



The countryside charity Avon and Bristol

CPRE Avon and Bristol
Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended
31st December 2024

CPRE Avon and Bristol is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
Branch Number: 1189628
www.cpreavonandbristol.org.uk

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Dear Member

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Accounts for year to 31st December, 2024. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and they and the Annual Report comply with CPRE Avon and Bristol's governing documentation and applicable law.

CHARITABLE OBJECTIVES:

CPRE Avon and Bristol's charitable objectives, as set out in its constitution, are to promote and encourage for the benefit of the public, the enhancement and protection of the English countryside. In particular, the rural environment around the towns and villages within the Unitary Authorities of Bath and North East Somerset; Bristol; North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

STRATEGIC AIMS:

CPRE Avon and Bristol is recognised across the West of England as the only charitable organisation that stands up for the countryside across the whole range of issues affecting it. In doing so, we can draw on CPRE's national expertise and experience acquired over nearly one hundred years.

Our objectives, set in 2019, remain steadfast. We recognise the value of open green spaces and Green Belt in providing a range of eco-system services necessary to sustain people and wildlife; we promote the health benefits of access to the countryside for everyone, especially urban dwellers and those from diverse cultural backgrounds who may currently have limited access. We support nature's recovery through our ongoing work on the 'Hedgerow Heroes' project and our District Planning Groups engage with local planning authorities, individuals and organisations to ensure rural communities continue to thrive and have a sustainable future.

Public benefit:

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and they have referred to it when carrying out the Foundation's charitable purposes.

ACHIEVEMENTS and PERFORMANCE:

We are a small branch of CPRE so it is a great achievement to have attracted so much funding for the 'Hedgerow Heroes' project. Through the practical conservation tasks of traditional hedge-laying and planting, it has enabled CPRE Avon and Bristol to continue to engage with volunteers from local communities as well as landowners, teach them new skills and aid in nature's recovery. Thanks go out to the Director of CPRE and to the Project Manager of Hedgerow Heroes' for securing these funds. This has raised the profile of the charity locally. In addition, funding from the 'Farming In Protected Landscapes' scheme, allowed us to reach communities with whom we had previously had no contact.

Following CPRE's stated objectives of supporting a 'Countryside for All', we partnered with Babassa, a social enterprise in Bristol, that works to open up job and other opportunities for young people from under represented groups.

Thanks to funding, we convened meetings where young people of colour were able to explore their attitudes to nature and the countryside. We then invited the participants to share their views at a Countryside Day in September, held on a regenerative farm on the Mendips.

Maxine Virapin, Mae Ghosh and Laughter Coker, gave moving testimonies on their relationship with the countryside. They also videoed the event and shared the experience on social media networks. We aim to continue to work with Babassa on future funded projects.

During 2024 The Chair continued to represent the branch at national and regional level.

Engagement with Planning Authorities:

CPRE Avon and Bristol has four District Planning Groups (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire). Each group is run by volunteers experienced in the planning process. They monitor and comment upon Local Plans and selected planning applications. They also work with community groups, giving advice on the planning system and sharing their experience, as time allows.

Late in 2024 and into 2025 the Districts began working on responses to Local Plans in South Gloucestershire, B&NES, Bristol and North Somerset. A professional planner was employed for a short period to comment upon the Bristol Local Plan. North Somerset District group responded fully, at every stage, to the Local Plan being drawn up.

The Districts also responded to planning applications submitted in these areas.

In Bath and North East Somerset, CPRE lent its support to the successful opposition to further intrusive development on the South Stoke Plateau which would have severely threatened the World Heritage status of Bath as well as damaging protected landscapes and ancient monuments.

In the Bristol district a letter was written to Bristol City Council objecting to the expansion of the South Bristol Cemetery and its effect on Yew Tree Farm.

In North Somerset CPRE also objected to a wildflower meadow, a nesting site for skylarks, next to the Avon Gorge (an SSSI) being taken over by a private company, Roots Allotments. The land is being converted for use as Allotments with associated shipping containers on site and access problems ongoing.

