

Peak District & South Yorkshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural
England

STRATEGIC PLAN

2008-2013



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
PEAK DISTRICT &
SOUTH YORKSHIRE



Friends of the
Peak District

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INTRODUCTION

This Strategic Plan covers the 5 years from January 2008 and is intended to shape and guide the work of the Peak District and South Yorkshire Branch of the CPRE during the next phase of our development. It is the result of a careful process of consultation and discussion, begun in mid 2006, and led by a small group of Trustees and the Chief Executive. This review process has included external interviews, desktop research, consultation with staff, a discussion day with Trustees and senior staff and a focus group of partners in South Yorkshire.

The review process has helped the organisation to understand the way in which the charity has evolved and identified changes in the external world that we should take into account, in particular: increased competition for funds and influence; new threats to the countryside and the relevance of government agendas to funding. Nothing in our current work was identified as no longer relevant, but several themes were identified either for additional work, or to shape the way in which we worked.

We have had to tackle some big issues. Whilst we were satisfied with what we were doing for the Peak District, the Board of Trustees decided that we needed to rethink what we did for South Yorkshire, and who we sought to work with in this area. The Trustees have reaffirmed that the organisation, with its two separate geographically based brands, should remain as one organisation. The strategic review process has also led the Board of Trustees to think more about the involvement of volunteers in our work. Trustees have also looked at possible options for our premises, and have thought once more about location, size of office space and assets. We have acknowledged again the need to develop a more widely attractive image in order to get our message across more effectively, and to emphasise the positive work of the charity.

Alongside this Strategic Plan, our Fundraising Strategy is intended to secure the future financial viability of the Branch, develop our membership base and raise our profile amongst people who love the countryside. Our biggest challenge in the future is going to be resourcing the work we want to undertake and fundraising will be key to the organisation's continuing success.

BACKGROUND

For over 80 years, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) has campaigned to protect and enhance the countryside of the Peak District and South Yorkshire. Our work has been influential in the establishment of the Peak District National Park, the implementation of the Sheffield Green Belt and the protection of the countryside throughout our area.

We are an independent body, linked to the national CPRE network and the smaller network of National Park societies - Council for National Parks (CNP). We are a registered charity, relying upon membership fees, donations and legacies from our supporters.

During 2005/2006 changes were made to the branding of the organisation and we now have two distinct identities, in two distinct geographical areas, both of which are run by CPRE Peak District & South Yorkshire. CPRE South Yorkshire will look after our work in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield and Friends of the Peak District will look after the Peak District National Park, the Derbyshire High Peak and the six parishes of North East Derbyshire (Eckington, Unstone, Holmesfield, Killamarsh, Dronfield and Barlow).

The organisation is managed by a Board of Trustees (currently nine members) who meet 6 times a year and are elected by members of the Peak District and South Yorkshire Branch of the CPRE, who are an independent charity but part of the national CPRE network. The organisation is supported by Friends of the Peak District, the National Park society, which is run and managed by the Branch.

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”.

ORGANISATIONAL VISION

A beautiful, thriving and sustainable countryside, locally distinctive, productive and enjoyed by everyone.

OUR SCOPE/AREA OF CONCERN

We are concerned with the whole of the countryside and the ability of everyone to enjoy it. Our scope encompasses the whole landscape and everything affecting it from habitats to housing. Because of their direct impact on the landscape, we take a particular interest in:

- land-use planning, development control and standards of design;
- the quality, character and diversity of the countryside;
- land management, farming and food;
- rural economies, services and quality of life;
- access, amenity and recreation;
- community involvement in caring for the countryside.

