CPRE Surrey AGM

1. Notice of 2023 AGM
2. Notes of 2022 AGM
3. Report to 2022 AGM – Kristina Kenworthy, exiting Chair
4. Report to 2022 AGM – John Goodridge, new Chair

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**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England Limited**

On Saturday 7 October 2023 at 10.00 for 10.30 a.m. start of business.

At The Winn Hall, Dunsfold Common Road, Dunsfold, Surrey GU8 4LA

**AGENDA**

1. Welcome from Chair and Apologies received.

2. Minutes of AGM 10 September 2022 for approval

3. Chair’s Report

4. Treasurer’s Report for Accounts year ended 31 December 2022

5. Members to approve the Accounts, and the appointment of the Independent Examiner.

6. Appointment of Trustees and Hon Officers of CPRE Surrey

7 Any Other Business

Meeting to end by 11.45 am

**R.S.V.P. Phil Partridge** by email ppartridge@cpresurrey.org.uk or telephone 01372 700205.

Members may appoint a proxy to exercise their rights to attend, speak and vote at the meeting. If you wish to appoint a proxy, please contact Phil Partridge with your details and those of your proxy.

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**2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Buckland Park Lake on 10 September 2022 at 10.30 am**

**In attendance**: **Ben McCallan (Zero Carbon Guildford/SCC Climate Unit, Guest Speaker), Caroline Bateman, Craig Freeman (Trustee), Dame Sarah Goad, David Allen, Georgina and Robin Parr-Davies, Helen and Graham Burr (Green Spaces Group, Reigate Society), Irene and Ian Seifert, Jennet Eyre, Jeremy Saunders (Volunteer Coordinator), Joan Fletcher, John and Susan Goodridge, John Whittaker, Kristina Kenworthy (retiring Chair) and Jonathan Kenworthy, Matt Mallinder(Trustee), Phil Partridge (Admin) and Sue Partridge, Ruth Lyon (Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents Assn), Sarah Sullivan, Simon Flack, Valerie Holliday + 1 guest**

The meeting of 21 members and 6 guests was quorate.

**Apologies received: Anita Littler, Barbara Anderson, Brendon Sewill, Brian Reader, Carey Fletcher, Chris Laver, Chris Pashley, Claudia Payne, Gillian Cameron, Gillian Hein (Vice President), Jennie Kyte, Jill Smyth, Jillian Paul, Keith Jones, Keith Tothill (Trustee), Mary Clark, Paola Bagnall, Sanchia Vinall, Sarah Clayton(Trustee), Simon Humphreys, Susan Briant, Tim Murphy (Vice President)**

**From the AGENDA**

1. Welcome from Chair (John) and Apologies received.

2. Minutes of AGM 10 September 2021 - approved ***– see attached***

3. Outgoing Chair’s Report ***– see attached***

4. Treasurer’s Report for Accounts year ended 31 December (and incoming Chair’s report) ***– see attached***

5. Accounts ***– see attached -*** and the reappointment and renumeration of the Independent Examiner - approved.

6. Retiring Trustees: Kristina Kenworthy, John Goodridge, Matt Mallinder, Craig Freeman, Alivia Kratke (Sonya Dixon retired July 2022), then Appointment of Trustees and Hon Officers of CPRE **– all approved**

Election of Trustees: Craig Freeman, **Susan Briant,** and Jennet Eyre

Election of Officers: John Goodridge Chair, Matt Mallinder Vice Chair, and David Allen Hon. Treasurer.

Re-election of Vice Presidents: Anthony Isaacs MBE, Tim Murphy, Gillian Hein and Keith Tothill.

**Following conclusion of Formal Business, there were 2 guest speakers:**

* ***“An introduction to Buckland Park Lake”*** by Wayne Thornton, Op.s Manager, Buckland Park Lake, and Estate

Documents going back 400+ years show the Sanders family site was an estate, a farm, then for a long time a Sand Quarry, mining ending in 1990. Lakes were then formed, and now the site hosts a diversity of nature, including sand martins. Infrastructure works were funded by a European grant, but now the majority income is from visitors for e.g. open-water-swimming, paddle-boarding, canoeing, fishing, yoga, meetings and the restaurant. the Reverie, run by Sam and Rachel). Happy to receive any advice or suggestions about aspects of the site, this can be via their website.

* ***“Community-Led Action On A Changing Planet”*** by Ben McCallan, Chair of local charity Zero Carbon Guildford, and a Senior Climate Officer on the Greener Futures team at Surrey County Council

**Attachments:**

Kristina Kenworthy’s ***Retiring Chair*** Report

John Goodridge’s ***Treasurer and New Chair*** Report – and Accounts attached

***3. Notes from Kristina Kenworthy, exiting Chair***

Welcome and thank you for making the effort to come and support the charity by attending this AGM. We have two interesting speakers today and we are grateful to them.