A letter was sent to the Secretary of State who had called in a planning application by an American Software Company, EPIC, to build a new HQ on 45 acres of green belt land in Long Ashton.

In South Gloucestershire, the main issue in 2024 was not any individual or multiple planning applications but the publishing of South Gloucestershire's final Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan; this was the moment when the Council stopped consulting on possible approaches to meeting the area's housing need and gave the public numbers and locations. This caused consternation with some local residents and community groups when they realised options for response were very limited.

Recruitment/Staff Changes:

We employed a part time Communications Co-ordinator between June and October 2024. The contract was terminated on October 11th as the person in question moved to London.

On October 24th, the Director requested a reduction in her hours from three days a week to one. This was agreed for an interim period of three months from January 2025.

In the meantime, the Trustees consulted on the charity's needs versus its income and a review of finances and roles was undertaken. No further action was taken on this matter in 2024 until evaluation of the Director's reduction of hours could happen in April of 2025.

Hedgerow Heroes – Jan 2024 – December 2024.

This year encompassed the end of our second Hedgerow Heroes project. By the project end in April 2024, we had engaged with over 80 volunteers in planting and restoring over 1km hedgerow across South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. We held a celebration event for volunteers at The Old Crown in Weston, Bath, joined by guest speaker Megan Gimber from the People's Trust for Endangered Species, who has expert knowledge on hedgerows.

We were successful in gaining funding for our third Hedgerow Heroes project, with an ambitious target of 3km hedgerow to be restored/created over the next season. For this phase, we expanded the project into the third county of North Somerset. The bulk of our funding came from CPRE National. South Gloucestershire Council also generously supported the project again this year. Additional funding from Mendip Hills National Landscape, Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme, allowed us to create a large engagement event, a 'Countryside Day', in September at a regenerative farm in the Mendips. Guest speakers included author and hedgerow expert Rob Wolton, alongside young people from the Bristol-based youth organization Babbasa, who created digital content of the event.

One of the key sites for hedgerow planting in 2024 was Lower Chew Forest, a farmland site South of Bristol owned by Avon Needs Trees. We worked in partnership to lead planting sessions at the site, establishing 1.3km of original hedge lines that were ripped out post-WWII.

National CPRE

One of the greatest strengths of CPRE is its structure. With 41 Local groups, one in almost every County, the national expertise in policy making and campaigning strengthens and supports local efforts. Hedgerow Heroes is a perfect example of this. In 2024 it was funded nationally in ten Counties and allows local branches to add to that funding to achieve more. The local groups also deliver the project by engaging with communities and delivering practical conservation. Local Chairs also input into national groups. CPRE Avon and Bristol Chair is a member of the Diversity and Inclusion group, the Task and Finish Group for the Centenary and Chairs the Centenary Communications Strategy Group.

Volunteers:

The Board of Trustees would like to thank our District Planning Groups for their tireless efforts in protecting the countryside in their local areas and thanks also to the individuals who attend the Executive Committee, ensuring local issues are raised.

The Hedgerow Heroes project could not be delivered without the support of our Hedgerow Heroes volunteers. We would like to thank all those who join the Project team across autumn and winter when the weather can be very challenging. They have taken practical action to ensure hedgerows are rejuvenated or new ones planted for the benefit of future generations of people and wildlife. Thank you so much.

FINANCIAL REVIEW:

2024 saw a similar level of income as 2023. Although there was a decrease in our unrestricted income, this was offset by an increase in restricted funding. This is indicative of a continued focus on fundraising, efforts to diversify income streams and the ongoing development of the branch.

Please note that the organisation's accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and no account has been taken of accrued or prepaid income or expenditure.

Our unrestricted income in 2024 was £18,975.82. This included £13,584 of membership fees, £300 of donations and £4,200 in unrestricted grants (D'Oyley Carte Foundation and £100 from Backwell Parish Council).

