

HAMPSHIRE VIEWS



Meet our 2025
Countryside Award
Winners



The countryside charity
Hampshire

Autumn/Winter 2025

Making a Difference with CPRE Hampshire

500 Club Members

The CPRE Hampshire lottery was relaunched in October. Every pound raised through the 500 Club helps us continue our work.

Lottery members simply buy a £20 share number each year which is entered into a monthly draw.

Our October winners were:

- Elizabeth Toulson £70
- Stuart Aberdeen £40

Our November winners were:

- Stuart Aberdeen £70
- Helen Jex £40

If you'd like to join the 500 Club or learn more about how your support helps, please contact:

finance@cprehampshire.org.uk

Thank you to all our members who supported our Centenary Auction, helping us raise funds for our 2026 celebrations. We raised over £1,800!

Leaving a Legacy to CPRE Hampshire

Leaving a Gift in your Will is a really special way to look after the people and places you care about.

[Download a free brochure on our website to find out how your gift could help nurture the countryside for years to come.](#)

CPRE Hampshire,
c/o Sparsholt College, Westley Lane, Sparsholt, Winchester, Hants, SO21 2NF

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Charity number: 1164410

Cover photo: Toby Cowell Photography

One lucky auction winner will enjoy a day out on the historic Watercress Line, pictured here, travelling through the beautiful Hampshire countryside.



Welcome to this edition of Hampshire Views.

This is an exciting time as we finalise our plans to celebrate CPRE's centenary in 2026. You can read about a Hedge Festival to celebrate the completion of the Hampshire Hedge between our two National Parks and an Art Exhibition in May to celebrate our countryside. We are especially keen to engage with all our Hampshire members and will be inviting you to join us for a celebratory lunch on 25th April that will be preceded by our AGM.

But of course our work is not just about celebrating CPRE it is mainly about protecting our countryside. Although in Hampshire we are yet to face the threat of mega solar or major overhead power lines, we nevertheless face relentless development pressure. You can read in this edition about how we think this can be mitigated by 'brownfield first' and what has been done to dilute some of the worst excesses of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill as it completes its Parliamentary journey. And we will continue to press local planning authorities to protect our countryside through the Local Plan process.

Finally, can I draw your attention to the splendid photograph on our front cover of one of England's rarest breeding birds, the Firecrest. The photo was taken by one of our young volunteers, Toby Cowell, in the New Forest, one of the country's strongholds of this lovely bird.

May all our efforts ensure that the Hampshire countryside remains a place where wildlife can flourish!



Margaret Paren
CPRE Hampshire Chair
chair@cprehampshire.org.uk



Bring the beauty of the outdoors to your Instagram feed - follow [@tobycowellphotography](#) for more inspiring wildlife photography.

Making Hay whilst the Sun Shines - Our Summer

Throughout the hot and dry summer we have been busy scaling up our Magnificent Meadows work. We now have a team of over 70 volunteers who have been engaged in traditional meadow management activities over eight chalk meadow sites in South Winchester. The work is led by local ecologist, Rachel Remnant and was featured on BBC South Today.

The project has been linking with lots of groups in Winchester, and introduced new elements including a night walk with a light pollution expert from Southampton University. If funding allows, the plan is to extend our meadows work into other peri-urban sites across Hampshire.



Steve Humphrey filming our Magnificent Meadow volunteers for BBC South Today on 26th July 2025



Open Farm Events

In June, we took part in an Open Farm Sunday event at Newhouse Farm in New Alresford.

It was great fun engaging with lots of families and young people. We made hedgerow crowns, hunted for bugs and created art work from hedgerow leaves.



Pollinator Monitoring Training

In August, we were joined by Rachel from Bug Life who trained our meadow volunteers on how to carry out Pollinator Monitoring and Fixed Insect Timings.

We visited meadow sites around Winchester and learnt about the main insect groups and how to feed our results into Bug Life's national surveys.



