

This question is directed to the Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB for public questions at the Board Meeting on 2 December 2020, as per the protocols on your website.

Madam Chairman

We have all witnessed the exponential increase in visitor numbers to The Surrey Hills in recent months. Our lovely countryside remains open and free to all 24/7/365, and all may therefore freely access its benefits. While this is in itself desirable, capacity is not limitless, and all footfall has impacts, in particular on the local residents who sustain Surrey's economy, and on the resident wildlife and its habitats which give Surrey its character and value. Some of the problems that have arisen from this increase in tourism are well-known - littering, illegal parking etc. The issues for nature and wildlife from erosion, disturbance, damage and littering are less easy to quantify.

Not all of the increase in numbers can be attributed to current health and economic circumstances. Given that government and SCC policy is to promote access to our countryside and that in pursuance of this policy advertisements for the Surrey Hills have recently been displayed in places such as London rail stations, can you:

- give details of what advertisements or other marketing initiatives actively to attract visitors have been commissioned by the AONB and whether any such marketing/ advertising is current or is being planned;
- explain what action or reaction is being taken by the AONB in response to the recent problems generated by the increase in tourist numbers attracted; and
- explain what procedures are in place to minimise impacts of this increase in tourism on habitats and wildlife, and their biodiversity, and how these are being monitored?

Thank you

Jenny Desoutter