

## FRIENDS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT & CPRE SOUTH YORKSHIRE

### STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

*For the countryside, for communities, for the future*

#### INTRODUCTION

In the late summer of 2011, the Board of Trustees of Friends of the Peak District and CPRE South Yorkshire (CPRE Peak District and South Yorkshire) took the decision to start planning for a smaller organisation and reduced expenditure from January 2013, with the intention of bringing income and expenditure into balance from that date. As part of that aim, a strategic review was undertaken, which was used to inform an organisational review and to guide the first three years of the restructured organisation.

In 2015, with stable staffing and finances, we are now in a position to plan positively for the next five years with the key aims of growing our membership, resources and effectiveness.

#### BACKGROUND

Since 1924, when our precursor, The Sheffield Association for the Protection of Local Scenery, was founded, we have campaigned to protect and enhance the countryside of the Peak District and South Yorkshire. We were influential in establishing the Peak District as Britain's first national park in 1951 and in creating the Sheffield Green Belt. In the past 50 years, the organisation has maintained a well-deserved reputation for principled and tenacious defence of the tenets of strong countryside protection and good planning. In the last decade we have had significant success in stopping quarrying threats, reducing motorised damage to precious green lanes, securing multi-million pound funding for removing intrusive electricity infrastructure and, through innovative training programmes, helped communities to get more involved in planning.

We are an independent body, part of the CPRE network and a member of the Campaign for National Parks. We are also a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee; our registered name is The Peak District and South Yorkshire branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. The organisation is managed by an elected board of trustees (currently seven members) who meet four times a year.

#### CONTEXT TO 2016-2020

##### External developments

Over the next five years, we anticipate increasing threats to our local countryside as the economy recovers, combined with the Government's view that further relaxing the planning system will favour growth. But resources for countryside protection - both at a statutory and non-statutory level - are still being cut. This means there will be many serious challenges that we need to face up to, but with fewer resources. Engaging in more partnership work will assist us to address these challenges and we will need to identify strategic partnerships that can help deliver our aims and objectives.

Much of our agenda will be driven by:

- The pressure on local authorities to help deliver high (and in our view, unsustainable) levels of house building
- Plans to pump prime the economies of the northern cities with major infrastructural investment
- Increased devolution of decision-making (including for planning) to city regions and other forms of combined authorities

We therefore anticipate more unsustainable development, predominantly in the wider (undesigned) countryside, although threats to green belts and national parks are also growing.

To deal with these issues (which provide opportunities as well as threats), we must find new ways to engage communities in the planning threats they face and with opportunities for helping shape their area. We must also strengthen our work with partner organisations (adjacent CPRE branches, CNP and CPRE nationally) and find new allies for our vital work.

### **Our area**

We cover all the countryside within the boundaries of the Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster unitary authorities, all of the Peak District National Park, the High Peak Borough Council area and the parishes of Barlow, Holmesfield, Dronfield, Eckington, Unstone and Killamarsh in North East Derbyshire. We also have regard to urban planning issues in our areas which can crucially affect the balance of development between town and country.

### **Our charitable objectives**

Our charitable objects are 'to promote and encourage for the benefit of the public the improvement and protection of the English countryside and in particular the area within the Branch boundaries and its towns and villages and the better development of the rural environment.'

### **OUR WORK**

#### **This is what we want:**

A living, working countryside that changes with time but remains beautiful forever.

#### **This is what we do:**

We campaign to protect, enhance and care for the countryside and rural livelihoods in the Peak District and South Yorkshire. *We're standing up for our countryside!*

#### **Our focus in South Yorkshire:**

Working with local people, communities and like-minded organisations to help combat the major threats posed to the South Yorkshire countryside by inappropriate developments and policies.

#### **Our focus in the Peak District:**

Working with partners and local communities to make sure the National Park and the wider Peak District are protected through appropriate policies and action.

#### **This is what we do:**

- We seek to influence planning policy so that the countryside is protected
- We campaign against development proposals which will damage the countryside
- We provide advice and support to local communities and groups to empower them to care for their local area, through engagement with the planning system
- We work in partnership with other groups and organisations to campaign against major threats to the countryside
- We run projects and campaigns which safeguard and enhance the countryside

- We work to raise awareness among policy makers and the public about issues that undermine the beauty and sustainability of the countryside

## **OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2016-2020**

### **1. Address major threats to the countryside of the Peak District and South Yorkshire with focused, time-limited campaigns**

*To achieve this we will:*

- Challenge plans and policies which undermine countryside protection, especially in the green belt and the PDNP
- Monitor and publicise the impacts of inappropriate development on the wider, undesignated countryside, with a special focus on eastern Doncaster which deserves green belt designation
- Comment and campaign on specific cases as necessary
- Run focused and time-limited campaigns and projects. These are likely to be linked to specific major development proposals and/or broader issues such as damage to green lanes and green belt protection. We anticipate running only one or two campaigns or projects at a time, subject to resources
- Work closely with partner organisations, especially CPRE and CNP, to strengthen our voice with decision makers and to draw in additional expertise and resources

### **2. Working in partnership, promote the wider benefits of well protected countryside as an essential ingredient in the revitalisation of the northern economy**