Countryside Day 2025

At the end of August, we held our second Countryside Day, linking with County Farms and previous Countryside Award winner Daisy Meadow Farm in Botley.

Over 100 people joined us to enjoy willow weaving, foraging, making butter, meeting the farm animals and learning all about bees and meadows.



It's been a joy to share the story of CPRE Hampshire at our events and promote our mission to create a thriving countryside for everyone to enjoy.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill

This bill was tabled by the government with the aim of streamlining the planning system to speed up the provision of housing and infrastructure. CPRE joined with other like-minded groups to challenge the provisions in the bill which would weaken environmental safeguards and reduce local democracy.

In the House of Lords significant amendments were made to tackle these issues and others, including emphasising brownfield first and protecting chalk streams. These amendments then returned to the House of Commons where they were debated further. Before this debate took place, we wrote to all MPs in Hampshire asking them to support the relevant amendments made in the Lords and drawing their attention, in particular, to the importance of chalk streams to Hampshire.

We were very pleased that three of our MPs spoke up in the debate in support of our chalk streams: Alex Brewer (LibDem NE Hants), Liz Jarvis (LibDem Eastleigh) and Kit Malthouse (Con NW Hants). Caroline Nokes (Con Romsey and Southampton North), who shared many of our concerns, was unable to participate in the debate or vote as a Deputy Speaker. All the amendments made by the Lords were voted down when the bill returned to the Commons though some concessions were made by the government in the process.

The bill then returned to the Lords in a parliamentary process known colloquially as 'ping pong'. This meant that the Lords could not insist on their original amendments but could return to the Commons amended versions of them. However, in the debate the government made further concessions and so the Lords withdrew their objections instead. The bill will therefore shortly return to the Commons for one last time before receiving Royal Assent.



On environmental safeguards, the government's main concession was on the controversial scheme known as Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs). This would require developers to pay into a national pot, a nature recovery fund, administered by Natural England for environmental benefits, rather than delivering benefits more locally. A number of changes were promised restricting the use of EDPs. A final concession also confined their use for the moment to cases where development was constrained because of nutrient pollution. Only if monitoring demonstrated the system is working would it be applied more widely.

On local democracy, the government made some concessions, including that the Parliament should have greater scrutiny over regulations concerning which planning applications should be determined by officers rather than local councillors. We were pleased by the change that would allow local planning authorities to set their own fees and ring fence the additional income for their planning service.

On brownfield first and chalk streams, the government has said that the forthcoming redraft of the National Planning Policy Framework will take account of the concerns expressed. It has promised that this will explicitly encourage local planning authorities to accommodate more development on brownfield land and that brownfield will be regarded as the first port of call for development. Chalk streams will be recognised as being of high environmental value and that must be taken into account by local planning authorities. It is also promised that the forthcoming White Paper on Water will deal with issues around pollution and extraction from chalk streams and rivers.

Both these documents are promised before the end of the year: we will be scrutinising them very carefully on your behalf.

Winter Programme of Events

As the days grow shorter, we're delighted to bring you a winter programme of events designed to inform and inspire. Alongside our recent activities, we'll be hosting a variety of online talks and in-person walks, where you can learn from experts on fascinating topics such as biodiversity, wildlife habitats and the benefits of hedgerows and meadows for both people and the planet.

These sessions are a great way to stay connected with nature during the colder months and deepen your understanding of how we can protect and enhance our countryside together.



Wellbeing in Nature: Winter Walks

Wednesday 3rd December 2025

Wednesday 10th December 2025

10.30am - 12.30pm

Learn about the beautiful South Downs meadows and the healing power of nature.

The walk will be led by Rachel Remnant, who can tell us about the wildflowers, hay making and co-creating nature recovery.



