

Charities Merge over concern for the River Wye

In response to the ongoing and widespread concern about the health of the River Wye, historic river charity the River Wye Preservation Trust has resolved to merge into CPRE Herefordshire from January 2024 in order to make better use of its assets for the protection of the river.

The RWPT was incorporated as a charity in 1986, having been formed out of concern for increasing leisure use of the river, including by hovercraft, in the period. It sought to balance the interests of different river users, bringing farmers, canoeists, rowers, fishermen and others together, under the leadership of first Simon Dereham and then Patrick Darling.

The Trust organised an annual River Walk and most recently appreciated the regenerative farming of Ben Taylor-Davies. Secretary the Revd Neil Patterson commented, "Since Patrick's sad death just over a year ago the Trustees and Committee have concluded that the issues with the River are too significant for our capacity to engage and that we need to merge into another group able to campaign actively. We have been impressed by the commitment of CPRE Herefordshire to research-based campaigning for the health of the Wye and are delighted that they will take this work forward."

At an Extraordinary General Meeting in the summer at the RWPT's traditional meeting place, the Bunch of Carrots, Hampton Bishop, there was strong endorsement for the plan.

CPRE Herefordshire Director Andrew McRobb responded, "We have admired the work of the RWPT for many years and also recognise that we can be stronger together. We are very happy to welcome their members into CPRE and to continue with the goal of protecting and improving the ecology and environment of the Wye Catchment. This merger is a significant indicator of our determination to continue Citizen Science and lobbying Government for the benefit of our rivers.

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