



Local Campaigners by Carol Fisk, Enfield RoadWatch

Spring into action!

New report reveals the sustained danger the capital's green spaces face

In March our new report **Forever Green?** identified more than 50 parks and green spaces threatened by development in London. There are many reasons why parks and green spaces come under threat, and it is usually connected to financial gain, lack of legal protection, failures of the planning system and/or a lack of community resources to stand up for open spaces.

Threats can arise from Local Plan Reviews, like the Hounslow Local Plan, damaging development proposals affecting parks, such as in Victoria Tower Gardens, and planning applications for building on Green Belt Land, such as Haslemere School.

The report complements the work of the More Natural Capital coalition which continues to press for a better deal for people and nature in London with 28 [policy proposals](#) and echoes our own commitment to London's parks and green spaces.

Forever Green? puts forward tangible actions for communities to champion and protect open spaces. Councillors standing for election for Borough Councils in May have the power to identify green spaces under threat, and positively plan, with local groups, to save them.

Here's what you can do to encourage them to take action:

- Find out your local election candidates [here](#) and write to them to support our [six pledges](#) to protect green spaces.
- Tell us about any neglected green spaces in your area and consider setting up a local group to create a new or better public park. Contact us for advice at office@cprelondon.org.uk.
- Join your local park friends' group – you can find their details at [GoParksLondon](#).
- Continue to enjoy and connect to London's many green spaces that provide so much joy in our lives.

The Future of London's Countryside

Our AGM is on 19 May at the Gallery in Cowcross St and following the formal business, we will be hosting a discussion on 'What Future for London's Countryside?' with a keynote presentation by landscape architect, Kim Wilkie, and responses from expert panellists. This will be our first 'in person' AGM since 2019 and we hope to see you there. For more information and details of how to book a place go to cprelondon.org.uk/news/cpre-london-agm-2022/

A view from our Chair... a new volunteer

Tony Burton welcomes a season brimming with opportunities to stand up for London's countryside

As London's green spaces come to life with the arrival of Spring we're gearing up to provide an even stronger voice for the capital's countryside. There are local elections in all London's boroughs in May and we're leading a coalition of environment and transport groups to help raise the ambition of local councillors who play such an important role in planning, transport, and other decisions. We've also launched Forever Green? our major new report exposing the continued threat to London's green spaces despite all the evidence of their importance to Londoners.

We look forward to seeing many of you at our Annual General Meeting in Farringdon on 19 May where we will mix business with pleasure. As well as being asked to put CPRE London on a stronger legal footing as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation we will have an informative and lively debate about London's countryside. You will also be able to view the winning entries from our #PictureBlueLondon photo competition - they're a real treat. Your AGM invitation should arrive around Easter.

The AGM will also mark an important transition as we say farewell and thank you to Neil Sinden and welcome Anna Taylor as CPRE London's new Director.

Neil has done a remarkable job in his five years of leadership and London's countryside is truly in his debt. Anna brings us rich experience from a health and humanitarian background which will help grow our support and influence as London's countryside charity.



Tony Burton



Neil Sinden



Anna Taylor

Michael Shilling joins the team as our new Social Media volunteer

What areas of our work are you looking forward to being involved in?

The Green Space For All and Ten New Parks campaigns resonate with me the most - I love exploring green spaces in London that are often hidden away.



Favourite green space in London to connect to nature?

The Happy Valley in Croydon has been one of my highlights whilst walking the London Loop this year. I live right by the Hogsmill River and I'd never tire of walking through the Hogsmill Nature Reserve.

Can you recommend any nature-focused social media accounts to brighten up our feeds?

I'm going to shamelessly plug my own personal project LondonIn360 and I'm also really enjoying reading Nature is a Human Right, edited by Ellen Miles - the associated Instagram feed is wonderful. I have a lot of love for the Thornton Heath Community Action Team who are doing brilliant things.

...and a new Trustee

We welcome Justin Portress as a new Trustee who tells us what encouraged him to get involved with CPRE London

"I have a passion for the outdoors - a product of growing up in the country and military service - which I have channelled into various expeditions and long-distance walks over the years. I also spend many hours walking and cycling around London and have developed a deep love for the city's green spaces, which are unique and very precious. I was keen to join a charity that was focused on protecting these.

As protecting London's green spaces goes hand in hand with creating a more sustainable city, with lower carbon emissions, cleaner air and less waste, I wanted to join a charity with a strong focus on policy and campaigning.

