

SURREY HILLS BOARD

Minutes of meeting held on 13th June 2018 at Warren Farm Barns

CORE MEMBERS

* Cllr David Wright	Guildford Borough Council
* Cllr Mike Band	Waverley Borough Council
* Cllr Lindsey Dunbar	Tandridge District Council
* Cllr John Stephenson	Reigate & Banstead BC
* Cllr Claire Malcomson	Mole Valley District Council
* Mike Goodman	Surrey County Council
* Stephanie Fudge	National Trust
* Adam Wallace	Natural England

ADVISORY MEMBERS

* Tim Bamford	CLA
* Liz Cutter	SSALC
* Chris Howard	Surrey Hills Society
* Simon Whalley	Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC
* Gordon Jackson	Surrey Hills Trust Fund

* Members present

IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Fairbanks	Surrey Hills AONB Office Director
Jane Garrett	Surrey Hills AONB Office Support (Notes)
Clive Smith	Surrey Hills AONB Team
Ken Bare	Surrey Hills Society
Caroline Price	Surrey Hills AONB Team
Lisa Creaye-Griffin	Surrey County Council Head of Countryside
Denise Furlonger	Surrey Hills AONB Team
Wendy Varcoe	Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC
Pennie King	Surrey Hills AONB Team
Ali Clarke	Surrey Hills Arts

		ACTIONS
1.	INTRODUCTIONS	
	David Wright welcomed everyone and round the table introductions were made.	
2.	APOLOGIES	
	Nigel Davenport and Neil Maltby	

3.	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	
	The minutes of the last meeting held on March 21st were agreed.	
4.	MATTERS ARISING	
4.1	Adam Wallace explained that a lot of work was being undertaken within DEFRA regarding future agricultural policy. The 25 year government strategy sought to derive public goods out of public investment through agri-environment schemes. They would be more results driven, but there would be a long transition period. From a Surrey Hills perspective, he said Surrey could benefit as a lot of people lived near the AONB who valued it for recreation which should make a strong case for investment in landscape. That would be a very important argument when it came to apportioning the current £3.4bn invested in rural development programmes. He said this was a massive opportunity to do something really beneficial to improve countryside management through investing in landowners and land managers. David Wright said that Michael Gove had not referred to this in his recent speeches so it was encouraging that DEFRA was working on it.	
4.2	Rob Fairbanks said he had submitted a proposal to DEFRA for a pilot project in partnership with the University of Surrey and the Surrey Nature Partnership. It was understood that Defra would confirm pilot schemes financing by the autumn. Adam Wallace said it was important to be proactive.	
4.3	David Wright reported that Waverley Borough Council had accepted the planning inspector's decision that the borough should take on half of Woking's unmet housing needs. A similar demand might be made of Guildford Borough. Mike Band said that Waverley had been reluctant to accept this ruling but did so to retain some control over its planning strategy. David Wright said that Guildford was not proposing any development in the AONB.	
5.	SURREY HILLS ARTS PRESENTATION	
5.1	Ali Clarke, Surrey Hills Arts Programme Manager, said her role covered heritage, health and tourism, and related to delivering the AONB Management Plan. She had recently been helping install artworks by students of the University of Creative Arts on Farnham Heath in partnership with the RSPB and to create Bryn Hallett's rammed earth sculpture at the Watts Gallery. She was also involved in chalk drawing workshops for children and supporting artists, website development and advocacy.	
5.2	Ali described Surrey Unearthed as a major arts programme. All the artists' works were different but shared a passion for the Surrey landscape and its history. The Lark Descending was a growing project led by internationally renowned artists Ackroyd and Harvey who were passionate and active in opposition to the drilling at Leith Hill. Jonathan Parsons' dot matrix sculpture was visible from the railway and sited on Hugh Broom's farm. Mary Branson's illuminated hay bales would be installed later in the year after the harvest, and harvest songs would be shared around community choirs for a celebration of the 60 th anniversary. She explained that Walter Bailey's sculpture would be the only permanent installation and sited on Farnham Heath. Ali Clarke said the cost of the projects was £150,000 of which £67,000 came from the Arts Council grant, £2,000 from the Surrey Hills Society and £5,000 from the Surrey Hills Trust Fund. She had made 24 applications for grants to cover the remainder.	
5.3	Adam Wallace said that engaging people in landscape through art was inspirational and should pick up different audiences. Ali Clarke said that the audience development was part of the evaluation but this was not always straightforward. Chris Howard said the Inspiring Views project had been found to impact a completely different audience from the usual one. Mike Band said it had even reached people in Koblenz. Adam Wallace asked if it would be possible to provide information for people doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award. Chris Howard said it would be good to provide an online resource for them.	
5.4	David Wright thanked Ali for all her hard and imaginative work and hoped it would be possible to create a lasting legacy out of the projects.	

