

SHROPSHIRE VOICE

Annual Report 2018

Campaign to Protect Rural England, Shropshire Branch



As part of CPRE's GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliance, CPRE Members who have supplied email addresses should by now have been asked to **opt-in** to hearing from CPRE by email in the future. This covers National as well as Branch communications.

If you have not already done so, please do respond, so National Office and we, the Shropshire branch, can continue to send you email newsletters and updates about our vital work both regionally and nationally. We promise to never give your details to anyone else.

If you have not received an email and **do wish to opt-in** to email contact, please email your membership number, name and preferred email address to supporterservices@cpre.org.uk (or ring 0800 163 680) and your records will be updated.

In Shropshire, we send out 3 or 4 emailed newsletters each year, and occasional emails about urgent or pressing local topics (like we did for the Local Plan Review consultation). We post newsletters to those members with no email addresses and to everyone for the Annual Report mailing. If you do not opt in, you will receive our newsletter through the post in future. Further information and our Privacy Policy will be available on our website www.cpreshropshire.org.uk or by calling our Administrator, Sarah Jameson, 01547 528546.

President's report

started last year's Annual Report with the words "nothing seems to stay the same". Goodness, how these words have been proved correct.

With the date of Brexit coming ever closer, the farming and land management communities are grappling with the many unknowns of what future farming policies will be. Will the targeting of public money into areas of public and environmental benefits be balanced with a recognition that we also require a thriving agricultural economy across all holding sizes; be it in the hills or on the lowland arable or mixed farm? This will be particularly important to our Shropshire hill farmers.

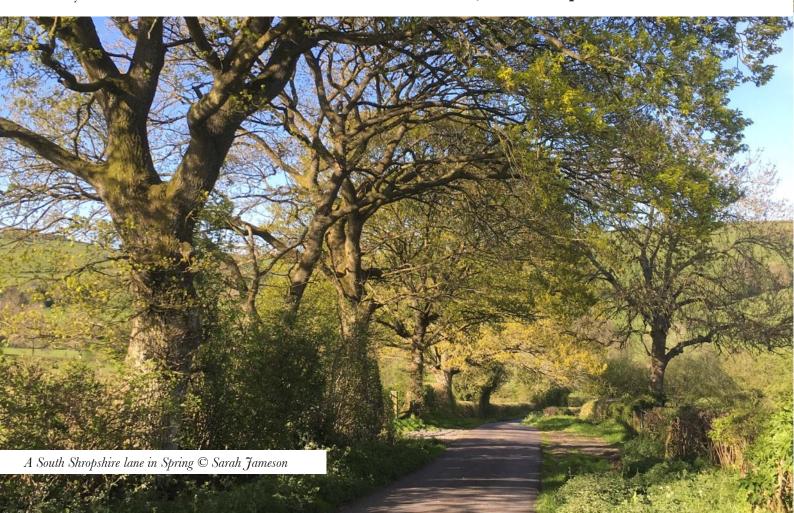
Closer to home, CPRE is also facing change: 'The Purpose Project' is well underway, with its straightforward objectives of reviewing our 'purpose' — what we stand for, how can we utilise our precious resources most effectively, be it in terms of cash or more importantly volunteers who make up our network of branches. Nothing is straightforward, we are also facing far-reaching, dull but important data protection legislation from Europe. It needs to be enacted across the whole branch network. Hopefully, it will not be too distracting from our objective of retaining and promoting 'thriving communities and a beautiful countryside.'

In Shropshire, planning is still very much centre-stage of our efforts – from dealing with Shropshire Council and the detail of housing need, to what is becoming the vexing problem of the proliferation of very large chicken sheds. While often unsightly and smelly, they are also one of the few agricultural enterprises that have produced a consistent return. Hence the balance between a beautiful countryside and a thriving one. It is a very difficult call.

We are extremely fortunate to have such a very able and passionate Executive. This year it would be remiss of me not to mention Charles Green for his consistently sterling efforts of reviewing, monitoring and commenting on the relentless number of planning applications from across the country. A mammoth task. Thank you, it is very much appreciated.

