

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**30 June 2017**

**Held at the Village Hall, Flintham**

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| **Apologies for Absence**  Apologies were received from Stuart Byfield, Mary Cunningham, Christine and George Ford, Howard Hunt, Mary Mackie, Claire Riggall and Barbara Walker |
| **Report from Chairman**  The chair thanked everyone for their attendance and said he was especially grateful to our President, Mr Liell Francklin, Deputy Lieutenant of the county, for his presence.  The Chair referred to his statement in the published Annual report for 2016 and said that, since he hoped that members would have read this, he did not propose to simply repeat its content. He would confine himself to one or two points and mention some issues that related to the time since the end of the calendar year 2016.  We had managed to maintain a regular pattern of communication with the membership and the outside world, through newsletters, Facebook and Twitter. We had used the occasion of the recent County Council and General Elections to write to every candidate standing for election throughout the county setting out CPRE policy on a range of issues and seeking support. A reasonable number of positive responses had been received.  The executive committee was trying to concentrate proactively on identified topics and on developing the branch. To this end we had revisited our forward plan and we were in the process of revising the same.  Just before last Christmas, we had set up a stall at a Nottingham Trent University Volunteers and Part-time Jobs Fair. One happy outcome was that we had recruited a new volunteer to replace our existing treasurer, who wished to resign on completion of the accounts for the current year. Earlier in 2017. We had engaged with Nottingham Trent University Business School who were offering consultancy projects to external organisations run by MSc students. We were about to start a project that would include seeking information by way of surveys of both members and non-members. Two of the students were in attendance and would say a few words about the project at the close of the meeting. The chair encouraged everyone to complete the survey.  During the early part of 2017, we had expended some effort in contributing to the CPRE national response to the government’s Housing White Paper. This White Paper at least showed signs that the government now accepted that the housing market was broken and that the housing shortage was not simply caused by planning restrictions and a lack of available land. There was a recognition that builders had plenty of land with planning permission but they were land banking to keep house prices high.  Shale gas exploration was a live issue in the county. CPRE policy had not been against fracking on principle (it has now tightened up to a call for a moratorium until certain conditions are met). We had objected to two applications (at Misson and Barnby Moor) to drill exploratory bore-holes on planning grounds – mainly about HGVs on narrow country roads -and had met some success in that the county council had laid down stringent traffic conditions. The present situation is that Ineos are seeking to undertake seismic tests across a wide area, including under Sherwood Forest. The chair did not think there would be much doubt about the view we should take to fracking under ancient woodlands. Landowners are free to refuse permission for seismic testing and, at present, we are considering whether to ask Nottinghamshire County Council to refuse permission on land owned by them (following the example set by the National Trust).  Quarrying is another live issue in Nottinghamshire. The County Council’s draft Mineral Plan was due for public examination but it has recently been withdrawn by the new administration. This could mean that there will be further opportunities to make representations about some of the sites proposed for quarries about which we have expressed concerns.  Finally the Chair mentioned that an entry form has been made available on our website <https://www.hugofox.com/community/cpre-nottinghamshire-10680/valerie-gillespie-20171/> for the 2017 Valerie Gillespie Award and he encouraged anyone who knew of a suitable community project to improve the local environment to persuade those concerned to enter the competition.  After the chair’s report, the following issues were raised  a) Are there plans to reinstate Nottinghamshire CPRE’s presence at County Shows? The chair replied that there had not been enough interest in CPRE at the shows we attended to justify devoting our limited branch resources to these shows.  b) Newark& Sherwood District do not have a policy on gypsy and traveller sites, and there are serious issues regarding the site at Wellow which affects the Conservation Area. The Policy Adviser said she could raise the matter of the policy in the context of following up on progress with the N&S Local Plan, and the chair that he would review the appeal decision about the site at Wellow. |
| **Report from Secretary and Policy Advisor**:  The verbal report covered only matters not included in the 2016 Annual Report already circulated and an update for 2017.  a) additions to the 2016 Annual Report:  CPRE nationally researched the extent to which the LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) are making a positive contribution to protecting rural areas, the countryside and the environment. To achieve this, contributions were invited from local CPRE branches (and Regional Groups). Bettina Lange contributed a detailed report on the ‘performance’ of the D2N2 (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) LEP. The research is intended to help CPRE consider how we can influence the LEPs more.  Bettina was asked for advice by Radcliffe on Trent Residents’ Association on how Neighbourhood Plans fit into the planning system and provided the advice.  She also attended an encouraging ‘masterclass’ held in November 2016 by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which suggested that Nottinghamshire CPRE may well be able to obtain funding for a heritage project.  b) 2017 update  Bettina spoke at the Mansfield District Council Planning Committee in May against a proposal for 400 houses at Warsop. The application was refused.  She spoke in favour of a housing proposal in Broxtowe, at the site of the former Barton bus garage and associated land, with the caveats that affordable housing should be delivered earlier than the applicant planned and that physical traffic calming measures are needed in addition to the speed limits already planned i8n order to prevent ‘rat running’ on the road through the development. The proposal is on a large brownfield site well connected to public transport and local facilities and well designed. The process used – BIMBY (Better in My Backyard), a Prince’s Trust initiative – is an example of good practice. The application was approved.    Bettina also gave a presentation on CPRE at Caunton Parish Council (on their invitation). |
| **Statement from Treasurer**  The Chair announced that Elena Gilbert had relinquished her position as treasurer and thanked her for her service over past years.  In her absence, the Chair said that subscriptions had fallen from £7040 in 2015 to £6171 in 2016. This significant reduction was largely due to a fall in membership. The reduction in membership was a common feature right across the county branches of CPRE, and charities generally. However, the rate of reduction in Nottinghamshire was higher than the CPRE average and it was a matter of concern. Our income was boosted to some extent by donations for consultancy work undertaken by our Policy Advisor. We also made a small surplus on the Best Kept Village Competition, kindly sponsored by Wilkinsons. The future of that sponsorship was a risk that we had to bear in mind. We still had reasonable cash reserves and we try to restrain our costs but continuing to expend more than our income did not provide a sustainable future financial pathway. Our proposed new treasurer would consider presenting our accounts on an accruals basis rather than a cash basis to present a more realistic picture of our true financial position. |
| **Election of President**  Mr Liell Francklin was re-elected as Branch President. |
| **Election of Chairman**  Fred Cook was re-elected as chairman. |
| **Election of Vice-Chair**  Howard Hunt was elected as Vice -Chair. |
| **Election of Treasurer**  Harry Wright was elected as treasurer. |
| **Election of Other Members of Management Committee**  Dr Peter Holland was re-elected to continue to serve on the Executive Committee as a trustee and as Best Kept Village Organiser. |
| **Election of Independent Examiner**  John O’Brien of Community Accounting Plus was elected. |
| **President’s Closing Remarks**  The President expressed his appreciation of the work being done by CPRE Nottinghamshire. |
| **Any Other Business**  Andres Arteche Lopez and Munib Shahir from Nottingham Trent University Business School introduced themselves and said they were part of a team with fellow students, Rhiannon Davies and Yejun Huang. Andres and Muneeb had worked on a survey for members and the other team members had worked on a survey for other people. The team were undertaking a body of research into what inspires membership and volunteering with CPRE; other charities; how to market CPRE Notts and to whom. The team would be presenting their recommendations for a marketing strategy later in July.  The AGM was followed by an interesting tour of Flintham, the parish church and the village museum. Later, refreshments were served. |