

Facsimile of eNewsletter sent to our members on 10 January 2022

All these articles may be found on the News page of our website



Welcome to our first Newsletter of 2022. Whilst 2021 was a challenging time for all of us, we move into a new year with plans to build on the theme of health and wellbeing alongside our environmental protection and enhancement initiatives. The Surrey Hills AONB is a wonderful asset that can help us all keep healthy whilst we, in our turn, work to improve it for future generations.

In this edition, we update you on the AONB Boundary Review - a key part of protecting our landscape. We also include a number of articles with the mini-theme of using the AONB to enhance our personal health.

Our Society is based on the ethos of getting more people out into the countryside to enjoy the benefits that can be found there - be it learning about nature, local history & culture whilst enjoying the views or supporting all our local businesses and artisans. It is your AONB. Why not make a new year resolution to get out more and play your part in keeping it special?

A Happy New Year to you all.

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Surrey Hills Boundary Review - Update



In 2021, Natural England finally agreed to take on a review of the boundaries of the Surrey Hills AONB. For many years there had been talk of the need for a review – indeed the discussion was already ongoing when the Surrey Hills Society was established back in 2008! Our Surrey Hills AONB was only the second to be created and the boundaries which were agreed then were subject to

significant debate amongst local councils and other influential bodies. Some excluded areas were subsequently given a degree of protection as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) but should probably have been included in the original designation.

This current review aims to redefine the boundaries by including areas which adjoined the 1958 boundaries but which can be shown to have equivalent (or indeed greater) landscape value than the already included parts. The map on the Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review [website](#) highlights where these 'Evaluation Areas' are located.

It has been stated that this is a "once in a generation opportunity" for the boundaries to be reviewed and relocated. It is, therefore, very important that those who know the area best – residents such as yourselves with an interest in the Surrey Hills plus local councils, countryside organisations and charities or others with local knowledge – all play their part in providing the information required to make this review robust.



The review is 'data driven'. Natural England has appointed consultants to undertake the data gathering and the emphasis is on 'facts not emotions'. It is important that all the decisions taken can be justified on the basis of what makes the particular area a 'special landscape'. The fact of it being 'nice' or 'well used' is not sufficient. The clue is in the title – Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – although there is an acknowledgement that all our landscapes are the result of human intervention over many centuries.

So, if you are able to use your local knowledge to highlight features, history, wildlife, biodiversity and all those other elements which add up to the term "outstanding", then you should be contributing to the review by completing the "Call for Evidence" form on the review website. This stage of the process appears to be placing significant emphasis on the provision of photographs to support the written evidence so it is worth digging out pictures which you may have taken in recent times (few places look at their best on a grey winters day!).

Make sure that your local parish council or conservation charity is also getting involved and playing its part. Many already are but with the deadline for responses being at the end of January, it is worth checking that the Christmas or Covid disruptions haven't caused them to miss the tight timelines for discussing and responding to the review.

The outcomes of this review will impact the Surrey Hills for many decades and will influence the degree of protection or development across the entire area. Remember that once land is defined as outside a 'protected' designation, it is far more vulnerable and once it has gone, it has gone forever. So don't just think 'it's someone else's problem'. Get involved and help to conserve the Surrey Hills and surrounding areas for future generations.



Surrey Hills Society joins the Surrey Green Social Prescribing Test and Learn Project



Surrey Heartlands Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is a GP-led organisation, responsible for planning and buying health services for the local population out of a budget of around £1.5 billion. Working with Surrey County Council, Surrey Heartlands CCG is one of seven national “test and learn” sites for Green Social Prescribing, which aims to connect people to the health benefits of nature and green spaces to improve mental health outcomes. More information is on the [Healthy Surrey website](#).

The two-year project will review green interventions and work together with residents on new initiatives to assess effectiveness for a variety of health and wellbeing issues, including those surrounding people who experience health inequality.

Activities can include walking, cycling, community gardening and food-growing projects, and practical conservation tasks such as tree planting. For people who need help to get involved this could include supported visits to local green spaces, or waterways and other outdoor activities.

Part of the project includes working with a series of partners to identify the green opportunities already available in Surrey - the Society is involved in the consultation which includes health, district and borough councils, as well as voluntary community and faith sector organisations. The aim is to ensure that nature-based activities are easy to find and to develop new initiatives that are culturally relevant whilst helping the green sector become a more accessible place for our diverse population. Surrey Heartlands are also developing a quality standard which recognises good practice for Green Social Prescribing in Surrey.

The Society is naturally extremely supportive of this initiative and as the project develops over the next two years we hope to build on the initial research that we facilitated through the [Into the Wild](#) project. We are already working with a number of landowners and youth groups to encourage hedge planting through the Surrey Hills and we also see opportunities for Society volunteers to assist with green social prescribing opportunities such as guided walks and conservation activities.



