



The countryside charity
Shropshire

Shropshire Voice

Welcome to our Winter 2025
member newsletter



A brief planning update for Shropshire

Planning in Shropshire remains in a state of considerable flux – and is likely to remain there until Shropshire Council has adopted a new Local Plan.

The Government rules now require them to build 2,025 houses a year (compared with Shropshire Council's aim of building 1,423 houses a year before the previous Draft Plan collapsed). That's a further increase from the previous year's figure of 1,994 a year, which was bad enough in itself. The reason is that the methodology is now based on existing building stock, not demographic need. That means that the more houses get built, the more are required – quite ridiculous!

Because Shropshire Council's existing plan is now out of date, and it also can no longer prove a 5-year supply of housing land, the rules allow it to become something of open season for developers. Shropshire Council has started work on its new draft plan by issuing a Call for Sites, but it is a long way off being anywhere near having that elusive up-to-date plan.

We are told that, as a result of the Call for Sites, somewhere between 700 and 800 site promotions have been received. However other sites also need to be considered – last time over 2,000 sites had to be individually assessed.

In recognising the present dilemma, Shropshire Council has recently issued a guidance note to Town and Parish Councils telling them that all is not lost, and that not every application in the green fields will necessarily be granted permission. They say that, when commenting on applications, consideration should be given to the following as important material considerations:

- If the proposed site represents a sustainable location for new development,
- If the application provides an effective use of land, and
- If the application secures a well-designed place and provides affordable housing.

We, and individuals around the county, should clearly do the same when looking at new applications.

Shropshire Council has also issued three new Supplementary Planning Documents on aspects of design, which are open to consultation until 14 January. In the meantime the Telford & Wrekin Draft Local Plan has been submitted for inspection, but no date for the examination in public has yet been set.

Our West Midlands colleagues have been doing much work recently on the Birmingham draft plan, which is out for consultation at the moment. It has implications for the West Midlands generally, including possibly Shropshire.

Reports produced by CPRE say that (1) Birmingham has a surplus of over 13,000 dwellings so could theoretically take unmet need from neighbouring authorities, and (2) there is estimated capacity for nearly 150,000 homes on brownfield land on the Brownfield Registers across the local authorities in the main part of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

This all implies that the moves towards devolution and a possible return to regional planning may return a measure of sense to the Alice-in-Wonderland nature of the current situation in Shropshire.

Charles Green, CPRE Shropshire Planning Spokesman

Hedgerow Heroes: year five well underway



CPRE Shropshire's Hedgerow Heroes project, now in its fifth year has been rather busy since news of funding was finally received in August.

Hedgelaying

Three traditional hedgelaying workshops (two 2-day beginners and a 1-day improvers) took place in November on a working farm at Pennerley. As usual all were fully booked well in advance with waiting lists, and had excellent feedback from attendees.

Hedgerow Management workshops

Nigel Adams, expert hedgelayer and hedgerow adviser, returned to Shropshire in October to lead two hedgerow management workshops for farmers. A morning theory session was followed by a light lunch and farm walk to look at and discuss management options for a variety of hedgerows on site. Many discussions ensued about how and when to intervene in the hedgerow lifecycle and the limitations and challenges farmers face in managing miles of hedgerow on their land.

Arts workshops

The first of our hedgerow arts workshops took place at New Invention in early October with Andrew Howe, local Shrewsbury artist, leading a drawing workshop out in the field observing landscape and nature and rendering these in charcoal, graphite, pencil and pen. A further three workshops will take place in the Spring and early Summer. These are open to all.

Field Names Talk & Walk

Professors Jayne Carroll and John Baker returned to Shropshire in September to give a fascinating talk on the field names of the Upper Clun followed by a walk the following morning up on to the Shropshire Way above Whitcott Keysett. The talk filled the hall at Newcastle community centre and 28 people set off on the walk the following day in autumn sunshine.

Hedgerow Heroes and hedge creation

At the core of our Hedgerow Heroes project is always hedge creation.

Despite the late start this year, we managed to go out and assess more than 25 prospective hedgerow sites this summer and most of these will be planted up over the winter months with the help of our fantastic volunteer hedge planters.

Planting starts on 2 December and will continue into February. Whips will again come from Bucknell Nurseries in South Shropshire who grow native stock from local seed as far as possible. They have provided excellent hedging for us now for four years.

We now have six experienced volunteer leads who will help and guide volunteers on sites around the county. Again we will plant on a variety of sites from working farms, including community-owned farms, to county estates, community spaces, learning centres and smallholdings, and a church. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and we are working on getting more interest from local Shropshire businesses and companies looking to send staff out on volunteer days.

If you would like to come on site to help us take a look at www.cpreshropshire.org.uk/help-us-plant-hedges



Photos (top to bottom): Lucy Grove's hand-made CPRE sign; gapping up a hedge on the Long Mynd, and hedgerow discussions with farmers in October.

