

Surrey Hills Society Update from Gordon Jackson – Chair

This report covers the period from 12 December 2018 until 20 March 2019

- 1) We have been using the winter period to move forward on our business plan and shape the work of the Society over the coming years.
- 2) Seven of our volunteers attended the Surrey Hills Away Day held on 29 January at High Ashurst Education Centre. 19 participants from different 'Family' members were present. After the event, I identified the following key actions:
 - a) Develop the thematic approach with a view to recruiting ambassadors that will support the themes for both the Trust and the Society. The themes suggested are:
 - i) Communities
 - ii) Landscapes
 - iii) Access
 - iv) Youth
 - v) Health & well-being
 - b) Work with the Board and other stakeholders to develop a list of projects that the Society can support in conjunction with the Trust Fund reflecting the above. This is particularly important from the point of view of potential sponsors, who want to be able to have something identifiable to support.
 - c) Continue to work with other members of the Surrey Hills Family, and Surrey Hills Enterprises in particular, to develop opportunities for greater integration.
 - d) Explore the possibility of developing the Society membership demographic by looking at cycling and equestrian groups.
- 3) On 13th February we held a Society workshop at Wooton Village Hall during which 18 volunteers brainstormed ideas and future projects for the Society. Since then a small working party has been developing these ideas and they will be translated into an Action Plan that will support the Business Plan that was produced last year.
- 4) I have met with Wendy Varcoe and we have had a wide-ranging discussion about ways in which the Society and SHE can co-operate. We have identified a number of potential visits that might be undertaken to SHE members including Adam Aaronson's Glass

Studios, Plant Passion in Staple Lane, Clandon and Elstead Village Gin Distillers. We also discussed the possibility of various talks by SHE members such as vineyard owners, LC Energy and Tim Metson of Coverwood Farm – this led to the idea of having a series of talks on Climate Change covering different aspects and this might be hosted by the Natural Burial Ground in Clandon. Wendy and I are continuing to develop these initial thoughts.

- 5) The Spring edition of the Society's newsletter was published in February and we have had extremely good feedback from our readers. The Society needs to make greater use of Social Media and we are keen to collaborate with the Board to develop a new approach to this. We are working closely through the Collaboration Group to improve the Society's profile on the Board's website.
- 6) At its recent Board Meeting, the Society agreed to make a contribution of £500 towards the Haslemere Rail to Ramble Project subject to further costings and the Project being fully funded.

We also decided to make a contribution of £500 to Surrey Wildlife Trust's Youth Engagement Day on 28th March, which I will be attending.

- 7) During the reporting period the following events have been held:

- a) Pre-Christmas walk at Belmont School
- b) Walk off your Christmas puddings – free, guided walk
- c) Explore Haslemere – free, guided walk
- d) A Talk on Surrey's Local Producers
- e) Explore Godstone and Tilburstow Hill – free guided walk
- f) Map Reading to Enjoy the Surrey Hills
- g) Visit to St John's Seminary
- h) Afternoon at Gatton Park
- i) Explore Ewhurst – free, guided walk

- 8) Forthcoming events include:

- a) A visit to Nower Wood Nature Education Centre 26/3/19
- b) Explore Frensham Little Pond and Devil's Jumps 7/4/19
- c) Chairman's Guided Tour of Guildford 17/4/19
- d) Rhododendrons at Ramster Wood 8/5/19
- e) Busbridge Lakes Heritage Garden Inspiring Views Walk 25/4/19
- f) Explore River Wey in Guildford 5/5/19
- g) Albury and Shere walk to Saxon Church and musical treat in conjunction with Investec Music Festival 10/5/19
- h) Discover Deepdene Trail and Betchworth Castle 15/5/19