Campaign to Protect Rural England
Avon and Bristol

CPRE Avon and Bristol
Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended
31st December 2025



CPRE Avon and Bristol is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO)
Registered Charity Number: 1189628
www.cpreavonandbristol.org.uk

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AN INTRODUCTION from SARAH PITT, Chair of CPRE Avon and Bristol

Dear Member

'**Hedgerow Heroes'** has been a flagship project for CPRE Avon and Bristol since I became Chair in January 2023. Each year since then we have been awarded substantial funding to allow us to engage the public and train volunteers in the traditional craft of hedgelaying and in new planting of hedgerows. We are one of thirteen local CPRE groups to receive this funding.

The West Country network of hedgerows is in need of rejuvenation and there are many opportunities for new planting. The network of small farms in this area contains a patchwork of hedgerows in various states of decline or over-management. There is much still to do to aid Nature's Recovery. Green Belt land around Bristol and Bath is coming under pressure for development so the remaining hedgerows on farmland need to play an ever-increasing role in supporting a healthy environment for people and wildlife. We are committed to taking part in this project into the Centenary Year, 2026 when CPRE funding will finish. You can read more about the Project on page 8.

2025 was a year in which core staff roles at CPRE Avon and Bristol were re-structured. Given the volatile nature of charitable funding, the Trustees agreed to replace the role of Director with a Charity Co-ordinator, ensuring the administration of the charity thrived. The current Director, Mary-Jane Wilshire left in May 2025 and after a competitive interview process, we welcomed Adaire Osbaldeston as Charity Co-ordinator in July 2025. Sonia Parsons, Project Lead on Hedgerow Heroes also left to go travelling and in October we appointed Sam Martlew as Lead and Gemma Michael as Assistant. All new staff have done extremely well in their roles.

CPRE National was also involved in a similar exercise of redefining and restructuring the organisation. As a local Chair I was invited to help shape the future of the national organisation through workshops with Trust Impact in 2025. I was also consulted on communications strategy and contributed to the Diversity and Inclusion Group. The new strategy will be published in August of the Centenary Year of 2026.

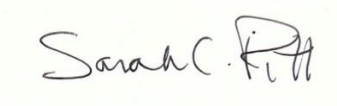
I have learned a lot in my time as Chair of CPRE Avon and Bristol and believe that the decisions the Management Committee have made are sound. We are fortunate to have an organisation guided by a group of individuals with much experience between them. They have ensured that there is good financial and operational management and my thanks, in particular, go to Kaley Hart, our Treasurer, who has served for six years and provided the Trustees with excellent reports and ensured our finances are clear, accessible and compliant.

Our partnerships with other organisations show CPRE Avon and Bristol is respected and known to deliver on a range of projects, including widening participation, building nature's recovery and through our planning work, protecting our precious countryside.

Membership is important and provides our core income. Please encourage your contacts to make an annual subscription to CPRE or donate to support our work – see link below - so that we can continue to save and value our green spaces and ensure future generations have access to quality landscapes and thriving farmland.

For personal reasons, I will be retiring as Chair from January 2027 but with your support, hope to continue as a Trustee. We are currently looking for a new Chair and Treasurer, and we could also add more Trustees to our Management committee. If you, as Members are interested, please get in touch with myself or our Charity Co-ordinator, Adaire Osbaldeston.

Thank you for your support, as a Member of CPRE Avon and Bristol you are playing a vital role in protecting the countryside.



SARAH PITT
Chair, CPRE Avon and Bristol

Here is a link for donations:

https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14611#!/DonationDetails

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 around the 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. In doing so, we can draw on CPRE's national expertise and experience acquired over nearly one hundred years.

Our objectives remain steadfast. We recognise the value of open green spaces and Green Belt in providing a range of eco-system services necessary to sustain people and wildlife; we promote the benefits of access to the countryside for everyone, especially urban dwellers and those from diverse cultural backgrounds who may currently have limited access. We support nature's recovery through our ongoing work on the 'Hedgerow Heroes' project and our District Planning Groups engage with local planning authorities, individuals and organisations to ensure rural communities continue to thrive and have a sustainable future.

