

SURREY HILLS BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th JULY 2008 WARREN FARM BARNS

CORE MEMBERS

*Cllr Michael Sydney (Chairman)	Tandridge District Council
*Cllr David Wright (Vice Chairman)	Guildford Borough Council
*County Councillor, David Harmer	Surrey County Council
Cllr Richard Wagner	Reigate & Banstead BC
Cllr Don Webb	Mole Valley District Council
*Cllr Mike Band (sub)	Waverley Borough Council
*Steve Walker	National Trust
*Lorraine Huggett	Natural England
*Liz Cutter	SCAPTC
Chris Howard	SCAPTC

ADVISORY MEMBERS

*Mike Giffin	National Farmers Union
*Tim Harrold	CPRE
*Nigel Davenport	Surrey Wildlife Trust
*Michael More-Molyneux	CLA

*Members present

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mike Dawson	Surrey County Council
Rob Fairbanks	Surrey Hills AONB Office
Denise Furlonger (Minutes)	Surrey Hills AONB Office
Gail Sperrin	Surrey Hills AONB Office
Pennie King	Surrey Hills AONB Office
Rod Shaw	Mole Valley DC

INVITED GUEST

Neil Maltby	Chairman, Surrey Hills Society
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		ACTIONS
1	INTRODUCTIONS	
	Michael Sydney welcomed all to the meeting of the Surrey Hills Board and invited Members to introduce themselves.	
2	APOLOGIES	
	Richard Wagner, Don Webb, Roger Steel, Chris Howard	
3	MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING	

	3.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 19 th March were agreed.	
4		MATTERS ARISING	
	4.1	4.2 – Rob Fairbanks clarified that the notice period for the AONB Director is 3 months.	
	4.2	7.2 – Rob Fairbanks confirmed that the constitution for the Surrey Hills Society had been circulated. Steve Walker requested another copy. Gail Sperrin to provide.	GS
5		AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN	
	5.1	Rob Fairbanks updated the members on the progress with the review of the AONB Management Plan. RF thanked all of the Board Members who led on the Expert Panel meetings. Approximately 80 people representing 40 organisations attended the 8 workshops. The information gathered is to be reviewed by the Officers Working Group on July 24 th . The Consultation Document is planned for release at the end of July.	
	5.2	Tim Harrold was worried that some small points needed to be addressed from the original document. Rob Fairbanks requested that any ideas or points of detail should be submitted to him.	ALL
	5.3	The Members expressed concerns that the Consultation Document should be cost effective, considering that the finished Management Plan will need to be published in full. David Harmer also suggested that the final document should be thinner with background information available on the website. Lorraine Huggett is not sure of the Natural England position and hoped that the website could be used for all reference materials, but will seek advice as there may be legislation that needs to be met.	
	5.4	The Members noted the Pre-Consultation Document, and delegated the Officers Working Group to determine the detailed arrangements for managing the consultation process.	OWG
	5.5	It was agreed that a workshop should be held for the purpose of consultation before it is agreed at the September AGM meeting. The workshop should be open to Board Members and the wider Partnership and alternative representatives are welcome where Board Members are unavailable. The agreed date is September 9 th 2008. The workshop is to commence at 1.00pm at Warren Farm Barns.	ALL
6		SURREY HILLS SOCIETY	
	6.1	Neil Maltby, Chairman of the Surrey Hills Society updated the Board on the progress with the establishment of the Society and clarified the key objectives. NM also thanked Mike Dawson for the work involved in writing the Draft Constitution.	
	6.2	NM recognised the great support given by the Board to date, but reminded the Members that the Society would not survive without continued support until the fledgling Society is able to stand on its own two feet. NM highlighted the close liaison required between the Board and the Society as there is a strong wish not to be in conflict with either the Board or the AONB Unit.	
	6.3	NM thanked the National Trust for allowing the of the use of Warren Farm Barns, and the Surrey Hills Board for assisting the provision of a web-site and availability Gail Sperrin's time.	
	6.4	NM reported that the Society has received approaches on planning matters, but that it is not big enough to act on these, however it will be able to take a	