Editors Note: The article “[Social Prescribing - at local level](#)” looks at how one medical centre in the area is putting these principles into practice.



Social Prescribing - at local level

In our newsletters, we always like to include articles by guest writers. To find out how Social Prescribing is being applied in practice, we sent one of our newsletter team along to her local surgery to find out more. The article below was put together by the team at Binscombe Medical Centre to describe their approach.

Patients contact our GP surgery for a huge variety of reasons.

There is not always a medication that we can prescribe to patients; some may already be on the maximum dose of their medication and some may have a clinical reason why they cannot be prescribed the most effective treatment, and there are some things that medication is just not appropriate for. In its place, there are lots of therapies that can be hugely beneficial, in a way that medication can never do.

At Binscombe Medical Centre, we recognise the connection between our physical, mental and social wellness and we are passionate about this holistic approach to health and wellbeing. We believe there is great value in taking regular exercise to help our patients stay well so, in 2017, we set up our weekly Walking For Health Group that takes place every Tuesday. The walks help improve mobility and are beneficial for patients struggling with respiratory conditions such as COPD and cardiac conditions. There are also great benefits to patients' mental health and wellbeing due to the social connection of the walks. The human connection part of this is immeasurable and we have had many patients who came along because they had been feeling isolated or needed some social interaction. We have two distances of walk to cater for all abilities with more information on our website.



On a different venture, we are also in the process of setting up [Farncombe Community Garden](#). This is a project which aims to benefit both patients and the local community. Gardening has a range of proven health benefits for everyone involved; for example, physical activity levels are increased, a sense of community is created and mental health can be improved.

All our health care professionals advocate outdoor exercise both for themselves and our patients, especially as we are located in one of the most beautiful parts of Surrey. It is often more applicable and more powerful than anything we can prescribe even when the issue feels insurmountable.

As well as these outdoor activities we also offer other non-medical therapies such as our GP Chaplain and we are looking into setting up a support group for parents who had a Lockdown Birth. More information on these and other initiatives can be found on our [Binscombe Medical Centre website](#).

ZERO launches in Guildford



Carbon Zero Guildford have launched a new community space “ZERO” with a view to driving a community-led climate action plan. Promoting education and solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, ZERO aims to be a vibrant town centre hub that brings together the work happening locally to help the borough of Guildford and its surrounding area to adapt to a changing planet.

The concept behind Zero is that only around 30% of Guildford’s emissions can be directly tackled by the borough or county council. The remaining 60-70% must be addressed through strategies aimed at reducing consumption, better energy management and waste reduction. Central to this plan is community cohesion; ZERO aims to bring together individuals, projects and organisations and offer resources and platforms for collaboration to enable greater benefits than each individual project alone.



The Society is delighted to be included as an exhibitor at ZERO and is strongly supportive of its aims. We believe that there are opportunities for mutual cooperation, particularly in relation to the Society’s key objects of promoting enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills AONB and encouraging conservation of the landscape and its wildlife. The Society has a wide network of connections that enable it to promote partnership in the community. We are constantly seeking to develop these connections and there is huge opportunity for encouraging volunteers to become

involved in environmental protection and restoration, which is one of the key strategic areas identified by ZERO.

ZERO is also focused on 4 other strategic areas laid out by the Climate Change Commission as crucial for mitigation and adaptation to the Climate and ecological crisis. These include:

- Clean energy - with a focus particularly on community energy, support for renewables and smart energy systems
- Active travel infrastructure and behavioural change
- A circular economy and community re-use schemes
- Low carbon solutions, retrofitting, and energy efficiency

Projects currently being undertaken by ZERO include a climate cinema showing films that focus on the climate and environment, a green read/book share, and a community seed bank geared towards protecting biodiversity. They have also received funding from Transition Network to set up a mini vertical farming installation.



Why not visit ZERO at 14-16 Friary Street Guildford GU1 4EH or find out more on their [website](#).

Get out, get active

Many of us will almost certainly have over-indulged during the festive season and taken less exercise than usual. However, a good number of us will also be making resolutions to get fit in the New Year. Instead of hitting the gym or joining an exercise class in the village hall, however, why not get out and get active? The benefits of the great outdoors include reducing blood pressure, keeping our lungs, heart and bones healthy and improving our mental health and wellbeing.

Perhaps we need an extra challenge rather than simply going for another walk. While most of us enjoy a good walk (members of the SHS probably more than most) what about trying out a different type of walking? Nordic walking, with poles, is brilliant exercise, working the upper body and giving a more complete workout. No wonder it is becoming increasingly popular with plenty of local walking groups.