OUR WORK 2008-2013

Our concerns to protect and enhance the countryside and to do so for the benefit of the public underpin our four work areas, all of which are linked:

1. **Protecting the countryside** from whatever threatens it, from road-building to climate change. Given the very different nature of threats, protection work will vary from public awareness campaigns to fighting cases at public inquiries. It includes our development control work and selected thematic campaigns e.g. combating climate change locally.
2. **Enhancing the countryside** to make it more beautiful, more prosperous and more sustainable. We will achieve this through pro-active campaigns and initiatives that encourage innovation and best practice.
3. **Engaging communities** to encourage people to value, use and care for the countryside. This means helping people to enjoy it and empowering communities to have a say in its future. It includes developing our work with volunteers and community groups and providing more people with opportunities to enjoy the countryside.
4. **Maintaining an effective organisation** to enable the Peak District and South Yorkshire Branch of the CPRE to achieve its vision. We will do this in a variety of ways, including good governance, the careful stewarding and development of resources, promoting our work and building partnerships.

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE COUNTRYSIDE

Core Work

These are the areas of our work which we feel are core to the organisation over the next five years. We will allocate 60% of our attention to the following areas, divided between the Peak District and South Yorkshire.

1 *Development Control and Planning Policies and Frameworks*

The planning system will continue to be the main factor influencing where development is placed, its nature and design. We will continue to scrutinise planning applications submitted throughout our area, to investigate those considered significant and to influence the outcome of these through submissions to the planning authority and campaigning. To ensure planning policies which will protect the local countryside we need to be influential at every level from local to national. We will participate in consultations on Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) and, working with regional and national partners, will lobby for national and regional policies which will protect the countryside of our area.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

2 *Combating Threats*

When significant threats to the countryside of our area are identified we will campaign for their removal. This means being well informed about what is happening and what is planned in the countryside, contributing to debate on issues of concern and campaigning for change at an appropriate level. Although others may arise over the coming years, at present it is envisaged that campaign themes may include:

Climate change /Positive Energy: we will monitor and evaluate the likely impacts of climate change, including renewable energy generation, on the local countryside and lobby for appropriate responses from every level of society and government.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

Protecting urban fringes, including the Green Belt

We will continue to keep a watching brief on greenbelt designations and on proposed developments in the green belt and to campaign when appropriate. We will find opportunities to advance our long term goal of a complete green belt for Doncaster.

Area: South Yorkshire

Sustainable Transport

Traffic growth and road building continue to be threats across our area. Wherever possible we will advocate sustainable alternatives to road-building and to reduce the impact of roads and traffic on the countryside.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

Major minerals cases

The Peak District is Britain's most quarried national park and our Old Minerals Permissions campaign has been influential at a national, regional and local level. We will continue to keep a watching brief on major quarrying developments and to campaign when appropriate.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

Important Work

These are the areas of our work which we want to make a significant contribution of the next five years, but which we recognize as secondary to our core work. We will allocate 30% of our attention to the following areas, divided between the Peak District and South Yorkshire.

1. *Understanding and enjoying the countryside*

We will help as many people as we can to understand and enjoy the countryside of our area. We will develop our activities with rural communities but will also target young people (so that countryside will be valued in the future) and deprived urban communities who don't value the countryside because they don't know it.

Existing work is heavily Peak District biased and includes: Walk and Talks, the Photo Competition, and summer shows. We will broaden our work to include South Yorkshire communities and the countryside on their doorstep.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

2. Farming, land management and local food

Farming and land management practices have major impacts on all landscapes. We will monitor trends and seek to influence change as appropriate, with a particular emphasis on maintaining the key upland landscapes in the South Pennines. When consumers buy locally produced foods they develop links with their local countryside, improve its economic viability and reduce food miles and carbon emissions. We will stimulate local food networks and encourage people to buy local food, especially in South Yorkshire.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

3. Rural Services

We aim to combine prosperity with protection taking into account the economic as well as the environmental aspects of sustainability. We will identify the factors likely to substantially impact on rural livelihoods and will engage to influence change where we can make a difference.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

Desirable Work

In addition to the work outlined above, there will be opportunities for the organisation to work on other issues which will help us meet our vision of the countryside. We will allocate 10% of our attention to the following areas, divided between the Peak District and South Yorkshire. Other new issues that deserve our attention may arise during the period of this plan.

