

# SURREY VOICE

Magazine of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England | Winter 2020/21

# PROTECT OUR SURREY HILLS



The countryside charity  
Surrey

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# Adapting to circumstances

By Kristina Kenworthy



During the last six months, amid all the Covid-19 chaos, the team at CPRE Surrey has had to adapt to new ways of working, along with the rest of the country. Early on, we set about finding new Trustees, writing a Strategic Plan, adopting new Articles of Association and

updating the name of the charity and company. (We are now, officially, Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England, Limited) This culminated in our first 'virtual' AGM, which was held online via Zoom. Our thanks go to guest speakers Heather Kerswell, Rob Fairbanks, Dr Ashley Bowes and Mark Robinson, whose presentations made the well-attended meeting both enjoyable and illuminating.

We have in fact been making considerable use of Zoom and other video-conferencing facilities, and have been greatly helped by the ease with which we can 'meet' CPRE members and volunteers from across the county, and indeed from farther afield, without having to step outside our homes. Volunteers have come forward through Reach and other recruitment websites, and we have been involved in all kinds of online gatherings, webinars and discussions which might not have been feasible had they been physical meetings rather than virtual. We were extremely lucky to find John Goodridge to join us as a Trustee taking on the Treasurer's role. With John's City experience and his keen interest in Surrey's countryside, he is well placed to look after CPRE Surrey's finances.

In September, National CPRE orchestrated an online meeting between the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, and representatives from every CPRE county group. CPRE Surrey was able to put the question directly to the Secretary of State on what evidence he had that building more houses in Surrey would result in reduced house prices and increased accessibility for first-time buyers. The meeting was under the Chatham House Rule and the answer was, as you might expect, more aspirational than evidence-based.

This Government believes that encouraging the housebuilders to construct 300,000 homes annually will deliver us from recession, and solve the inequality between those who can afford a

home of their own and those who cannot. CPRE does not accept that our planning system is to blame for under-delivery of homes, especially when we know that permission was granted for around 370,000 homes both in 2018 and 2019. We also do not accept that prices will tumble in Surrey if Berkeley Homes and the like were to 'build, build, build'. Nevertheless, whilst we may not get the answers we want, it is significant that CPRE was able to secure an audience with the Cabinet minister responsible for housing and planning.

Our CPRE Surrey planning team has been working hard on responses to the Government's consultation on the new and interim 'standard methodology' algorithm for housing numbers, as well as on the Planning for the Future White Paper which sets out longer term proposals. Our comments were fed into the National CPRE submission. The government's proposals represent the most radical changes to the planning system in many years. How much of the White Paper comes to fruition remains to be seen. A copy of the CPRE response is now on our website.

A major project for CPRE Surrey at the present time is the eagerly anticipated review of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), in which we are directly involved as an advisory member of the Surrey Hills AONB Management Board. We had been promised that this would happen once the review of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB had been concluded – which has now happened, and in consequence the Suffolk AONB has been enlarged. In the meantime the final report of the Glover Review of Protected Landscapes was published; this had a number of important and positive recommendations for the strengthening of National Parks and AONBs, but, as yet, Defra (the Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs) has remained mute on whether or not it will be taking forward any of the report's proposals. We wrote in September to Natural England conveying CPRE's support for the expansion of the Surrey Hills AONB, and have received a positive and grateful reply from their Chief Executive, Marian Spain. It



The Devil's Punch Bowl in the Surrey Hills AONB

## Horse Hill legal challenge takes on National Planning Policy

By Sarah Finch

On 17 November, I'm going to court for my legal challenge against oil production at Horse Hill, near Horley. The case has evolved since I first brought it and now challenges national policy as well as Surrey County Council's decision-making. Last November, I requested a judicial review of Surrey County Council's decision to allow 20 years of commercial oil production at Horse Hill. This was on various grounds, including that the County Council failed to consider the direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions of the project, and the Government's Net Zero target for carbon emissions. The original grounds also included earthquake risk and Green Belt aspects – however, I accept that I am unlikely to win those and am now focused on the climate change arguments.



Large-scale oil drilling is planned for Horse Hill

My request for judicial review was turned down, twice. But convinced that I had a case, I appealed, and the Appeal Judge agreed. As well as agreeing that my grounds were 'arguable' the Judge pointed out that an ancillary part of my case – that UK national planning policy is not in conformity with EU law – is "a point of some importance which ought to be considered at a full hearing." This may seem a moot point, given that the UK is leaving the EU, but even when we've left, many of our environmental regulations will be based on EU rules. So, if we win the case on this ground, it may well influence how UK regulations are interpreted post-Brexit.

