

## **‘Making Space for Nature’ – Surrey Hills commissions and exhibits 30 paintings of indicator species at Leith Hill Place**

The Surrey Hills National Landscape is delighted to host an exhibition of 30 illustrations of [Surrey Hills indicator species](#) at [Leith Hill Place](#), in response to their Making Space for Nature project. These 30 original artworks were specially commissioned by [Surrey Hills Society](#) and funded by [Surrey Hills Trust Fund](#).

Gordon Jackson, Chair of Surrey Hills Society and Surrey Hills Trust Fund comments;

*These beautifully detailed and keenly observed illustrations in acrylic and ink were conceived to support visual interpretation for the Making Space for Nature project. They have all been created by an artist as part of a prisoner rehabilitation programme. We are absolutely delighted that the National Trust has offered to display the originals, which we eventually hope to sell to raise funds towards the Society’s charitable purposes of promoting the positive enjoyment and care of the Surrey Hills National Landscape.*

The 30 illustrations are directly inspired by [the Surrey Hills Nature Recovery Strategy](#), a collaborative document with farmers and landowners designed to develop an approach to nature recovery. Seven habitats were identified, and each species is an indicator of a healthy habitat and in turn raises awareness of the essential conservation and protection of the homes of these animals, flora and fauna. Whilst some species depicted in the illustrations, such as the Water Vole and Turtle Dove, are not currently present within the Surrey Hills, it is hoped that habitat creation and enhancement, combined with targeted conservation action, may encourage these species to increase their current ranges. For those that are present, conservation projects within the Surrey Hills are critical to manage essential habitats and support both an increase in abundance and biodiversity.



**Water Vole**  
© Surrey Hills Society



**Turtle Dove**  
© Surrey Hills Society

The Making Space for Nature project promotes education, awareness, and a sense of purpose in the landscape. The aim is to encourage community support, connection to nature and inspire efforts towards the protection needed for these species to prosper. The Surrey Hills has helped to enhance these rich habitats through projects such as the 7.5km of native hedgerow planted over the past winter, which will create dynamic environments for species such as the Turtle Dove, Barn Owl,

Brown Hairstreak Butterfly and Hazel Dormouse. These projects are made possible through [collaborative farming and landowner groups funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant](#) and fantastic volunteer efforts delivered by Surrey Hills Society.



**Barn Owl**  
© Surrey Hills Society



**Brown Hairstreak Butterfly**  
© Surrey Hills Society



**Hazel Dormouse**  
© Surrey Hills Society

The opportunity to exhibit these illustrations at Leith Hill Place will powerfully enhance and impact the experience of viewing these artworks for those who visit. This evocative [National Trust](#) property was the childhood home of Ralph Vaughan Williams, composer of the pastoral masterpiece *The Lark Ascending*, which pays homage to our Skylark illustration, one of the species exhibited. Vaughan Williams' great uncle, the famous naturalist Charles Darwin, visited Leith Hill Place frequently and conducted experiments in the grounds.

Stephanie Fudge, General Manager of the Surrey Hills for the National Trust adds:

*We are so pleased to host this exhibition for so many reasons. We at the National Trust are always looking at ways to engage new audiences and potential supporters of our natural and built heritage. It is after all being protected for everyone to enjoy. Our strategic ambitions of restoring a healthy and beautiful natural environment can only be achieved if we work across landscapes and with partner organisations, landowners, farmers and leisure users to come together under shared goals. The Making Space for Nature project is a wonderful example of these shared ambitions.*

[The exhibition](#) is open to the public now and is included with the purchase of an [entry ticket to Leith Hill Place](#), free for National Trust Members. It will continue to be on display at Leith Hill Place until the autumn. Leith Hill Place is open Friday to Sunday 11am – 16.30pm.



**-ENDS-**

Notes to editors:

**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 AONB was designated on 8 May 1958, which makes it the first AONB in southern England to be designated (the first was the Gower Peninsula near Swansea in 1956). The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across a quarter of the county of Surrey and includes the chalk slopes of the North Downs from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east, and extends south to the deeply wooded Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere. The Surrey Hills Board is a Joint Advisory Committee which is funded by Defra, the National Trust, Surrey County Council and the local authorities within the Surrey Hills area. For further information on the Surrey Hills please visit [www.surreyhills.org](http://www.surreyhills.org)

**The Surrey Hills Society** is a membership charity with its main role being to promote and engage with the public by running a wide range of events. It also raises awareness of the issues facing the AONB National Landscape and leads on and supports relevant projects in partnership with key stakeholders. The Society is a totally self-funded organisation run almost completely by volunteers, with core funding coming from membership fees, as well as any profits that are made from running events. Further information can be found on our website [www.surreyhillsociety.org](http://www.surreyhillsociety.org).

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