

CPRE SUSSEX

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

100
YEARS



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Sussex

Director's Report



Writing as I prepare to leave CPRE Sussex in April, I want to reflect on the first quarter of 2026 – a period that has shown why, in CPRE's 100th year as a national charity, our work to defend nature, landscapes, peace and tranquillity, clean air and water, and the sensible use of land has never been more vital.

The year began with the consultation on the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to which CPRE Sussex responded swiftly and robustly. With proposed changes that risk weakening protections for our countryside and doubling down on unrealistic housing targets, we have been vocal in calling for planning policies that prioritise genuinely affordable homes in compact, well-designed settlements while safeguarding the landscapes that make Sussex so special.

We also had to remain nimble as the government repeatedly chopped and changed the timetable for local elections across Sussex – first postponing proposed mayoral elections by two years, then cancelling and reinstating council elections. These shifts threatened to disrupt democratic oversight at a critical time for planning. CPRE Sussex worked hard to keep residents informed and engaged, ensuring local voices continued to be heard in decisions that shape their environment.

Our practical projects have continued to flourish. Our Plant Your Postcode scheme has seen more local residents' groups get urban street trees in the ground in Brighton & Hove, while on the Manhood Peninsula our Hedgerow Hero volunteers have smashed our targets, restoring and extending hedgerows that support wildlife, capture carbon, and enrich our landscapes. These efforts build on our long-term commitment to enhancing, promoting and protecting the countryside for all.

I am immensely proud to have overseen significant growth in our staff team during my tenure – growth made possible only through the extraordinary generosity of members and supporters who have left legacy gifts to CPRE Sussex. Your belief in our mission has allowed us to build the capacity we need to face ever-greater challenges.

None of our successes would be possible without the dedication of our staff, trustees, volunteers, and above all you – our members and supporters. As I step down, I do so with deep gratitude and great confidence that CPRE Sussex will continue to thrive and protect the countryside we all cherish. I hope to see you at future events – maybe even this year's Countryside Day in a new location at the wonderful Seven Sisters Visitor Centre.

Paul Steedman, Outgoing Director

Chairman's Report

For the year ended 31st December 2025

The past year was an eventful one for CPRE Sussex. It often felt like the countryside was under unprecedented attack. But we continued to fight back – celebrating some real wins and highlighting the value of our precious landscapes and green spaces. As always, our members, supporters, project partners, staff and dedicated volunteers have been instrumental in helping to protect and celebrate the Sussex countryside.

Planning upheaval

Last year saw the Government repeatedly throwing the planning rule book into the air and ripping up protections for nature. The Planning Infrastructure Bill (PIB) was a disastrous piece of legislation which weakened environmental safeguards and reduced local democracy.

In the end, we did gain some concessions. These included restricting the use of controversial Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) which would require developers to pay into a national pot rather than delivering benefits more locally. The Government also conceded that there was a need for greater scrutiny of which planning applications should be decided by officers. However, while we can celebrate some small wins and know we fought hard for larger ones, the PIB was still a huge blow to the countryside.

In December, the Government also launched its publication consultation on the redraft of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It said this would take account of the concerns raised about brownfield first and chalk streams during PIB development. However, draft proposals are highly centralising, taking yet more power away from local councils and local democracy.

In the face of national pressures, we will continue to back residents and local councils working to protect their communities from profit-hungry developers.

Planning victories

Despite the chaos of national planning policy, throughout the year we fought alongside local communities to oppose harmful development applications – and we won.

Victories include the refusal of 1,450 homes on farmland in the High Weald National Landscape between Cuckfield and Ansty and 80 homes on long-undisturbed fields and hedgerows on the fringes of Haywards Heath. We also saw common sense prevail at appeal, including the dismissal of a bid for 475 homes on Chatsmore Farm which threatened the green gap between Worthing and Ferring.

Gatwick Airport

Approval of the hugely harmful runway at Gatwick Airport was a massive blow last year. Climate change is the single biggest threat to the countryside. This expansion will lead to increased air and noise pollution, as well as threatening local landscapes and wildlife.

As I write this, we are awaiting the results of a judicial review into the decision brought by our friends at CAGNE and backed by CPRE Sussex. I sincerely hope common sense will prevail and the High Court judges will block the Government's ludicrous decision to allow this runway to go ahead.

A rooftop solar revolution

In more positive news, our rooftop solar revolution continued to gain ground in 2025. In May, the Government announced all new homes will have solar panels.

Sussex now has more than 5.2MW of larger roof-mounted installations already operational with lots more planned. At the small scale, we have around 160MW of PV capacity already installed on domestic and other small roofs.

At the same time, brilliant local pioneers bring people together to run community-owned solar-powered systems. This rooftop-first approach to solar helps tackle the climate crisis while protecting agricultural land and green spaces.

