

CPRE Sussex Branch
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Bates Green Farm, Arlington.
On Friday 6th July 2019

- 1.0 **Welcome:** the President, Lord Egremont, welcomed the members and guests to the meeting, and thanked them for attending on such a beautiful day when members could have been in their garden instead!
- 2.0 **Apologies for Absence** were received from Anita Hewerdine, Sir Freddie Sowrey, Nick Daines, Gaynor Gough, Margaret Burton, Christine Musgrove, Marilyn Rawson Ekblom, Keith Glazier, Jeffrey and Rosalind Bridger, Terri Ellis, Graham Ault, Liz Quilter, Oliver Harwood.
- 3.0 **Resolution to approve and sign the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting.** The Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (previously circulated) were proposed by Michael Warden and seconded by Sally Pavey. All approved the minutes which were signed by Lord Egremont.
- 4.0 **Matters arising from the Minutes.** There were no matters arising from the Minutes.
- 5.0 **Chair's Report:** as the outgoing Chair, David Johnson said, although he was standing down in line with the constitution he had enjoyed the last six years very much, and was glad to be in such a strong and worthy organisation, of which all members can be proud. He thanked the many members present, and at home, for their continued support as well as our knowledgeable and supportive President and Vice Presidents, Lord Egremont, Margaret Moore, and Rodney Chambers.

David noted that the report in the Summer Review only covers activities up to December 2018. Since then much has been achieved, and as always much remains to be done, because every year is so busy. He emphasized that without our wonderful, competent, loyal - and occasionally accident-prone staff - little would be achieved. CPRE Sussex has a very small staff – Kia, our excellent Director who is wise beyond her years, is ably assisted by Lesley, Sas, Alison, and now Duncan Lyne.

With very few staff, it means that we are heavily reliant on volunteers such as Lorna Train who has just received a “Making the Difference” award from the National Charity CPRE for her outstanding work, supported by husband Geoff, in organising Tours and Talks for branch members. David also thanked Sas Drury for stepping in when Lesley was out of action, and hoped she would continue to return from time to time as an esteemed volunteer.

He also welcomed our Lewes MP Maria Caulfield to the meeting and thanked her for joining us.

David also thanked his fellow Trustees, and their families for their support. The important work undertaken by our volunteer Trustees - who give their precious time to represent us in various roles and undertake demanding projects - is crucial to CPRE making a positive impact in Sussex and adjoining counties. The support of their families is an integral part of that work.

As mentioned in the Sussex Review, David reported the sad news of the death of Steve Ankers, Gerald Summerfield, and also Peter Mumford. Their expertise and contributions are much missed. Gerald held many roles while a Trustee, including being an active and knowledgeable member of the National Charity Transport Group in particular. Peter Mumford held a variety of roles including Trustee and Chair. Both worked hard for the Branch. Steve Ankers was a good friend and colleague, and as Policy Officer, he breathed new life into the South Downs Society. His fantastic knowledge and influence are sadly missed. Vic lent has kindly agreed to continue his work with the Society.

During his time as Chair at CPRE David referred to the increasing new threats to the Sussex countryside, nature and wildlife which have been noticeable. This is in spite of the importance of accessing and connecting to parks, green spaces, beaches, cliffs and rivers which are now acknowledged as crucial to everyone's wellbeing. Our farmed and valued man-made landscapes are also part of this. Unfortunately threats come not only from ill-considered development but from the rapid change threatened by the climate emergency. Our landscape, farming, and rural economy will all need to adapt to new circumstances.

One of David's hopes is that existing members and their families and friends will help to increase our support and funding by encouraging others to become members. He reminded existing members that Membership is great value at only £36 per year, the equivalent of a dozen coffees, several packets of seeds or a bottle of malt whisky! It is a fact that when there is increased support from a wider membership it gives us greater legitimacy when making representations for example about roads, water, and the future of the countryside.

He also drew attention to the forthcoming Shoreham Wordfest "Shaping the Future" which runs from 7th September – 13th October, and at which Dr Tony Whitbread, and the Environmental campaigner Stanley Johnson, will discuss the challenges of climate change at the Ropetackle Arts Centre. He noted the usefulness of working with others such as the Green Alliance, and a possible strapline for future co-operation such as "Shaping a Green Future for Sussex".

Lord Egremont thanked David Johnson for his hard work as Chair. Although sorry to lose him as Chair of CPRE Sussex he was glad to note that he would instead be appointed a Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees for a year, if this was agreed by those present.

- 6.0 **Director's Report:** Kia reported on the work of CPRE Sussex and said how proud she was to belong to such a unique organisation, which not only works to identify issues "on the ground" to National Office but also is involved with such varied concerns as Transport, Dark Skies, Tranquillity, and protecting the Dartford Warbler.

Kia acknowledged the valuable work of the Protect Sussex Group and its Chair, Dr Roger Smith, and also of the CAT Group, chaired by Penny Hudd, which is spearheading projects such as "Plant your Postcode" - a pilot project in Brighton & Hove to restore and increase the City's green canopy through tree planting in streets and parks. She outlined the work ahead on shaping Branch strategy and the implementation of the National Charity re-branding project. It is hoped that being known as The Countryside Charity will broaden CPRE's appeal and attract younger people - without losing sight of the fundamental work. Kia made a direct appeal to those present to put forward potential sponsor contacts in order to fund the 2020 Countryside Awards.

