



The countryside charity  
Staffordshire

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Working locally and nationally to protect and enhance a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy.

Charity number 219443

Dear Clerk,

### **Invitation to parish councils to join CPRE Staffordshire**

CPRE Staffordshire, the countryside charity, invites Parish Councils to join it in protecting the countryside, towns and villages of the wonderful and varied county of Staffordshire.

Part of the national CPRE network, our aim is to protect, promote and enhance Staffordshire's valued landscapes and green spaces. We're passionate about making the countryside a better place for everyone to live, work and enjoy.

Our team keeps a watching brief on planning applications and responds to Local Plan consultations. Over the past year, we have examined and commented on the South Staffordshire Preferred Options consultation, the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Issues & Options consultation and the Black Country Plan consultation. Our volunteer planning advisor recently offered advice to the Protect Audley Parish Greenbelt group about the most effective way of making progress in fighting the proposals to build warehouses on farmland in the Green Belt.

It's at the Local Plan stage where we have the best chance to influence planning and shape the future of our local area for years to come. CPRE will be responding to the two consultations that close next month: Stafford Borough's Preferred Options, which is proposing over 4,500 new homes across the borough, including 3,000 at a new "garden community" on agricultural land, and South Staffordshire District Council's Regulation 19 consultation, which is looking at whether the final proposed Plan is sound and has been properly prepared.

We currently have 18 parish councils who are members of CPRE Staffordshire. Becoming a member of CPRE is the best way to support your local countryside and utilise the information and resources we have available. Together, we can be more effective in protecting the Staffordshire countryside and helping to support local communities for generations to come.

Joining CPRE costs from just £36 a year. Member councils will be able to receive advice from our dedicated planning advisor and will have access to objective information on a full range of planning matters, as well as issues such as light pollution, litter and hedgerows. CPRE also produces an invaluable range of online and print publications giving practical help and information on planning and countryside related issues.

**Here are five reasons why parish and town councils should support or join CPRE:**

**1. Most parish councils are situated in rural areas. Town councils appreciate the countryside around their urban areas.**

CPRE campaigns to protect rural England for all to enjoy. As former CPRE President Bill Bryson said, “It’s rare and dangerously finite, and every bit of it should be cherished.”

Over the past couple of years, we have kept up the pressure on local councils, planning departments and MPs in the West Midlands and South Staffordshire not to release land from the Green Belt, and to re-examine the calculations of housing numbers used to justify its release. CPRE West Midlands has produced two reports into this topic, the [Report on Urban Capacity and Green Belt Material](#) and [Update on Urban Capacity](#).

**2. Planning can be one of the most controversial issues in local communities.**

CPRE can help make the planning process easier to follow. During the Local Plan consultation periods for South Staffordshire and Stafford Borough, we organised online training sessions for parish councils, covering the Local Plan process and how to respond effectively.

One attendee commented: *“It was a really useful and informative session that was well presented”*. Another said: *“It was very well presented. Very helpful. Well done and thank you.”*

**3. The Localism Act puts more responsibilities on parish councils, for example with reference to Neighbourhood Plans.**

CPRE provides information about the latest legislation and relevant case studies.

**4. Specialist briefings on topics such as renewable energy or the Green Belt are needed by parish and town councils.**

CPRE’s national office prepares a range of easily accessible, reliable background information and briefing reports. Parish councils can benefit from CPRE’s invaluable range of online and print publications such as Fieldwork, which gives practical help, information and updates on planning and countryside issues.

**5. Parish councils sometimes need specific help when responding to planning applications in their areas.**

Staffordshire CPRE keeps a watching brief on applications across the county, with the help of a specialist planning advisor. Parish councils can call on CPRE Staffordshire and the national CPRE office for advice and support on a full range of planning matters.

**So why not suggest that your council joins CPRE? For more information, please contact the Stafford office, or [join online on CPRE’s website](#).**

Yours faithfully,

*Mohammed Khuram*

Mohammed Khuram  
Chairman

