

# GREEN LONDON

CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) London

## Growing Together in Forest Lane with the Magpie Project

**The start of the year saw the beginnings of our Growing Together initiative with the Magpie Project at Forest Lane Park in Newham.** The Magpie Project provides support and advice to vulnerable mothers and their children who are at risk of homelessness. With support from national CPRE and the Forest Gate Community Garden, we have planted fruit trees and bulbs, and constructed three sturdy raised beds near the Lodge where the mums meet every week. We are looking forward to growing food and flowers in the beds with the children and their mums when current restrictions are lifted.



CPRE volunteers at Forest Lane Park.  
Photo: Neil Sinden

## Flight Blight - the impact of aviation noise on our health

**The absence of noise from aircrafts flying over London has been one of the more positive aspects of the current pandemic.** In February, CPRE's Network Aviation Group published groundbreaking research showing that aircraft noise is more 'annoying' than road or rail noise and that we are becoming increasingly sensitive to it. *Flight Blight* showed that the approach taken by Government seriously underestimates the number of people affected by aircraft noise and the impacts on their health. The report called for new research into the impact of aviation noise on health, which we're delighted is being actioned by ICCAN (Independent Commission on Civil Aviation Noise). We are undertaking our own Noise Attitudes Survey to find out more about how aircraft noise affects people and you can take part here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/cpreaviation> - open until 1st June 2020.



Wanstead Park, Photo: Lynne Roberts

## Are there 4,000 parks in London?

**Amid the current crisis, London's wonderful green spaces are more important than ever before.** Our *GoParksLondon* initiative will be one year old in June and we have already achieved a huge amount. The project is an exciting opportunity to raise the profile of parks and their Friends Groups, and to get the public out to visit and enjoy London's parks.

With funding from the City Bridge Trust and the Mayor of London, we have created a major coalition involving the Greater London Authority, London Boroughs, the London Friends of Green Spaces Network, London Parks and the Gardens Trust, London National Park City and, importantly, Greenspace Information for Greater London who hold the statutory records on London's greenspaces.

### The Big Green London Map

Last year we published the website [www.GoParks.London](http://www.GoParks.London) with a map of London's parks and links to information on their history and nature. For many parks, Friends Groups have created a bespoke listing for their area, linking to information about their work. The website also has lots of fascinating articles about what's happening in our parks, including their contribution to London's health and highlighting key features which people might want to explore and visit.

### Public parks

The process of mapping parks has been interesting to say the least. Due to historical accident, many green spaces that are accessible to the public in London are not actually classified as a 'public open space' or 'public park'. For example, woodlands and old cemeteries like Highgate are not usually listed as 'parks' even though they are publicly accessible, outdoor green spaces that people like to visit.

We have been working with the coalition to make sure all of these sites are on the map. By summer this year we will have mapped over 4,000 spaces which Londoners can visit - more than 100 in each borough! Please use the website and explore London's wonderful heritage of green spaces.

## STOP PRESS!

**The 2020 CPRE London AGM originally planned for 21st May has been postponed due to coronavirus. We hope it will now take place on Thursday, 8th October - all being well!**

## Will Croydon go for brownfield?

Earlier this year we worked with campaigners in Croydon the object to proposals to build on Green Belt land. Residents were concerned about preserving the Green Belt and about the risk of more cars and pollution in the Borough. Our Local Plan consultation included options to build on brownfield land or green fields. Residents campaigned for the use of the brownfield sites where homes could be built close to amenities and 'car-free' development with access only car clubs, and public transport rather than lots of parking for private cars.



