



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

Parliamentary News: September 2008

Imagine an England where towns and cities are lively, distinctive, full of green space and where locally grown food occupies shop shelves. Imagine a countryside which is viable and vibrant, and provides a tranquil retreat for all of us.

CPRE's Vision 2026

CPRE is leading a national debate on our vision of the English countryside in 2026, our centenary year. No one can be sure of what the countryside will look, sound and feel like in the future, but we can be sure that the decisions we take today will affect that vision. The invitation to debate is open to all. The countryside is, after all, a resource for everyone.

Where we have been and where we are going...

Over the past year and a half we have held a series of public discussions with leading policy thinkers, academics and politicians, including Rt Hon David Miliband MP (when he was Secretary of State for the Environment) and, more recently, Rt Hon David Cameron MP – we hope to host a debate with Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP soon. We have also met our own county and regional groups to gain their perspectives on local issues. We published a discussion pamphlet early this year to stimulate debate and the responses have helped us to start shaping our vision, but we want to understand the needs and perspectives of a wider selection of people. Our ambition is to encourage a consensus on the future of the countryside that can serve as a blueprint for those interested in the future of rural England.

Strengthening policy

Our vision for 2026 will guide our own work over the coming years, and, we hope, will shape public attitudes and political engagement towards a coherent and positive vision for rural England. Fundamentally, CPRE's main focus remains on how we will use land in the future – planning is at the heart of our vision. But a vision for the countryside has to provide an integrated view of the multiple roles that government and society play in shaping the future of our rural areas.

Our vision for the countryside in 2026 is likely to include:

- more people living and working in the countryside;
- farmers who are rewarded for landscape conservation and ethical food production;
- more countryside visitors, and a wider understanding of rural issues;
- wilder, wetter and more wooded landscapes, especially in the uplands, and;
- greener lifestyles, more energy-efficient buildings and micropower generation.

But there are many areas where further debate is needed. Examples include:

- What impact will an increasing population and expanding urban areas have on Green Belts, and how can we ensure that these are enjoyed more by urban dwellers?
- How can we ensure that farmers are able to safeguard the environment in a world of growing demand for food and energy crops?
- How can we get the most from renewable sources of energy without compromising the beauty and tranquillity of the countryside?

Tell us what your vision is

If you would like to contribute to the debate you can meet CPRE staff to discuss our vision one-to-one, or you can contribute via our website at www.cpre.org.uk/debates. Why not ask your constituents to contribute too.

If you are interested in learning more about Vision 2026 or have any further questions, please contact Sam Redding at CPRE.

Planning Bill

When Parliament returns on 6th October, the Lords will resume its scrutiny of the Planning Bill at Committee stage.

At the Lords Second Reading Debate in July, peers on all sides of the house expressed concern at plans to create an Infrastructure Planning Commission with decision-making powers on major infrastructure projects. Peers were also concerned about the lack of adequate parliamentary scrutiny of National Policy Statements, and by the lack of detail on plans to introduce a Community Infrastructure levy which aims to give communities a share in the enhanced value that development brings to land.

CPRE will continue working with peers to amend the Bill at Lords committee stage, to press for democratic accountability to remain central to the planning process, and for all National Policy Statements, particularly those that specify locations for development, to be subject to full consultation at local and national level. For more detailed briefings on the Planning Bill please contact Adam Royle.

***Stop the Drop* – campaign update**

In our last newsletter, we reported on our *Stop the Drop* campaign against litter and fly-tipping.

We held a well-attended parliamentary reception in June to support the campaign, at which our President, Bill Bryson, met MPs and Peers from all parties. Defra Minister Jonathan Shaw spoke at the event, and endorsed our aims. This is welcome, as is the recent decision by Defra to look again at the merits of a bottle deposit scheme in the UK; we hope their study will reach positive conclusions.

Bill also publicised the campaign in a *Panorama* documentary in August which was watched by 4.5 million people – the excellent public response shows the extent of concern about litter and fly-tipping. MPs can support the campaign by signing EDM 1634, which has broad cross-party support. You can also encourage constituents to visit www.litteraction.org.uk to find out about clean-up activities near them.

CPRE at the 2008 Party Conferences

CPRE will be at the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Conservative conferences this year. We will be looking at responsibility for litter in joint events with ENCAMS. We will also be at the Climate Clinic with RIBA for a timely discussion on the contentious issue of eco-towns.

Liberal Democrat Conference

- Sun 14th Sept, 18:15-19:30

Litter: whose responsibility? at the Connaught Hotel, room Priory 1 with Dan Rogerson MP

- Mon 15th Sept, 17:45-19:00

Climate Clinic: eco-towns at Punshon Church House with Dan Rogerson MP

Labour Conference

- Mon 22nd Sept, 19:30-20:30

Litter: whose responsibility? at the Radisson Hotel, Stanley Livingstone Room with Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP *tbc*

- Tues 23rd Sept, 12:45-14:00

Climate Clinic: eco-towns at the Cube with Iain Wright MP

Conservative Conference

- Mon 29th Sept, 19:30-21:30

Litter: whose responsibility? at the ICC, Hall 10B with Bill Wiggin MP

- Tues 30th Sept, 12:45-14:00

Climate Clinic: eco-towns at 1 Regency Wharf with Jacqui Lait MP

Please do join the discussion.

CPRE's political website

Visit CPRE's micro-site on the ePolitix website (www.epolitix.com) to find useful parliamentary briefings and our recent policy consultations.

Find us in the stakeholder section under Campaign to Protect Rural England.

We're here to help

Contact our National Office policy and campaigns team for information on our work:

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You can also find out more about our work by visiting www.cpre.org.uk