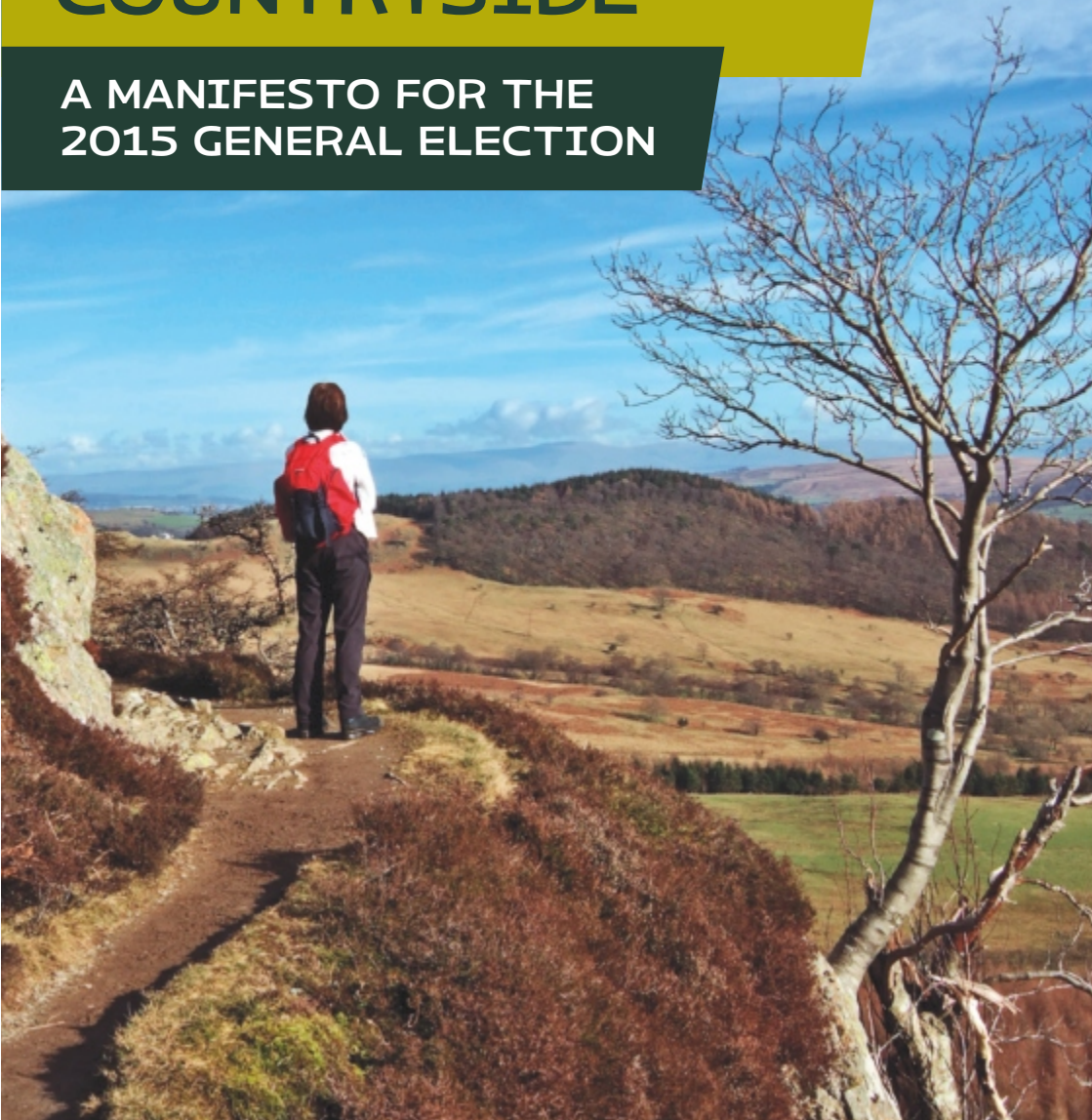




Campaign to Protect  
Rural England  
Standing up for your countryside

# STAND UP FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

## A MANIFESTO FOR THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION



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## A MANIFESTO FOR THE 2015 GENERAL ELECTION

**T**he beauty of England's countryside is a national treasure renowned throughout the world. For such a small country, our geology, climate and history have produced a unique range of landscapes that people love.

But with short-term economic needs dominating the political agenda, the countryside is under increasing pressure. Careless housing and infrastructure development and consequent loss of countryside are often the result, despite alternative options that can deliver the development we need while safeguarding a beautiful and living countryside.