6	SURREY HILLS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN (2019-2024)	
6.1	<p>David Wright said that the plan had to be reviewed every five years and this time we were going to undertake a ‘light touch’ review as the current Plan was considered in general to be fit for purpose. Rob Fairbanks referred to the Government Review of all Designated Areas (National Parks and AONBs) which would change the nature of the Plan. In the meantime the Board needed to identify anything that might have a harmful impact in the short term. He asked Board Members to list the strengths, weaknesses and future threats facing the AONB which he would then pass to officer representatives of the member bodies for closer analysis.</p> <p>Board members identified as strengths: the beauty of the AONB; the large population accessing it; its free accessibility; diverse natural habitats including rare lowland heath; its proximity to London; its vibrant rural economy; popularity; affluence; history and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Weaknesses: poor public transport links; congested roads and lack of parking; traffic and housing pressures; lack of public awareness of the AONB; dependence of the landscape on outdated and non-viable land management models; development restrictions; fragmented land management; its role as the patio of the London suburbs; failure to make good use of all the potential viewpoints; lack of consistent quality of visitor facilities and landscape interpretation.</p>	
	<p>Opportunities: Better management of visitors would enable the AONB to reduce friction between users and accommodate larger numbers; connectivity of information would help people understand wildlife and landscape and would help promote biodiversity; toilet and catering facilities to improve the visitor experience; links between train stations and the rights of way network; the cycle network; the chance to influence Government policies; volunteering; community engagement and user cooperation; improve AONB gateways eg “you are entering the AONB”; funding through development; involvement of businesses and institutions; promotion of education, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Threats: housing development; lack of infrastructure investment; uncertainty over future agricultural and landscape management funding; London expansion; climate change putting species at threat; difficulty in generating income; diseases and pests threatening indigenous species; lack of integrated planning; waste management; reduction in commercial farming; water resources and flood protection.</p>	
	Rob Fairbanks said he would ask the Board in September to incorporate the Consultation Draft into a new revised Plan to be published in October 2019.	RF
7.	SURREY HILLS ACTIVITY REPORT	
7.1	<p>Rob Fairbanks outlined the purpose of the Defra review of Designated Areas led by Julian Glover. The Cotswolds were bidding for a change of status to become a National Park. David Wright suggested that we look at all the issues in the round. The £52m Government support is currently divided into £46m for 10 National Parks and £6m for the 34 AONBs. One question to consider was whether the 70 year old National Park model remained fit for purpose. He asked whether the AONB model was leaner, lighter touch and offered better value for money. Rob Fairbanks said that the Surrey Hills could also apply to become a National Park Authority but asked if it was appropriate. The Surrey Hills attracted more visitors than some National Parks. Should this factor influence the distribution of funding? It was agreed that the Chairman should write to Julian Glover and invite him to come and visit Surrey so they could put these arguments to him. Adam Wallace said there needed a very succinct message as Julian Glover was looking for ideas and would be willing to engage with people. Christine Howard said they should push the visitor numbers as it was a strong argument for Surrey in that we had a high number of visitors but a fraction of the funding.</p>	DW
7.2	Rob Fairbanks reported that the Into the Hills project had failed to get the HLF funding they had sought. He proposed to revise the proposal with a Youth Partner or incorporate it with a project with a clearer heritage focus.	

