



Summer 2021

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Summer Update

Welcome to our latest newsletter. Again COVID dominates our thoughts but with the successful roll out of vaccinations the outlook is looking more positive. As usual the beautiful Bucks countryside is putting on its spring/summer show, which is very welcome after what has seemed to be a long wet winter. Getting out into the garden and the great outdoors is a great mood enhancer.

Unfortunately, across the county, areas are now starting to feel the full impact of HS2 works as trees are felled and areas of countryside ruined. We have always opposed HS2 and living with the destruction is making us even more determined to ensure future development in Buckinghamshire meets local need and benefits local residents.

Following a year of remote working which has been very effective and reduced our travel we have decided to move out of our shared office base with Community Impact Bucks in Monks Risborough and continue to develop the branch based on remote working. When we can all meet again in person we will make use of various locations across the county. To enable us to hold meetings remotely on an on-going basis we do need to consult with our members and make some changes to our Articles. The Notice to do that is enclosed with this newsletter.

We have been busy recruiting to our team to enable us to work even more effectively. Frances Nash has joined us as an additional Trustee. Kathryn Jones joined a few weeks ago as a volunteer supporting our communications currently focusing on social media. Our most recent recruit is Christa McDermott who started just after Easter as our new paid part time Office Support Manager.

To support our wild seeds project and to include the Notice about our change in the articles we are issuing this newsletter as a hard copy to all our members. We will revert back to our email copies for following editions.

[Paula Buck, Chair]

Dame Cheryl Gillan MP



We were saddened to hear that our President Dame Cheryl Gillan MP passed away over the Easter weekend. Cheryl has been a huge support to CPRE Bucks. She passionately campaigned for the Chiltern countryside whether it was campaigning against HS2, protecting chalk streams or promoting that the Chiltern Hills gained National Park status. Our thoughts go to her family and friends. She will be greatly missed.

Expressway Cancelled!

Thanks to the amazing work of campaigners across the OxCam corridor the controversial expressway road linking Oxford to Cambridge has been scrapped.

The Oxford to Cambridge Expressway had been paused since March 2020. After further analysis and public engagement, the Government has decided the project is not cost effective. The Department for Transport will now look at more targeted road interventions to improve transport links. [Paula Buck, Chair]

FREE INSIDE! Wildflower seeds to help you wild a part of your garden!

Welcoming an additional Trustee

We are delighted to announce that we have expanded our Board of Trustees and welcome Frances Nash. Here is Frances' message:

"Hello! I'm delighted to be joining the CPRE Bucks Board. I've lived in Buckinghamshire for over 15 years now, in Pitstone, in the south east of the county, where I have been lucky enough to have Ivinghoe Beacon on my doorstep for my daily lockdown exercise over the past year. I'm a hobby gardener as well as a walker, and I spent large parts of my childhood on narrowboat holidays - so I guess it's not surprising that I've developed a broad interest in the countryside and the environment. By profession I'm a civil servant, and in fact my very first department was the old Ministry of Agriculture, where I worked on some of the first environmental protection schemes.

I've attended two trustee meetings to date and been impressed by the very broad range of topics that CPRE Bucks touches on - everything from rewilding and biodiversity on the one hand through to infrastructure and planning issues on the other. The breadth of the



agenda reflects the breadth of the challenges to our local area, of course, in creating a sustainable environment where people can live and work and where we don't lose the best of our beautiful countryside: I'm very much enjoying getting involved, but, goodness, there's a lot to do!" **[Frances Nash]**

Everyone's talking about Rewilding....

There is much written about rewilding and it has become rather a 'hot topic' recently. As such, we are including an introduction in our newsletter for your interest as we do sometimes refer to the term. We also enclose some wild flower seeds for you to enjoy.

What is Rewilding?

Rewilding is providing the right environment to allow nature to regenerate naturally.

Why is it needed and what is the purpose?

With all the changes and advances of human activity, nature has been changed and the impact is widely recognised. Wildlife is in decline, with many species becoming endangered. For example, we now see around half the butterflies we used to less than 50 years ago.

According to experts, the changes (driven by human activity) in our environment are affecting the climate conditions for local wildlife so fast that it struggles to adapt quickly enough, causing an extinction risk. But it is estimated that if we act now and restore as much as 30% of natural habitats by 2030, at least a fifth of

the species could be protected. In line with this, Boris Johnson has made a pledge to protect 30% of UK land to help, but more needs to be done.

Various (small and large-scale) rewilding projects have been initiated to try to temper the changes with the aim to bring back the natural balance. There is plenty of scope for us to help.

How can you help?

There are many ways to get involved! As a member of CPRE Bucks you are already a member of an organisation that supports rewilding either specifically or as part of a combination of activities. You could recommend a friend as a member. A donation to us will help us do more. You could also set up a group locally to coordinate a rewilding project or contact your local MP and council to see what action they are taking.

