



The countryside charity
Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire Views Spring 2023

www.cpreglos.org.uk



Greetings from the Chair

Wildflowers seem to be becoming fashionable. On a recent visit to the 'Lost Gardens of Heligan' in Cornwall, I learned that they are planting many acres of wild-flower meadow with a view to collecting seeds to sell to other landowners. This is good news. The statistics speak for themselves. Since the second world war, we have lost 97% of our wildflower meadows in the UK. Over 200,000 miles of hedgerows have been destroyed and half of our ancient woodland and heathland has disappeared. The wonderful vistas of wild daffodils to be found around Kempeley in the spring are now so unique that they are the basis for a major festival! The impact of this loss of wildflowers, bushes and trees on the pollinators, the birds and the animals that depend on them has been severe. As we know, meadows in particular are in rapid and in some cases, terminal decline.

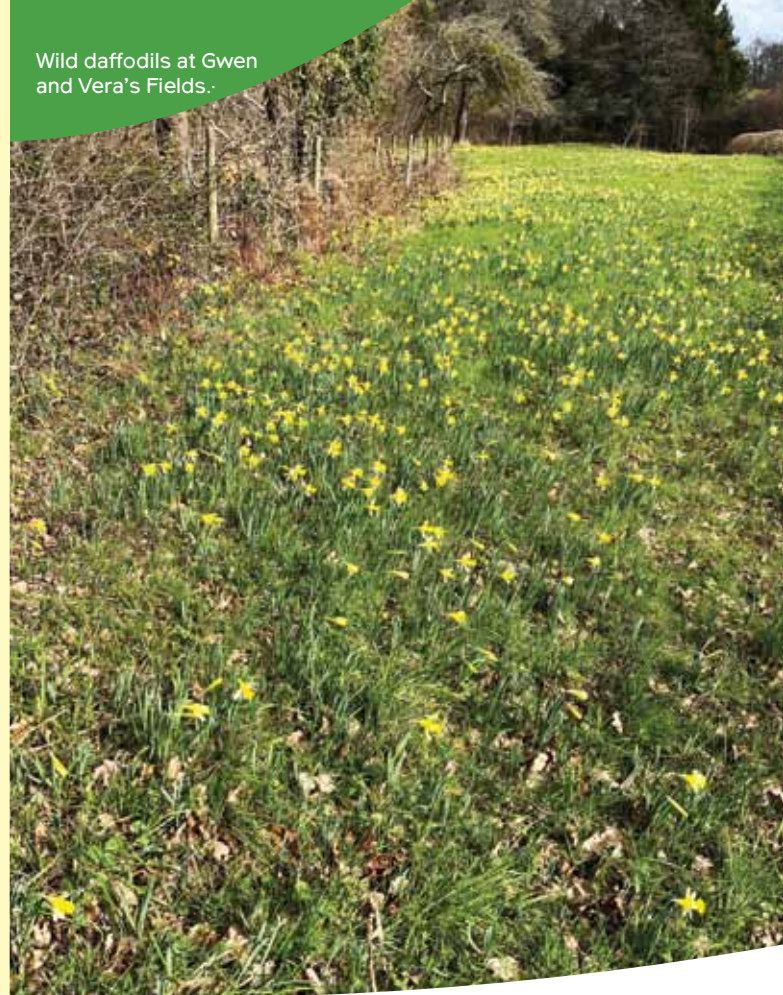


Prof. Patricia Broadfoot CBE FAcSS,
County Chair

But it is not too late. Most of us haven't got a garden the size of Heligan but we can all find a small corner to grow wildflowers – even in a window-box! Hedgerows too are a vital part of this mission to support our wildlife. They have the added benefit of storing carbon and helping to prevent soil erosion. So I am delighted that in the winter months CPRE Gloucestershire volunteers, with partner organisations Cotswolds Canal Trust and the South West Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group, have planted several kilometres of new hedging.

Our involvement in the 'Britain in Bloom' competition for the first time this year also provides encouragement to communities and individuals across Gloucestershire to create a display that is not only beautiful, but also contributes to nature. CPRE is the only charity that is concerned with every aspect of the health of our countryside. We fight for the future of its wildlife, its communities, issues of rural living and above all, the beauty of our wonderful landscape. Our overriding concern is to protect our countryside from the incursions of inappropriate

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Chair's Statement

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housing developments, solar farms and industrial farming practices that together are increasingly threatening the viability of the natural world on which we all depend.

And so thank you for your support for CPRE Gloucestershire. Your membership, your donations, and above all your volunteering, help our small, but dedicated team, to fight effectively for the future of your countryside. I hope you enjoy reading about our activities in this newsletter and if you do, please let us know. We always love to hear from our readers, especially with suggestions about what we can do better. Thank you!

