



The countryside charity
Gloucestershire

2020 Annual Review

www.cpreglos.org.uk

Farmcote overlooking Winchcombe
by Flynn Paget-Wall Collins



Chair's Statement

We know only too well that 2020 was an extraordinarily difficult year for all of us and especially for charities. At CPRE Gloucestershire, like other charities, we were not able to engage in most of the activities we had planned and had to learn to operate in a completely different way.

I am delighted to report however, that not only were we able to keep going, but that despite it all, we had a most successful year. We were able to use the power of various technologies to meet, to publicise our work and above all, to campaign for the future of our countryside.

Thanks to the determination and skill of our Director, Louise Williams, and our Office Manager, Lesley Painter, who joined us last February, CPRE Gloucestershire significantly increased its presence on social media over the last year and greatly improved communications with our members. Despite having to work from home, like so many others during this difficult time, Louise and Lesley were able to initiate a number of new projects and activities. These have included fund-raising, successfully applying for grants, launching regular online newsletters, selling Christmas cards and calendars and of course, planning new initiatives for when we can all meet in person again. As always, our CPRE Gloucestershire Awards, which recognise outstanding contributions to the environment or to the local community, were a highlight of the year. Despite constraints, all the Awards were given to the recipients in person, prompting very welcome press coverage. More generally our media profile significantly increased during the year including several interviews on BBC Radio Gloucestershire.



**Prof. Patricia Broadfoot CBE FAcSS,
County Chair**

As 'the Countryside Charity', CPRE, both nationally and locally, conducted major campaigns during the year to raise public awareness of the solace to be found in our wonderful landscapes and to encourage people to join CPRE to help protect these beautiful places. Monitoring planning applications and fighting inappropriate development is a central part of CPRE activities. I am therefore pleased to report that this vital work has continued. Members of our six District Committees continued to work tirelessly on behalf of local communities to protect our precious countryside from the sprawl of unfettered housing growth.

CPRE Gloucestershire is a campaigning organisation. It depends heavily on the work of a wide range of volunteers – its trustees, its committee members, its specialist volunteers, as well as on its small, but hugely committed, team of paid staff. I would like to record my sincere gratitude and thanks to them all. The achievements recorded in this Report are due to their combined efforts. As we look forward to the possibility of live events in the months to come, I am confident that CPRE Gloucestershire will raise public awareness of the importance of nature for our mental and physical health and for the future of our rural communities. With your support, we will continue to do everything we can to protect and enhance our priceless and irreplaceable Gloucestershire countryside.

Our National Campaigns

Peat

We continue to press the Government for changes in the way that peatland is managed through the burning of vegetation. The Government announced in January 2020 that they wanted to take measures to prevent the burning of heather and other vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats and to make the sale of peat loaded compost illegal. There hasn't been any further movement from Government on this since then, but DEFRA reports that 'Work to restore peat bogs is also already underway, and we're currently funding four major projects around the country which will restore 6,498 hectares of degraded peatland.'

Regeneration

A 'Regeneration' campaign was launched on 1st July 2020 calling on Government to consider the newly awakened appreciation of our natural environment that was felt during Covid-19 restrictions when building back our economy. A poll carried out during lockdown found that two-thirds of people think protecting and enhancing green spaces should be a higher Government priority after coronavirus.

Greener, better, faster

Greener, better, faster was launched at a virtual panel discussion in July 2020 with George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Luke Pollard MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Former Leader of the Green Party; and Freddie Northcott, youth climate activist in attendance.

CPRE National and its local office in Gloucestershire believes that the countryside is key to tackling the climate emergency and provides many of the solutions to addressing climate breakdown. More information can be found here <https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/what-we-care-about/current-campaigns/greener-better-faster-countryside-solutions-for-a-green-recovery/>

Star Count 2020

Our annual Star Count took place in February 2020 and an incredible 2,500 people took part, counting stars within the Orion constellation. Over 27,000 stars were counted and logged.

