

Second Annual General Meeting of the Surrey Hills Society
Saturday 16 October 2010 at Gatton Hall, Gatton Park, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 0TW
MINUTES (for approval at the 2011 AGM)

1 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman, Neil Maltby, opened the meeting and welcomed approximately 70 members to the second AGM of the Society. He thanked Gatton Park through Glyn Sherratt, the Landscape and Heritage Officer, for hosting the meeting and for arranging the afternoon's walks around the grounds.

He introduced and thanked his fellow Trustees, whose CVs had previously been circulated, and wished to place on record the thanks of the Society for the sterling work undertaken by recently retired Trustees Terry Edwards and Rose Younger. He also thanked June Robinson, administration advisor, for all her help.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from 24 members. A further three were mentioned at the meeting.

3 Approval of Minutes of the AGM held on 13 June 2009

It was unanimously agreed that the Minutes circulated represented a true record.

Proposed: James Dubois Seconded: Peter Hattersley. The Minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

4 Chairman's Report

Following acknowledgement of the contribution made by the members of the Management Committee, the Chairman gave a report on the Society's progress during its second year. With the expansion of the Society, it had been realised that professional support would be required. With a generous grant from the Sustainable Development Fund towards the cost of employing a consultant administrator, the Society had been able to secure the services of June Robinson and he was delighted that a second grant had ensured that her services could be retained for a further year.

A further SDF Grant towards the cost of a laptop, screen and projector had enabled the Society to offer PowerPoint presentations to local organisations to promote the SHS objectives. Thanks to the professional expertise of Ken Bare, these were very much in demand and had contributed to the ability of the Charity to attract funds.

A successful submission of a Leader bid had resulted in the latest acquisitions of a Trailer and Gazebo, which had greatly enhanced the Society's ability to attend shows and exhibitions throughout Surrey, raising its profile and awareness. The Chairman asked members to alert the Trustees to suitable events for a SHS presence and invited volunteers to man the Trailer or Gazebo at shows to contact him; volunteers to tow the trailer were also required.

He then highlighted the diverse range of events which had been offered during the year - from the Mobility Trumper Ramble organised by Peter Hattersley to the Parish Day at Shamley Green, along with many others which were hugely successful. Plans were already in progress for a full and diverse Programme of Events for 2011.

The Society welcomed the opportunity to cooperate with other charities and organisations and was very grateful for a donation from Le Trec following an equestrian event in the Surrey Hills. Similarly partnerships with NADFAS for the Celebrating Surrey event at Loseley Park and the first Surrey Wood Fair at Birtley Court had helped to promote the Society's aims to the wider community.

The Chairman thanked Ringway for their assistance in publishing the Members' Newsletters; the cost saving to the Society is significant.

He thanked the members for their continuing involvement and support and looked forward to another successful year.

5 Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the Period 4 April 2009 to 31 March 2010

The Report of the Trustees and the Unaudited Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2010 had been circulated in advance and posted on the Society's website. In the absence of the Treasurer, Stuart Smith, the Chairman presented the Report and Financial Statements.

There was a query regarding the amount of subscription revenue received last year; the Chairman explained this was in some part blurred by the generous donations which were included by Founder members.

The number of members was increasing - in early October the figures were 169 single memberships; 219 family memberships and 59 organisations - approximately 700 individual members. The target for the coming year was 1,000 members. This would provide more volunteers to deliver projects.

The year had produced more promotional costs for printing membership brochures, stationery etc but there were no plans to increase costs substantially.

In response to a query regarding payment of subscription by Direct Debit, the Chairman detailed the significant costs which would accrue - the current membership numbers would not justify this outlay but it was hoped the facility to pay by standing order might encourage renewals. There was a vote of appreciation from the floor on the clear way the accounts had been presented.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by James Dubois, seconded by Keith Childs and agreed by the membership.

6 Confirmation of the Appointment of the Independent Examiner for 20010/11

Confirmation of Margaret Brett as Independent Examiner for 20010/11 was unanimously agreed.

7 Appointment of Trustees

The Administrator referred to the list of eight proposed trustees and associated short CVs that had been circulated prior to the meeting. Each of these individuals had made an invaluable contribution to the Society over the last year. The appointment of all eight trustees was proposed, seconded and unanimously agreed. The trustees elected are Neil Maltby, Kenneth Bare, Graham Butler, Nigel Davenport, Christine Howard, Richard Pitts, Mark Richards and Stuart Smith.

8 Any Other Business

Attention was drawn by Peter Hattersley to criminal damage being caused by 4 x 4s near Troy Bridge; there will be prosecutions if the offenders can be traced and members were urged to be vigilant. The Chairman pointed out that green lanes had been re-classified as Byways Open to All Traffic and so become roads, subject to the Road Traffic Acts. This meant that vehicles could not be excluded without a road closure order. A comment was raised by another member that scrambler bikes presented similar disturbance. It was suggested that the AONB might install infra-red cameras.

Madeleine Brooks expressed the disappointment of the Westcott Meadow Action Group that the Society had not publicly supported their campaign. The Chairman explained that the Society is not a campaigning organisation and relies on the AONB Board for the advice of their professional consultant planning officer, Clive Smith.

There are a number of issues in the Surrey Hills; the majority of the Parish Councils are affiliate members and the Society has to be cognisant that they may have differing viewpoints.

Keith Childs advised the meeting that there has been some vandalism in the newly constructed car park at Shere and measures are currently being considered to deal with the culprits. Local BOATS are frequently used by 4 x 4s, dislodging the soil, which has washed down to coat the main street in 1" of silt. There will be an Off-Road Forum Meeting organised by the Chairman of Shere Parish Council.

Caroline Vaughan asked if the Society could encourage members to record registration numbers of vehicles causing nuisance, which the Society would then pass to the Police. The Chairman said he would include this for discussion at a future meeting of Trustees.

Chris Cheverst will send the website contact relating to the closure of the West Horsley BOAT so that members may consider in advance of the decision meeting on 8 December.

There was a request for petitions to be launched on the website; the Chairman responded that, in many cases direct personal approaches by residents will carry more weight than from one organisation.

After the formal business there were talks by Glyn Sherratt of Gatton Park and Rob Fairbanks, AONB Director and Society member. This was followed by a buffet lunch and guided walks of the Gatton Park grounds.