



The countryside charity  
Avon and Bristol

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## ANNUAL REVIEW 2021-22

### Vice Chair's Report to Members

As readers will already know, the unprecedented times in which we are living continued throughout 2021 and into 2022, with Covid still very much with us, and a world that feels volatile on all fronts. Your Avon & Bristol branch of CPRE has, despite everything, continued to make good progress. This formal report to the AGM can only summarise the key points.

### Governance

Although our late Chair, David Worskett, died in July 2022, we could not begin any Governance report, for 2021 or otherwise, without mentioning him. David's contribution to CPRE Avon & Bristol was immense and our Annual General Meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022 will be dedicated to him.

Mention must also be made of the departure in early 2022 of our Director, Sophie Spencer. Sophie, as well providing invaluable and loyal support over the past eight years, has always been a pleasure to work with. and we wish her every success in her future career. We are very grateful to one of our Trustees, Charlee Bennett, for skilfully holding the fort pending the recruitment of a new Director . Our search has been successful, and Kate Jordan, who has wide experience in the charity sector and enthusiasm for countryside issues, is now in post.

Under David's leadership we have welcomed four new **Trustees** to the Board in 2021:

- Catherine Withers: farmer at Yew Tree Farm, the last working farm remaining in a Bristol postcode and passionate campaigner for protecting our green space and making it accessible for everyone
- Charlee Bennett: Chief Executive Officer of the charity Your Park Bristol & Bath
- Professor Christine Wilmore: Emeritus Professor of Sustainability and Law at the University of Bristol, alongside several other eminent positions
- Dr Miles Thompson: Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of the West of England and registered clinical psychologist.

### Starry Skies

Starry Skies is CPRE Avon & Bristol's iteration of CPRE's national project to map light pollution, Star Count, which usually takes place over two weeks in February and March. Star-filled skies are one of the most magical sights that nature has to offer, but our research shows that light pollution is leaving fewer stars than ever visible to the naked eye. Asking people to count stars is a fantastic way for a wide range of people to engage with CPRE's work: no telescopes required, can be done by children and adults, and it can be done safely from a garden, balcony or even bedroom window.



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In 2021 we put our learning from the significant Covid restrictions in 2020 to good use for Starry Skies by delivering a significant element of the campaign online. We ran a series of very successful events with much greater reach and exposure for CPRE than we could have achieved with just in-person events.

- 800 people signed up to our free public online events/workshops, and their email addresses were added to our mailing list (adhering to GDPR), increasing it by 86%.
- 12 young people from the Mendips Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Young Rangers Programme took part in an exclusive Starry Skies workshop.
- Social Media: 228K impressions on Twitter; 951 accounts reached in Instagram; 1,115 people reached on Facebook
- Our Director at the time, Sophie Spencer, was interviewed for BBC Breakfast, as part of the wider CPRE Star Count, with an average daily reach of 6.84 million.

Through Starry Skies, we have developed and strengthened partnerships with several important stakeholders, such as the Bristol Natural History Consortium, Bath Astronomers, the Cotswold's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Bath and Surrounds Starlit Skies Alliance and the Royal Astronomical Society, to name but a few. In the summer of 2021 we followed up our extensive online work with some in-person workshops with these partners, including one at the Royal Astronomical Society's National Astronomy Meeting in Bath in July.

## Planning

We continue to split CPRE's work into two strands, closely related but different. Proactively building understanding and appreciation of the countryside is one strand and is obviously the key to the future, to address the decline in broader political support for the countryside. This decline is, of course, not new on our list of worries - but one of the very few good things to come out of the pandemic is, as all conservation charities will attest – increasing public recognition of the importance of the countryside and green space in urban areas – and of the fact that many people cannot access it easily.

The second, equally challenging strand, for which CPRE is best known, is planning. Here in Avon and Bristol we have the huge benefit of three incredibly active and knowledgeable CPRE District Groups, covering three of Avon's Unitary Authority areas: South Gloucestershire, Bath & North East Somerset and North Somerset, who undertake the bulk of our planning work. They are constantly vigilant for inappropriate development proposals and attempts by others to subvert our complex planning system. Of course, where major planning proposals cut across the District and Unitary Authority boundaries, they are picked up and we give support at the Avon and Bristol level, but there is nothing like local knowledge on many of the issues that come our way.

In 2021, aided by our new Bristol-based Trustees, we started corralling a fourth District Group, to cover the Bristol City Council area. Our District Groups put in many more hours than they should, and we are always keen to hear from people interested in contributing to them.

