

REVIEW

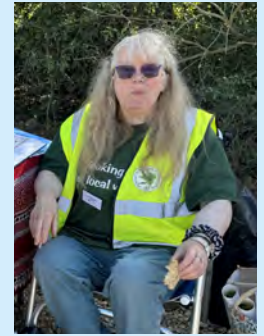
SUSSEX 2024



The countryside charity
Sussex



Introducing our new Trustees



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Katherine Sykes (not pictured)

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Paul Steedman

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex.

We promote beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities. We campaign for countryside and green spaces accessible to all. We champion thriving communities and sustainable development. We encourage effective responses to the climate emergency.

The Review

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CPRE Sussex
Brownings Farm
Blackboys,
Uckfield, East Sussex
TN22 5HG
01825 890975
info@cpresussex.org.uk
www.cpresussex.org.uk

For membership information please contact the office as above or join online at www.cpresussex.org.uk

To find out more about our work please visit the website and sign up to receive regular email updates. This helps us reduce our overheads and reduce mailing costs

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Cover picture: An exceptionally rare elm, Ulmus hollandica superba in Stanmer Park, Brighton & Hove's rare elms propagation project



Welcome

It's a huge year for our countryside, for Sussex and for CPRE; thank you for being part of it.

A general election looms, with the potential for big changes in who represents Sussex in parliament, and big changes in the policies that shape the places where we live. We look at what it might mean, including the new constituency boundaries and CPRE Sussex's 'mini manifesto' on page 4.

What MPs do can make a big difference to our local environment, but what councils do matters greatly too. This year sees a great number of the 'Local Plans', that shape development in our areas, being reviewed, consulted on, judged by Planning Inspectors, and finally adopted. What's happening near you? Our round-up on page 6 has the latest.

It might not always feel this way, but so often the power to shape the future of the places we care about lies in our hands. On page 8, you can check out how our people-powered campaigns on rooftop solar power, affordable rural housing and Gatwick's proposals for a second runway are getting on – and what you can do to help.

One thing that makes an immediate difference to nature, climate change and the beauty of our surroundings is planting a tree. You can read on page 10 how CPRE Sussex members and supporters have been getting new trees and hedgerows in the ground, in both the city and the countryside.