Professor Patricia Broadfoot CBE.
Chair

District Activity

Berkeley Vale

Prue Vernon

Stroud District Council is in the middle of the inspection of its new Local Plan. As we would expect, there is a lot of discussion about the impact of the proposed large housing developments at Cam, Wisloe and Sharpness. There is great concern about their proximity to the international SSSI protected Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust land at Slimbridge and the pressure such a large number of people, and their dogs, will put on the land next to the Severn and the SSSI when out for some fresh air.

It is interesting how awareness of water is seeping into planning applications. The Severn flood defences currently do not have a 50 year life. The effect of global warming, sea level rise and the effect of storms is now a serious point for consideration. Also, given the large developments proposed in the Severn Vale, where will the surface water from heavy rainfall go? Currently it causes regular local flooding in the Cambridge/Slimbridge area as some of the land is lower than the river Cam. We suspect that this new awareness contributed to the withdrawal of the proposed solar development in the Arlingham peninsula. The life of a large solar array is at least 50 years and the flood defences round Arlingham will not last that long, so any developer could be asked to contribute substantially to reinforcing the flood defences.

There is a proposed solar array at Gravel Farm (*Forest of Dean District Council Planning ref: P1773/22/FUL*) opposite Arlingham which is a beautiful bit of grassland along the Severn. Please look up the application and object.

There are more applications for solar arrays, masts and battery storage sites. The solar array developer at Whitminster (49.9MW) is applying for masts and a conversion block to connect directly to the national grid. It is close to the listed Whitminster Church and Whitminster House and will affect the view of them from local footpaths. Battery storage sites are proposed on Kingston Road near the Cambridge Arms which will be substantial (36MW), and also at Sanigar Lane, next to Hook Street, Berkeley, (100MW). These are noisy, large machines and will not make good neighbours to nearby housing. Another large solar array (40MW) is proposed between Frocester, Eastington and the M5 which will be very conspicuous from the Frocester Hill viewpoint.

The 2016 St Modwyn Development Plan for Littlecombe, Dursley, highlighted the key role of green infrastructure in the plan for Zone E. They are now applying to put 10 houses in Zone E on an important area of green infrastructure (S.22/2789/FUL). There is a lot of local feeling about this which we are supporting.

Some of us spent three mornings planting new hedges at Fromebridge Mill supporting Cotswold Canal Trust's green infrastructure on this section of the canal. I can recommend

this as a very pleasant way to be out of doors in good company doing something useful. Do try and join us next time we are planting hedges. We hope to have a stand at the Cotswold Canal Trust's Spring Festival on 13-14 May. See our website for more details.

Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury

David Crofts

Development on the sites allocated in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), located in Tewkesbury Borough but intended to meet the needs of Gloucester and Cheltenham, continues except in the case of north-west Cheltenham. Elsewhere in Tewkesbury Borough, pressures for development in some villages also continue.

The three JCS authorities have made no meaningful progress on the review. The JCS was adopted in December 2017 and under current guidance became out of date for the purposes of housing provision in December 2022. This has led to renewed controversy about whether or not the Borough Council can demonstrate a five year supply of land for housing.

The most recent major appeal, at Hillend, Twyning was dismissed, but the Inspector accepted the appellant's case in respect of housing land supply. Good news for Twyning; bad news for the rest of the Borough.

The JCS authorities were already in difficulties over housing land supply when the MoD decided in late 2016 that the Ashchurch Depot, on which the JCS relied for about 2,000 houses, was not after all available. The outlook is made worse as a result of the dismissal late last year of an appeal at Mitton, located in Wychavon District but included in the JCS for 500 houses, largely on traffic grounds.

More recently, judicial review of TBC's decision to grant planning permission for a new bridge across the Bristol to Birmingham railway line resulted in the decision being quashed. The Council was judged not to have taken sufficient account of the potential environmental effects of the bridge. The bridge would be an essential part of the infrastructure for the Tewkesbury Garden Town.

The Council will have to start again in a situation where the costs of the bridge have risen sharply. Making provision for development in the JCS review for the period 2031 to 2041 will rely even more on sites in Tewkesbury Borough as the capacity of Gloucester and Cheltenham to accommodate development diminishes. The degree of strategic choice in Tewkesbury Borough has fallen, as the most suitable sites



in the Green Belt were allocated in the present JCS, much of the Borough lies in the Cotswolds National Landscape, and large areas on both sides of the River Severn are inaccessible and unsuitable for major development.

CPRE will continue to keep watch and will play an active part in the JCS review when it starts.

