



Green clean

Rage Against Rubbish volunteers sorting and counting drinks containers at the canal Green Clean in Bridgwater.

Litter doesn't belong in our countryside. It harms nature and prevents us from enjoying the green spaces that enrich all our lives. Last September, we decided to do our bit to clean it up and join in as part of national Green Clean - with the help of several Somerset community groups and some lovely volunteers. We ran four Green Cleans in Somerset - at Haselbury Plucknett, Wells, Frome and Bridgwater - in partnership with Haselbury Plucknett Parish Council, Wells City Council, Frome Litter Warriors and Rage Against Rubbish. All these groups regularly organise litter picks of their own and were happy to spend the extra time counting all the drinks containers they found so we could gather the data for our campaign for a comprehensive Deposit Return System (DRS) in England.

Somerset Wildlife Trust also adopted the Green Clean approach. As part of their Big Taunton Litter Pick they counted the bottles and cans that they picked up and shared their data with us, which was brilliant.

So - in total - with the help of 137 volunteers we collected 139 bags of rubbish, just under half of which were full of cans and bottles. Altogether we collected 776 plastic bottles, 1104 cans, 348 glass bottles and 54 drinks cartons.

Evidence from other countries shows that, if people were able to get money back by returning drinks containers, we would see littering rates fall dramatically and recycling rates increase.

The results from a month of Green Cleans in September 2019 across England prove that, to boost recycling rates for all drinks containers - cans, glass and plastic bottles, cartons and pouches - the only option is for the government to introduce an all-in system.

CPRE will continue to lobby government and we thank everyone who took part in Green Clean 2019 and helped us to gather this convincing evidence.

This page is sponsored by



Continued overleaf



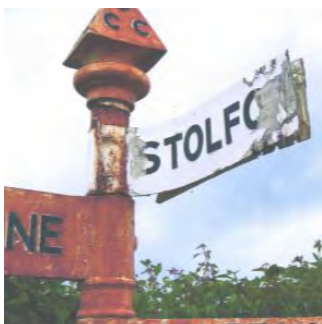
Restoring historic signposts

We have now begun allocating some of our grant funding to Parish Councils for the restoration of historic signposts

Stogursey Parish Council has done amazing work on 16 signposts in the parish. Their team of volunteers has worked very hard but can now have the satisfaction of seeing these wonderful features restored to their former glory. Having attended the Somerset County Council Safety Workshop, they were well prepared for surveying the signposts to assess just what works would be needed. They found that some posts were very rusty but this could be fixed with some strong rubbing with a wire brush and careful repainting using specialist paint. No problem – though you would be surprised how expensive one pot of paint can be! However, other signposts were in need of serious surgery with broken arms, often damaged by passing vehicles. Replacement arms (in some cases a bit shorter to avoid vehicle damage) and collars had to be ordered from Somerset Forge at considerable cost.



Stogursey Parish Council volunteers



Before and after – one of the 16 fingerposts restored by Stogursey Parish Council volunteers, which we helped to fund.

We have also offered grants to Woolavington, Williton and Mark Parish Councils and look forward to seeing their successes. A few other Parish Councils have expressed an interest and we hope to receive applications from them soon and before the funding deadline of September 2020..

This project is limited to parishes within 10 miles of Hinkley C as it is funded by the Hinkley C Community Fund. We are working with Somerset County Council and exploring funding opportunities to extend this project countywide if possible.



Star Count 2020

Star Count 2020 is a fun, easy activity and you don't need any equipment. By showing where artificial light is spilling out into the countryside, CPRE can help campaign to reduce it and bring back the sense of wonder we have when looking at a starry sky. Results from the Star Count help us to map where the best – and worst – places are to see stars. Where people see fewer stars, this means there's more light pollution.

Light pollution is bad for our health – and has an effect on wildlife too. By highlighting this problem we can help find ways to tackle it.

Join In

- Go out after dark in the last week of February
- Find the constellation of Orion (look for the three bright stars on his famous belt).
- Count all the stars you can see inside the rectangle (excluding the four stars on the corners).
- Send your results to cpre.org.uk/starcount

Celebrating and enhancing our countryside

Photography Competition 2019

Our 2019 photo competition with the theme of “Enjoying the Somerset Countryside” certainly sparked your imaginations. Many thanks to everyone who entered - your photos gave us a delightful insight into the different ways we all enjoy our beautiful county and just how much our Somerset countryside means to us.

