

CPRE letter writers network



Campaign to Protect
Rural England

CPRE letter writers briefing

Tips when writing your letter

- You don't have to write pages to express your concerns. Something clear, short and to the point is ideal.
- There are likely to be many candidates standing in your constituency—write to one, or as many as you can.
- Make sure that you explain your views and why the issues affect you—be positive and provide solutions wherever possible. CPRE's manifesto has been produced to provide clear positive actions that will help ensure the continuing protection of the countryside.
- Make sure you are specific about what you want candidates to support.
- If there are local examples you can think of, please do drop them into your letter. This is a great way to personalise your approach and give it local relevance, which will engage your candidates even more.
- You can download a copy of our manifesto from our website at www.cpre.org.uk, or contact our publications team to request further copies: publications@cpre.org.uk or call freephone 0800 163 680.
- As we go to press, there is no date for the election, but you can write to your candidates at any time up until the big day!

Extra actions you can take

Do you have a little more time? Why not write a letter to your local paper highlighting the manifesto. Explain that you support it, and that you have written to your candidates in the hope that they will support it too.

Please let us know whether you are able to take this extra action. CPRE staff always back up the action requests we make of our supporters.

A little help goes a long way

You can help CPRE in all sorts of ways; letter writing is just one of them. Have you considered becoming a volunteer for one of our groups—we have a Branch in every county and they will be very grateful for more assistance in their local campaigns.

You can also make a donation to support our campaigns at <http://www.cpre.org.uk/support/joinus>, or call freephone 0800 163 680.

Update on last letter writer request

Electricity Networks Infrastructure Consultation—Pylons

Thank you to everyone who responded to the consultation on the Electricity Networks Infrastructure. Once again, we received overwhelming support from you, and we really do appreciate every letter that is written.

The consultation closed on 22nd February and the responses will now be collated. We hope for a formal response from Government within the next few months and I would hope to include an update on this in the next appeal.

Policy staff at national office submitted evidence to the consultation and more recently to the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee (a cross party group of MPs which scrutinises Departmental activity). Our evidence supported your letters and highlighted specifically that the proposals were not sustainable. CPRE branch groups across the country are actively engaged with local cases where pylons are intruding on beautiful countryside. Please contact your local group to see whether they are involved in any specific local campaigns.

9 March 2010

Dear Friend

Help us make the countryside count in the general election

The general election, which must take place by June of this year, is a hugely important opportunity to ensure that prospective members of parliament support our countryside and demonstrate a commitment to its protection.

The election is a crucial time to impress upon candidates, of all parties, that there are real threats facing the countryside and that we need them to commit to protect our treasured landscapes. CPRE has produced a national countryside manifesto which we are asking parties and candidates to support in order to make real progress in protecting our countryside. This is enclosed with this appeal.

As one of our valued letter writers, I know that you feel strongly about the countryside, and that it should be protected. That is why I am asking you today to contact your local candidates and ask them to support our manifesto for the countryside. Your voice, and your vote, will be important to your local candidates at this time.

The attached briefing should give you all you need to write a short letter highlighting the main issues. When you have written, please mail back the form on the next page in the freepost envelope provided.

Thank you in advance for your help—a little time to write a letter will certainly go a very long way.

If you do have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (samr@cpre.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

Sam Redding
Campaigns Support Officer

Registered Office
128 Southwark Street
London SE1 0SW

Telephone: 020 7981 2800
Facsimile: 020 7981 2899
Email: info@cpre.org.uk
www.cpre.org.uk

Patron
Her Majesty The Queen

President
Bill Bryson

Chief Executive
Shaun Spiers

The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country.

A company limited by guarantee,
registered in England number 4302973
Registered charity number 1089685

Your name and address are printed on the back of this page to save repetition— if you are photocopying the page however, please provide your details.

- I have written to my candidate (s) (please indicate which party they represent)
- I have not written this time because
- I have passed this briefing on to a friend

Please return to: Sam Redding Email: SamR@cpre.org.uk Fax: 020 7981 2899

Please let us know whether you have been able to write. Likewise, tell us whether you can't write as it will help improve our campaigning work. Please use the freepost envelope provided.

Vote for the countryside!

