

**Date:** 26 November 2019

**Report:** Surrey Hills Trust Fund

**Written by:** Gordon Jackson, Panel Chairman

---

**Purpose of Report**

To update Members on the activities related to the Surrey Hills Trust Fund.

**Period Covered**

This report covers the period from 1 September to 26 November 2020.

**Principal Activity during the Reporting Period**

The focus for the last three months has been almost entirely on Into the Wild.

As previously reported, The Trust Fund has provided £3,695 matched funding with LC Energy to engage a research Coordinator, Genevieve Lebus, who was contracted by the Surrey Hills Society. Surrey Hills AONB is providing support and funding for marketing material and a website etc.

The report, which runs to 100 pages, is a superb piece of work. It contains a detailed analysis of the long-term benefits to young people of being encouraged to spend time in the countryside. It demonstrates that there is considerable evidence that connection with nature at an early stage in adolescence can have a lasting effect throughout the rest of a person's life. Relatively small expenditure at an early stage can provide huge savings by reducing the need for NHS and Mental Health interventions later.

The research highlights that, of the 200,000 young people in Surrey, approximately 10,000 are diagnosed with mental health disorder and that despite Surrey's overall affluence there are wards with over 40% of children living in deprivation. Some of those wards are within the 20% of the most deprived areas in need in the UK.

The report researched the nature of youth groups that exist in Surrey it concluded there are:

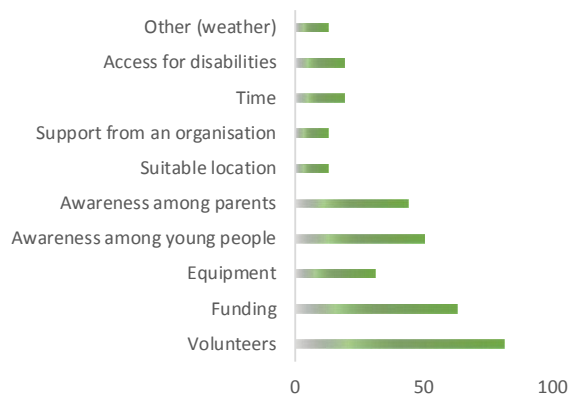
Youth groups (nature engagement)	35
Youth groups (no nature)	102
Groups that take youth outside	81

Almost all of the organisations would like to ensure more engagement with the countryside.

It also identified the barriers to young people engaging with Nature. The slides below have been borrowed from the presentation to be made by Dr Birgitta Gatersleben, a reader in Environmental Psychology at the University of Surrey, who will be presenting the results of Into the Wild to the Surrey Hills Symposium on 27 November 2019. It shows the challenges that are faced.

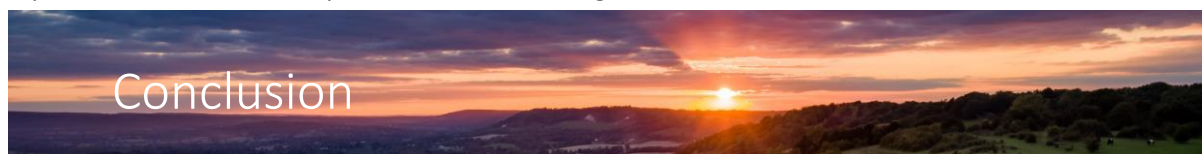


<b>Volunteers</b>	Volunteers to transport and help with small groups once we get out into the country
<b>Other support</b>	A partnership organisation - to work in collaboration to share skills/ equipment/ staffing - not able to do it on my own!
<b>Transport</b>	Transport is very important. As an organisation we do not own a minibus so heavily rely on the good will of schools to loan us their transport.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding is also a huge factor. As we are a charity we are constantly having to find funding to run anything.



*What would help you bring (more) young people into the natural environment (agree/disagree)?*

The report includes 7 case studies and concludes that there is no single solution to the problem, but it provides some excellent pointers as to what might be done.



- There are a lot of young people in need of support
- Surrey has a lot to offer in terms of natural health resources
- We should get together to close the gap between existing needs and opportunities
  - Suitable environments, volunteers, transport opportunities, facilities, equipment, training, awareness



Unfortunately, this report is being written the day before the Symposium so Rob Fairbanks and I will give an oral report about the evening at the AONB Board meeting. However, the intention is that this report should form the basis for a concerted effort to improve the opportunity for vulnerable young people to experience the Surrey Hills. To this end we are proposing the establishment of a steering group to examine the report's findings in detail and to propose a strategy that will seek to overcome the barriers and enable more young people to connect with the countryside. We are particularly keen that the group should identify partners with whom Surrey Hills can work - be they funders (who can work with the Surrey Hills Trust Fund to provide matched funding), volunteers or landowners to promote the benefits of the Surrey Hills for our young people.