Key findings:

Almost two-thirds of us (61%) couldn't see more than ten stars within Orion, indicating we're experiencing severe light pollution. Worryingly, this was the highest figure we've seen since we started doing our annual counts. Find out more and see the interactive map here.

<https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/starry-skies/>





Jane Leckebusch

Our Local Campaigns

Wolds End Orchard, Chipping Camden

Friends of Wolds End Orchard was formed in 2019. The orchard has been at risk of development for decades, despite enormous local opposition to it. We were approached by FOWEO to support their campaign. We are happy to report that for now, the orchard is safe and under new management from the charity who owns it, and the future of the orchard looks far better than it did.



Newnham on Severn Phone Box

We're delighted to report that Historic England have awarded the phone box listed building status. The Parish Council then met and decided against the removal and sale of the phone box. Tony who is working on this campaign said: "I want to thank you for your great support and for informing your members. If any of them did write to the Council or sign my petition, please thank them on my behalf."

Local Planning Matters

The Local Plan process gives us the chance to shape the places where we live into the future. If you want more affordable housing for young people; if you want more local transport so that traffic is reduced; if you want fewer unsustainable commuter settlements that increase traffic and pollution whilst bringing limited economic benefit, you can write to your local council and have your say.

Here we provide an overview of the Local Plans for each council.

Cotswold District Council

The Cotswold District Local Plan was adopted in 2018 and runs to 2031.

Cotswold District Council were due to undertake a partial update of the Local Plan. The Government subsequently published the Planning for the Future White Paper and Changes to the current planning system consultation in August 2020. These documents seek to reform the existing planning system and change the way councils plan for new development and determine planning applications.

Cotswold District Council will publish a new Local Plan Development Scheme when they have clarity from the Government on the proposed reforms to the planning system.

Forest of Dean District Council

The Forest of Dean District Council began the process of reviewing its Core Strategy and associated plans in Autumn 2019, with the aim of having a new Local Plan in place by 2023. This is intended to cover the period up to 2041.

All of the consultation responses are being analysed to inform the next stage of the emerging Local Plan. The public will be asked for comment on the Draft Local Plan in Summer 2021..

Stroud District Council

In November 2015, the Council adopted a new Local Plan for Stroud. This plan provides a framework for the District for the period up to 2031.

In August 2020, the Government published proposed changes to the way they calculate the minimum housing requirement for each local authority area in the country. This revised method would have increased the requirement for Stroud District from the level set out in the 2019 Draft Local Plan of 638 homes per annum, to 786 homes per annum.



Tewkesbury Borough Council

Should this method be confirmed, a revised Draft Local Plan may have to identify further land within the Stroud District for housing. Current monitoring indicates they may have to find land for an additional 1,050 – 2,400 homes between now and 2040.

For this reason, the Council consulted on additional housing options and sites. This took place via an online questionnaire due to Covid-19 restrictions. The consultation has now closed. Our Stroud and Berkeley Vale District Committees jointly responded to the consultation on additional housing options in early December 2020

Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Review

There has been little if any obvious progress since the Issues and Options consultation at the end of 2018, and while the major expansion of Ashchurch to form 'Tewkesbury Garden Town' remains a likely major aspect, there is little public progress on that either. However, a new timetable has been published, which involves public consultation on Preferred Options later in 2021. Pre-submission consultation is intended to take place towards the end of 2022 and the Examination the following summer.

As noted above, the current JCS work had continued on the more detailed local plans for its three constituent authorities, all of which run to 2031.

Gloucester City Council

CPRE made a detailed submission on the Gloucester City Plan at the Pre-Submission consultation stage. The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 20 November 2020 and its Examination is now due to start 11 May 2021.

Cheltenham Borough Council

The Cheltenham Plan had its Examination in 2019 and was adopted on 20th July 2020.

Tewkesbury Borough Council

Following the Pre-Submission consultation at the end of 2019, the Tewkesbury Borough Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in May 2020. The Examination hearings, to which CPRE provided written input, will begin in February 2021.

