



Shropshire
Campaign to Protect Rural England

SHROPSHIRE VOICE

Campaign to Protect Rural England

Autumn 2018



A stunning veteran Oak tree, at Honeyhole, near Bucknell, SW Shropshire © Sarah Jameson

See much more on our website at www.cpreshropshire.org.uk

CPRE Shropshire Planning Update



Local Plan Review

The next consultation stage of the Local Plan Review deals with actual sites for development, particularly in the rural areas. It is going to Cabinet on 7th November, and the papers for that can be found via: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/committee-services/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=130>.

However, the consultation is not due to start until 29th November and will run for 9 weeks until 31st January. So it's possible that further relevant papers won't be published until 29th November.

Shropshire Council has been holding confidential, unminuted "conversations" with relevant Town & Parish Councils about housing guidelines and development boundaries, and the results of those talks are now apparent within the consultation papers. Increases of over 40% are proposed in approaching one-third of the hub villages, despite there supposedly being a move away from "rural rebalance".

Our July 2018 "Consultation Response Analyses" report on the results of the last consultation showed that 88% of members of the public and 74% of Town & Parish Councils were against the Council's high housing targets. Only the development sector and the Council were in favour of them. The Council's

response to us, only via the press, was essentially that they knew best about the "*wider needs of the entire population and other stakeholders, including those who are not as engaged as those who have already contributed views*", although they did not say how they were able to divine these needs outside the consultation.

A question we put to Cabinet in May had to be followed up by a Freedom of Information request to get the answer. It turned out that one of the tables in the last consultation had been wrong by 250%, if you can believe it! The Council had "grossed up" by 40% twice instead of once, and nobody had checked the figures. No wonder they looked wrong to us. Who do you believe?

So get ready to take part in another consultation before the end of January. This time it will concern housing numbers and sites right on your doorstep.

Ongoing planning matters

As well as keeping up with the Local Plan Review there are also the ongoing planning campaigns to keep abreast of:

Intensive poultry units:

There seems to be no shortage of demand yet for more broiler-houses and free-range egg factories. Ammonia emissions continue to be a major concern

to the public. The South Planning Committee allowed the latest large unit partly because it will have ammonia scrubbers. That might reduce the stench from the live birds but does not deal with the spreading of manure. In this case there were limitations on spreading the manure from the units on their own land, but it was pointed out that they could ship in as much manure as they liked from outside. Colleagues in Powys and Herefordshire continue the battle there too.

Mortimer Forest:

To the relief of all campaigners, we hear that Forest Holidays have recently withdrawn their plans for up-market chalets in Mortimer Forest, which would have wrecked its tranquillity and had knock-on effects around Ludlow.

Garden village around Tong:

The plans for a so-called “garden village” of 10,000 houses promoted by the Bradford Estate and centred on Tong around junction 3 of the M54 were first aired about a year ago. It is widely thought that such inflated plans are untenable but although there is currently little public activity, it may well be that pressure from the West Midlands for more housing will see something happen yet. We await the publication of the papers for the Local Plan Review to see if they include any hint from Shropshire Council, or any Review of the Green Belt boundaries, which would have to happen first anyway.

Shrewsbury Growing Forward:

The Town Mayor and Civic Society’s seminar on 28th April was called because people are fed up with large new housing estates being plonked down without the proper infrastructure to create a “place” worth living in. Various initiatives continue to be followed up, including a design accreditation scheme. But the planning system generally still remains at the mercy of developers, despite continued efforts to “fix the broken housing market”. The Government continues to push for 300,000 new homes a year, but they will be largely high-cost houses in the least affordable parts of the country. It is welcome news that Councils are once again being encouraged to build council houses, and that Shropshire Council may be amongst them.

Ironbridge Power Station site:

You may have seen that preliminary plans for the Ironbridge Power Station site have been opened for consultation, and run until 9th November, a rather short four weeks. We await to see how this major site fits into Shropshire Council’s preferred sites and its overall housing alloca-

tions but the indication is that it will involve another 1,000 to 1,500 homes in addition to the existing high targets.

