



The countryside charity  
London

Working for a greener city

# GREEN LONDON

Newsletter of the London Branch of the  
Campaign to Protect Rural England

## Winter Appeal!

**Please support our work to stop green spaces coming under threat.**

This year we have worked with local campaigners to protect London's green spaces. But we continue to see major threats arising including a staggering 125 hectares of Green Belt at risk in Hounslow.

When parks and greenspaces are valued and well-used, they are less likely to be lost to development. So we are delighted to have launched two new projects which will help ensure sites do not come under threat in the first place - *Go Parks London* and *Ten New Parks for London*. But we desperately need funds to support these projects. Please make a donation and help ensure our amazing, diverse and historic green spaces remain part of London life forever.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO OUR WINTER APPEAL PLEASE GO TO:**  
[www.kindlink.com/fundraising/cpre-london/10newparks](http://www.kindlink.com/fundraising/cpre-london/10newparks)

## Ten New Parks for London

**We're trying to find ways to stop green spaces coming under threat from development.** Often this happens because they are left to become derelict. We are campaigning to create at least ten new parks in London from sites which are protected but which are unloved and not well-used. We want them to be given a new identity and turned into parks for all kinds of play, recreation and sports, as well as great places for wildlife.



We've worked with local campaigners in Waltham Forest to create a vision for a site until recently at risk of development. A new 'East London Waterworks Park' would be a place for wild swimming at the historic Essex Filter Beds.  
Image: Kirsty Badenoch



Image: Neil Sinden

New countryside in east London

## Londoner's countryside

**So what does being England's leading countryside charity mean for CPRE in London, our capital city?** This is a question we've been wrestling with and we would welcome your views. Some of the answers are clear. By bringing the benefits of the countryside - its beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and places to escape - closer to people's doorsteps we can improve the quality of life for more Londoners. To achieve this we need to ensure new development does not encroach on the Green Belt and make green spaces accessible to all Londoners, whatever their backgrounds and wherever they live.

### City of villages

As we wrestle with the climate and ecological crises and the consequences of urban sprawl other answers lie in the story of London's growth and the landscapes beneath our feet. To a large extent, the capital remains a city of villages. Its diverse neighbourhoods can provide for more of what we need locally and thereby reduce the need to travel. Their stories evoke local pride and provoke community action.

London's neighbourhoods lie in an often hidden landscape rich with rivers, open spaces, vistas, trees and footpaths. There are too many stories of special places lost or threatened and of open spaces kept private where local people aren't welcome. Yet this is also a landscape rich in opportunity where new green spaces can be made, landscapes revealed and public access created.

### Climate and nature emergencies

We won't solve the challenge of climate change, the ecological crisis and the threat to the countryside without making our cities thrive. We know of the huge public concern about the scale and quality of new building, its poor design and the impact of noise and air pollution. We also know that the places local people care about are too often overlooked and their knowledge and insight ignored. CPRE is here to give London's landscapes and neighbourhoods an ever stronger voice. Let us know where you want it to be heard.

Tony Burton, Chair, CPRE London

## Green Clean

**More than 40 dedicated volunteers joined two 'green clean' litterpicks in September.** We enjoyed a sunny morning clearing the Thames Path from Battersea Park to St Mary's Church. We also revisited the Green Way and waterways near the Olympic Park in Newham, with support from Friends of Bow Back Rivers, Poplar Harca, and Thames Water.

Overall, we collected 739 drinks containers of all shapes, sizes and materials demonstrating the need for an 'all-in' deposit return scheme to tackle litter and encourage recycling. We were delighted to see provision for such a scheme included in the Environment Bill.



Thames Path Green Clean Image: CPRE

## Tranquil London

**With our Tranquil City partners and postgraduate art and science students from Central St Martins we organised a walk through the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in July.** While walking through the park, participants discussed what tranquillity means to them and its importance in urban areas. We presented CPRE's mapping of rural tranquillity at a seminar at Kings College London as part of the Festival of Social Science. We objected to City Airport expansion partly on the basis of noise impacts. And, in November we gave evidence to the GLA's Health Committee on the importance of tranquil green spaces for public health.

## Green spaces saved - but threats remain!

**This year we have helped save two important sites: the historic Essex Filter beds site in Waltham Forest and a sports ground in Greenwich in the floodplain of the Quaggy River.** But new pressures continue to arise such as in Hounslow where 125 ha of Green Belt could be lost as a result of a local plan review. Sadly, despite a long battle, Metropolitan Open Land at Highgate School, a Capability Brown Landscape, is set to be built on. And development is underway at Shoreditch Park causing the loss of large area of the park, in an area already lacking in open space.