Planning Reforms

In August 2020 the Government launched two consultations on proposals to make major changes to the planning system in England.

The first “Changes to the current planning system” comprised a number of changes which could be introduced quickly aimed at stimulating economic recovery after the Covid pandemic.

The second “Planning for the Future” was a White Paper detailing major longer-term changes which would require legislation.

A number of the proposals were highly controversial and set alarm bells ringing at CPRE. Responding robustly to the consultations was the main CPRE campaign in the autumn and is continuing into 2021. Our national planning team did an outstanding job in responding in detail, with inputs from across the network of local CPREs, not least from CPRE Gloucestershire. They were also very successful in raising awareness of the issues at stake with Conservative backbench MPs and in the media. At the same time, the team engaged with Ministers and senior staff in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in a spirit of constructive dialogue to address areas of particular concern.

The proposal in the first consultation to revise the standard method for determining how many homes should be planned for in each local authority area would have resulted

in greatly increased rates of building in the south of England and on greenfield sites but reduced numbers in the north of England and in the major conurbations where regeneration is so urgent. For Gloucestershire, our house building rate would have increased overall by a massive 46% and in the Cotswolds by a staggering 148%. This proposal caused widespread dismay across the country and a backlash from MPs and more generally. In December, the Government backed down. The present standard method is now to be retained but the twenty most populated urban centres in England see their housing needed uplifted by 35% and there is to be a greater emphasis on redevelopment of underused and derelict land. CPRE can claim much of the credit for this very welcome change of heart.

There is much more campaigning to do as the legislation to implement the proposals in the White Paper is drafted. There are still major issues to resolve, including ensuring local democracy and community engagement, addressing the climate and biodiversity emergencies, ensuring development is focussed on sustainable locations and delivering sufficient affordable housing.

Until details of the new legislation emerges we will not know whether the Government has listened to us or not, but our aim is to continue to engage positively with MHCLG and be solutions focussed.

The sterling efforts of the national team and the considerable resources devoted to this vital campaign have only been made possible because of the strength and support of CPRE’s membership and supporters across the network. CPRE Gloucestershire members have therefore played their part.





CPRE Gloucestershire Awards 2020

Six Awards were made in 2020, but because of the Covid-19 pandemic we were not been able to hold our usual celebratory presentation ceremony. Instead our Vice-Chairman, Richard Lloyd presented the Awards at the project locations, we produced a video of the presentations, and those involved were invited to an online event on 10th November to hear about all the projects.

The six projects are:



Bledington Community Shop and Café

Bledington now has a splendid community shop thanks to the energy, commitment and skills of local people. Largely funded by the community, designed by a local architect, constructed by a local builder, fitted out and mainly run by volunteers, the outcome is a great community asset



Lewiston Mill redevelopment, Brimscombe

Derelict mill buildings have been restored creating 20 residential units and five commercial units, all executed to very high standards both externally and internally. The result is an attractive development which has retained its industrial heritage



Midcounties Co-op Store, Bourton on the Water

Bourton's new store has been exceptionally well designed with sustainability at its heart. A welcome feature is its focus on selling locally sourced produce benefitting local businesses while at the same time reducing "food miles"



mindSCAPE

MindSCAPE is an innovative project in the Forest of Dean to improve the physical and mental well-being of people living with dementia and their carers by offering creative opportunities to access the countryside and reconnect to the landscape through art.



Nature Based Solutions at Oxtalls Campus and Plock Court

This project focusses on Wooton Brook on Gloucester's northern edge. The southern part was devised by the University of Gloucestershire and links at the northern end to the Plock Court wetland nature reserve created by the City Council. Together biodiversity has been greatly enhanced and flood management aided over a mile of interconnected habitat.



Sud Brook Riparian Restoration

When the housing was built in the Abbeydale area of Gloucester in the 1960s, the Sud Brook was placed within a concrete channel. This project has seen the removal of a stretch of the channel and reintroduction of meanders, berms and other traditional riparian features along the brook, transforming the area with an improved landscape, new water habitats and public access to the waterside.

Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan

A new Minerals Local Plan (MLP) was finally adopted by Gloucestershire County Council in March 2020 following appraisal via an examination in public and subsequent endorsement by a Government planning inspector - 14 years after its predecessor formally expired (though key policies were 'saved' and still applicable until the new plan was adopted). The current MLP covers the period 2018 - 2032 and will be subject to periodic review in order to reflect any changes, in particular in demand for minerals.

CPRE made substantial representations to several public consultations during the long evolution of the new plan. Although the planning inspector did not accept CPRE's assessment that the 'duty to co-operate' (with other mineral planning authorities) had not been satisfied, it is evident that our comments did help to achieve a major shift in the county council's attention to that requirement. In the latter stages of developing the plan the duty to co-operate was given much greater attention and prominence.

We are disappointed with some policy text in the new MLP and with allocation 01 for crushed rock in the Forest of Dean (extension of Stowe Hill Quarry), but the MLP is now adopted and is the key statutory document for minerals land use planning in Gloucestershire.'

Working with others

Despite having to adapt the way we work we have continued to build relationships and develop projects with other partner organisations:

- Friends of the Cotswolds: we have been developing a project around hedgerow restoration in the Cotswolds National Landscape. We will provide updates throughout 2021
- ReWild Project, Forest of Dean: we have developed a project to deliver traditional rural crafts to young people at risk of exclusion from school.
- Richard Lloyd continues to represent CPRE on the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership board
- Our tree planting scheme to mitigate against ash dieback in partnership with the Cotswolds Conservation Board continues into another year

- A417 Missing Link We responded to a further Highways England consultation on updated designs for the 'A417 Missing Link' suggesting a number of refinements to this major road scheme which would help to minimise its landscape impact.

Other organisations we worked alongside included: Cotswold Conservation Board, Gloucestershire Ramblers, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Historic England, the National Trust, Natural England and Woodland Trust

- Gloucestershire County Council Local Transport Plan 2020 – 2041: We made a comprehensive response to a consultation on updating the county's Local Transport Plan. We welcomed much of what the Plan contains. It aligns with the principles CPRE advocate, with policies to achieve a significant modal shift from use of private cars to use of public transport and more active travel (cycling and walking) not just to solve the increasing problem of congestion but to contribute to efforts to mitigate climate change. However, we were concerned that the proposed actions in the plan failed to follow through with sufficient energy, incisiveness or early commitment of funds.

