



The countryside charity
Avon and Bristol

CPRE Avon and Bristol
Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended 31st
December 2023

CPRE Avon and Bristol is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) | Branch number
1189628.
www.cpreavonandbristol.org.uk

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE NUMBER
Trustees' Report	1
Charitable objectives	1
Strategic aims	1
Achievements and performance	2
Financial Review	5
Structure, governance and management	6
Plans for the future	7
Reference and administrative details	7
Financial review	8

Dear Member,

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Accounts for year to 31st December 2023. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and they and the annual report comply with CPRE Avon and Bristol's governing documentation and applicable law.

Charitable Objectives:

CPRE Avon and Bristol's charitable objectives, as set out in its constitution, are to promote and encourage for the benefit of the public the enhancement and protection of the English countryside. In particular, the rural environment, towns and villages within the Unitary Authorities of Bath and North East Somerset; Bristol; North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Strategic Aims:

CPRE Avon and Bristol is recognised across the West of England as the only charitable organisation that stands up for the countryside across the whole range of issues affecting it and in doing so can draw on CPRE's national expertise and experience acquired over many years.

Objectives for 2019-2023:

1. Protecting our countryside: Focusing on engagement with local authority planners, individuals and organisations to influence better planning that protects the countryside whilst ensuring thriving rural communities have a sustainable future.
2. A Positive Vision for our countryside: To promote and campaign for measures that will increase the prosperity and sustainability of our countryside and the role it can play in enhancing quality of life for urban and rural dwellers alike.
3. Securing the future of CPRE Avon and Bristol: To achieve a level of financial security for CPRE Avon and Bristol that allows us to expand our activities to levels that significantly increase our effectiveness and public recognition of what we do.
4. Building recognition and reputation: To build our communications with the public, key stakeholders and our Members to support our strategic goals and achieve our vision.

The organisation's work will promote a positive vision for the countryside:

- Promoting the wider social and health benefits of access to the countryside for everyone, especially urban dwellers and those from diverse cultural backgrounds who may currently have limited access.
- Promoting innovations and initiatives that encourage sustainable rural and local economies.
- Supporting actions that maintain and increase biodiversity.
- Recognising the value of open green spaces and Green Belt in providing a range of eco-system services necessary to sustain people and wildlife.
- Influencing rural communities towards sustainable energy; transport; housing and environmental initiatives that will encourage resilience in future.
- Prioritising fundraising from charitable sources that promote our activities and extend our influence.
- Ensuring successful delivery of project-based work i.e. Hedgerow Heroes.

Public benefit

The Trustees have complied with their duty to have regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, and they have referred to it when carrying out the Foundation's charitable purposes.

Achievements and Performance

2023 was a year of change for CPRE Avon and Bristol. The previous Chair, David Worskett, who did so much to extend the influence of CPRE and worked so hard to build a successful CPRE Avon and Bristol, sadly passed away in July 2022.

While recruiting for a new Chair, Vice-Chairs David Ambrose and Charlotte Bennett stepped up to provide stability. The branch commissioned a recruitment agency to appoint the right candidate and Sarah Pitt was elected as Chair at the end of January 2023. Her background is in BBC public service broadcasting, where she specialised in producing programmes on the countryside and wildlife. A highlight was spending a year filming, 'Highgrove, A Prince's Legacy' for BBC 2.

Shortly after Sarah joined CPRE Avon and Bristol, Kate Jordan, the previous Director resigned for personal reasons. These were challenging times and the search for a new Director began immediately.

There was one funded project, 'Hedgerow Heroes' and as soon as possible Sarah joined Sonia Parsons, Project Leader and volunteers on site in South Gloucestershire to see the training in laying hedgerows and planting new ones, in practice. Sarah believes the hedgerow work that CPRE is funding is vital in regenerating these precious assets of our countryside.

Engagement with Planning Control and Development Policy:

District Groups

Within CPRE Avon and Bristol there are three long-established and committed District Groups, mirroring the Local Authority boundaries of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset Councils. These volunteers lead work to monitor and influence developing Local Plans, respond to planning applications and build relationships with local decision makers. They are also invaluable in providing local insight and expertise to determine our approach to regional issues. Thanks to the recruitment of a new and energetic Trustee living in Bristol, joining with a serving Trustee, a new District Group has been created to cover the area of Bristol. The group is focused on strategic planning responses and influencing Bristol City Council. It also aims to recruit new members from the city area, from which the branch traditionally has not secured much traction. This work will continue to be developed with new partnerships and opportunities explored as they arise.

