



CAPEL GREENBELT PROTECTION SOCIETY:

Registered Charity 1192171

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE PERIODS 05/11/19 TO 30/06/20
 01/07/20 TO 30/06/21

This report covers the first full financial year period - 2020/21 (01/07/20 to 30/06/21) plus the previous period (which was the initial 8 months from formation - 05/11/19 to 30/06/20) this not being a complete 12 month period to report on.



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1. Introduction and Executive Summary

Capel Greenbelt Protection Society (CGPS) was formed in 2019 by residents of the small Parish of Capel near Tonbridge in Kent, who are concerned about the future of the countryside around the Parish. This is a combination of Metropolitan Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and provides a wonderful rural backdrop to life in the small community of around 900 dwellings and 2,400 residents.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has included 2,100 new houses in West Capel (Tudeley) in their Local Plan period to 2038 (recently increased from 1,900) and 2,160 new houses in East Capel between Five Oak Green and Paddock Wood (recently increased from around 1,500) in its draft Local Plan

The concerns are:

- a) that the pressures of modern life have resulted in residents finding it more difficult to find the opportunity to take part in outdoor activities.
- b) the threat of the Parish being swamped by new housing developments, as the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Draft Local Plan envisages putting 4,260 new dwellings out of a total of 8,500 in the plan (50 per cent) in this corner of the borough which makes up only 6.5 per cent of its area (21.5 sq.km out of 331.3 sq.km).

The Charity was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 5th November 2019.

2. Objectives

Our Charitable Objectives are to protect our local Green Belt and educate, and support, the General Public to use the Green Belt for their benefit and in particular:

- 1. To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the vicinity of Capel**
- 2. To advance the education of the public in the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment of the Capel Green Belt and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**



We believe in:

- the advancement of our local environment through protection and improvement
- the conservation of our local flora and fauna and of the local environment in these areas. through the promotion of sustainable development and biodiversity in our Parish, including the promotion of recycling, flood defences, and sustainable waste management
- excellence in the advancement of community development by sustainable urban and rural regeneration within the Parish of Capel, through the promotion of volunteering for public benefit coordinating different, like-minded, societies and organisations and raising, and managing, funds and donations for organisations that support our Society objectives

Promoting local culture and heritage by supporting local history and archaeology societies, preserving local ancient sites, woodlands and buildings and the preservation of our historical traditions, such as the local village fete, gardening groups, and Capel Path Rangers.

3. Achievements

In its initial reporting period of 20 months, the charity has

1. set up its formal structure (4 to 7 Trustees)
2. registered as a charity with HMRC
3. established a successful website www.capelgb.com
4. initiated its development programme “Wellness, Wilding and Walking” – known as “WWW”
5. responded to the threats in the TWBC Local Plan to build 4,260 new houses, five times the existing number of dwellings in the Parish, and supported a local campaign.
6. joined the London Green Belt Council (LGBC) and attended the 2019 and 2020 LGBC AGMs.
7. held a series of public on-line meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic to promote its work and raise awareness of the benefits of and the threats to the countryside.
8. raised Donations and successfully applied for Gift Aid from the HMRC
9. sponsored 3 local organisations (see section 5 below)



4. Impact and Value

In its first 20 months, the impact of the charity has been:

- to increase awareness of the value of the countryside and the ways it can be enjoyed. During the pandemic more people became aware of the value of the countryside to their wellbeing which provides a platform to build on.
- to provide support to the Capel Path Rangers to encourage and enable walking for wellbeing
- to highlight the harm that would be done to the Green Belt if the TWBC plans are adopted.

5. Sponsored Organisations and Activities

Green Belt Public Awareness Campaign

CGPS has held, to date, a series of 4 public online meetings – our “Greenbelt Gatherings” – to explain the purposes of CGPS and explain the activities that CGPS are involved in. These were well attended and resulted in financial donations and pledges to the objectives of CGPS. The charity has made a submission in response to the consultation on the TWBC Local Plan, focusing on the harm that would be done to the Green Belt if it is adopted.