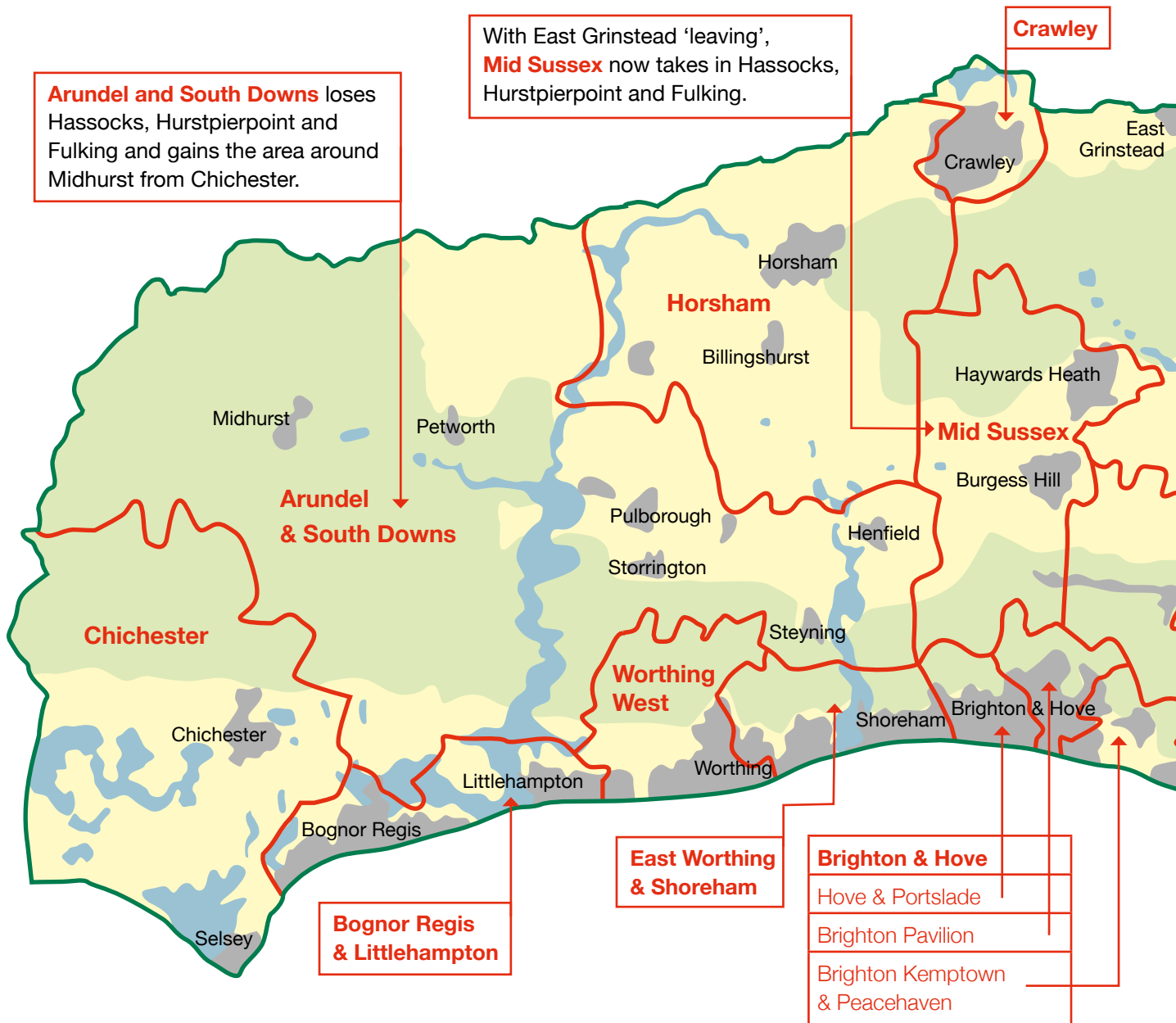
There's something for everyone to get involved in this year, whether it's coming to one of our amazing tours or walks, or even starting a new job with us. Find out more on page 12.

Our work to protect, celebrate and regenerate the Sussex countryside is guided by a magnificent board of trustees, with a number of fresh faces over the last year. You can see who they are on the opposite page. A huge thank you from all of us to trustees who have recently stepped down – Julian Hill, Monty Larkin and Libby Alexander.

Finally, I'm grateful to every single one of our members and supporters, and I wanted to say a particular thank you to everyone who contributed to our hugely successful appeal last year. Our work simply couldn't exist without your good will; a special thanks goes to two members who passed away recently, remembering CPRE Sussex in their wills with generous bequests. If you would similarly like to leave a gift to help protect the Sussex countryside for generations to come you can find out more at www.cpresussex.org.uk/get-involved-leave-a-gift-in-your-will/

Paul Steedman
Director, CPRE Sussex

Boundaries shift



The General Election: Is change on the ballot?

