

General Meeting Minutes
Saturday 19th September 2026
Friargate Meeting House
11.00am

In Attendance

Jan Arger- Chair
Sally Learoyd Co- Vice Chair
Richard Johnston - Trustee
Sara Matchett - Trustee
Victoria Russell - Trustee
Holly Fawcett – Admin Support
Katie Atkinson – Planning Consultant (and outgoing Co- Vice Chair)
Ian Messum – Social Media Specialist
Dr Rosie Page – Guest Speaker
Dr Nick Palmerley – Speaker Support
Plus eight members and one non-member

Apologies

Henry Breese - Trustee
Members: Received from five members.

Approve 2025 AGM and 2026 EGM minutes

Proposed by a member, Seconded by Katie Atkinson.

Introductions

Each attending trustee introduced themselves and a brief background to the work they offer to CPRENEY.

The Chair's Report

Jan Arger (Chair of the Trustees) introduced a short summary of CPRE NEY's work during 2025 and the priorities guiding the trustees in 2026, highlighting the following:

- The pressures on the countryside were clear, with government targets for housing, renewable energy, food security, climate action and nature recovery all competing for finite land. These pressures had been felt very directly in North and East Yorkshire.
- National planning reforms had added further urgency, including substantial increases for housing leaving local planning authorities with a significant challenge to deliver a viable supply of developable land. The question of how land is used, and who gets a voice in those decisions, had never mattered more.
- CPRE NEY's practical work in 2025 demonstrated the importance of the charity's role, including 55 responses to planning consultations and enquiries, evidence at four planning appeals, and four Interested Party representations regarding large-scale solar farm projects. The charity also responded to key policy consultations within our geographical area, an area of work that was seen as vital because strong Local Plans represent one of the best protections the countryside has.

- As part of empowering local communities, in 2025 CPRE NEY worked with parish councils, neighbourhood plan groups, residents, conservation bodies and local campaign groups to help people engage confidently and constructively with issues in their area. These issues included the proposed removal of protected ancient hedgerows in Richmondshire, a proposed solar farm on prime agricultural land near Bedale, a large dwelling proposal near Ingleby Barwick and the proposed gas exploration site at Burniston. The charity also continued its strong support for the proposed designation of the Yorkshire Wolds as a National Landscape.
- Other 2025 initiatives included our work as a member of the North Yorkshire Climate Coalition, a public briefing on the North Yorkshire Local Plan consultation and encouragement of public participation, and working with young people through the Poetry for Climate Change primary school project.
- 2026 initiatives include support for the CPRE national solar rooftop campaign, focus on major Local Plan public consultations (members asked for their support with this) and preparation to run a Hedgerow Heroes project in 2027.
- Membership fell in 2025, and the Trustees remain concerned about the charity's income and long-term resilience. The Trustees are responding positively by updating the charity's strategy to ensure that it addresses the relevant issues.
- In conclusion, the Chair of the Trustees thanked all the members and supporters who had stood with the charity during the year.

Finance Update

Sally Learoyd (Vice Chair of Trustees) provided a finance update highlighting the following:

- 2025 expenditure on charitable activities totalled £73,602 (2024: £54,737).
- 2025 income totalled £301,738 (2024: £30,787).
- The charity's financial position was underpinned by two substantial generous legacies. The balance of a legacy gift of £275,078, held by National Office, had been granted in full to the Charity.
- At 31 December 2025 the charity held funds totalling £393,801 comprising unrestricted funds of £150,555 and restricted funds of £243,246.
- The Charity held 'zero level' reserves due to its low risk profile and no long-term commitments
- A 10-year financial plan was in place, reviewed annually and to be updated in line with the Charity's new strategy

Strategy Update

Sally Learoyd (Vice Chair of Trustees) provided an update on the charity's draft new strategy which was discussed at a meeting of the trustees on 16 September 2026 and which builds on the new strategic framework for CPRE national. The proposed new strategic themes for CPRENEY are

1. Strengthen connections to the NEY countryside through:
 - a. Campaigns centred on why countryside protection matters
 - b. Increasing awareness of CPRE NEY
 - c. Providing tools, resources and training to empower communities, resulting in more people being ready and able to take action to protect the countryside.

which will help ...

