



Rutland Branch of CPRE

Annual Report for 2018/19

Registered Charity Number 500480

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1 Introduction

Welcome to this Annual Report for the Rutland Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. It starts with the Chairman's Report given at the Annual General meeting on 21st July 2019, which summarises the branch activity for the year.

As we have updated the branch forward plan, this is presented at Section 3, noting that the current state of progress against this plan is covered in the Chairman's Report. The minutes of the AGM are at Section 4, followed by the statement of our accounts as at December 2018 and finally a list of the officers and committee members for the year.

We would welcome feedback on the style, contents and format of this report, in order that we might do even better next year. Please contact any member of the committee with any comments you may have.

2 Chairman's Report

Once again, it has been very busy year, both for the branch and for the national organisation. After a wide-ranging review, CPRE has a new strategy going forward to its centenary in 2026, together with a new image. Locally, we have continued to respond to consultations from Rutland County Council (RCC) on the local plan update and the revised transport strategy, as well as developing our campaign approach regarding the proposed St George's and Woolfox developments.

National CPRE

I announced last year that, to address concerns over the way that CPRE is seen by the public and against the backdrop of declining membership figures nationwide, work was in hand to redefine the purpose of CPRE. This has now been completed and further work carried out to establish a new strategic plan for the organisation for 2020-2026. A new identity and image have been developed, as you can see from the banners here. CPRE is now 'The Countryside Charity', and our mission is 'To enhance, promote and protect the countryside'. The plan goes on to define our key values and strategic aims, and to describe how we intend to deliver those. This is all being rolled out across the CPRE network during the rest of this year, and full details will be available on the CPRE web-site, which is itself being updated.

Associated with the revised strategic plan, changes have been made in the organisational structure at national level. Much greater emphasis is now being placed on supporting the many volunteers who run the local groups. A new director has been appointed to oversee this and several new members of her team are also now in place, including Louise Hall, who is the Volunteer Development Officer for the East Midlands region, and who is just starting to get to know how we work and how she can help us to be more effective.

Much of CPRE's activity has centred on housing. Protection of the Green Belt remains a major concern, with constant pressure from developers and some local authorities to release land for housing in order to meet the government's target of building 300,000 homes each year. Analysis of brownfield registers across the country, however, has revealed that there exists sufficient previously developed land for more than one million homes, much of it already suitable for redevelopment.

There has been much talk of a housing crisis. CPRE believes that the government's target is excessive when compared with the real need, and that the crisis is actually in affordability not the number of homes. Consequently, this is now one of the main campaigning themes, with substantial responses having just been made to the Affordable Homes Commission and to the related government consultation. A key element of these submissions is to recommend a significant change to the definition of affordability, such that it will be based not on the market value of homes but on the means of those who need to be able to afford them. One of the recent successes for CPRE has been to persuade the government to close the so-called viability assessment loophole, whereby developers were able to renege on commitments to build affordable homes as land prices rose; the planning framework is still regarded as somewhat of a developers' charter, all the same.

Affordable homes is, of course, an issue for Rutland as much as anywhere and is of direct relevance to the plans for St George's and Woolfox; the committee is following this closely.

In view of the prominence which it now has in the national debate, much greater emphasis is now being placed on climate change, and work is under way to establish exactly how this will be incorporated in other campaigning activities; it should, amongst other things, help in our appeal to a younger audience. Related to this, efforts continue to ensure that the Deposit Return Scheme, which I highlighted last year, is applied to all containers, and also to promote keeping the countryside tidy through organised litter picks.

Branch Level Activities

Rutland Local Plan

Last summer, a further revision of the Rutland Local Plan, principally to incorporate the proposals for the St George's Barracks site, was released by Rutland County Council for public consultation. The main thrust of this revision was to create a new policy specifically to allow for a major development at St George's, but while other, existing planning policies, which do not allow for such a development, were left unchanged. As you would expect, we submitted a substantial response to this document, as did many others, most of them very much against the changes; the full set of these responses has now been published on the RCC web-site, and we wait to see how the council proposes to address them. A further update to the local plan is expected later in the year, with a view to submission for external examination early next. The local plan will be the crucial document in determining the future of St George's and other potential developments, and will therefore be the principal focus of our efforts in the coming months.