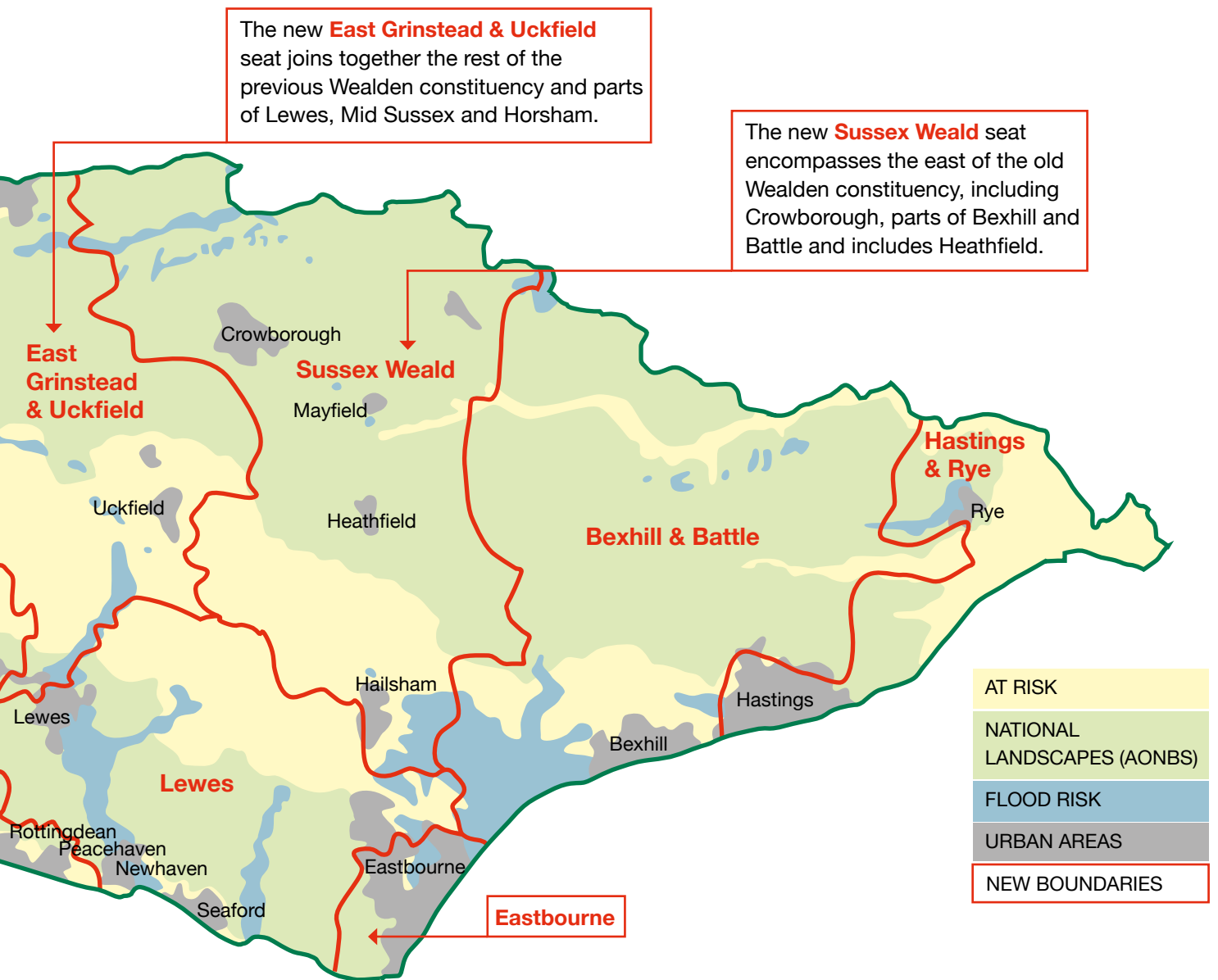
Public opinion – and politicians’ and parties’ policies – are highly fluid, and can change dramatically and quickly. One thing that we can be sure of is that there will be a general election no later than 28 January 2025 – and it is most likely to come this year.

Boundaries shift

When it does come, Sussex will still have 17 seats, but will see significant changes in the constituency names and boundaries used to elect our MPs. While there are small but important changes along the coast, the biggest shifts will happen inland.

The new boundaries make predicting the election’s outcome even more of a lottery than usual, but several pollsters have predicted that there could be big changes in the political make-up of Sussex once the results are in.

If change is in the air, what do we want to see done differently by our new MPs? With Sussex on the frontline of our cost of living, housing, nature and climate crises, we need our next MPs to champion policies that address these huge challenges. At CPRE Sussex, we’d like to see candidates from all parties commit to tackling:



Climate breakdown: the greatest challenge facing Sussex – and the world

- A rapid end to fossil fuel extraction and consumption.
- A requirement for rooftop solar PV on all new buildings.
- No second runway at Gatwick.