I feel sure that 2018 will be full of challenges and changes; we are very fortunate in Shropshire to be in a strong position to face that future. I would very much like to thank Sarah Bury and the Executive together with Sarah Jameson our Administrator for all their time and commitment to CPRE Shropshire.

Robin Thompson President, CPRE Shropshire





AGM NOTICE

CPRE Shropshire Annual General Meeting

Monday 2nd July 2018

Attingham Park, Shrewsbury
from 5pm

The AGM will be followed by a talk on "The landscape design work of Humphry Repton (1752 to 1818) at Attingham Park and beyond" and an (optional) evening guided tour of the parkland.

A unique opportunity to hear about the work of Repton at Attingham and enjoy a summer evening guided walk in the Park. (Repton's 'Red Book' will be available to view in the main house until 5pm)

All CPRE Members & visitors are welcome. Tickets: £12.50 (to include cold buffet)

To book your place now, contact Sarah Jameson, Administrator 01547 528546 / admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk or complete the tear-off section on the back page of this newsletter.



Chair's Report

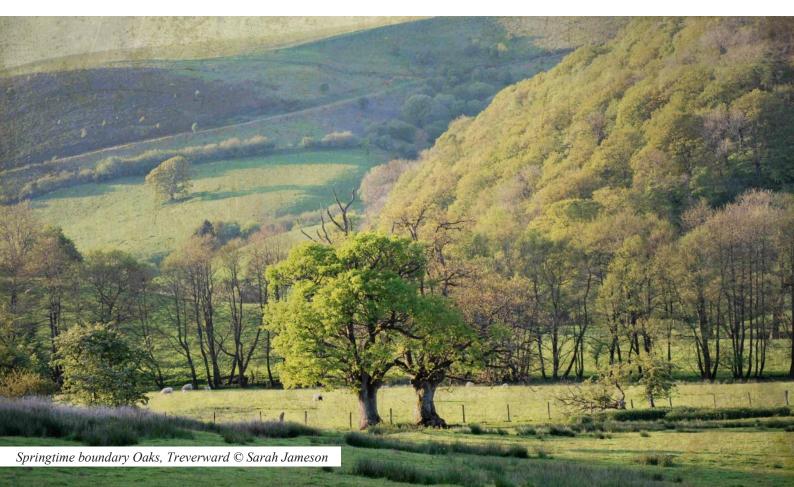
s I write this on the 30th April, it is a brilliant sunny day from behind glass. This view of green fields, prancing lambs and spring blossom belies the fact that the outside temperature is 7C and 10 days ago it was 25C. These early Spring days reinforce my love of the Shropshire countryside. It has changed in the 50 years that I have lived here but in many respects it is still unspoilt. We are lucky to have so many people who care passionately about conserving our landscapes and protecting our villages and market towns from inappropriate development. CPRE is determined not to be known as negative with a nimby mentality but we do want to protect our countryside and celebrate what is best about our local culture.

I am always impressed by the determination with which local groups emerge to fight for their particular area. CPRE Shropshire will always support and help where they can, but there is tremendous vigour and often expertise within these groups. Sometimes our work is about directing people to the right source of information or organisation who can help their campaign as well as responding to planning applications. We also work with other partners: with the Shropshire Hills AONB partnership, the Wildlife Trust and local Civic Societies. We do not duplicate each other's work but we do share many of the same interests.

Not all development is bad and the right houses in the right place are needed for our increasing population. We need to make sure that there are affordable houses being built for local people as well as developments of larger homes. Shropshire Council have not achieved their targets for providing affordable houses either as a percentage of overall development or within their own building programme. We recognise the reduced funding which local authorities and housing associations receive from Central Government for Affordable Housing and accept that this is a national problem which our National Office are working on. We also need good design for village developments in keeping with the rest of the built environment.