We were not looking for photos of majestic landscapes - though Somerset has plenty of those! This time we specifically asked for images of people out and about having fun in the countryside with friends, family - and pets! We had some wonderful entries showing people of all ages getting up to all sorts of things in all weathers - blackberry picking, skateboarding, kite flying, walking, playing tag - and even playing musical instruments.

Our judges had a difficult job but they chose a clear winner - Glastonbury Tor Silhouettes by Jonathan Bull - shown at the foot of the page. We were really pleased to present Jonathan with his £100 prize in person at our AGM in Chard in October.



Jonathan Bull receives his prize from CPRE Somerset Chair, Chris Lewis

We will be able to use our favourite photo entries in our newsletters, on our social media and throughout our new website which we are developing now. We plan to run another competition later this year, with a whole new theme so look out for news on that coming soon.

Bruton landscape painting prize



Each year we also sponsor a prize for the best Somerset landscape painting in the Bruton Art Society summer exhibition. The winner is chosen by the society committee themselves from all the paintings in the exhibition. The 2019 winner was “Harbourside”, an oil painting by Thea Dupays - shown above. Congratulations to Thea



Glastonbury Tor silhouettes by Jonathan Bull

Planning update

Mendip

Any CPRE members living in Mendip are very welcome to join our friendly group which meets two or three times a year. Get in touch for details of our next meeting.

At our November meeting, we were joined by Andre Sestini, Principal Planning Policy Officer for Mendip District Council. Andre explained that, in Mendip, for the Local Plan to be valid, there must be 2300 homes with permission or started which could come forward in the next 5 years – this is the 5 year housing land supply. Housing is a national priority with a target of 300,000 homes to be built every year.

Mendip's annual housing figure was 400 a year but this has recently had to increase to 600 a year as the Local Plan is now over five years old, meaning that figures must revert to national figures while the Local Plan is reviewed. The worry is that if the 5 year housing land supply target is not met, then the Local Plan housing policies are rendered invalid, making it harder for Mendip to deny permission for building outside allocated areas.

Local Plan 2 is going through it's final consultation before adoption. Final modifications include allocating more housing sites in north-east Mendip.

There is more encouraging news from Frome, where a masterplan is being developed for the derelict Saxonvale brownfield site comprising 300 homes, commercial space and links to the town centre.

We have been contacted by several people who are concerned about plans published by Mendip DC for alternative routes for a Glastonbury bypass – one of which could go through Pilton & North Wootton. CPRE will challenge any proposals for new road building, especially where it will impact on such quality landscapes. We understand these plans are at the very early stage.



Bridgwater & Taunton Canal

Sedgemoor

We are continuing to challenge plans to expand the British Car Auctions site at Walpole. The most recent application is to cover 1.6 hectares of productive farmland with tarmac and use it for parking and storage of up to 657 vehicles. A major concern is the plan to erect 21 lighting columns, each 8m high. We have requested that the developers carry out a survey to ascertain if the land is classed as Best & Most Versatile. We also ask that strict conditions are applied re design and timing of use of the lights if this plan is to be approved.

At Callow Rock Quarry, in the Mendip Hills, there is an application to vary the planning condition so as to allow 24 hour operation of the processing plant. We have objected as we fear this will create noise, dust and light pollution that will be detrimental to the residential amenity of local residents and affect tranquillity in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Night time operations could also potentially cause harm to nocturnal feeding patterns of fauna such as bats, owls, mammals.

Planning update

South Somerset

Many villages and towns in South Somerset are under siege from developers seeking to take advantage of the district's lack of a 5 year housing supply, which has resulted from under-delivery by the larger settlements. Permission is being sought for developments which are neither envisaged nor planned for in the Local Plan. This is fully acknowledged by South Somerset District Council which states that: 'New housing has been delivered by Rural Settlements far in excess of what the Local Plan anticipated'.

Thankfully, the window of opportunity for such applications is closing. The housing supply has recently improved to 4.5 years, and the ongoing Local Plan review seeks to redress the situation. For example, the emerging Policy SS4 provides that only Rural Settlements which contain at least four of the listed services will be considered suitable for sustainable development. This will bring welcome relief for many smaller settlements.



This field next to Castle Cary railway station could soon be covered in 200 houses. Image © BBC.

Planning cases

We have concentrated on fighting applications where there is demonstrable harm to village character and its landscape. Notable examples include Charlton Adam, where we objected to an application for 24 houses that did not respect the linear character of the village, and which would have closed the historic gap between the village and the smaller hamlet of Broadway (18/03298/OUT). We worked closely with local campaign group "Save The Charltons" and the Parish Council and we were all delighted when it was refused by Regulation Committee.