Later last year, the county council published a draft of its revised transport strategy for Rutland. This seemed to us and others to present little of any significance in providing for the future, in terms of both supporting the planned developments and in accommodating the changes that can be anticipated in the use of technology, in working practices or in retail behaviour.

Following the collapse of environmental groups which I reported last year, very little seems to have been done on this important topic since, and we remain concerned about the level of importance attached to environmental issues in RCC.

All in all, we remain disappointed in the lack of vision apparent in the plans emerging from Rutland County Council, and are looking carefully at how we might help to fill this void.

St George's

A much more detailed master plan for St George's was produced last year, but without any opportunity for formal consultation. The number of houses has been reduced, to 2215, and we were advised by the council that this is the minimum number needed to underpin the financial viability of the proposals, given the significant amount of remedial work needed at the site before building could commence. This number remains, nonetheless, way in excess of any realistic assessment of the need for houses in Rutland.

As I indicated earlier, the proposals are still in breach of many extant local planning policies, including those specifically concerning the reuse of military facilities. Given, furthermore, that Rutland already has sufficient land allocated for future development to meet identified needs for the next seven years, there should be no need to consider any further sites. Many of you will be aware, however, that our MP, Sir Alan Duncan, continues to argue that planning permission for the St George's development will, in any case, be granted on appeal and that, without the agreement between the MoD and the County Council, the number of houses would be even higher. This seems to us completely contrary to the established national planning policy and to suggest that the planning system is effectively impotent in the face of demands to meet the pecuniary needs of government departments in Whitehall. We have challenged Sir Alan on this important point, and have received a highly unsatisfactory response, as you will have seen from my recent letter in the local papers. We are seeking to meet with Sir Alan to try to resolve this. Our position here is based on the clear guidance received from Matt Thomson, Head of Land Use and Planning at National CPRE, and this advice was also incorporated in a deputation to the full Rutland County Council meeting earlier this month.

Early this year, the county council proposed to submit a bid for a grant of some £30M from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund in order to kick-start the necessary infrastructure development to support the St George's plan. This was debated at a full council meeting in January, which attracted a large attendance from a fairly vociferous public, with a number of deputations arguing strongly against the proposal. It was nonetheless approved, but by a majority of just one, indicating that there is significant opposition to the plan even within the council.

You may also have seen the recent announcement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to the effect that Rutland is to be awarded a small grant from the Garden Communities fund. We have not yet heard exactly how much this will be, but, according to the council, it is intended to support the St. George's development in becoming a Garden Community that creates an inclusive environment for all who live there, with a particular focus on it being designed as a Dementia Friendly Community.

Taking account of all these developments, the St George's subcommittee, with the very welcome support of the National Charity, is developing a more detailed campaign strategy. We held a very successful facilitated workshop last month, joined for some of the time by members of the Parish Council Liaison Group (PCLG), and, as a consequence, we are planning to bid for a grant from the CPRE Strategic Collaboration Fund (SCF) in order to support a much more active campaign in which we will collaborate with the PCLG to provide a more comprehensive approach. This represents a significant step change in both our profile and our workload, and we would welcome more support from members in taking this forward.

Through all of this, CPRE Rutland's position remains that we would welcome the development of a new village, of the scale and character of many existing Rutland villages, but any larger scale housing development would definitely not be acceptable. We would also like to see some of the site being used for some rather more imaginative purpose, perhaps a technology park, agricultural college or possibly accommodation to support youth activities around Rutland Water, but something which would be an asset to the county in the future. Such options must be fully researched and consulted on, and be coherent with the vision we believe is needed, before the future of St George's can be agreed.

