



# Annual Review

2018 to 2019

*Promoting and Enhancing  
The Surrey Hills  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty*



# About Us

**The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of 46 nationally protected landscapes in the UK, having equal landscape status and protection to a National Park.**

The Surrey Hills Society (SHS) is an independent charity promoting the positive enjoyment and care of the Surrey Hills AONB for those who live, work in, or visit the area. The Society encourages people to explore and learn about the special qualities and distinctiveness of the area.

At its heart, the Society has a thriving membership organisation, which provides a vehicle for increasing the knowledge and enjoyment of the area by our members.

The Trustees and Management Team for the Society are all unpaid volunteers. There are over 70 active volunteers with at least 20 key volunteers, who regularly support us on a monthly or weekly basis. We also have one paid, part time, Co-ordinator role. Many of our Trustees and Management Team have active roles within the charity delivering various aspects of our work.

Due to this high level of volunteering, all the monies received by the Society, whether from internal activities, external grants or donations can (apart from internal running costs) be used to support the outreach and wider goals of the organisation as described in the Charity's Aims.



*SHS members visit Goldstone Farm*



*Free Sunday walk to Gibbet Hill and "Xylem" sculpture*

## What We Offer

**For our members,** we offer a wide-ranging programme of talks, visits and walks. All of these are designed to increase the understanding and awareness of our members and their guests of the special landscape and features which characterise the AONB.

**For the wider public,** we provide information about the AONB through our presence at a large number of shows and events across Surrey.

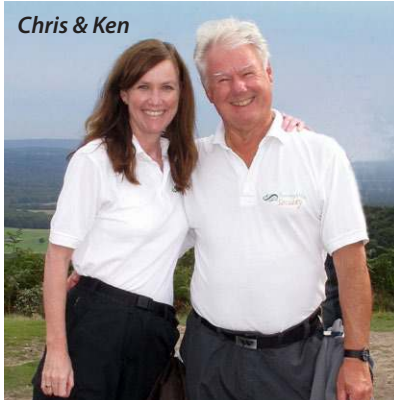
**For other groups and organisations,** we offer talks about the Surrey Hills using expert volunteer speakers. The income from these talks helps to support the wider work of the Society.

**For the AONB itself,** the Society forms the public face of the AONB, acts on behalf of the AONB Board to promote the area to the public and works with the Board to undertake or support initiatives, which help to deliver their Management Plan.



# Our Members

We have around 480 memberships of which a large percentage are family memberships of two or more people. In addition to this we have an affiliate network of related organisations including most of the Parish Councils across the AONB plus Surrey Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Long Distance Walkers' Association, Horsley Countryside Preservation Society, GASP Motor Project, The Gatton Trust and other like-minded groups. We also have a number of commercial businesses as affiliate members, ranging from The Hampton Estate to Playle & Partners LLP and the Stephan Langton Inn.



Chris & Ken

## Trustee Changes

At the Society's AGM in October 2018 Chris Howard and Ken Bare stood down as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively, having completed the maximum number of years as Trustees, which are allowed under the Constitution.

Gordon Jackson, who joined the Trustee team during the previous year, has been appointed Chairman to replace Chris. The post of Vice Chairman has been left unfilled for the time being.

Rather than lose the skills and experience which Chris and Ken have brought to the Society since its beginning, they have both been appointed as Vice Presidents. In this new role they are continuing to provide support and guidance to the Society and participate in many of its initiatives.



Gordon & Chris

## Volunteering – April 2018 to March 2019



SHS Vice Chairman presenting a talk



Our promotional display supporting Gatton Trust's Country Fair

During 2018 to 2019 there were more than 70 active volunteers supporting our Society in various ways. They undertake a wide range of tasks including practical volunteering, newsletter compilation and packing, supervising events, sitting on committees as well as external promotion of the Society.

- 8779 volunteer hours were achieved, equivalent to about 4.5 full time staff
- 47 events were organised and delivered as part of our annual programme
- 20 talks were given to external groups – resulting in over £1,000 income (plus in some cases additional Gift Aid)
- We attended 13 shows and external events across the county with our promotional displays
- We raised £30,388 of income through membership fees, running educational events and talks, plus donations by individuals and businesses.