## Urban Tree Festival celebrates city trees

**We are delighted to be part of this year's Urban Tree Festival, celebrating trees in London and beyond.** The festival will take place entirely online, so tune in and enjoy it on your daily exercise or from home. Running from **16-24 May**, the programme is packed with creative activities to get involved with, including virtual tree tours, natural soundscapes, and a book club devoted to trees and woodland. Join in the daily meditation challenge and connect with the powerful energy of nature to release stress and promote wellbeing. CPRE London will be hosting a daily series of 'Tree Rings' webinars with leading experts on topics ranging from street trees and woodland creation in the Green Belt, to the Great Trees of London and the future urban forest. For more information visit: <https://urbantreefestival.org>

## London Plan hits the buffers

**A dramatic intervention by the Secretary of State for Communities, Robert Jenrick MP, has delayed the adoption of the long-awaited London Plan.** Along with many other groups, we participated in the public examination of the draft Plan at the beginning of 2019. We strongly supported its policies to protect the Green Belt and MOL, and called for stronger policies to promote building on disused or underused previously developed land. Responding to the Mayor's 'Intend to Publish' version of the plan, the Secretary of State criticised its failure to prioritise housing delivery and inconsistencies with national planning policy. We have written to Robert Jenrick expressing concern that his suggested changes could weaken protection of the Green Belt and MOL. We await a response.

## Street Talk – coalition calls for radical improvements to our streets

**Two years ago we set up a coalition of health, transport and road safety campaigners, recognising that we need to work together to make necessary changes to our streets to improve our health and safety.** Our subsequent Healthy Streets Scorecard collates data comparing the London Boroughs' performance on a series of key indicators and we have been working to encourage them to make changes to reduce congestion, and improve air quality and road safety.

### Traffic and roads

Cars and traffic have a big impact on the things we value at CPRE London. Our research has shown that a third of London's parks are severely impacted by traffic noise. Also, London has only two thirds of the open greenspace it needs for its population, while roads and 'car-related infrastructure' like parking take up a large amount of space.

If we build new homes in London's Green Belt, evidence shows that they will be 'car-dependent' and just add to congestion in outer London and the home counties. The more sustainable alternative is to build 'car-free' homes close to amenities within urban areas allowing more walking and cycling - thus freeing up roadspace. Of course, traffic has other impacts: it causes air pollution and road danger, contributes to carbon emissions, and generates noise with major health impacts.

### Car ownership

Nearly half of Londoners don't own a car (two thirds living in inner London), in particular old people, young people and those on low incomes. This raises the question concerning the disproportionate amount of space given to cars. Of course, many people need to use cars or vans for personal reasons or for work but the reality is that around 70% of trips made by car could readily be made by other transport 'modes'.

The Mayor has set targets for a reduction in car trips and to increase the use of 'sustainable modes' of transport. The lockdown has meant more people have been walking and cycling, partly because streets are safer and less polluted. The need for safe social distancing has led to calls for emergency changes to introduce wider pavements and temporary cycle lanes. We believe such changes should be considered for the long term.

The Healthy Streets project is gaining momentum. The coalition is due to publish data for the second year running in July when we will also be launching a new website. In the meantime, you can find out more about the project and your Borough's scores at: [www.cprelondon.org.uk](http://www.cprelondon.org.uk)

## Newham parks and open spaces bike ride

**Shortly before the lockdown, working with Newham Cyclists, we explored a 20-mile cycle route designed to link many of the wonderful green spaces in the Borough.**

We had aimed to lead rides on the route during Newham Heritage Month in May but these plans are now on hold. Much of the route was off-road and links long established parks in West Ham with more recent creations around Beckton and the Thames Barrier. We want to encourage other cycling and walking groups to create similar routes connecting their own green spaces.



Bernard of Newham Cyclists at Bow Creek Ecology Park, Photo: Neil Sinden.



## Our 'Climate Safety Belt' - Influential New Report

In March, we published London's Green Belt: our Climate Safety Belt on why London's Green Belt helps us build a compact, efficient, low carbon city and manage severe weather events. At its simplest, compact cities are lower carbon because people travel less by car and goods don't have to be moved so far. But with more extreme weather events, our Green Belt is also now vital in managing rainfall and reducing high temperatures generated by the urban heat island effect. Incremental destruction of Green Belt would lead to a higher carbon city with more congestion and pollution. And it won't deliver significantly more housing or make housing more affordable.