I should also mention the proposal for a major development at Woolfox, another former airfield but which is now in private hands. Outline plans for up to 10,000 houses have been advanced. Should these plans come to fruition, and including the worst case housing numbers at St George's suggested by our MP, this would more or less double the number of houses in the county, a clearly unacceptable and totally unnecessary outcome. We will, of course, continue to monitor this closely.

Other Activities

The Rutland Round remains an important source of funding for us. It featured strongly once again at the Rutland Walking Festival in May. Such is its continuing success that we have just had a further batch of the books printed, taking the opportunity, of course, to raise the cover price. Our thanks, as ever, go to John Williams for his ongoing efforts in managing and promoting the Rutland Round.

Once again, we ran a very successful Christmas Quiz, with four winners this year. Our thanks, as usual, go to our imaginative and inscrutable quizmaster, Philip Riley.

Branch Forward Plan

The forward plan has been updated¹ to reflect recent developments, in particular those concerned with the evolving St George's campaign, and the various actions arising from our recent workshop. We also continue to liaise with RCC wherever possible, and we have a meeting scheduled next week with the new Director of Places. We are also starting to work more closely with some of the parishes via the Parish Council Liaison Group, as I have mentioned already, and I'm sure there will be further opportunities for collaboration, particularly if we are successful in our bid for a grant from the SCF. We are conscious that we could and should do more to keep you, the members, informed of our activities and progress, but we do still need more help with publicity and communications in order to achieve this.

Membership

There are a number of changes to the volunteer staff of the branch. Gerry Robinson has decided to stand down, mainly for personal reasons. Our branch secretary, Shane James, has also decided to stand down. We have recruited a new secretary, Alex Lee-Day, and we wish her well as she settles into this role.

Current membership is now 122, which includes 11 parish councils; this continues to buck the national trend, as it again shows an increase on last year, which is really encouraging. With the workload likely to increase, especially regarding our campaigning with respect to the St George's proposals, we would, of course, welcome further support, both for the committee, should anyone wish to offer their services, and in the form of additional membership. Please let Alex or me know if you are able to help in either way.

Finally, the committee and I again look forward to campaigning on your behalf in the year to come to enhance, promote and protect the countryside of Rutland.

¹ See next section.

3 CPRE Rutland Branch Forward Plan

The following sets out the forward plan for the branch, as updated in June 2019.

Proposed Direction of Travel

Our aims should be:

- To develop our relationship with Rutland County Council (RCC).
- To get into a position to exert greater influence over development and preservation of the county's built and natural environments.
- To raise the profile of the branch within the community.

Improving Relationships within the Rutland Community

We should build on the initial meetings with Councillors and with the Planning Department at RCC. Meetings with the current portfolio holders for relevant areas should be progressed as necessary.

An event at which the county councillors can be briefed on CPRE generally and the Rutland Branch aims in particular is proposed. This should probably include representation from National CPRE on wider planning issues as well as a more specific focus on local matters and the Local Plan. Timing will be dependent on the schedule for the updating of the Local Plan. The event should probably be preceded by a letter to all the councillors to outline our general objectives and invite them to consider taking up membership and to offer further support to CPRE.

In addition to working more closely with RCC, we should be looking to liaise more effectively with a number of other individuals and organisations. A suitable briefing note, which can be tailored to suit different addressees, is needed to sound out the potential for co-operation.

Rutland Local Plan

We must pursue the development of the current draft plan, to ensure that important points, many of which have already been made in responses so far, are fully taken into account; this is key to resolving the issues surrounding the St George's and Woolfox proposals. It is expected that there will be a public enquiry to review the updated plan, which should address the various comments received. We should consider taking on suitable professional experience to represent our position more effectively and ensure that we are able to provide expert input.

We need to have a clearer idea of the timescale for further updates to the Local Plan, and for the availability of the important associated plans, in particular Transport and Infrastructure. The Branch should also monitor the developing relationship between the local and the various neighbourhood plans and be prepared to exert appropriate influence. Environmental aspects are also important, particularly with the current emphasis on climate change issues, and efforts will be needed, possibly through the LSP Sustainable Growth (Environment) Theme Group, to drive the

requisite policies and standards into the Local Plan. Many extant and emerging CPRE reports are of relevance here.