7.3	He reported that the pending AONB boundary review might be incorporated into a wider national review of AONBs.	
7.4	The Byways working group continued to meet at intervals and was concentrating on criminal damage and fly-tipping now that the main BOAT issues had been addressed.	
7.5	The Board gave David Mir a sincere vote of thanks for all his many his contributions to the work of the Board over many years. He had worked extremely hard and his dedication had been appreciated.	
7.6	The Mountain Bike Working Group had now identified a network of single track cycle trails across the Surrey Hills. Unfortunately the Friends of the Hurtwood had declined to take its monitoring and management. It might be necessary to ask and volunteers within the Surrey Hills AONB family to undertake the task.	
7.7	Mike Goodman congratulated the team on the Cycle Surrey Hills project that was launched by Jeremy Hunt. He said he hoped Government should do more to promote health and wellbeing through cycling and he hoped the cycle network would be extended into Sussex and Hampshire.	
7.8.	QUIET LANES ZONE	
7.9	Liz Cutter said she had met the Chairs of the Mole Valley, Waverley and Guildford Local Committees and they were supportive of the approach. They were hoping to get a standardised sign at the entrances to the zone warning drivers they were entering a rural environment. As part of the Decluttering programme in the zone, she had counted 30 signs in Holmbury St Mary and was to contact Surrey Highways to see how many of them could be safely removed. On behalf of the Board David Wright congratulated Liz on the progress of the initiative. Rob Fairbanks said that road signs had more than doubled in recent years and it was not easy to get rid of them. They planned to create a pile of signs that could be photographed as an example of street clutter. Liz Cutter said the initiative was being undertaken in cooperation with parish councils. Mike Goodman warned her not to be disappointed if only a few of the signs they had identified as redundant were permitted to be removed. The proposed gateway signs would also need special dispensation. Rob Fairbanks said repeater 40mph signs were considered counterproductive on lanes where traffic naturally went slower.	
7.10	Chris Howard and the Board congratulated Ken Bare on his book on the Surrey Hills. Mike Band commented that people reading it said it had opened their eyes and made them look at the landscape afresh.	
7(B)	SURREY HILLS ENTERPRISES Simon Whalley reported that membership was growing with people approaching them to join rather than being canvassed. He paid tribute to the work of Wendy Varcoe and said total membership, at 75, had doubled. The Rural Economy Conference had been a great success with 120 delegates it had covered its costs. They were starting to see exciting members working together who they were supporting through mentoring and help with marketing. David Wright commented on the high quality of the recent e-newsletter.	
7 (C)	SURREY HILLS SOCIETY	
	Christine Howard flagged up the AGM on October 13 and congratulated Ken Bare on his Guildford Borough Council award for volunteering. She said her Walks for All Ages book was about to be published and that the Tillingbourne Tales project had been very successful, winning a Surrey Archaeology Society Award. The Haslemere Hare project was proving a great attraction. Chris Howard also called on volunteers to support the 40 th anniversary celebrations of the North Downs Way National Trail.	
7(D)	SURREY HILLS TRUST FUND Gordon Jackson said the trustees were reviewing their future strategy. They were conscious that without high powered trustees they were not going to raise serious amounts of money. There were practical problems over small donations that needed to be addressed. Rob Fairbanks said the Surrey Hills Challenge and Festival of Sport would be taking place on 23 rd September. This was an educational opportunity but in the medium and long term the aim was to get sponsorship to cover the costs so that registration fees could raise money for	

	the Trust Fund in support of countryside access. He reported that he was organising a reception on Inspiring Views with the Watts Gallery at the Mittal's Alderbrook Estate. Members of the Board and larger landowners had been invited.	
8	ANNUAL PARTNERSHIP TOUR Rob Fairbanks outlined arrangements for the Partnership Tour on 6 th July at Denbies and the farms of Hugh Broom and Laurence Matthews. This was agreed.	
9	ANY OTHER BUSINESS Adam Wallace said Natural England was working with the City of London and Croydon to look at establishing a nature reserve in Happy Valley where the down land abutted on the AONB. He suggested it could be promoted as a gateway into the AONB and would keep Rob Fairbanks informed of progress. Rob Fairbanks reminded members of the Surrey Hills Symposium on November 28 at the University of Surrey.	
10	DATES FOR MEETINGS Partnership Tour Friday 6 th July Surrey Hills Board Wednesday 12th September 13.30 Surrey Hills Board Wednesday 12 th December 13.30	

The above minutes are a true record of the Surrey Hills Board meeting held on Wednesday 13th June 2018.

Signature of Chairman

Date