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:

We are a small branch of CPRE so it is a great achievement to have attracted so much funding for the 'Hedgerow Heroes' project. Thanks to the Hedgerow Heroes' team for building the relationships with partner organisations that led to successful outcomes. This has enabled CPRE Avon and Bristol to continue to engage with volunteers from local communities as well as landowners; teach them new skills and aid in nature's recovery. It has also helped raise the profile of the charity.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PLANNING AUTHORITIES:

CPRE Avon and Bristol has four District Planning Groups (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire). Each group is run by volunteers experienced in the planning process. They monitor and comment upon Local Plans and selected planning applications. They also work with community groups, giving advice on the planning system and sharing their experience, as time allows.

This year was a challenging one as 2025 saw a Labour Government continue to make major changes to the Planning system through the National Planning Policy Framework. Nationally, their stated desire is to build 1.5 million homes during the current Parliamentary term (that's around 300,000 per year). The permanence of Green Belt areas around England's towns and cities came under scrutiny for the first time since its inception in 1933. Until now Local Authorities could choose to review and alter Green Belt boundaries, but only where exceptional circumstances were fully evidenced and justified. Now, under Local Planning Authority (LPA) review, Green Belts can become 'Grey Belts' and a targeted release of land for development is allowed if the land is of lower quality i.e. not prime agricultural land or it is land that has been previously developed. However, Green Belt land, in this area, has already been lost to development. CPRE Avon and Bristol wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to object to EPIC, an American software company, building a new headquarters on the outskirts of Long Ashton. It was approved in 2025 and that's 90 acres of high value Green Belt land lost, forever.

Government is also committed to 'Brownfield development' which is land that has previously been built on or altered by human activity. The sites are generally assumed to be in or on the edge of urban areas. CPRE wrote a report in September 2025 which evidenced that there is enough brownfield land to build 1.4million homes in England and more than half of the sites already have planning permission. However, Developers it seems, prefer green fields.

The high numbers of housing the Government want to achieve puts a strain on local communities and the local environment. People in the Avon and Bristol area are waking up to the reality of what it means as Local Plans are re-written to try and accommodate what many regard as unsustainable numbers of houses. Now, there is a presumption in favour of development, particularly around green field sites that have good transport links i.e. stations.

We know we need new housing, particularly affordable and social rent houses which have rents linked to local incomes but to protect our countryside we need to ensure they are in the right place and not eating up our Green Belt. This is Green Belt land that can be used for food production; nature's recovery and our own health and wellbeing and for over a Century it has separated our towns and villages and given each a distinctive character.

The Chairs of each of the District Planning Groups in South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset have been responding to the plethora of information coming from Government and in particular have commented upon Local Plans in each area.

Local Plans. The Government recently announced that South Gloucestershire has been selected as one of the 12 potential **New Towns** locations - now called **Brabazon**, in relation to the development underway on the former Filton Airfield.

In Bath and North East Somerset, CPRE Avon and Bristol challenged the increase in housing numbers and the impact this could have on Bath's World Heritage status. (Development proposals are aimed at the local authority boundaries rather than extension to the City of Bath).

We were disappointed that the current approach by BANES only dealt with the relative environmental merits of locating the extra housing in one area rather than another and completely failed to address the Net Zero implications of doubling the housing targets and accommodating all the transport and other needs of the additional 27,000 homes proposed.

CPRE did lend its support to the successful opposition to further intrusive development on the South Stoke Plateau which would have severely threatened the World Heritage status of Bath as well as damaging protected landscapes and ancient monuments.

North Somerset Council's attempts to finalise its Local Plan to enable some stability and to give communities certainty about their area has been delayed by National Planning Policy changes. This has meant the prepared draft Local Plan housing numbers being increased by around 10,000. North Somerset's previously protected land designations, Green Belt and Mendip Hills National Landscape and local landscapes are now vulnerable to development of all kinds.

