

Campaign to Protect Rural England Sussex Branch CIO
Minutes of the 2nd Annual General Meeting
Held at
West Dean College, Chichester
On Thursday 16th July 2015 at 10.30 am

1. The President, Lord Egremont, welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from; Michael Brown, Sir Frederick Sowrey, John Burns, John and Virginia Hinze, John and Diane Foxley, Margaret Burton, Robert Cheesman, Stephen Hardy, John Harmer (Rambles E.Sx), Vic Lent, Julian Hill.

3. **Resolution to approve and sign the Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting**

The Minutes of the 41st Annual General Meeting (which had been previously circulated) were proposed by David Willingham and seconded by Roy Haycock. All approved and a copy signed by Lord Egremont.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

5. **Chairman's Report**

David Johnson, Chairman, thanked Lord Egremont and welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He reported that it had been a busy year for the Branch. Thanks were passed to Georgia Wrighton who had stood down as Director at the beginning of 2015, to take up a post with CPRE London. David highlighted the following:

- The successful Awards Ceremony that took place in October 2014 at Firle Place. Thanks were passed to all those involved with the organisation of this successful event.
- The trips and outings continue to be extremely popular and thanks were passed to Lorna Train for organising the outings.
- Planning challenges continue to dominate the agendas within the Branch. Other threats include the A27 road improvements and the second runway at Gatwick .
- It has been agreed that part of the Branch's title "Countryside Trust" will no longer be used as it considered that "Trust" is a misused word. The organisation will be known as "the Sussex Branch of CPRE."
- Although the letter 'P' stands for 'Protection' in the organisation's name it should also stand for 'Promotion.'
- The need to improve and strengthen District Groups continues as a priority. Their primary role is as a form of 'intelligence' – monitoring planning and developments in their particular area. Linking with other similar organisations continues.
- Interviews have taken place to find a replacement for Georgia, as part time Director, and DJ hopes to announce an appointment shortly. Staff, Trustees and active volunteers have worked even harder in GW's absence and grateful thanks are passed to them.

Finally, DJ expressed a desire for CPRE Sussex to take a positive stance within our county and find ways to influence the shape of Sussex in the next 15-20 years.

6. Treasurers Report

Richard Shirley, Branch Treasurer reported that this year's report is the first for the new Sussex Branch CIO which took over the business of the previous CPRE Sussex entity with effect from 1st July 2014. The first trading period of the new CIO ran for six months from 1st July to 31st December 2014.

A separate Statement of Financial Activities has been prepared and shows the manner in which a Net Surplus of approx £47k for the full year ending 31st December 2014 has been derived. This surplus has been made possible by the receipt of a legacy totalling £93,495.

CPRE Sussex continues to budget its activities on a planned deficit basis and the result for 2014 show a high level of compliance to budgeted levels of income and expenditure. Legacies continue to be taken into account when they are received. They are not budgeted for.

The Trustees continue to review the financial performance of the Charity on a regular basis in order to maintain a balance of two principal financial imperatives:

- To utilise the resources of the Charity in the most active and constructive way possible, year on year.
- To have due regard to the requirements of the Charity on an ongoing basis and for future years.

Edmund Critchley commented that legacies cannot be relied upon and vary greatly year on year.

David Willingham questioned the '£5k restricted' legacy. It was confirmed that this was for projects relating to Cuckmere.

Lord Egremont thanked Richard for his excellent management of the finances.

7. Resolution to Adopt the Financial Report for the period July-December 2014

Lord Egremont thanked David Johnson and Richard Shirley for their hard work.

The Report and the Annual Accounts were adopted at the meeting. They were proposed by Peter Dawson and seconded by Lawrence Keeley.

8. Resolution to dissolve the unincorporated branch and to notify the Charity Commission Accordingly

David Johnson explained that this item was the final 'administrative' step following the establishment in 2014 of the charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) called The Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch CIO (registered charity No: 1156568) and the transfer to it of all the assets (including contingent assets), liabilities and operations of the unincorporated branch known as the Sussex Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (registered charity no. 265028).

The resolution to dissolve the unincorporated branch was proposed by Richard Shirley and seconded by Rodney Chambers.