1. Conservation

Some of the area's unique habitats are threatened by factors such as visitor pressure, land management practices and climate change. We will work in a variety of ways to combat threats and to implement practical improvements. Our conservation volunteer teams will continue to carry out practical restoration and improvements in the Peak District; in South Yorkshire we will aspire to develop an equivalent scheme

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

2. Undergrounding

Until 2010 we will work with partners and utility companies to maximise the benefit to our area of the funds now available for undergrounding electricity infrastructure.

Area: Peak District

3. Future Landscapes

A project to demonstrate and publicise the likely impact of current policies and practices on the landscapes of the future.

Area: Peak District & South Yorkshire

4. Affordable Housing

We will campaign for provision of housing which is affordable by rural dwellers on lower incomes.

Area: Peak District

WAYS OF ACHIEVING OUR AIMS

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

In addition to the ways we have worked in the past, we will pay attention to the need to raise awareness and ensure support from individuals, local communities and funders. We want especially to develop the following:

1. *Encouraging Best Practice*

Our Countryside Awards Scheme can support many of our other objectives but needs effort to develop its full potential. During the next five years, we will develop the scheme to encourage and reward those who shape the countryside to work to high standards of design and to make the countryside accessible and enjoyable by everyone.

2. *Developing Volunteering*

We will develop our volunteer programme as a way of helping people understand and care for their countryside. As part of this, we will review how we work with volunteers to ensure that both the organisation and the individual are getting the most out of their volunteering. We will look for ways to work with other organisations with an involvement in volunteering. We aspire to reach new volunteering audiences and to develop new volunteering opportunities.

3. *Supporting Community Action*

We will encourage communities to care for their local countryside and provide them, wherever we can, with the knowledge, skills and confidence to do so. At present we partner and support campaign groups effectively but we aspire to a greater level of empowerment than this.

MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE ORGANISATION

1. *Supporting and developing staff & Trustees*

We have a skilled and committed group of Trustees and staff team. We will seek to support and develop them by:

- Providing supervision, clear line management and support for all staff;
- Identifying training needs and providing training opportunities for everyone;
- Encouraging staff to take their own professional development seriously;
- Reviewing terms and conditions of employment to ensure we are in line with the local voluntary sector and other comparable organisations;
- Reviewing staffing structures and roles to ensure a good fit with the work required;
- Providing a pleasant working environment.

2. *Building partnerships*

We have strong partnerships with a number of related organisations, including the Peak District National Park Authority, the Council for National Parks and CPRE's national and regional network. We have also worked together with other agencies on specific projects. We need to build our networks, especially in South Yorkshire, and continue to develop effective partnership working. We will do this through:

- Ensuring attendance at relevant forums and meetings;
- Identifying and approaching organisations with whom we share values but do not yet have a working relationship, to build contacts and identify possible mutual benefits;
- Continuing to share information with our partners and look for ways to work together effectively.

3. *Managing finances for a sustainable future*

Our aim is to make the organisation financially stable and sustainable, through robust financial management and monitoring. We will continue to manage finances in accordance with the law, good practice and the requirements of the Charity Commission. We will ensure our finance policy and practice meet these standards and are reviewed regularly.

Continuing to develop our effectiveness at fundraising will be key to securing the future of the organisation. A fundraising strategy was agreed in February 2005 and reviewed in August 2007. This strategy, produced by UCS Consultants, aims to make the organisation financially sustainable by increasing fundraising from people and grant-making trusts and developing other potential funding sources. In 2008-2012, we will aim to:

- Increase income from membership of Friends of the Peak District, Peak District Guardians, other members and events;
- Increase grant income;
- Develop corporate sponsorship ;
- Develop legacy and big gift giving.

We will keep the success of the fundraising strategy under review and adjust our fundraising plans if necessary. However, we will also have to monitor expenditure, as part of moving towards a situation in which annual income will match annual expenditure.

4. *Promoting our work*

Within our two brands, we will continue to promote the work of the organisation and raise awareness of our activities and concerns. We will do this in a variety of ways, through our own publications, including leaflets, CPRE newsletters and the Peakland Guardian magazine, as well as by promoting media coverage and making the most of external opportunities to promote our work.

