



'Containing urban pressures is a huge challenge'

In March this year, CPRE Chairman Peter Waine attended an international conference on Green Belts in Ontario. CPRE were chosen to represent the UK at the conference, 'Greenbelts: Local Solutions for Global Challenges', and made London's Metropolitan Green Belt – the first of its kind – the main focus of our presentation.

In the most recent Green Belt success story for London, Charles Darwin's home in Downe, near Bromley, is being considered for *World Heritage Site* status in recognition of the scientific heritage of the surrounding countryside. Just minutes from the southern edge of London, the Green Belt landscapes and many of the plant and animal species studied by Darwin continue to evolve 150 years on. We hope CPRE members will take the opportunity to visit it soon.

Not an Elephant's graveyard

CPRE London have secured funding for a unique partnership with the London School of Economics to study regeneration processes at the Elephant and Castle and how well it meets the requirements of high density, quality housing, incorporating green spaces. Good design and regeneration can protect the

STANDING UP FOR THE LONDON GREEN BELT

Other successful CPRE Green Belt campaigns noted were:

- Green Belt land saved from development by CPRE in the 1980s has become Thames Chase Community Forest, a 40-year project, with over 1.5 million trees planted, a Forest Centre and 90km of walks and trails created for local people ;
- Rainham Marshes nature reserve is regenerating an industrial site which has been 'off limits' to Londoners for 100 years;
- Community farms, like Lambourne End Care Farm, near Romford in Essex, are helping vulnerable people and developing vital educational projects with local schools;
- CPRE played a key role in winning a High Court case against a huge expansion of Heathrow Airport in the Green Belt;
- CPRE helped to prevent a 120 hectare railway development in Hertfordshire on the last remaining significant piece of open Green Belt between St Albans and London.

Throughout the 1930s CPRE campaigned for a protected zone of land outside London to prevent the relentless spread of the city. Now CPRE wants to utilise the full potential of the Metropolitan Green Belt to tackle climate change, create natural corridors, with tree planting to improve the landscape and wildlife habitats. We can also help make farming greener through schemes to promote environmentally sensitive farming. Most people appreciate the value of the Green Belt. We think it has been the saviour of London and the most effective instrument of the planning system, and we will oppose any threats to it.

Green Belt by providing affordable family housing, with plenty of green space in the inner city, and thereby reducing sprawl.

London's famous Georgian squares have higher density dwellings than high rise blocks of flats, proving it is possible to make best use of scarce space while creating pleasant living environments.

Date for your Diary >

March 2012: High Streets or Low Expectations. We are planning a seminar on Compact Communities and good urban design. This will be in The Galley at Cowcross Street and details will be available later, and on the website.

CAMPAIGNS ROUND-UP

Riots in London

Tottenham and Croydon bore the brunt of the disturbances of 2011 – how to counter these outrages?

London has been the scene of riots over many centuries. Whether it was the Spitalfield Riots of 1769 or the Spa Fields Riots of 1816, they have all had a big impact on the capital.

The summer 2011 riots were particularly shocking and disturbing and Eric Pickles has now made £20m available to the GLA for improvements in certain boroughs. Rebuilding and repair is one thing, but the longer term value of London must also be factored in. Now is the time for us to encourage communities to work with CPRE to protect the unique identity of these areas.

Family houses for London

CPRE is refreshing earlier work on the 'power of concentration' and its importance for families in London.

Over recent years, CPRE has carried out case studies of two and three storey housing schemes. These have included Coin Street in Waterloo, Colebrooke Place in Islington, as well as sites in Fulham and Peckham. They were reviewed by the architect and designer Sir Richard MacCormac. He concluded that 50dph (dwellings per hectare) was the benchmark for density. We will refresh and expand this material in our campaigning in 2012.

Green Belt or green girdle?

While the Green Belt is essential for people and for wildlife, there continue to be those that wish to abuse it.

Whether it is reclamation centres or gypsy and traveller sites, the Green Belt is often seen as a easy option. We have recently sent in objections in Bromley, Mill Hill and Havering on schemes that would compromise the Green Belt. Please let us know of any damaging proposal in your area so that swift action can be taken.

CPRE is working in London and elsewhere to make the case for sustainability that balances social and environmental factors, as well as economic considerations. The Government's new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is not helpful to us, and we will work to ensure that the Green Belt is not seen as a target for easy pickings in any development scenario.



'London's gritty character gives it its enduring charm'

London Campaigner: Edward Dawson

As recently appointed Director of CPRE London, Edward Dawson can claim a close link with the capital and its environment. He grew up in London, and campaigned for many years. These efforts included gaining nature reserve status for Perivale Wood in Ealing and pressing English Heritage to restore Danson House in Bexley. He has already spent over 12 years working on regional planning issues in South East England.

This year he received the CPRE Countryside Medal for his work on countryside protection in the South East and in Hampshire.

Be our 'eyes and ears'

CPRE London has district groups around the capital. We would like to set up more groups, and to create an 'eyes and ears' network. This is not a formal arrangement, just a way of feeding back ideas and responses from local areas. We are arranging meetings of local group reps and others in the coming months. We will also look at training sessions on local planning.

We want to recruit a volunteer local groups Co-ordinator to assist groups. Please contact the Director if you can help.

How you can help

Anyone can become a campaigner, young or old. There are so many ways you can get involved with us. Working with CPRE can be challenging and rewarding, and you may learn new skills, and make a valued contribution to our work.

Most of all, we will ensure your time spent with us is enjoyable and fruitful. CPRE is a national organisation with local branches across the country. Contact our Director for details.