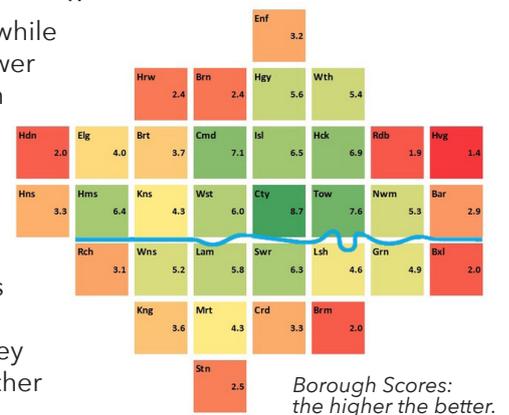
## Healthy Streets Scorecard

**Wide variation exists between London boroughs' progress towards the Mayor's Transport Strategy 'healthy streets' targets.**

We have been collaborating with other transport groups to publish the first ever "London Boroughs Healthy Streets Scorecard" in July. Transport is a big issue because roads and car parking often take up so much space which could be better used for new green space or housing. London also needs to see a dramatic shift from car trips, towards 'sustainable travel' - public transport, walking and cycling - to ensure we keep moving, improve health and reduce carbon emissions.

London's Boroughs control 95% of London's roads but while some are taking action, others are doing far too little.

Our Scorecard shows that, while some boroughs such as Tower Hamlets, Camden, Waltham Forest, are rapidly progressing schemes to cut car use and road danger, and boost air quality, walking and cycling rates, others such as Kensington & Chelsea and Haringey have yet to take key measures to put people, rather than cars, first.



Since the launch of the Scorecard we have been meeting with local politicians to promote action and offer help. We will be publishing the Scorecard annually to show which boroughs are working hardest to deliver healthier streets. To get involved and promote healthy streets in your borough, contact [alice@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:alice@cprelondon.org.uk).

## London's Green Belt under pressure

**The report by Government Inspectors on the public examination of the London Plan was released in October and contains a major new threat to London's Green Belt.** It also threatens to weaken protections for equally precious Metropolitan Open Land.

Despite a reduction in housing requirements and evidence that there is space for over a million new homes on previously developed brownfield sites, the Inspectors have proposed a London-wide review of the Green Belt to find land for new housing. They have also suggested industrial development should take place on Green Belt land. And if that's not bad enough, the Inspectors have objected to stricter controls over inappropriate development and loss of Green Belt through Borough local plan reviews.

The Mayor's formal response to the Inspectors Report is due in December. We have been urging him to stand firm and ensure that the final London Plan retains strong policies to better protect Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land - the 'countryside next door' for millions of Londoners. Please write to the Mayor to register your concern about the Inspectors report by email to [mayor@london.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@london.gov.uk).



Walpole Park in Ealing is one of the many listings on our [www.GoParks.London](http://www.GoParks.London) site. Image: Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust.

### Mayoral elections

**We are gearing up for the Mayoral and London Assembly elections on 7 May and have identified a number of key priorities for the new Mayor.** As well as pressing the need for much stronger controls to protect London's precious Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land, we want to see action to improve and link-up green spaces in the capital, a reduction in low density, car-dependent development, and more efficient use of existing developed land, including redundant 'grey space', land previously devoted to car use such as surface car parks, garages and excess road space.

Many of these issues are addressed in this newsletter. To find out more about our agenda for the new Mayor and help us to promote it contact [neil@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:neil@cprelondon.org.uk)

### Green walking routes

**Following a lively discussion at our AGM in May about an urban 'right to roam' we have been promoting improvements in public access to green and open spaces across London.** We hosted a seminar for the GLA in October to help inform the Mayor's commitment to produce a Public London Charter to improve access to new public realm.

We have also worked with the Ramblers and others to explore new opportunities including the creation of new radial 'green walking routes' from inner to outer London, as well as the proper recording of existing public rights of way - see adjacent article for more on this.



Image: National Library of Scotland

## Goparkslondon! - helping you to discover London's less well-known parks

**Our [www.GoParks.London](http://www.GoParks.London) website is a place to discover London's amazing array of parks and green spaces.** This is a collaboration with three great partners. The London Friends of Green Spaces Network are busy creating listings for local parks so you can find out what's happening there. We now have over 70 listings created by friends groups. The London Parks and Gardens Trust has given access to their amazing historical records for over 1500 green sites so you can go on a journey of historical discovery too! Or if it's wildlife you're looking for, Greenspace Information for Greater London, have made their records available so you can find out about the wildlife in our parks.

The project promotes London's huge diversity of parks, particularly the less-well-visited ones, and encourage people to get out and discover them. We also want to raise awareness of the critical role friends groups play in helping to ensure parks are well-used and maintained. GoParks is supported by City Bridge Trust, the Mayor of London and the London National Park City Foundation.

Get involved by looking up your local park friends group at [www.GoParks.London](http://www.GoParks.London) or to find out how to start your own group contact [alice@cprelondon.org.uk](mailto:alice@cprelondon.org.uk).