5. *Providing administrative support and an efficient working environment*

We will continue to need an efficient working environment to maximize the effectiveness of the organisation in meeting its aims. This will include ensuring ICT is working well, and that we are making the most of technological opportunities. We will continue to try to provide a pleasant and healthy working environment in which staff and volunteers have sufficient space and resources to fulfil their tasks.

RESOURCING OUR WORK

Staffing

The current staff structure is described in the Organisational Chart included as an appendix to this plan. During the next five years, we will review this structure to ensure it still fits with our changing priorities, and review staff terms and conditions of employment to make sure they are appropriate.

Volunteers

Historically, CPRE Peak District and South Yorkshire has achieved more than might be expected from a small organisation because of the involvement of volunteers. During the next five years we will review our volunteer programme, as described above, and anticipate using more volunteers, in a variety of roles, in the future.

Premises and Equipment

During the next five years, we will keep under review the suitability of our premises and equipment, based on a number of factors:

- Ensuring we have sufficient space for staff and volunteers to work well;
- Achieving our aims of 'greener' working environment and working practices;
- Technological developments that can assist our work;
- Financial constraints.

Financial Resources

We have adopted a strategy of spending reserves, increasing fundraising and maintaining expenditure, with the intention that annual income will match annual expenditure, and we will have a reserves level of 12 months costs, agreed by the Trustees as an appropriate level of reserves for the organisation. The importance of increasing fundraising, and monitoring expenditure is outlined in the section on maintaining an effective organisation. We will closely monitor the effectiveness of this strategy, and make adjustments as necessary.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with members, potential members, community groups, partner organisations and others is an important part of ensuring the organisation is effective. We need to continue to communicate our successes, protect our reputation as the champion of the countryside and develop a wider awareness of why the organisation matters. A higher profile will give us more effectiveness in our work, for example in terms of support for campaigns, partnerships which help us achieve our aims, donations and potential volunteers.

The organisation has developed two brands – Friends of the Peak District and CPRE South Yorkshire. Whilst representing CPRE throughout our area, we operate as CPRE in South Yorkshire and in the wider Peak District as the National Park Society, Friends of the Peak District. These separate identities are reflected in how we communicate with others, for example through newsletters, press releases, leaflets etc. Positioning guidelines help guide how we behave as an organisation and what we say about ourselves.

We will continue to keep the marketing of the organisation under review, including the effectiveness of marketing material in attracting new members, and the appropriateness of the branding of our two identities.

MONITORING

Monitoring is a key part of ensuring that our resources and efforts are being directed in the right way. It can help motivate and focus our work, and provides information on how well we are progressing in achieving our aims.