Forest of Dean

Simon Murray

The hot topic here in the Forest, as across Gloucestershire and much of England, is the roll-out of field solar on a large scale. Because there are no spatial plans to guide where development can be put in the landscape, this is a free market driven by investor capital. And, as a consequence, investors like big, because big brings a good return as opposed to small and community-led.

CPRE Forest of Dean is currently objecting to a large 30+MW scheme on the banks of the River Severn between Westbury and Rodley. This will cover a whole farm of 150 acres and be very visible in the landscape. It is directly opposite Arlingham in CPRE Berkeley Vale District. A well-organised campaign by locals, supported by CPRE, persuaded the developers at Arlingham to pull out. We hope that similar arguments will persuade these developers to pull this application as well. It would be great if CPRE members could add their voice to this campaign. The planning reference is P1773/22/FUL on the Forest of Dean website.

In a similar vein, CPRE Forest of Dean also submitted evidence to the planning inspector in an appeal case against the decision to refuse planning permission for a large 2-acre battery storage unit next to the village of Awre. Awre is a tranquil hamlet with origins going back to Norman times and with many listed buildings. This industrial development would be wholly inappropriate in such a setting. We wait to hear news of the inspector's decision.

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District Activity

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CPRE recognises that renewables have an important part to play in combatting the climate emergency, but this does not mean a free-for-all in the countryside. Our campaign focuses first on asking the government to re-introduce subsidies for rooftop solar. Only 3% of houses in the UK have solar on their roofs. This would run in tandem with more help from government to insulate homes, thereby reducing energy demand. These two approaches would go a long way to meeting current demand for electricity and significantly reduce carbon emissions. The third element of our campaign is to ask for better spatial planning for solar and wind schemes. Solar and wind should be built into Local Plans, like all other development. Moreover, schemes should be smaller, community supported and located where impact on the countryside can be minimized.

North Cotswolds

Steve Smith

Quarrying for building stone and walling stone in the Cotswolds is important. As well as providing local employment, the houses and walls that are made of this stone frame the unique Cotswolds landscape. In recent years the demand for this stone and by-products of

quarrying within and outside the Cotswolds has increased and as a consequence the quarry owners have been increasing production to meet this demand. They are also in the process of applying to Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to increase production even further. This increased production is having a significant impact on local residents and the local environment. The increase in number and size of lorries down the small country lanes around the quarries has damaged roads and eroded verges. The increased production has significantly increased dust and noise pollution.

Temple Guiting Parish Council (TGPC) has been leading a campaign to formally recognise the quarries as a cluster and to set production limits for the cluster rather than looking at individual planning applications and production levels for each quarry. Any approvals would be based on the cumulative environmental impact. In addition, all quarries in the cluster would need to have an agreed reinstatement plan that it is adhered to and would include minimising the need to import materials from outside of the cluster or between quarries in the cluster.

We have been supporting TGPC, including providing advice and writing to GCC to support objections to individual planning applications.



Stroud

Elisabeth Skinner MBE / Pippa Schwartz

The Stroud District Local Plan Examination in Public (EiP) has been taking a lot of the committee's time over the last few months. The EiP formal hearing started in March and will go on until the end of May with site-specific discussions at the beginning of May. This time, the Examination is being held virtually rather than face to face and while it is great to be able to watch the proceedings from the comfort of an office, it perhaps lacks a little immediacy.

Where appropriate, Stroud District will be joining in discussions for the sites they commented on, both of which are related to the Cotswolds National Landscape which covers much of our district. The District Committee is anxious to ensure that the plan does not result in major development in the AONB, thus gradually eroding the protected landscape we all value so much.

Many of the objections we have raised to planning applications over recent months follow the same theme; the Cotswold National Landscape is coming under increased pressure from development and where appropriate we will voice opposition.

On a less serious note, Stroud district is planning to hold a guided walk in June to discover the delights of Ebworth wood and Sheepscombe, ending up with lunch at the Butcher's Arms in the village for those in need of refreshment or nourishment. Our Chairman has lived in Sheepscombe almost all of her life and is quite an expert on local history so it promises to be a fascinating walk.

We are also planning to have a stand at the Stroud Show again this year so please do pop over to say hello if you are there.

South Cotswolds and Tetbury

Max Thornycroft

In the last twelve months, the District Committee has considered a variety of development proposals in the South Cotswolds and Tetbury area. The most high profile has been the application to construct a major truck stop for 75 HGVs on a greenfield site in the Cotswold National Landscape just north of Cirencester off the A417. The applicant is claiming in effect that a national need for more such truck



stops outweighs the protection of AONBs from major developments. The Committee made its own submission in response to the planning application which was successful in getting the application refused by the Cotswold District Council (CDC) and followed this up last year with a further submission to the Inspector in the course of the ensuing appeal by the applicant. The local residents have raised money to engage expert lawyers and consultants to fight the appeal and the Committee have committed some of the District's funds to pay their costs, as they believe that this is the most cost effective way obtaining professional assistance in defeating the proposal. A decision on the appeal is expected later this year.