		view and pass them on to the Board. Matters relating to AGLV and BOATs have also been identified by Society members.	
	6.5	NM explained that the Society is currently raising public awareness of the Surrey Hills and would like to see more mentions of its potential in the Management Plan.	
	6.6	<p>Michael Sydney thanked Neil Maltby and congratulated him on the progress so far. NM invited questions or comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michael More-Molyneux enquired if the Society had a membership target in mind. NM response was ideally 1000 members within 5 years. - Steve Walker suggested approaching local authorities to add mail shots in with their publications. NM said that Mole Valley DC was already running an article on the photo competition and there was a hope to spread to other areas. - Tim Harrold reported that CPRE Surrey would be happy to print progress reports in its newsletter, but since new postal rates are based on weight would not be so inclined to add further printed materials in the envelope with their newsletter. - Michael Sydney enquired if there was an aim to supply volunteers for undertaking practical work. NM replied that the first aim could be volunteer rangers to work in conjunction with organisations like The National Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust to assist with car parking and scrub clearance, but British Trust for Conservation Volunteers already do this and the Society is mindful not to tread on anybody's toes. Lorraine Huggett said that Natural England has Regional Volunteer Coordinators. LH will try to find information that could provide a link 	LH
7		SURREY HILLS LEADER AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FUND	
	7.1	Rob Fairbanks updated the Board on the progress with Leader and SDF. RF paid particular thanks to David Greenwood at Surrey County Council for his work on Leader, and thanks to Surrey County Council for acting as the accountable body.	
	7.2	The Board was reminded that SDF is not guaranteed each year by Natural England and Lorraine Huggett warned that potentially annual amounts awarded could be reduced.	
	7.3	Pennie King, the Sustainable Development Fund Administrator fed back on some of the projects that have benefitted from SDF over the past few years. The Board reviewed these projects and felt that wood fuel had been the subject of the biggest grants. David Wright suggested that in future years due weight should be given to strategic development of Surrey Hills food. Michael Sydney agreed but explained that Leader will be able to provide a lot of this.	PK/RF
	7.4	The Board agreed to allocate the Sustainable Development Fund as laid out in Section 5 of the report.	
	7.5	The Board agreed to the formation of a Panel to evaluate and decide on grants above £2k. Michael Sydney invited Board Members to join the Panel. Liz Cutter put her name forward as did Nigel Davenport who expressed a declared interest.	PK
8		AREA OF GREAT LANDSCAPE VALUE (AGLV) DESIGNATION	
	8.1	Rob Fairbanks informed the Board of the progress in retaining the AGLV Designation. Letters consulting stakeholders were sent out in May. A list of	

		responses and issues received so far was circulated around the table. Responses are still arriving due to the infrequency of relevant council meetings.	
	8.2	Tim Harrold noted that no response has yet arrived from Waverley BC. TH was concerned as there are important areas of ancient woodland around Chiddingfold. Mike Band will look into this.	MB
	8.3	Guildford BC has responded but not given full support because of their own Landscape Character Assessment that they have adopted. David Wright has asked to see a copy of the letter. Denise Furlonger to provide a copy.	DF
	8.4	David Harmer noted that not many local authorities had replied yet and queried why Natural England had not responded. Rob Fairbanks clarified that Natural England will only proceed if there is unanimous support from stakeholders.	
	8.5	David Harmer queried if other AONBs are carrying out the same exercise? Lorraine Huggett believed that there has been a case in the north of England but Natural England suspended its review work as this was not seen as a priority area.	
	8.6	David Harmer suggested that no progress could be made until full support is gained so a concentrated effort should be made to gain it. Tim Harrold suggested also canvassing support from local authorities on the fringe of the Surrey Hills, for example Croydon borders Tandridge, and areas of Kent are on the edge of the AONB/AGLV.	
	8.6	The Members noted the progress with the consultation.	
9		SURREY HILLS AONB OFFICE UNIT REPORT	
	9.1	Rob Fairbanks updated the Board on the activities of the Surrey Hills AONB Unit and invited comments and questions.	
	9.2	Steve Walker suggested that a PowerPoint presentation with photographs would enhance the Director's report at future meetings.	
	9.2	Steve Walker asked what would be the focus for the upcoming visits of Jonathan Shaw MP and Helen Philips, CEO of Natural England. Rob Fairbanks suggested Higher Level Stewardship Schemes for Helen Philips, with a visit to Landbarn Farm plus the issue of BOATs. Jonathan Shaw would also be made aware of BOAT issues plus wood fuel and mountain biking. Lorraine Huggett advised that when Helen Phillips visits, she should have demonstrations of best practice from the Surrey Hills AONB. Helen Philips should also be made aware of the value to the landscape and other educational benefits. Do not let the subject be too narrow.	
	9.3	Steve Walker raised the issue that mountain biking and declassification of BOATs had been talked about for a long time but frustratingly nothing was being resolved. SW felt it was time to start putting pressure on SCC. Several of the Partner organisations have issues with different BOATs and David Harmer suggested identifying one BOAT and the various named organisations should write to him individually. Steve Walker said that he would propose a route and discuss with Rob Fairbanks.	
	9.4	Tim Harrold was concerned that the agreed Planning Officer had not yet been appointed, however he also felt that a small planning committee should be formed to support the post when it is filled. Michael Sydney asked if Tim Harrold would be prepared to supplement the Surrey Hills Unit's monitoring. TH feels it is important for the Surrey Hills to speak out on planning matters and is happy to help in any way that he can. Steve Walker said that he is happy to assist on a steering group with other	

