

# SURREY HILLS AONB BOARD

## DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2<sup>nd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 HELD ONLINE

### CHAIR

Heather Kerswell Independent

### CORE MEMBERS

\*Cllr Susan Parker Guildford Borough Council  
\*Cllr Hazel Watson Mole Valley District Council  
\*Cllr Rosemary Absalom Reigate & Banstead BC  
\*Alison Griffiths Surrey County Council  
\*Cllr Geoffrey Duck - Vice-Chairman Tandridge District Council  
\*Cllr Ruth Reed Waverley Borough Council  
\*Andrew Wright National Trust  
\*Andrew Smith Natural England (Defra)

### ADVISORY MEMBERS

\*Romy Jackson National Farmers Union  
\*Kristina Kenworthy CPRE  
\*Mike Waite Surrey Wildlife Trust  
\*Tim Bamford CLA  
\*Liz Cutter SALC  
\*Gordon Jackson Surrey Hills Society & Surrey Hills Trust Fund  
\*Wendy Varcoe Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC  
\*Alistair Burtenshaw Surrey Hills Arts

\*Members present

### IN ATTENDANCE

Rob Fairbanks Surrey Hills AONB Office Director  
Denise Furlonger Surrey Hills AONB Office  
Caroline Price Surrey Hills AONB Office  
Ken Bare Surrey Hills Society  
Chris Howard Surrey Hills Society  
Clive Smith Surrey Hills AONB Office  
Rod Shaw Mole Valley District Council  
John Oliver Member of public

			<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>1</b>		<b>INTRODUCTIONS</b>	
		Introductions had been made at the AGM and Geoff Duck remained in the chair	
<b>2</b>		<b>APOLOGIES</b>	
		Heather Kerswell, Natalie Bramhall, Sarah Jane Chimbwandira, Stephanie Fudge, Simon Whalley	

<b>3</b>		<b>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>	
	3.1	The minutes of the last meeting held on 17 <sup>th</sup> June were agreed. Matters arising were reported in the updated AONB Management Plan Monitoring Frameworks.	
<b>4</b>		<b>SURREY HILLS BOUNDARY REVIEW</b>	
	4.1	Clive Smith provided the background. The Surrey Hills had been assured by Natural England that we were next after the completion of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths boundary review but we have not received confirmation yet that it is going to happen. This has been embarrassing as the Surrey Hills Board has been using the reassurance from Natural England to inform local plan inspectors and members of the public that the AGLV in particular needed to be retained and that the boundary review will include much of the AGLV as per the Hankinson Duckett, Landscape Character Assessment from 2013.	
	4.2	Andrew Smith said that he recognised that the timeline in Clive’s report did not read well and said that Heather Kerswell and other Board Members had written recently to Natural England to ask when something would happen now that the Suffolk Coast and Heaths work had been completed. Andrew thanked the AONB Board for their patience. Natural England still recognised the commitment and it is now subject to getting support from DEFRA in light of the Glover Review. Andrew apologised that it has taken so long and acknowledged that it would be helpful if the Board had some form of written response from Natural England to clarify how they may take this forward and how the AONB could be involved in the process.	<b>AS</b>
	4.3	Geoff Duck thanked Andrew for his response and agreed that the AONB Board would be happy to work with Natural England to pilot a new streamlined procedure and suggested that the AONB Board members should now be approaching DEFRA. Kristina Kenworthy added that CPRE Surrey wanted to campaign for the boundary review and as a charity was able to lobby DEFRA and would like to assist.	
	4.4	Hazel Watson asked if it was appropriate for the Chair to write to DEFRA to get clarification on timing. The Board agreed and Andrew added that it would not do any harm.	<b>RF/HK</b>
	4.5	The Board agreed the recommendation to approach Natural England with an offer to work with them on a streamlined procedure for AONB designation in reviewing the Surrey Hills boundary.	<b>HK/RF</b>
<b>5</b>		<b>AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN REPORTING</b>	
	5.1	Rob provided the background and highlighted the Red, Amber, Green ratings. There are a lot of red ratings due to the Covid 19 pandemic which has limited the ability to proceed with many of the planned events. One action from the last meeting is that we are trying to make progress on the Greenways Project with an opportunity to make a bid to the Green Growth Recovery Challenge Fund which is available to environmental bodies aimed at retaining jobs. Rob thanked Mike Waite and the Surrey Wildlife Trust for all their help with the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) which is progressing well. The Symposium with Surrey University, Making Space for Nature, would take place online on 25 <sup>th</sup> November	
	5.2	Wendy Varcoe reported that businesses membership had been retained through lockdown with some new members. A positive outcome is that members have been collaborating and supporting each other, with some of our Surrey Hills members supporting the NHS with food deliveries. Wendy thanked Caroline	

		Price for her help and support during that difficult time. The launch of the Artisan Trail is now likely in October. New members have come on board in the last 5 months and they are building the membership	
	5.3	Gordon said that the Society was now up and running again with events and it will be supporting 11 walks at the Guildford walk festival in September. The events had all been well received and fully booked within hours of going online. They were struggling with indoor events and the AGM may have to be conducted online.	
	5.4	Gordon Jackson explained there was a great deal of linkage between the Trust Fund and the Society. One example was Into The Wild which encourages disadvantaged groups of people out into the countryside.	
	5.5	Clive Smith updated on the Planning For The Future White Paper. Clive had thought he would present it to the meeting but decided it would be too premature. There have been lots of discussions with other AONB planning officers. The document suggested that AONBs will be protected but it had also stated the same about green belt which had not been protected. The local plans are being done in a hurry and Clive hoped the government would give local authorities discretion about what land will be protected, especially AGLV land until the boundary is reviewed. Clive will draft a response to agree with Rob and Heather. The Board asked Clive to circulate the draft to them for comments. Mike Waite added that he has done a response for the Surrey Nature Partnership and also a joint response for the South East Nature Partnerships which he would liaise on with Clive.	CS CS/MW
	5.6	The Members noted progress.	
<b>6</b>		<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	6.1	Mike Waite reported that he is writing a response on the England Tree Strategy at the moment. There is a specific question about how National Parks and AONBs could expand woodland cover. Susan Parker asked if it is ok for people to copy parts of it for their own responses. Mike said yes and suggested sharing it via Denise Furlonger.	MW/DF
	6.2	Rosemary Absalom said that her husband would be completing a sponsored walk on Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> September which takes him from the east of the borough to the west and he will be accompanied by a broadcaster from Susy Radio so Rosemary will be raising the profile of the Surrey Hills.	
<b>7</b>		<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
		The next Board meeting will be on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> December at 13:30. The venue is yet to be agreed and may need to be held again by Zoom.  13:30 Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December - Surrey Hills Board	

The above minutes are a true record of the Surrey Hills Board meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.

Signature of Chair

Date