A key feature of the emerging local plan will be the proposed developments of St George's Barracks and the airfield at Woolfox. This has the potential for a significant impact across the entire county and very likely much further afield; indeed, a co-ordinated approach to align with major developments in adjoining counties is seen as highly desirable. It can be expected, therefore, to represent a major campaigning and recruiting opportunity for the branch, as strongly felt local opinions will inevitably emerge. Following the Campaign Strategy Workshop in early June 2019, Branch strategy, supported by the National Charity, will need to be developed and executed in conjunction with relevant local organisations.

Given the evident lack of vision in the plans emerging from RCC and the lack of clarity as to how they will relate to changes in the surrounding areas, the possibility of a CPRE Rutland Vision for the county will be pursued, and timed to align effectively with the local plan schedule.

Branch Development

Updating of the Rutland Local Plan, and in particular the St George's development, should underpin the ongoing development of the branch, in that it should both increase the profile of the branch and provide a stimulus to increase membership and thus funding. This should lead to opening up of further opportunities as the resource base grows.

There is a need for professional support in the form of both planning experience (as noted above, e.g.) and publicity/communications skills. This is expected to be facilitated by changes at the National CPRE to strengthen the capability in volunteer development.

Creating and maintaining a branch web-site, supported by a competent web-master, is a key requirement, but this must be done well. There already exists a branch page on the regional web-site, which needs to be developed. Producing a regular newsletter is desirable, but demanding in terms of resources. A well-produced annual publication, to incorporate the annual report and other suitable material, might be feasible and would certainly be worthwhile.

Better connections with tourist organisations, including, for instance, Discover Rutland and Active Rutland, should be pursued in the short term; there is significant potential for further exploitation of the Rutland Round in this regard. Further promotion should be achieved through letters and articles in local papers and the use of local radio. In due course, and with a more coherent message to sell, advertising in local publications and establishing stalls at suitable events/shows should be considered.

With a stronger presence in the community and with greater expertise in key areas, we should be focusing more on the younger population, in order to ensure greater continuity of membership in the years to come and to encourage further expansion of our skills base. This could include giving talks to schools, colleges and universities, as well as commissioning suitable projects for students in support of our aims; the development of our web-site might form a good candidate project. Climate change issues are of particular concern to the younger generation at present and so offer a useful opportunity to encourage wider engagement.



The countryside charity
Rutland

Plan Review

Progress against this plan, and the plan itself, should be kept under review, at least as a regular agenda item at committee meetings; the latest version should be included in the branch annual report.

4 Minutes of the CPRE Rutland Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 21st July 2019 at the Old Vicarage, Whissendine. There were 29 members present.

Introduction

The Chairman, Malcolm Touchin, welcomed all to the meeting. He then thanked the Lord Lieutenant, Dr Sarah Furness, and her husband, Peter, for the use of their lovely garden for the meeting. He welcomed Louise Hall, the newly appointed Volunteer Development Officer for the East Midlands region.

The Chairman also noted that, following a substantial review across the organisation, a new branding and identity were being rolled out for CPRE nationally, and examples were on display at the meeting.

Apologies

Received from Tony Stott, Andrew and Cathy Robinson, Margaret Simpson.

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd July 2018

These were circulated and approved by the meeting – nem. con.

Matters Arising

None.

Finance Report

Judy Geer has agreed to take over as Treasurer for the Charity; her report follows.

I would first of all like to propose that:

1. We should continue to bank with HSBC
2. That you authorise the Treasurer to make the necessary arrangements to review and update the bank mandate on behalf of the Secretary to include 5 signatories, any two of whom to sign cheques and authorise payments. These signatories to be Malcolm Touchin, John Williams, Patsy Clifton, Judy Geer and Carolyn Cartwright who are all trustees of the Charity.