Nationally, a number of us have attended meetings in London and Birmingham where the annual autumn conference is held. We have met the new CEO of CPRE, Crispin Truman from the Churches Conservation Trust who says:

"In my time at CCT I've thoroughly enjoyed working with rural communities to save their local historic churches - now to have the chance to lead the premier charity working to protect and enhance rural England fantastic."



Treasurer's report

We are looking forward to welcoming Crispin to our September Management meeting and hope to introduce him to more of our members then.

The AGM last year at Soulton Hall was a great success and the talks by Tim Ashton, the young owner and Carole Ryan Ridout were inspirational. I am sure that our AGM this year at Attingham to celebrate the centenary of Repton will be an excellent evening with knowledgeable speakers and a chance to enjoy guided walks of his planned landscape as well as a supper in the Mansion Tearoom and plenty of time to mingle and chat.

Finally, as always are my thanks to a wonderful team, my Vice Chair, Cally Ware, who arrived from Kent CPRE with a wealth of experience and has taken on the communications brief. My admiration is limitless for Charles Green who sometimes puts in about 20 hours a day as a volunteer Chair of planning, and for Sally, his wife who sometimes prizes him from his computer! Emma Jones as our Treasurer - many congratulations on her recent wedding - and thanks for your work for CPRE.

I must also mention Connor Furnival, the Telford and Wrekin District Chair who ran a half marathon to raise funds for CPRE Shropshire - Phew! There isn't one member of the Management team who does not contribute and a very big thank you to them all.

Thanks also to Sarah Jameson our Administrator for keeping us together and prodding when needed, all with good humour. Also thanks to Cath Shuttlewood from SY1 Consulting, who is our media adviser and has learnt her way around CPRE and what matters in planning with amazing speed. Finally, my thanks to Gerald Kells who does work for us as a planning consultant.

Sarah Bury Chair, CPRE Shropshire n 2017 CPRE Shropshire continued to maintain a strong financial position, allowing us to fund various publicity and research projects. In total our resources would allow us to continue operating for a further 3 years should funding cease, which is very positive.

A copy of the accounts for CPRE Shropshire to year ending December 2017 is enclosed with the AGM paperwork.

The eagle eyed of you may notice that the format has changed slightly this year, to bring our future budget planning in line with our accounting. An increase in spending was introduced by the management committee to use our funds to buy independent, high quality external consultancy on matters such as the National Planning Policy Framework. This is the greatest change from last year, with the more proactive use of available resources increasing external consultancy spending by £3,430 from 2016.

Our back-up savings account with NS&I has continued to suffer very low interest rates, as it has in the past several years.

Our main income source, as ever, comes from our members and it is this that allows CPRE Shropshire to continue the important work of protecting our Shropshire landscape.

Emma Jones (nee Ireland) Hon Treasurer, CPRE Shropshire



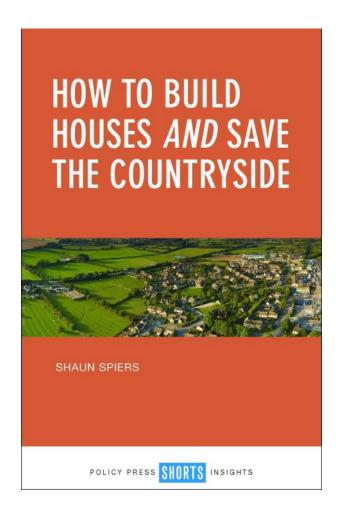
CPRE Shropshire Planning Update

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The "Housing Crisis" has dominated our lobbying this year. Nationally, there is the new Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets the rules that all Local Authorities have to abide by. Its compulsory new methods will now cause even more houses to be built in the over-heated South East, rather than encouraging a spread of jobs and houses round the country and anyway, the big push for houses won't make them more affordable. CPRE's National Office coordinated a single detailed "OneCPRE" response by the NPPF consultation deadline of 10th May, to which our Branch contributed.