Hedgerow Heroes talk series

16
DEC

Can Hedgerows Save the World? with Megan Gimber - Peoples Trust for Endangered Species

21
JAN

Restoring Hedgerows, Reviving Landscapes: A Local Success Story with Jane Reeve - Hedgerow Heroes Lead, West Sussex

4
FEB

Hedgerow Management for Healthy Hedges with Nigel Adams - Renowned Professional Hedge layer

17
MAR

A talk by Ian Metson - Founder of Hedgelife

All talks are FREE and on Zoom from 7.00pm – 8.30pm

What to expect

- Enter our friendly hedge laying competition
- Listen to our talks
- Learn about hedgerow management
- Enjoy a day out in Hampshire's countryside.

Whether you're a seasoned hedgelayer or just curious to learn more, Hedgefest is a great opportunity to get involved, gain new skills and connect with others who care about our rural landscape.

Look out for further details on our social media and the events page on our website.

CPRE HAMPSHIRE'S HEDGEFEST 2026

SAVE THE DATE!
FRIDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2026

We're excited to announce that CPRE Hampshire will be hosting our very own Hedgefest on Friday 20th February 2026. This will be a celebration of the final year of the Hampshire Hedge project, which aims to connect the two National Parks in Hampshire with a nature recovery corridor of hedgerows.

With support from the South of England Hedge Laying Society, this promises to be a fantastic day celebrating hedgerows and countryside skills.

Celebrating Hampshire's Countryside Champions

Whether it's a small-scale community initiative or a large-scale enterprise, the CPRE Hampshire Countryside Awards shine a spotlight on the remarkable individuals and organisations that help the Hampshire countryside to thrive.



Curdridge Rural Affordable Housing Scheme

Best Housing Solution Award

Celebrating homes that go beyond bricks and mortar including developments that are thoughtfully designed, environmentally responsible and deeply rooted in local needs.

Winner: Curdridge Rural Affordable Housing Scheme, Winchester District

The Curdridge Rural Housing scheme, years in the making, showcases the strength of collaboration. This partnership has delivered eight new homes on a rural exception site in Curdridge, welcoming its first residents in Autumn 2025.

What the judges said: "Good to see how this project has been developed between the Parish Council, Hastoe, Winchester City Council, Action Hampshire and critically the landowner, who has made this plot available in response to local needs. This initiative offers valuable lessons on delivering affordable homes in rural communities, a key priority for CPRE Hampshire. It's also encouraging that the project has been highlighted to other councils and featured more widely on BBC Politics South."



Exploring Wildflower Meadows in Hursley

Countryside Changemaker Award

This award honours individuals who positively make a difference to the Hampshire countryside. Whether through hands-on action, community leadership, campaigning, or creative storytelling, we're celebrating those who inspire change, raise awareness and advocate for rural communities.

Winner: Angela Elder founder of Wildways, Hursley, Winchester District

Wildways is a local (village) group trying to preserve habitats in and around Hursley village, near Winchester. Angela is the instigator and driving force of this group, which has grown from very small beginnings, to be a regular and well appreciated aspect of village life. Angela's ecological knowledge is extensive but self taught. There has been a Wildways stand at the village fete since Covid, and wildflower seeds are regularly harvested and distributed free of charge through the village shop.

With special thanks to the award sponsors:



"Angela is a tirelessly committed defender of our countryside and a natural educator, inspiring people of all ages to get involved. Under her leadership, volunteers have protected and enhanced habitats, improved access, and increased the wild spaces we all cherish." Helen Turvey, Hursley resident and former parish councillor



Best Countryside Access Award

This award recognises outstanding efforts to make the countryside more accessible, inclusive and welcoming - especially in the places closest to where people live.

That includes projects that open up the countryside for everyone, break down barriers and create opportunities for more people to enjoy the natural benefits of the countryside.



New Permissive Path at Colden Common

Joint Winner: Colden Common Permissive Footpath

A new permissive footpath now links Colden Common Park to the South Downs National Park, fulfilling a long-held ambition of the Parish Council and providing safe access for walkers.

