



The countryside charity

Essex

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Dear Candidate

PROMOTING, PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE COUNTRYSIDE IN ESSEX

I am writing to ask you, as a local candidate for the 2021 local elections, to support the local election manifesto produced by CPRE Essex. CPRE is the countryside charity that campaigns to promote, enhance and protect the countryside for everyone's benefit. We stand up for the countryside so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations.

The beauty of the Essex countryside is a local treasure and is a shared resource for all, irrespective of ownership, ability or background. The countryside has also been repeatedly shown to provide a wide range of social, environmental and health benefits. The next few years will be critical to ensure that we provide the new houses and infrastructure we desperately need. However, this need not come at the expense of our beautiful, living landscape.

Our manifesto calls on all political parties to develop better policies in four key areas:

1) Promote countryside solutions to the climate emergency

- Developing and implement a local authority strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Embedding climate change considerations into policy-making on all issues, demonstrating leadership by, for instance, maintaining and managing publicly-owned farmland to ensure it is farmed in harmony with nature to lock up carbon.
- Urging central government to invest in nature-based solutions, including the restoration and planting of England's hedgerows, to achieve at least a 40% increase in their length by 2050.

2) Build a planning system that works for people, nature and the environment

- Setting ambitious policies in Local Plans targeted at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure that all developments are well designed.
- Protecting, enhancing and increasing access to the Green Belt and other protected landscapes, as well as local green spaces.
- Making building affordable homes and local needs a priority, and ensuring that all developments are in sustainable locations.

3) Deliver a comprehensive bus network for rural communities

- Urging central government to redirect funding from roadbuilding to provide the investment your council needs to fund a reliable, affordable and environmentally-friendly bus service for local communities.

- Prioritising future transport infrastructure investment towards sustainable travel including footpaths, cycle ways and bus lanes, which help people lead healthier lives while cutting carbon emissions.
- Making sustainable transport opportunities an essential requirement for approval of new housing developments. All new housing should be well connected to footpaths and cycle routes, as well as having reliable bus services available from day one.

4) Develop an 'all-in' Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers

- Urging central government to introduce an 'all-in' Deposit Return Scheme.
- Making the case for ambitious Extended Producer Responsibility and consistent collections reforms, so that local authorities can save money, create local green jobs and work towards their climate goals.

Alongside the aims of the manifesto, we would also like to highlight the huge pressure being placed on our highly productive agricultural land by over-development, mineral extraction and the multitude of solar farm proposals.

As the election approaches, will you make a public pledge to pursue these issues if you are elected to office?

We must take this chance to provide the housing and infrastructure the country needs, while protecting and enhancing the countryside for current and future generations to enjoy. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

David N Knight
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