

Autumn/Winter 2022 Newsletter



The countryside charity
Staffordshire

CPRE Staffordshire
Autumn/Winter
2022 Newsletter

AUTUMN/WINTER NEWS FROM CPRE STAFFORDSHIRE
WWW.CPRESTAFFORDSHIRE.ORG.UK

Hello and welcome to our autumn/winter newsletter. If you've received this newsletter in the post, that either means that we don't have an email address for you, or that because of the GDPR, we haven't had confirmation that you wish to continue receiving emails from CPRE. If this applies, please email Supporter Services (supporterservices@cpre.org.uk) to confirm that you are happy to receive CPRE emails

As well as reducing our printing costs, signing up for e-mail newsletters means you will get your news earlier. We will never pass your email address on to anyone else. Please also let us know if you do NOT wish to receive the newsletter or other communications from us.

Please let us know if you would like a large-print copy of the newsletter.

Above photo credit: David Gibson, Staffordshire Moorlands.

Chairman's address

It was both an honour and pleasure to be elected as CPRE Staffordshire's new Chairman at the AGM in September. As we near the end of a year best summed up by the word 'perma-crisis', I'm reminded of the solace and tranquility that our countryside can offer us in such times. We should therefore feel proud of the work we do, whether as volunteers or members, to protect, promote and enhance our countryside. For me, the honour and reward of this role is also very much about getting to know and spending time with our members.

In the short time I've been in this role, I've started to reach out to both members and volunteers. I am keen to get to know more of you, and there are a few ways in which we could start a discussion. Please feel free to drop me an email or write a letter to the address at the end of this newsletter. I'm very keen to hear from you and promise to write back. Another way to get a conversation going is by

answering some of our consultation questions in our newsletters - this one on the hot topic of solar farms. I've noticed an application for one near me and see an increasing number of them on my regular train trips to London. We really want to hear from you to make sure that CPRE's local and national policy reflects your views. And finally, if you don't want to write, then I would still be keen to hear from you. I'd love to see your photos of the countryside, or a poem celebrating it, or anything else inspired by Staffordshire's wonderful countryside that you'd like to share.

With a view to engaging more of our members, we adapted our AGM slightly this year to have a picnic before the guest speaker and 'business bit' of the meeting. I have more ideas for other such events to bring our members together - perhaps curry and quiz nights, a ramble near Cannock Chase, or any other idea you might have. We encourage as many of you as possible to attend so that we can make the events both

financially viable as well as enjoyable. The future of any charity is not just with its current members - we also want to bring in new supporters. These events would thus be open to your family, friends and anyone else who might be interested in helping support us and what we stand for.

Before I sign off until our next newsletter in 2023, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our previous Chair, Mary Booth. We are fortunate to still have Mary as one of our Trustees of course. Not only was Mary the Chair for three years, her term also coincided with the upheaval of the pandemic. I am grateful for the strong legacy she has left and the high bar she has set for me to aspire to.

With best wishes,

Mohammed Khuram.

Solar farms

Solar energy has an important role to play in meeting future energy needs and climate change is a huge threat to the countryside. However, when it comes to building large-scale

solar farms on agricultural land things get a bit heated to say the least...



Does the climate crisis warrant building more solar farms in the countryside? Should solar only be on rooftops? Or Grades 4 and 5 of agricultural land only? We would really like to know the views of our members on this issue. Please let us know your thoughts by completing this short survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5GVTDKY>

The photo shows the site of a proposed solar farm on arable land near Knighton, currently farmed by a tenant farmer.

FUTURE EVENTS

This winter, we are planning to hold a tree-planting event in collaboration with the Prince's Trust.

We also hope to hold a dark skies event, possibly in conjunction with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, to tie in with CPRE's Star Count. Please contact us if you know any local astronomers who may be able to help.

Calling All Farmers - Staffordshire Needs Trees!



Are you a farmer or landowner? We are always on the look-out for suitable land on which we could organise tree or hedge-planting events. Please contact us if you can help.

LOCAL NEWS

Staffordshire Way - a correction

We apologise for the error in the route description given in the previous newsletter, in which we stated that from Uttoxeter the Way follows the Trent and Mersey Canal towards Shugborough Hall. On leaving Uttoxeter, the Staffordshire Way goes through farmland and the village of Abbots Bromley and skirts Blithfield Reservoir before joining the Trent and Mersey Canal on the outskirts of Rugeley.

