

**SURREY HILLS SOCIETY
Third Annual General Meeting**

11 am on Saturday 29 October 2011 at Amesbury School, Hazel Grove, Hindhead GU26 6BL

DRAFT MINUTES – for confirmation at 2012 AGM

1 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed members and thanked the Headmaster, Staff, Governors and Trustees of Amesbury School for hosting the Society's Annual General Meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

A list of those who had sent Apologies for Absence was read out.

3 MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2010

There was one amendment to the minutes of the AGM held on 16 October 2010: Item 8 Any Other Business "There will be an Off-Road Forum Meeting to be organised by the **Chairman of the AONB Board.**"

The Minutes were then agreed as a true record: Proposed – Peter Hattersley, Seconded – Jean Pearson. All were in agreement. Signed by the Chairman and filed.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A copy of the Chairman's Report is attached. The Chairman closed by thanking all the members and Trustees for their support during the Society's first three years. He had hugely enjoyed his Chairmanship and would be standing down from the Trustee Board at this AGM; he wished the Society continuing success and looked forward to joining even more of the events and activities in the future.

5 REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2010 TO 31 MARCH 2011

The Finance Director, Jo Tollow presented the accounts to the Meeting, highlighting that the finances were in good order. There were no questions.

Proposed that the accounts should be adopted: James Dubois, Seconded – Tony Pearson. All in agreement.

6 TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF MARGARET BRETT, A PARTNER OF BULLIMORES ACCOUNTANTS AS THE INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL EXAMINER FOR 2011/12 AND TO AUTHORISE TRUSTEES TO FIX REMUNERATION.

The Chairman expressed thanks and appreciation to Margaret Brett of Bullimores for her good offices and for examining the accounts for the year to 31 March 2011. The meeting unanimously agreed that Margaret Brett should be appointed independent financial examiner for the ensuing year; she had waived remuneration.

7 TO APPOINT OR REAPPOINT TRUSTEES OF THE SOCIETY

Those who had expressed a willingness to be appointed or to continue as Trustees were introduced to the meeting. By agreement, there was a single vote covering all Trustees. It was agreed unanimously by members present that the following should now serve as Trustees:

Kenneth Bare (1)
Graham Butler (1)
Diane Cooper (2)
Nigel Davenport (1)

Terry Driscoll (2)
Christine Howard (3)
Richard Pitts (3)
Jo Tollow (2)

[Notes: (1) Continues as Trustee; (2) Newly appointed; (3) Under the Articles of the Society, these trustees were due to retire by rotation but in the absence of other nominees were eligible for re-appointment.]

Following the elections, Chris Howard was introduced as the new Chairman to succeed Neil Maltby.

To acknowledge his outstanding contribution as Founder Chairman, Neil Maltby was presented with a gift of engraved brandy glasses and invited to become the Honorary President of the Surrey Hills Society. He considered this a great honour and was delighted to accept; there was spontaneous applause.

Neil thanked all his fellow Trustees, all volunteers and his family for their support; he was confident the Society would continue to grow and encouraged all members to be actively involved.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Hattersley asked if there was any information on the proposed review of the designations of AGLV (Area of Great Landscape Value) and AONB (Area of outstanding Natural Beauty). Neil Maltby and Chris Howard both serve on the AONB Board and will keep the membership informed of any future progress.

The Meeting closed with thanks to the Headmaster of Amesbury School, Nigel Taylor, and his staff; a tour of the Lutyens' designed school and gardens and Montgomery's campaign room followed.

Chairman's Report

Strictly speaking my report should cover the period from 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011, but I have included in my report the period between our two AGM's, that is from 16th October 2010 to this week.

I will refer to the figures for the financial year and membership figures, but trends since then are important and I have included these as well.

Throughout this year and for the last 3 and a half years, I have had the constant support of my vice chairman, Chris Howard. She has taken on the difficult jobs with a smile, finds time, from who knows where, to make things happen, to meet deadlines and to make my job easy. PR and marketing are her forte and our newsletter and high standing in the community are proof of this. Please remember that all our Trustees and Directors are unpaid volunteers. Thank you Chris for all you do.

We realised, after the success of our second year's programme of events, how important a varied and interesting programme was to you, our members and supporters. June Robinson, our consultant administrator, not only helped up produce such a programme but also to deliver it. She has also put in hand our programme for 2012 and this looks as good, if not better than this year. I am very grateful to June, not only for her support and guidance, but also for the very efficient and cheerful way she goes about her job.

A list of all the exciting events over the last 12 months would be boring and not do them justice, suffice to say we have had talks, visits, walks, explanations, tastings, boat trips and days out across the whole of the Surrey Hills. Too many for me to be able to attend all of them, which made me jealous of those that could go to those I missed! There are too many people involved to be able to thank them individually here today, but I do give a sincere thank you to them all collectively for giving so much pleasure to so many people.

