THE COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND

Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 30 September 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1997</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subscriptions &amp; Donations:</td>
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<td>Share from CPRE National HQ</td>
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<td>Branch Members</td>
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<td>EXPENDITURE</td>
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| Administration Costs:                      |        |        |
| County Office                              | 4013   | 3925   |
| Postage & Telephone                        | 642    | 538    |
| Printing & Stationery                      | 575    | 445    |
| Secretarial                                | 218    | 222    |
| Travel                                     | 159    | 174    |
| Meeting Expenses                           | 133    | 122    |
| District Expenses                          | 70     | 33     |
| CPRE Work                                  | 5810   | 5457   |
| Publications bought                        | 0      | 1140   |
| Newsletter                                 | 48     | 85     |
| Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year | 3407  | 1010   | 7693  |

Balance Sheet as at 30 September 1998

| INVESTMENTS                                      | 1998   | 1997   |
| National Savings Bank                           | 15908  | 10338  |

| CURRENT ASSETS & LIABILITIES                    |        |        |
| Bank Balance                                   | 1570   | 4110   |
| Creditors                                      | 1874   | -304   | 2251  | 1859  |
|                                                | 15004  | 12197  |
| ACCUMULATED FUND                               |        |        |
| Balance as at 1 October 1997                   | 12197  | 12157  |
| Surplus for the year                           | 3407   | 40     |
| Balance as at 30 September 1998                | 15004  | 12197  |

REPORT OF THE HONORARY ACCOUNTANTS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BRANCH

We have verified, without carrying out an audit, all the items in the accounts for the year ended 30 September 1998 prepared by the Honorary Treasurer. Subscriptions and donations income is the amount received by the Branch.

Meadows & Co
Chartered Accountants
91 Headlands
Kettering, Northants NN15 6BA

10 November 1998
Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the NORTHAMPTONSHIRE BRANCH OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PROTECTION OF RURAL ENGLAND held in the Great Hall of St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton on Wednesday 11th November 1998 at 2.30 p.m.

The Chair was taken by Lady Juliet Townsend, LVO. 40 Officers and Members of the Branch were present.

Lady Juliet welcomed everyone to St Andrew's and, in the absence of the President Sir John Lowther KCVO, CBE, JP, who was undergoing a further hip operation, took the Chair. Sir John had said that he was particularly sorry not to be able to be present, as it would have been his last meeting as President as he retired as Lord Lieutenant this year and therefore would be relinquishing his position as the CPRE County President.

Lady Juliet went on to say that sadly it would be her last AGM as Chairman of the County Branch as she would be replacing Sir John as Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire. She said that she had much enjoyed her time and work as Chairman. It had been tremendously worthwhile and always interesting.

Mr Keith Allsop, Vice Chairman of the Branch, had agreed to stand as Chairman and, if, elected, would be prepared to hold office for a period of up to one year. Sir John Dent would stand as Vice Chairman.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Sir John Lowther, Lord Boardman, Sir John Greenaway, Lady Dent, Mr F G H Osborne, Mr T Boswell MP, Mr C Davidge, Mr J Pearson, Mr R A Palmer, Mr J Hadlington, Mr & Mrs W Usher, Dr & Mrs J Lancaster, Mr & Mrs J Shephard, Mr & Mrs C Davidge, Miss J M Swann.

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

The Minutes of the 1997 Annual General Meeting held on 13th November, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR 1998/99

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that the following Officers be appointed for the year 1998/99:-

President .......................................................... Lady Juliet Townsend LVO
Lady Juliet Townsend LVO
Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire

Chairman .......................................................... Mr K J Allsop OBE

Vice Chairman ...................................................... Sir John Dent

Honorary Secretary ............................................... Mrs V J Lankester
Honorary Technical Secretary
Mr A Mayes

Honorary Membership Secretary
Mrs E Young

Honorary Treasurer
Mr D Watson

Honorary Auditors
Meadows and Co.

Elected Members
Mr N Earle, Mr J Day,
Mr D Hugheston-Roberts,
Mr C Wood, Mr D Edsall,
Mrs L Meredith-Owens.

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Mr David Watson presented the accounts for the year ending 30th September 1998. He said that once again the balance at the end of the year was favourable and that this was due to a bequest to the Branch. The very successful Summer Party had raised £350 and the Design Seminar held at Hunsbury Hill had made a profit of £89. Donations had also been received from West and South Northants Branches.