We have considered a number of smaller proposals, many of them featuring the change of use of redundant buildings to alternative uses ranging from commercial (including holiday lettings) to residential. We often take the view that it is better to support such changes rather than let buildings fall into disrepair, so long as the design is of high quality and in keeping with the local vernacular.

An unusual case which we considered involved the expansion of a commercial business at Long Newton near Tetbury. The application did not particularly change the use of or expand the site itself but would have resulted in a large increase in the number of HGV movements on local roads which were completely unsuitable even for the existing HGV traffic using the site. We supported the local residents by submitting an objection to the CDC which was successful in obtaining a refusal of the application.

The CDC Local Plan 2011-2031 is undergoing its mid-term review and we are involved in that process.

The holding of events for our members is slowly getting back underway following the pandemic and the first post-pandemic event was a visit to the ASI site at Kemble Airport in August 2022 which was oversubscribed. Further events are planned.

Environmental Land Management

Richard Lloyd

In the spring 2020 newsletter I reported on radical changes to the way farmers will receive income support through the public purse. Under the former EU Common Agricultural Policy farmers received direct income support through a Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) with the amount paid determined by the area of land managed. On top of that money was available under Countryside Stewardship (CS) to fund measures to conserve and enhance the environment, but by far the majority of the money went into the BPS. In future, public funding will be focussed largely on supporting environmental measures – public money for public goods – with delivery through a programme called Environmental Land Management (ELM).

There is a transition period. BPS is already being phased out and will be gone by 2027. It is being replaced by funding for ELM agreements which will sit alongside other programmes such as Farming in Protected Landscapes, the Farming Investment Fund and innovation programmes. This will increase as various ELM schemes are rolled out, and Ministers have promised that the total budget available will be maintained at least for the duration of this parliament.

At the end of January, Defra published long awaited details of how ELM will operate. The policy paper includes a summary. It says:

“Payments for environmental goods and services”

We will have three schemes to pay for environmental and climate goods and services:

- the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) will pay farmers to adopt and maintain sustainable farming practices that can protect and enhance the natural environment alongside food production, and also support farm productivity (including by improving animal health and welfare, optimising the use of inputs and making better use of natural resources)
- Countryside Stewardship will pay for more targeted actions relating to specific locations, features and habitats. There will be an extra incentive through CS Plus for land managers to join up across local areas to deliver bigger and better results [the original intention was to devise a new scheme to be called Local Nature Recovery. Instead, the existing CS scheme is being retained and improved]
- Landscape Recovery will pay for bespoke, longer-term, larger scale projects to enhance the natural environment.

Currently, there are about 40,000 agreements in our Countryside and Environmental Stewardship schemes, covering about 34% of agricultural land. There are 94% more CS agreements now than in January 2020. By 2028, we plan to increase this to at least 70,000 in our schemes, covering 70% of farmed land and 70% of all farms, so that farmers and land managers can collectively deliver our ambitious targets for the environment and climate, alongside food production.

We want all farmers in existing agreements to continue to take part in our new Environmental Land Management schemes and will make it as easy as possible for them to either enter into our new schemes at the right time, or add new offers to their existing agreement.

The schemes will collectively pay farmers and land managers to deliver, alongside food production, significant and important outcomes for the climate and environment that can only be delivered by farmers and other land managers in the wider countryside. These include:

- creating and restoring a broad range of wildlife-rich habitat, as well as continuing to protect habitat already managed under our existing agri-environment schemes
- improving water quality, by reducing nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agricultural activities, building on our existing Catchment Sensitive Farming approach
- increasing resilience to flooding and drought through nature-based solutions such as natural flood management
- creating more new woodlands and treescapes to increase tree and woodland cover, and encouraging management of existing woodlands, including to increase their resilience to pests and diseases
- reducing carbon emissions, storing carbon and increasing resilience to climate change, for example through management of soils, water, peatland and trees.”

The full ELM prospectus runs to many pages and sets out payments rates for the range of activities that Defra intends to cover. Initially, SFI aligns with CS payment rates. They are based on an income foregone plus costs calculation. Defra indicate that in the future in the SFI they will incentivise farmers to carry actions in combinations, or at scale, or levels of ambition that are more likely to deliver successful, significant results.

Payment rates will be reviewed regularly.