There have been 24 events since the beginning of February this year – about 3 a month – no wonder I could not get to them all. For me the highlights would be the Chairman's Day at the Hampton Estate, where we were wonderfully looked after; the canal boat trip on the Wey Navigation and the 3 'Parish Days' organised by Brockham, Newdigate and Wonersh Parish Councils for the Society. These parish days were very popular and also give our affiliate member Parishes in the AONB a chance to show us how special their part of the Surrey Hills is, both to them and to us.

My aim for the first 3 years of our existence was to grow the Society, to increase the membership until we are of a sufficient size to be self sufficient and sustainable. Every year, after our first, we have had an additional 110 membership applications and we now have over 450 memberships, representing over 750 members altogether, with 60 affiliate memberships, which takes our membership figure to well over 500.

While my target of 1000 members or even memberships, is still some way off, we are now of a size to be taken seriously. This enables is to fulfil some of our aims and ambitions.

Richard Pitts does an amazing job dealing with the new membership applications, renewals, enquiries and reminders. His reports and statistics keep us focused and I am very, very grateful to him for all he does.

During the 2011 season we have attended 20 shows, open days, markets, fairs and fetes etc, with our trailer or gazebo or table top display board for a total of 24 days. This has enabled us to raise the profile of the Surrey Hills AONB, make people aware of the beautiful countryside, how they can enjoy it, what goes on in it and at the same time, promote the efforts of these that live and work in it. A loyal and

hardworking team of volunteers do the rounds, to whom, very grateful thanks. Offers of help to tow the trailer or man the trailer or gazebo for a few hours at any of the many venues we attend would be most welcome.

Ken Bare has mastered the art of giving illustrated talks to groups. Between the 2010 and 2011 AGM, Ken has given 11 talks to a wide and varied audience. I am very grateful to him for his time, skill and effort and for further raising our profile. Ken also helped us to help and promote the Surrey Wood Fair at Birtley House this month. With its emphasis on wood fuel this helps promote sound woodland management in our Surrey Hills and to this end, your society is making a contribution towards the cost of an 18 month woodland advisory officer post. We hope his advice will help owners of small woodland areas with management, harvesting and replanting.

Through the year we have continued to be delighted by the constant goodwill we receive from those we come into contact with and the support they give us, in time, advice and financially.

The Surrey Hills Board and Partnership continue to be very supportive. Their Director, Rob Fairbanks, and their Chairman are both members of the Society and have sent their apologies as they are unable to be with us today. They and their staff are free with their advice and help us in many ways.

The National Trust is also very supportive. They allow us to use Warren Farm Barns as our headquarters and for the third time they are leading the walk after our AGM. Their help and support is much appreciated and show the close working relationship between us as well as other rural organisations.

Ringway, the Highway and Environmental contractors have kindly sponsored our newsletter and printed it for us for the last 2 years. Tracy Elms, from Ringway, is here with us today and on behalf of the Society, may I thank you for all you have done.

Three Waitrose stores have, through their staff, selected us as one of their 3 monthly charities; the amount donated being determined by their customers.

Toyota has selected us as one of 3 green charities and their staff voted on which project they preferred. Our project, to update and reprint guided walks brochures around the Frensham area came second, behind SWT's reintroduction of the otter programme. We received £2,000 which, with a further grant of £1000, has enabled us to complete our project. The revision of the walks brochure was carried out by Graham Butler, who has also masterminded and led the 4 day North Downs Walk. Thank you Graham for all you do for us.

The EU Leader funding for rural areas made a grant to us to buy two generators for the trailer and gazebo enabling us to show slide shows and DVD displays and to light them both.

These charitable donations, grants and bequests and other gifts are vital to us. Our subscriptions just about cover our running expenses, our events have to break even and so the only way we can fulfil our aims and ambitions is to raise this additional revenue. We are grateful to all those that help us.

This brings us to the Trustee Report and Financial Statement for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011.

I must thank Bullimores of Dorking for their support and particularly Margaret Brett, for acting as our external examiner. Bullimores rightly told us we should find and appoint our own financial director. Andrew Morris agreed to fill the post and was a trustee for about 6 months before a relocation of his firm and increased work commitments forced him to stand down. We were extraordinarily lucky that Jo

Tollow agreed to take over at short notice and steered us safely to final account stage and this AGM. Thank you Jo.

While all this was going on, our treasurer, Stuart Smith, also had to stand down after 14 months, due to other growing commitments. We are very grateful to him for his stewardship and for helping with a seamless transfer to our new treasurer Terry Driscoll. Terry immediately showed his worth and capabilities and he and Jo are a formidable team. I thank them both.

Neil Maltby
Chairman SHS