In High Ham we are fighting a proposal for three houses to be built in open countryside in a grandstand position directly opposite the conservation area (19/02777/FUL). In Keinton Mandeville we have objected to a proposal for 9 houses to be built in one of the few remaining orchard plots which, since time immemorial, have characterised this village (19/02211/OUT). In Lovington we are fighting a proposal for 9 houses to be placed across a public footpath in open countryside, which would harm both the dispersed character of the village, and the quiet setting of the Grade 2 listed 18th century village school (18/04044/OUT). In North Barrow we have objected to a proposal for 9 houses to be placed in open countryside in a sensitive position at the village entrance (19/02775/FUL).

On a larger scale, we have objected to a proposal for 200 houses to be built in the magnificent field sweeping down to Castle Cary railway station (19/01840/OUT). This would harm not only the landscape setting of the town, but also the historic setting of the 1856 Victorian railway station. This proposal does not comply with the town's recently adopted Neighbourhood Plan, which is now legally part of the Local Plan. Let us hope that the planning officer will recommend refusal, and that the Area East Planning Committee will have the courage to refuse it.

Somerset West & Taunton

We objected to plans for 180 homes on 8.3 hectares of grazing land at Cheddon Fitzpaine near Taunton. A very similar scheme was refused in July 2019 and we believe the same flaws exist in the new plan.

We were pleased to see refusal for plans for 27 houses at Paddons Farm, Stogursey as we felt the scheme was poorly designed

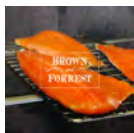
Somerset West & Taunton is beginning the initial stages of consultation on its new Local Plan. Exhibitions are being held in the next few weeks where residents are invited to have their say about the shape of future development in the district. This is the time to have your say as when a planning application is later submitted, it may be too late!



Wintry willows at North Curry.

Events

A visit to Brown & Forrest Smokery



Friday 15th May 12.00pm – for a brief tour followed by lunch in the restaurant.

Brown & Forrest is a small family run smokery, started 37 years ago in Somerset. They produce the finest smoked eel and salmon as well as a whole range of delicious smoked foods including smoked chicken, duck, lamb and trout – and cheese. They supply smoked goods all over the UK to discerning customers, including Fortnum and Masons.

The smoking process is totally non-industrial – instead they specialise in small scale batches, smoked to order and produced with love, care and dedication.

We have arranged for CPRE members and guests to have a brief tour of the smokery followed by lunch in the restaurant. Lunch will be soup and a sandwich of your choice plus a tasting platter allowing you to sample many of the smoked goods. You can also visit the smokery shop to stock up on your favourites.

Brown & Forrest is about 2 miles south of Curry Rivel at Bowdens Farm Smokery, Hambridge TA10 0BP.

The cost will be £13.50 for CPRE members and £15.00 for non-members. This price includes a small donation to cover our administration costs. Places are limited so please book early by emailing admin@cpresomerset.org.uk or calling 0845 269 4206.



Smoked eels at Brown & Forrest Smokery.

2019 AGM

Our 2019 AGM at Chard Guildhall was a well-attended and enjoyable event in a great venue. Thanks to everyone who came.

Our speakers were CPRE Chief Executive Crispin Truman, Rebecca McElliott from South Somerset District Council's Chard Regeneration Project and Mike Taylor from Chilmark Consulting. They gave first hand examples of successes and challenges in developing brownfield sites and why we should be looking at these first instead of sacrificing our green fields. Lots of good questions came from our well-informed audience which was made up of CPRE members as well as Parish and District Councillors.

During the AGM proceedings, members agreed to adopt the new Articles of Association - a positive step in making sure our charity is up to date with all the current legislation and ways of working.

A day at the dump

Who'd have thought that waste could be so fascinating?

It was a warm and sunny September day when a group of CPRE members and friends visited the Dimmer landfill site. Rupert Farthing, Chief Executive of the Carymoor Environmental Trust, gave us a potted history of the site. Soon we were walking across the capped landfill site with waste from the 1970s beneath our feet! The old tip has been restored using field systems and hedgerows and, apart from the odd bit of pipework here and there venting landfill gas, it all feels remarkably natural.