		members of the Board if nobody is able. Rob Fairbanks will take this matter to the Officers Working Group and prepare a report for the next Board meeting. Michael Sydney also asked if Board Members from local authorities could alert the Unit of any major planning issues in their area.	
	9.5	<p>Tim Harrold commented on the wind turbine that has been approved in the Shackleford area. Guildford BC's Landscape Officer had objected as had the Surrey Hills AONB Director but it still went ahead. Lorraine Huggett feels that Natural England should have been consulted. Rob Fairbanks will email LH to query this.</p> <p>The Board felt that the process had been at fault and that a letter should be written to Carol Humphries at Guildford BC to express disappointment and to enquire as to why the decision was made. Steve Walker also suggested inviting Carol Humphries to the next Board meeting to explain the decision.</p>	<p>RF/LH</p> <p>MS/RF</p>
	9.6	<p>Steve Walker felt that although the Surrey Hills AONB is trying to reduce clutter, the Environment Agency is producing garish signs to indicate rivers in the area. SW wondered if the Board could invite them to produce something more sympathetic? Rob Fairbanks will try to find a contact at the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Steve Walker added that the National Trust is progressing a series of brown signs, and have asked SCC as the highways authority to display the Surrey Hills logo if located within the AONB (at no cost to the AONB) assuming this is acceptable to the Board. The Board gratefully accepted the offer as long as the signs are not garish. Steve Walker to liaise with RF.</p>	<p>RF</p> <p>SW</p>
	9.7	David Wright enquired if there had been any progress on the development of Conservation Verges. Rob Fairbanks clarified that Young Street near Bookham will be used as a pilot and paid thanks to Dave Symonds for the work he has done on this project.	
	9.8	David Wright suggested encouraging the Hurtwood Control to apply to Leader or SDF for grant money so that they can develop mountain bike schemes. Michael More-Molyneux added that he has some sympathy for mountain bikers and motorcyclists, as when asking them to move off of land that they should not be on, they pose the question as to where they can go. Steve Walker agreed and could not understand why areas could not be found so that people can carry out these activities legally and away from conflicting users. Rob Fairbanks will try to present a paper to the next Board meeting with costings. Nigel Davenport warned to be aware of insurance issues relating to landowner liability.	RF
	9.9	Rob Fairbanks paid thanks to Sarah Ritchie and Prakash Jhalla at Surrey County Council for their help with the Audit Commission reviews, and to Dave Symonds for the work involved with undergrounding of powerlines. RF also thanked Mike Giffin for help with Surrey Quality Producers and Regional Farm Foods. Finally RF extended thanks to Caroline White, Hindhead Together Coordinator, Mike Taylor from the National Association of AONBs, and The National Trust for their help in the successful Partnership tour held in May.	
10		SURREY HILLS STAFFING REVIEW	
	10.1	Mike Dawson provided the background information and explained the organisational structure and the main responsibilities for each post. MD added that there is room in the structure for a Wood Fuel Officer.	
	10.2	Mike Dawson explained that it should be made clear in the Business Plan as to what the Surrey Hills Board and Surrey Hills Unit should focus on.	

		This will be in review of the Management Plan.	
11		FINANCE REPORT	
	11.1	Michael Sydney explained that the Audit Commission had decided that Joint Committees were now required to undergo an annual external audit. The audit process was currently underway and related to the financial years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. The Board is required to approve the outturn figures for these two financial years as part of the process.	
	11.2	The Board studied the outturn reports and were invited to comment or ask questions. Nigel Davenport enquired why the core costs were shown separately to the project costs. Mike Dawson explained that the finance reports reflect the way they are set out in the Natural England bidding process.	
	11.3	Steve Walker requested that the in-kind contribution from The National Trust for office accommodation should be reflected in the report. Rob Fairbanks agreed that this had been an oversight and would be rectified in future.	RF/DF
	11.4	The Chairman asked if the Board could agree and approve the outturn reports for the financial years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008. Nigel Davenport proposed and David Wright seconded. There was also a show of hands around the table. The outturn reports were agreed and approved by the Board.	
12		ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	12.1	Neil Maltby enquired if the Board held a view to the removal of rural telephone kiosks, particularly if within an area with a poor mobile telephone signal. Michael Sydney believed that a letter could be written to the local authority encouraging them to use their right to veto such a decision. Rod Shaw was not sure that local authorities had a right to veto, however he believed that the local authority could forward comments to British Telecom for consultation.	RF
13		DATE & AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING ON 16TH JULY	
		2008 Meeting dates M' ment Plan Workshop September 9 th Warren Farm Barns Board AGM September 29 th Warren Farm Barns Partnership meeting November 19 th Warren Farm Barns Warren Farm Barns meetings to start at 1.00pm	