

**Campaign to Protect Rural England, Somerset  
Minutes of Annual General Meeting.  
Held at Wells & Mendip Museum  
Friday 21st November 2025**

The following Trustees were present: Hugh Williams, Chairman, Somerset CPRE, Vernon Hughes, Sarah Hutchison, David Julian, Jenny Raggett, John Roberts (also Honorary Treasurer), and Janette Ward. In addition, Simon Murray (Chair, CPRE), Becky Collier, (Branch Manager), Fletcher Robinson, (Planning Consultant) plus 30 CPRE Somerset members and 6 guests. The attendance list is held by the Branch Manager.

**Apologies for absence** were received from the following members: Mariella Frostrup, Susan Shields, Rev Richard Kirlew, Patricia Eames, Ashley Deacon, Martin Horrox, Robert Sprawson, Linda Bennett, David Lloyd, Mike & Angela Merrifield.

**Confirmation of the minutes** of the previous AGM – these had been circulated and were confirmed as a correct record.

**Matters Arising** – none

**Review of the Year:** presented by Hugh Williams, Chair. Hugh gave a presentation showing highlights and achievements this year.

Planning: a busy year for planning – as always! Hugh ran through a snapshot of just the new cases in the last 6 months, including cases we had positively supported (rooftop solar installations and affordable homes for rent). Some battles won, some lost and many still working their way through the planning system. We are finding that expert advice is the only thing that cuts through but specialist legal advice or landscape and heritage reports don't come cheap. We have a small budget each year but also must rely on public donations and crowdfunding. We had an amazing response to our Frome crowdfunder – which allowed us to commission a legal letter and a landscape report, both used at the public inquiry in August.

Events: Our February Stargazing night in Middlezoy was very well-timed to coincide with the planetary parade and clear skies! We sponsored the landscape painting prize at Bruton Arts Society exhibition in August, and we held our second CPRE Countryside Day event in September at Shapwick Moor Nature Reserve, in partnership with the Hawk & Owl Trust.

Litter project: We have now given out over 350 litter picking kits to volunteers of all ages across Somerset (since 2020). We continue to work with SEND schools and Hugh gave examples of Penstone Farm, Cheddar and Cambian Lufton College, Yeovil, who take students out every week. Cambian students have been logging the most damaging items they find with the Marine Conservation Society Source to Sea national database.

Fingerposts: We have set aside £2000 of our budget each year to support Parish & Town Councils who want to restore their historic fingerposts. This year we have helped fund repairs in Crewkerne, North Curry, Greinton and Kingston St Mary. Others will be completed soon. In total, we have now helped to restore 38 fingerposts across Somerset.

Hugh thanked the following:

- All this year's Trustees – Gerhard Hattingh, Vernon Hughes, Sarah Hutchison, David Julian, Jenny Raggett, John Roberts, Janette Ward, Hugh Williams.
- Bron Purkiss and Liz Parfitt who have been participating in our meetings and are standing as potential Trustees. Thanks to Bron for taking minutes at our board meetings.
- David Julian is stepping down from the board as his 6-year term is up, but will continue to be involved – particularly through the strong links he has built up with the Mendip Hills partnership.
- John Roberts, our Treasurer. John first came to us as a Transport Volunteer in 2012 and took on the role of Treasurer in May 2017, so he has been looking after our finances for over 8 years. He has also been our Company Secretary during that time. He has kept us on an even footing, has prepared numerous annual reports and accounts and done annual submissions to the Charity Commission and Companies House. John has offered to complete the accounts for 2025 before handing over to a new Treasurer, which is very helpful, so he will be staying on as a Trustee in the short term.
- Mariella Frostrup - we are so proud to have Mariella as our President. She is an incredibly busy person, but she is happy to make time for our charity and we look forward to working with her in our centenary year.
- Phil Michael for auditing the accounts.
- Catherine Anderson and Mike Lanning, our Volunteer Photographers.
- Fletcher Robinson, our Planner, and Becky Collier, our Manager.

#### **Litter Project**

- All of our Litterpicking Volunteers.
- All our Trustees, plus Mike & Angela Merrifield, who help to deliver kits to new volunteers.
- Tincknells Country Store, Wells for discounted use of a container to store the equipment
- SUEZ for providing our wonderful, recycled litterpicking kits made of ocean plastic
- Somerset Duke of Edinburgh Coordinators and our friends at various SEND schools.

**Events:** Thank you to Somerset Levels Stargazing Group for hosting another brilliant stargazing evening in Middlezoy in February. Thanks also to the Hawk & Owl Trust for organising such a brilliant event for us at Shapwick Heath Nature Reserve for CPRE Countryside Day in September.

**Donations:** This year we have had donations from the CA Redfern Charitable Trust and some individual donations from people who have received planning help. We had an amazing response to our Frome crowdfunder – over 160 people donated and we raised almost £6000 for this specific case.

We also received a legacy of £3000 from Penelope Pargiter, a late member from South Somerset. Thanks to the Somerset Vintage Motorcycle Club for their donation of £200 to our fingerpost fund. Quite a few of our monthly lottery winners donate their prize money back to us, which is very kind. Thanks also to:

- Simon Murray for coming today
- Everyone who has bought a lottery ticket, bought our Christmas cards, recycled their ink cartridges for us and shopped via easy fundraising.
- Everyone who follows us on social media and likes and shares our posts
- Very importantly - our members! We tried hard to recruit new Parish Council members this year and are pleased to say it paid off with several PCs joining.

**Photo competition:** This year's theme was **Somerset: life in the countryside**. We received over 100 entries. Hugh thanked everyone who entered and thanked his fellow judges – Kit Houghton, Andrew Lee (Somerset Confidential), Ross Alexander (Moment Photography, Bridgwater). Stuart Watson, the adult winner was unable to attend but his £100 prize money has been sent to him. Olivia D'Ovidio, the under 19s winner, was present and Hugh awarded her a certificate and prize.

**2024 accounts:** The Treasurer, John Roberts presented his report. The accounts had been circulated to members. The reserves have continued at a stable level. Anyone interested in becoming our new Treasurer should contact Becky asap.

**Election of trustees:** Becky Collier, CPRE Somerset Manager, took the chair and reported nominations received for trustees. Nominations were for Hugh Williams, Vernon Hughes, Sarah Hutchison, Liz Parfitt, Bron Purkiss, John Roberts, Jenny Raggett, Fletcher Robinson and Janette Ward. These were proposed for election by Phil Holms and seconded by Mike Merrifield. On a show of hands all were appointed en-bloc. Mariella Frostrup was proposed by David Julian, seconded by Janette Ward, and re-elected as President.

**Any other business & questions** – various questions were asked about inappropriate housing developments in our small villages, solar farms, and the Planning & Infrastructure Bill.

Hugh thanked everyone for attending. The meeting was then followed by a presentation by Simon Murray, Chair of CPRE, about CPRE's 100-year history, and a preview, by Becky Collier, of CPRE Somerset's centenary plans.

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Hugh Williams, Chairman CPRE Somerset

Date:.....