How to Build Houses and Save the Countryside

The best book on this whole subject is the recently published *How to Build Houses and Save the Countryside* by CPRE's outgoing Chief Executive, Shaun Spiers. Go out and get yourselves a copy, it's a real eye-opener! At a recent Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting we presented copies to their chiefs for Planning and Economic Growth, in the hope that it might encourage them to rein in Shropshire Council's over-ambitious targets.





Shropshire Local Plan Review

Locally, thanks again to all of you who responded before Christmas to Shropshire Council's consultation on its Local Plan Review. Its Summary of Responses says that, of those who gave a clear opinion, just over half were against the Council's preferred target of 28,750 houses from 2016 to 2036. We have been given access to the detail of these figures and it turns out that many of the responses in favour were duplicates from agents on behalf of landowners. *In reality, over two-thirds of ordinary people are against Shropshire Council's high targets*.

People realise that leaving things to developers who just plonk houses down doesn't get us the decent infrastructure that should go with good place-making.

Shrewsbury's Town Mayor and its Civic Society recently held a Forum to address exactly this issue, at which CPRE Shropshire spoke, along with Shropshire Councillors and officers, and others. Cleobury Mortimer's Neighbourhood Plan is being developed to deal with the same problem there. There is a growing feeling that it shouldn't all be left to developers and their guaranteed 20% profit margin, and, who knows, we may soon see a return to council house building.

Planned Towns & Villages for Shropshire?

Infrastructure (transport, communications, schools, medical facilities, playgrounds, green spaces etc.) is often more difficult to provide when settlements grow at the edges. One proposed solution is to build brand new, planned towns or villages. Shropshire has so called "Strategic sites" at the former Ironbridge Power Station and Tern Hill barracks, and at possible "Garden Village" sites, where that just might happen. However, that would be in addition to the 28,750 housing target, because such sites are as yet undefined.

There is also pressure from the West Midlands, which cannot find space for all the houses it needs. The housing target in Telford & Wrekin Council's recently adopted Local Plan includes a sizeable chunk of such overflow. Such pressure is partly behind Bradford Estate's plans for up to 10,000 houses around Tong, which is causing consternation to locals, and which has already contributed to Shropshire Council delaying its timetable for its Local Plan Review. Before this "Garden Village" idea can go ahead, a large chunk of Green Belt would have to be formally released for development.

Farming & Food

On non-housing matters, larger numbers of people mean that industrial quantities of food are needed. One manifestation of this is the burgeoning numbers of vast poultry-producing warehouses springing up around the country, including many here in Shropshire. We are liaising with CPRE/CPRW neighbours in Herefordshire and Powys to try to stem the worst of the environmental consequences of these Industrial Poultry Units. It is farming that has largely shaped our landscape since the Bronze Age. Farming post-Brexit may involve less subsidy which will bring further pressure on farmers to be more "efficient", carrying its own threats to the Shropshire countryside as we know and cherish it.

Charles Green
CPRE Shropshire Planning Officer



Communications Report

Public Relations

SY1 Consulting, a Shropshire-based media and Public Relations specialist, was appointed by CPRE Shropshire in September 2017. This was initially to raise awareness of CPRE Shropshire's objection to Shropshire Council's Local Plan, as well as to commence a longer-term relationship aimed at strengthening CPRE Shropshire's media profile and, by default, support for its campaigns.

During autumn 2017, SY1 Consulting carried out a strategic PR programme based around the development of a set of core key messages; a press release outlining CPRE Shropshire's response to Shropshire Council's housing proposals and extensive media contact in support of this message; management of all resultant media interviews; a follow up press release to coincide with the launch of the consultation period and a subsequent final call to action before the consultation ended. Media monitoring was also included.

This programme of activity resulted in over twenty pieces of local and regional media coverage being secured. Once Shropshire Council publish their preferred site allocations and draft development policies later this year, we will once again be mounting an active PR and media campaign to hold them to account.

