning Casebook

The big story recently is Leeds Bradford Airport. The application proposes a replacement terminal to support the expansion of the airport from 4 to 7 million passengers per year. The airport is at pains to gain green credentials: the new building would have the best environmental performance of any airport building, there is a strategy to enhance biodiversity, and an intention to cap the amount of car parking at existing levels. However, we don't think the sustainability case stacks up. Capturing 'leakage' of passengers to Manchester is of questionable benefit, because Manchester has vastly better public transport access – even with the proposed rail station at Leeds Bradford. And then there is that sticky problem about airports: aeroplanes. You can't fly them without generating carbon emissions, noise and a lot of road traffic.

Leeds City Council has been doing good work recently on climate action. Aviation itself is difficult to address because it depends on national and international policies to address its impacts, but in our view if Leeds support a development that will inevitably generate road traffic, and will also further tie the local economy and the pattern of development to the growth of aviation, then this would go against their climate obligations. There is a strong groundswell of opposition to the airport expansion and we're glad to add our voice to it. You can read full our analysis on our website.

Also on our website are our recently made representations against a spa and holiday resort in the Wakefield Green Belt adjoining Pugney's Country Park, and a luxury house in the Bradford Green Belt on the edge of Burley-in-Wharfedale.

And finally: Controversial changes to the planning system are afoot. Stay tuned to our website as this story unfolds!

Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire Project Update

We published the Spring issue of our magazine in May. This issue was all about our relationship with the land, including a fabulous photographic study of some of Wakefield's rhubarb growers, the inspiring story of Kirkstall Valley Community Farm, and other fascinating interviews with Friends of Ilkley Moor, the Hepworth Gallery and our very own David Cooke.

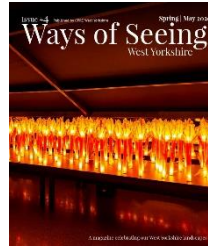
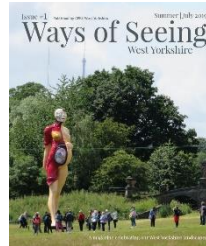
With four online magazines published, it has been incredibly rewarding to find such a range of interesting people, projects and ideas to feature. The purpose of the magazine is to show the amazing cultural layers that add up to what we understand by 'West Yorkshire's countryside'. The next stage is to establish how to apply that understanding to the challenge of campaigning to protect and enhance our countryside.

We are now developing the theme of '21st Century Countryside'. What do we want West Yorkshire's countryside to be like, and what is its role in addressing the pressing issues of our age, like the climate and biodiversity emergencies, agricultural change and people's need to reconnect with nature?

We had to postpone the Countryside Conversation event, which we had planned for late April, so we are re-thinking this phase of the project. There will of course be more online working, but we're also looking into other possibilities such as films and outdoor activities. If you have skills that you'd be interested in contributing, for example video editing, photography, guiding walks or rides, social media, writing or graphic design, we would love to hear from you.

Catch up on all of our Ways of Seeing West Yorkshire magazine issues at:

www.cprewestyorkshire.org.uk/discover-our-countryside/ways-of-seeing-west-yorkshire/



Community Planning Training Workshops

The planning system can be daunting and can seem like a moving target, as government regularly announce reforms. Sometimes it may also seem as if the language and processes are deliberately shrouded in mystery.

Our planning skills training can help make sense of the planning system and how to use it. We have developed online training modules to suit beginner and more advanced groups, with a range of specialist interest areas.

If you know of a group who may be interested in our training, please direct them to the website, where details are available!



Planning & Campaigning Round-up

Local Plan News

You may have already heard about Aireborough Neighbourhood Development Forum (ANDF)'s successful legal challenge to the Leeds Site Allocations Plan. Our full analysis is available on our website. In essence, the judge found flaws in how the exceptional circumstances needed for Green Belt changes had been established. In theory, this may save a number of Green Belt sites in Aireborough and elsewhere in Leeds from being developed. But we're still waiting to hear how Leeds City Council are proposing to deal with the situation. In any event, it's a landmark case.

We are now preparing for the Calderdale Local Plan Examination hearings. A first round of hearings took place last year, and a delayed second round is scheduled to begin in September. In the meantime, the Inspector asked Calderdale Council to resolve a mismatch between their housing targets and their job growth aspirations, which resulted in a proposed raft of additional Green Belt losses in Greetland, Northwram and Shelf. We have a strong campaign network involved, including local residents, Friends of the Earth and CPRE. The other major issue here is the proposed 'Garden Suburbs' at Brighouse. A recent national report showed how badly 'Garden' developments fall short of their promise – an analysis of this is also available to read on our website.

The Wakefield Local Plan review is also under way. A full draft plan was scheduled for consultation in May and is now delayed until October. We have recently opened up conversations with Parish Councils in Wakefield, and with Wakefield and Pontefract Civic Societies, with the aim of starting a campaign network in the area, and we are also offering planning training to those communities. Widening the range of voices influencing the Local Plan is absolutely crucial if we are to have an impact.

Continued over the page ...

Annual General Meeting 2020 – Moving Online

Members will be aware that the AGM scheduled for 25th April had to be postponed due to the pandemic restrictions. We do not wish to risk another postponement and without knowing future social distancing requirements, booking a venue is challenging. We want to make sure that our AGM is inclusive and will not exclude our more vulnerable members.

As National CPRE successfully held its first online AGM a few weeks ago, we are planning to do the same later this year. The AGM business itself will be no more than 30 minutes, and the online event should run for about an hour in total.

Papers will be sent out by post and email as usual, and proxy voting will be available for those who do not wish to take part online.

Full details including date, time and joining instructions will be available on our website shortly. We do hope that you will join us for AGM matters and a good catch up!