While not all agricultural sectors will be able to benefit equally from ELM, the overall industry response has been broadly positive. However, at their conference NFU President Minette Batters raised a number of concerns



CPRE Gloucestershire Awards 2023

Our Awards committee are in the process of receiving and reviewing nominations for our CPRE Gloucestershire Awards 2023. We are looking forward to hosting the ceremony in November 2023. More information can be found on the 'Awards' page on our website.



Cotswold field margin for pollinators.

saying that while the ELM prospectus provides much needed detail in some areas, it still falls short in others. Specifically:

- ELM must reward environmental outcomes that are not land-based, so sectors such as horticulture can help deliver net zero.
- The lack of scientific rigour and transparency in the co-design process needs to be addressed.
- There should be clear rules so that new options in SFI and Countryside Stewardship are compatible and can be stacked.
- And payments must move away from the principle of income foregone, which offers little incentive, especially in some sectors and geographies.

Clearly there is much more to do to get the details right as the ELM programme is rolled out progressively.



Local Nature Recovery

Nicola Hillary

Over the next couple of years, the phrase “Local Nature Recovery Strategy” is coming to Gloucestershire, as it is coming to every county in England. The Environment Act 2021 set out the requirement to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and in March 2023 Defra published the long-awaited guidance on what is expected: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategy-what-to-include>. Gloucestershire County Council will be appointed as the “responsible authority” for the task, but to be successful this is a partnership exercise which is to be coordinated and managed by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership.

Gloucestershire is well prepared. Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership coordinated the creation of a Nature Recovery Network map of key biodiversity habitats in our county, and the best potential opportunity areas for expanding, connecting and improving these habitats. You can explore many different layers of this mapping here: <https://naturalcapital.gcerdata.com/>. Huge credit should be given to Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Juliet Hynes in particular, and to Linda Moore at Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records for most of the hard work behind the compilation and analysis of this information.

The potential visualised by the Nature Recovery Network map is a brilliant start point for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy discussions. We have numerous other pieces of the jigsaw available as well. Cotswolds National Landscape has already created a Local Nature Recovery Plan for the AONB. Malvern Hills AONB and Cotswold Water Park Nature Conservation Forum have also created Local Nature Recovery Plans and Wye Valley AONB has a management plan and has just started to develop its nature recovery plan.

The National Trust is working at “landscape recovery” scale in its Stroud Landscape Project. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust is working on Nature Recovery Zones. The Severn Vale Catchment Partnership has developed a strategic action plan for the River Frome. FWAG is working with groups of farmers to “test and trial” landscape recovery approaches. Gloucester City Council is taking forward the idea of a Severnside nature park. The Woodland Trust is funding, via Gloucestershire County Council, significant levels of new tree planting.

There are two innovative landscape scale projects just starting – Severn Treescapes, looking at enhancing tree cover to connect the Lower Wye Valley and Forest of Dean north-wards to the Wyre Forest; and Eelscapes, with ELMS landscape recovery pilot funding, where Wildfowl and Wetland Trust, Environment Agency and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust are working together with 14 landowners to look at the potential to restore floodplain habitats. And there are many, many, more pieces of the jigsaw of care, vision and priorities that people and organisations around Gloucestershire are already taking forward for nature. My hope is that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy can reflect them all.

Some of the other early preparations have been led by Gloucestershire County Council’s principal ecologist Gary Kennison, and one of our challenges is that he retires in April! Many of his predictions about the process ahead are very similar to what we now read in the guidance. It will be key to collectively think about:

- Biodiversity priorities
- Potential measures to achieve these priorities
- Mapping of areas that could become of particular importance – this will create a Local Habitat Map.

Haven’t we thought about all these things before?

Remember Biodiversity Action Plans? Yes, of course we have, and the jigsaw of plans, strategies and projects I described above is testament to that. However, I do think that developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy is a huge opportunity.

On the first step, around Biodiversity Priorities, I think there is an opportunity to let ourselves imagine what would really be needed to help nature turn things around and recover? The phrase of “Nature Recovery” is a much more powerful concept than “conservation” – which implies preserving value, or “biodiversity” which values the complexity of ecology but is more neutral than Nature Recovery. For me, the phrase Nature Recovery acknowledges how much the numbers of so many of our wildlife species have declined over our lifetimes, and how habitats such as ancient woodland, wetlands and meadow grasslands have been damaged and fragmented, to the extent that we can describe this as ecological emergency. “Nature Recovery” enables us to imagine not just reversing those declines but what it could take to respond to this ecological emergency and really restore thriving ecosystems. Aspects of this might feel uncomfortable but personally I’d like to look honestly at what it would take.