Website

We continue to make progress with our website at www.cpreshropshire.org.uk and hope to reinvigorate our social media activities shortly.

Publications

'Shropshire Voice' continues to be our flagship publication and we aim to publish 3 editions each year, including this 'bumper' AGM and Annual Report edition. For a charity like us, costs such as printing and especially postage are quite high and we would like to move to electronic versions for two of the three editions each year in order to save money. This is why we urge you to make sure we have your email address and that you are happy for us to contact you this way. (See front page of this report).

Cally Ware, Vice Chair



District reports

OSWESTRY

Outline permission has been granted for 600 houses in Oswestry at the so-called "Eastern Sustainable Urban Extension", which will take seven years to build out. It has the now-usual problems of inadequate infrastructure, as highlighted elsewhere in this Shropshire Voice.

Oswestry & District Civic Society (with which we have close ties) has launched its vision for the "Big Town Plan" for the Oswestry area, which looks towards 2050 and a settlement of 35,000 people, encompassing Oswestry, Gobowen and Whittington, with a new A5 to the east, bypassing the sub-standard existing single-carriageway section.

You may remember that Oswestry CPRE was part of the active "Store Wars" campaign starting nearly a decade ago. Ironically, the winner of that War, the Smithfield site, has thereafter lain derelict, whilst first Aldi (with its demolition of the Telford Toll House), and then Lidl, have sprung up between it and the threatened Oswestry Town Centre. Morrisons are now at last reviving plans for their site, at a reduced scale, but these could yet be improved.

The other long running campaign affecting the Oswestry area involves National Grid's pylon plans, stemming from the proposed massive mid-Wales windfarms. Incredibly, the revised decision about this has still not been released, eighteen months after fresh evidence was submitted, and now over four years since the end of the Public Inquiry. This is apparently for political reasons; the Government's focus is apparently on Brexit instead!

Charles & Sally Green Joint Chairs, CPRE Oswestry District

We are always pleased to hear from anyone who is touched by any of the items in this newsletter, and who might want to help. Our contact details are on the back page, or find us at www.cpreshropshire.org.uk

SHREWSBURY

The Shrewsbury district committee has met on six occasions during this last twelve months. Members have attended several meetings with Shropshire Council planning and policy staff with particular concerns about the level of proposed development in Shrewsbury. Two new members have joined the Shrewsbury district committee, Susan Lockwood who lives and is very active within the local community of Pontesbury and David Arkinstall, who lives in Shrewsbury. The committee is still without a Chair and is looking for an enthusiastic person to take on this role and would like to hear from anyone interested.

The group hopes to form closer links with Shrewsbury Civic Society who have kindly offered the use of their meeting room at Bear Steps in Shrewsbury, with the next committee meeting being held on 24th April. Several members attended a Planning Training seminar held in Stafford and found the day to be very instructive. A number of members attended an open meeting held at the Guildhall in Shrewsbury led by the Shrewsbury Civic Society and Councillor Mackenzie with the title "Shrewsbury Growing For-ward: Urban sprawl or sustainable development.

Recent objections to development include the proposals for additional poultry sheds at Nescliffe, which will impact considerably on the landscape and local community, support for Meole village in opposing inappropriate development in Washford Road and support for Shropshire Wildlife Trust in its objection to the Shrewsbury North West Relief road.

It has been confirmed by Shropshire Planning dept that an area of open space land on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, abutting the Radbrook Green estate, which was threatened is now classified as a wildlife area which should give it stronger protection against any future development proposals. However, the owners of this site are still hoping to develop it.

David Arkinstall CPRE Shrewsbury District



District reports—continued

TELFORD & WREKIN

Over the last 12 months, Telford & Wrekin District Group has moved significantly and in all the right directions. We appointed a Committee with a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary in November 2017 and now meet 4 times a year at Edgmond Village Hall.

Although the District Group was formed after the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan had gone through all its stages of consultation, we did take the opportunity to meet with Telford & Wrekin Council Officers and Managers to discuss our views on the Local Plan and other matters relating to planning, ecology, affordable housing and to begin a positive dialogue with the Council where we can share expertise and resources.

