

**THE BEDFORDSHIRE BRANCH OF THE
CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
Charity No: 1202399**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024
FOR**

**BEDFORDSHIRE BRANCH OF THE
CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT RURAL ENGLAND**

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1202399

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

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**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024**

TRUSTEES

Dr Martin Christopher (Chairman)
Colin Haine (Secretary)
Gabriella Davis (Treasurer)
John English
Susan Lynch
Fred Motson
George Karaiskou
Simon Grantham

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS

43 Bromham Road
Bedford
MK40 2AA

REGISTERED CHARITY NO.

1202399

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Gerald Bygrave FMAAT
GB Accounting Solutions
Millennium Studios
Bedford Technology Park
Thurleigh
Bedford
MK44 2YA

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The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims.

The objects of the branch are to promote and encourage for the benefit of the public the improvement and protection of the English countryside and in particular that of Bedfordshire its towns and villages and the better development of the rural environment.

Public benefit

In planning the charity's activities for the year, the trustees kept in mind the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Charitable activities

The Charity Incorporated Organisation was established with the Charity Commission on 20th March 2023 with a view of transferring from the Registered Charity with the same name (Reg No **1023435**) on 1st January 2024. A partial transfer took place at this time but some of this was delayed by issues with the banking arrangements which were finalised by 31st December 2024. Over the year the CIO continued the work started by the registered charity as shown below.

Hedgerow Heroes

The launch of the Bedfordshire Hedgerow Heroes project has been a real highlight of the year. This is the first year of a 3-year project that aims to plant or restore 3000m of hedgerow. In 2024 our brilliant team of volunteers have planted 730 metres of hedgerow at sites in Goldington, Maulden, Flitton & Greenfield and Gravenhurst. There's also been hedge-laying in Gravenhurst, teaching traditional skills to a small group.

We are pleased to work with the Forest of Marston Vale, National CPRE and a number of parish councils to make this project happen and look forward to continuing these partnerships.

We created our Hedgerow Heroes Explorers Guide, a free activity booklet, helping children and families learn about hedgerows and have fun at the same time.

Rooted in Communities

2024 saw CPRE Bedfordshire continue to work with Local Action Groups, Parish Councils and other grass roots organisations. Whether it's on National Infrastructure Projects like East West Rail and East Park Energy, or on local planning applications, the CPRE Bedfordshire team have helped people understand how to have their say and worked with them to navigate the planning system.

The floods that hit Bedfordshire in September formed the basis of a photo story, where we shared stories from Local Action Groups dealing with developments on flood plains. In March we helped a number of Local Action Groups publicise their peaceful protest walks, designed to help raise awareness of threats to local green spaces.

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This year we've been delighted to be able to share success stories of different kinds from several groups including the Shillington and Gravenhurst Local Action Group, Save Steppingley Road Field, Cranfield and the No To Greenwoods campaign.

Bedfordshire through fresh eyes

As part of our mission to promote the countryside, we launched our new series of web features, an A-Z of Bedfordshire's landscapes, places and history. Each post includes links to walks, places to visit and lots of ideas to help you discover more about Bedfordshire. As well as highlighting some familiar places, we hope it will help people find new inspiration.

Digging deep

From Local Plans to Universal Studios, this year we've continued to make our responses to significant consultations and applications available via our website. This helps organisations and individuals understand both our concerns and how to make their own comments more effective. We've also helped demystify the planning system – including updating our Greenbelt Explained feature and explaining the East West Rail consultation process. One of our most comprehensive explainers this year looked at where power lies in the planning system and where and how decisions are made. It also explored the ways in which, with support from CPRE Bedfordshire, local people can make their voice heard.

Always popular, our Understanding Planning workshop was attended by 35 representatives from town and parish councils and community groups. They shared knowledge and information while learning more about the planning system and how we can all work together to protect our countryside.

During 2024 we welcomed 4 new Trustees who added new skills to CPRE Bedfordshire to help the organisation develop and become more sustainable.