The stage of “potential measures to achieve these priorities” is the pragmatic balance to this, where the process can engage with our local realities and look at where there is real scope for practical action. Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership aims to be working closely with Gloucestershire

County Council to bring together nature organisations, landowners, farmers, planners, agencies and others to discuss these potential measures. Working with all of these groups we can identify and agree how to map the “areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity” – remembering of course our comprehensive start point of the Nature Recovery Network mapping. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is intended to inform the planning process, but it will be subject to public consultation before it is adopted.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy process will also look at adaptation to climate change and the potential for carbon sequestration, and other environmental benefits that come from recovering and enhancing biodiversity. Our important habitats don’t stop at the county borders either, so liaison with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy processes of all the neighbouring counties is also part of the job ahead. Natural England, Environment Agency and Forestry Commission all have staff assigned to supporting Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership members in the strategy process.

CPRE Gloucestershire is a member of Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership and will be a key participant in the discussions around biodiversity priorities, potential measures and mapping of “areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity”. CPRE members can therefore keep in touch with Richard Lloyd and Tim Andrews as the process unfolds.





Hedge planting report

CPRE Gloucestershire were really pleased to be able to support the Cotswold Canals Connected partnership by helping to fund and plant 400m of native hedgerow. Over 4km of hedgerow will be delivered as part of the environmental benefits of the project. The hedgerows will all be planted within 1km of the canal, and locations are being strategically chosen to link up existing areas of good quality habitat and provide connectivity across the landscape. Once complete, these new and improved 'green' wildlife corridors will help wildlife move safely across the region, increasing biodiversity as well as providing a wealth of other benefits for people and nature.

Some of the first hedge plants were put in at an event attended by representatives of CPRE Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Summerfield Charitable Trust, Greene King, Cotswold Canals Connected and canal volunteers. CPRE Gloucestershire and the Summerfield Charitable Trust funded the initial 400 metres of hedgerow, which runs alongside the entrance driveway to Fromebridge Mill, Whitminster. Over 30 volunteers from CPRE, Stroud Valleys Project and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust continued the planting throughout February.

Anna Tarbet, Canal Environment Manager said:

"We would like to thank CPRE Gloucestershire and Summerfield Charitable Trust for funding this season's hedgerow planting, and to Greene King who have been incredibly supportive of the work we are doing. It is important to us at Cotswold Canals Connected to engage and collaborate with local charities and organisations; not only to further the progress of the restoration, but to raise awareness of the importance of improving connectivity and the positive impact hedges and wildlife corridors have on the environment.

"Enhancing the natural environment is a vital part of the canal restoration and we are very lucky to work with local businesses who recognise this."

Cotswold Canals Connected is a partnership of organisations led by Stroud District Council and the Cotswold Canals Trust which are restoring the canal network. Phase 1A, which is now complete, restored the section between Thrupp and Stonehouse. Phase 1B, which includes this project, will restore a further four-mile section between Stonehouse and Saul Junction providing a connection to the national waterway network.

Find out more about the project at www.cotswoldcanalsconnected.org and by following Cotswold Canals Connected on social media and YouTube.

Children's wassail event

On Saturday 18th March, CPRE Gloucestershire collaborated with the Ernest Cook Trust and the Severn Trent Biodiversity Fund to host our first children's wassail event. The event was hosted in Halmore near Slimbridge in the orchard we have restored, and continue to restore, in our volunteering programme. We received a fantastic turnout of children and parents, all enthusiastic to get involved and celebrate Gloucestershire's countryside!

A traditional wassail event comprises of celebrations to bless orchards to ensure a good harvest in the coming year. Following traditions, but making the event child-friendly, we carried out various orchard-themed activities. This included making crafts, singing traditional wassail songs and a treasure hunt in the orchard. Our Director and orchard expert, Tim Andrews, led the session and taught all this to the group. We also blessed the orchard trees by pouring



apple juice (traditionally cider – but made child friendly!) on the trees' roots and hung slices of toast onto branches!

Thank you to all that came along! We had a fantastic time celebrating the orchards and Gloucestershire's countryside with you!



Truck stop campaign

We have been busy working on our truck stop campaign over the last few months. The campaign is supporting CARG (Cotswolds AONB Residents Group) who are fighting against a proposed truck stop development planned for a site of open farmland near Cirencester, above the village of Daglingworth.

The plans create a great threat for the Cotswold National Landscape and a precedent for development nationwide. Better brownfield alternative sites have been highlighted however, as the transport company have purchased the fields speculatively, it is ignoring the alternatives.