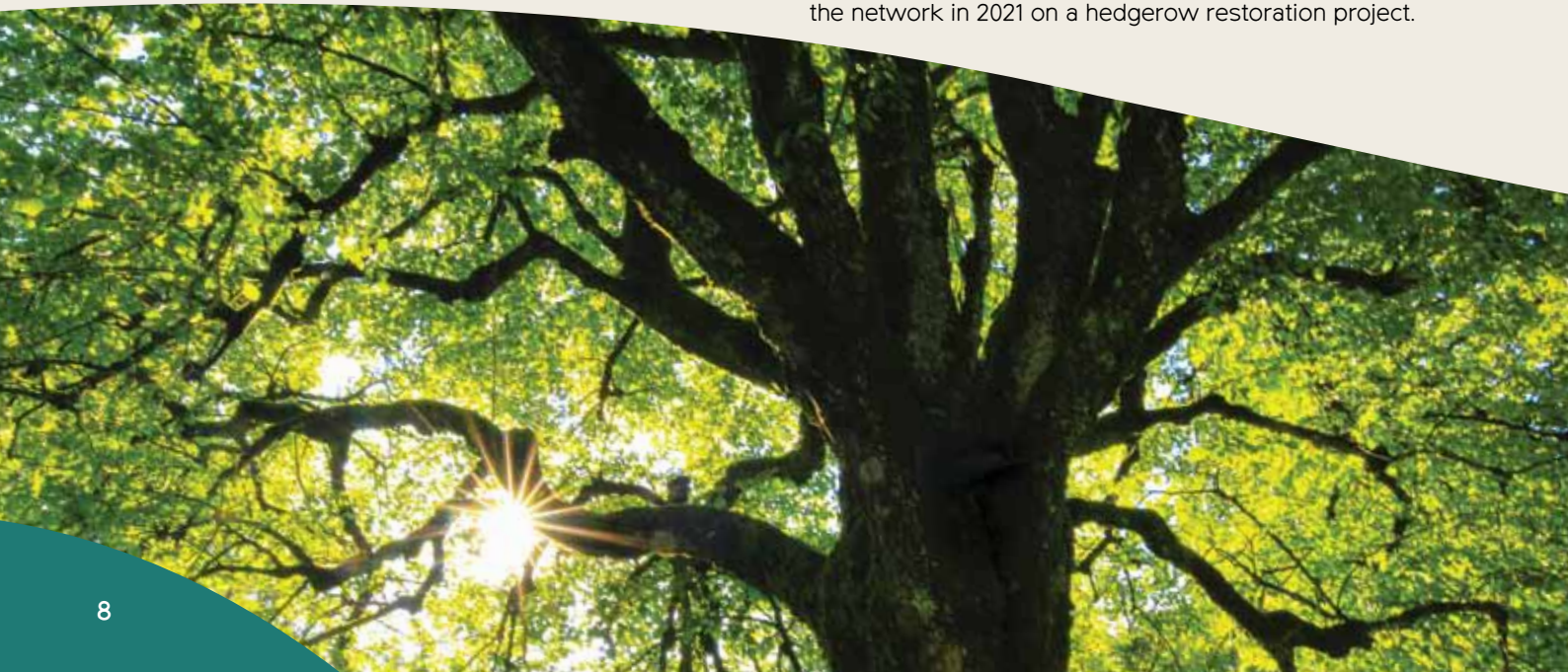
Working with the wider CPRE network

- Louise Williams has been attending the South West regional meetings mostly online for 2020. The region took part in a joint communications initiative with Pink Sky Design during October and November 2020 promoting responsible use of the countryside in response to the observation that Covid-19 had increased our appreciation for the countryside on our doorstep. The successful campaign saw us and other CPRE's in the region promoted across all social media channels providing us with great insight into the opinions of people who engaged with the content published.

- Louise has also been working alongside the income generation team at National CPRE and the Volunteering team as new ways of working are being established to further promote and support the work of local offices. One of these has been the introduction of a new section of our website that processes volunteer applications.

- Our Chair of the Forest of Dean District, Simon Murray, was appointed National CPRE Chair of the board of trustees.

- We will be working with four other CPRE offices across the network in 2021 on a hedgerow restoration project.



The Work we Do

CPRE Gloucestershire, the Countryside Charity is your local office of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

We work to protect our green spaces which are so important now more than ever. We support rural communities to thrive and connect those in more urban parts of Gloucestershire with their local countryside. How do we do this?

- We scrutinise planning applications and make representations where development would be particularly harmful with regards to the sustainability of the location and/or the impact of development on the landscape – this work is carried out by our dedicated and passionate volunteer task force. You will have a committee in your area of the county: Stroud, Berkeley Vale, Forest of Dean, North Cotswolds, South Cotswolds and Tetbury, and Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury.

- We offer grants to local community groups and parish councils for tree planting to help mitigate the impacts of ash dieback <https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/news/funding-for-parish-councils-and-community-groups-for-tree-planting/>

- We're working on some exciting partnerships with local organisations and individuals on the physical and mental health benefits of the countryside, and we're planning lots of events and activities – foraging, mindful walks, outdoor yoga, forest bathing and many more!