District Groups were visited, by the Chair, in BANES; North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Sarah saw first hand just how valuable these Groups are in extending the influence of CPRE.

Their experience came to the fore just before Christmas when a professional planner, Alison Hood, was commissioned to work alongside the Planning and Policy Group (made up of the Chair of each District Group), to respond to the consultation on Bristol's Local Plan.

This was a rare opportunity to have a say in how Bristol's housing; development and environmental plans would be shaped until 2040 and beyond. CPRE Avon and Bristol's response was completed by the end of January 2024.

CPRE Avon and Bristol questioned the 'locking in' of housing numbers required leading up to 2040 and beyond, regardless of any future, climate, economic or environmental changes, particularly regarding the worldwide collapse in birth rates.

CPRE has long supported a sequential approach to development such that the least sustainable sites (e.g. Green Belt) are reserved for the later stages of the Plan, which would prevent developers seizing on the most profitable green field sites.

The response was very detailed and wide ranging but we also commented on how the Green Belt and the city's green spaces contribute to the overall character of the city and are highly valued by the population.

Recruitment:

Recruitment to find another Director was successful and Mary-Jane Wilshire was appointed to the post at the end of May. Once the Director was in place a part-time Information and Communications Co-ordinator, Phoebe Barker, was appointed to support the Director.

Hedgerow Heroes: Jan 2023 – End of December 2023

Following the completion of the first Hedgerow Heroes project, CPRE Avon and Bristol were successful in gaining funding for a second phase in 2023. Project Officer, Sonia Parsons continued to lead this project, alongside newly recruited Sarah Sawyer as a Project Coordinator.

We were able to increase the scale of the project to partner with Bath and North East Somerset Council as well as continuing to work closely with South Gloucestershire Council. The project involved working with both local authorities to improve management of local authority hedgerows and locate hedgerows to be restored by volunteers over winter. We also worked with private landowners to promote best-practise management and plant new hedgerows in areas most significant for linking up habitats (within the West of England Nature Recovery Network), extending the range for wildlife such as dormice that utilise these corridors.

Paul Pearce, Head of B&NES Parks team said of the project:

'Working with the 'Hedgerow Heroes' project has been a golden opportunity for us to help improve our hedges in Bath and North East Somerset.

We manage approximately 25,000 m2 of hedges and shrub lines across the district and although we've changed our management where we can to improve biodiversity we've never had the chance to survey and restore any of our hedgerows; nor provide training for our staff to help them understand the value of these habitats.

It's also been great to extend the opportunity to local communities too. Better hedges mean better parks with more biodiversity and it's been great to be able to offer a practical learning experience for our hard-working local volunteers.'

Community Energy and Rooftop Renewables

At CPRE we are very clear, both at national and at local level, that climate change poses one of the most serious threats to the countryside. We also see how important it is to support

communities to develop solutions on the ground. The new Director wasted no time at all in securing a Quartet Grant in June 2023 to fund public awareness and education for the Rooftop Renewable Campaign. With this additional funding we were able to connect to our members as well as community groups with ambitions and interest in community energy and zero carbon futures.

We provided advice, information and training on what actions they could take to support the Rooftop Renewable Campaign and what they could do to get a project going in their area. One of the key outputs of this work was the Powering Community with Renewables Workshop, you can read the report [here](#).

Green Belt

One of our aims is for the Green Belt – which represents 720 km² around Bristol and Bath – to be seen and valued for what it is: a living network for our rural communities, an essential solution to the climate and nature crises and a space for farming and food production. It's also where thousands of people, can enjoy fresh air and the great outdoors.

We would like to see rural communities have access to affordable homes, but we believe that development should be done in the right way, in the right place. The narrative is often reduced and oversimplified to housing versus Greenbelt but the reality is more complex and nuanced. In an effort to understand this debate, our Director contributed to the making of a film called 'Green Belt 2.0'.

Exploring the relationship between the rural and the urban, the project examined the tensions between development and protection using creative technologies to bring the conversation to a wider audience. The result can be viewed here: [Green Belt — R + J \(reubenandjamie.com\)](https://www.reubenandjamie.com/greenbelt)

National CPRE

One of the greatest strengths of CPRE is its structure. The expertise and national capacity of National CPRE continue to strengthen and support our local efforts. The 'Hedgerow Heroes' project is the perfect example of this partnership's strengths, where national policy and priorities attract funding that enables local, grassroots projects, like ours, to thrive.

