

**DRAFT MINUTES – for confirmation at the 2023 AGM**

**Fourteenth Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Hills Society  
Saturday 22nd October 2022 at 11.00am  
at Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0TW**

**Welcome** – The President, Chris Howard, welcomed members to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and thanked them for their continuing support. The meeting was attended by approximately 52 members.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Apologies had been received from 7 members.
2. **Minutes of the AGM held on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021**  
The Minutes were approved unanimously. Peter Hattersley proposed and Gordon Jackson seconded.
3. **Annual Report for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022**
  - a) **Chairman's Report** - Copies of the Chairman's Report (Report of the Trustees) were available at the meeting and had been published on the website.  
  
In addition to the attached Report the Chairman also thanked Peter Salisbury, Martin and Stella Cantor, Chris Howard (President), Ken Bare (Vice President), the Newsletter team (Diane Cooper, Susie Turner, Sall Baring and Chris Howard), the Events team, Peter and Jean Arnold, the AONB team for their support and all volunteers. There are also two paid coordinators Lesley Crofts and Christa Emmett who work tirelessly for the Society.
  - b) **Chairman of Events Committee Report** - see attached.
  - c) **Project and Volunteer Coordinators Report** - see slides attached
  - d) Rob Fairbanks, Director of the Surrey Hills AONB explained the process of the review of the AONB area. It is anticipated that the recommendations will be put to the Secretary of State next June.
4. **Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022** – Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting and had been published in the accounts on the website.  
  
The Accounts were approved unanimously. James Dubois proposed and Peter Salisbury seconded.
5. **To confirm the appointment of the independent financial examiner for 2022/23** - The appointment of Nick Boot of Bullimores LLP was proposed by Martin Cantor and seconded by Ken Bare. It was approved unanimously.
6. David Montgomery of Moore Kingston Smith was thanked for his services as independent examiner of the Society's accounts for the five years ending 31st March 2022
7. **To set the annual membership subscription for 2023/24** – As mentioned last year, the Trustees have reviewed the membership subscription. They now recommend an increase to £20 for single membership and £30 for family membership with effect from the start of the membership year in April 2023.

The increased subscription was approved unanimously. Gordon Jackson proposed and Martin Cantor seconded.

#### 8. **Resolution**

The Chairman, Gordon Jackson explained that Sarah Jane Chimbwandira and Stella Cantor have reached their maximum number of years as Trustees but as no other members had come forward this resolution was necessary so that they could stand for a further year

- a) To put to the meeting the following resolution, notice of which was provided on 30th September 2022:

*"THAT notwithstanding that Sarah Jane Chimbwandira and Stella Cantor have served three continuous terms of office they shall both be re-elected for an additional period from 22 October until the next AGM of the Company despite the maximum continuous period provided by the Articles of Association of the Company."*

The Resolution was approved unanimously.

#### 9. **Any other business**

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

At the end of the meeting Gordon Jackson was thanked for all the hard work and support he gives to the Society and AONB.

During the meeting a film jointly funded by the National Trust and Surrey Hills AONB to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Vaughan Williams birth featuring 'The Lark Ascending' and the George Meredith poem upon which the music was based.



## Report of the Trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2022

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act, present their report with the financial statements of the charity of the year ended 31 March 2022.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice, applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2015.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Objectives and Aims

The Society seeks to promote, enhance and conserve the physical and natural environment and its natural beauty around the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Surrey Hills Society is an independent charity promoting the positive enjoyment and care of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for the benefit of 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 which is recognised as being of unique value and needs to be nurtured for the benefit of future generations to enjoy. The Surrey Hills Society is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of this outstanding and natural landscape.

The Society's aims and roles are:

- 1 Creating greater awareness and understanding of the Surrey Hills through education, publicity and events
- 2 Providing activities for members and supporters of the Society, including walks, talks, social events, advice, communications for (and with) members
- 3 Promoting and championing farming, forestry and local industries, including tourism, and raising awareness of local produce and crafts
- 4 Protecting and improving facilities for recreational use of the area
- 5 Encouraging conservation alongside the improvement of the amenities and features which make the Surrey Hills special
- 6 Influencing regional and local authorities, seeing high standards of planning so as to protect and enhance the landscape and character of the Surrey Hills.

We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commissions' general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the trustees now consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives of the Society.