2. Grow support for CPRE NEY in terms of both funds and people through:
 - a. Diversifying income sources

- b. Growing donation income
- c. Engaging teams of volunteers resulting in an increase in the charity's capacity and reach.

which in turn will allow the charity to focus on...

- 3. Stopping the loss of the NEY countryside
 - a. By engaging with the North Yorkshire and East Riding councils
 - b. Maximising Local Plan policy protections, wherever possible
 - c. Fulfilling more public requests for guidance and support

... with indicative measures of success being greater use of brownfield land, more use of greenfield land, and protection of agricultural land.

Elections

Prior to the meeting each member of CPRENEY had been posted a proxy vote form. Holly Fawcett counted the votes to endorse the re-election of the current trustee board and the new appointments.

There were 26 votes to endorse the current trustee board and 1 vote that could not be counted as it was not signed.

Jan Arger, Chair read out the resolution - "Notice is hereby given that the 2026 AGM of CPRE North and East Yorkshire is being held today Saturday 19th September in person, at Friargate Meeting House.

The meeting will consider and, if thought fit, pass the resolutions in relation to the re-appointments of trustees. If you have not already voted by proxy in advance of this meeting and are a member of CPRE North and East Yorkshire, please do so now so that we can count your vote".

The members in public attendance, 15, confirmed they were happy to vote on block in favour of all appointments as follows:

- 1. To reappoint Jan Arger as Trustee / Chairman - Unanimously agreed.
- 2. To re-appoint Sally Learoyd as Trustee / Vice Chairperson - Unanimously agreed.
- 3. To re-appoint Victoria Russell as Trustee and Supporter Development Lead – Unanimously agreed
- 4. To appoint 3 new trustees – Sara Venables as Trustee and Communications Lead, Henry Breese as Trustee/Treasurer and Finance Lead, Richard Johnston as Trustee and Governance Lead – Unanimously agreed.

Planning Update

Katie Atkinson, outgoing Trustee and CPRE NEY's retained Planning Consultant provided an update on planning activities:

- In 2025, CPRE had responded to 55 individual planning consultations, plus involvement in planning policies, national consultations, solar scheme applications, planning appeals, and enquiries from the public, members and parish councils.
- Significant development management successes included the rejection of a major housing development in Selby, the rejection of the Harrogate Bottling Plant expansion and the approval of the UK's first Passivhaus-accredited hotel (Runswick Bay)

- A key ongoing campaign was the Yorkshire Wolds National Landscape designation. A designation order had been submitted to DEFRA and confirmation was now awaited.
- CPRE NEY had also campaigned against applications involving fracking activities in North Yorkshire and East Yorkshire.
- Looking ahead, planning issues in 2026 and 2027 for CPRENEY to consider will be:
 - The Town and Country Planning Regulations 2026
 - The revised National Planning Policy Framework
 - National Development Management Policies
 - Spatial Development Strategies
 - The impact of the National Scheme of Delegation

Public Questions / Comments

The Chair of Trustees opened the floor to questions from attendees. Contributions included:

- Whether encouraging legacies formed part of the charity's strategy? It was confirmed that members were encouraged to leave a legacy to CPRE NEY in their wills.
- Highlighting the campaign to save Mandale Meadow in Middlesbrough from a controversial spine road development (from a CPRE NEY member volunteer).
- Whether the charity's focus was on protected national parks and national landscapes versus non-protected areas? It was confirmed that the Trustees had recently discussed this issue in depth and the charity's focus will be on non-protected areas.
- The importance of protecting Best and Most Versatile agricultural land.
- Highlighting the campaign to remove a stile at the Hagg Wood community woodland.
- The under-occupation of housing in market towns which meant that housing stock was not being used efficiently, and the potential that resolving this could reduce the scale of new housebuilding required and ease development pressure on rural landscapes.
- Resourcing and possible skills shortage issues of Local Authority planning teams – is this an area where CPRE NEY could offer guidance/support? Whilst recognising the issues, planning teams have their own training/CPD sources and in any event may be precluded from accepting an offer from CPRENEY being a campaigning charity. However the charity is developing planning workshops for Parish Councils with a view to rolling these out in 2027.

Meeting closed at 12.40pm