Proposed: Jill Lessey

Seconded: Patricia Hagger

As you may have realised, there were some errors in the accounts for 2017 presented to you at last

year's AGM. These have now been corrected, the accounts inspected by Mr Ramsay Ross CA, and issued to you in the Annual Report for 2017. These accounts are used for the comparative figures in the accounts before you today, which have also been inspected by Mr Ramsay Ross.

The income from subscriptions has increased in 2018, but no receipts for the Rutland Round went through before the year end. As the Accounts for 2018 have been prepared on a cash basis, we are not including any accruals in the accounts, therefore the figures for 2019 will be increased by about £415 to reflect this. It is proposed that this policy be continued for the 2019 Financial Year, on the assumption that the timing of cash flows properly represent the activities of the branch.

The expenses for travel have increased as our Chairman attended a lot more meetings with National CPRE, particularly concerning the St George's Barracks development. He also attended the CPRE conference. £64 of meeting expenditure was carried over from 2017.

During the year we contributed £274 to the purchase of some gates for one of the footpaths in the Empingham area which is not supported by RCC.

We have a balance of £10347 in the bank.

I propose the adoption of the accounts. Secunder: Barbara Keene. Approved nem.con.

Questions Raised:

1. Can we use online banking? This will be explored when the Treasurer is on the mandate, but the requirement for two signatures may be a problem.
2. There seems to be a large amount in the current account, should it be transferred to savings? This again will be explored when the Treasurer is on the mandate, but the advantage of having funds easily available at present is useful.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman gave his report on the National CPRE activities, the Rutland Branch activities and the St George's Barracks Development Plan.

He thanked John Williams for his work on the Rutland Round and Philip Riley for compiling the Quiz.

There are 122 members of the Branch and 11 Parish Councils.

The full report would appear in the Annual Report 2019² to be circulated to members.

A number of questions were raised as a result of the report:

1. Are there any plans for legal action against Rutland County Council regarding the St George's Barracks plans? These have been discussed but Rutland CPRE is not in a position to do so. Others may. Norman Milne of Edith Weston said that there is no point until we see how the Local Plan emerges before it goes to the inspectorate. Woolfox may also challenge RCC at some point but that may not be happening instantly. A timeline for the Local Plan should be available shortly and a new Director of Places has taken over at Rutland County Council.

2 See Section 2 above.

2. The Branch is applying for a grant from the CPRE Strategic Collaboration Fund to support a more active campaign to challenge the St George's development – how can we add an extra string to our bow in this regard? National CPRE has admitted it is of national interest and we should find a way of using their expertise. Malcolm Touchin replied that we should not raise our expectations too far, as we are already getting sound advice and support and National CPRE itself has limited resources. We will keep pressing for more support.
3. Could we know more about our own membership so that we can target recruitment more accurately? Malcolm Touchin has a list of members (their addresses are roughly 60 email, 20 postal) but the GDPR regulations restrict the use of the information. We can look at making this list available within the committee. We could also have a newsletter which could be circulated if someone is prepared to take on the task of producing and distributing it. Any help with the publicity and production of a newsletter would be appreciated.
4. At the Council Meeting in January the HIF bid was passed by one vote. Has the election of councillors changed the balance to be more or less in favour of St George's now? It was that there has been no obvious change.
5. Woolfox personnel had attended some Parish Council meetings – has an application gone in? Norman Milne had met with Woolfox and they had only registered interest and would follow with application post the local plan, so it is too early to take them on.

The President stated that there had been an increased interest in development in Rutland and that tensions were rising. He thanked members of the team, especially Malcolm Touchin, for their work, but recommended that Branch members should not expect too much of CPRE. Members need to get through to their local councillors and also encourage new members to join to add weight to the group.

Election of Officers

Mr Gerry Robinson has had to stand down from the committee and as trustee as he is moving.

Mrs Shane James, the Secretary/ Treasurer has had to stand down.

The new Secretary Ms Alex Lee Day was not able to be present.

The election of the President, Sir Laurence Howard, and the Vice President, Mrs Barbara Keene, was proposed by Mr Malcolm Touchin and seconded by Mrs Patsy Clifton, and approved unanimously.