Surrey Hills Society

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2022

## ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Society volunteers continue to promote the special protected landscape of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in many different ways, ranging from:

- Running events to educate our members and residents about the area
- Leading free walks across the county and developing walks that can be promoted to the public
- Promoting volunteer conservation activity
- Supporting and promoting the work of other related charities
- Manning our stall at local shows across the county, handing out free walks leaflets and showcasing the special attractions of the area; and
- Giving talks to other groups and organisations

Our volunteers, of which there are over 50 who regularly contribute their time, share their passion for everything to do with the Surrey Hills – from its wonderful flora and fauna and rare habitats to its unique culture and heritage, as well as its leisure opportunities. They also collaborate with other organisations across the Surrey Hills to raise funds for agreed worthwhile projects within the area, which benefits both wildlife and the residents of Surrey.

The first thing I would like to do is to play tribute to Neil Maltby, who stood down as our President in the Autumn of 2021. Neil was involved with the Society from its inception in 2008 and we cannot thank him enough for the massive contribution that he has made. In recognition of this the Trustees agreed to make Neil a Life Member and I know he will continue to support us at every opportunity. I'm delighted that Chris Howard, who was Chairman for so many years is now our new President and we welcome her to her new role.

Although 2021-2022 was not as challenging as the previous year, the Society still had to operate within the Covid-19 restrictions that prevailed for most of the financial year. Our first event at Caxton Garden in April 2021 was the first opportunity that many of our members had had to meet in a social situation for some months and there was palpable relief that we could at last be out again, albeit numbers were carefully controlled and social distancing observed. Fortunately, the Society was able to put on an extensive programme of events throughout the year, although the emphasis continued to be on outdoor events until restrictions eased.

In the current year, we have run 52 membership events, which is more than in any other year since our inception. When one considers that this was in a year when people's movements were seriously restricted, the number of high-quality events we have been able to provide is a truly fantastic achievement, and I would like to particularly thank Sall Baring and her Events Committee for all their hard work. The events would not go ahead without our extensive network of volunteers and just under 1000 volunteer hours have been recorded in supporting the programme.

A major development during the year has been the engagement in October 2021 of our first full time employee, Christa Emmett, as the Society's Project and Volunteer Co-ordinator. Initially this post is for a fixed term of two years and we are grateful to the Surrey Hills Trust Fund, the Community Foundation for Surrey and the AONB Board for the funding that they have provided. Christa has been invaluable in promoting the work of the Society and extending our engagement across a wide variety of activities. She has enabled us to make a major step forward by helping us to organise over 400 volunteers during the winter months to plant approximately 1.75 kilometres of hedgerow comprising about 12,500 hedgerow plants. These volunteers were drawn from a diverse range of organisations. Schools were represented by Guildford High and Reeds School, government organisations included DEFRA and National Highways, and both WPA and Environet held corporate volunteering days. We also advertised open days for the general

community and were delighted to have volunteers joining us from as far away as Luton! The hedgerows were planted at farms in Shackleford, Shere, Clandon and Wotton. A key enabling factor was the Surrey Hills Making Space for Nature programme funded by the Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme (“FiPL”) introduced by DEFRA. Through the programme, farmers and land managers can be supported to carry out projects that support nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and cultural heritage, or support nature-friendly, sustainable farm businesses.

We were delighted to receive two FiPL grants. One that helped with 250 metres of hedgerow planting and one that enabled us to work with the Surrey Choices Growth Team, which is dedicated to improving the independence, confidence and life skills of people with a range of disabilities in their local community. They helped with a number of our conservation projects including extensive scrub clearance at Newlands Corner, which made a huge difference to the landscape and the public’s enjoyment of the fabulous views that can be enjoyed from this popular beauty spot.

During the year we also launched the Surrey Hills Champions Scheme, working with Surrey Hills Enterprises. Members of the scheme receive access to certain experiences and £10 of their membership fee goes to the Society to invest in conservation projects. The first year’s subscription funded 50 metres of hedgerow planted by Surrey Hills Champions at Clandon Natural Burial Ground, which is maintained as a nature reserve. Surrey Hills Enterprises also worked with us to facilitate the planting of Allianz Copse, comprising 1000 native trees at Knowle Park, Cranleigh. Over 100 employees from Allianz joined us to plant the entire copse in one day!