- We campaign for better transport links for those living in rural parts of Gloucestershire and are calling for a dedicated rural transport fund <https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/resources/transport-deserts/>



- We run projects, activities and campaigns across the county to reduce litter and plastic waste
- We recognise and celebrate local projects which are exemplars of good practice in terms of sustainability and improvement to the environment through our annual CPRE Gloucestershire Awards <https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/get-involved/cpre-gloucestershire-awards/>
- We work to protect and enhance the Green Belt and local countryside that give our towns and cities room to breathe
- We promote and support buying local, supporting your local farmers and local businesses

Members

CPRE Gloucestershire relies on the generosity of its members who pay a monthly subscription. Gloucestershire remains the 10th largest local office in terms of membership (43 offices total) with 1,150 as at the end of 2020 which is broken down per district as follows:

During lockdown, Lesley and Louise focused their efforts on improvising our communications with members and started to produce a regular e-newsletter that is emailed monthly to all members who have provided us with an email address. We have started a Members' Book Club, and we have a Members' Corner on our website, showcasing a life in the day of a regular CPRE Gloucestershire member. We continue to interact with our members via social media in particular Facebook and Instagram. We also have a new website that is full of interesting information and updates on both the campaigning work we do and any projects that we are running.

District	Total number of members
Berkeley Vale	139
Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury	354
Forest of Dean	99
North Cotswolds	151
Stroud	165
South Cotswolds and Tetbury	227
Listed as member of County Branch	13
Listed as No district	2
TOTALS	1,150

A move to the status of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

For some years the Charity Commission has recommended that all but the smallest charities should move from their traditional status of an unincorporated body (where trustees have individual liability) to that of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (where the liability is held corporately). This advice is echoed by national CPRE.

Accordingly, and on the recommendation of the trustees of CPRE Gloucestershire, the AGM in 2019 approved such a move in principle. Following a year of preparatory legal work, the change of status was agreed unanimously by the AGM in 2020. Trustees are currently working through the practical tasks needed to effect the change.

The day to day work of CPRE Gloucestershire will be unaffected by the move to CIO status, and membership will be unchanged.

Election of Trustees for 2021

The first set of Trustees for the CPRE Gloucestershire CIO were elected at the AGM in November 2020. In furthering the work of the charity the Trustees will be guided, as always, by the advice of the Charity Commission.

Professor Patricia Broadfoot CBE (Chair)
David Brooke (Vice Chair)
Miranda Chalk
David Crofts
Colin Evers
Julian Oxley (Treasurer)
Ashley Smith
Steve Smith

At the AGM the Chair thanked a number of former trustees whose terms of office had now expired. She added that their time, commitment and experience would be greatly missed. Richard Lloyd remains a Vice Chair of the charity.

Mr David Bayne
Mrs Elizabeth Bourne
Mr Nick Dummett
Major Tom Hancock
Mr Richard Lloyd (Vice Chair)
Mr Simon Murray
Mrs Prue Vernon

President of CPRE Gloucestershire
Mr Charles Martell

Vice Presidents
Sir John Adye KCMG
The Earl of Harrowby
Professor Adrian Phillips CBE
Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE
The Earl of Wemyss and March

Income and Fundraising

CPRE Gloucestershire were fortunate to receive the following donations through trusts and grants and from members. We extend our heartfelt thanks to those that have supported us financially during this tough year, we are very grateful.

J & M Britton	£250
HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust	£1,000
Severn Trent Recovery Fund	£2,000
D'Oyley Carte Charitable Trust	£2,000
Members donations	£677.15
Christmas Cards and Calendar sales	£871



Wayne Seeley

Photography competition: Christmas Cards and 2021 Calendars

Lesley our Office Manager ran a successful and popular photography competition during the Summer of 2020. We were pleasantly surprised at the number of contributions and staggered by the talent and beautiful photographs we were sent of our wonderful Gloucestershire countryside. If you purchased either the cards and/or calendars, thank you. We will be running the same competition again in 2021 and aim to be selling the Christmas cards, calendars and greeting cards in September, a bit earlier this time!