Oswestry:

And finally, there are a couple of unusual recent applications, one for a new crematorium between Oswestry and Shrewsbury, and another for a “pop-up” 30MW gas-powered power station next door to Oswestry’s existing sub-station, in order to help balance the national fluctuations from renewable energy: it is apparently one of very few nationally suitable sites.

Charles Green

Planning Volunteer, CPRE Shropshire



How Indeed!

(Illustration from a card recently received by Charles)
© Woodmansterne Publications; artist: Ian Blake

Can you be our Eyes and Ears?

We are looking for Members throughout Shropshire who can keep an eye (and ear!) on significant local planning applications that are controversial or inappropriate and let us know about them? It would take a few minutes each week. If you can help us, please contact our Administrator, Sarah Jameson on admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk or telephone 01547 528546



The NPPF – Good news for ancient habitats

The revised NPPF may have been a mixed bag for the countryside but it was definitely good news for our most special trees.

The Woodland Trust responds to planning applications that impact ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees. Over the years hundreds of these irreplaceable habitats have been destroyed by development. In June there were 823 ancient woods under threat across the UK, via both planning applications and site allocations.

The planning system enabled this with a loophole in the 2012 NPPF (echoing the previous PPS9). This permitted the loss or damage of ancient woods and trees as long as 'the benefits outweigh the loss'. Many developers exploited this loophole pushing through developments that were viewed as having perceived local benefits, even in the face of strong local opposition.

The Woodland Trust has been lobbying to tighten up this loophole for nearly 20 years. We are thrilled that 2018 is the year that it has actually happened:

Paragraph 175 of the new NPPF states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and The inclusion of 'wholly exceptional' brings the protection of ancient habitats in line with the protection of our best heritage assets (see NPPF paragraph 194b). This is a great step forward for the protection of ancient woods and trees.

Footnote 58 is critical, it states: *For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.*

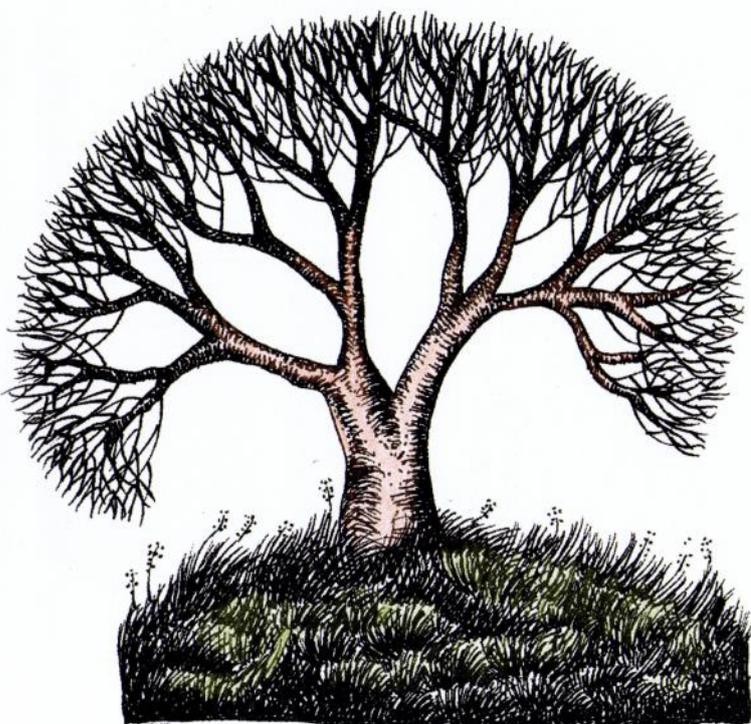
On the face of it this appears to be limited to only the most major developments, HS2 and other major infrastructure projects will clearly continue to pose a threat. The Woodland Trust will continue to fight for the best possible outcome for woods and trees in these cases.

