



Shaping the Future of Sussex – the CPRE Sussex Strategic Plan 2021

We are CPRE Sussex, the countryside charity

We believe that the countryside is for everyone. We know that engaging with our natural environment, especially near to where we live, is vital for our mental and physical health and wellbeing.

We are determined to promote the countryside and its communities to enable more people than ever before to benefit from it – including those who have not benefited before.

We defend a competent and engaged citizenship who can escape the confines of a car or office. We want a thriving, beautiful countryside, rich in nature and playing a crucial and beneficial role in our nation’s response to the climate emergency.

We are aiming for a countryside that is valued, enjoyed and understood by, and accessible to everyone, wherever they live, now and in the future.

Our vision for Sussex

Our vision is for a beautiful and thriving Sussex countryside that enriches all our lives. For us the ‘countryside’ is about more than rurality, it is about the natural outdoor spaces all around us, from ‘pocket parks’ to ancient woodland.

Our Sussex mission

Our mission is to enhance, promote and protect the Sussex countryside, and the ability of local communities to enjoy and value the natural world. To achieve our mission, we will work with a wide range of organisations, businesses and communities in Sussex. We will run innovative projects to demonstrate good practice and do research and run campaigns. We will evaluate our work, share our findings and act on insights to inform future activities. We will take the learning from our work to local decision-makers and via CPRE, our sister national countryside charity, to national decision-makers and to all those concerned with our nation’s wellbeing.

Our aims and actions

To implement our strategy, we aim to connect people and countryside; promote the countryside; empower communities; and grow our capacity. The climate emergency underlies all our aims. Our actions are aligned with CPRE national objectives.



Aim 1: Connect people and countryside

We want the Sussex countryside to enrich people's lives and provide space and homes for wildlife.

In order to offer people physical and mental health benefits, we will encourage more opportunities for access to the countryside on their doorsteps and into the wider Sussex countryside. As people connect more with the countryside, they will value it and become more aware of its vital importance for our survival; and will seek to reduce climate change and other environmental impacts.

We support protection of locally valued green spaces, as well as the South Downs National Park and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We favour development on brownfield and other unused urban sites and the conversion of redundant urban buildings to reduce pressure on the countryside and revitalise towns. We believe that any new development should be designed to fit in sympathetically with the local landscape and architecture; include wildlife features; and provide net environmental gains.

We oppose Gatwick expansion because it will increase carbon emissions, noise, pollution, pressure on the local housing market and rail links.

We oppose major bypass proposals, such as the A27, which should be replaced by smaller scale improvements whose need is absolutely demonstrable, as part of a wider strategy for sustainable travel.



Our actions to connect people and the countryside

CPRE Sussex will seek promotion, enhancement and better protection of the distinctive Sussex countryside, campaigning at a local level, and engaging with other local groups working to protect and enhance the Sussex countryside.

Specific actions include: highlighting climate change issues; promoting dark skies; commenting on local plans and planning applications including for major roads and airport expansion; protecting and enhancing biodiversity; and increasing access to the countryside.

Aim 2: Promote the countryside

We want communities in Sussex to be vibrant, with mixed age populations, local jobs and local accessible services.

We support affordable housing, particularly social housing and housing for the elderly and disabled, located near transport and other facilities. We want new housing to have health, social care and educational provision, plus cycle and pedestrian routes linking to local transport hubs and facilities. We support corridors and homes for wildlife and refuges for wildflowers.

To help to combat climate change, we support more sensitively located renewable energy, including community energy, plus energy-efficient homes and buildings.

We oppose fracking and the exploitation of 'tight oil' in Sussex.

We support increasing waste reduction and recycling and the prevention of litter.

We want farmers to receive subsidies to maintain the diversity of farming and farm types; protect sensitive habitats; increase biodiversity; protect soil and adapt to climate change. We support appropriate farm diversification for tourism and more local and/or organic, produce to support family farms and encourage small enterprises.



Our actions to promote the countryside

We will work for a planning system that protects and enhances the Sussex countryside as well as achieving positive outcomes for people, the economy and the environment. We also support national policy underpinning realistic housing targets and local plans.

Specific actions include: campaigning for a better planning system. This includes protection of the South Downs National Park and High Weald and Chichester Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We will also campaign for more affordable homes, for local buses and Quiet Lanes.

Aim 3: Empower communities

We will engage with communities to involve more people in improving their local environment through volunteering and local action.

Our actions to empower communities

CPRE Sussex will support local community initiatives; increase volunteer numbers and offer support and training for volunteers.

Specific actions include: supporting local voluntary countryside action groups; delivering the Plant your Postcode project; and recruiting more volunteers.



Aim 4: Grow our capacity

We will bring together a larger and more diverse group of people in Sussex who share our belief in a countryside for all.

This will increase our resilience, income and capacity.

Our actions to grow our capacity

We will ensure that CPRE Sussex is a well-managed and resourced charity by increasing our membership; training and supporting staff and members; maintaining good governance and financial management; and communicating effectively with local audiences.

Specific actions include: raising the profile of CPRE Sussex to attract new members; keeping existing members informed about our activities; organising events for members; and increasing our income through fund raising.