The President then took the chair and thanked Malcolm Touchin and his team for all the work they had done. Mr Malcolm Touchin was re-elected as Chairman *nem.con.*

The list of members willing to stand was proposed *en bloc* by the Chairman and seconded by Mrs Annabelle Meek.

Treasurer Mrs Judy Geer

Members Mrs Patsy Clifton

 Mr John Williams



Mr Ron Simpson

Mr Cliff Bacon

Mrs Carolyn Cartwright

Secretary Ms Alex Lee Day

The Chairman reported that there were 5 trustees for the CPRE Rutland Branch Charity: Mr Malcolm Touchin, Mr John Williams, Mrs Judy Geer, Mrs Patsy Clifton and Mrs Carolyn Cartwright.

Parish Council Membership

It had been suggested that Parish Councils who were members of CPRE should be able to be represented on the committee. The constitution allows only individual members at present.

If the wording of the constitution were to be changed then it should include a limit to the number of PCs represented and define the persons representing the PC. Parish Council rules can prevent councillors joining other committees, therefore legal limits for a parish councillor would have to be clarified. Perhaps guidance could be obtained from National CPRE. An EGM could be convened if required.

Events

It was proposed that events be organised to help promote the Branch and recruit new members. Cliff Bacon requested that these should be specifically to educate new members. Barbara Keene suggested a look at a garden village (and to see what 'dementia friendly' means³).

Use of social media was suggested to help promote the branch, but suitable resources would be needed to support this.

Any Other Business

Mrs Barbara Keene suggested an outing to Thorpe Camp near Woodhall Spa to see how a well-designed visitors' centre could be put on a disused airfield. An outing date of 6th October was put forward.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 5.15 pm.

³ This is a reference to the recent award of a grant to Rutland County Council, quoted as helping to support the creation of a dementia friendly village at St George's.



5 Statement of Accounts

CAMPAIGN FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND - RUTLAND BRANCH **Accounts for the Year to 31st December 2018**

<u>Income & Expenditure Account</u>	<u>Year to</u> <u>12/31/2018</u>	<u>Year to</u> <u>12/31/2017</u>
INCOME		
Subscriptions : Branch Share	1806.70	1695.95
Fundraising & Sales		
Rutland Round		357.00
Christmas Quiz	307.88	144.50
Donations	4.00	18.50
Bank Interest	5.80	2.20
Total Income	2124.38	2218.15
EXPENSES		
Admin Officers Fees	945.00	855.00
Admin Expenses/Meetings	650.36	282.61
Travel Expenses	560.45	105.00
AGM	30.84	23.26
Annual Lunch	286.05	254.15
Purchase of Gates	274.51	
Total Expenditure	2747.21	1520.02
Deficit/Surplus	-622.83	698.13
<u>Balance Sheet as at: 31st December 2018</u>		
	<u>12/31/2018</u>	<u>12/31/2017</u>
Bank:		
Current Account & Petty Cash	5032.72	5583.35
Savings Account	5392.68	5386.88
Cheque not presented	78.00	
Net Assets	10347.40	10970.23
Represented by:		
Reserves Brought Forward	10970.23	10272.10
Current Year Deficit/Surplus	-622.83	698.13
Reserves	10347.40	10970.23

Accounts for the Year to 31st December, 2018

I certify that I have examined the records of the CPRE – Rutland Branch presented to me, and found that the accounts are in accordance with the records for the period 1st January to 31st December 2018

M. Ramsay Ross CA

16th July 2019



The countryside charity

Rutland

6 Officers and Committee Members for 2018/19

Officers:

President: Sir Laurence Howard

Vice President: Mrs Barbara Keene

Committee Members (Trustees):

Chairman: Mr Malcolm Touchin (Trustee)

Treasurer Mrs Judy Geer (Trustee)

Members: Mrs Patsy Clifton (Trustee)

Mr John Williams (Trustee)

Mr Cliff Bacon

Mr Ron Simpson

Ms Carolyn Cartwright (Trustee)

Secretary: - vacant -