Or perhaps explore a different area close to home. I live just outside of Dorking by Box Hill and most of my dog walks are around local fields, but I recently discovered lovely countryside walks just the other side of Dorking around Westcott. Or why not discover Surrey's lesser-known villages? Betchworth, Godstone, Shere and Chiddingfold get more than enough visitors, so try exploring villages away from the tourist trail. Perhaps Holmbury St Mary, where EM Forster's "A Room with a View" is supposedly based, or Outwood, with its grade 1 post mill, picturesque Bramley, or Seale with its hidden gem, the Manor Farm Craft Centre, housed in old farm buildings.



What else apart from walking? The Surrey Hills may be landlocked, but there are many opportunities to get close to water. Willing to give wild swimming a go? Try Divers Cove in Godstone, a former sand extraction site, or Buckland Lake, a 50-acre recreational lake near Reigate. Canoeing and paddleboarding are great fun and help to tone the upper body as well as offering a great opportunity to get close to wildlife.

Cycling is a great family activity and there are plenty of interesting cycle trails that do not involve the Box Hill loop. Check out the [Cycling page](#) of the AONB website for ideas. If cycling seems too strenuous e-

cycling offers low-impact exercise along with an opportunity to enjoy the countryside at a comfortable pace. It's possible to hire by the day or as a starting point just by the hour.

Volunteering is another way to stay active and contribute to conserving and protecting our countryside. Opportunities exist with many local organisations especially those concerned with environmental and wilding initiatives.

And for those who prefer to stay home, there is plenty to do in the garden even in January. Gardening benefits our well-being and gives a full body workout particularly when raking, digging or even clearing leaves. Finally for days when the weather really is too inclement to venture out, a spring-clean is not only good for your home but can boost your mood, burn calories and do wonders for your overall health.



Susie Turner

Surrey Locations for TV and Film

Surrey has been a renowned film location for well over fifty years. One of the earliest blockbusters filmed partly in Surrey was Lawrence of Arabia back in 1962, where Peter O'Toole falling from his motorbike was shot at Chobham Common.

While two of the most often quoted films are Four Weddings and a Funeral and The Holiday, there are a whole raft of TV and film productions that have taken place in Surrey since then and it isn't hard to understand why. Firstly, its location: Surrey is home to two high-end studios (Shepperton and more recently Longcross) and is close to London as well as Heathrow and Gatwick airports. Secondly, the wonderfully diverse scenery makes the area a perfect stand-in location for many other parts of the country and beyond.



In The Dig, the film about the discovery of Sutton Hoo in Suffolk, Norney Grange in Shackleford, was chosen as Edith Pretty's home, while Loseley Park near Guildford doubled as Broadlands in Hampshire for recent episodes of The Crown. Netflix's Bridgerton was filmed partly at Painshill Park and features the 18th century gardens and lake, while Leith Hill Place was transformed to the mother house of the nun's order in Call the Midwife, even though the series is set in Sussex. Ironically, the famous picnic scene on Box Hill in Jane Austen's Emma wasn't filmed there at all, but at nearby Leith Hill.



Certain parts of Surrey are particularly popular and used as locations again and again. They include Frensham Ponds, Waverley Abbey, Painshill Park, Loseley, Bourne Wood (particularly famous for scenes from Harry Potter), the village of Shere and Hankley Common Nature Reserve.

Hankley Common was used for several Bond blockbusters including Skyfall and represented a French battlefield in the epic film 1917. More recently, it is rumoured to be the site for a Netflix production The Sandman. Visitors to Frensham Ponds may also have spotted a Celtic village taking shape for another upcoming

Netflix production, The Cursed which also has the romantic remains of Waverley Abbey near Farnham, transformed into a ruined castle. Meanwhile, during last summer, filming of the remake of an Agatha Christie novel, Why Didn't They Ask Evans?, directed by Hugh Laurie and with a star-studded cast, took place at a number of Surrey locations, including Guildford, Mickleham and Shere.

Elsewhere, a scene for a romantic comedy What's Love Got to Do With It? starring Lily James and Emma Thompson reportedly took place at Ashcombe School in Dorking. Another school enjoying fame earlier in 2021 was Betchworth Primary School which along with Flanchford Farm near Reigate became one of the Surrey based locations for The Larkins.

Finally a mention must be given to West Horsley Place. The 15th century manor house has become the go-to location for a range of television and film productions. One example is the popular Ghosts which was filmed there almost in its entirety - with proceeds from filming contributing to the major restoration programme.



With film production making up for lost time during the pandemic, Netflix significantly increasing activity in the UK, the expansion of both Shepperton and Longcross studios, and the support of the Surrey Film Office, an economic development initiative by Surrey County Council, it seems that the Surrey Hills can only continue as one of England's prime filming hotspots.

We hope that you have found this newsletter of interest. Our Management Team and other volunteers have been working hard behind the scenes to develop our Events and work programme for this year and beyond. Keep up to date with all our Surrey Hills Society activities by checking our website www.surreyhillssociety.org on a regular basis.