As this is a permissive route, the Parish Council ensured it was clearly marked to protect the beetle bank and crops and to guide walkers away from woodland used for shooting.

What the judges said about Colden Common:

“Imaginative thinking to create a new walking route to the National Park, avoiding local roads, and good initiative to persuade the local landowner to allow a permissive footpath across his land. Strong volunteer involvement to create the new footpath. An excellent countryside access project.”

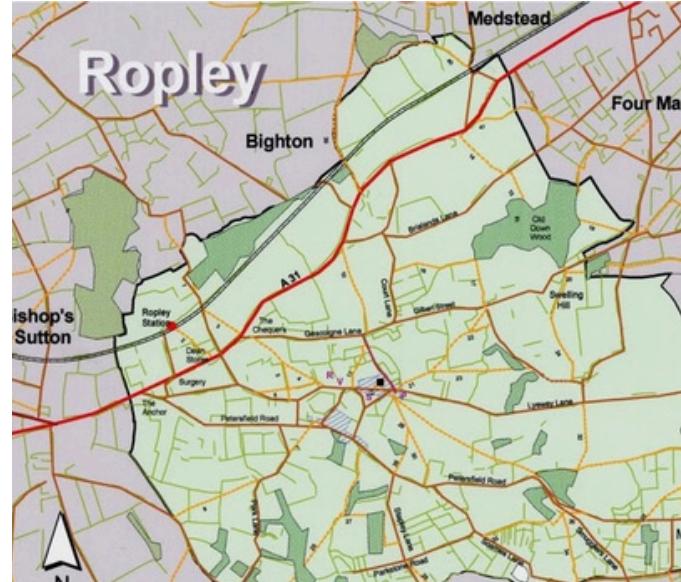
Joint Winner: Ropley Access Improvement Project

Ropley Parish Council has replaced stiles with kissing gates across its footpath network, improving accessibility for people with limited mobility and delivering on its commitment to inclusive countryside access.

What the judges said about the project:

“Excellent to see the strong commitment over a number of years to the replacement of stiles with kissing gates. Great work to persuade so many bodies to contribute funds. Clear evidence of (measurable) success. Strong volunteer involvement (1300 volunteer hours since 01.1.24) and interesting spin-off benefits (community engagement/cohesion, formation of a walking group and volunteers clearing vegetation from footpaths). Ongoing commitment to continue the work into the future.”

“As a walker of advanced age, I really appreciate the replacement of stiles with kissing gates. Replacing no less than 35, with more to come, is very impressive.”



Ropley Access Improvement Project



Green & Blue Spaces Award

From the rolling hills of the South Downs to the ancient woodlands of the New Forest, and from community gardens to the county's world-renowned chalk streams, this category celebrates projects that improve or enhance Hampshire's blue and green spaces. We were looking for blue and green projects that make a difference to the countryside at a local level – projects that care for and enhance these spaces in ways that benefit both people and the environment, now and for the future.



River Anton Conservation Project

Blue Spaces Award

Winner: River Anton Conservation Project, Andover, Test Valley

Albeit less well known than the Test, Itchen and Meon, the River Anton is an important part of the chalk stream network within Hampshire, which is nationally and internationally recognised.

However, it was in urgent need of conservation. Volunteers from The Anton River Conservation Association meet regularly to carry out practical work, improving and managing wildlife habitats along this vital waterway.

What the judges said: "An excellent project which promotes community engagement, will transform habitat for the benefit of local flora and fauna and will have a lasting impact on biodiversity."

Green Spaces Award

Winner: Golden Hill Woods, Hordle, New Forest

Situated on the site of an old marl pit, Golden Hill Woods had been left unmanaged for years.

Volunteers from Hordle Parish Council's Golden Hill Working Party have worked tirelessly for six years to enrich and restore this woodland, creating a thriving habitat for wildlife and a welcoming space for the community.