*To achieve this we will:*

- Develop and promote a persuasive case for local and regional authorities and Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) to recognize that strong protection of the countryside, including the Peak District National Park, is a pre-requisite for regenerating the rural and urban regional economy
- Identify and work with suitable allies, both local and regional, to help deliver complementary messages to key decision makers
- Make the case for more democratic accountability, including a stronger countryside voice, within city region/combined authority structures

### **3. Strengthen our work with local communities so they are better able to shape the future of their countryside, primarily by resisting unsustainable development**

*To achieve this we will:*

- Develop a network of community champions ('eyes and ears') in the Peak District and South Yorkshire
- Provide training and advice on the planning system and how to influence it
- Identify and focus on joint campaigns that engender real local concern and passion
- Create cost effective ways of communicating with local communities to enable closer joint working
- Engage volunteers and campaigners from Mosaic groups and hard to reach communities to work with us

### **4. Grow our work with partners to build long-term influence that adds weight to our local and regional advocacy and organizational objectives**

*To achieve this we will:*

- Review our current network of relationships to identify realistic prospective partners who are best placed to add weight to our strategic objectives
- Working with partners, identify projects and funders which would help to further mutual objectives

**5. At least double our membership and widen our supporter base to lend weight to our work**

*To achieve this we will:*

- Invest reserves in a member recruitment programme led by an additional (PT) member of staff
- Review, refine and build our brand identities to maximize public understanding of our local 'offer'
- Devise and implement a member recruitment strategy, subject to annual review, aimed at doubling our membership income, widening our support (especially with business) and spreading it geographically
- Use community contacts and volunteers to raise awareness of our work and its value to rural communities and visitors
- Engage more actively with members, particularly via social media and e-campaigning

**6. Secure the funding and resources (especially volunteer input) necessary to deliver a sustainable organisation capable of delivering our strategic objectives**

*To achieve this, we will:*

- Maintain an effective fundraising programme, focused on providing unrestricted income for our core work and objectives
- Develop a comprehensive volunteer offer and an effective volunteer management system that helps us recruit and retain the volunteers we need to grow and prosper
- Recruit trustees and staff, as required, and ensure they are supported and valued
- Make sure we have a well run office
- Meet and exceed our legal requirements through adoption of best practice in administration and governance, appropriate to an organisation of our size

**OUR APPROACH TO DELIVERING OUR OBJECTIVES**

**How we campaign**

Campaigning is key to how we will deliver many of our objectives. It will:

- Be professional, well informed and well respected
- Make the most of opportunities to work in partnership, especially with affected communities
- Seek ways to engage the public and our members in campaigning and in responding to planning issues
- Link to fundraising and profile-raising activities
- Respond to threats to the countryside and promote measures that will enhance it.

**What we will prioritise**

With limited resources, we will have to prioritise our work. Protecting and enhancing the Peak District and South Yorkshire countryside is core to our identity as a countryside campaigning charity, so work which delivers this will be given top priority. We must also focus on developing our organisation, as this is essential to our long term survival.

As a CPRE branch, we will prioritise work which enables us to work in harness with national CPRE campaigns. This makes our efforts more effective and promotes a strong, common message. Similarly, as part of the CNP network of national park societies, we will identify opportunities for effective joint working on our strategic objectives, including fundraising and grant opportunities.

Wherever possible, we need to plan activities that deliver multiple benefits. This will be crucial to maximising what we can achieve. A key consideration will be to what extent our campaign goals and plans provide opportunities for growing our influence and attracting the funds and resources we need to do our work.

### **How we will resource our work**

We will use our available core resources (predominantly our annual income) to employ professional staff to help deliver our strategic aims and objectives. We will also need to strengthen our volunteer team by recruiting volunteers who will take responsibility, with staff guidance, for specific tasks and project work. Our income will be reliant on the success of our fundraising programme, including our ability to retain and grow our membership.

### **How we will fundraise**

The fundraising strategy is based on seeking income from a range of sources, so that we are not over-reliant on any one area. It focuses on sources of income which complement each other and our work, and which encourage greater supporter engagement.

Key sources of income are:

- Membership - our main source of unrestricted income
- Events
- Legacies
- Corporate fundraising

Supplementary sources are:

- Appeals
- Community fundraising
- Trading

For the fundraising strategy to succeed, we need to:

- Create opportunities to engage people in our work
- Demonstrate the positive impact of our work on the countryside, its amenity and rural livelihoods, even when our work is done as part of a partnership with others
- Ensure that fundraising is considered in all aspects of our work
- Build strong relationships with members, with local communities in the areas we cover and with businesses and their networks

## **MEASURING OUR EFFECTIVENESS**

We will produce annual plans to show how we will deliver the things we want to achieve, and review effectiveness annually and through quarterly monitoring updates to our Board of Trustees. These reviews will help shape our work and inform the development of future annual plans.

We will continue to record data that will help inform and improve our effectiveness. This will include improved membership and income data and monitoring our influence on planning cases we engage with.

## RISKS

The key risks to delivering this plan are:

- A failure to generate sufficient income and/or control costs. This can be mitigated by careful planning and monitoring, and by ensuring that sufficient resource is dedicated to fundraising
- An inability to prioritise our work correctly, resulting in a poor delivery against objectives because too much is being attempted at once, or by missing opportunities, for example, to increase income. This can be mitigated by maintaining annual planning systems, producing detailed project plans in advance and effective Board oversight
- High staff and volunteer turnover and/or the inability to recruit the right staff and volunteers