

Date: 4 September 2019

Report: Surrey Hills Trust Fund

Written by: Gordon Jackson, Panel Chairman

Purpose of Report

To update Members on the activities related to the Surrey Hills Trust Fund

1. Strategy

Since the last meeting of the AONB Board the Panel has not met as most of the reporting period covers the Summer holidays. A meeting is scheduled for the early Autumn. The discussions referred to in the previous report concerning the way in which grants are handled and the emerging themes that the Trust wishes to support are therefore ongoing.

However, taking the themes that have been identified so far, the following can be reported:

- **Communities**

As Chairman I have been having discussions with the AONB Director about how the Trust Fund can be more widely promoted through our Parish Councils and local communities. We believe that the Trust Fund could assist with schemes that are primarily promoted by local residents, particularly in relation to biodiversity and village decluttering.

We have also had a meeting, organised through the Community Foundation for Surrey with a number of Surrey Borough Philanthropy Funds, which have been set up under the aegis of the Foundation. Although these funds are aimed at a wider set of charitable objectives it is clear that there is scope for working with those boroughs that are in the Surrey Hills to prime the pump on appropriate community projects.

At the moment the Trust Fund suffers from a lack of visibility in the Community and it is important that we develop a strategy to correct this. We are now making it a condition of all grants that the role of the Surrey Hills Trust Fund is fully acknowledged.

- **Landscapes and nature**

The Surrey Hills Trust Fund is supporting the Surrey Hills Arts Inspiring Views Appeal for a sculptured bench at a viewpoint above Albury. This project will include some landscape and conservation work.

Discussions are also being held with various farmers/landowners, who are promoting a number of biodiversity projects. By way of example on SHAONB Partnership day, we visited Lydling Farm nr Shackleford, where Angus Stovold is going out of his way to promote farming methods that promote biodiversity. Similarly, the Hampton Estate is adopting new sustainable farming methods that improve the quality of the soil and contribute to increased plant and insect varieties. The Trust Fund and the Surrey Hills Society have a role to play in supporting such projects.

Of particular interest is the Government's announcement that it is considering introducing laws that impose a mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain when permission is granted for new development. We are looking at whether or not the Trust Fund could play a role in this as a

recipient of S106/Community Infrastructure Levy that could then be applied towards appropriate projects in the Surrey Hills AONB.

- Access

The Trust Fund is always open to providing assistance with access projects. The AONB Director is considering the establishment of a single access group that would include walking, cycling and equestrian representatives. This group could then propose suitable projects to the Trust Fund.

- Youth

The Trust Fund is contributing to a significant project that we have called “Into the Wild”, which supplements and builds upon the Leatherhead Youth Project initiative that has already been funded by the Trust Fund. The total project cost is £13,490. The Trust Fund is providing £3,695 matched funding with LC Energy to engage a research Coordinator, who is being contracted by the Surrey Hills Society. Surrey Hills AONB is providing support and funding for marketing material and a website etc. The University of Surrey is providing research support and hosting the Symposium on 27 November 2019, at which the research will be profiled by Dr Birgitta Gatersleben. The University is also obtaining sponsorship for the Symposium.

The purpose of the research is to gain an overview of what Surrey can offer with respect to providing natural environments and nature-interventions that help support the health and well-being of young people in the county.

Our part time researcher, Genevieve Lebus, will undertake an outreach and engagement role:

- reviewing the evidence relating to nature-based therapy and health by undertaking desk top research
- identifying where the need is in Surrey (and environs) by engaging youth organisations
- and identifying what provision, or potential provision, is available in the Surrey Hills by working with the land based, education, therapy and activity providers.

Her research will be supervised by the Environmental Psychology Research Group at Surrey University.

The outcome will be to support a fundraising campaign that will target grants to effective nature-based therapy to those groups for which it will have the biggest impact. This will be profiled at the Surrey Hills Symposium at Surrey University on 27th November 2019. In this connection we are also linking up with the High Sheriff, Bridget Biddell, whose theme for her Shrieval year is “Nurturing through Surrey’s Nature” and she will deliver the closing speech at the Symposium.

- Arts, health and well-being

As mentioned above the Trust Fund continues to support Surrey Hills Arts and the Into the Wild project. The theme of the Symposium will be wider than just youth and will include talks on “Our Natural Health Service” by Dr William Bird MBE, a GP and CEO of Intelligent Health and on “Living Environments for Healthy Aging” by Professor Caroline Scarles. As Chairman of the Trust Fund, I will host a 30-minute Question and Answer session after the various talks.

2. Fundraising

Surrey Hills Wood Fair

The Trust Fund will have a presence at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair and will work closely with the Surrey Hills Society to promote itself.

Surrey Hills Challenge

The Rutland Group is organising the third Surrey Hills Challenge on 22 September hosted at Denbies as the event village. This will include a number of outdoor sports coming together. The ambition is to grow the event and attract greater sponsorship to make a substantial income stream for the Trust Fund. In the meantime, free places are being made available to raise money for the Into the Wild campaign.