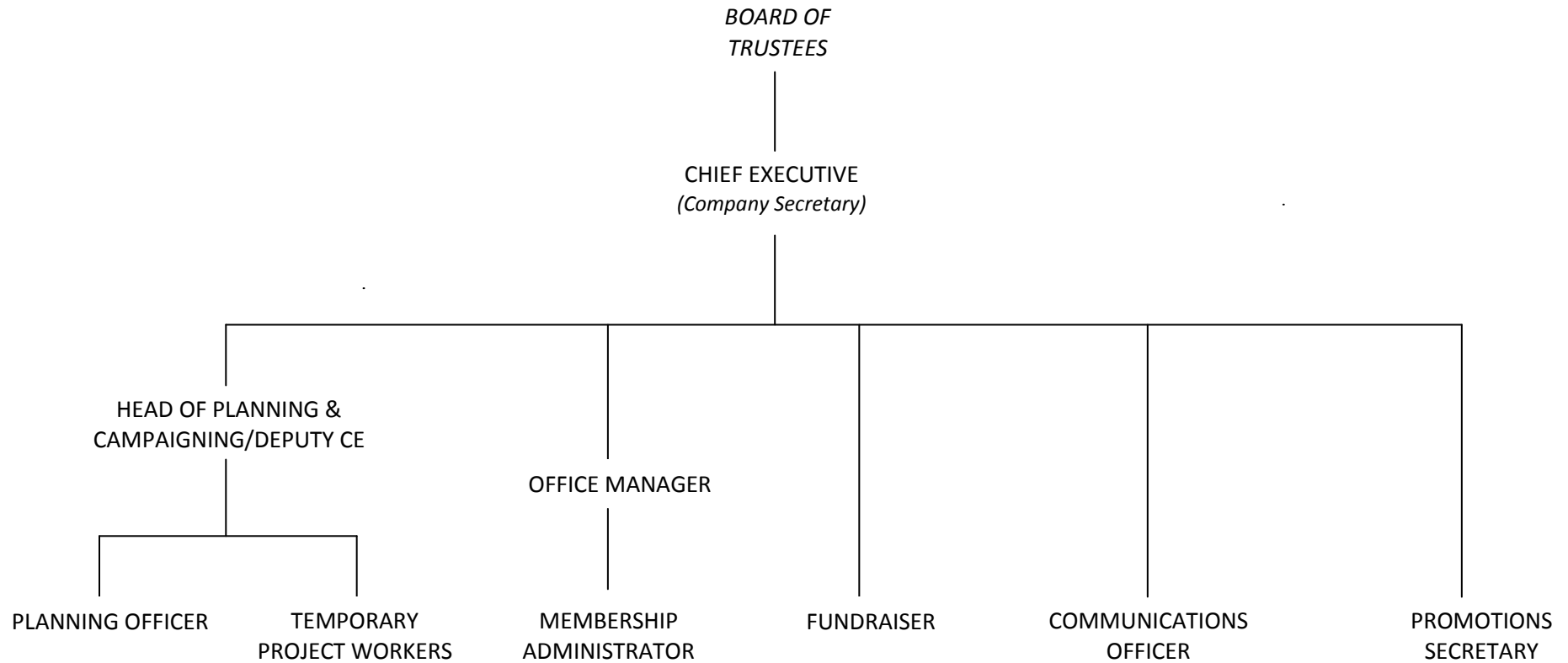
To be able to monitor the organisation's effectiveness, we will need clarity about what we are trying to do. The Strategic Plan is important in this, but we will produce an Annual Plan to help the organisation in its implementation and outline specific activities towards achieving the organisation's goals. The Annual Plan will form the basis for our monitoring and will include appropriate and relevant measures to help gauge progress. These will include measures of outcomes, where possible, as well as measures of outputs. It is important that indicators are meaningful, although it may be difficult to find suitable measures for some of the outcomes we want to see.

Trustees will receive regular updates and a six-monthly and annual report on the progress towards the goals set out in the Annual Plan. Reports will focus on both the positive and negative and highlight areas of achievement as well as where more attention is needed. The reports will help Trustees and staff make any changes necessary and to reassess priorities for future work. Their purpose will be to make sure the organisation is using its resources, including staff time, as effectively as possible.

The monitoring process will be kept under review to ensure that the information we are producing is useful and relevant to assessing how well we are progressing.

APPENDIX

Organisational Structure 2008



Policies and Procedures

The Board of Trustees have adopted a number of policies to ensure that the organisation operates in accordance with the law, good practice and the requirements of the Charity Commission. These policies are usually reviewed every three years, with some policies being reviewed annually.

Code of Conduct
Data Protection Policy*
Disciplinary & Grievance Procedure
Employment Handbook*
Energy impacts in the Landscape Policy Statement
Equal Opportunities Policy Statement
Financial Control
Food and Farming Policy*
Health & Safety Policy Statement
Housing Policy
Investment Policy
Minerals and Quarrying Policy Statement
Office Environmental Policy*
Planning Policy
Recruitment & Selection of Staff Policy*
Reserves Policy
Risk Policy
Small Scale Quarrying for Local Building Materials Policy Statement
Staff Support, Supervision & Appraisal Policy*
Telecommunications Policy
Transport Policy
Volunteer Policy
Working with business - Investment and Sponsorship policy

Copies of any of these policies are available on request. Policies marked * will be new during 2008-2012.