9. Resignation of Officers and Trustees

The resignation of Michael Brown as Trustee was reluctantly accepted by the Board. Lord Egremont thanked Michael on behalf of the Branch for all his hard work, particularly setting up the new CIO.

10. The Election of Officers and Trustees

- (a) That *Lord Egremont* is re-appointed as President of the charity for a 1 year period:
Proposed: Roy Haycock
Seconded: Roy Coppard
- (b) That *Margaret Moore* is re-appointed as Vice-President of the charity for a 1 year period.
Proposed: Edmund Critchley
Seconded: David Johnson
- (c) That *Rodney Chambers* be appointed as Vice-President of the charity for a 1 year period.
Proposed: David Johnson
Seconded: John Kay
- (d) That *David Johnson* is reappointed as the Chair of the Charity for a 1 year period.
Proposed: Lord Egremont
Seconded: David Willingham
- (e) To reappoint the following members of the Executive Committee as Trustees:
Rodney Chambers
Justin French-Brooks
Stephen Hardy
Proposed: Peter Dawson
Seconded: Geoff Bridges
- (f) To appoint the following as members of the Executive Committee as Trustees:
Julian Hill
Sally Pavey
David Willingham
Proposed: Lawrence Keeley
Seconded: Richard Shirley

11. Any Other Business

Peter Dawson expressed his concerns regarding the protection of undesignated landscapes. Peter lives in West Wittering and for many years he has managed, with a friend, a 9.5 acre meadow. They have been managing it for wildlife as it is not financially viable. The field now has an SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Interest) classification. Sadly, however, it is likely that the meadow will have to be sold by the owner and Peter Dawson is concerned that there appears to be no way of protecting this classification. John Kay congratulated Peter on his efforts and agreed that this was a very frustrating situation. It was agreed that Peter would prepare an article for the 'Sussex Review' in an attempt to 'spread the news' and encourage support.

Peter Dawson raised the issue of the apparently 'low calibre' planning employees in the District and County Councils. It is very clear that they are no match for the costly barristers and consultants employed by the developers. DJ responded by confirming that CPRE Sussex may, on a case by case basis, provide consultancy expertise but criteria for doing this is very strict.

David Roberts feels that it is important that National Officer lobby the Government on the unfortunate weakening of planning laws in favour of housing developments.

David Sawers (Worthing) asked if it would be possible to push for a public enquiry for the Arundel A27 proposals. He feels that it is important to expose any political influences on consultants' recommendations. DJ confirmed that there had been a meeting on Tuesday 14th July with the design engineers and the report was eagerly awaited! He also asked that if any of the members had knowledge of roads to let him know.

Colin Brent (Lewes) raised the issue of Lewes District Council appearing to act as a developer. A senior officer within the Council has apparently selected (with little or no consultation) 49 sites, including Jubilee Gardens, as areas for house building. John Kay agreed that this was an interesting situation and one that CPRE Sussex would be monitoring.

Lawrence Keeley (Herstmonceux) expressed concern over the lack of infrastructure within new housing developments. He informed the meeting about the existence of 'Land Community Trusts' - local organisations set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community. It was agreed that Lawrence would write an article for the 'Sussex Review' about LCT's.

It was agreed that CPRE needs to continue to push for the development of brownfield sites.

To summarise the discussions, David Johnson confirmed that:

- National Office tries to influence planning legislation.
- It is important to pool member expertise – in order to share knowledge and gain expertise.
- CPRE needs to continue to promote the countryside – particularly 'tapping into' the younger generation in order to change perceptions/knowledge of the countryside.

All agreed that this had been a really useful discussion, and CPRE Sussex will keep challenging where necessary.

To conclude Lord Egremont thanked David Johnson, The Board of Trustees, office staff and the membership for their continued support and hard work. He also thanked our hosts, West Dean College, for providing such a splendid setting for this year's AGM!

The meeting welcomed Chris Hare, a local historian, whose interesting talk was entitled "*How the Sussex Landscape has shaped the lives of Sussex People.*"

Margaret Wilkinson, Head of Planning for Real ran a short session "*Creating a vision of the Sussex we would like to see.*"

Signed..... Date.....