AGM



Thank you to everyone who came to our picnic (held indoors due to the weather), talk and AGM at the Haling Dene Centre on 22 September. Guest speaker John Baker of the University of Nottingham gave a fascinating talk about what place names can tell us about the

history of the countryside and landscapes.

We also said a big thank you to our outgoing Office & Publicity Manager, Sue Kneill-Boxley (pictured below with trustee Steve Hopkins) - our loss is Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's gain! Fortunately we are not completely losing Sue as she is staying on as volunteer treasurer.



The minutes of the AGM and the slides from the presentation are on our website.

New Chairman

We are pleased to announce that we elected a new Chairman at the AGM, Mohammed Khuram. Mohammed lives in the east of the county, just outside the village of Abbots Bromley. He is particularly interested in conserving the beauty of the county's villages, promoting the access already available to the county's open spaces and

for a greater understanding and appreciation of the invaluable work done by the farming community. He is also keen to protect its countryside by enabling it to thrive through better transport and telecommunications connectivity and championing affordable housing for younger rural residents being priced out of their communities.

Having graduated from Oriel College, Oxford with a degree in Law, he has been employed with Shell International for the entirety of his professional career. He has previously volunteered for the Prince's Trust in Scotland and the Prince of Wales' Turquoise Mountain Foundation in Afghanistan.

CPRE NATIONAL NEWS

Star Count

CPRE's annual Star Count will take place from 17-24 February 2023 (half-term week).

CPRE's hedgerow petition handed in to Defra

Staff and volunteers from national CPRE and local

groups have handed in a hedgerow petition signed by almost 50,000 people. The petition calls on the government to set a target to increase our hedgerow network by 40% by 2050, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee (CCC).

The Countryside Next Door: Investing in Green Belts

Allocating a greater share of government funds towards the Green Belt could give a huge boost to people's health and wellbeing, according to a new CPRE report. Its new report, *The countryside next door: why we need to invest in greener, healthier Green Belts*, is the first to analyse where agri-environment funding has been spent. The research shows that just over a quarter (28%) of Green Belt farmland is covered by these sorts of government funding schemes, compared with 42% nationwide. Only 7% of all national spending is on Green Belt land, even though Green Belt contains 11% of all England's farmland.

<https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/investment-needed-for-countryside-next-door-to-level-up-access-to-nature/>

LOCAL PLANNING ROUND-UP

Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

22/00724/FUL Land At Pool Farm 82 Napley Road Napley Staffordshire TF9 4DP. Change of use of agricultural land to form dog exercise area including installation of fencing.

As a broad principle CPRE welcomes and encourages the development of small business opportunities in the rural economy, especially if this is linked to diversification of small farms, which may otherwise become economically unviable.

We recognise the demand for safe and secure dog exercise facilities, and broadly welcome them if they improve animal welfare and reduce the potentially damaging effects of uncontrolled

dog exercise on farmland and around livestock.

However, we are concerned about the loss of high-quality agricultural land and the potential disturbance to natural habitats these facilities can cause, including, in this case, the removal of some hedgerow. It is also difficult to fully scrutinise the ecological impacts of the application given the large amount of redaction in the published survey.

We would hope that conditions are put in place with any application to minimise the amount of land that would not be able to be returned to agriculture if the facility subsequently closes.

Whilst any application needs to be considered on its merits, issues such as hours of use, noise and light pollution, and increased traffic should be considered by the relevant authority before any final decision is made.

Stafford Borough Council



22/36536/OUT Outline Planning Permission for the erection of forty dwellings (Use Class C3), access and parking with some matters reserved | Land Off Old Croft Road Walton On The Hill Stafford (pictured above). Objection on the grounds of being a greenfield site outside of the settlement boundary and not in an area allocated for development in the Local Plan.

We responded to the Stafford Gateway Masterplan Consultation in September. We support a 'brownfield-first approach' and the use of previously developed land to meet housing need. Whilst we therefore do not object to the Stafford Gateway development in principle, we are concerned that

the proposals in their current form are not sufficiently ambitious in responding to the challenges of the climate and ecological emergencies. We urge developers to follow the Building with Nature (BwN) 2.0 standards - an evidence-based benchmark for high-quality green infrastructure.

We are currently preparing a response to the Stafford Borough Council Local Plan Preferred Options consultation and the South Staffordshire Regulation 19 consultation.

Spot some weird and wonderful fungi



Fly agaric - Mark Kneill-Boxley

They can be easily missed, but mushrooms of all shapes and sizes are hiding in England's countryside - and autumn

is a great time to spot them.

