



The countryside charity
Norfolk

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CPRE Norfolk calls for the value of our green spaces to be recognised

Dear Parish and Town Councils,

CPRE Norfolk is writing to you to ask you for your support to ensure that the value of our green spaces and countryside is given greater recognition and better protection at a time when Covid 19 has accentuated the really important benefits they provide.

Benefits of green spaces

The past weeks have highlighted the benefits of our green spaces to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of all. This is reinforced by various research, studies and surveys by many organisations, including CPRE. As we come out of lockdown it is vital that this is not forgotten, but instead is used to underpin local strategies at borough, district, city and parish level, as well as being used to inform policy-making in new and emerging local authority plans. It will be tempting to focus on growth and development to reboot the economy, but we urge authorities to see this period as a genuine opportunity for improving Norfolk's health and wellbeing through focussing on green spaces, nature and wildlife.

Over two-thirds of us want to see our local green spaces enhanced with more plants and wildlife, our new research shows.

It was perhaps natural that the lockdown during the coronavirus pandemic would affect how we feel about our local green spaces. Data from the Office of National Statistics shows that one in every eight households doesn't have access to a garden, so daily exercise in nearby countryside and parks and other green spaces became a lifeline to many. According to survey data from Natural England, in England Black people are nearly four times as likely as White people to have no access to outdoor space at home, whether it be a private or shared garden, a patio or a balcony (37% compared with 10%).

We at CPRE have long campaigned for us all to have easy access to quality green spaces from our doorsteps. And new online research that we commissioned just as lockdown started, working with the HomeOwners Alliance, shows that our time in a pandemic has really reinforced just how much people want these green spaces to be the best they can be.

Making green spaces greener

We asked over 2000 people some key questions about their green spaces, and 71% of those asked told us that they would like to see these enhanced. Our survey shows the many ways that people would like to see these local spaces, including their nearby countryside, made even better. Over half said they'd like to see more wildlife including birds, butterflies and bees, and almost exactly the same amount of people said they want more variety in the trees, shrubs, hedgerows, plants and flowers in these areas. It seems we're all hoping for rich and diverse spaces in which to rest and play.

President: Professor Tim O'Riordan

Chairman: Christopher Dady
Registered charity number 210706

Treasurer: George Ridgway



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It's not neat lawns many people are picturing, either. 30% told us that they'd like to see fewer manicured spaces and more wildness, where nature has been allowed to take its course. And we want to explore and exercise safely in these areas, with over a third of people saying they'd like more signposted walks and 34% saying they'd like paths and plants to be better maintained.

A beating green heart

We'll continue to call on the government and Local Authorities to do all they can to enhance and protect these local spaces and the countryside in general. Alongside greater access should come education around the Countryside Code. Some specific actions which would help to ensure these green spaces are and remain available for the benefit of all are:

- Improving signposting and publicity of public rights of way.
- Adopting a Green Belt for Norwich on a 'green wedges' model in part to give protected green corridors to and from the countryside.
- Ensuring that existing sites for housing in current Local Plans are built before additional sites are considered for development – this common-sense phased approach to housing delivery is supported by 156 Parish and Town Councils across Norfolk and if adopted will ensure that many green fields will be saved from unnecessary development.
- Developing public engagement projects related to local green spaces, their biodiversity, health benefits and how best to enjoy them.

As society emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic the value of green spaces and the countryside deserves greater recognition and protection. Please consider joining our CPRE Norfolk Alliance which aims to protect Greenfields from development by securing a phased approach to the delivery of housing. It is not too late to get the draft GNLP changed to allow this approach. Click here for more details: [CPRE Norfolk Alliance](#)

CPRE Norfolk

If you would like to support CPRE Norfolk further in its work to connect people with the countryside so that everyone can benefit from and value it, please consider:

- Making a one-off [donation](#)
- [Joining CPRE](#) from £3 per month – for this you become a member of CPRE nationally as well as of CPRE Norfolk
- Signing our Green Belt for Norwich [petition](#)

Yours faithfully,

David Hook Chair, Vision for Norfolk Committee, CPRE Norfolk
Michael Rayner Planning Campaigns Consultant, CPRE Norfolk

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