However, as we neared the active tipping site, things began to feel different. Our ears roared with the sound of trucks dumping rubbish, bulldozers compacting it and the screech of gulls. The close up view of the tipping face was unforgettable and the huge scale of it all was a sobering site for all.

We were lucky to visit when we did as the site closed a few weeks later and waste from this end of the county will now go to the new Avonmouth incinerator to generate energy. The site will be restored and nature will find its way but it is challenging to think of how much rubbish we produce as a society. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle has never seemed more appropriate.



How you can help

Money's not everything.....BUT.....

CPRE members provide the foundations of all our work through membership subscriptions and we really value this support and commitment. We try hard to keep costs down by not having a dedicated office but, inevitably, our running costs like postage, insurance, travel and stationery are always increasing.

CPRE Somerset is currently working really hard to find ways of increasing our long term income so that we can continue to provide professional planning advice to help rural communities and our members. We will be applying for project grants and approaching trusts as part of our efforts to widen our income stream and exploring ways of raising funds through events and fun activities. See the bottom of the page for news of our Lottery Club, which we hope you will join.

Different ways to support us

Support our 2020 appeal

We are asking for donations, big or small, to help with our fighting fund to retain a professional Planner. The letter from our Chairman (enclosed with this newsletter) gives all the details and explains how using Gift Aid can help us even more. A reminder of how to donate, including our bank details is on the back page.

Tell a friend about CPRE

The more members we have, the more we can do to protect and celebrate Somerset's countryside and the stronger our voice. Please share this newsletter with your friends and family and encourage them to join CPRE. Membership can cost as little as £3 a month. You can join via our website at www.cpresomerset.org.uk or get in touch with us and we can send you a membership form.

Encourage your Parish Council to join CPRE

Parish & Town Councils can join CPRE for as little as £3 per month and benefit from shared knowledge and advice in planning matters. Why not raise the subject at your next Parish meeting? Contact us for a special membership form for organisations.

Donate as you shop

Please nominate CPRE Somerset as your chosen charity on Easyfundraising when you shop online. It costs you nothing at all but those small amounts donated by the retailers really add up. If you use it when booking train tickets or even holidays – then the donations are not so small after all!



Raise funds for us

You can help us by organising an event, donating a raffle prize, selling cakes..... the possibilities are endless - and whatever you can do would be much appreciated. Do get in touch to share your ideas and we will try to help you as much as we can.



Walking in the woods: Coombe Hill by Jya Raine

Leave us a legacy

Please consider leaving us something in your will so that we can continue our work for Somerset's countryside. Just mention CPRE Somerset to your solicitor and specify our charity number (1100860) and they will take care of the rest.

Join our lottery club

- Each ticket costs £12 and will enter you into 12 monthly draws
- 50% of the money raised will go into the prize fund and 50% will be used to help us continue our work for the Somerset countryside.
- Anyone over 16 can join
- Use the form enclosed in this newsletter or download one from www.cpresomerset.org.uk – or get in touch and we will send you one.



Every ticket helps us raise vital funds.

Get involved

A big thank you

Two of our longest serving trustees, David Lloyd and Cathy Nicholls have had to step down but have promised to stay in touch. They both have such a depth of understanding of landscape, wildlife and planning issues which we do not want to lose. Thanks to both for their commitment and support to CPRE over many years.

Volunteer opportunities

We are now looking for a couple of new Trustees - particularly from the Somerset West and Taunton area. You do not need any specialist skills to become a Trustee - we just need people who can bring their own life experiences to share with our team of volunteers and who love the Somerset countryside. You would need to be able to attend our meetings 5 or 6 times a year and can stay in touch by email in between.

We also have a rare opportunity for someone to lead our charity through the next few years. Chris Lewis is ready to step down as Chairman after seven years and we are looking for someone who can take on this rewarding role. This is a great opportunity for someone who enjoys networking and who could guide our charity as we face the challenges of the 21st century.

To learn more about these roles and how you could help, please get in touch with Becky Collier, Branch Manager.

Who we are

Chair	Chris Lewis
President	Roger Martin

Trustees	
Chris Lewis	Chair
David Julian	Mendip
Don Parkinson	South Somerset
Fletcher Robinson	South Somerset
Tim Whittingham	Sedgemoor
Hugh Williams	South Somerset
John Roberts	Honorary Treasurer

Becky Collier	Branch Manager admin@cpresomerset.org.uk Tel 0845 269 4206
Judith Chubb-Whittle	Planner planning@cpresomerset.org.uk



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The countryside charity
Somerset