New coastal flood maps were required which resulted in changed locations utilising much more Green Belt land than the previous draft Local Plan. The loss of Green Belt land to both housing and solar is extensive. Farming has been severely hit and is a great loss to North Somerset countryside.

All this activity has not stopped developers submitting applications for sites not currently in the proposed Local Plan. Where resources allow, we are working with Parish Councils and local groups to oppose this where green fields are at risk.

North Somerset Council is also being faced with further expansion plans from **Bristol Airport**. Without completing all the conditions set at the previous expansion approval for 12 million passengers, they have started Consultation on expansion to 15 million. The application expected in 2026 includes an extension to the east end of the runway to include approach infrastructure (lights, fencing etc) on Felton Common. The Common is a site of nature conservation, a local nature reserve and designated open access land. It also has a number of important archaeological features, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

RECRUITMENT/STAFF CHANGES:

- After the statutory process was undertaken, the Director, Mary-Jane Wilshire was made redundant and left in May 2025.
- Adaire Osbaldeston, Charity Co-ordinator was appointed in July 2025.
- Sam Martlew was appointed Hedgerow Heroes Project Lead in October 2025.
- Gemma Michael was appointed Hedgerow Heroes Project Assistant in October 2025

'HEDGEROW HEROES' - PHASE 5 Jan-Dec 2025:

Since 2022, Hedgerow Heroes project staff and volunteers have planted and rejuvenated over 8km of hedgerow and remain on target to achieve our Centenary Challenge goal of 10km by the end of 2026. In this phase, we worked at nine sites, focusing on areas with significant wildlife or community benefits and were delighted to continue our partnership work. We engaged 242 volunteers aged 18 to 70, and 100% of respondents reported that these sessions improved their sense of connection with nature and had a beneficial impact on their mental health.



Other highlights included working with Avon Needs Trees to establish hedgerows at their ambitious 422-acre Lower Chew Forest – a woodland creation project aimed at helping tackle the climate emergency, improve biodiversity and reduce local flooding. We collaborated with a local council to restore hedgerows in parks and green spaces, and with Bristol Water to boost biodiversity on their site at Chew Valley Lake. Volunteers valued the training and leadership given by the Hedgerow Heroes team, including:
Mike Reed, Hedgelaying trainer; Sam Martlew, Project Lead; and Gemma Michael, Project Assistant. In turn the staff team witnessed the satisfaction and pleasure it gave volunteers to actively contribute to making our countryside more bio-diverse and climate resilient.

Highlights:

2,900 metres 21 planting days 8 hedgelaying days 10,840 hedge whips planted 4 hedgelaying training sessions	105 people trained in hedgelaying 35 events 242 volunteers 968 volunteer hours 8 sites

VOLUNTEERS:

The Board of Trustees would like to thank our District Planning Groups for their tireless efforts in protecting the countryside in their local areas by engaging with the planning process and supporting local groups in their campaigns to ensure the best planning decisions are made.

The 'Hedgerow Heroes' project could not be delivered without the support of our volunteers. We would like to thank all those who joined the Project team across autumn and winter when the weather can be very challenging. They have taken practical action to ensure hedgerows are rejuvenated or new ones planted for the benefit of future generations of people and wildlife.

FINANCIAL REVIEW:

2025 saw a lower level of income compared to 2024, due to a less restricted income for projects received during the year. Unrestricted income remains stable.

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 2025 was £18,931.02. This included £13,891 of membership fees, and £4,198 in donations.

The majority of our restricted income of £58,030.69 was received from a private donor who, through National CPRE, has supported our Hedgerow Heroes project and funded activities until June 2025. This project also supports the branch's core costs.