Keep your eyes peeled on your next woodland walk for some of these unusual specimens. Remember: stay on the path, if you plan to pick any then always forage safely and responsibly - and take lots of photos! We'd love to see them on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

Fly agaric

One of the most recognisable of the autumn mushrooms, fly agaric (above) can be found from late summer to the first frosts of winter.

Spotting the bright red caps peeking up from the leaves can make it feel like you've been transported into a fairytale. Its name comes from its historic use as natural pest control: fly-plagued countryside-dwellers would sprinkle chopped up chunks of the mushroom into a bowl of milk to form a tasty but deadly trap for insects.

Where to find it: Look for these mushrooms in

woodland, growing near birch, pine and spruce.

Shaggy inkcap



The long, shaggy cap of this fungus has earned it many nicknames, from 'lawyer's wig' to 'shaggy mane'.

The white scales on its cap give the appearance of a ruffled head of hair, although it looks a lot more mushroom-like when you get close up. And if you're feeling creative, shaggy inkcaps can be used to make your own ink. Fair warning: mushroom-based ink is a bit smellier than the stuff you get in your ballpoint pen!

Where to find it: Lots of open areas - grassy fields, lawns, parks and even roadside verges.

Recycle for CPRE Staffordshire!

Yes Please

- ✔ Gold or Silver Jewellery
- ✔ Watches
- ✔ Stamps
- ✔ Costume Jewellery
- ✔ Banknotes & coins
- ✔ First Day Covers

The **ONLY** electrical devices we accept are:

- ✔ Mobile Phones
- ✔ Cameras
- ✔ Video Cameras
- ✔ Sat Navs
- ✔ Electronic gaming devices
- ✔ Ipods/MP3 players
- ✔ Tablet Computers

No Thank you

- ✘ Laptops
- ✘ Home phones
- ✘ Fax machines
- ✘ DVD players
- ✘ Printers
- ✘ Modems or routers
- ✘ Kitchen appliances
- ✘ Porcelain or glass items
- ✘ Personal Grooming items (straighteners razors, hair dryers, etc.)

We continue to collect a variety of electronics, including mobile phones and gaming devices, jewelry, used stamps and foreign and old coins and banknotes to raise funds through Recycling for Good Causes. Please see the list above for what is and isn't accepted. Unfortunately, laptops are no longer accepted but tablet computers are. We have now raised a grand total of £267.70 over the 2021-22 financial year.

Aroma Tranquility, based Castlefields, Newport Road, Stafford ST16 1BQ and neighbour Roots Larder (plastic-free shopping), have a box for collecting the items in their recycling shed. You can take items for recycling between 9am and 4pm on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday (look for the big Shoe Shed sign). Hand gel is available and face masks are encouraged.

If you are not able to take your items to Aroma Tranquility, they can either be dropped in to the Stafford office (by arrangement only - please call [01785 277890](tel:01785277890) or email protect@cprestaffordshire.org.uk) or post to us or, if small items, post to the Freepost address below in a no larger than A5 envelope:

FREEPOST RSXA-GJBY-ARRZ
Charity Name: CPRE Staffordshire
Unit 14
Amber Business Village
Amber Close
Tamworth
B77 4RP

If you have large amounts, please either contact us directly or call Recycling for Good Causes on [0800 633 5323](tel:08006335323) (they are based in Tamworth).

CPRE Staffordshire is a registered charity, number 219443. It promotes and encourages the protection and improvement of the countryside of Staffordshire: its towns, villages and rural environment. Anyone who values the Staffordshire countryside is invited to join us, either as a supporter of our work, or as an active participant.

<https://www.cprestaffordshire.org.uk>

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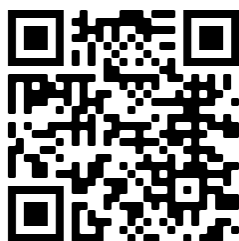
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Current CPRE Staffordshire Executive Committee Officers:

Chairman: Mohammed Khuram

President: His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire Mr Ian Dudson, CBE KStJ

Vice President: Philip Atkins OBE

Vice Chair & Social Secretary: Mrs Anne Clendon BEM

Executive Committee Members: Steve Anderson, Mary Booth and Steve Hopkins

Join Us!

If you would like to join CPRE, please go to:

<https://www.cprestaffordshire.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-member/>

As a member you will receive discount to attractions nationwide, 15% off Cotswold Outdoor store and national and local news about events, your local countryside and future planning.

Please remember to state **Staffordshire** as the local group or branch you are joining through.