## Sponsorship

We are very grateful to the following businesses who have provided sponsorship for various aspects of our work:

- Anthony Wakefield & Co for continued sponsorship of our newsletter
- Playle & Partners LLP for sponsoring our anniversary celebrations at Loseley
- Fidelity International for a donation as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility work.

# 2018 – The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Surrey Hills AONB



In 1958, the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was established as one of the first tranche of AONBs.

To mark its 60th anniversary, the AONB Board and SHS jointly organised a celebration in the Speakers House State Rooms within the Palace of Westminster, by kind permission of Rt. Hon. John Bercow MP.

This rare privilege, facilitated by Ann Milton (Guildford MP and strong SHS supporter) enabled us to invite an influential audience together with supporters of the AONB – past and present.

To mark the anniversary, the Society had also received Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) to produce a book describing how the AONB came about and how it has changed over the 60 years. This event also provided an opportunity for a high profile launch of the book which had been researched and written by our Vice Chairman.



*Diane Cooper (editor) and Ken Bare (author) of "Our Changing Landscape"*



*Dignitaries – including Lord Gardiner, Michael More-Molyneux (Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey), Ann Milton MP and Perdita Hunt (HLF Trustee)*



*SHS Trustees and Supporters*

*Chris Howard & Jeff Holliday (2nd & 3rd from left) with the AONB Team who helped organise the event*



*The beautiful State Rooms of Speakers House*



# 2018 – The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Surrey Hills Society



*SHS Volunteers at Loseley*

In June, the Society held a 10th anniversary celebratory event at Loseley Park in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant, Mr Michael More-Molyneux, and Guest of Honour, Dame Penelope Keith, who is Patron of the Surrey Hills AONB.

Apart from our volunteers, there was also a wide selection of supporters from the private and public sector plus our media partners from Surrey Life and BBC Surrey. We were also extremely grateful to Playle & Partners LLP who sponsored our evening and brought along a sizeable group to celebrate with us.

This was not only an anniversary event but an opportunity to provide a platform promoting many of our partner organisations. One of the strengths of the Society is that, because it owns no land and has no management responsibilities for any particular location, we are able to work with many like-minded groups, who carry on complementary activities across the breadth of the Surrey Hills.

We were therefore pleased to host displays from Surrey Wildlife Trust, GASP Motor Project, Community Foundation for Surrey (which administers the Surrey Hills Trust Fund), Surrey Hills Enterprises, Surrey Hills Arts, Louise Dunkley with her amazing artwork for the AONB Board, – and of course, various displays to highlight our HLF funded projects and all the other work which we undertake.



1. Surrey Wildlife Trust with BBC Surrey.
2. Surrey Hills Arts. 3. GASP Motor Project.
4. SHS general display with volunteer.
5. The speeches – Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey.
6. Dame Penelope Keith (AONB Patron) with Chris Howard (SHS Chairman).
7. Our event sponsors – Playle & Partners LLP.
8. SHS volunteers with the HLF display.



# Events & Activities – April 2018 to March 2019

During this period, the Society undertook many activities and delivered numerous events including:

- Free monthly walks on the first Sunday of each month – organised by different SHS members and volunteers



*Our Free Sunday walk at Hindhead*

- Joining up with other related organisations/charities and running events jointly with them, such as The Gatton Trust's Country Fair and Surrey Hills Challenge



*Our team at a very cold and wet Surrey Hills Challenge*

- Supporting the 40th anniversary of the North Downs Way National Trail by leading walks across the entire Surrey section of the route and by promoting the Surrey Hills at the North Downs Way Pilgrims Festival at Wye (in Kent) to celebrate the actual anniversary



*SHS display at North Downs Way celebrations, Wye (Kent)*



*North Downs Way walk*

- Organising and hosting two large celebrations to mark the AONB's 60th anniversary and the Society's 10th anniversary (more details on pages 4&5)
- Partnering with Surrey Hills AONB Board and University of Surrey to produce the first Surrey Hills Symposium



*SHS donation to the Patchworking Garden, Dorking*

- Working increasingly with Surrey Hills Arts to assist with and promote various projects and initiatives throughout the year
- Visiting historic properties and Surrey Hills villages of interest plus gardens of note not normally open to the public
- Organising and leading educational events e.g. learning to map read, Christmas wreath making, tree identification.