Our countryside faces many challenges in the years ahead, but the coming general election provides an ideal opportunity to demonstrate to politicians that they have a chance to help shape the way we care for and use the countryside, now and in the future. Last year, CPRE launched a vision for the countryside in 2026, our centenary year. We are optimistic that our countryside can be a better place in 2026 than it is now, but that will depend on the decisions made between now and then.

Our manifesto

Our manifesto for the countryside will help to deliver this vision – we are using the manifesto to lobby the political parties to try to influence their policy programmes. Please help us achieve a better countryside for everyone.

We are asking our letter writers to contact their parliamentary candidates to ask them to support the manifesto. You will be sending a clear message to your future MP about the issues that really matter to the people they will be representing from next summer. In requesting that they give their support to an issue, you are also asking them to act on that commitment if they are elected.

What we are calling for

You will find enclosed with this appeal a copy of our manifesto which highlights the key commitments which will deliver a more beautiful, tranquil and varied countryside.

Ask your candidates to support:

- A democratic planning system that protects and enhances the countryside, promotes urban renewal and improves people's quality of life;
- Protection of our best landscapes, wider countryside, and Green Belts; and
- Action to tackle the rising tide of litter and fly-tipping

“a democratic planning system that protects and enhances the countryside, promotes urban renewal and improves people's quality of life”

A good planning system should not be viewed as an obstacle to development. It should, instead, be seen as a tool to ensure that development is appropriately located and takes all considerations, including the protection of our countryside, fully into account..

The planning system should help deliver a low carbon future and empower local communities to make the important decisions on developments that affect them, and the countryside they love.

We want candidates to support our call for a planning system that is plan-led and democratic. It must take account of the wide range of stakeholders involved, and ensure the right balance between varying interests (local, regional and national; economic, social and environmental etc.). Good planning is the key to truly sustainable development for our countryside, towns and cities.

“protection of our best landscapes, wider countryside and Green Belts”

CPRE has long campaigned for the protection of our most treasured landscapes. We can, with real pride, say that National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Green Belts were amongst our early achievements as an organisation; they have proved critical for the quality of life of countless people from all walks of life, and provided recreation, inspiration and access to tranquillity that refreshes and reinvigorates. They remain as important and relevant today as when they were first created.

But these areas are under growing pressure from development and climate change, and we need candidates to support their protection. They should be 'no-go areas' for intrusive development. We also need formal recognition that tranquillity and quality of life should be important factors in determining development plans and other decision-making processes.

“action to tackle the rising tide of litter and fly-tipping”

At a time when debate on economic policy is prominent, we are highlighting that local councils spend an estimated £780 million a year clearing up litter. In 2008/09, councils also dealt with 1.1 million incidents of fly-tipping. On top of this figure private landowners have to shoulder costs of up to £50 million a year to clear up after fly-tippers. We need to stop this unacceptable behaviour now. This will require action at local and national level, including improved education, stronger enforcement, and more support for organisations charged with cleaning up litter, and preventing it being dropped in the first place.

Ask your candidates to support action, such as introducing a national bottle deposit scheme which will reduce litter and increase recycling rates; the next government should also keep open the option of legislation to impose a tax on plastic bag use (should current voluntary reductions in bag use by retailers not be maintained); and give local authorities increased powers to tackle roadside litterers.

Who to write to

You can find out who your candidates are for the general election by contacting your local returning officer (contact your local council for details of the electoral services team). Remember to ask about candidates for the general election; there will probably also be candidates for local council elections, but these will not be the same people.

You can also look at political party websites where many candidates are already listed. These often contain biographies and contact details.

Conservative party - www.conservatives.com
Labour party – www.labour.org.uk
Liberal Democrats – www.libdems.org.uk

Obviously these are some of the parties that will be standing candidates. You can contact others too.

Please note that you can also write directly to candidates from the leading parties through CPRE's website – www.cpre.org.uk

If you are not sure of your constituency, please contact Sam Redding at CPRE national office on Thursdays or Fridays.



You have a democratic right to ask questions of the candidates in your constituency—after all, they are seeking your vote, so they should demonstrate to you why you might give it to them! This is your opportunity to make sure that they understand the issues that matter to you, so please speak up for the countryside in the coming general election.