

**Date:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Report:** Surrey Hills Society – Spring 2019

**Written by:** Marika Elzinga (Coordinator)

---

### **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 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 period from 20<sup>th</sup> March to 12<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

### **The SHS Strategy**

We have received the **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service**. It is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their own communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of The Queen's coronation and is the equivalent of an MBE for volunteer groups. Any group doing volunteer work that provides a social, economic or environmental service to the local community can be nominated for the award. Each group is assessed on the benefit it brings to the local community and its standing within that community. The award will be presented to the Society by the Lord-Lieutenant in either late summer or early Autumn.

The Society is continuing its dialogue with Trustees, volunteers, the AONB Board and key partners as part of its three year Business Plan 2018-21. Various Committees are reviewing the Action Plan and incorporating actions that they can take forward. A list of projects are being identified for our sponsors to support in the future.

The Surrey Hills Society AGM will be held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> October at the Evelyn Hall in Abinger Common. Members of the Board are most welcome to join us.

### **Core Funding and Staffing**

The Society has had a self-employed consultant, Marika Elzinga working fifteen hours per week as the Coordinator for the last five years. She will be leaving her role at the end of July. The role and hours will be reduced and a new Administrator, Lesley Crofts will continue with a number of tasks including event bookings and main email addresses.

The Society has also been able to work with Ali Clarke from Surrey Hills Arts. We have assisted her with publicity for the Inspiring Views project and done walks/events to promote the project. We hand out leaflets and raise awareness of this projects through our talks and shows. We have also supported Ali on the Soundscape project and are currently looking for further funding projects for the AONB, that the Society can assist her with.

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

### **Communications and Publicity**

Surrey Hills main website and the Society's presence on it is under discussion. There is a direct link from the website's banner to our separate micro site [www.surreyhillssociety.org](http://www.surreyhillssociety.org) that works well and enables people to join the Society and book our events on-line, and purchase gift packs, notelets, fleeces and other Society products.

The Summer newsletter is now in circulation. It has been distributed via the library service and our own distribution network. The newsletter comes out three times a year, is run by volunteers and is self-funding via corporate sponsorship.

Our vice-President, Chris Howard continues to write a Surrey Hills column and the walks pages in Surrey Life magazine each month.

Social Media presence has been acknowledged as crucial for the Society. Caroline Price from the AONB Board has agreed to create social media accounts for the Society on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They will be managed by the Society once created.

### **Shows and Talks**

Our vice-President, 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.

We have a new volunteer Show Coordinator, Jean Arnold who recruits volunteers to man the Society's stall and keep raising awareness of the AONB at various country fairs and shows. We currently have nine shows listed for the season including Surrey Hills Challenge and Surrey Hills Wood Fair.

### **Walks**

The Society continues to run a monthly free walk to engage wider public (particularly young people) to get out and enjoy the Surrey Hills and learn more about the AONB. We have around 30 people attending each walk.

The Society is one of the lead organisations in the Guildford Walkfest, held in September. We have also led walks along the North Downs Way with the trail manager Pete Morris in order to promote the National Trail that runs through the Surrey Hills AONB.

### **Events**

The Society volunteers organise and run over 40 events each year. The events are open to all with different prices for members and non-members. Most of the walks are free. All events are listed on our website and can be booked online.

During the reporting period the following events have been held:

- 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
- 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
- i) Walk the North Downs Way from Farnham to Guildford 1/6/19
- j) Explore the Greesand Way 2/6/19
- k) East Clandon Village Day 5/6/19
- l) Picnic and Croquet at Polesden Lacey 13/6/19
- m) Sublime Sanctuaries at Brookwood Cemetery 19/6/19

Forthcoming events include:

- a) Explore Gatton Park 1/7/19
- b) Chairman's Day at Hampton Estate 11/7/19
- c) Cranleigh and the Brooking Collection 13/7/19
- d) Explore Ash Ranges 1/8/19
- e) Explore Compton 4/8/19
- f) Garden visit to Pratsham Grange 7/8/19
- g) Wanborough Great Barn 17/8/19
- h) Explore Stoke Park 1/9/19
- i) Walk along the River Wey 14/9/19
- j) Discover the Industrial History of Abinger 15/9/19

We have met with the Arts and Craft Movement in Surrey (ACMS). Their Society has been struggling for membership and we have identified a number of synergies. We have agreed to co-operate more closely in the promotion of events via website, newsletters and AGM.

### **Recommendations**

The AONB Board is asked to note of the report.