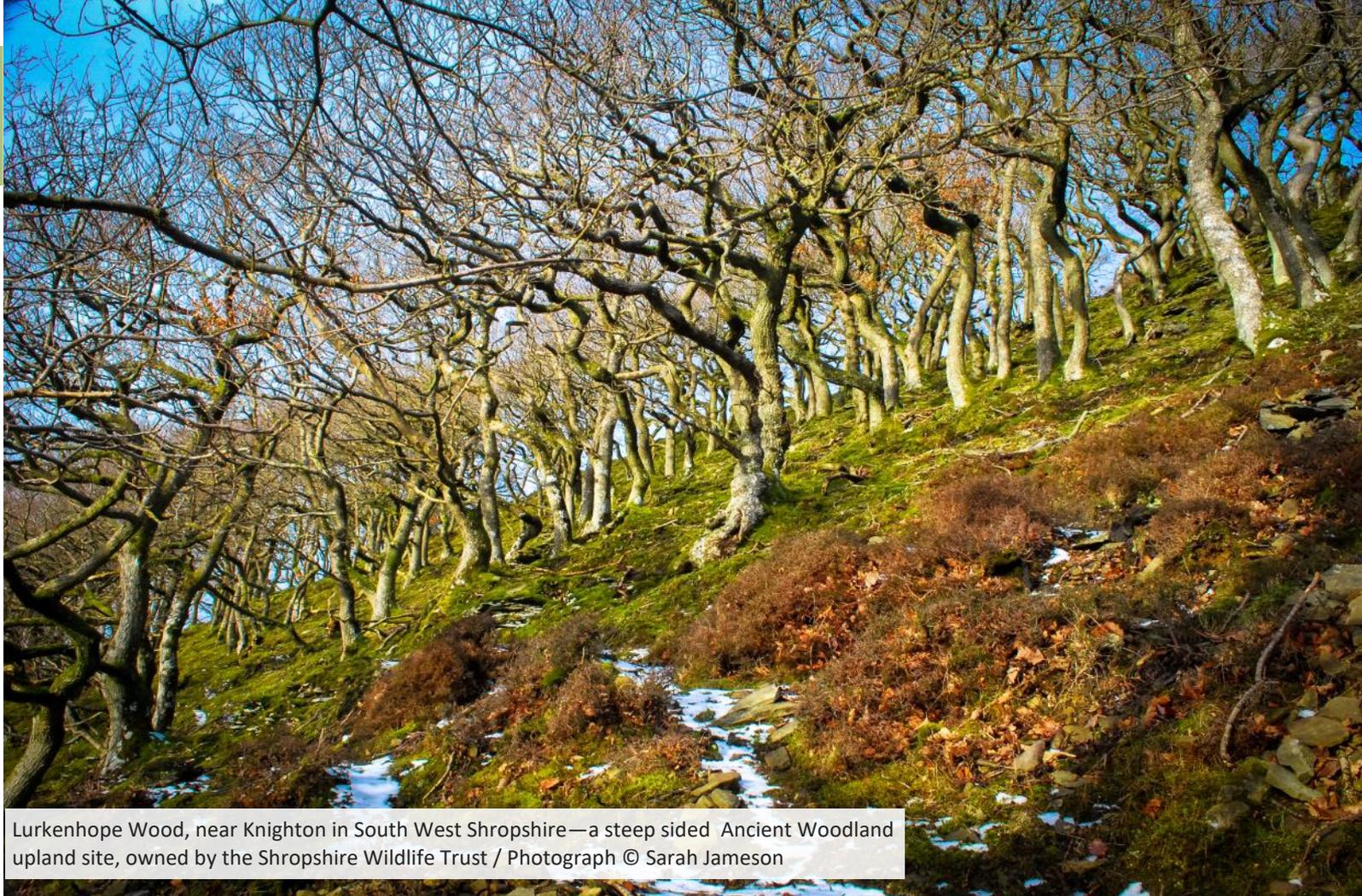
“This is a great step forward for the protection of ancient woods and trees”

The Woodland Trust is also very concerned about how the new policy is interpreted. The NPPF came into force straight away for development management decisions and will apply from 24th January for plan making. These first few months are critical for precedent setting decisions. The Woodland Trust will be monitoring its implementation very closely.