Apologies have been received from: Phil’s list

We have at least 15 members present and so are quorate and can proceed with the business of the meeting.

We thought about cancelling it as a sign of respect for Queen Elizabeth’s death on Thursday but decided to continue at this very sad time - I want to read out the message from CPRE : –

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| **Everyone at CPRE, the countryside charity, trustees, staff, volunteers and our members, is deeply saddened to learn of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We were honoured to have her as our patron throughout her long reign and today marks the end of an era for us all.**  As our patron, she showed her love for the countryside for many years, helping CPRE celebrate its 80th birthday and other significant occasions and providing hugely valued support.  Since she became our patron 70 years ago, the Queen took a keen interest in our work, sending regular messages of encouragement. Most memorably, Her Majesty hosted CPRE anniversary events at Windsor Great Park in 2001, and St James’s Palace, in 1976 and 2006. On each occasion, she was keen to spend as much time as possibly chatting to our volunteers about their local countryside.  CPRE chief executive Crispin Truman has sent CPRE’s condolences to the Royal Family and our support to our new king. He said: ‘Today we are mourning someone who has been so much part of the life of the nation that it is hard to imagine public life without her steadying hand and reassuring voice. We should all pause to remember the huge contribution the Queen has made to the nation, to our countryside and to all the important causes she has supported over her many decades as monarch.  ‘It is the end of an era for the country and for CPRE – and one we are truly grateful to have been a part of. |

I would like to add that I believe King Charles is a force for good as a genuine and long-time environmentalist, who has been in step with the green movement and the interests of the countryside and organic farming all along. This is encouraging since we have a new government and PM who are perhaps less well aligned to the conservation of our natural captial and our commitment to combat climate change and reach Net Zero by 2050. I sincerely hope Charles III will become Patron of CPRE as we head towards our centenary celebrations in 2026.

Turning to this meeting I want to keep my contribution as short as possible as I am handing over today to a new Chair and welcoming a new Treasurer on board. I have Chaired the Board of Trustees for the last six years and have come to the end of my term. I am pleased to have been able to encourage new people offering new skills and enthusiasm to join CPRE Surrey and to come on to the Board. We are also lucky to have the Phil Partridge taking care of the Admin side of things and many of you will be familiar with him through the E-newsletters and other communications. We also have the benefit of Jeremy Saunders as our Volunteer Co-ordinator and he organises our fortnightly meetings on Zoom where volunteers and members can get together and discuss planning matters and campaigns . Jeremy works for the National Trust. Please introduce yourselves to them over a cup of coffee later.

But first I want to update the meeting on a few things since I wrote the Chair’s report back in April.

I attended the AGM of the Surrey Hills AONB Board on Wednesday where we received an update from Stephen Rudd from Natural England: Following the call for evidence 1 Dec – 31 Jan 2022 – which had over 2000 responses from the public, parish councils and of course CPRE Surrey - their consultants have been carrying out their technical assessment of Natural Beauty to identify the Candidate Areas. We do not know precisely which areas have been assessed or will now be considered as being “desirable “ as areas proposed as potential extensions to the Surrey Hills AONB. But we do know they have had positive meetings with the Technical Advisory group which brings together the relevant local authorities and Surrey Planning Officers Association. There were no objections to the proposals for candidate areas on the basis that it would be **undesirable** to include them in the AONB. The next step is to make a submission to NE for their Board to approve a statutory and public consultation by and for that consultation to run until end of April, with the aim to have NE’s Board approve a draft Order to be submitted to the Secretary for State together with the supporting evidence, by the end of June – giving a 28 day period for any final representations supporting or objecting to the draft Order. – And then to submit the Order to the Sec of State by end of August 2023. We hope there will not be a public inquiry and instead DEFRA will move swiftly to confirming the Order. If this happens it will be in record time for a Boundary Review and Extension.

CPRE Surrey needs to continue to play its part in providing evidence and support for the extensions. We trust this will not become contentious and protracted. NE and DEFRA will shy away if the cost of this and the Chilterns Hills AONB are seen as prohibitive. I trust that CPRE Surrey will work with the AONB team and Natural England and that we shall see perhaps as much of a third of Surrey protected as a National Landscape.

Other news on the Weald Action Group and Sarah Finch and her challenge of Surrey CC’s decision to allow further oil exploration at Horse Hill which went for judicial review in the High Court, then to the Court of Appeal where she lost again but she has now got permission and the Supreme Court will hear her appeal and make a landmark ruling about whether councils must factor in the long term climate impact when considering applications for fossil fuel production plants.

CPRE Surrey have financially given some support to the Weald Action Group but I am glad to say that she is supported by the Law for Change Fund on this final leg.

