

**Date:** 15 March 2018

**Report:** Surrey Hills Society – Spring update 2018

**Written by:** Chris Howard (Chairman)

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### **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 winter/spring 2017/18 period.

### **The SHS Strategy**

The Society is on track to sign off the new three year SHS Business Plan at the Trustees meeting this week. It is not a radical departure from the previous strategy. The income from events and activities continues to grow and we are able to now fund and support small scale projects in our own right, for example; £250 for tools for Gatton Park Trust, £500 for re-printing of walks leaflets, and £1000 to deliver Tales of the Tillingbourne workshops in schools.

We are also confident in our role supporting the Surrey Hills Trust Fund. We provide the volunteers needs to run PR events for the Trust, and leading on many fund raising activities in 2016 & 2017 to raise over £30,000 for the Fund. In the new strategy we will continue to support and grow this area of charitable work.

The area where the Society has grown most in confidence is in its ability to lead and deliver grant funded projects within the Surrey Hills AONB. With the £92,000 HLF Tales of the Tillingbourne project, the Society took a leading role, managed the contract for the Project Co-ordinator and led on her recruitment. The Society also supplied the majority of the volunteers for the project. We have just heard we have been given an Award from the Surrey Archeological Society for our role in this project- in partnership with Shere Museum.

The Society has also been awarded £6,000 from HLF to deliver the Surrey Hills 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary book, as part of the Surrey Hills AONB 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

The Society will continue with its work providing volunteers to man the Surrey Hills trailer at shows and events across the County, as well as giving talks both in Surrey and south London. We will also continue to deliver three newsletters highlighting what activities and projects are taking place across the Surrey Hills. This newsletter is

distributed across the County via the library service and through volunteer drop offs at key locations.

In my last report, I highlighted the issue of succession planning as both myself as Chairman and the Vice Chairman, Ken Bare, need to step down as Trustees in 2018, as per the Articles of Memorandum of the charity. Following our recruitment campaign, Gordon Jackson, has been appointed as the Society's new Chairman. He will be formally adopted at the Society's AGM in October 2018. A Vice Chairman has yet to be confirmed. Ken Bare and Chris Howard will continue to support the Society as volunteers.

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.

### **Funding:**

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**

The Spring newsletter is now in circulation. The deadline for the summer newsletter is end of March. The Chairman continues to write a Surrey Hills article and the walks pages in Surrey Life magazine each month. The Chairman & Vice Chairman, Ken Bare have been asked to judge the Surrey Life Food and Drink Awards 2018 and to attend the award ceremony at Foxhills 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 Chairman is pushing to keep to her end of March deadline for writing a book about walking in Surrey by Bradwell books, called "Walks For All Ages". Surrey is one of the few Counties yet to appear in this series. The book is on track to be published May 2018.

The Society £6000 Heritage Lottery Fund to support the writing of the Anniversary book to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Surrey Hills is almost complete and will be launched at the VIP event at Speaker's House on 8<sup>th</sup> May. A huge thank you to Ken Bare for leading on this project- which is on time and on budget.

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, is painting 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. The project is on track.

### **2018 anniversary Events:**

We are also working closely with Rob Fairbanks, Caroline Price and Denise Furlonger to develop the series of events and activities across 2018 to highlight the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society.

David Wright joined us at **Denbies in January to launch the Surrey Life magazine-Surrey Hills celebration calendar**, with the Lord Lieutenant, Michael More Molyneux. Surrey Life magazine are our media partner for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They will be making their May edition a Surrey Hills special.

The Society has managed to secure **Speakers House for the VIP celebration** to be held on the **8<sup>th</sup> May 2018** - the date of the original dedication of the Surrey Hills as an AONB. All members of the Board should have received their invitations by now. Please rsvp asap.

On **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June** in the evening, the Society, in partnership with the Surrey Hills Board, will host a **celebration event at Loseley Park**. Mayors and leaders from boroughs and districts across the AONB, and key partner organisations, will be invited to celebrate the anniversaries.

The Society is also planning to celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a **community fete held at Gatton Park on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

There will also be a series of smaller member events that will be themed around the 60<sup>th</sup> /10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

The Vice Chancellor at the University of Surrey, Prof Max Lu, is keen to support the development of a **Symposium in October 2018**. This 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 but a date has yet to be confirmed.

2018 is also the **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of the North Downs Way** as a National Trail. We will be 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 are creating several events as part of the festivals. See [surreyhillssociety.org](http://surreyhillssociety.org) for details or [www.farnham.gov.uk/walking-festival-2018-walk-information](http://www.farnham.gov.uk/walking-festival-2018-walk-information) or [www.molevalleyramblers.org.uk/festival.html](http://www.molevalleyramblers.org.uk/festival.html) Or [www.guildfordwalkfest.co.uk](http://www.guildfordwalkfest.co.uk) or [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way)

### **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 has just completed a walk leaders training day for 10 of its volunteers.

## **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 new Data Protection Act law that comes into force in May 2018 is a focus of activity at present. Our Membership Secretary will be reporting at our March Trustee meeting to make recommendations on how we cope with the new GDPR legislation. However, we do not expect this to be too much of an issue for our organisation as we do not keep any financial details about our members. We also do not keep any membership details online and our Membership Secretary is the Data Controller. She has insisted that there is only one database controlled only by her. This database is constantly updated as memberships lapse.

## **Recommendations**

The AONB Board is asked to note of the report.

Chris Howard, Chairman, Surrey Hills Society 15-03-18