The original planning application was unanimously refused by Cotswold District Council planning committee in March 2022. Its reasons were:

The proposal would represent harmful and insufficiently justified major development in the Cotswolds National Landscape

The position of the development is in an isolated, rural location, remote from existing development and visible from many directions

The introduction of surfacing, buildings, along with trucks, cars, lighting and a wide new access road would have

intrusive effects on the landscape, giving it an urban feel

Various tests within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) were also not satisfactorily addressed and the requirement for exceptional circumstances to be demonstrated were not met.

CPRE Gloucestershire have huge sympathy for HGV drivers and the need for better facilities, however we believe that the development to provide this must be in the correct place and not cause serious threat for the AONB.

To support CARG, CPRE Gloucestershire have already contributed £6,000 towards the campaign. We have been enthusiastically campaigning via our communication channels too, with the aim to add to this contribution from our supporters who received appeal letters.

We have received a great response and many kind donations so far. The donations will help cover the costs of the barrister and planning consultant who are working alongside the Cotswold District Council's team at the inquiry. The inquiry was due to have been completed by 20th April 2023 but has been delayed.

We will continue to fight for this case to ensure our precious AONB is protected. We want to thank all our supporters who have kindly donated towards this vital campaign. To keep up to date with the progress of this campaign, be sure to follow up on Instagram and Facebook.





Rooftop renewables

Richard Lloyd

Towards the end of May CPRE will be launching a “Rooftop Renewables” Campaign. This will be a major national campaign in 2023, and CPRE Gloucestershire will be supporting it.

To avoid the worst impacts of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions need to be reduced by almost half by 2030 and to reach net-zero by 2050. A major expansion of electricity generation from renewable energy will be part of the solution, and this will include exploiting solar power.

Opposition to industrial-scale solar farms across the countryside is growing because of increasing concerns about impacts on food production capability and food security. And there are often severe landscape impacts too. CPRE Gloucestershire shares these concerns which especially apply to solar developments on best and most versatile land. The District reports in this newsletter indicate the scale of these issues which are at their most severe in the Severn Vale and into Forest of Dean District, but other parts of our county are also at risk.

In contrast, there is huge untapped potential for rooftop solar across the country, with 250,000 hectares of south facing commercial roof space alone, and a further 20,000 hectares of car parks. Analysis by CPRE, using highly

conservative estimates, indicates that that if only a quarter of the south facing commercial rooftop space was usable it could generate 25GW of electricity annually; so making the best use of it would dramatically reduce the pressure for controversial greenfield solar farms.

In the campaign, CPRE will be calling for a renewables strategy for solar power that prioritises rooftops, surface car parks and brownfield sites, and it will be pressing for the installation of solar PV or thermal panels as the standard expectation for all suitably-orientated roofs on new buildings, including homes.

To this end, rooftop solar should be at the forefront of any new or updated Climate Strategy or Action Plan, any Corporate Strategy or any emerging Local Plan. Their policies should allow for refusal of development if deemed suitable for solar installations and this provision is not included in the plans, as should refusal of planning permission for homes unless they are Future Homes Standard or equivalent.

There are already some good examples in Gloucestershire of what can be achieved. Gloucester Cathedral has 150 PV panels on its roof, and Renishaw was a pioneer back in 2016 receiving a CPRE Gloucestershire Award for the solar installation at their Innovation Centre at New Mills.

Graduate work experience

After much interest to gain work experience with our charity, in March, we launched our graduate work experience programme. We currently have 3 enthusiastic university graduates carrying out a research project to contribute to our solar panels campaigning. The aim of this campaign is to encourage policy makers to choose 'brownfield' sites and rooftops for solar panel installation over our precious farmland and countryside.

To gain more data on the potential for brownfield and rooftops as a first choice for solar panel installation, our graduates are currently investigating the available space on rooftops for solar panels. The graduates are assigned with a specific research area; East Gloucester, West

Gloucester or Tewkesbury & Ashchurch, all areas that have potential to yield the benefit of renewable energy whilst protecting our countryside from extensive development. Once data is concluded, we can then take this forward in our campaigning.

Although we are still at early stages in the work experience programme, it has been fantastic to see the investigation so far. It is already apparent that our campaigning to protect Gloucestershire's countryside is backed up by clear data for alternative development choices for policy makers.

If you are a graduate looking to gain experience or someone who wishes to gain experience in the charity and environmental sector, please get in touch! Your work will help us protect Gloucestershire's countryside! Please email: info@cpreglos.org.uk



'Gloucestershire's Country Matters' interview series

Throughout Spring, we have continued to develop our 'Gloucestershire's Country Matters' interview series where our Director, Tim Andrews, interviews people with keen interest in Gloucestershire's countryside. We now have a total of 3 episodes, all available to watch on our YouTube channel, with more upcoming though the year.