Celebrating the countryside and green spaces

The successful return of our annual Tree Festival saw more than 1,000 people attend events across Sussex to raise awareness of the value of trees. The event, which included everything from poetry readings and tours to a photography exhibition, is part of our wider work to raise awareness of the value of trees.

Throughout the year, we continued to work with our community partners to plant new trees across Brighton & Hove. We are also urging Brighton & Hove City Council to ringfence funding for trees and increase canopy cover across the city.

In September, our ever-popular Countryside Day returned to the Knepp Estate. We would once again like to thank our hosts for their generous support.

Hedgerow Heroes

Another highlight of 2025 was the return of our Hedgerow Heroes scheme. The latest campaign saw volunteers planting nearly 3km of hedgerow on the Manhood Peninsula.

The new hedgerow will provide vital wildlife corridors in a landscape surrounded by the protected areas of Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve, Medmerry and Chichester Harbour. The project was also an opportunity to raise awareness of the vital importance of these traditional habitats and work with community partners. Thank you to everyone who has come along to the planting events!

Thank you to those who make our work possible

I would like to thank you all – our fantastic staff, volunteers, trustees, members and supporters for your invaluable support throughout 2025. Without your help, expertise and generosity, our work would not be possible.

Having been appointed as Chair at the Annual General Meeting, I would like to say a special thank you to the outgoing Chair, Prof Dan Osborn. Dan has been a passionate advocate for protecting the environment – and the people who depend on it to survive and thrive. I am thrilled that he is now serving as Vice Chair.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank David Johnson who has stepped down from his previous role as Vice Chair. David will continue to bring his expertise as a trustee.

Among the changes of last year, we were joined by three new team members. Please join me in welcoming Plant Your Postcode Manager Jen Eneke, Members, Supporters and Fundraising Senior Officer Sarah Gabriel and Campaigns and Communications Manager Nancy Duckels.

As we move into the national CPRE charity's centenary year, we as a local branch have continued to build our operational infrastructure. With your support we can continue to protect the countryside for generations to come. Thank you.

Corinne Stuart, Chair

Trustees' Report

For the year ended 31st December 2025

Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch CIO
Charity number 1156568

Trustees

Trustees who have served during the year and at the date of the Report were: Penelope Hudd, David Johnson, Joshua Lelliott, Dan Osborn, Sally Pavey, Dr Roger Smith, Corinne Stuart, Dr Jill Sutcliffe, Katherine Sykes, Clive Webb.

New trustees are appointed after a review of the skills required and are drawn from individuals who have relevant backgrounds. When appropriate, the trustees consult other relevant organisations for nominations to the committee. New trustees are provided with an introduction to the charity, where they receive copies of relevant documentation as well an operational induction with the Director.

Conflicts of interest

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Upon appointment to the Board any potential conflict of interest with any individual or organisation must be disclosed. Before each Board meeting all trustees are requested to declare any conflict of interest with any agenda item.

Networks

The charity is a member of the network of charities federated to the national charity "CPRE The countryside charity", formerly known as the Campaign to Protect Rural England. The CPRE network comprises over 40 member charities, and the chairs of the network's member charities hold voting rights in the Assembly body that shapes national CPRE decisions. The branding and core purposes are shared across the network. The Branch is also involved at a regional level with the County Branches Forum.

Reward Policy

The pay of the staff is determined by the Board of Trustees. Salaries are benchmarked with those of charities of similar size in terms of income, staff numbers and complexity. The same benefits, including pensions, and terms and conditions, apply to all staff.

Registered address

Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5HG

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd, PO Box 289, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA

Independent Examiner

Mr M. Partridge, FCA, Chariot House Ltd, 44 Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 9QA

Investment adviser and nominee company

Charles Stanley & Co Ltd, 55 Bishopsgate London, EC2N 3AS

Public benefit reporting

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17(5) of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Corinne Stuart, Chair

Abridged, the full report can be found on the CPRE Sussex website

www.cpresussex.org.uk

Abridged Financial Information

Statement of Financial Activities for the year to 31st December 2025

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Designated	Total 2025
Incoming Resources	£	£		£
Membership Subscriptions	35,470	–		35,470
Investment Income	18,766	–		18,766
Legacies	1,000	–		1,000
Donations	16,798	–		16,798
Chalk Cliff Trust	5,000	–		5,000
Hedgerow Heroes Grant	–	20,512		20,512
Plant your Postcode Brighton	–	9,911		9,911
Sussex Tree Festival	–	1,804		1,804
CPRE Centenary Grant	–	4,683		4,683
Gift Aid on Donations	2,421	–		2,421
Other Income	1,733	–		1,733
Total Incoming Resources	81,188	36,910		118,098
Resources Expended				
Raising Funds	9,278	2,583	–	11,861
Charitable Activities	118,670	34,066	19,678	172,414
Total Resources Expended	127,948	36,649	19,678	184,275
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources before Transfers	(46,760)	261	(19,678)	(66,177)
Gains on Investment Assets	4,596	–	–	4,596
Net Movements in Funds	(42,164)	261	(19,678)	(61,581)
Transfer between funds	(175,000)	–	175,000	–
Fund Balance at 1st January 2025	546,110	8,465	–	554,575
Fund Balances at 31st December 2025	328,946	8,726	155,322	492,994