In order to promote the Making Space for Nature programme, with funding provided by the Surrey Hills Trust Fund, the Society commissioned 30 illustrations of the identified indicator species, whose presence shows that the habitats of the Surrey Hills are in good health. These fabulous paintings were created by an ‘Our Time’ artist at HMP Send, taking part in a programme delivered by Watts Gallery Trust and funded by the Michael Varah Memorial Fund. The images are being used in many ways - illustrating interpretation boards, creating way markers and supporting general publicity material for example. The National Trust were so impressed with the images that the originals are on display in an exhibition at Leith Hill Place throughout the 2022 summer season and will be auctioned in due course to support our charitable activities.

During the winter of 2021 we worked closely to develop the concept of Surrey Hills Conservation Volunteers. Our vision is that we will recruit volunteers, whom we will train to help monitor footpaths and bridleways in the Surrey Hills and to help us deliver conservation activity by working with the many communities that operate in the area. We hope to launch the scheme in the autumn of 2022.

As I reported last year, we are now producing two e-newsletters a year and two copies of the traditional Surrey Hills Views in the Spring and Autumn. I’m delighted to say that our printed newsletters are now sponsored by Bury Hill Estate Management and the trustees are extremely grateful to their managing director, Kathryn May, for her support. Sadly, Ken Bare has decided to retire as editor. He has made an enormous contribution over the years and we will miss his attention to detail and his excellent editing skills.

We have continued to develop our already close relationship with the other members of the Surrey Hills Family – Surrey Hills Trust Fund, Surrey Hills Enterprises and Surrey Hills Arts – and the Chairs of these organisations meet regularly to ensure that our activities are co-ordinated. These meetings have been arranged by the current Chairman of the AONB Board, Heather Kerswell, who is due to retire at the end of 2022. Heather has proved an excellent Chairman and I would like to thank her for her untiring support of the Society.

The Surrey Hills Family now has a more co-ordinated approach to material sent by email, and you can elect to be a Friend of the Surrey Hills as well as a Society Member and receive regular communications from the AONB Board that bring together a summary of all the activities being undertaken by the whole Surrey Hills Family. This is in addition to our own e-newsletters that members receive as a matter of course.

The Society has also continued to be active on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and we have well over 2500 followers through these various media. We do find that our regular MailChimps are extremely popular, and they clearly result in increased booking for our events. I would particularly like to thank our administrator, Peter Salisbury, who works extremely hard behind the scenes.

This year we have been able to resume our representation at various shows ably co-ordinated by Jean Arnold. These have included Denbies Artisans' Festival, the Surrey Hills Wood Fair, Ripley Farmers Market and The Great Fair of Shalford. We are currently working on revised displays for our gazebo and hope that these will be launched in September 2022.

The theme of the 2021 Surrey Hills Symposium was Our Climate and Biodiversity Emergency – How can we inspire action? The Symposium was part physical and part virtual and had over 400 attendees. The keynote speaker was Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England and an excellent debate was moderated by the University of Surrey's Professor Jim Al Khalili, the well-known BBC Broadcaster.

Another important part of our outreach are the talks that we give to interested organisations such as U3A and Probus. During the course of the year our Vice-President, Ken Bare, gave seven such talks. They are always well-received and we frequently attract new members as a result, although their principal purpose is to fulfil our twin purposes of educating and inspiring people about the Surrey Hills. Ken kindly donates the fees which he receives to the Society and we are very grateful for all he does in this respect.

It is important to emphasise that our member events are key to the health of the Society. As with the previous year there has been a heavy bias towards outdoor events and our extensive programme of walks have been hugely popular. Nearly 30 walks were organised during the year, but some included other activities. For example, we joined up with the Guildford Book Festival to walk with author Jake Tyler, who told us about his new book and his experiences walking around the coast of Britain. We had a number of nature walks – birdwatching at Bookham, butterflies at Netley Park and trees at Margery Woods. Our partnership with Guildford Walkfest continued with 11 walks being organised by the Society for the September festival. One of these included a sponsored walk from Guildford to Farnham along the North Downs Way which raised a staggering £6300 for Guildford Street Angels. We also enjoyed a fabulous, guided visit to the Woodland Trust's Langley Vale.