What the judges said: "Good to see such strong engagement from the Parish Council over many (six) years. But, while the Parish Council manage the project, it is implemented by volunteers, who are out every week from October to March conducting regular monitoring and conservation activities: e.g. enhancing ponds, creating bug hotels and other habitat for insects and other animals (bird and bat boxes), surveying local flora and fauna, monitoring ash die-back and litter-picking. An excellent project."



Golden Hill Woods

To find out more about our Countryside Award winners visit www.cprehampshire.org.uk

Over 33,000 New Homes Could Be Built on Hampshire's Brownfield Sites

CPRE Hampshire can reveal that there are brownfield sites with space for over 33,000 new homes in Hampshire according to the local authorities' own figures as shown in their brownfield registers - and 38% already have planning permission.

The table below shows the number of sites listed in each district.

- Basingstoke and Deane – 991
- Portsmouth – 13073
- Rushmoor – 3329
- East Hampshire – 316
- Eastleigh – 891
- South Downs National Park – 1496*
- Gosport – 1548
- Southampton – 3779
- Havant – 3022
- Test Valley – 719
- New Forest – 2966
- Winchester – 755
- New Forest National Park – 213

* this figure is for the whole of the South Downs National Park including the part that lies in East and West Sussex

CPRE Hampshire believes that these figures may under-estimate the true figure.

We believe that a more pro-active approach to identifying sites for inclusion on these registers could significantly increase the scope for brownfield development.

Based on work carried out by our South Downs and Central Group, East Hampshire District Council have now increased the numbers on their register.



Why Brownfield First?

Brownfield sites are typically located near existing infrastructure and facilities such as public transport, schools, healthcare, shops and places of work. By transforming these often neglected spaces into new homes with green spaces, smart infrastructure and renewable energy resources, our cities, towns and villages can be revitalised into more attractive places where people want to live.

Recent research by CPRE shows there are enough brownfield sites across England to build 1.4 million new homes, contributing the bulk of the government's target of 1.5 million.

Despite successive government policy prioritising brownfield development, 46% of houses completed in 2021/22 were built on greenfield land. According to figures compiled by the Local Government Association in 2021, an additional 500,000 are likely to be granted planning permission.

Developers prefer greenfield sites as they are easier and cheaper to develop. CPRE believes that not only do they utilise land we need to grow food, sequester carbon, restore nature and provide health and wellbeing but they create unsustainable communities dependent on the car for the infrastructure vital to modern life.

We will continue to press central government and local authorities truly to put brownfield first.

For 100 years, we've stood up for the countryside

Since 1926, CPRE has worked to protect the countryside from harm - whether that's unplanned building, pollution, or the loss of nature and peaceful places and made sure the countryside is valued in national decisions.

After World War II, CPRE helped bring in the laws that protected green spaces, supported the creation of Green Belts, National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now called National Landscapes).

Over the decades, CPRE has spoken out for clean air, quiet places and affordable homes that fit in with rural life. The charity raised early concerns about plastic waste and coastal erosion in the 1960s. In the 1980s, CPRE helped stop harmful power stations, saved wetlands and ended straw burning in fields.

Through its campaigns CPRE makes sure that things like dark skies, local food and hedgerows are seen as important. It pushes for better recycling, protected public forests, and is campaigning for the use of brownfield land instead of building on green fields.

From changing national policies to supporting local campaigns, CPRE has helped people across the country protect the countryside they love.



Celebrating CPRE's Centenary

Our national team will lead a year of celebrations marking a century of countryside advocacy. Historian Matthew Kelly will create a unique chronicle from CPRE's archives, showcased in an exclusive exhibition at the Museum of English Rural Life.

Nationally, CPRE will be sparking the biggest countryside conversation in decades through national polling, explore urgent challenges with the 'On the Edge' garden at the Chelsea Flower Show and launch a people-powered digital mapping tool to celebrate what the countryside means to us all.