We are not currently in discussion with any members, community groups or Parishes regarding planning applications. However we are now monitoring the weekly planning list provided by Telford & Wrekin Council and keep an eye on any applications we feel may have a negative impact on the rural spaces of our borough.

The Lilleshall Parish Neighbourhood Plan is now at the Regulation 16 Consultation stage and we will be commenting on this with our support for their plan. We have also started discussion with Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council to offer our support to reignite their aim of producing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Our name and progress in the borough is moving in a good direction and one example of this was our speaking at a Newport & District Civic Society event in March 2018. We explained what CPRE is, does and is planning to do in the coming years. Following this, we have been invited to two further events in Newport and Oakengates to showcase what we do. And to top it off, in March 2018 I took part in the Ironbridge Half Marathon where I raised vital funds for CPRE and its Telford & Wrekin branch!

I am very keen to progress with our district and offer our support and expertise to community groups and parishes and encourage anyone interested to contact me or attend one of our next meetings which are 5th June, 4th September and 4th December 2018.

Connor Furnival Chair, Telford & Wrekin District

BRIDGNORTH

Since last year's County AGM, we have held 9 committee meetings attended 5 County meetings and 4 West Midlands Regional meetings. We contributed to a joint County response on the Housing White Paper, The Green Belt Performance Report (60 pages long!) and the model National Office Constitution (30 pages long), the Partial Review of Shropshire Council's Local Plan (one paper at least 20 pages long).

We regularly check planning applications and follow up the controversial ones, of which there have been several this year.

One major concern is the controversial proposal to extract sand and gravel from a quarry near Shipley that is in the Green Belt. We have submitted detailed and strong objections to this application where a decision is awaited.

Another major concern is the proliferation of megasized chicken farms and there is a great deal of work to do on this subject.

Residential caravan sites continue to cause problems, nearly always on Green Belt land. These frequently hitch up to the nearest property sewage pipe or septic tank which was never meant to cope with the extra wastage. These caravan sites are often like small housing estates, but regrettably are not included in the housing numbers. We at Bridgnorth think they should be and continue to press for this. Developers continue to apply for plots of housing although no one locally seems to benefit.

Stella Voysey Chair, Bridgnorth District

SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

As yet we have no volunteer to lead in South Shropshire District and would love to talk to anyone who might be interested. We have a central planning committee which has a number of experts who can look at major applications. We are also lucky in South Shropshire to have Bill Ware who has just moved here from Kent and lives between Clun and Knighton. He has taken on the problem of poultry units and has met with Herefordshire CPRE who have the highest number of such units in the country. At present, there are ongoing applica-

tions at Hopton Heath and Aston Munslow. This has provoked Shropshire Council into adopting an Interim Guidance note which is to be sent to planning agents regarding rising ammonia levels from the cumulative effect of clusters of LSU's which produce both air and water pollution. We still do not know whether the increase in poultry farms and resultant increase in chicken manure being spread on the fields is affecting SSSI meadows and ancient woodlands which we have taken for granted for hundreds of years.

Although, strictly speaking, Mortimer Forest is in Herefordshire, a proposal from the Forestry Commission for holiday chalets above Ludlow would affect Shropshire. The actual application has not yet gone in but the public have been consulted and it has attracted a lot of criticism in the press for the use of what is essentially public land for luxury holiday chalets, with all the attendant access roads, utilities and car parks. See: https://www.save-mortimer-forest.co.uk.

As members will be aware the consultation for the atest stage of the review of Shropshire's Local Plan has now closed and the Cabinet are due to make decisions as I write. CPRE Shropshire sent in a 66 page response. No one is expecting us laymen to read all of this but at the next stage, when the Council consults on land allocations, villages and settlements should look at the proposals for Village hubs and clusters.