The decision to allow drilling for oil and gas at Dunsfold on the edge of the AONB was made by a government Minister in June – Surrey County Council having twice turned down UKOG’s application. Weald Action Group and Waverley Council have both applied to the **High Court** for permission to challenge this decision. The Good Law Project have launched a fundraising page and I would hope that CPRE Surrey will want to support this action.

Given the lifting of the moratorium on Fracking earlier this week I can see good times for the lawyers ahead.

I think that is enough from me for now and let us move to the business at hand. If you have any questions then can we take them after the Treasurer’s Report:

Over to John – on Accounts and approval of reappointment and remuneration of Begbies

**Appointment of Trustees and Hon Officers.**

Back to me to say who is retiring and to thank Sonya Dixon and Alivia Kratke. Sonya stepped off the Board earlier this year but ran a survey of members and gave us valuable information on what you value and think about CPRE Surrey. Alivia – Cabinet Office job and juggling her first child – all too much but remains a member and will come back in the future when her hands are less full.

And Welcome Susan Briant – volunteer in Elmbridge and Jennet Eyre from the Waverley Committee. And to say how grateful I am that John is taking over etc… and to David Allen for offering to take over the Hon Treasurer roll from John. We have Matt Mallinder who is here today and is Vice Chair, and Craig Freeman who runs our social media and marketing team which is something which is growing and is valuable in reaching new and younger audiences.

Thank you all I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as Chair – and while stepping off the podium so to speak I will remain in the background for support and advice when needed.

1. ***Notes from John Goodridge, new Chair***

Thank you Kristina, for all your hard work.

Kristina has been a member of CPRE for 27 years and chaired the board for the last 6. Her legal background has been invaluable to the group over the years and helped us fight the good fight against unreasonable development. She understands the importance of work to counter climate change, not least as her daughter Maia has made an influential new film entitled “Rebellion”. She has strived over the last few years to bring new energy to the board of the Surrey group, while having to cut costs to secure our financial future.

I believe that the coming years will have huge ramifications for the countryside. The National Planning Policy Framework is creaking under the strain of a lot of criticism from all sides, and in Surrey we can see it is not fit for purpose. Even before the new prime minister was named there had been several attempts at redrawing the planning framework. The recent white paper showed many signs of protecting the green spaces we have but the new prime minister has said some ominous things in the recent past.

Liz Truss has said “we need to build a million homes on the London green belt near railway stations and around other growing cities”.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, the new business, energy and industrial strategy minister and Simon Clarke’s boss has said “It is going to be primarily on green fields but there is going to be some element of green belt as well because not all green belt land is areas of outstanding natural beauty”.

And the new secretary of state for Levelling Up , Housing and Communities Simon Clarke made headlines in 2018 when he made a fresh call for the government to relax green belt rules.

In a paper titled Housing Addressed: Freeing up land, while protecting the environment, Clarke called for the freeing up of green belt land “for development within a half-mile radius of stations, where no special environmental protection exists”.

He wrote: “As it stands, the green belt is an arbitrary and increasingly damaging holdover from seventy years ago. It is currently preventing a generation from owning their own homes, pushing up the cost of living, increasing the tax burden, and damaging the environment. As demand for housing steadily rises, the green belt ensures that supply will never catch up, and that much of the additional housing that is being built is not in the places where it is most needed.”

As supporters of the green belt we at CPRE should realise that things are going to change. It is essential that we remain a part of the conversation, nationally and locally, being the voice of the countryside. We have always espoused the green belt and for there to be no change to it’s boundaries or legal strength in protecting the green spaces we have, but there is no guarantee that this will remain in place. Building houses is an effective way for governments to create economic growth at no cost to the public purse. We have to ensure that the right houses, ideally affordable homes, are built in the right places, ideally brownfield sites, of which there are plenty near railway stations around the country and in Surrey rather than in the fields that Jacob Rees-Mogg suggests. The only sacrifice that this would entail would be reduced profits for the big builders, and I’m sure you would agree this is something we are very welcome to campaign for.

What does need government attention is our infrastructure : our water systems are close to breaking down, and our energy plan for the coming decades in an ever important backdrop of climate change is obviously impaired. Unfortunately these potentially huge infrastructure projects do come at a cost to the taxpayer, and so are politically unappetising. Difficult decisions will have to be made, and we need to be there every step of the way to protect the countryside.

Nationally CPRE has done a good job spreading the word, with good exposure in the Telegraph and Guardian.

Locally we have campaigned well in some areas of Surrey to retain our beautiful countryside, but recently have had added headwinds as the Dunsfold development has had a hold up and one inspector thought this was a valid point to allow other, more disfiguring developments to be permitted.

We should liaise with other local groups near us, who are perhaps better funded and better supported, to leverage the work they are doing.

We need to retain and improve relationships with our local councillors and MPs to make sure we are heard.

And in order to do this we need membership, and social media following to give us credibility and clout with the politicians. So please suggest CPRE to all your friends and family, as there’s a lot to do.