

Date: 4th June 2018

Report: Surrey Hills Society – Summer update 2018

Written by: Chris Howard (Chairman)

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 summer 2018 period.

The priority throughout 2018 is the delivery of the various events to promote the 60th Anniversary, the 10th Anniversary of the Society, the 40th Anniversary of the North Downs Way being designated a National Trail, and supporting the Downlands Project in their 40th anniversary celebrations- as you will see in the centre page spread of our newsletter.

The SHS Strategy

The Society has now signed off its new three years strategy. It is not a radical departure from the previous strategy- as documented in last report.

The **Surrey Hills Society AGM** this year will be held on **Saturday 13th October** at the Dorking United Reform Church, Dorking. This will also include a talk on the history of the church and also highlight the local Dorking links with William Mullins (c.1572 – 1621). He and his family travelled as passengers on the historic 1620 voyage to America on the Pilgrim ship “Mayflower”.

Core Funding and staffing:

Surrey Hills Society continues to be a totally self- sufficient organization raising its funds from its events program, membership and corporate sponsorship. The model continues to reinforce the use of volunteers to support the Board in the delivery of the Surrey Hills Management Plan.

- Award for Ken Bare

Ken Bare received a volunteer service award for his volunteering efforts with the Surrey Hills Society from the Mayor of Guildford in May 2018.

Funding and Projects:

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.

- Walks For All Ages Book for Surrey

Chris Howard was asked by Bradwell Books last year to write a book of short walks in Surrey. £1000 was donated to the Surrey Hills Society, as payment for this project. The book highlights the Surrey Hills AONB, the 40th Anniversary of the North Downs Way and showcases walks in countryside owned by some of our key partners like Farthing Downs. The books will be on sale from July 2018 at a cost of £5.99.

- HLF 60th Anniversary book.

The Society's £6,000 HLF project to deliver the Surrey Hills 60th anniversary book, as part of the Surrey Hills AONB 60th Anniversary, has been completed and was successfully launched at Speakers House at the 60th Anniversary event there on 8th May. A huge thank you to Ken Bare for the many hours he spent writing and researching the book. Also a big thank you to Diane Cooper for editing the book.

The books have been distributed to all parish, borough and district leaders and key organisations. The books have also gone to all our members and are being given away at events throughout the summer. The book is being well received.

It has also gained quite a bit of publicity in the local press.

- Surrey Unearthed Arts Project with Ali Clarke

The Society has been able to donate £2000 to this project and is also supplying volunteers to assist in the project.

- Award for volunteers on Tales of Tillingbourne Project from Surrey Archeological Society

The Society will be attending a ceremony on Saturday 28th July to accept an Award for the volunteers work on this project, in partnership with Shere Museum for the HLF funded Tales of the Tillingbourne project.

Communications and Publicity

The Summer newsletter is now in circulation. The deadline for the Winter newsletter is end of July. The Chairman continues to write a Surrey Hills article and the walks pages in Surrey Life magazine each month. The Chairman, Chris Howard & Vice Chairman, Ken Bare will be judging the Surrey Life Food and Drink Awards 2018 in August and will attend the award ceremony at GLive in October 2018. This event is an excellent network of local food producers, pubs and restaurants and does an excellent job promoting local Surrey enterprises both through their magazine and via their website and excellent social media.

The Society is busy at present delivering its round of shows and fairs throughout the summer. This included having our trailer or gazebo at the Surrey County Show on Bank Holiday Monday, Ashstead Village Day, Cranleigh Show, Effingham Commoners Day, Haslemere Fair, to name a few.

The Society has got involved with a local fund-raising project in Haslemere, called Haslemere Hares. The hares are decorated by local artists and auctioned for local

charities. A local artist (and member of the SHS), Charlotte Choi, has painted our hare to promote the Surrey Hills 60th anniversary. It will spend the summer outside Dylans' Icecream shop in Wey Hill, before becoming a display item for our trailer display at shows in the future. We have attended their various publicity events and definitely raised the profile of the Surrey Hills in Haslemere. The Hare proved very popular at the County Show. The artwork on our hare has been much admired.

2018 Anniversary Events:

We continue to work closely with Rob Fairbanks and the team at WFBs to deliver all the events planned for the anniversary celebrations. The Speaker's House event, organized jointly with the Society proved a great success.

On **Tuesday 26th June** in the evening, the Society, in partnership with the Surrey Hills Board, will host a **celebration event at Loseley Park**. Parish Council Chairman and Clerks from across the AONB, and key partner organisations, will be invited to celebrate the anniversaries. The sponsor for this event is Playle & Partner.

The Society is also planning to celebrate the 60th anniversary at a **community fete held at Gatton Park on Sunday 1st July 2018**. The SHS have supported the Gatton Park HLF project over a number of years and raised the funds to clear the view over the lake. We will be showcasing the Tales of the Tillingbourne and running a Big Draw project for children.

The Vice Chancellor at the University of Surrey, Prof Max Lu, is keen to support the development of a **Symposium in Autumn 2018**. The date has now been set for **Wednesday 28th November, in the afternoon**, with Max Lu hosting a VIP dinner in the evening. This event will look at the future of the SHAONB in the coming 60 years and what will be the main challenges affecting it. Several meetings have now been held to progress this project. Gordon Jackson is leading on this project in partnership with Rob Fairbanks.

2018 is also the **40th anniversary of the designation of the North Downs Way** as a National Trail. We have been working with Peter Morris, the NDW Manager to deliver a **series of walks along the NDW**. Working with the key walking festival organisers along the route, Peter Morris and the Surrey Hills Society created several events as part of the festivals. See surreyhillssociety.org for details or www.farnham.gov.uk/walking-festival-2018-walk-information or www.molevalleyramblers.org.uk/festival.html
Or www.guildfordwalkfest.co.uk or www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way

Chris Howard has now walked all of the NDW through Surrey, except for the Reigate to Oxted section, which will be completed on Thursday 14th June. All Board members are welcome to join us to complete this last section.

Shows and Talks

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.

Walks

The Society continues to run a monthly free walk to engage particularly young people to get out and enjoy the Surrey Hills and learn more about the AONB. We continue to have between 30 - 50 people attending each walk.

The Society is planning another Walk leader training day on 14th July at Womersley Sports Hall.

SHS Events Calendar

The Society continues to deliver between 2-4 events per month- run entirely by volunteers. Our limiting factor continues to be the number of willing, trained volunteers who are prepared to take responsibility and lead events. However, we have a strong team of 10 that lead of this activity.

GDPR:

The Society has completed its review of GDPR legislation and believes it has responded appropriately. A huge thank you to Stella Cantor and Martin Cantor for leading on this review.

Recommendations

The AONB Board is asked to note of the report.

Chris Howard, Chairman, Surrey Hills Society 4-6-18