The majority of our restricted income of £72,103.36 was received from a private donor who, through National CPRE, has supported our Hedgerow Heroes project and funds activities until June 2024. This project also supports the branch's core costs. The remainder of the income included additional support for our Hedgerow Heroes activities from the Bee Bold Award received from the West of England Combined Authority (£6,000), the Bristol Airport Community Fund (£7,000) and from Funding in Protected Landscapes (£8,715). The Trustees have subsequently decided not to apply for further funding from the Bristol Airport Community Fund.

The Trustees are sincerely grateful to all those that have supported CPRE Avon and Bristol's work during this period.

In total during the year, CPRE Avon and Bristol received income of £91,079 and paid out £92,829.53 on charitable activities and fundraising. Net movement in funds on unrestricted funds was -£621 and -£1,750 on restricted funds resulting in total funds balances of £78,409.11 at the end of this financial year.

Reserves policy: CPRE Avon and Bristol has reserves equating to a full years' operational costs. This will be held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow, meet emergencies and allow CPRE Avon and Bristol to maintain its financial sustainability. The balance of free reserves at the end of 2024 was £49,879.17.

Risk Management

The Board of Trustees have examined the major strategic and operational risks which CPRE Avon and Bristol may face and they have established systems which enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to minimise these risks.

Going Concern

The Board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the branch during the accounting period and the position at 31st December, 2024 and consider that CPRE Avon and Bristol is in a reasonable position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the branches assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT:

CPRE Avon and Bristol services are delivered by an operational, part-time team. The team includes the Director (3 days a week), one part-time Communications Co-ordinator, one part-time Project Lead (Hedgerow Heroes) and a Project Assistant (Hedgerow Heroes) on a short term contract.

The staff team report into the Director and the Director reports directly to the Chair and Board of Trustees. Performance reviews of the Director are undertaken by the Chair of Trustees.

The IT resources required to run the branch includes office equipment such as laptops and a phone which has been provided from funds from CPRE Avon and Bristol.

Office meeting space is rented at the Engine Shed, Station Approach, Bristol at a competitive price. This allows the team to meet up regularly face to face to sustain good communication, relationships and staff morale.

Complaints

CPRE Avon and Bristol received no complaints regarding our fundraising practices.

Independent examiners

MJB Accounting were re-appointed as independent examiners to the branch during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

Changes to the Trustee Board

Georgie Bigg joined the Trustee Board at the AGM in September 2024.

The Chair would like to thank the Trustees for their loyal and dedicated service to CPRE Avon and Bristol. We are in need of Trustees to expand our Board. We are currently looking for Trustees with a financial and HR background; a Trustee who can lead on Diversity and Inclusion; on Nature's Recovery and a Trustee who has planning expertise.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

In 2023 we declared our intention to apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support us in accessing a wider network of individuals from under-represented backgrounds and to drive inclusive policy and practice at CPRE Avon and Bristol. The application was extremely time consuming for both Chair and Director and unfortunately we were unsuccessful. Our strategy now is to focus on smaller Trusts and Funds to enhance our work in this area and expand from Hedgerow Heroes to include funding for nature's recovery.

We will continue to work with communities on planning issues and in line with other CPRE local groups, continually apply for funds to stage events that bring stakeholders and communities together to find best outcomes for a thriving, sustainable countryside. We will continue to work with under-represented groups so support access to the nature and land based sector for further training, careers or recreation.

We sincerely thank our Members for their ongoing support. Without you, we could not contribute so fully to increasing bio-diversity in this area, through 'Hedgerow Heroes' and support our District Planning Groups in the dedicated work they do.

Sarah Pitt



Chair, CPRE Avon and Bristol.