I have served as an elected London Borough Councillor and more recently leading efforts to secure Islington's first traffic-reduced 'School Street' outside my children's primary school."



Talk London

A new opportunity to offer your thoughts for an ever-evolving London

The [London Plan 2021](#) provides the guiding policy framework for development in the capital and will be reviewed in 2026. The Planning for London programme set up by the GLA to engage people who do not typically get involved in consultations and to gather opinions to help shape the review.

Talk London is an online community of over 62,000 Londoners that facilitates discussion on pressing issues facing our city, including the housing crisis and climate change. It only takes a few minutes to sign up and join the conversation. Get involved with Talk London [here](#).

Our new parking policy tool

Effective parking policy is one answer to addressing the huge amount of space taken up by cars and parking. Car dominance leads to loss of green and play spaces within cities, where land is swallowed up by stretches of 'grey space' for roads.

At the beginning of the year, we launched our [Parking Policy Benchmark Assessment Tool](#) designed to enable borough officers, councillors, and campaigners to measure indicators of effective local authority parking policies.

The tool has gained huge support on social media, and we hope that increasing awareness will encourage completion of the policy assessments across London. It is complemented by guidance for [campaigners](#) that sets out best practice guidance for tool use and putting forward recommendations to local authorities.

A hunt for urban hedgerows

Help us find locations for planting new hedgerows

Hedgerows have a valuable part to play in improving air quality and biodiversity in urban areas, as well as helping to reduce noise pollution and make the city more resilient to climate change.

Working with partners we have identified several locations across the capital, including parks, roadsides and community gardens, where new hedgerow planting can make a positive contribution to the local environment. We will be seeking financial support to deliver these schemes, including by working with the Hedgerow Campaign Group coordinated by National CPRE.

If you know of any locations in London that would benefit from the planting of new hedgerows, please contact office@cprelondon.org.uk.



Fernbrook Road in London Borough of Lewisham. An example of pavement parking restricting walking routes



New urban hedges can reduce air and noise pollution

Photo credit: Neil Sinden

Celebrating London's countryside

News of recent events and a preview of what's to come...

Ruskin Park Walk

CPRE London were pleased to support the John Ruskin Tree Walk which took place on 6 March and paid homage to the life and thinking of the influential Victorian writer, critic, and philosopher. A nineteenth century David Attenborough, Ruskin's thinking on the environment, arts and mental health were revolutionary for his day and continue to resonate strongly today.

The Ruskin Tree Walk project has been developed jointly by The Camberwell Society and SE5 Forum for Camberwell, with support of the Friends of Ruskin Park, the Guild of St George, and The Herne Hill Society.

The route consisted of six stops in Ruskin Park, close to the site of a house where he lived for nearly 30 years. Participants admired the remarkable trees and stretching vistas while community presenters brought Ruskin's work to life using material specially commissioned from leading Ruskin experts and local artists. The walk concluded with a tree drawing session.

Don't worry if you missed it - materials for the walk including a map of the route and complementary materials – can be found [here](#).

Dark Sky London

To celebrate the 2022 Star Count we took to the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to rediscover the beauty of the night sky and learn from environmental experts.

The evolution of the landscape and design of the park, since 2012, was outlined by Mark Camley from London Legacy Development Corporation. Kerem Asfuroglu, lighting designer and founder of Dark Source recounted a brief history of light pollution and how lighting design can reduce the damaging impact of light pollution on humans and the natural world. Finally, Dr. Ella Browning of the Bat Conservation Trust discussed the life of bats and the smart detectors that have been installed around the park to monitor bat behaviour.

A video of event highlights can be seen [here](#) and keep your eyes peeled for the Star Count results to discover the extent of light pollution in London.

This year's Urban Tree Festival is almost here

The festival that celebrates urban trees is back from 14-22 May. Sign up to the [newsletter](#) to hear about the event programme, including a Mulberry Walk in Camberwell with photographer and urban ecologist Peter Coles, and other exciting activities.

London Rivers Week returns

This year we will be celebrating London's rivers with partners Thames21, the Environment Agency and others from 11-17 July. Look out for the programme including the return of our popular London Lost Rivers 'Book Club' hosted by author Tom Bolton.



Photo credit: citiesatnight.org

Thanks to our members, supporters and partners for helping us to make our city greener

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The countryside charity
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Working for a greener city

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