## Volunteer Profile: Lucy Farrell

**Our new communications volunteer Lucy tells us what inspires her about London, its green spaces and healthy living:**



**Where do you sit and watch the world go by?** Hyde Park is a short walk away from my office. Many lunchtimes I've found myself taking a moment to sit on a park bench overlooking the gentle waters of the Serpentine.

**Favourite green space to connect to nature?** Battersea Park is comprised of beautiful gardens each one bursting with seasonal vibrancy. Everytime I visit I find something new to enjoy.

**Favourite London Park and why?**

I love strolling around the vast open space of Brockwell Park. I'm yet to take a dip in the lido but it's definitely on my list once the weather gets a little warmer.

**What are you planting in your garden right now?** I'm nurturing a little chilli plant on my windowsill to spice up my cooking and taking part in a sunflower growing competition.

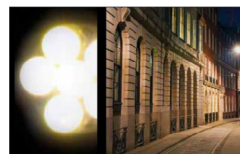
**Favourite market for British produce?**

Borough Market never fails to surprise me, with its abundant sights, smells, colours and gourmet delights on offer. The market participates in a 'no waste' scheme, where surplus food is redistributed to charities or to an anaerobic digestion plant.

**What steps are you taking to live more sustainably?** I've been planning my running route to work for when offices reopen again. I'm trying my best to cut down on single-use plastics and I'm sourcing secondhand gems in local charity shops, rather than fast fashions outlets.

## Guest Column: Light pollution by Isabelle Ficker from Hampstead Garden Suburb

**Did you witness the most recent Lyrid meteor shower in April? We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the beauty of a dark and starlit sky wherever they live. But we fear the capital's sky is so affected by light pollution that the opportunity to experience truly dark skies is denied to many. This need not be the case.** Here our supporter Isabelle Ficker discusses the damage of light pollution in north London:



2700k Streetlights



4000k Streetlights

Hampstead Garden Suburb was described by the architectural historian, Sir Nikolaus Pevsner as 'the most nearly perfect example of... the garden suburb'. Situated in north-west London, it is a designated Conservation Area in the care of Barnet Council and a separate Trust. For many years, the soft, orange glow of the sodium lamps was a welcome and restful relief from city lights. However, an increasing number of outdoor lights (street and domestic) are transforming it from a pleasant, atmospheric suburb into an extension of the harshly lit inner city. These outdoor lights create glare, resulting in poor vision and road safety issues, and contribute to the London sky glow.

Scientific research reveals that artificial light at night (above 3000K) is detrimental to the ecosystem and human health. Despite these findings, Barnet Council has erected 'Cool White' 4000K streetlights. This is a widespread problem affecting areas where local councils have installed 3000K+ street lighting.

The Garden Suburb is internationally recognised as an outstanding example of early 20th-century town planning, so it should be home to good lighting practice. In 2018, France adopted a national policy that regulates outdoor lighting to an upper limit of 3000k. This reduces wavelengths to safe levels without affecting brightness and vision, producing less glare and reflection, and thus better night vision. Please lobby your Councillors and MPs to pass similar legislation here.

## A More Natural Capital? An agenda for the next Mayor of London



**With London's Mayoral and Assembly elections postponed for a year, we have more time to press home our agenda for the next Mayor. Along with more than 20 other environmental groups, we have set out 24 key priorities for action under four broad themes - action to reduce pollution and waste, to secure nature's recovery, to increase resilience to climate change and to improve health and wellbeing.** Tackling the climate and nature emergencies take centre stage in the manifesto. While also advocating the benefits to people's health and wellbeing of contact with nature and green spaces, we were not to know that a public health emergency would emerge so rapidly as a third major threat.

We were pleased to meet some of the candidates and their teams to discuss our asks before the elections were postponed. We now have an opportunity to consider in more detail how each of these priorities can best be delivered once we have overcome the challenges we currently face. We also hope that the candidates will use this time to consider our proposals further and be ready to promise the transformational change Londoners want and need.