Volunteers

The Board of Trustees would like to thank our District Groups for their tireless efforts protecting and enhancing the countryside in their local areas. We would also like to extend special thanks to those that attend the Executive Committee, ensuring local issues are raised.

Our 'Hedgerow Heroes' project would not have been possible without the support of our Hedgerow Hero volunteers. These volunteers have committed hours of training to understand the importance of hedgerows in building biodiversity and they learned traditional hedgelaying techniques. They have taken practical action to ensure hedgerows are rejuvenated for the benefit of future generations of people and wildlife.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

2023 saw a significant increase in our income from 2022 due to an increase in project funding, some of which was to fund activities in 2024. This is indicative of a renewed focus on fundraising, work to diversify income streams and the ongoing development of the branch.

Please note that the organisation's accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and no account has been taken of accrued or prepaid income or expenditure.

Our unrestricted income in 2023 included £14,360 of membership fees, £7,891 of donations, including one legacy of £3,765 and two individual donations amounting to £4,000. We also receive a £100 grant from Backwell Parish Council.

The majority of our restricted income of £64,606 was received from a private donor who, through National CPRE, has supported our Hedgerow Heroes project and funds activities until June 2024. This project also supports the branch's core costs. The remainder of the income included additional support for our Hedgerow Heroes activities from Local Giving (£500), the Matthew Good Foundation (£2,000) and the first tranche of our Bee Bold Award received from the West of England Combined Authority (£1,500 of a total grant of £7,500). We also received a small grant (£3,990) from the Quartet Community Foundation for work on community energy, the activities for which take place in 2024.

The Trustees are sincerely grateful to all those that have supported CPRE Avon and Bristol's work during this period.

In total during the year, CPRE Avon and Bristol received income of £91,696 and paid out £64,998 on charitable activities and fundraising. Net movement in funds on unrestricted funds was £3,474 and £23,494 on restricted funds resulting in total funds balances of £80,159 at the end of this financial year.

Reserves policy: CPRE Avon and Bristol has reserves equating to a full years' operational costs. This will be held to smooth out fluctuations in cash flow, meet emergencies and allow CPRE Avon and Bristol to maintain its financial sustainability. The balance of free reserves at the end of 2023 was £56,666.

Risk management

The Trustees have examined the major strategic and operational risks which CPRE Avon and Bristol may face, and they have established systems which enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to minimise these risks.

Going concern

The Board of Trustees are satisfied with the performance of the branch during the accounting period and the position at 31st December 2023 and consider that the CPRE Avon and Bristol is in a reasonable position to continue its activities during the coming year, and that the branch's assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

MANAGEMENT, STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

CPRE Avon and Bristol services are delivered by an operational, part time team. The team includes the Director (3 days a week); one part-time Information and Communications Co-ordinator; one part-time Project Manager (Hedgerow Heroes), one Project Co-ordinator (Hedgerow Heroes) on a short-term contract.

The reporting structure includes the staff team reporting into the Director with the Director reporting directly to the Chair and Board of Trustees. The performance review of the Director is undertaken by the Chair of Trustees.

The resources required to run a successful branch includes office equipment, such as IT and general office equipment which has been provided from funds from CPRE Avon and Bristol.

In 2023, in order to facilitate good communication between team members CPRE Avon and Bristol took on the rental of office space at the Engine Shed, Station Approach. The rental

fee for the workspace and meeting room is at an incredibly competitive price. This arrangement allows the team to meet up regularly face to face in a working environment which is so important for communication, relationships and staff morale. We have also held several events in the space which is conveniently located next to Bristol Temple Meads Station and all events are warmly supported by the staff at the Engine Shed.

Complaints

CPRE Avon and Bristol received no complaints regarding our fundraising practices.

Independent examiners

MJB Accounting were re-appointed as independent examiners to the branch during the year and have expressed their willingness to continue in that capacity.

CHANGES TO THE TRUSTEE BOARD:

Dr Miles Thompson resigned during 2023 as he is now working in Wales. Danica Priest, based in Bristol, has replaced him.

The Chair would like to thank the Trustees for their loyal and dedicated service to CPRE Avon and Bristol. We will be recruiting for new Trustees in 2024/5. If you are interested or would like to propose someone for the role please get in touch with the Chair direct. We are particularly looking for Trustees with a Financial and HR background; a Trustee who can lead on Diversity and Inclusion; a Trustee who can lead on Nature's Recovery and building biodiversity.