Paul Bennell



Sue Heady

CPRE Gloucestershire
Summarised Statement of Financial Activities for the Year ended 31st December 2020

	2020	2019
	£	£
Income		
Share of National Subscriptions	22,159	22,044
Investment Income & Interest	4,101	4,705
Donations & Miscellaneous	7,486	2,315
	<u>33,746</u>	<u>29,064</u>
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	34,468	13,003
Training & Recruitment	2,400	451
Postage & Telephone	576	639
Office & IT Costs	5,689	968
Office Rent	3,467	3,467
Publicity & Fund-Raising	1,257	125
Publishing	3,465	4,929
Reporting Accountant	672	660
Annual General Meeting	0	560
Professional Charges	2,994	3,335
Insurance	864	660
Travel & Meetings	1,040	2,485
Awards Scheme	1,940	873
Subscriptions	91	89
Planning Consultancy	1,225	3,542
Bank Charges & Interest	96	0
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust: for Severn Vision Project	2,500	2,500
Place Studio: for Neighbourhood Plans Research	0	2,606
	<u>62,744</u>	<u>40,892</u>
	Deficit for the Year	(11,828)
(Loss) Gain on Investments	(23,394)	34,441
General Fund brought forward	83,602	200,989
	<u>31,210</u>	<u>223,602</u>
Transfers to:		
Partnership Fund	0	(50,000)
Development Fund	0	(50,000)
Districts Fund	0	(30,000)
Training Fund	0	(10,000)
General Fund carried forward	<u>31,210</u>	<u>83,602</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2020

Assets		
Investments (market value)		283,749
Bank Accounts		350
Debtors		5,131
		<u>289,230</u>
less Current Liabilities		(5,770)
		<u>283,460</u>
Financed by		
General Fund	31,210	
Fighting Fund	100,000	
Partnership Fund	50,000	
Development Fund	50,000	
Districts Fund	30,000	
Training Fund	10,000	
	271,210	
Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs)	7,250	
Tree Planting Fund	5,000	
	<u>283,460</u>	

Treasurer's Report

Despite welcome growth of £5,171 in Donations, the appointment of both a Director and an Office Manager increased Staff Costs by £21,465, so that the Annual Deficit of £28,998 was some £17,000 higher than in 2019. Added to that, a fall of £23,394 (7.6%) in the value of our Investments during the year produced a total shortfall of £52,392 which has been met from the General Fund.

With the worldwide fall in stock markets as a result of the pandemic, the trustees decided to delay any realisation of investments for the time being. Instead our routine work has been temporarily supported by modest borrowing from our bank and from the Government's Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

Julian Oxley, Hon Treasurer
March 2021

How leaving a gift in your will can regenerate our Gloucestershire countryside for the future

For every rolling hill, every thriving farm and every characterful village. You can choose to help regenerate the Gloucestershire countryside you know and love by leaving a gift in your will to CPRE Gloucestershire.

Together, we can promote, enhance and protect the places we hold dear so they can thrive in the future. For us all. Forever.

For more information or advice, please get in touch – louise.williams@cpreglos.org.uk

Director Louise Williams
e-mail: louise.williams@cpreglos.org.uk
Office Manager Lesley Painter
e-mail: lesley.painter@cpreglos.org.uk
Tel: 01452 309 783

Twitter: @CPREGlous
Instagram: [cpre_gloucestershire](https://www.instagram.com/cpre_gloucestershire)
Facebook: @cpreglos

The Objects of CPRE Gloucestershire are the promotion and encouragement, for the benefit of the public, of the protection and enhancement of rural Gloucestershire and its towns and villages



Alexander Caminada Photography

Join in.
cpre.org.uk/gloucestershire

© CPRE Gloucestershire, Community House, 15 College Green,
Gloucester GL1 2LZ. Tel: 01452 309783
Email: info@cpreglos.org.uk | www.cpreglos.org.uk
Registered charity number: 248577



The countryside charity
Gloucestershire