In a short report it is impossible to do justice to our work on planning, but a few highlights are:

- Ongoing work to challenge the Bristol Airport expansion plans, including the commissioning of a significant economic report, cited as an important source for the overall campaign against expansion
- Extensive stakeholder engagement with, and navigation of the sometimes delicate relationships between, the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and the four Unitary Authorities that comprise the West of England (S. Glos, BANES, N. Somerset and Bristol)
- Contribution to the successful campaign against the building of an anaerobic digester facility in open countryside in Keynsham, BANES



## The countryside charity Avon and Bristol

- The upholding by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) of our complaint, about WECA's refusal to provide us with information we requested on six strategic transport schemes in the region.

This is just a snapshot, intended to illustrate the strength CPRE gains from the two work strands: one proactive, the other protective - nationally and locally.

### **Political lobbying**

Throughout the period we have been active as active as ever in lobbying our local Councillors and MPs, some of whom are of course more receptive than others. Our regional political landscape has continued to be uncertain and shifting. We have done well at joining forces with other like-minded organisations to put important cases across, which has enabled us to continue building strong links and becoming more effective as a result.

### **National CPRE**

Being part of the National CPRE Network is one of our greatest assets. During the period it has again allowed us access to unrivalled expertise and significant project funding, not only for Starry Skies but for marketing communications support in various forms as well. Cooperation with neighbouring local CPRE Charities through the SW Regional Forum has also been a significant benefit. National CPRE is itself still going through a period of major transformation and, therefore, anxieties remain present and patience is still needed while those responsible work through the various stages.

### **Finances and fundraising**

Our financial position is shown on the attached annual accounts. In essence it remains stable (as does membership, though there is a very small decline) but the pandemic, and its continuation in 2021, has made it impossible to achieve the step-change we really need, to allow us to deliver more now and secure the future. Doing this is the top priority as we launch new initiatives over the coming year. We have undoubtedly raised awareness of who we are and what we do, but as with very many organisations, converting awareness, often achieved through social media activity, into revenue, is a big challenge. All the financial support members currently give is hugely appreciated. However, we know that we need to raise more money, be it from new members, project funding from Trusts or revenue-raising events and activities and we will be energetically doing so.

Finally, I cannot close this report without formally thanking all those who work so hard to make CPRE Avon and Bristol the successful small charity that it is. I am hugely grateful to all my fellow Trustees for their guidance and support, and our District Groups - and especially their indefatigable chairs.

I hope very much to see you at our AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Chris Ambrose  
**Vice Chair**

CPRE Avon & Bristol  
Registered Charity 1189628  
Registered Community Interest Organisation CE021950  
Statement of Financial Activities to 31s December 2021

The following accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) issued by the Charity Commission to comply with the Executive Committee's obligations as the trustees of the Charity for keeping accounting records

	2021	2021	2020	2020
<b>Income</b>				
<b>Subscriptions &amp; Donations</b>				
Subscriptions	13,371.97		3,404.94	
Donations & Legacies	1,803.14		4,665.35	
Restricted Grants			15,000.00	
Restricted Funding Introduced from CPRE Avonside			4,211.98	
<b>Other Income</b>				
Training Supplied	100.00			
		<u>15,275.11</u>		<u>27,282.27</u>
<b>Investment Income</b>				
Bank Interest	30.46		4.66	
<b>Total Income</b>		<u>15,305.57</u>		<u>27,286.93</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
<b>Direct Charity</b>				
Insurance	533.70		533.69	
Telephone	116.59		31.62	
		<u>650.29</u>		<u>565.31</u>
<b>Other</b>				
Office & Administration Expenses	107.51			
Directors Employment	10,547.16		2,721.72	
Postage, Copying & Stationery	870.93		324.56	
Professional	1,342.00		71.00	
Subscriptions	180.00		65.00	
Restricted Fund Expenditure	18,453.48		978.50	
Bank Charges	21.30	31,522.38	7.10	4,167.88
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<u>32,172.67</u>		<u>4,733.19</u>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>		<u>(16,867.10)</u>		<u>22,553.74</u>
<b>Retained Funds B/fwd</b>		<u>59,301.68</u>		<u>36,747.94</u>
<b>Total Funds</b>		<u>42,434.58</u>		<u>59,301.68</u>
<b>Funded By:</b>				
Current Accounts		5,567.77		22,459.01
Deposit Account		36,766.81		36,742.67
Bristol Pounds		100.00		100.00
		<u>42,434.58</u>		<u>59,301.68</u>



#### Notes to the Accounts

1. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and no account has been taken of accrued/prepaid income or expenditure

#### Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of CPRE Avon & Bristol

##### Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the charities act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Direction given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act) and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

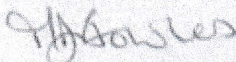
##### Basis of Independent Examiners Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

##### Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met, or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

 M J Bowles C.M.A.

M J Bowles  
MJB Accounting  
July 2022