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We call on all parties to develop better policies so we have:

- | **the right housing in the right places**
- | **the right infrastructure for the right reasons**
- | **a beautiful countryside to sustain us all**

CPRE's manifesto sets out our priorities for the next Government under these three themes.

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# THE RIGHT HOUSING IN THE RIGHT PLACES

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We need to save our countryside from unnecessary and damaging development by improving planning policy and guidance.

**T**he way we plan our towns and countryside could be so much better. Top-down housing targets that were rightly unpopular with local communities have been replaced with the equally unpopular planning by appeal.

Countryside is being developed unnecessarily and there is a growing threat to the Green Belt and high quality farmland. Planning decisions are increasingly taken to suit the big housebuilders and against the aspirations of local people.

Where issues cross local administrative boundaries, decisions are now often taken by bodies that are even less accountable than the former regional organisations. More new housing must be built. But it must satisfy local needs as well as national ones.

## The next Government should:

- Make sure brownfield sites are prioritised for new housing over greenfield sites, and strengthen protection of the Green Belt against speculative development, through more effective strategic planning across local authority boundaries;
- Increase delivery of the right housing by investing in affordable housing to meet local needs, and providing incentives for custom-build and small-scale house builders;
- Support local aspirations by introducing a community right of appeal against speculative development in areas where a neighbourhood plan has been prepared.

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# THE RIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

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**We need to make better use of existing transport and energy infrastructure and smarter decisions on new investment – to reduce demand rather than drive it.**

**E**nergy bills and public transport fares are continuing to rise, yet power cuts and disrupted journeys are ever more likely. It's not surprising there is pressure for renewed investment in energy and transport networks. But building the wrong sort of infrastructure not only risks devastating our landscapes, but also locks us into unsustainable and increasingly expensive lifestyles.

Reducing demand for energy and motorised travel is crucial, but has been neglected. New technologies and lifestyle changes offer 'smarter' opportunities, such as better insulated homes and car sharing. But reducing carbon emissions and other pollutants requires significantly more renewable energy and sustainable travel options.

## **The next Government should:**

- | **Reduce the demand for car travel and energy**, by ensuring places are better suited to walking and cycling, and by retrofitting old buildings and seeking the highest environmental standards in new ones;
  - | **Prioritise better and smarter transport choices**, including supporting community-led transport, integrated and expanded public transport networks and local freight distribution hubs, over road expansion;
  - | **Ensure that new energy infrastructure minimises local impacts** through incentivising renewable energy on buildings and brownfield sites, and adopting a precautionary approach to fracking.
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# A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE TO SUSTAIN US ALL



We need to value and protect the countryside for the countless benefits it provides to our health, prosperity and wellbeing.

**O**ur beautiful and irreplaceable countryside provides vital space for recreation and reflection, a rich diversity of landscapes and a home for nature. Farming is the backbone of the countryside and influences both the scenery and the success of the rural economy.

We must value and protect the countryside for its role in supporting farming, tourism and innovative businesses, providing the food and resources we need and giving people beautiful, tranquil places to enjoy. High quality farmland is being lost to development, when it should be protected as a strategic resource to provide a secure supply of affordable food well into the future.

## The next Government should:

- | **Promote the resilience of the food and farming system** by strengthening policies to protect the best farmland from development and to foster the growth of local food economies, from field to fork;
- | **Enhance people's experience of the countryside**, by committing to monitoring rural tranquillity and dark skies and the policies created to improve them;
- | **Champion and deliver solutions to eradicate littering** in the countryside, including a national behaviour change campaign.

# CPRE: A VOICE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

CPRE fights for a better future for England's unique, essential and precious countryside. From giving parish councils expert advice to influencing national and European policies, we work to protect and enhance the countryside.

We believe our countryside is important for everyone, no matter where they live. We don't own land or represent any special interests. Our members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enhance and inspire future generations.

Many communities feel their voices aren't being heard in the important decisions being taken about their countryside. Last year the CPRE launched its charter to save our countryside and tens of thousands have already signed up in support of its demands.

CPRE believes that not only should there be a fair say for local people on issues affecting their area, but also that the common ambition of people, both rural and urban, for a beautiful and thriving countryside, should be listened to. We champion these voices across all our work and call on the next Government to stand up for the countryside.

For our full manifesto, please see [www.cpre.org/manifesto](http://www.cpre.org/manifesto)

## How you can help

- | **Sign CPRE's charter**  
[www.saveourcountryside.org.uk](http://www.saveourcountryside.org.uk)
- | **Stay up to date with our campaigns**  
[www.cpre.org.uk/campaignsupdate](http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaignsupdate)



**Campaign to Protect Rural England**  
Standing up for your countryside

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