

BRANCH PLAN – CAMPAIGNING STRATEGY

Our mission is to protect the Devon countryside in a way that underpins the local economy, whilst maintaining all that is best in the balance between necessary development and a tranquil, productive and beautiful environment.

Devon is a place where people work and live and where communities need services, jobs and housing if they are to survive and thrive. It is also a place of exceptional beauty and tranquillity, which draws visitors who contribute to our local economies. CPRE Devon's approach is this:

- We support an evidence-based planning system which balances the need for development against any harm that might be caused to this beauty and tranquillity, and to the responsible tourism industry that depends on it. We will therefore continue to scrutinise proposals for need balanced against environmental harm.
- We recognise that the planning system in England continues to be under sustained assault. Instead of being a mechanism for balancing competing claims on our land, the Government has turned it into an unbalanced instrument biased towards promoting economic growth. We believe that this dash for unplanned growth will have long term consequences that will irrevocably damage the character of Devon.
- We have become increasingly conscious that there has been insufficient debate about the land use implications of new developments, particularly the loss of land from agricultural production. For example, unsuitably located wind turbines, industrial scale solar panels and anaerobic digesters damage the natural beauty of Devon, as well as disrupt communities, businesses and individuals, and we will continue to campaign against them where they are inappropriately sited.
- We are aware that renewable energy structures are not the only cause of land being lost from farming. Housing, roads and waste management facilities all need new land.
- We do not oppose any of these developments on principle. On the contrary, we recognise all too well the necessity to attack the housing shortage, secure our energy supplies for the future, enable people to travel and dispose of our necessary waste. It is how these goals are achieved that divides opinion.

For generations, the visible function of most undeveloped land has been to provide food, particularly so in an agricultural county such as Devon where locally produced food is an important element in the way of life. In an increasingly unstable world we question the wisdom of randomly destroying our domestic food production capacity by allowing more and more land to be taken out of agricultural use. Yet discussion on this vital issue has so far been confined to think-tanks and academics.

Over the coming years, CPRE Devon will work to raise awareness of the risks to our food supplies caused by the loss of agricultural land to development which is either unnecessary or which would be better located on a brownfield site or more appropriate non-agricultural land.

This aim will inform our work in examining individual proposals for development as well as our public campaigning voice.

Our campaigns will also include supporting:-

- *the reinstatement of a fully functioning rail service between Okehampton to Exeter;
- *Devon County Council's aims to progress the off road cycle/bridle/footpath routes throughout the County (where appropriate) so that more people can enjoy the countryside in a safe environment;
- *the provision of good quality, affordable housing;
- *wildlife and biodiversity and the enforcement of habitat regulations.

And we will:

- *continue to raise awareness of a 'brownfield first' approach to new development throughout the County.
- *endeavour to raise the awareness of the importance of Devon's hedges.
- *continue to support maintaining vibrant rural communities and their facilities.
- * support outdoor learning and the development of interest and appreciation of the countryside in children and young people.
- *aim to raise awareness of CPRE and the work that we do both locally and nationally, by way of increased promotion and marketing.

For further information or help with any of these or other local issues, please contact us on 01392 966737 or email director@cpredevon.org.uk

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