The protection of valued landscapes: putting nature and beauty first

- More certainty, and targeted support, for farmers wanting to produce food in low-carbon, low-pollution, nature-friendly ways.
- Guaranteeing core funding for National Park Authorities, including the South Downs, and new powers and cash for our newly named National Landscapes (AONBs) including the High Weald and Chichester Harbour.

Affordable living: tackling rural housing, energy and transport costs

- Create genuinely affordable homes to meet local needs, with a plan to take the economic pressure off the South

East, abolishing the ‘hope value’ that encourages greenfield speculation, and supporting communities to use neighbourhood plans and rural exception sites to deliver the homes they actually want.

- Reverse the decline of the rural bus network.
- Massively expand home insulation schemes.

A plan for the land – and the water

- Protect our countryside from overdevelopment through planning reform, including an end to the ‘Standard Method’ of setting inflated housing targets that bear no relation to real local need.
- Develop a land use strategy which sets a positive long-term vision for land use across England, promotes a brownfield-first approach to development, and incentivises the delivery of environmental goals, such as net zero, hedgerow expansion and nature restoration.
- Reform of the water sector to end pollution of our rivers and seas, and to ensure that our infrastructure can cope with the new housing we need.



What's happening near you?

Chichester

The District Council (CDC) plan consultation took place between February and March 2023 and received c2500 comments. Contributors were asked to comment on: whether it is compliant, whether it is sound and whether the Council engaged with appropriate stakeholders.

The plan is expected to be submitted in early 2024. The District has been divided into three: East to West Corridor, Manhood Peninsula and North of the plan area. Key issues include transport, housing numbers and environmental designations.

www.chichester.gov.uk/article/35375/Chichester-Local-Plan-2021-2039

Adur

A draft of the local plan update has been in development for over a year, delayed by continual updates to the NPPF. This includes a review of the Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) for the Western Harbour Arm in Shoreham. Regulation 18 public consultation for the draft is planned for Summer 2024 with final regulation 19 consultation in Spring 2025 with submission to the Planning Inspectorate in Summer. Subject to the Inspectorate's scheduling, examination is projected in August with adoption the following winter.

Adur is working to improve public consultation in light of the public's serious overdevelopment concerns for the JAAP where, with three sites still to come forward, approvals far exceed the total 1100 homes planned for the whole Western Harbour Arm.

Arun

Adopted in 2018, the Arun Local Plan is out of date and subject to review. The Council are preparing for Regulation 18 Consultation including a draft Direction of Travel document. The consultation will be an opportunity for residents to engage and comment on the plan and we urge you to get involved.

Brighton & Hove

The Planning Inspector recommended that the City Council look to the urban fringe to fulfil City Plan housing targets, presenting developers with an open goal. Why plan city-centre development when there is a green light to build more cheaply on the fringes? As a result, the City Plan part 2 has a specific urban fringe policy, H2: Housing Sites- Urban Fringe. This lists sites identified for potential housing and makes worrying statements. 'The urban fringe allocations are by their nature sensitive locations for development, comprising green field land adjoining open countryside and the National Park.' And 'Several of the allocated housing sites overlap with, or are close to, Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Nature Conservation Importance) including Local Nature Reserves'.

An immediate threat is the Gasworks site near Black Rock. The revised application is an over the top high rise development, running contrary to the Local Plan. The City Plan policy DA2 states 85 residential units and 2000m2 of business floor space. The developer has submitted 495 units and nearly 3000m2 of floor space.

Go to BHCC planning applications quoting BH2021/04167 to make your views on this proposal known.

Horsham

The Local Plan Consultation took place between January and March 2023.

The housing target for the district, 15,487 (911 dwellings pa x 17), was determined using the Standard Method. To achieve water neutrality the plan proposes to deliver 480 homes pa in the first five years and 901 pa for the remaining 12 years, 13,212 homes, 2,275 short of the target.