Future Activity

Our future activity will be guided by a Strategic Plan and will develop our main areas of expertise, particularly in the area of environmental planning but the strategy also highlights the need to:

Continue to develop our work supporting Local Action groups and empower communities.

Continue developing our marketing activity to promote our messages to the wider public.

Promote the Living Countryside Awards to celebrate the people and projects that have a positive impact on Bedfordshire's rural environment and urban green spaces.

Work to develop the local hedgerow project as part of the national Hedgerow Heroes initiative.

Increase our efforts to recruit and retain supporters and volunteers and develop diversity across the organisation.

Continue to develop the long-term sustainability of the organisation improving income generation and developing the board of Trustees.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

Reserves policy

The Trustees aim to maintain reserves in unrestricted funds at a level that equates to twelve months of unrestricted charitable expenditure. The Trustees consider that this level will provide sufficient funds to cover fixed including salaries and rent and governance costs. At the end of the year, our unrestricted reserves were in below the level required to provide this cover.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is registered with the Charity Commission (Reg Charity No. 1202399) and controlled by its governing document,

Organisational, structure and accountability

The Board of Trustees have overall responsibility for the Charity and operate a system of accountability. This includes the three-year Strategic Plan and an annual budget. Performance is evaluated against the plan regularly during the year at Trustee meetings and a complete review takes place annually.

The Board of Trustees currently consists of eight members all of whom are elected at the Annual General Meeting, including the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Treasurer. They meet formally at least six times per year.

The day-to-day operations are delegated to the Director, who is employed on a part time paid basis. The Director manages the Digital Engagement Officer (salaried role) and volunteers, all of whom are part time. All vacancies for Trustees, paid staff and volunteers are openly advertised, utilising specific descriptions that have regard to the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary for each role.

Induction and training of new trustees

New Trustees are provided with the Charity Commission's "The Essential Trustee" which focuses on the main duties and responsibilities of the role, along with CPRE Bedfordshire's Constitution, Three Year Strategic Plan, and other documents pertaining to the Charity's history and current activities. All new Trustees are invited to participate in CPRE Bedfordshire's local induction as well as an induction by the national CPRE organisation. New Trustees are encouraged to visit the Charity's small office in Bedford, meet with the staff, and become familiar with the Charity's operations. Depending upon the Trustee's specific role and interests, additional training is available including an extensive curriculum hosted by the national CPRE organisation and local Community and Voluntary Service.

Risk management.

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 27th March 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Martin Christopher – Chairman



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**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT
RURAL ENGLAND BEDFORDSHIRE**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on page eight.

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(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the 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 those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an 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 examiner's 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 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 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.



Gerald Bygraves FMAAT

GB Accounting Solutions Limited
Millennium Studios
Bedford Technology Park
Thurleigh
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK44 2YA

Date: 3rd March 2025

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Statement of Accounts (31st December 2024)

	2024	2024	2024	2023
	<u>Non-Restricted</u>	<u>Hedgerow Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
RECEIPTS				
Membership fees	8,315		8,315	0
Donations	1,424	4,942	6,366	0
Grants	17,170	17,500	34,670	0
Workshop Income	1,150		1,150	0
Gift Aid	156		156	0
Bank Interest Interest	298		298	0
Other Income	25		25	0
Total Income	28,539	22,442	50,981	0
PAYMENTS				
Salaries	-16,137	-10,152	-26,289	0
Office cost				
- Rent	-2,774		-2,774	0
- Insurance	-522		-522	0
Marketing	-236		-236	0
Workshop Expense	-275		-275	0
Governance	-152		-152	0
Office Expenditure	-160		-160	0
Sundries	-79		-79	0
Hedgerow project		-2,708	-2,708	0
Total Expenditure	-20,335	-12,860	-33,194	0
Net Flow of cash	8,204	9,582	17,786	0

ASSETS & LIABILITIES

Barclays	24239	9582	33821	-
Petty Cash	0	0	0	
Total Assets	24239	9582	33821	

FUNDS

Brought forward from previous year	0	0	0	
Balance transferred from CPRE				
Charity Number 1023435	16035	0	16035	
Carried forward	24239	9582	33821	

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