Recent rewilding trials on UK road verges are underway and you could try to encourage more; where safe to do so of course. The organisation 'Plantlife' has recently confirmed that some 45% of

the UK's total flora can be found on our road verges; that is over 700 species!

Another lovely way to help is by creating an area in your garden eg: letting your grass grow longer (all of it or just an area) and planting wildflower seeds, thus helping provide areas for more insects to explore and attracting bees and other pollinators. But do remember to also avoid pesticides.

To help with this, we have sent you a packet of bee-friendly wildflower seeds to get you started. So give it a go in your garden or give them to a friend or family member to try! When you have taken action, why not let us know what you have done to get involved and any success stories you have during the coming months, we would love to hear about it!

[Fiona Williamson, Trustee]

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc

The Oxford to Cambridge Arc (or OxCam Arc) is the name given to a cross-government initiative that supports the planning for the future across the five counties of Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. The Government regard it as an ambitious plan to unleash the economic and cultural potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, to transform it into one of the world's premier growth corridors and a world-leader in sustainability. The government view is that it:

"will help to create thousands of jobs, drive investment, protect and enhance the environment, and provide the infrastructure and beautiful new places".

Their proposal is to develop a spatial framework plan, the approach of which will be consulted on in summer 2021.

Our concern is that the proposals are looking to focus massive investment and development in the already overheated south – east and it risks driving a maximum growth agenda inappropriate in a climate emergency and post-Covid world, and unwanted by the local populations on whom it will be foisted. How can building all over it enhance the environment?

We know that growth both economic and in terms of housing are inevitable but this needs to be framed around local development and need. We will continue to work alongside the other CPRE groups in the Arc area together with support from National CPRE to make sure we can respond to the upcoming consultation and representations to government with a shared voice.

[Paula Buck, Chair]

Buckinghamshire Council Elections – Challenge your candidates!

Your Trustees at CPRE Bucks have written to all candidates in May's first full election for the new Buckinghamshire Council - to ask what they will do to PROMOTE, PROTECT and ENHANCE the countryside in Buckinghamshire.

How will they stand up for our countryside?

Our county is rich in AONB, including globally-important chalk streams and other wildlife havens, and retains a strong rural character – but are these secure? The next five years of Buckinghamshire Council will be critical in planning for the affordable housing, jobs and infrastructure we desperately need.

We asked all candidates for their views on the following important topics:

- 1) How will you support the development of a new Local Plan – to prioritise brownfield development, protect the green belt, support the rural economy and challenge Government-dictated housing assumptions?
- 2) How will you challenge the OxCam Arc development numbers to ensure they are focussed on meeting local needs?
- 3) How will you improve the county's transport networks and support access to transport for rural communities?
- 4) How will you protect our farmers and farmland? These provide jobs, skills, biodiversity and land stewardship.

- 5) What support for the county's rural areas will you give, to provide affordable housing and better broadband?
- 6) What action will you take to promote local, sustainable, affordable produce?
- 7) What action will you take to prevent further destruction to our countryside environment - from over-development, deforestation and the degradation of our rivers?

We will share the responses with you, our members. We will also write to all councillors after the election, to ask how they will use their new powers to support our rural environment.

You can play your part by asking your own questions, to challenge your candidates – and hold them to their promises once elected. For a full list of Buckinghamshire Council candidates by area, please go to:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/council-and-democracy/election-and-voting/election-timetable-and-notices/>

Happy voting!

[Andrew Garth, Trustee]

More ways to donate to CPRE for free!

In the last issue we told you about Amazon Smile and how, by shopping at Amazon using the smile.amazon.co.uk website a small donation can be made to CPRE Bucks – by Amazon itself. Well there is another way you can donate without it costing you a penny:



How does it work?

easyfundraising turns your everyday online shopping into free donations for your favourite cause. Just start your online shopping first at easyfundraising.org.uk, then shop as normal. Retailers will then make a small donation to say “thank you”.

There are 4700+ retailers to choose from including big names e.g. M & S and John Lewis and so far over £35 million has been raised for thousands of community groups, schools, sports clubs, small and large charities across the UK.

It's simple to use and it's free. CPRE Bucks has already received over £350 from our supporters who shop through easyfundraising.

1. Get started

If you haven't already, create an account at easyfundraising.org.uk and choose CPRE Bucks as your cause to support. then join for free and save easyfundraising.org.uk as a bookmark.

2. Start shopping

Log on to easyfundraising.org.uk from your computer, go to the shop you want and start shopping! You can even download an add-on to your browser that means whenever you shop online if the retailer participates you will always be asked if you want to make a donation.

[Paula Buck, Chair]