*Promotional work at the County Show*

We very much value the contributions made by our volunteers to achieve such a wide ranging programme and, to mark this, a 'Thank you to the Volunteers' picnic was held in August 2018.



# Marketing and Communications

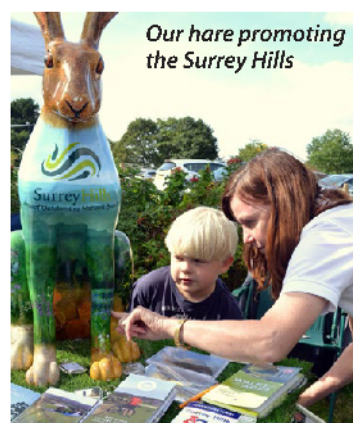
We continue to have a good working relationship with local publications such as Surrey Life and Vantage Point.

Chris Howard and Ken Bare have undertaken a number of interviews with BBC Surrey, our local radio station, and jointly promoted the Surrey Hills in its 60th anniversary year.

Chris Howard writes a monthly countryside column in Surrey Life. This includes information on our free guided walk – published in advance so that we can encourage more people to come along and get to know us.

We continue to produce our 8-page full colour newsletter 3 times a year with a print run of 3500 copies. These are distributed to members, Surrey's library network, a number of local business outlets and handed out at all the shows, events and talks which we attend.

4000 copies of "Our Changing Landscape" were printed. This book explains how the AONB came about and how it has changed over the last 60 years. It has now been distributed widely – including individual copies to all local and county councillors to assist them in understanding countryside issues.



## Our Mascot

The Society sponsored a hare as part of the Haslemere Hare Community Arts Project. This one metre high resin hare was painted by one of our volunteers to represent different scenery, fauna and flora of the Surrey Hills and was displayed in Haslemere throughout the summer of 2018. The Society "borrowed" it to take to all our external events and it proved to be a major attraction and aid in promoting the area – particularly to a younger audience. The Society chose to purchase the hare which is now a permanent mascot for us and continues to perform a vital promotional role for us at external events.

## Walking Festivals

The Society has a tradition of leading walks right across the AONB so it has been a natural extension of our work to become more involved in local walking festivals. In particular, Guildford Walking Festival has provided an opportunity for us to introduce many non-members to the North Downs Way, the Tillingbourne Valley and other parts of our glorious countryside.



[www.surreyhillssociety.org](http://www.surreyhillssociety.org)



# Awards



In July, the Society was the proud recipient of the 2018 Award from the Surrey Industrial History Group (SIHG).

We received this award jointly with Shere Museum for our work on the HLF funded project entitled "The Tales of the Tillingbourne". This project researched the industrial history of the Tillingbourne Valley and produced a wide range of outputs which have been used for educational work in schools, walks leaflets, talks, and to establish a permanent gallery exhibition space in Shere Museum.

During the second half of 2018 the Society was nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. This award, which is the equivalent of an MBE for volunteers, is announced on the Queen's birthday in June each year.

In February 2019 we were informed that we had been shortlisted as one of 13 Surrey based organisations.

We were invited to participate in a major promotion at Loseley House in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant, and many other influential members of the community. [Note: Since year end, we have been informed that we have been selected to receive the Award and the presentation will occur in the Autumn of 2019].



SHS Team with Lord-Lieutenant and his Deputy



Receiving the SIHG Award



Our volunteers at the 2018 "Thank You" picnic

We hope that you have enjoyed reading about some of the activities of the Surrey Hills Society during its 10th anniversary year. The Society is continuing to grow in size and stature as it seeks to involve a wider audience across the area.

If you would like more information about the Surrey Hills Society please visit our web site [www.surreyhillssociety.org](http://www.surreyhillssociety.org)

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