If you know of any developments that may impact ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees, contact the Woodland Trust and CPRE Shropshire to let us know. We will be working hard to empower local planning authorities to make the right decision and ensure that only the very best precedents are set.

Victoria Bankes Price
Planning Adviser, Woodland Trust
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk





Lurkenhope Wood, near Knighton in South West Shropshire—a steep sided Ancient Woodland upland site, owned by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust / Photograph © Sarah Jameson

Ancient Trees & Woodland

What is an ancient tree?

The UK has an exceptional number of ancient trees. Despite the shared name they are rarely found in ancient woodland.

Most surviving ancient trees in the UK are growing on sites that made up the extensive royal hunting grounds, in medieval deer parks, historic wood pastures, ancient wooded commons and old hedgerows. Small groups or individual trees can also be spotted in housing estates, urban parks, village greens, churchyards and the grounds of historic buildings.

How old an ancient tree is depends on the species. Some species can live longer than others. Yew, Oaks and Sweet Chestnuts top the age charts at over 1000 years. Other species, including Birch, Willow and Ash live shorter lives.

What do ancient trees look like?

Ancient trees don't always look the same, depending on the species and where it grows. But in general, there are several ancient characteristics and the more a tree has the older it's likely to be.

Key features to look out for include:

A crown that is reduced in size and height; a large girth in comparison to trees of the same species; hollow trunk; stag-headed appearance (dead, bare, antler-like branches in the crown); fruit bodies of heart-rot fungi growing on the trunk; cavities on trunk and branches, running sap or pools of water forming in hollows; rougher or more creviced bark or an 'old' look with lots of character.

What is a veteran tree?

Ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient!

Veteran trees are survivors that have developed some of the features found on ancient trees. However, veteran trees are usually only in their second or mature stage of life. You might see signs of decay, fungal fruiting bodies or dead wood, these features may start to appear in the mature stage and also in traditional pollards. Although veteran trees aren't as old or complex as ancient trees, they still provide holes, cavities and crevices which are especially important for wildlife.

What is ancient woodland?

These are areas which have had woodland cover for centuries and have been relatively undisturbed by human activity. Over hundreds of years, they have evolved into complex communities of trees, plants, fungi, microorganisms and insects.

They are present on maps dating back to 1600 in England and Wales and may even link back to the prehistoric wildwood that once existed in the UK.

Each ancient wood is unique. It has its own local soil, environment, wildlife and cultural history. For this reason ancient woodland is irreplaceable.

Our ancient woods are in desperate need of protection. Once vast, they now cover just two per cent of the UK. Approximately half of what remains has been felled and replanted with non-native conifers and invasive species such as rhododendron. This can seriously damage their fragile ecosystems and smother the growth of delicate and rare woodland plants.

Some noteworthy trees and ancient woodland in Shropshire

Ancient & veteran trees:

- Brook Vessons Nature Reserve, Pontesbury
- Clun Church, Loughton Church & Norbury Church all have very large and old Yews
- Lydham Manor, Bishops Castle (Lydham Manor Oak—one of the largest English Oaks—private land)
- Pitchford Hall, Shrewsbury (large broad-leaved Lime)
- Walcot Hall, Lydbury North (large and rare trees)
- West Felton, Oswestry (original West Felton Yew)
- The Royal Oak, Boscobel House
- The Repton Oak, Attingham Park, Shrewsbury

Ancient woodland:

- Helmeth Hill, Church Stretton
- Lurkenhope Wood, near Knighton
- Clunton Coppice, Clunton
- The Hollies, near Minsterley

To find a useful map of many more trees and woods in Shropshire, log on to the "Visiting Woods" page of the Woodland Trust website (www.woodlandtrust.org.uk).



Measuring the girth of a veteran Oak at Rorrington on an ancient tree walk run by local botanist Rob Rowe © Sarah Jameson

Oswestry District update

The Oswestry District's AGM was held on the afternoon of Saturday 1st September 2018 in the 18thC Malthouse at Charles and Sally Green's home at The Wood.