New members, particularly in the western area, secured by Membership Secretary Mrs Elaine Young, had also increased income. The accounts showed a £3407 surplus of income over expenditure.

It was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed that the accounts be adopted.

ANNUAL REPORT

Included with these Minutes.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Meredith-Owens thanked members for their contributions to the County Newsletter and asked for articles on successes in the County by the area branches. She also went on to say that members may have seen that the magazine now contains advertising and any contributions would be appreciated.

Mr Keith Allsop proposed a Vote of Thanks to Lady Juliet and she was presented with a basket of flowers and a book on behalf of the Branch for all the work she had undertaken during the last ten years. He went on to say how pleased we were that she had agreed to take on the Presidency.

...ooOoo...

After the business of the meeting there followed a talk by Mr Bruce Bailey on 'The Changing Fortunes of Northamptonshire Houses'. Mr Bailey is an architectural historian and well known lecturer to NADFAS, the National Trust and other organisations.

A Vote of Thanks to the Governors of St Andrew's and to the Guest Speaker was proposed by Mr David Edsall.
I feel very pleased to be able to present my last Annual Report on a year which has been a very positive one for Northamptonshire CPRE. We have faced our usual quota of problems and challenges, and have, through our excellent network of Technical Secretaries, had our say on many local planning applications, in a number of cases influencing the outcome.

Some planning issues present difficult problems for us, as there is sometimes a genuine conflict of CPRE interests involved. A typical example this year has been the proposal for the Northampton Parkway International Station at Blisworth. Here the environmental advantage of diverting traffic from road to rail had to be balanced against the impact the plans, particularly the car parking requirements, would have on the immediate surroundings, and the effect the opening of the station would have on increased development demands over a wider area.

After weighing up the issues, the Committee decided to oppose the application, but it is an example of the fact that, in planning matters, it is often not a simple case of right versus wrong.

One scheme we definitely did think was wrong was the Millennium Trust Project proposed for Midsummer Meadow in Northampton. The suggested collection of buildings for this finger of the countryside which reaches into the town seemed to us ill designed and wholly inappropriate, and we were delighted when the project failed in its bid for Millennium funding. The dangers of development of this sort on the flood plain were highlighted by the disastrous Easter floods. We await the full report on these, but feel that a contributing factor must have been extensive earlier development in the flood plain and water meadows.

At a more strategic level, we have submitted our response to the Draft County Structure Plan. While we welcome some aspects of this, we remain deeply concerned about the whole concept of linear development along "transport corridors" through open countryside, and we are still waiting for more information on the extent and location of potential brownfield sites within the towns, without which information no valid plan can be drawn up.

The ultimate horror of the transport corridor theory from our point of view is the suggestion put forward by Peter Hall, Chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association, for what he calls "Sustainable Social Cities of Tomorrow". You may have read about his proposed City of Mercia, which would stretch in a huge horseshoe from Rugby to Corby via Northampton and Wellingborough, embracing such charming sounding new sub-cities as Sunnyside, Diana and Nene-the-Valley. At the moment this is only an idea, not part of any structure plan, but the danger of the transport corridor approach is that it can so easily lead on to ideas like this one, which can seem to offer practical advantages but which would be absolutely disastrous for the Northamptonshire countryside. Should this scheme ever enter the realms of practical possibilities we will certainly oppose it vigorously.

An encouraging development over the last few years had been the way in which many planning authorities are now paying much more attention to the standard of design in rural buildings. In June, the Branch through the Technical Secretaries, organised a Rural Design Seminar at
Hunsbury Hill, which had excellent speakers and was very well attended by members and representatives of many local councils. A generous legacy from the late Mrs E O Mynard has meant that at long last we can finance the printing and production of our own county design guide, which is excellent news. Another successful event was the Summer Party held at Pytchley House, home of Sir James and Lady Spooner.

A good start has been made on the Hedgerow Survey, which has certainly aroused a lot of interest among members and has brought us some new ones. On this subject, I should like to congratulate Elaine Young on the excellent job she has done during her first year as Membership Secretary. Building on Sheila Walker's good work in rationalising our membership system in the past, she had gone out into the highways and byways and increased our membership by 12% in the one year - a notable achievement.

I am sad to have to report the death of two good friends of Northamptonshire CPRE, Cyril Meadows who was for many years our Honorary Auditor, and Fay Chaplin who made a notable contribution to our County Committee and who was a founding member of the West Northamptonshire Area Committee. They will both be much missed.

