

Announcement Kate Fielden.

Dr Katherine Jane Fielden BA, DPhil

20th July 1944 - 21st July 2023

On 21st July, Dr Katherine Jane Fielden BA, DPhil, unexpectedly passed away at the John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford at the age of 79 years.

She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and many colleagues.

Dr Kate Fielden joined the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Wiltshire in 1986 and carried out many roles for the branch. She became a Trustee of the charity and most notably Secretary of the Stonehenge Alliance, of which CPRE Wiltshire is a key member. She was also a member of the Avebury Society.

Kate made an outstanding contribution to CPRE Wiltshire over the past 36 years. She brought her invaluable knowledge of history and context, thanks to her background as an archaeologist, to help protect the North Wessex Downs AONB, the famous Kennet chalk stream and Wiltshire's many historic villages from unsuitable development. Her attention to detail in all her campaigns was second to none.

She was a member of the Kennet group of CPRE Wiltshire and became acting chairman in 2021. With her encyclopaedic knowledge of planning regulations and the history and context of an area, she was able to help the CPRE responses to the endless flow of unsuitable planning applications for development in these very special areas.

Her greatest contribution to CPRE Wiltshire has been her work with the Stonehenge Alliance. She became honorary secretary of a group of NGO representatives, who included CPRE Wiltshire, to prepare objections to the proposal for a Stonehenge/A303 Tunnel.

The advice of a landscape architect and a specialist planning solicitor was volunteered. Other specialists also joined the Alliance but unfortunately there was not a geologist available to help. It became necessary to engage a paid professional and funds were desperately needed. Dr Fielden organised a fundraising appeal and this allowed the campaign to raise the necessary money.

As an archaeologist she understood the complexity of the situation and enabled the Alliance to clearly communicate their concerns about the controversial changes proposed.

In 2012 CPRE President Sir Andrew Motion presented her with a High Commendation in the Marsh awards for Countryside Champion of the Year for the tireless work she carried out in this regard.

On presenting the award, Sir Andrew Motion said: "It takes dedicated people like Kate to care and look after it. The work she does is not glamorous or high-profile and the results are all too often taken for granted. That's why I am proud to present this award to Kate and recognise this fantastic contribution."

Kate was a marvellous voice for CPRE through her work creating comprehensive, meticulously compiled contributions to local planning consultations, media interviews, radio chats and attendance at international conferences for the Stonehenge Alliance and CPRE.

In 2022, she was again recognised for her outstanding contribution to CPRE Wiltshire over 36 years, in the national CPRE Volunteer Awards.

One of her many distinguished roles was working for Lord and Lady Lansdowne at the Bowood estate where she was a curator and worked in the library and the archives. She was often called upon to give guided tours. In an attempt to mark the many changes of the estate, Kate wrote 'Bowood Revisited' together with Lord Lansdowne, which looks back on the estate's revival in the 1970s to the modern day.

There will be a private family funeral and a memorial service which will take place in the Autumn (TBC).