#GoParksLondon

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## Guest Column: Don't Lose Your Way by Jack Cornish, The Ramblers

**The Ramblers' are calling on people to help save thousands of miles of historic paths missing from the maps in England and Wales.** On the 1st of January 2026 unrecorded rights of way will no longer be added to the 'definitive map' - the legal record of public paths - based on historical evidence. There are at least 10,000 miles of unrecorded rights of way that could be lost forever when we reach that deadline. Many of these paths have been created by use over centuries, dating back to medieval times or earlier and form a vital part of our heritage. We need to act now, so we don't lose them forever.

*Don't Lose Your Way* is focused on making sure these historic rights of way are properly recorded and protected for generations to come. The first step will be to identify where these paths are, and the Ramblers would love your help. They are launching an online mapping platform in January 2020 with the aim of making sure every single map grid square in England and Wales (including Outer London boroughs) is checked for lost paths.

The path network is an incredible asset that makes it possible for us to access and explore our beautiful landscapes and green spaces - in London and further afield. Some paths missing from the map might be overgrown and long forgotten. They might have historical significance or create new and useful walking routes linking people more easily to local green spaces. To get involved in the fight to save historic rights of way and help map lost paths, download the Ramblers guide at [www.ramblers.org.uk/dontloseyourway](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/dontloseyourway).



Lunchtime in the Cloister Garden at the Museum of the Order of Saint John, Clerkenwell. Image: Neil Sinden

## Campaign Update: Space to Build

**Our Space to Build project is helping save countryside throughout England.** Too many councils are identifying green sites for housing development even though they will cause a significant increase in traffic congestion, pollution and carbon emissions, as well as the loss of precious countryside. But in most towns there are big sites within the urban area, often close to the centre, which could readily be redeveloped for new housing and business. While working with campaigners in Enfield we pioneered a way of finding such sites and we are now helping other CPRE branches propose alternative sites for development.

### Higher density, less car-dependent

We need to build more higher-density housing (not the same as high-rise!) which allows enough people to live within a neighbourhood to support local shops and bus services. But around the country developers are building very low-density housing. By promoting attractive, higher density development, close to town centres, we can save land and create low-carbon homes which don't leave people without a car isolated.

Too much new housing is 'car dependent' - but London is leading the way with 'car-free' housing. In our towns and cities between a third and half of households don't have access to a car, often the young and old and people on low incomes. So building housing where you don't have to use a car to get to local shops, schools or doctors benefits many people.



The Assembly: a high density, car-free development planned in Hounslow. Image: Countryside Properties

## Guest Column: Green spaces and cities: the value of the 'good ordinary' by Alan Baxter

**We have as humans a long history of evolution over many thousands of generations but it is only in the last few hundred generations that we have been town dwellers.**

And it is only in the last 5 or 6 that we have lived in mega-cities like London remote from experiencing the growing of crops and rearing of sheep and cattle. Yet deep down in our intuitive memory is the joy of seeing green spaces, trees and the sky. In our society whose values are obsessively measured in financial numbers there have been some brave attempts recently to measure the monetary value of trees and green space but not yet in an acceptable way to the decision makers. In some areas like hospitals sufficient numerate proof comes from analysis of patient's shorter length of stay if they can see trees and sky from their beds. Other health related areas like the Maggie's cancer recovery centres emphasise in their brilliant designs the beneficial relationships to gardens and green spaces.

I live and work in Clerkenwell in central London, an area with no big parks in easy reach, and yet it has fortunately many small green spaces and trees. These make my one mile walk to and fro each day through six or seven of these an uplifting experience.

The whole area is becoming even more densely populated with office workers, often in highly creative design studios. Only 100 years ago or so the inhabitants and workers strolled out a short way to the nearby green fields still revealed by street names like Pear Tree Court, Bowling Green Lane and Spa Fields. Now there are so many of us working here that on sunny days the few small public green areas are crammed at lunchtimes by those who value being outside in green space and seeing trees. How can we create more of these spaces, and how can we create more pleasant green walking routes to the many destinations and places of interest? Some are relatively easy to generate but need political will and efficient direction.

Clerkenwell is just one example of many similar situations all over the country. The recent Glover report on National Parks and AONB's quite rightly celebrates these obviously beautiful and special places but the public also value very much the "good ordinary" countryside and, especially for us city dwellers, the small relatively unknown and unremarkable green spaces and trees which we see every day. The "good ordinary". Without them our lives would be seriously impoverished.

### SAVE THE DATE!

**CPRE London Public Meeting/AGM 2020**  
**Thursday, 21 May 6-8.30pm,**  
**The Gallery, 77 Cowcross St, EC1M 6EJ**

CPRE London is grateful to all our supporters and partners.  
 To find out more about our work please follow us on  
 Twitter@cprelondon, visit [www.cprelondon.org.uk](http://www.cprelondon.org.uk),  
 or email [office@cprelondon.uk](mailto:office@cprelondon.uk)