In conclusion, I should like to thank all the Committee Members and all supporters of Northamptonshire CPRE for the help you have given me over the years. It has made by time as Chairman not only rewarding, but also great fun!

*Lady Juliet Townsend*

**TECHNICAL SECRETARIES REPORT**

The past year has seen a number of significant issues covered by the Technical group, although the actual number of planning referrals dealt with has fallen slightly from last year. The Technical Secretaries group has met five times during the year and the issues dealt with have been: a planning application for quarrying at Pittsford, proposals for redevelopment of the Scott Bader site at Wollaston, the Midsummer Meadow Millennium proposals for Northampton and most recently Alconbury airfield expansion proposals which could have a significant effect on the airspace over parts of Northamptonshire. Comments have also been made on the production of our design guidance leaflet, on East Northamptonshire Councill's plan for lighting along the A14 and on the whole issue of light pollution. Discussions have taken place on national CPRE's countryside clutter campaign, new settlements (in particular Mawsley near Kettering), waste disposal, environmental impact studies and the availability of Collyweston slating.

In April, CPRE was asked to give their views on the use of brownfield sites to a gathering of the County Women's Institutes, little knowing at that time that the use of brownfield land would be a major thrust in our response to the County Structure Plan, the first draft of which was open to review in June. The Technical group drew comments from each part of the county which were formulated into a single response. Significant assistance was also provided by Henry Oliver from headquarters and comments were made on policies relating to protection of open spaces, office development, the Nene Valley, location of retail and office development and a call for better design, which was wholeheartedly supported. Our main concerns were with the housing numbers game and the need for accurate brownfield registers in each district. CPRE identified an anomaly in the housing numbers in that once existing planning commitments had been removed from the number only 39% of all new housing commitments would be on urban or brownfield sites and 61% on greenfield sites. The plan took little account of the Government White Paper 'Building Communities of the Future'
issued in February which calls for 60% of all new housing to be on brownfield sites. National CPRE has called for this to be 75%. Northamptonshire CPRE has strongly supported a reduction in housing numbers in the new County Structure Plan and has suggested that all but one of the strategic development areas be omitted.

June proved to be a busy time of the year. In addition to their normal work the Technical group arranged a CPRE Seminar 'Design in the Countryside' at Hunsbury Hill Centre which was attended by about 40 people representing Local Authorities, Architects, Developers and CPRE members. There were three excellent speakers and a high standard of debate following their presentations. It is hoped that in the future CPRE may hold further seminars on current countryside issues.

I am also pleased to report that the publication 'Design in the Northamptonshire Countryside' - produced in draft by the Technical group - can now move towards publication. This is due to the generosity of a legacy from a late CPRE member from Leicestershire. This publication will be dedicated to her memory.

Thanks are due to all the Technical Secretaries and the staff at Hunsbury Hill and to all members for their constant vigilance.

Alan Mayes
Technical Secretary

SOUTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA COMMITTEE REPORT

Some encouraging decisions have been made on matters with which we have been concerned. "Serious harm to the character and appearance of Hardingstone Conservation Area and the landscape in its vicinity" was the main reason given by the Inspector for dismissing the appeal, last March, to the developers who wished to build fifteen houses on the hill adjacent to the Hardingstone Conservation Area.

Two appeals to keep mobile homes, near Chacombe and Culworth were both rejected by the DETR. The Silverstone and Brackley Hatch to Whitfield bypasses have now been given the go-ahead by the Government, a reversal of their previous decision.

The application to build an International Passenger Station at Blisworth has been refused by the South Northants Council: R.T.I., the company involved, is appealing against the decision and there will be a public inquiry. We are concerned that this station, if it gets the go-ahead, will increase pressure to develop the A43 corridor, an area already faced with the building of 4,000 new homes under the proposed County Structure Plan.

At Whittlebury, in spite of our objections, permission has been given for a very large hotel to be built and for lighting on the golf course. At Aynho we are concerned about the proposal to convert farm buildings at College Farm into five houses and to build four new ones, effectively creating an estate. This is an application which realistically cannot be rejected by the South Northants Council because the farm house and farm buildings have recently been included in the Village Envelope and Conservation Area.

Also we have opposed the building of a supermarket at Old Stratford and a proposal to increase the area given over to storage of cars on Chipping Warden aerodrome.
In May, 25 of our members enjoyed an outing to Burghley House. We held our AGM at Lois Weeden Village Hall in October, at which Mr Martin Ellison of Northamptonshire Heritage gave a very interesting talk on his work of conservation in Northamptonshire.