In February, we filmed episode 2, interviewing Elisabeth Skinner MBE. Elisabeth has worked to raise the standards in parish, town, and community councils through her development of training over the last 30 years. She revised and trained a national team to deliver the 'Certificate in Local Council Administration' (CILCA) qualification and was awarded an MBE for her work in the New Years' Honours List, 2018, making this episode very interesting!

Episode 3 saw us interview Pippa from Stroud District Committee. Pippa is the Secretary for CPRE's Stroud District making her a key player in delivering CPRE Gloucestershire's work in the area. In the interview, Pippa discusses development and planning in the context of her hometown, Minchinhampton. We thoroughly enjoyed interviewing Pippa and producing an engaging conversation!

Be sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to keep up to date with our latest episodes in the series!

Introductions

Matilda Jones

New Engagement & Events Officer at CPRE Gloucestershire

In early February, we welcomed Matilda Jones into her new role at CPRE Gloucestershire. She will be supporting our Director as an Engagement and Events Officer, working to raise the profile of the charity, help attract new members and volunteers, and liaise with existing members and volunteers.



Matilda recently graduated with a degree in Geography from the University of East Anglia (UEA). She has experience working with other charities, providing research and recommendations to raise their profiles.

Since starting, she has worked to increase engagement through social media, website updates and increasing our email activity. She has also joined the charity's campaigns sub-committee which aims to develop campaigns and strategies to engage the younger demographic in our work. Moreover, she has helped facilitate and organise events including our children's wassail, our two volunteering programmes, District events and our Annual General Meeting and Lecture later in the year.

Nicola Hillary

New Partnership Manager at the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership

Nicola Hillary started in the post of Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership Manager in January 2023. She's lived in Gloucestershire for 17 years and for the last 12 years was working for the national and international sustainability organisation Transition Network. Her background includes nature conservation charities and fundraising for environmental and social projects. She's motivated by finding ways to reduce our impacts on the earth and to protect the wild and green spaces that matter to nature and to us.



Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership is a partnership of over 40 organisations from public, private and third sector bodies from across the county of Gloucestershire, including CPRE Gloucestershire. All are working together to recognise the importance of embedding nature's value in local decisions for the benefit of nature, people and the economy.

Roger Mortlock

New national CPRE CEO

Roger joins CPRE from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust where he has been CEO for the last 10 years. Roger has lived in the county for over 15 years and although he will now be spending more time in London with the CPRE team, Roger will stay living in the Minchinhampton, near Stroud. While he excited to get to grips with everything CPRE, Roger's recent work has focused on planning and agriculture. While at GWT, he launched Building with Nature, the UK's first green infrastructure benchmark and as Deputy Director at the Soil Association before that he led campaigns promoting sustainable food and farming. Roger is also a Trustee of the Summerfield Charitable Trust which is focused on grant giving in Gloucestershire and Hawkwood College, near Stroud.



Roger starts his new role at the beginning of May and is looking forward to campaigning for the countryside – staying in touch with the issues that matter to CPRE members in his home county.

1959 Gloucestershire Newsletter found

David Brooke

A February 1959 edition of Gloucestershire Countryside (a forerunner to Cotswold Life) has recently emerged from a tidy-up in the office. Among advertisements for local firms long gone and content as diverse as salmon fishing prospects, the history of Plough Sunday and a concourse of beauty in 'Recent Engagements' lies 'The Preservation of Rural England – the C.P.R.E. in Gloucestershire'.

From the article we learn of our fears for road verges in beautiful areas as they cope with increased picnicking; our concern for the outcome of a quarrying application above Prestbury; and of our guarded support for the route of a 132kv electricity line between Frampton-on-Severn and Whitminster.

Bread-and-butter topics perhaps but as vital to the continuing beauty of Gloucestershire then as they are now.

AGM and Annual Lecture 2023

Afternoon of Tuesday 23rd May, 2023

Royal Agricultural University (RAU),
Cirencester, GL7 6JS.

We are looking forward to hosting our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Annual Lecture for 2023. This year, it will take place on Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.

We are excited to announce that the annual lecture will be led by Professor Paul Bates, who is a professor in hydrology from the University of Bristol.

SAVE THE
DATE!
23rd May
2023

Tickets for each part of the event are now available to book via the 'Events' page on our website. More information on the event can also be found here:
<https://www.cpreglos.org.uk/get-involved/events-2022/2023-agm/>

Instagram: [cpre_gloucestershire](#)
Facebook: [@cpreglos](#)
YouTube: [CPRE Gloucestershire](#)



Join in.
[cpre.org.uk/gloucestershire](https://www.cpre.org.uk/gloucestershire)

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Registered charity number: 248577



The countryside charity
Gloucestershire