Over 30 people came on a beautiful sunny day, the majority of them being CPRE members or guests. The Malthouse is being restored from a dilapidated state and that may have been as many people as it has held since the days when it hosted the local Methodist Circuit quarterly meetings in the 19thC. The newly installed oak handrail reflected the needs of CPRE's demography!

The AGM, held on the lines of a Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting, was over in five minutes. After an update on Oswestry planning matters Charles and Sally then gave an illustrated talk about the history of their old timber framed homestead and its inhabitants, Charles's forebears since 1787, and its strong Primitive Methodist association for some 150 years.

After cream tea and cakes a dozen remaining folk were led through the grounds on a guided walk along the Tom Ward Green permissive memorial path, opened 13 years ago through his plantations on the estate, on what would have been his centenary. He was Charles's bachelor uncle and the previous owner of the property and was a stalwart CPRE supporter, immortalised in this acrostic produced by colleagues for him on his 90th birthday.

*T*o measure up the times and seasons past
*O*nly an ancient sage like Tom can cast,
*M*using, an eye upon the rural changes.
*W*arlike he stands and far and wide he ranges
*A*gainst the ugly, greedy, modern tide,
*R*esolved to keep fair beauty at his side.
*D*evoted to the land and all its ways,
*G*ardener, forester, skilled carpenter, he stays
*R*eminding us of duties and true worth.
*E*vening and sunrise celebrate his birth.
*E*ver the wise and knowing country man
*N*eighbours might well his life with profit scan.

T. W. G.

from the C. P. R. E.

23 April 1995

*For safeguarding TOMorrow's world
With love of what has been
Thanks! champion of our countryside
And WARDen of things GREEN.*

The Role of CPRE Shropshire's Heritage Adviser

Few CPRE branches have a Heritage Adviser. The current Adviser was kindly invited by Sarah Bury, Branch chairperson for Shropshire, due to having been Head of Historic Environment at the former Shropshire County Council for many years. The detailed knowledge of the County accrued during this period is now very useful.

The role is not as intensive as the planning role of some members of the management committee. It does, however, involve responding to concerned members of the public and parish councils, who bring those aspects of listed building and conservation area consent applications to our attention, that are causing concern over the whole of the County.

Many villages have persons who are vigilant. One such person was the late Mike Bullen of Dovaston and Kinnerley, now succeeded by his widow Hilary Bullen, who first highlighted concerns about the Cross Keys PH at Kinnerley in 2014. This hostelry, had operated as such since the 19th century or earlier, but was threatened with obliteration for housing – a common malaise. Two years were spent defending this building, a circa 1400 medieval hall, with connections to the Knights Templar, against numerous applications for redevelopment. It sits on a site of equal importance, a village green of probable Saxon origin. During the course of the necessary investigations concerning the origin and development of both village and PH, it was concluded that the best way forward was conservation area designation for the village and listing for the PH. The former involved the writing of a conservation area appraisal, and numerous consultations and meetings with the local inhabitants, and the Parish Council. The Local Authority (LA) duly designated the conservation area (an unusual step at the present time) so that further applications affecting the historic core could be robustly defended.

Another similar PH in Whittington, immediately adjacent to the bailey of the Castle, was not so fortunate and has sadly been redeveloped for housing, despite the best efforts of the CPRE heritage adviser.

Gaining internal access in order to make a detailed assessment can be a problem when dealing with more private homes, such as the ubiquitous Shropshire yeoman farmhouse

(16th or 17th century). Such privileges are accorded only to Local Authority conservation officers (COs) so assessments must be made from photographs and drawings submitted with applications, which is no easy task. Assessing an application, if it is new development within the setting of a listed building or within a conservation area, is somewhat easier. An instance occurred in a remote hamlet in South Shropshire, where an application had been submitted for a bungalow set within an open field adjacent to fine listed former farmhouse. Views into and out of the conservation area would have been affected.

Barn conversions are still popular and can be problematic, not so much in getting the application drawings done correctly (the role of the LA CO) but in ensuring that the work is done correctly and valuable features are not needlessly destroyed during construction or repair. Concerned residents contacted the CPRE regarding a group of farm buildings near Newcastle-on-Clun. In such situations every effort is made not to trespass on the preserve of the LA CO, ditto another scenario where a whole barn blew down in a storm and where the owner wanted CPRE to intervene with the CO to ensure his consent for conversions was still valid. In situations such as these it is essential for the heritage adviser to work with the CO.