Sarah Bury Chair, CPRE Shropshire



Claire Cox, CPRE Shropshire, receiving her Honorary Award for Outstanding Contribution to CPRE from Sir Andrew Motion in 2014. Photo © CPRE National Office

Claire Cox obituary

laire Cox, who died in March aged 95, was a long serving and very committed member of CPRE, particularly in South Shropshire. During her 17 years of unbroken service as Chair of the CPRE South Shropshire District Group, she received CPRE's highest honour, the CPRE Countryside Medal. She maintained regular attendance at the branch Executive Committee meetings until 2014 at the age of 91.

For Claire, personally, the highlight of her last years as an active member of CPRE came when she was nominated by her colleagues to represent CPRE Shropshire at a reception held by Her Majesty the Queen at Clarence House to mark CPRE's 80th Birthday in 2006. Thrilled though Claire was to meet the Queen, she was just as moved by the affection and esteem of her colleagues, revealed by the fact that they had chosen her to represent the county at such a significant event.

Walking in the countryside was a passion with Claire. Born in Preston, where her father was a doctor, the whole family frequently rambled together in the Lake District. Those early years sowed the seeds of Claire's life-long love of wild flowers and her keen interest in the protection of the countryside.

For over 20 years, Claire was a teacher at Shrewsbury High School, rising to become Deputy Head. While there Claire became closely involved with the Girl Guides, taking the opportunity to open the eyes of some of the next generation to the wonders of the natural world.

Claire's move to Church Stretton came when her parents moved to the town on her father's retirement. Here, Claire became deeply embedded in the community life, serving on the Town Council and later playing an active part in supporting the Shropshire Hills AONB. She was a loyal member of the WI and found recreation in Bridge and Country Dancing.

It was through Claire's membership of the Ramblers Association that my wife and I met her, in 2004. On the third of our weekly outings with the group, Claire approached us, "Are you members of CPRE?" she asked. We shook our heads. "You are clearly country-side lovers, so you should join. Our next committee meeting is on Tuesday. You must come!" So, we did. We had learned very early in our acquaintance with her that Claire was a lady not easily denied. Subsequently, we discovered that she had long used her pool of rambling friends as a rich source of CPRE recruits. In CPRE, Claire saw hope for the survival of her beloved, beleaguered countryside.

For me and others who were privileged to know her well, she was a dear and steadfast friend whose presence in our lives will always be a joyful memory.

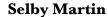
Derek Bartlett

(the full version of this obituary will be available on the South Shropshire district news page on www.cpreshropshire.org.uk)

Judge Michael Mander

We have been saddened to hear of the death recently of Judge Michael Mander who was President of CPRE Shropshire for a number of years until 2008.

He was a distinguished lawyer, devoted to the Shropshire countryside and determined to promote its conservation; he regularly attended meetings of the Executive Committee to express his views. As it happens, he was also an expert magician and will be remembered for entertaining us at social events with remarkable conjuring tricks.





AGM Booking form (see p3 of this newsletter)

To book your place at our AGM (5pm start) on Monday 2nd July at Attingham Park (National Trust), please complete this form, or email/telephone Sarah Jameson (details below).

Please send completed form to: Sarah Jameson, Administrator, CPRE Shropshire c/o Stags Head, New Invention, Bucknell, Shropshire SY7 0BS by Monday 18th June 2018.

Tickets for the AGM are £12.50 per person, to include entry to Attingham Park, the evening talk, buffet supper, and optional guided walk.

| I would like to book place/s at the C | PRE AGM at Attingham Park on Monday 2nd July and |
|--|--|
| enclose a cheque to the value of \mathcal{L} | (made out to CPRE Shropshire) |
| Full Name (s) | (please print clearly) |



|--|

Email _

On the night, there will be a fund-raising raffle for CPRE Shropshire, so please do bring some loose change to buy a ticket, or perhaps even bring a raffle prize?

Contact CPRE Shropshire Administrator, Sarah Jameson Tel: 01547 528546 / admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk www.cpreshropshire.org.uk