We will continue to develop our shared agenda over the coming months, working up action plans and exploring new ideas. We would welcome feedback on the manifesto and further ideas on how to achieve its aspirations for a healthier, greener and more liveable London space.

## Finding space for new homes

**The search for sites for new homes continues and many boroughs, including Kingston, Richmond, Enfield and Bromley, are revisiting their Local Plans.** We are working with local groups across London to campaign against development on Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land or other green sites and to press for the use of sites which are currently inefficiently used. For example, in Enfield we have worked with Enfield RoadWatch and The Enfield Society to promote the use of the A10 retail park for a new residential neighborhood. It currently makes poor use of space with single storey retail units and large areas of surface car park. Some may be concerned about over-densification but many sites are so inefficiently used that careful redesign could add just 5 storeys and provide a lot of new housing.



## Rural rides - a programme of visits to Epping Forest

**Our application for funding to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to organise a series of seasonal trips for Magpie families to Epping Forest has been put on hold due to the coronavirus crisis.** Working with the Epping Forest Heritage Trust we planned four 'rural rides' for the mums and children with interactive activities designed to showcase the wonders of the forest and its wildlife. This is intended to be the first in our series of trips to the local countryside organised for vulnerable people. We are exploring alternative ways to fund rural rides so we can launch the programme next year.

## Green Walking Network

**London is a beautiful and diverse city, and it is even more breathtaking on foot.** More importantly, walking as a sustainable method of travel, can help tackle the climate emergency and improve our wellbeing. A key priority in our Manifesto for the next Mayor, is the creation of new strategic green walking routes across London. We have been working with the Ramblers, London Living Streets and others to develop a series of potential routes that will fill your senses with the nature of the city. These include the Great Eastern Parks Route from Bishopsgate to the Lea Valley, and a strategic walking network in Barnet. We want to develop proposals for new green routes in other parts of London. What are your favourite walking routes? Where would you like to see more? We'd love to hear from you.

## A view from the Board: by Danny Garvey, Vice Chair



**When I joined the Trustee Board of CPRE London three years ago I was advised the experience would be challenging, absorbing and rewarding.**

Since then, having revised the make-up of the Board, the introduction of the new CPRE brand and the re-alignment of our strategic objectives, this was farsighted advice.

Last year saw the retirement of four trustees who had served their full terms and the appointment of three new trustees including a new chairman. This year will see the retirement of a further three trustees and the recruitment of two new trustees. While this is a significant change, CPRE London members can be confident we are recruiting skilled trustees to oversee the direction, management and administration of the charity.

Last autumn we introduced new branding and identity which positions CPRE nationally as The Countryside Charity - connecting more people with the benefits of the countryside. We will be working to bring the value and enjoyment of our local green spaces and surrounding countryside - its beauty, tranquillity, wildlife and escapism- closer to our doorsteps. We want to be more inclusive of the many Londoners who can benefit from our work.

The introduction of the new trustees and brand has been accompanied by a review of our strategic objectives which will guide CPRE London over the next few years. In summary, these are:

- **Protect.** We will promote policies and plans to protect and improve the London Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land and other green spaces.
- **Revitalise.** We will campaign for better use of London's built environment and natural resources including more affordable homes, good urban design, more sustainable travel, less waste and lower carbon emissions.
- **Engage.** We will promote London's green spaces for people to visit, discover and enjoy

We are undertaking a wider range of activities to work towards these objectives. The projects are funded by a variety of Trusts and Foundations and during the past year we secured funding for four new initiatives. Our success with funding applications has been the partnership approach taken in working with other London environmental bodies to provide complementary expertise. This approach is supported by funders who recognise CPRE London's strong reputation and co-ordinating skills.

The year ahead will no doubt be as exciting as this past year. If becoming a Trustee with CPRE London is something you might be interested in, either this year or next, please do contact us - see below.

**CPRE London is grateful to all our supporters, partners and funders who enable us to carry out our important work.**

**To find out more about us please follow us on twitter @cprelondon, visit our website**

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