REFERENCE and ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Trustees

The following served as Trustees during the year (unless shown otherwise)

Chair: Sarah Pitt
Charlotte Bennett (Vice Chair)
Kaley Hart (Treasurer)
Catherine Withers
Danica Priest
Sophie Spencer
Georgie Bigg

Correspondence address:

PO Box 3435
Bristol
BS6 9PS

Branch Registration Number:

1189628

Independent Examiner:

MJB Accounting
83 Upper Halfway
Beanacre
Wiltshire
SN12 7QA

CPRE Avon & Bristol
Registered Charity 1189628
Registered Community Interest Organisation CE021950
Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2024

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

| | 2024 General £ | 2024 Restricted £ | 2024 Total £ | 2023 General £ | 2023 Restricted £ | 2023 Total £ |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Income | | | | | | |
| Subscriptions & Donations | | | | | | |
| Subscriptions | 13,584.46 | | | 14,360.35 | | 14,360.35 |
| Donations & Legacies | 300.00 | | | 7,891.20 | | 7,891.20 |
| Charitable Activities | | 4,638.00 | | | | |
| Restricted Grants | | 67,465.36 | | | 64,606.33 | 64,606.33 |
| Hedgerow Heroes | | | | | 3,990.00 | 3,990.00 |
| Quartet Rooftop Solar | | | | | | |
| Unrestricted Grants | 4,200.00 | | | 100.00 | | 100.00 |
| Other Income | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Training Supplied | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Uncatergorised | | | | 268.13 | 138.24 | 406.37 |
| Investment Income | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Bank Interest | 891.36 | | | 611.74 | | 611.74 |
| Total Income | 18,975.82 | 72,103.36 | 91,079.18 | 23,231.42 | 68,734.57 | 91,965.99 |
| Expenditure | | | | | | |
| Direct Charity | | | | | | |
| Insurance | 179.82 | 227.32 | 407.14 | 142.11 | 263.91 | 406.02 |
| Telephone | 68.22 | 139.24 | 207.46 | 80.70 | 100.24 | 180.94 |
| Fundraising | 175.00 | | 175.00 | 1,266.98 | | 1,266.98 |
| Travel, Accomodation & Room Hire | 426.42 | 3,166.46 | 3,592.88 | 660.66 | 2,117.45 | 2,778.11 |
| Other | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Office & Administration Expenses | 504.93 | 745.99 | 1,250.92 | 810.89 | 1,743.66 | 2,554.55 |
| Salaries & Wages | 9,778.90 | 43,776.43 | 53,555.33 | 12,131.02 | 28,083.83 | 40,214.85 |
| Recruitment | | | | | | 0 |
| Staff Expenses | | | | | | 0 |
| Volunteer Expenses and Welfare | | | | | | 0 |
| Training | 1,980.00 | 100.00 | 2,080.00 | | | 0 |
| Materials | | 16,187.08 | 16,187.08 | | 4,615.38 | 4,615.38 |
| Publicity & Promotion | | | | | | 0 |
| Costs of Education | | | | | | 0 |
| Events | | | | | | 0 |
| Equipment | | | | | | 0 |
| Postage, Copying & Stationery | 665.18 | 220.91 | 886.09 | 813.68 | 9.99 | 823.67 |
| Professional | 5,752.74 | 8,668.79 | 14,421.53 | 3,635.41 | 8,291.39 | 11,926.80 |
| Subscriptions | 36.00 | | 36.00 | 187.93 | 14.95 | 202.88 |
| Bank Charges | 30.10 | | 30.10 | 28.40 | | 28.40 |
| Total Expenditure | 19,597.31 | 73,232.22 | 92,829.53 | 19757.78 | 45,240.80 | 64,998.58 |
| Surplus/Deficit | (621) | (1,129) | (1,750) | 3,473.64 | 23,493.77 | 26,967.41 |
| Retained Funds B/fwd | | | 80,159.46 | | | 53,192.05 |
| Total Funds | | | 78,409.11 | | | 80,159.46 |
| Funded By: | | | | | | |
| Current Accounts (excluding Restricted Funds balances) | | | 11,711.01 | | | 13,184.95 |
| Deposit Account | | | 38,068.16 | | | 37,315.71 |
| Bristol Pounds | | | 100.00 | | | 100.00 |
| Restricted Funds C/Fwd | | | 28,529.94 | | | 29,558.80 |
| | | | 78,409.11 | | | 80,159.46 |

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
24th April 2025