Anne Usher
Chairman

WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA COMMITTEE REPORT

The West Northamptonshire Area Committee met on five occasions during the year and held their AGM in July at West Haddon House, by kind invitation of Lady Pritchard, when they welcomed twelve new members.

The year started with the problem of Althorp. Planning applications for developments in the park to the stable block and at the lake where Princess Diana was buried were granted without opposition but there was great concern among the nearby villages and all the residents in the area about the traffic which would be generated by opening the site for two months during the summer and about building a car park and facilities outside the park itself. In the event temporary permission was given for a 500 place car park without hard standing or buildings and this together with careful direction of traffic allowed handling of the event without problems. Planning applications are expected shortly for next year but no radical changes are expected, although it is understood that Great Brington Parish Council are still likely to object.

The conditions to apply for mineral extraction at a large site at Pitsford are still subject to negotiation and together with a new application for sand and gravel extraction at Buckby Wharf give rise to great concern to residents in the area. The Buckby proposal was not part of the County Minerals Plan, will be a major eyesore and will generate traffic problems on the already busy section of the A5. It is also proposed to use the site as a landfill area for refuse disposal which creates its own additional traffic. However this case had a greater significance. When the County Minerals Plan was adopted it included the proposals that a search for glacial deposits of sand and gravel should be funded covering a wide area, much of it identified as of special landscape value. In the event no funds were made available and no general search has been made, and at Buckby Wharf, we have the first example of a contractor, in this case a waste disposal contractor, making an application for extraction of glacial sand and gravel from a site which they have identified and which was not in the Minerals Plan. It could be a very important precedent.

The proposal to reinstate the Great Central Railway which was voted down in the House of Commons two years ago is again on the table. This time it is understood that it is proposed to extend the line for freight up to Manchester and Sheffield which makes it a more attractive project to get freight off the roads. So far there is insufficient information available to allow proper study and consideration but CPRE will need to take a view and this may be more difficult than it was last time around.

Sir John Dent
Chairman

NORTH EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AREA COMMITTEE REPORT

During the year, proposals for the road system in our Areas have caused us considerable problems. Following the Government Moratorium on new road building a decision was finally
made to go ahead with the A6 bypasses which will bring relief to Rothwell and Desborough and Higham Ferrers and Rushden. This was extremely welcome but there are still problems with Isham/East Wellingborough bypass on the A509 and increased traffic from the Corby area on the A43 at Geddington. We will continue to put forward proposals to address these concerns and will also support the CPRE Charter for Country Lanes. Keith Allsop has campaigned for the lighting on the Kettering southern bypass to be properly designed to minimise light pollution.

We were delighted that the proposals for no less than five shopping villages in the Area all failed to attract sufficient support. There is considerable concern about plans for an air freight depot at Alconbury Airfield. Although this is just outside our County, many of our villages could be affected by noise.

East Northamptonshire District Council is taking an active interest in trying to present the loss of rural services such as village shops, pubs and schools. An attempt is being made to provide a better bus service, but the success of this project will depend on how many people can be persuaded to use it.

Finally, the long running saga of the proposal for Wonderworld at Corby has finally been abandoned and need no longer figure in this report, as it has done so often in the past.

Dr Robert Wigglesworth  
Chairman

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

I am pleased to report that our membership has been growing steadily this year. The total membership in November 1997 stood at 486. It now stands at 556, an increase of 70. 51 of these have joined since June this year in response to a number of Branch campaigns. Northamptonshire is now fairly high in the league tables of recruitment at Headquarters.

Recruitment methods have been concentrated in a number of ways. Firstly, the parish councils were contacted during June and 16 responded positively and have joined CPRE. The total number of parish councils now in membership stands at 42. It is vital to raise our profile and create awareness through these councils because they are the local decision makers. Secondly, 'on the spot' membership has proven successful at various events and 18 members have been recruited through this method.

The Member-Get-Member scheme was launched in July. Many contacts have been given and to date we have gained 16 members through this scheme.

Survey forms have been sent to all members to help identify skills/interests they could offer the Branch. Volunteers have been found to help in a number of areas from hedgerow surveys to advice on waterway ecology.

Unfortunately there is no room for complacency, I believe it is critical that we continue to raise the profile of Northamptonshire CPRE and sincerely hope that next year will see our membership increasing.

Elaine Young  
Membership Secretary