However, our Society is not all about walking, other highlights included a private visit to Dunsborough Park's Tulip extravaganza, the Chairman's Day at Buckland, a visit to Waverley Abbey, and a day with Angus Stovold at Lydling Farm highlighting the regenerative approach that he is adopting to farming his world famous Aberdeen Angus herd. We visited Dorking Museum and the Spike in Guildford and had an enormously popular event that was repeated three days running at the historic Tollsworth Manor and Gardens, which is not generally open to the public. We also went behind the scenes at Polesden Lacey to hear about the work of the National Trust's conservators, visited the beautiful Kingswood Church and enjoyed a gin making evening with Wessex Gin!

We again ran a couple of Zoom events, which proved very popular - a talk about the Wey and Arun Canal and one from Dorking Museum about the history of Holmwood Common.

I have of course mentioned the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic throughout this report, but it is important to emphasise that the financial standing of the Society has been largely unaffected. Our membership has held up extremely well with a total of 540 active memberships at the 31<sup>st</sup> March, an increase of 35 compared to the prior year. Overall, our finances are in robust health. Again thanks are due

to husband and wife team Martin and Stella Cantor, who respectively look after the Society finances and manage our membership.

This report started by referring to our many volunteers. The trustees would like to extend our thanks to all that our volunteers do for the Society. It has been yet another challenging year but there is no doubt that people are becoming more and more aware of the countryside and our beautiful Surrey Hills.

GORDON JACKSON

Chairman

Surrey Hills Society

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March  
2022  
Including Income and Expenditure Account

			31.3.22	31.3.21
	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restrict- ed Funds £	Total Funds £
				Total Funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM:				
Donations and Legacies		12,343	-	12,343
Charitable Activities		-	40,867	40,867
Events		9,934	-	9,934
Promotional		1,190	-	1,190
Investment Income	2	40	-	40
Total		<u>23,507</u>	<u>40,867</u>	<u>64,374</u>
		<u><u>23,507</u></u>	<u><u>40,867</u></u>	<u><u>64,374</u></u>

EXPENDITURE ON  
Charitable Activities



Events & Operations	3	18,841	25,374	44,215	15,676
Promotional	3	91	-	91	56
Total		<u>18,932</u>	<u>25,374</u>	<u>44,306</u>	<u>15,732</u>

NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)		<u>4,575</u>	<u>15,493</u>	<u>20,068</u>	<u>5,802</u>
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RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS

Total funds brought forward		<u>37,210</u>	<u>6,817</u>	<u>44,027</u>	<u>38,225</u>
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TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u>41,785</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>64,095</u>	<u>44,027</u>
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CONTINUING OPERATIONS

All income and expenditure has arisen from continuing activities

These notes form part of these financial statements

Surrey Hills Society  
Balance Sheet at 31 March 2022

			31.3.22	31.3.21
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	
	Funds	Funds	Funds	Total

	Notes	£	£	£	Funds £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Equipment	8	1,172	-	1,172	880
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Debtors	9	63	-	63	63
Cash at Bank and in hand		41,385	22,310	63,695	43,134
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>41,448</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>63,758</u>	<u>43,197</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due within one year	10	835	-	835	50
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u>40,613</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>62,923</u>	<u>43,147</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u>41,785</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>64,095</u>	<u>44,027</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u>41,785</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>64,095</u>	<u>44,027</u>
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted Funds		41,785	-	41,785	37,210
Restricted Funds		-	22,310	22,310	6,817
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<u>41,785</u>	<u>22,310</u>	<u>64,095</u>	<u>44,027</u>

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 March 2022.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

a) ensuring that the charitable company keeps accounting records that comply with sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and

b) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company at the end of each financial year and of its surplus or deficit for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the charitable company

## Events Committee Report

Up to the end of March 2022 we ran 53 events our largest number of any year and carried out nearly 1,000 volunteer hours and have raised £3,240 less than £3,500.00.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 our first face to face event took place since October 2020 and this was a visit to Caxton House Garden. All of our visits up to July 2021 were held outdoors due to the COVID restrictions being in place and some of our events were revisited as we were still limited on the amount of people who were allowed to congregate and this could have a bearing on the total number of events we provided. All our visits were booked up incredibly quickly as some people were desperate to meet up and be outdoors enjoying our beautiful countryside.

Chris had in the past organised a first free walk of the month around Godstone and this was picked up by the BBC and they carried out a days filming for South East Today to promote the Society and the Surrey Hills.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May we supported Surrey Day with the High Sheriff at Brookwood Cemetery.

and after the tour we enjoyed tea and cake at the café, always very welcome.