The plan advises HDC work with neighbouring authorities to meet the district's unmet need in 'sustainable locations' although 'the constraints of water

neutrality do not enable the unmet housing needs of other districts and boroughs to be accommodated at the current time'. This 'position will need to be kept under review in future plan reviews and through on-going active engagement, once an alternative water supply solution for the district is secured'. This means the target will be subject to a substantial increase, with additional sites identified and allocated.

Strategic site allocations are: land West of Ifield (3000); North West of Southwater (1,000); East of Billingshurst (650) and North Horsham (an additional 500); plus, a multitude of strategic and smaller-scale sites including sites previously refused at Appeal, plus sites that could and should have been scrutinised and allocated if found sound by communities, through the neighbour plan-making process.

Mid Sussex

We have concentrated on responding to the public consultation on MSDC's draft District Plan Review. MSDC has heard our (and others') pleas to make the Plan greener. But overall we are disappointed in the timidity and lack of ambition in the plan proposals.

We call for more affordable homes, redevelopment of the Martlets Centre, better protection for our downland villages including scrapping the proposed 2,500 homes allocations at Sayers Common, and lots more.

www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/mid-sussex-district-update-february-2024/

Lewes

The Lewes Local Plan is currently at the Reg 18 consultation stage. While there is a willingness not to just accept the Government's 'Standard Method' housing target, and some positive thinking on climate change, at this stage it appears heavily, and unfortunately, developer-inspired in its 'spatial options', and lacks basic information such as housing targets for individual towns and villages.

Astonishingly at this stage, the plan keeps alive the likelihood of significant new developments on green field sites in and around Low Weald villages.

One positive feature is that the 'Eton Mess' new town proposal on the edge of the SDNP is not supported.

www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/spatial-options-for-lewes-district-local-plan-are-developer-inspired/

Eastbourne & Hastings

We need support in our busy towns of Eastbourne and Hastings. If you have some planning experience and

would like to get involved, please contact us at info@cpresussex.org.uk

Wealden

A new draft plan to 2040 including 15,792 new houses (955pa) was approved by the council on 8th February to go out for an eight week consultation in early March.

Around 10% of the new development is planned to go in the High Weald National Landscape (previously, AONB) meaning that the vast majority of the houses will be constructed in the Low Weald. The majority of houses are planned for green field sites and we will investigate ways whereby Wealden could reduce the excessive numbers.

We will let you know through the website about the consultation and how to contribute when further details become available shortly via the Wealden District page of our website: www.cpresussex.org.uk/wealden/

Worthing

The Local Plan Update, 2020 to 2036, was adopted in March 2023, calling for development of 3680 homes (230 average pa), much on brownfield land.

The authority now has a battle on its hands with Persimmon's application for 475 homes on Chatsmore Farm between Goring and Ferring. This was excluded in the approved plan to prevent coalescence of these two communities and its impact on the National Park and heritage features to the north. The developer persuaded the Inspectorate to re-examine the application based upon a technicality, despite a High Court ruling nullifying an inspector's approval. The February examination is currently delayed.

Rother

Rother District Council's Local Plan, adopted in September 2014, is more than 5 years out of date and subject to review. Following an extensive period of evidence gathering, Rother are planning to undertake the Regulation 18 Public Consultation in spring this year. We encourage you to keep watch and get involved in this consultation – Rother Local Plan Review

Make an impact

We are building up our planning teams in Arun, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Hastings and Rother. If you want to make a positive impact and live in one these districts please contact us at: info@cpresussex.org.uk

For more District news visit the website at:

www.cpresussex.org.uk/news-from-your-district/



Green energy: campaigning for solar

A campaign for a common-sense approach to solar in Sussex is continuing to gain momentum.

The Rooftop Renewables campaign calls for at least 60% of solar energy to be delivered through rooftop solar installations on new builds, commercial buildings and car parks.

In the recent Future Homes and Building Standards consultation, we were surprised to see that the Government is considering two options – one that requires solar panels, and one which does not. The option without solar panels means higher energy bills, higher costs if people want to install panels later, and more carbon pollution. We have urged the Government to pick the ‘no-brainer’ option of mandating solar panels.

CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said: “Putting solar panels on rooftops in Sussex would help generate the clean electricity we need, while cutting our carbon emissions and protecting our valuable landscapes.”

Six Sussex MPs have already shown their support for the campaign by signing up to become Parliamentary Rooftop Solar Champions. They are:

- Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne)
- Caroline Lucas (Brighton Pavilion)
- Maria Caulfield (Lewes)
- Sally-Ann Hart (Hastings and Rye)
- Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West)
- Tim Loughton (East Worthing and Shoreham)

CPRE Sussex is also working with the University of Southampton on a new research project to generate more evidence on how much rooftop solar we can host in Sussex. We hope to use this to lobby councillors, planners and MPs around the policy changes needed to put rooftop solar first.

Sign a petition calling on the Government to unleash the power of rooftop solar at www.cpre.org.uk/get-involved/take-action/



Hastoe Homes award winning development of affordable homes, Brede in West Sussex

Much needed rural housing

A rural housing crisis, fuelled by record house prices, low wages and a proliferation of second homes and short-term lets, is driving people out of the countryside.

The average house price in Sussex is currently more than £450,000. A 2023 report by the national CPRE charity revealed homelessness has gone up 40% since 2018 in rural England.

A developer-led approach has also seen a focus on executive homes in rural areas rather than sustainable housing which meets a genuine local need and is guided by local plans.

The 2023 report by CPRE makes several recommendations to help tackle this growing crisis. They include:

- Government redefining ‘affordable housing’ so the cost of new affordable homes is directly linked to average local incomes.
- Reforming ‘hope value’ to increase the viability of social housing provision and enable Local Authorities to deliver additional social rented homes.
- Greater support for rural communities using neighbourhood planning and rural exception sites to deliver small scale affordable housing on the edge of villages.
- Greater support for community-led development.
- Introduction of a second home and short term lets register, with planning controls to regulate the provision of short term lets and powers to levy extra council tax on second homes.

Read the full report at www.cpre.org.uk/resources/unravelling-a-crisis-the-state-of-rural-affordable-housing-in-england/

Gatwick update

CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said: “Gatwick is proposing what is, in effect, a new runway, to operate at the same time as their existing main runway – which they cannot do at present.

“Government policy is clear – any new runway for the South East should be at Heathrow. However, CPRE Sussex supports the even stronger view of the Government’s own advisers, the Committee on Climate Change, that there should be no net airport expansion across the UK.”

“We are speaking at the planning examination hearings, and writing to Planning Inspectors, urging them to reject the expansion – looking at noise, air and climate pollution and housing impacts. We’ve also helped fund CAGNE’s panel of experts and lawyers, fighting the plans.”

You can view key dates for the inquiry on the Planning Inspectorate website here: national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/TR020005



Shaping a greener future for Sussex: our cities and their surrounding countryside

CPRE Sussex is perhaps best known for our work protecting and promoting the countryside. But did you know we are also working to increase street tree cover and create new urban green spaces?

Trees & Urban Green Space

Our Plant Your Postcode scheme in Brighton & Hove is helping residents plant new trees, creating happier, healthier places to live.

In December, Surrenden Road residents supported a whip planting session as part of their donation campaign to replace lost elms.

In other projects last year, residents supported tree planting in Bond Street, Compton Road, Elm Grove, Kenmure Avenue, Westbourne Street and Newtown Road. This year, planting has started in Newtown Road. These are all projects where we have received funds from the public to plant.

This year we have also worked with Brighton & Hove City Council and Brighton Permaculture Trust to plant new community orchards and canopy trees in East Brighton Park, Happy Valley Park and Hove Community Field.

Area-wide Greening Up projects are also up and running in the North Laine and Hanover areas of the city. And Newtown Road in Hove is currently fundraising for four lovely Hornbeam saplings for their street to be planted this winter.