The remainder of this restricted income included additional support for our Hedgerow Heroes activities from the following sources:

- Somerset Council who support the 'Farming in Protected Landscapes' (FiPL) grant programme
- Bristol Natural History Consortium
- Garfield Weston Foundation Fund
- Quartet Community Foundation Fund
- A Crowdfunder supported by the Aviva Community Fund

This restricted income total also included a £5,000 grant from National CPRE to support our 2026 Centenary event 'Concert for the Countryside'.

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 £76,961.71 and paid out £92,702.92 on charitable activities and fundraising. Net movement in funds on unrestricted funds was £8,524.69 and -£24,266 on restricted funds resulting in total funds balances of £62,667.90 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 2025 was £58,403.86.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for year ending December 2025:

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. The statement of financial activities to 31st December 2025 can be found on pages 14/15 of this report.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS:

MJB Accounting were re-appointed as independent examiners to the Charity during the year and they have examined and signed the Statement of Financial Activities to December 2025. This document concludes the end of this Annual Report.

RISK MANAGEMENT:

The Board of 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 2025 and consider that CPRE Avon and Bristol is in a reasonable position to continue its activities during the coming year and that the charity assets are adequate to fulfil its obligations.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE and MANAGEMENT:

CPRE Avon and Bristol services are delivered by an operational, part-time team. The team includes one part-time Charity Co-ordinator (3 days a week) one part-time Project Lead (Hedgerow Heroes), 4 days a week and a Project Assistant (Hedgerow Heroes) on a short term contract which equates to 2 days a week.

The staff team report to the Charity Co-ordinator and the Co-ordinator reports directly to the Chair and Board of Trustees. Performance reviews for the Charity Co-ordinator are undertaken by the Chair of Trustees and Project Lead by the Charity Co-ordinator.

The IT resources required to run the charity includes office equipment such as laptops and a phone which has been provided from funds from CPRE Avon and Bristol.

All staff are home based and meet online, except when face to face meetings are required when a room is hired by the hour at the Square, in Berkeley Square. This is also where interviews with candidates for new roles are conducted.

COMPLAINTS:

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

CHANGES TO THE TRUSTEE BOARD:

Danica Priest stood down as Trustee, and Charlee Bennett as Vice Chair. Sophie Spencer was elected Vice Chair.

The Chair would like to thank the Trustees for their loyal and dedicated service to CPRE Avon and Bristol. We are in need of Trustees to expand our Board. We are currently looking for Trustees with a financial and HR background; Trustees who can lead on Nature's Recovery and Trustees who has planning expertise. All our Trustees are committed to the Charity being inclusive and appealing to people from all backgrounds and cultures.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

We will continue to work with communities on planning issues through our District Groups.

We are continually applying for funds to enhance current projects and provide match funding for work such as Hedgerow Heroes. As National funding is due to finish for Hedgerow Heroes in 2026, we are already thinking of how we may fund a team to continue this work in some way in future years. Charging for hedgelaying training may be one way to support the continuation of the project.

Subject to funding, it is our intention to continue to work with under-represented groups so they can access the nature and land based sector for further training, careers or recreation.

We are planning an ambitious event, a '**Concert for the Countryside'** in the Centenary Year of CPRE, 2026. The intention is to stage this at Bristol Beacon with Bristol Youth Orchestra and source archive film telling the story of our countryside for the last hundred years. The archive will be played on a large screen behind the Orchestra.

We are doing this with David Parker of Available Light Productions who has a rich library of rural archive. Our Chair, Sarah Pitt has also made countryside films for many years and will contribute footage also. In 2025 we contacted well known composer, Debbie Wiseman, and she is writing a new piece for the orchestra to perform. The Concert will be on March 29th, 2026.

As a permanent legacy of the Concert we will plant a Woodland Grove of 100 native trees on a site managed by Avon Needs Trees on the outskirts of Pensford. Trees will be planted by a diverse group of young people from Babbasa in Bristol and by members of Bristol Youth Orchestra.

THANK YOU!