In August we visited Angus Stovolds farm in Shackleford where we were told about his philosophy of improving the local habitats to provide many wildlife havens. Later on in our visit we had afternoon tea, there is a theme coming-together here.

As stated earlier members of the committee have carried out nearly 1,000 volunteer hours. Some events are very easy to organise depending on the amount of recycling and if you are dealing with an organisation who regularly organise events, some however take longer. This was a walk held at Wotton and proved a little tricky. Behind all the belted Galloways was the third style on this first free walk of the month. Eventually we managed to persuade them to move into the field and continued. The walk then became extremely boggy and one of us was not particularly wearing the correct footwear and this also may have added to the volunteer hours.

In September the Society provided 11 walks in Guildford Walkfest. Our president Chris Howard is the Chairman of the walkfest and is very ably assisted by our Vice President, Ken Bare.

The last walk of Walkfest was a sponsored walk for Guildford Street Angels from Guildford to Farnham and over £6,000.00 was raised.

We had an afternoon at Waverley Abbey In September with a talk on the history of the Estate followed by a look around the ruins of the Abbey itself.

The author Jake Tyler, who was lovely, provided us with an interesting walk around Guildford. He had written a book about his walk all around the UK following a mental illness and how being in the countryside has enabled him to become well again. A hug at the end was very much appreciated.

We were treated to a guided tour of the historic Kenley Airfield. It was fascinating to hear of its significant involvement in the second world war.

Belmont walk has been a feature of the SHS calendar since 2009 so 14 years. We have a walk up to Holmbury St. Mary for a wonderful view and then back to the School for mince pies and mulled wine. A lovely start to our December festivities.

Our other Christmas event which has become a regular occasion is our wreath making afternoon. We gather our foliage on a short walk and then return to the village hall to make our own natural wreaths. It's a lovely family event and really gets you into the Christmas mood.

We undertake to keep some people trained in first aid. Let's hope judging from this photo that nothing too drastic is required. I certainly look a lot happier than Chris!

I am very happy to announce that Heather Aikin has joined the committee and has proved to be an enthusiastic and helpful member of the team.

Jeff Holiday decided at the end of the year to step down from the committee. As you will know he was the chairman of the committee for many years until I took over in January 2020, he is now taking a more backseat roll but will be helping Chris and other members with events. I have always wondered if he knew what was coming around the corner in March 2020?

Gilly Coombes organised 2 visits to Langley Vale and we worked closely with her to bring the events together. If anyone would like to organise an event or would like us to, then do please let one of us know.

And finally, just a big thank you to all the events committee members, especially Peter Salisbury who somehow manages to keep us on the straight and narrow, and others who have worked on and helped with events over the year. I think we work very well together and when required you pull out all of the stops to get things done. THANK YOU.

## **A year as Project and Volunteer Coordinator - Christa Emmett - Surrey Hills Society AGM 2022**

### **My Role...**

- Conservation Projects in the Surrey Hills
- Volunteering activities
- Engagement with community groups, schools, corporates, farmers, landowners and the general public
- Promote the work of the Society
- Conserve, Educate, Enjoy and Inspire!

### **Winter 2021/2022**

#### **Hedge and Tree Planting Season...**

- One native woodland copse of 1000 trees
- 12,500 hedgerow trees
- Comprising 1,750 metres of hedgerow
- Engaging 400 volunteers
- Including 2 schools, several corporates, open volunteer days and over 20 adults with learning disabilities

### **Volunteer Open Evening**

- New recruits for all aspects of the Society
- Held at Zero Carbon in Guildford
- Another one in the East of the County?
- Building the Society community!

### **Conservation Volunteers and Route Auditing**

- Conservation Volunteers - undertake conservation and access work across the Surrey Hills, managing access and habitats for people and nature.
- First training course held in August – Auditing and Monitoring Promoted Routes
- Reporting on the condition of promoted routes:
  - Initial route audit (survey on signage, route description, accessibility).
  - Monitoring and adopting a route
  - Path condition
  - Signage
  - Vegetation

### **Conservation**

- Hedgehog Surveys x 3
- Dormice Surveys
- Hedgerow Surveys
- Bat Recordings

### **Engagement**

- Shows
- Joint events
- Talks

### **Coming up...**

- Tree popping
- Tree/Hedge planting
- Hedgerow Girlguiding Badge
- Surrey Hills Symposium
- Further engagement