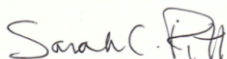
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

With a new Director and Chair in place we look to 2024 as a period of stability and with a commitment to progressing our priorities.

We have submitted a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund which, if successful, will support us in developing Inclusive practices and process that will enable us to involve diverse communities in our projects, communications and campaigns. It will also increase our capacity to digitally engage with existing and new audiences by increasing our digital assets and social media presence. We will know if we have been successful in securing funding in late September 2024. To increase our resilience, we will also be submitting bids to a variety of smaller local funding organisations.

We sincerely thank our Members for their ongoing support and hope to see them at the AGM and Countryside Day on September 8th, 2024 at 1.45pm.

Sarah Pitt



Chair, CPRE Avon and Bristol

Reference and Administrative Details

Trustees

The following served as Trustees during the year (unless shown otherwise):

Chair: Sarah Pitt,
Charlotte Bennett (Vice Chair)
Kaley Hart (Treasurer)
Catherine Withers
Danica Priest
Sophie Spencer

Correspondence Address

PO Box 3435
Bristol
BS6 9PS

Branch Registration Number

1189628

Independent Examiner

MJB Accounting
83 Upper Halfway
Beanacre
Wiltshire
SN12 7QA

CPRE Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2023

Annual Accounts

CPRE Avon and Bristol
Registered Charity 1189628
Registered Community Interest Organisation CE021950
Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2023

The following accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) issued by the Charity Commission to comply with the Executive Committee's obligations as the trustees of the Charity for keeping accounting records.

	2023	2023	2023	2022	2022	2022
	General	Restricted	Total	General	Restricted	Total
Income						
Subscriptions & Donations						
Subscriptions	14,360.35		14,360.35	13,723.79		13,723.79
Donations & Legacies	7,891.20		7,891.20	9,854.21		9,854.21
Restricted Grants		64,606.33	64,606.33		26,218.66	26,218.66
		3,990.00	3,990.00			
Unrestricted Grants	100.00		100.00	500.00		500.00
Other Income			0.00			
Training Supplied			0.00			
Uncategorised	268.13	138.24	406.37			
Investment Income			0.00			
Bank Interest	611.74		611.74	59.94		59.94
Total Income	23,231.42	68,734.57	91,965.99	24,137.94	26,218.66	50,356.60

	2023	2023	2023	2022	2022	2022
	General	Restricted	Total	General	Restricted	Total
Expenditure						
Direct Charity						

CPRE Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2023

Insurance	142.11	263.91	406.02	390.68		390.68
Telephone	80.70	100.24	180.94	99.29		99.29
Fundraising	1,266.98		1,266.98	1,200.00		1,200.00
Travel, Accommodation & Room Hire	660.66	2,117.45	32,778.11	301.99		301.99
Other						
Office & Administration Expenses	810.89	1,743.66	2,554.55	116.99		116.99
Salaries & Wages	12,131.02	28,083.83	40,214.85	12,581.46	12,307.48	24,888.94
Recruitment			0.00		574.00	574.00
Staff Expenses			0.00		802.30	802.30
Volunteer Expenses and Welfare			0.00		391.73	391.73
Training			0.00		1,050.00	1,050.00
Materials		4,615.38	4,615.38		241.30	241.30
Publicity & Promotion			0.00		813.44	813.44
Costs of Education			0.00		1,872.60	1,872.60
Events			0.00		69.20	69.20
Equipment			0.00		1,990.97	1,990.97
Postage, Copying & Stationery	813.68	9.99	823.67	525.66		525.66
Professional	3,635.41	8,291.39	11,926.80	4,248.84		4,248.84
Subscriptions	187.93	14.95	202.88			
Bank Charges	28.40		28.40	21.20		21.20
Total Expenditure	19,757.78	45,240.80	64,998.58	19,486.11	20,113.02	39,599.13
Surplus/Deficit	3,473.64	23,493.77	26,967.41	4,651.83	6,105.64	10,757.47
Retained Funds B/fwd			53,192.05			42,434.58

Total Funds	80,159.46	53,192.05
Funded By:		
Current Accounts	42,743.75	16,274.59
Deposit Account	37,315.71	36,817.46
Bristol Pounds	100.00	100.00
	80,159.46	53,192.05

Notes to the Accounts

1. The accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis and no account has been taken of accrued/ prepaid income or expenditure

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of CPRE Avon & Bristol Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the charities act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Direction given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act) and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiners Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with these records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below,

Independent Examiners Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

CPRE Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2023

Michael Bowles

M J Bowles MJB Accounting

2nd May 2024