“It is fantastic to see the level of support for street trees in Brighton & Hove,” said Plant Your Postcode project manager Jenni Cresswell. “Urban trees have a vital role to play in supporting the health and wellbeing of people living in cities. They are one of our most powerful weapons in the fight against climate change, capturing carbon, preventing flooding and reducing urban heat and pollution.”

Find out more about Plant Your Postcode, including how to get started and fundraise, at www.cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/plant-your-postcode



Far left: Planting up fruit trees at the Sylvan Hall Estate.

Left: Young birch and cherry trees bring new life to Brighton's vibrant North Laine

Above: Volunteers planting hedgerows at Nightingale Farm, East Sussex

Hedgerow Success!

For almost a century, CPRE has been campaigning for the protection and restoration of hedgerows.

Last year saw a hard-won victory as the Government announced a target to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows by 2037, and 45,000-miles of hedgerows by 2050.

Here in Sussex, we have been doing our bit with a series of hedgerow planting events at Nightingale Farm, Hartfield.

Over 300m of new hedgerow was planted over four days in January and February with an enthusiastic team of volunteers who helped us plant a brand new hedgerow on the East Sussex farm.

Working with our incredible team of planting volunteers was a wonderful experience and such a success! We are looking forward to doing more planting later this year.

CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said: "These planting events were a fantastic opportunity to get hands-on conservation experience, make a difference to the Sussex countryside and help wildlife to thrive. We would like to say a huge thank you to all the volunteers who came out and helped to create this new hedgerow."

Find out more about how CPRE Sussex is working to protect and restore hedgerows at www.cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/hedgerows

Upcoming hedgerow planting events will be shared at www.cpresussex.org.uk/get-involved/events

Want to get involved?



**Join the CPRE Sussex team
Administrator part time
£25k pro-rata (18.75 hours per week)
Initially a 1-year fixed term contract with the
possibility of extension.**

Are you looking for a varied role as part of a dynamic, friendly team of staff and volunteers? Do you want to make a difference and help protect the environment and our wonderful Sussex countryside? This could be the role for you!

We are looking for an Administrator with office experience, excellent organisation skills, an eye for detail and a 'can do' attitude.

You'll play a central role in the efficient and effective running of our small, but incredibly impactful charity. Managing our office, supporting our Board, Director and network of development planning volunteers, assisting the South Downs Network and supporting projects like our annual Countryside Day and Tree Festival.

If you'd like to play a positive part in shaping a greener future for Sussex, we would love to hear from you.

You can find the Job Description and how to apply at www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/join-a-leading-countryside-organisation-as-a-part-time-administrator/

Closing Date for applications:
5pm on Thursday March 14th 2024.
Interviews will be held on Friday March 22nd 2024 at our office in Blackboys.

**May 11-12 & 18-19
Celebrating our city's trees**

Running over two weekends in May, the Brighton & Hove Tree Festival offers a host of events for everyone to enjoy. There are also opportunities to get involved before the festival and throughout May with Tree Trails, a Photography Competition 'I love this tree because...' and the Champion School Trees project.

Find out more and view the full programme at www.cpresussex.org.uk/news/may-2024-brighton-hove-tree-festival/ If you would like to help let us know! email info@cpresussex.org.uk

The festival is organised by volunteers, supported by CPRE Sussex. We are grateful for the generous support of our sponsors: Connick Tree Care, Hanningtons and Rampion.



It's happening! The Countryside Day returns on Saturday, 7th September 2024 at Knepp, the home of rewilding.

Save the date and join this celebration of everything that is wonderful about the countryside with more stalls, talks and tours to enjoy, entertainment for all the family and much more.

Join the Countryside Day team

We are looking for lots of help and support before and on the day with tasks ranging from putting up signs, setting up, helping on the gate, parking stewards, selling raffle tickets, walks and talks marshals and many more. If you can help out at this wonderful day, please register here and we'll be in touch <https://volunteer.cpre.org.uk/opportunities/60565-volunteer-helper-countryside-day-support-team-2024-02-14>

To receive the latest news sign up to our monthly e-newsletter at cpresussex.org.uk and scroll down to the bottom of the home page.