The countryside charity London

Planning Volunteers

Candidate Briefing Pack
September 2022



Working for a greener city

1. About CPRE London



CPRE is England's leading countryside charity. The charity comprises a National Office and 42 local branches, including CPRE London, each of which operates as a distinct charity. At a national level, CPRE campaigns for a beautiful and thriving countryside that is valued, enjoyed and is accessible to everyone. At a local level, the CPRE London branch addresses the area covered by the 32 boroughs of Greater London and campaigns for London to be a green, sustainable, and vibrant world city.

The events of 2020 have highlighted how precious London's green spaces are. There is a unique opportunity to secure a healthier environment and a better future for London's 9 million residents where each person can access nature more easily and be inspired. We are playing our part through working to bring the value and enjoyment of our local green spaces and surrounding countryside - its beauty, tranquillity, wildlife, and places to escape – closer to everyone's doorstep. To guide our activities, we have established three key strategic objectives for CPRE London:

- We will promote policies and plans to protect and improve the London Green Belt, Metropolitan Open Land, and other green spaces.
- We will campaign for better use of London's built environment and natural resources including the supply of affordable homes, the delivery of good urban design, more sustainable travel (public transport, cycling, walking), less waste and lower carbon emissions.
- We will promote London's green spaces for people to visit, discover and enjoy, including being more inclusive of the many diverse communities across London.

CPRE London has a strong reputation for providing evidence-based, well-reasoned and passionate campaigning. In doing this we draw on our core strengths:

- We are recognised as London's leading environment charity in protecting green spaces and providing solutions for our city.
- We are respected by GLA and Borough policy makers as an authoritative voice in the planning and development of London.
- We are trusted by a network of more than 100 community groups to provide critical advice to support their local campaigns.
- We are backed by a powerful national organisation that amplifies our voice, enhances our resources, and increases our impact.

CPRE London recent activities have included:

- Exposing the scale of threats to green spaces in London which go against agreed policy and persuading politicians to act.
- Finding 'Space to Build' – researching and demonstrating to Local Authorities how we can make better use of unused & wasted land for housing in London.
- Collaborating with other campaigning groups to publish the "London Boroughs Healthy Streets Scorecard" to encourage more sustainable modes of transport.
- Launching the 'Go Parks' London Initiative which supports the activities of dozens of Parks Friends Groups.
- Launching the Growing Together initiative as part of a community outreach project to enable greater engagement with green spaces and the countryside for marginalised groups.
- Campaigning to create at least ten new district parks in London from sites which are protected but which are unloved and not well-used.
- Developing a strategic plan to expand the Walk London network with at least six new, high quality green walking routes that link green spaces and bring nature closer to people.
- Co-ordination and leadership of the environmental asks for the London Mayor.

As we build on these activities, we are undertaking more projects in the areas of making better use of London's resources and promoting London's green spaces for people to enjoy. Funding for these projects is coming from a variety of Trusts and Foundations. To ensure the right skills and experience is brought to the delivery of these projects, we are increasingly working in partnership with other London environmental bodies to bring particular expertise. This approach is playing very well with funders who see CPRE London as having a strong reputation and strong co-ordinating skills to manage the expertise brought by other organisations.

CPRE London has over 2,000 members and supporters. We provide them and the wider public with information and guidance on issues affecting London's environment through our website, a regular Green London newsletter, and other mailings. We carry out research, publish reports and issue regular press releases to communicate our messages. We collaborate with staff from the National Charity, also based in central London, to increase the impact of our activities and influence politicians, policy makers and opinion formers.

CPRE London runs a small office and currently employs three part-time staff members, headed by a Director who reports to the Chair. The organisation has several volunteers and interns who work under the leadership of the staff on specific projects and initiatives.

We are based at 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EL. Our office in Clerkenwell is a shared workspace alongside other professionals/organisations involved in the built environment, including architectural practices, urban designers, and other special interest groups. This helps us maintain links with other organisations working on related issues in London and further afield.

2. Planning Volunteer Positions

At CPRE London we are passionate about making London a greener city including bringing the benefits of the countryside, its beauty, tranquility, and places to escape, nearer to everyone's doorstep.

By volunteering with us you'll be helping to find positive solutions for helping London progress towards being a carbon neutral city by 2030, strengthening biodiversity and nurturing nature for the good of wildlife and Londoners.

By applying your skills and experience you can make a real difference and be a central part of a friendly and passionate charity. As a planning volunteer you'll be investigating planning applications which affect Londoners access to green spaces, and you will help us to influence their outcome.

You'll also have the opportunity to contribute to national consultations and policy development.
For this role we're ideally looking for volunteers with an interest in and knowledge of the planning system and environmental issues.

The roles are accountable to the CPRE London Campaigns Officer. They are home based with occasional attendance at meetings. We hope that you will be able to contribute 2 days each month to suit your availability. Our team will provide you with training and support to develop in your role.

Key Areas of Responsibility

- Investigating planning applications with an impact on London's green spaces
- Preparing and submitting responses to influence the outcome of planning applications and appeals
- Visiting the local planning offices and proposed development sites to look at plans and record details
- Liaising with parish and district councils and other conservation bodies
- Seeking to influence local and neighbourhood plans
- Building relationships with local organisations to influence their management plans
- Liaising with the planning team and policy committee at National CPRE to contribute to consultations and policy development
- Proactively investigating the planning designation of green spaces in your local area to find out whether there is scope to strengthen these in order to better protect these sites for future generations.

Skills / Experience

- An eye for detail and an interest in investigative work
- Some knowledge of planning and environmental issues
- Some previous experience in the planning sector and knowledge of the planning system would be helpful in this role
- A willingness to visit the local planning office and proposed development sites
- Able to carry out tasks independently and as part of a team
- Good written and verbal communication skills
- Access to a computer and the internet at home and be comfortable using them
- Be able to commit to volunteering regularly to suit your availability - typically for two days a month although if you have greater capacity this is also extremely welcome.

Benefits of the role

- Use your skills and experience to contribute to the success of our charity and make a positive impact on London's environment
- Meet like-minded people and enjoy being part of a team
- Enhance your CV by developing new skills and gaining valuable experience
- We'll support you to develop in your volunteering role and provide you with relevant training
- We'll give you a reference for your future work or volunteering
- Get involved with social events and workshops on a local and national level, including the annual CPRE conference
- The opportunity to attend a volunteer induction day at CPRE's national office in London or a regional centre
- We are happy to provide out-of-pocket travel expenses

How to apply

Applications should be made by submitting a CV along with a letter explaining how you believe you could use your skills to help CPRE London in working for a greener city that benefits everyone. We look forward to hearing from you.

Closing Date for Applications: Friday, 30th September 2022