

CPRE Hampshire the countryside charity Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2025

Registered charity
number 1164410



Hampshire



CPRE Hampshire, the countryside charity

Our vision

A beautiful and thriving countryside that enriches all our lives.

An Introduction

Our charity works to:

- Support communities to have their say on developments and changes in Hampshire.
- Promote the benefit of the countryside to everyone, wherever they live.
- Work with local and national government, and other organisations to promote planning policies that make the best use of land.
- Raise awareness of the Hampshire countryside as a vital space for health and wellbeing.
- Encourage care of our fields and hedgerows to help protect landscapes and wildlife.
- Call for homes that local people can afford to be built in the right places across the country.
- Celebrate and support businesses that give back to the Hampshire countryside.
- Promote renewable energy that doesn't damage the Hampshire countryside or wider environment.

Our mission

To promote, enhance and protect a thriving countryside.

CPRE Hampshire Business Plan

Our Business Plan is regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees and sets out the priorities for the year ahead.

The key priorities in our Business Plan are;

1. Our Planning Work which is carried out by our District Groups and Planning Policy Group
2. Our Project work which is overseen by a small team of core staff and delivers funded projects to protect or enhance the Hampshire Countryside.
3. Our marketing and Comms activity to aid delivery of our key priorities.

The key challenges facing CPRE Hampshire continue to be a falling membership base (1,000 members pre pandemic 814 by Dec 2025), limited financial resource base and a small staff team. We needed to focus on how to make the most of this limited resource to maximize our impact.

Strategic Priority 1 Planning

2025 has been a time of challenge and change for the local planning system within Hampshire and we have had to adapt to this new reality, and this will continue in 2026.



Our Planning activity is structured broadly to work at 3 levels

1) Supporting National CPRE

We have done this providing feedback on documents such as consultation responses produced by the National CPRE team, for example throughout 2025 we have commented on the 2026 Planning and Infrastructure Bill, supporting and feeding in to the development of CPRE's consultation response and helping to ensure that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) "works for the countryside" and reflects Hampshire's priority concerns such as Valued Landscapes and protection for our precious chalk streams.

We have responded and commented on policy guidance from National CPRE and promoted these national policies and seek to influence at a Hampshire level.

2) Strategic Campaigns

We have provided support to local campaigns which are intended to prevent serious detriment to the Hampshire Countryside, for example local again against proposed garden villages at Neatham Down and Upper Swallick.

3) Working with Local Planning Authorities

We have met and positively interacted and looked to influence Local Planning Authorities to encourage them to adopt policies that will conserve, enhance and recognise the importance of the Hampshire Countryside, its communities and environment

During 2025 our volunteer District Groups planners have spent much of their time responding to consultations on draft Local Plans published by their Local Planning Authorities, we have 13 planning authorities across the county and 2025 has been a very busy year.



Local Planning, continued

What is going on with Local Plans and why are some of them so badly delayed giving rise to speculative development applications?

A number of our Local Planning Authorities have delayed their Local Plans and, in some cases, have had to carry out second Regulation 18 consultations to reflect the changes that the government made in December 2024 to National Planning Policy. Overall, these changes led to an increase, across Hampshire for the annual target of dwellings to be built every year from 8,255 to the current annual target of 12,487 an increase of 51%, for some of our rural areas their targets have nearly doubled. This has meant that Local Authorities now have to find sites for these additional numbers of homes across the plan period, so are looking to allocate additional sites, many of which are in greenfield areas.

Our local planning teams have spent time responding to consultations in Winchester, The New Forest, The Test Valley, Eastleigh and Havant and will be responding to the repeat consultation for Basingstoke and Deane in the next few weeks.

We would like to thank all our planning volunteers for their hard work throughout the year on behalf of you, our members and supporters and on behalf of our Hampshire countryside.

We have continued to provide planning advice services to the public, community groups and to parish / Town councils across the county, to enhance their ability to participate successfully in the planning system We prioritise support to members of CPRE Hampshire in line with our mission and funding requirements.

In addition, our teams have also responded, on your behalf to many individual planning applications, where we have concerns over the impact of proposals on our Hampshire countryside. We have developed relationships with local action groups such as that at Neatham Down and the A31 Alliance which represents all communities along the A31 between Bentley and Ropley, raising awareness as to local proposals for development and providing them with expertise to assist them in their arguments against what we all agree is inappropriate development proposals.

Our Water Focus Group

Our Water Focus Group has continued to promote its Policy of linking planning and water to members. We are encouraged by and support, the upswing in interest at all levels in water especially the Rights of Rivers movement espoused by several Hampshire Councils.

We have opposed the axing of the last Government's Chalk Stream Recovery Plan.

We have monitored among others the progress of Southern Water's Water Transfer and Recycling NSIP, the progress of the Abingdon reservoir in Oxfordshire and the Havant Thicket reservoir here and the Parliamentary move to list chalk streams as UNESCO heritage sites, providing comments on these where appropriate.

We have attended Southern Water's stakeholder meetings and a workshop on the Sustainable Management of the River Test.

We have written in response to letters from Danny Chambers MP, commented on water aspects of the South Down NP Plan, responded to the Basingstoke and Deane Reg 18 Local plan consultation, and written in opposition to two planning applications in Test Valley which are unsupported by water resources and wastewater treatment works.