"Sense of Place" hailed a success

More than 200 photographic entries were received in our Sense of Place photographic awards from over 70 photographers.

Judging took place in September and an exhibition of the work took place from 2-31 October at the Gateway Gallery in the heart of Shrewsbury. Seventy guests packed into the gallery for the preview and prizes were awarded to the best three entries by Richard Childs, Ron Parnell and Paul Murray.

Dr Peter Day, CPRE Shropshire, who had organised and run the Awards said "People were asked to photograph their favourite places in Shropshire – their local town park, a river or walk in summer, a hike in the hills with big views, their daily dog walk, a favourite meadow, country lane, or their back gardens. It has clearly inspired and motivated people to visit the Shropshire countryside and photograph and describe the places they love."

The 21 selected entries can still be seen in our online gallery (link below). We hope we might have an opportunity to exhibit the canvases in 2026, our Centenary year.

On Friday 31 October, a day of arts workshops, talks and demos was held at the Gateway Centre with participants taking part in artist-led sessions on drawing and creative writing. Artists involved in the day included Hanny Newton, Sarah Goudie, Chris Kinsey, Keith Ashford and Liz Turner.

CPRE Shropshire would like to sincerely thank Andy from Frame it by Kaleidoscope for his company's generous printing of the selected entries and his help with the exhibition hang. We would also like to thank Rotary Club of Shrewsbury Darwin and Ochre Building Design for generous sponsorship and the Gateway Gallery and Centre for allowing us to use their fantastic Shrewsbury space for a whole month.



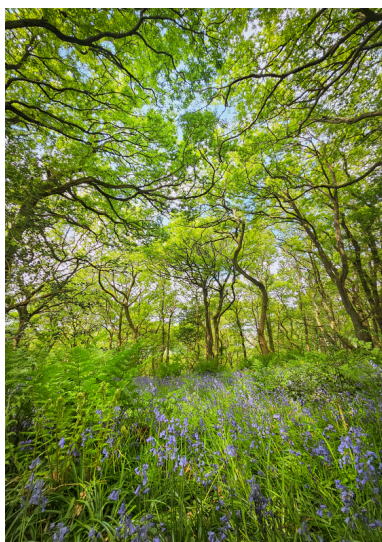
Paul Murray: First Light over Oldbury Viaduct



Jason Albutt: Blue Canoe, Old Ironbridge



Jacky Champ: White Ponies on the Long Mynd



Ron Parnell: Helmeth Wood



Tom Cuthbert: Cold



Drawing workshop in progress © Sarah Goudie

"Confirms why I love Shropshire so much!"
"Very beautiful work; every image speaks of Shropshire"
"Came to the Shropshire photographic exhibition.
Lovely, really enjoyed it"

Centenary Geology project

CPRE Shropshire was successful in applying for a Centenary grant from CPRE National Office to run a year-long Geology/arts project in the county.

Following her successful run of Geology talks for CPRE Shropshire, Oswestry-based Sally Green has paired up with artist Andrew Howe to deliver an unusual project that will not only go into schools to teach children about the county's rich geological history, but produce a geology cabinet we will be able to take to shows and events in future. The cabinet will showcase and explain some of the wonders of our county's unique geology.

Sally explains: "In November, Andrew and I spent a very fun and interesting day at Ludlow Primary School teaching seven and eight year olds the basics of geology, as outlined in the national curriculum.



They were schooled in the understanding of deep time in a practical way by spacing children in their large hall according to the eras. They made plasticine strata which were then cut and bent to demonstrate faults and anticlines and then the children examined and drew rocks or fossils. They were also taken through the geological eras, shown pictures of what Shropshire looked like in that era and then drew their conceptions: an interesting exercise! Sadly no dinosaurs in south Shropshire - or Shropshire at all until the Triassic era in the north of the county.

After lunch we all paraded down to Ludlow town, inspecting the building stones and walked over Dinham Bridge on the River Teme, running in spate. A walk along the Breadwalk revealed some fine cliffs and a fossil hunt below yielded a few specimens and a lot of enthusiasm. Altogether a very fun day and a lot of interest. Some budding geologists I hope!"

Sally's online geology talk in March 2026 will be on the subject of fossils in Shropshire. She will also co-lead a series of walks to geologically and ecologically interesting parts of the county with other experts. Watch this space!

Events for 2025

We have attended a number of events, shows and conferences this year with our stand in our bid to engage further with the general public about planning and our other ongoing projects.

Amongst the highlights was an exceedingly hot Ludlow Green Festival in July followed by another warm and very enjoyable busy day at Minsterley Show where Bob James' famous Tree Quiz drew (and kept) the crowds but still only had one outright winner!

A warm welcome to Nick

Nick Gaudin has joined us as a volunteer at CPRE Shropshire and is cutting his teeth helping Sarah Jameson deliver the Hedgerow Heroes project by doing sterling work contacting Shropshire businesses. Thank you Nick!

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