She concluded by saying that while continuing to oppose over-development, CPRE will promote the positive benefits of the countryside and green spaces which is universally recognised as contributing to everyone's well-being.

- 7.0 **Treasurer's report:** Julian Hill introduced the Treasurer's report which had been circulated to those present. He thanked Sas Drury for her invaluable help over his time as Treasurer, and went on to highlight the key features of his report, which included the emphasis this year to improve earnings from corporate sponsors, grant funding and local fundraising activities. Legacies are a vital source of funds, so their importance will continue to be publicised in newsletters and direct mailings.

To develop CPRE's fund raising ability, Alison Welterveden has joined the Branch in order to focus solely on fund raising. Her successful start generated over £36,000 in the first six months of her part-time role – figures which compare very well with receipts of £15,000 in 2018 and £5,000 in 2017. Alison's work is

particularly important because the investment fund decreased by £9,000 in the year. Fortunately the market has improved in that time to yield £11,000.

The majority of fund-raising is for projects developed and managed by CPRE Sussex with the aim of enhancing our beautiful Sussex landscape. In 2020 we are planning another awards event and we need commercial sponsorship and other forms of funding. It is always an uphill task to find those invaluable sponsors. Everyone could assist by identifying companies who may wish to have a commercial interest in what will be a very successful event, and any suggestions will be gladly received.

Lord Egremont thanked Julian Hill for his report and noted that although his role could be seen by some as an unrewarding one it is, however, one of vital importance.

A Resolution to adopt The Financial Report for the period ended 31st December 2018 was proposed by Penny Hudd and seconded by David Willingham. It was accepted by all present through a show of hands.

8.0 The election/re-election of Officers & Trustees

The re-appointments/elections of the following were proposed and seconded, and confirmed by a unanimous show of hands from those present.

- The re-appointment of the President, Lord Egremont for a further year.
- The re-appointment of Margaret Moore & Rodney Chambers as Vice-Presidents for a further year.
- The appointment of Professor Dan Osborn as Chair and member of the Executive Committee for a year, in order to replace David Johnson who stood down as Chair in line with the constitution.
- The appointment of David Johnson as Vice Chair for a year.
- To re-appoint Julian Hill as Treasurer for a further year
- To re-appoint John Kay, Penny Hudd, and Stephen Hardy MBE as Trustees.

Lord Egremont confirmed that he was delighted to continue since CPRE was a cause which was close to his heart.

- 9.0 **Any Other Business:** Michael Warden reported on the pressure Arun District is under to provide housing. Unfortunately what is being allowed at the planning stage, or built subsequently, does not cater for the most needy, and is not satisfying local demand.

Following the elections in May it is hoped that a newly elected Council at Arun will be more responsive to the needs of those who elected them than has been the case in the past. Accordingly, there will be a Seminar on Affordable Housing to be held on Saturday 9th November 2019 at Barnham Community Hall at which it is hoped decision makers and CPRE members will attend. Flyers will be produced to promote the event, and the website will have details in due course.

10. **Address by Dan Osborn, Professor of Human Ecology at University College London.** Professor Osborn spoke about the diverse factors which influence our sense of wellbeing, focussing particularly on the importance of green havens and open spaces in our built and natural environment. The effect on our mental health was highlighted by his continuing research at UCL.
11. **Address by Dr. Tony Whitbread, the former CEO of the Sussex Wildlife Trust.** Dr. Whitbread shared his interest and passion for supporting a 'living landscape' where people can re-engage with wildlife. He discussed the importance of improving our soils, restoring biodiversity, and the role which re-wilding can



play. His slides demonstrating the depletion of the natural environment, and our resources, in recent decades were potent proof that time is against us all regarding climate change and that action is needed fast.

12. **Questions from the audience:** David Roberts queried the Branch position on street lighting as a form of pollution. Kia Trainor referred to the National Charity's work on dark night skies and the need to reduce the impact of lighting without impacting on public safety.

Prof Dan Osborn referred to the definition of pollution as 'doing harm'. If there is no harm, there is no pollution. He talked about how lighting can disrupt wildlife and how the problem could be solved through technology to reduce the amount of light escaping and reduce the energy used.

David Johnson remarked on the importance of being evidence based when taking a position on an issue, for example road building - the reality being that if you build more and bigger roads you'll get more cars. CPRE Sussex's position argues for road improvements before expansion. He acknowledged the difficulty in taking into account the widespread views of the membership and the need to accept there are times we will not all be in agreement.

The Mayfield's new town proposal was raised. Roger Smith informed all that CPRE Sussex had campaigned against the proposal and funded a Viability Impact Assessment. However, due to the government determination to build, Mayfields were able to press on with their plans.

Helen Warden raised the issue of plastic waste. Kia Trainor responded that although this isn't a specific campaign for CPRE Sussex, the National Office is championing a 'money return scheme' for drink containers, and the Branch is linked to an A27 litter group.

Sally Pavey, Trustee, talked about Airport expansion and the impact on climate change. She warned that Gatwick Airport are pushing ahead with a second runway. She noted that on a positive front, funding has been secured to research how airports impact on rural areas because rural areas and their communities are not taken into account at present. This research will become a national document relevant to all at CPRE.

Signed Date