Strategic Priority 2

Projects

Our project work is carried out by a small team of dedicated staff with specialist knowledge in project areas.

Magnificent Meadows Project

In 2025 we secured funding for a second year of the Magnificent Meadows project. The project focusing on restoring chalk meadows on the urban fringes of Winchester. We worked with local ecologist, Rachel Remnant from Land Lore consulting to organise training for local people to learn traditional meadow management techniques, including scything, making hay by hand, raking and box bailing hay to feed the local allotment sheep.

The project grew significantly and we held over 40 meadow activities over the Spring / Summer and Autumn period in 2025. We engaged with 363 people and had over 70 people register as meadow volunteers, who contributed 723 volunteer hours to the project. We worked on 15 sites across Winchester with over 10 partner organisations.

We have prepared a full report on the project and have been successful in securing further funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund to continue the project into 2026.

Key Projects in 2025

We identified four project areas in our Business Plan. These were;

- Magnificent Meadows
- Hedgerows - The Hampshire Hedge
- Hampshire Countryside Awards
- Countryside Day

Countryside Day

In August we had a brilliant day celebrating the countryside at Daisy Meadow Dairy Farm in Botley, Hampshire, with just over 100 attendees, including around 30 children.

The event brought together families, volunteers, and partners for a fun-filled and educational day in the Hampshire countryside.

Alison, Operations Manager at CPRE Hampshire, shared: "It was a good day and really great to see so many of our volunteers and partners all working together."

The event was another good example of how the charity has worked successfully with Hampshire County Farms over the years.



The Hampshire Hedge Project

In 2025 we were into the second year of our Hampshire Hedge project with an ambitious target to create a green corridor of hedgerows between the South Downs and New Forest National Parks.

We have secured funding from: CPRE Hedgerows Project, The Linbury Trust, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Big Give, Hampshire County Council, The Tree Council and Spurgin Trust for the second year of the project. We also received donations in kind in the form of hedging plants, trees, guards and stakes from The Trees for the South Downs, Hampshire Forest Partnership and Tree Council.

Our full-time project officer, Ellie Banks, who started in July 2023, was joined by Katy Hooper, who joined CPRE Hampshire for a 6-month hedgerow assistant role.

A full report for Year 2 was prepared and sent to funders and we are well on target in Year 3 to deliver on our targets.

A steering group with partners from the two National Parks, Sparsholt College, Tree Council, Winchester City Council and Test Valley Council meets regularly to support the project.

Hampshire Hedge key targets for 2024-25

- 5,000 meters of new hedgerow planted across 8 sites.
- 0.5miles of hedgerow restored.
- 18 training events held to teach people traditional hedge laying skills.
- 3 x 5-month hedge laying traineeships funded Community Hedge Fund established to support local projects.
- Engagement with local colleges and school has resulted in 100s of young people being engaged with the project.



Countryside Award winners - Ropley Parish Council Access Project

Hampshire Countryside Awards 2025

With funding support from Hastoe Housing, and TerraFirma we ran a successful Countryside Awards in 2025. Launched in May at the AGM the awards had 4 categories:

- Countryside Access Award
- Best Housing Solution
- Green and Blue Spaces Awards
- Countryside Changemaker.

The winners of each category had a special promotional video made for their project. These were shown at our Awards ceremony in December.

The Hampshire Choice Award went to the Ropley Parish Council for their Access Improvement Project



Governance and Staffing

Our Operations Manager, Alison Talbot, continues to lead the small team which are based at Sparsholt College.

Our Finance Officer is Jo Wyatt, who continues to keep our finances on track.

Rebecca Simpson our Comms Officer works for us on a freelance basis one day per week, We have also been using the services of a freelance planning consultant to help with our responses to Local Plan reviews..

Our Hedgerow Project Officer, Ellie Banks, has continued to lead on the Hampshire Hedge project and was joined in October by Katy Hooper who has worked as the hedgerow assistant role attached to the Hampshire Hedge project.

We have developed good links to Sparsholt College and have numerous students come and volunteer on part time, time limited projects, bringing new ideas, energy and enthusiasm to the team. We have a regular 'office day' on Tuesdays in our office on the Sparsholt college campus.



CPRE Staff team and volunteers at the New Forest Show 2024.

Marketing and Communications

We now deliver our Bi -Annual Hampshire Views magazine in digital format to most of our members. This and our e-newsletters, continues to be a key means of communicating with our membership.

We have expanded our use of the Canva platform and produce most materials in house , saving costs and resources.

We also regularly post on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account. PR success has been focused on the Hampshire Hedge and meadows project, with coverage on BBC South Today , and the Countryside Awards, with coverage in Hampshire Life magazine.



Magnificent Meadow Volunteers in Action

We are CPRE The Countryside Charity

CPRE is the countryside charity that campaigns to promote, enhance and protect the countryside for everyone's benefit, wherever they live; today and for generations to come.

With a local CPRE in every county, we work with communities, businesses and government to find positive and lasting ways to help the countryside thrive.

What we do

- We connect people with the countryside so that everyone can benefit from and value it.
- We promote rural life to ensure the countryside and its communities can thrive.
- We empower communities to improve and protect their local environment.

Through all our work we look at the role of our countryside in tackling the climate emergency, including seeking ways to increase resilience and reduce impact.

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