

CPRE Essex: Chairman's Report

October 2020

Over the past year, CPRE-Essex has been involved in many areas, but for this report, I have attempted to categorise our main activities:

People

Michael Hand our planning consultant has represented us at various major planning events. Having had considerable success in the recently cancelled garden villages proposals for West Essex.

David Mairs our communications expert has grown our web site and social media links to the point where we now quite often enjoy 1000 viewings of our sites in a month. He also ensures that we have local newspaper coverage as well as keeping us up to date with National CPRE initiatives and features.

Ed Dixon and Keith Francis both received long service awards for their excellent work over many years.

Events/ Initiatives

We have contributed to a number of key events including; affordable housing commission, Oxford/Cambridge Arc. Forum. Adding our support to; the Landscapes Review written by Julian Clover, Easton Park restoration project, Lower Thames Crossing etc.

Using one of our funds, we have been able to contribute towards the upkeep of both Alderford and Bocking mills.

Strategy

We now have in place the CPRE-Essex Strategic Plan for the period 2020-26. It is a working document that as a charity we will measure ourselves against each year. It includes,

How we;

Connect people and the countryside,

Promote health and wellbeing projects,

Work with local and national government,

Lobby governments, national and local,

Work or promote other applicable organisations,

Grow our capacity,

Increase membership.

An abbreviated version of the document will be posted on our web site.

Recruitment

In this area, we still need to do much more. However, the news that national intends to run some advertising features may help us promote our cause and get people involved.

Looking Forward

Whilst it does not fit into the financial year that this AGM reports on it is worth noting the considerable interest in a feature that we ran during the Corona virus lock down period. "Our lovely Essex". To help our members and others through this very difficult period we encouraged people to send in features or photographs of memorable Essex sites, either ones being missed or ones seen while taking socially distance walks, all of which were placed on our web site. It was an outstanding success. Moreover, it will feature in the CPRE National magazine.

Covid- 19

Whilst in theory the outbreak of the Coronal pandemic just about falls outside this report, it's worth mentioning that although virtual meetings are not ideal it has enabled us to be in more contact with the larger CPRE community across England. To understand their challenges which tend to be much the same as ours: namely this government's proposed assault on the planning rules!

David N Knight