These figures are extracted from the full Trustees' Report and financial statements which have been independently examined by Mr M Partridge of Chariot House Limited who gave an unqualified statement in April 2026. The Independent Examiner has confirmed to the Trustees that the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2025. The Trustees' Report and financial statements were approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf on 30th January 2026. They will be submitted to the Charity Commission. These summarised financial statements may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of CPRE Sussex CIO. The full Trustees' Report, Independent Examiner's Report and Financial Statements may be obtained from CPRE Sussex CIO, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, Uckfield, TN22 5HG.

Joshua Lelliot, Treasurer

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2025

Fixed Assets	£
Tangible Assets	1,425
Investments	90,442
Total Fixed Assets	91,867
Current Assets	
Stocks	203
Debtors, Prepayments and deposits	15,283
Current asset investments	318,896
Short term deposits	81,163
Cash at bank and in hand	7,137
Total Current Assets	422,682
Less Creditors	
Amounts falling due within one year	(21,555)
Net Current Assets	401,127
Net Assets	492,994
Income Funds	
Restricted	8,726
Designated Funds	155,322
Unrestricted	328,946
Total	492,994

If you're passionate about the countryside we'd love to hear from you.

We're hiring: Charity Director – CPRE Sussex

We are looking for an inspiring Director to lead our charity and champion the protection of Sussex's countryside and green spaces.

This senior part time role (3-4 days a week) involves leading strategy and operations, working with our Board of Trustees, influencing planning and development, growing membership and fundraising and acting as the public face of CPRE Sussex.

Flexible working, mainly remote, with meetings across Sussex and beyond.

Salary dependent on experience.

We're looking for: Trustees

Help protect the Sussex countryside. We are seeking new charitable trustees to strengthen our work protecting and enhancing the Sussex countryside. As a local branch of a respected national charity, we play a vital role in responding to planning proposals, raising awareness, and advocating for the countryside, green spaces and well-designed, sustainable development.

If you are passionate about Sussex's landscapes, villages and green spaces, and want to make a difference, we would love to hear from you.

To find out more please contact info@cpresussex.org.uk



Invitation to the AGM

You are invited to our AGM 2026 on Tuesday the 7th of July – the meeting starts at 11am (refreshments from 10:30am) in Humphrey’s Barn at Amberley Museum & Heritage Centre, New Barn Road, Amberley, Arundel BN18 9LT

You are warmly invited to join us at this glorious Sussex gem, hear about our previous year and exciting plans for the future.

We invite you to relax and enjoy a delicious buffet lunch and join an accessible guided wildlife walk around this old working chalk quarry (45-60 minutes).

We very much look forward to seeing you!

Please complete and return this form, including a cheque if needed, to Sarah Gabriel, CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, East Sussex, TN22 5HG, by Tuesday 23rd June 2026
PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS THROUGHOUT

I am attending the AGM

(It would be helpful to know if you will just be attending the AGM or will also be staying for lunch).

Name/s _____

email/s _____

- I am/we are attending the AGM
- I am/we are staying for lunch (£17.95 per person)
- I have paid online:
actionnetwork.org/ticketed_events/agm-2026
- I enclose a cheque for £ _____
(payable to CPRE Sussex)

Please note any allergies or special dietary requirements:

I am/we are joining the guided walk Yes No

ABSENTEE VOTING FORM

I am unable to attend the AGM but would like to vote on the Resolutions below

Resolution	For	Against	Abstain
To approve and sign the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting 2025			
To receive The Annual Report and Accounts for year ended 31st December 2025			
To re-elect those Trustees who are retiring by rotation in accordance with the CIO Constitution:			
Roger Smith			
Joshua Lelliot			
Jill Sutcliffe			
To elect Penny Hudd as Interim Chair			

PROXY VOTING FORM

I am appointing the Chair of the meeting as my proxy vote on the Resolutions on my behalf.

I, being a member of CPRE Sussex (the ‘Charity’), appoint the Chairman of the meeting as my proxy to vote for on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the Company to be held on Tuesday 7th July and at any adjournment of the meeting, on the resolutions set out above, except where I have indicated otherwise by completing the ‘Resolution Choices’, and on any other resolutions as the Chair thinks in their absolute discretion fit.

Signature _____

Date _____

Please complete and return this form to be received no later than 6pm on Tuesday 23rd June 2026 to Sarah Gabriel, CPRE Sussex, Brownings Farm, Blackboys, East Sussex, TN22 5HG, or email info@cpresussex.org.uk. Thank you.