The Chair and Trustees sincerely thank our Members for their ongoing support. Without you, we could not contribute so fully to increasing bio-diversity in this area through 'Hedgerow Heroes' and support our District Planning Groups in the dedicated work they do to mitigate unwise development in the countryside.

REFERENCE and ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS:

Trustees:

The following served as Trustees during the year.

Chair:	SARAH PITT
Vice Chair:	CHARLEE BENNETT (stood down as Vice Chair at AGM on 12 October 2025)
Vice Chair:	SOPHIE SPENCER (elected as Vice Chair at AGM on 12 October 2025)
Treasurer:	KALEY HART
Trustee:	GEORGIE BIGG
Trustee:	CATHERINE WITHERS
Trustee:	DANICA PRIEST (stood down as Trustee at AGM on 12 October 2025)

Correspondence Address:

PO Box 3435
Bristol
BS6 9PS

Branch Registration Number:

1189628

Independent Examiner:

MJB Accounting
83 Upper Hallway
Beanacre
Wilts
SN12 7QA

CPRE Avon & Bristol
Registered Charity 1189628
Registered Community Interest Organisation CE021950
Statement of Financial Activities to 31st December 2025

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

		2025 General £	2025 Restricted £	2025 Total £	2024 General £	2024 Restricted £	2024 Total £
Income							
Subscriptions & Donations							
Subscriptions		13,890.85		13,890.85	13,584.46		13,584.46
Donations & Legacies		4,198.17	6,376.89	10,575.06	300.00		300.00
Charitable Activities						4,638.00	4,638.00
Restricted Grants	Hedgerow Heroes		46,653.80	46,653.80		67,465.36	67,465.36
	Concert for the Countryside		5,000.00	5,000.00			
Unrestricted Grants					4,200.00		4,200.00
Other Income							
Uncatergorised		100.00		100.00			
Investment Income							
Bank Interest		742.00		742.00	891.36		891.36
Total Income		**18,931.02**	**58,030.69**	**76,961.71**	**18,975.82**	**72,103.36**	**91,079.18**
Expenditure							
Direct Charity							
Insurance		173.43	295.31	468.74	179.82	227.32	407.14
Telephone		50.60	161.90	212.50	68.22	139.24	207.46
Fundraising					175.00		175.00
Travel, Accomodation & Room Hire		1,326.30	1,680.33	3,006.63	426.42	3,166.46	3,592.88
Bank Charges		29.90		29.90	30.10		30.10
Office & Administration Expenses		496.12	936.51	1,432.63	504.93	745.99	1,250.92
Postage, Copying & Stationery		1,046.82	15.15	1,061.97	665.18	220.91	886.09
Other							
Salaries & Wages		4,560.62	38,653.69	43,214.31	9,778.90	43,776.43	53,555.33
Training			183.60	183.60	1,980.00	100.00	2,080.00
Materials		243.48	27,070.36	27,313.84		16,187.08	16,187.08
Professional		2,082.61	10,190.19	12,272.80	5,752.74	8,668.79	14,421.53
Payroll Services		90.00	2,602.00	2,692.00			
Subscriptions		36.00	13.00	49.00	36.00		36.00
Website		270.45	494.55	765.00			
Total Expenditure		**10,406.33**	**82,296.59**	**92,702.92**	**19,597.31**	**73,232.22**	**92,829.53**
Surplus/Deficit		**8,524.69**	**(24,266)**	**(15,741)**	**(621)**	**(1,129)**	**(1,750)**
Retained Funds B/fwd				**78,409.11**			**80,159.46**
Total Funds				**62,667.90**			**78,409.11**
Funded By:							
Current Accounts (excluding Restricted Funds balances)				19,636.34			11,711.01
Deposit Account				38,667.52			38,068.16
Bristol Pounds				100.00			100.00
Restricted Funds C/Fwd				4,264.04			28,529.94
				62,667.90			**78,409.11**

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 in 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.



M J Bowles
07th April 2026