

Date: 4th September 2018

Report: Surrey Hills Society – June – September 2018 update

Written by: Chris Howard (Chairman)

Purpose of Report

To report on the activities of the Surrey Hills Society

Summary

The Surrey Hills Society continues in its main role of promoting and engaging with the public, supporting the Board on deliver of the Management Plan, and raising awareness of the issues facing the AONB. It also leads on, and supports, relevant projects across the AONB, in partnership with key stakeholders. This report covers the June to September 2018 period.

The priority throughout 2018 is the delivery of the various events to promote the 60th Anniversary, the 10th Anniversary of the Society, the 40th Anniversary of the North Downs Way being designated a National Trail, and supporting the Downlands Project in their 30th anniversary celebrations- as you will see in the centre page spreads of our spring and summer newsletters. The Autumn newsletter centre pages summarises the celebrations and activities of 2018 so far.

The SHS Strategy

The Society signed off its new three years strategy in March 2018.

It is not a radical departure from the previous strategy- as documented in last report. We have been working closely with the AONB unit to identify key projects for 2019 and beyond. We are also actively engaging with the AONB Management Review and discussing how the Society can best assist the AONB Board in deliver of the new Plan.

The Government's announcement of a new 25 year plan is an exciting development- as is the review of National Parks and AONB's headed by Julian Glover, which was the main topic of debate at the National AONB conference in July of this year.

The **Surrey Hills Society AGM** this year will be held on **Saturday 13th October** at the Dorking United Reform Church, Dorking. There will also be a talk on Surrey Suffragettes and a tour and history of the church. Board members would be most welcome to join us. Please book via the website.

At this event the current Chairman, Chris Howard and the Vice Chairman, Ken Bare will be standing down as Trustees, as per the constitution. Gordon Jackson has been recommended by the Trustees, as the next Chairman. A new Vice Chairman has yet to be identified.

Core Funding and staffing:

Surrey Hills Society continues to be a totally self- sufficient organization raising its funds from its events program, membership and corporate sponsorship. The model continues to reinforce the use of volunteers to support the Board in the delivery of the Surrey Hills Management Plan.

Funding and Projects:

The Society continues to be a totally self -funded organization, with core funding coming from our membership fees, our events program, donations and fund-raising events.

The **Society has donated £2000 towards the Surrey Unearthed project** this year.

- Walks For All Ages Book for Surrey

Chris Howard's book produced by Bradwell Books was launched by Dame Penelope Keith at the Surrey celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Surrey Hills at Loseley on 26th June. The books are now on sale on the Surrey Hills Society website at a cost of £5.99 + P&P. All proceeds go to the charity.

- HLF 60th Anniversary book.

The book has continued to gain praise from various members of the public and requests for the book continue to come in via the website.

It has also continued to gain quite a bit of publicity in the local press. The Society has now distributed over 3,500 copies of the book, including sending them to the Julian Glover Review Committee and all Surrey MPs, Council Leaders, and Parish Councils.

- Award for volunteers on Tales of Tillingbourne Project from Surrey Archeological Society

The Society attending a ceremony on Saturday 28th July to accept an Award for the volunteers work on this project, in partnership with Shere Museum for the HLF funded Tales of the Tillingbourne project. The plaque is to be displayed at Shere Museum.

Communications and Publicity

The Autumn newsletter is now in circulation. The deadline for the Spring newsletter is end of Jan 2019. The Chairman continues to write a Surrey Hills article and the walks pages in Surrey Life magazine each month. The Chairman, Chris Howard & Vice Chairman, Ken Bare have been judging the **Surrey Life Food and Drink Awards 2018** during August and will attend the award ceremony at GLive on 13th September 2018. This event is an excellent network of local food producers, pubs and restaurants and does an excellent job promoting local Surrey enterprises both through their magazine and via their website and excellent social media.

The Society was busy over the summer delivering its round of shows and fairs throughout Surrey. This included having our trailer or gazebo at the Surrey County Show on Bank Holiday Monday, Ashstead Village Day, Cranleigh Show, Effingham Commoners Day, and Haslemere Fair.

The Society been involved with a local fund- raising project in Haslemere, called Haslemere Hares. The hares are decorated by local artists and auctioned for local charities. Last year they **raised over £35,000 for local and national charities**. A local artist (and member of the SHS), Charlotte Choi, has painted our hare to promote the

Surrey Hills 60th anniversary. It will spend the summer outside Dylans' Icecream shop in Wey Hill, as well as being a display item for our trailer display at shows this summer. We have attended their various publicity events and definitely raised the profile of the Surrey Hills in Haslemere. The Hare proved very popular at the County Show. The artwork on our hare has been much admired. The auction of the hares will take place at Lythe Hill Hotel on Wed 26th September at the Lythe Hill Hotel. SHS have purchased their hare already so it will not be in the auction. It will continue to be used at shows and talks in the future.

2018 Anniversary Events:

On **Tuesday 26th June** in the evening, the Society, in partnership with the Surrey Hills Board, hosted the **celebration event at Loseley Park**. Parish Council Chairman and Clerks from across the AONB, and key partner organisations attended the celebration, including our Patron, Dame Penelope Keith.

The Society also celebrated the 60th anniversary at a **community fete held at Gatton Park on Sunday 1st July 2018**. The SHS have supported the Gatton Park HLF project over a number of years and raised the funds to clear the view over the lake. We will be showcasing the Tales of the Tillingbourne and running a Big Draw project for children.

The Vice Chancellor at the University of Surrey, Prof Max Lu, is supporting the Surrey Hills **Symposium on Wednesday 28th November, in the late afternoon/evening**, with Max Lu hosting a VIP dinner in the evening. This event will look at the future of the SHAONB in the coming 60 years and what will be the main challenges affecting it. Several meetings have now been held to progress this project.

2018 is also the **40th anniversary of the designation of the North Downs Way** as a National Trail. We have been working with Peter Morris, the NDW Manager to deliver a **series of walks along the NDW**. Working with the key walking festival organisers along the route, Peter Morris and the Surrey Hills Society created several events as part of the festivals.

Chris Howard has now walked all of the NDW through Surrey, and will repeat the Guildford to Dorking section as part of the Guildford Walkfest on All Board members are invited to join Chris on this final event to celebrate the North Downs Way 40th Anniversary.

The Chairman, Vice Chairman and several members of the SHS also attended the Wye Festival which celebrated the NDW anniversary on Thursday 27th September and had a stall there, promoting the Surrey Hills.

Shows and Talks

Ken Bare continues to deliver a series of talks to various groups across the County. This not only fulfills our charitable aim to promote the SHAONB, but also brings us an income as often the organizations we speak to make us a charitable donation.

Walks

The Society continues to run a monthly free walk to engage particularly young people to get out and enjoy the Surrey Hills and learn more about the AONB. We continue to have between 30 - 50 people attending each walk.

The Society trained 10 volunteers on a Walk leader training day on 14th July. Another map reading training day is planned for 6th October. We are now delivering training to a new generation of volunteers to keep the charity sustainable in the future.

We are also the lead organization supporting the Guildford Walkfest. The launch event was held on 1st September at Chilworth, where we also showcased the Tales of the Tillingbourne project and took two of the puppets from Shere Museum along.

SHS Events Calendar

The Society continues to deliver between 2-4 events per month- run entirely by volunteers. Our limiting factor continues to be the number of willing, trained volunteers who are prepared to take responsibility and lead events – problem shared by many charities.

Recommendations

The AONB Board is asked to note of the report.

Chris Howard, Chairman, Surrey Hills Society 4-9-18