Later, in 2026 CPRE will launch the Love Your Countryside Weekend, honour volunteers at a National Countryside Awards ceremony and in the Autumn celebrate 100 miles of new hedgerows delivered by the Hedgerow Hero project.



Throughout 2026 we'll join National Office to celebrate 100 years of the Campaign to Protect Rural England

How we are celebrating CPRE's Centenary here in Hampshire

We're marking CPRE's Centenary with a series of special events that celebrate Hampshire's countryside and the people who care for it:

Friday 20th February: HedgeFest

Join us for a hedge laying competition, guided hedgerow walks and expert talks as we celebrate the third and final year of the Hampshire Hedge Project (see page 5 for details).

Saturday 25th April: Centenary Member Lunch & AGM at Itchen Abbas Village Hall

A chance to reflect on our achievements and look ahead, while enjoying a celebratory lunch with fellow members.

Friday 15th – Sunday 18th May: Hampshire Countryside Art Exhibition

Experience the beauty of our local landscapes through the eyes of local artists.

September: Hampshire Countryside Day

A day dedicated to celebrating everything that makes our countryside special. (Date to be confirmed.)

We'll also be supporting CPRE's bold new national strategy, a statement of intent for the countryside of the future and how we can work together to protect it.



Celebrating the Hampshire countryside

We're unveiling an inspiring new art exhibition and sale celebrating the beauty and heritage of the Hampshire countryside - and you're invited!

Our carefully curated exhibition will feature a diverse selection of artwork, welcoming painters, photographers, sculptors, textile artists, mixed media creators and more, to showcase the richness and creativity inspired by the Hampshire countryside.

Exhibition dates: 15th – 18th May 2026

Location: The Amanda Aldous Gallery, Western Corbett, near Basingstoke.

We will be holding a drinks reception at this beautiful location on Friday 15th May and all members will be invited to attend.

Meet Katy Hooper

We have a new member of staff in the CPRE Hampshire Team. Katy Hooper joined us in October as Assistant Hedgerow Officer and will be working a busy planting and laying season with the team to take forward phase three of the Hampshire Hedge Project. Katy has worked in conservation and music in both the UK and abroad. Her grandmother, Patricia Hooper, worked for CPRE back in the 70's to campaign against the motorway passing through Winchester's watermeadows and was a tireless champion for Hampshire's countryside.



Katy Hooper: Assistant Hedgerow Officer

Celebrating Year 3 of The Hampshire Hedge

Our goal this autumn - spring is to plant a whopping 5km of hedge, bridging the gaps in our countryside between the New Forest and South Downs National Park. This will be the third and final year of an ambitious project to plant 15 kilometers of hedgerows and bring people together to restore and protect these vital habitats.

Get Involved!

Would you like to get fit and meet new people this autumn whilst doing your bit to create a valuable wildlife corridor? There are many ways in which you can get involved.

We will be running weekly action days every Thursday and one weekend day a month until the end of March. We welcome any help, whether it be joining for a few hours, just one time or every week!



Hedge Laying Courses

Courses are available to learn the traditional skill of hedge laying this autumn/winter. We have 2 day and 1 day courses for just £20. Whether you are a beginner or want to improve your skills, this is a great opportunity to learn from an expert in a friendly environment.



“Mother, I want to be a hedge layer”

To breathe new life into this wonderful countryside tradition, CPRE Hampshire have funded the training of six apprentice hedge layers alongside the guidance of a professional hedge-layer.

The new apprentices have already begun wielding their axes and billhooks on neglected hedges and hedges in need of laying. We are so excited to follow their progress and possible new career path. Watch this space!

Community Hedge Fund open for applications!

If you are a landowner or manage an area of land as part of a community group then have a think - 'Is there space for a hedge here?'

Our Community Hedge Fund grant will supply whips, guards and canes to all successful applicants giving you everything you need to create your very own hedge!

Contact hampshirehedge@cprehampshire.org.uk to apply - applications are open until the end of December.