Members of CPRE are welcome to contact the Heritage Adviser concerning any application for listed building or conservation area consent that is causing concern, or regarding work on site that may not accord with LA consents (also, regarding buildings in a poor state of repair). In nearly all instances the heritage adviser will contact the LA CO to ensure that good relations are maintained with Shropshire Council.

Carole Ryan-Ridout BSc. MA MRICS MCifA IHBC
Heritage Adviser, CPRE Shropshire



The Cross Keys, Kinnerley - The Inn on the Village Green

Telford's "Green Clean"

Almost 1000 pieces of recyclable waste were recently collected by volunteers from the Shropshire branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

As part of the CPRE's nationwide 'Green Clean' campaign, 16 volunteers met in Telford Town Park on Saturday 22nd September in order to raise awareness of how much litter can be recycled, whilst also contributing to a clean-up of the countryside. The event was also in anticipation of the imminent deposit return system which the group lobbied for over a 10-year period.

Connor Furnival, a volunteer for the Telford & Wrekin district of CPRE Shropshire, said: *"The Government announced earlier this year that it would introduce a nationwide deposit return system for plastic and glass bottles, as well as aluminium cans with the aim of boosting recycling rates and combatting the plague of litter blighting the countryside. However, that system is yet to launch so the CPRE has taken steps to mobilise volunteers and clear as much litter as possible.*

"Litter removal currently costs the people of Shropshire almost £250,000 annually, yet what we achieved in just a few hours demonstrates that needn't be the case. We collected 11 bags of general waste and 14 bags of recyclable bottles and cans. Amongst those, was a total of 941 items of which 274 were plastic bottles, 388 were aluminium cans, 272 were glass bottles and 7 were either carton or tetra-pak items.

"Whilst not all of these would be eligible for the proposed deposit return scheme, the sheer quantity of waste collected demonstrates just how high the level of disregard for litter and recycling currently is. The sooner the government announces a launch date for the new scheme, the better as this should provide consumers with an incentive to see the level of waste abandoned in our countryside reduce."

An apology!

It has come to our notice that a handful of our 2018 Annual Reports were sent out to Members with no stamps on the envelopes, meaning that some recipients had to pay a small fee to receive them. We are very sorry about this admin error. If any members did have to pay for the postage and would like a reimbursement, please do contact me by phone or email (details opposite). Thank you! Sarah Jameson



CPRE's
GREEN
CLEAN



CPRE's GREEN CLEAN Join In!

CPRE's Green Clean is a litter pick to clean up the countryside this September – and we need your help!

By collecting all the bottles and cans you collect locally, we can provide national evidence to the Government that they need to create the best possible deposit return system.

To find out more, get in touch with your local organizer (details below) or visit our website or follow the action: #GreenClean

Date: 22nd Sept 2018
Time: 10.30am
Location: Telford Town Park
Contact: Connor Furnival,
CPRE Shropshire Telford & Wrekin District
(07740 728 927)

CPRE Shropshire
CPRE Shropshire – www.cpre.org.uk
www.cpre.org.uk/greenclean

CPRE Shropshire: contacts

Membership Secretary/Administrator: Sarah Jameson
01547 528546 / admin@cpreshropshire.org.uk

Communications & Press: Cally Ware
cally.ware@btinternet.com

Heritage Adviser: Carole Ryan-Ridout
ryanridout@btinternet.com

CPRE Shropshire Districts:

Bridgnorth: Stella & David Voysey
david.voysey@jacd.co.uk

Oswestry: Charles & Sally Green
charleswgreen@msn.com

Shrewsbury & Atcham: Susan Lockwood
susanlockwood345@btinternet.com

Telford & Wrekin: Connor Furnival
cpretelfordwrekin@gmail.com

Website: www.cpre.org.uk

CPRE Shropshire: charity number: 218782