Capel Path Rangers (CPR)

CGPS has donated funds for the CPR to replace Brush Cutting equipment for the maintenance of footpaths, and insurance and training for volunteers. A relaunch of this organisation and support by CGPS has enabled CPR to recruit members of whom 12 have volunteered to walk the local footpaths to report any problems, ensure routes are waymarked and clear any overgrown Public Footpaths. The booklet of self-guided walks has been updated by this group and will be published shortly with financial support from the charity.

As a result the Path Rangers group has been re-invigorated as part of our programme to encourage and enable walking as a means of increasing Wellness.

Education

In order to encourage and foster a long-term love for local green spaces, wildlife and the outdoors, CGPS is liaising with the three local schools and the youth groups within the Capel parish boundaries. Through these affiliations we aim to engage with early years and school age children to the age of 13, their teachers and parents. The National Curriculum has a focus on the natural environment and sustainable lifestyles. CGPS will support these local schools and youth groups by helping to deliver these elements of the national curriculum and other activities that will encourage use of the greenbelt countryside. CGPS will achieve this through financial support, expertise and other materials and resources.



CGPS plan to donate funds to Capel Primary School to fund the development of their “Forest School” initiative. Forest School enables children to learn about the environment, care and provide protection for our habitats and develop outdoor skills. The money given to the school by the charity will fund a teacher to become a qualified, Level 3, Forest school Instructor.

Capel Pre-School and the Somerhill Schools have also responded with interest in working with the Charity. This work is ongoing.

Youth Groups

Local youth groups including the District Girlguiding groups have also expressed an interest in working with us.

Capel Allotments

CGPS is working with the local Capel Parish Council, and the Capel Parish Allotment Holders Association, to establish the requirements for equipment to raise the standards of the local allotments. In particular this cooperation is targeting provision of

1. Enhanced Security solutions
2. Gardening equipment
3. Development of specific allotments for
 - a. disabled people
 - b. local schools

A large pledge has been now received by CGPS to fund a secure storage facility following frequent thefts from the site.

Save Capel Campaign

CGPS has supported a local campaign called “Save Capel” - whose sole objective is to protect the Green Belt from over-development by building developers due to the local Borough Council’s draft Local Plan. In response to the charity’s activities in sponsoring awareness and implementation of the local “Save Capel” campaign’s organisation, over 3,000 responses, overwhelmingly against the local Borough Council’s draft Plan, were submitted by local people in the Reg 18 consultation and approximately 1,000 to the Reg 19 consultation in 2021. We have helped raise money to support the local community’s campaign against the proposals, under the banner of “Save Capel”. Professional expertise has been engaged by Save Capel in the legal, planning and environmental areas to assist in responding to the local Borough Council’s draft Local Plan, facilitated by the charity.



6. Long Term Strategy

CGPS believes that protecting the Green Belt in Capel is an important short-term objective. Once the status of this section of Green Belt has been secured the charity will concentrate on seeking donations and grants to sustain the CGPS WWW and Education Strategies for the benefit of the General Public. We will continue to seek grants and donations to sponsor local organisations and increase public benefit from the use of the Green Belt by all parishioners but particularly among the following groups:

1. Youth groups including:
 - a. Rainbows,
 - b. Brownies,
 - c. Guides
 - d. Rangers.
2. The elderly
3. Dog Walkers

7. Statutory Information

CGPS was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 5th November 2019, charity number 1192171.

The Registered Office is:
3 Bank Farm Cottages
Sherenden Road
Tudeley
Tonbridge
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Full details are available at [www. https://www.capelgb.com](https://www.capelgb.com)

The current Trustees are:

Chair	Dr David Parrish
Deputy Chair	Konrad Legg
Treasurer	Robert Assirati CBE
Trustee	Hilary Andrews

The charity's bankers are:
HSBC UK
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