



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 July 2011

Bill Bryson presents anti-airport expansion campaigners with award

Local campaign group, Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE), has received national recognition for its work opposing the proposed plans to increase airport traffic at Bristol International Airport from six million passengers to ten million passengers by 2019.

The group's outstanding campaigning achievements were acknowledged by CPRE President Bill Bryson who presented them the Marsh Award for the Benefit of Rural England, accompanied by a cheque for £450. The prize was presented at the CPRE national AGM in London last week.

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion is a coalition of several local interest groups: the local (North Somerset) branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Bristol Friends of the Earth and the Parish Council's Airport Association (CPAA), which represents 24 Parishes neighbouring the airport.

Bill Bryson, CPRE's President, commented on the award winners: "When I came to this country I fell in love with the unique character and eccentricities of England's towns and countryside. It's through the work of many volunteers and people like those receiving awards today that these endearing qualities will be preserved.

"In my work with CPRE I have often been struck by the amazing dedication and commitment shown by our volunteers. These extraordinary people finish their working week only to sit down and do another week's worth in their spare time."

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion was highly commended for its varied and tireless campaign work including the group's work to educate and raise public awareness. The judges were particularly impressed by the group's web campaign that made it easier for local residents to have their say and resulted in five thousand public responses to North Somerset Council's consultation, including objections from Bristol City, Bath & NE Somerset councils and local health authorities. The group are continuing their campaign and are currently pursuing a legal challenge to North Somerset Council's May 2010 approval of the plans.

Brian Marsh, Chairman of the Marsh Christian Trust, said: "A huge congratulation to all the CPRE winners. We set up the Marsh Award for the Benefit of Rural England to support just these sorts of grassroots volunteer initiatives and it's a credit to the work done by CPRE volunteers that this year we needed to expand the number of grants we give out."

Hilary Burn, spokeswoman for SBAE said: "We are delighted to receive recognition for our campaign which has been the result of three groups combining their expertise for a common purpose, namely CPRE's knowledge on green belt and planning policies, Bristol Friends of the Earth's expertise on climate change and the Parishes' knowledge of the impacts on the rural environment and local communities."

For further information on SBAE, please contact: Hilary Burn on 01934 838599 / 07854 444609

For further information on CPRE and the Marsh Awards please contact: Jack Neill-Hall, CPRE Senior Press Officer: 020 7981 2819 or out of hours: 077 3933 2796

A photo of the award presentation is available

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Notes to Editors

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE) is a campaigning coalition between the North Somerset branch of CPRE, local Friends of the Earth groups, and the Parish Councils' Airport Association, comprising 24 Parish Councils in the vicinity of Bristol Airport. SBAE has been fighting, since 2005, plans to more than double the size of Bristol airport and have so far achieved a delay of at least three and a half years. The proposed plans could lead to a major increase in carbon emissions, loss of green belt land, hugely increased numbers of cars on rural roads, and increased night flights. SBAE are currently pursuing a legal challenge to North Somerset Council's May 2010 approval of the plans, granted despite 5000 objections, including Bristol City, Bath & NE Somerset councils and local health authorities.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) fights for a better future for the English countryside. We work locally and nationally to protect, shape and enhance a beautiful, thriving countryside for everyone to value and enjoy. Our 57,000 members are united in their love for England's landscapes and rural communities, and stand up for the countryside, so it can continue to sustain, enchant and inspire future generations. Founded in 1926, President: Bill Bryson, Patron: Her Majesty The Queen. www.cpre.org.uk

The Marsh Christian Trust is a grant-making body supporting registered charities. The Trust administers a Marsh Award Scheme, to recognise the achievements of those who strive to make our world a better place through volunteering or academic excellence. Founded in 1981, by Brian Marsh OBE, it now runs over 40 Awards with a number of partner organisations and supports a growing number of smaller charities.