The case is important. It's important for Horse Hill and its neighbours – the communities in Norwood Hill and the local area who are the most affected by the drilling. It's important for the Weald. Successful oil drilling at Horse Hill would fund UKOG's ambitions for Dunsfold, Arreton and Broadford Bridge. And it's important nationally. If we win, it will set an important precedent for fossil fuel and other high-carbon-footprint developments across the UK. **Planning authorities will have to consider the long-term, indirect emissions associated with a development, and the government's Net Zero target.** The national importance has been demonstrated Friends of the Earth and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government both seeking and gaining permission to participate in the case. Friends of the Earth brings valuable expertise in the climate issues we've raised and a strong record of making positive legal interventions in other cases.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this campaign, including CPRE Surrey. Thanks to the generosity of so many people across Surrey and beyond, we have almost met our £35,000 fundraising target. If you would still like to donate, please visit: <https://chuffed.org/project/support-surrey-oil-legal-challenge>. Thank you.

**Sarah Finch's legal challenge is supported by the Weald Action Group**

is clear that the bottleneck lies with Defra and budgetary constraints, rather than with Natural England. CPRE Surrey is working with the AONB Board and we have written to Surrey's MPs, who in turn have written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The main point is that if Natural England reneges on its promise it will leave the adjacent countryside in the Area of Great Landscape Value exposed to development as planning regulations are loosened (see our article on pages 10-11

for more details of this important campaign). Finally, we have recruited Julia Green as our Volunteer Coordinator, to work with our existing and future volunteers. Her energy, enthusiasm and professionalism are a real boost for CPRE Surrey. We know that she will inspire more people to join us and engage with what we do and why we feel it is so important to be the voice of Surrey's countryside.

**Kristina Kenworthy is Chair of CPRE Surrey**

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Room G2, The Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8AH

Tel: 01372 362720 / 07737 271676

[cpre.surrey@btconnect.com](mailto:cpre.surrey@btconnect.com)

[www.cpresurrey.org.uk](http://www.cpresurrey.org.uk)

Twitter @CPRESurrey

EDITOR: Andy Smith FCIJ

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# Managing the verges on Surrey's roads

By Jenny Desouter

This year, following discussions with Plantlife, Surrey County Council adopted a new policy on some roads, including the A24, of not mowing the full width of verges until September, but instead mowing only essential sightlines at junctions where visibility is affected. Not only does this new policy benefit wildlife but it is a well-established fact that beautiful surroundings enhance mood, leading to more relaxed behaviour and hence greater road safety. Much thought and care were put into this plan by SCC's Helen Currie and staff, and the result repaid the effort by affording magnificent displays of wildflowers on verges throughout the summer, but with sightlines intelligently trimmed.

Surrey is unrivalled for its beauty and biodiversity. Indeed much of our visitor/tourism industry, as well as residents' well-being, is underpinned by this. Not only is it our natural duty to protect these gifts, but it makes sense that all policy and planning build on and protect those natural qualities

which enhance our wellbeing. And this plan does just that. Not only was driving the A24 between banks of flowers now a pleasure, but there was another safety benefit. Because tapering sightlines were mowed at entrances and exits, these focused attention on upcoming hazards more directly and organically than a plethora of signs. In addition, all traffic whether motor, cycle or pedestrian now had a barrier to shield from oncoming headlights, enhancing vision and concentration – and therefore safety.

As I stopped to photograph the verges, my eye was caught by a newly emerged Meadow Brown fluttering among the daisies – only the second I'd seen this year. I glanced down at the sea of Dog Daisies around me. Wherever I looked, a host of insects were feeding on the golden centres. The sight brought home to me just what this change of policy means – leaving the flowers for invertebrates – for nature. I glanced down, and there was a Swollen-thighed beetle in classic pose on the egg-yolk yellow



TOP: Small Blue butterfly;  
MIDDLE: Hedge Brown (Gatekeeper) butterfly;  
BOTTOM: The A24 at Beare Green

centre of a daisy. On another was a bee, there were several hoverflies, and nearby a tiny fly I could not possibly name. In just a minute, standing quite still in this fairyland of flowers, I counted over 20 insects without even trying: each one finding life and strength from the life of the flowers that this year, for the first time, had been spared. Tiny crickets, too, sprang about the understory of the sward, and lower still would be a myriad creeping things, living their lives unseen.

## Hidden world

Among the brilliance of daisies and buttercups and sorrel, just below the surface I found cobalt speedwells, and the stunning magenta of a gem-like Grass Vetchling which used to be common, but has so often been mowed that it has almost attained rarity. I could happily have stayed all day exploring this hidden world, peopled by enigmatic insects and beautiful flowers. It was a world explored once long ago in childhood, a world of secret romance.

How wonderful it would be if this vision could be extended into

every aspect of Surrey's land management as policy. Surrey should not be famous just for breakneck hills for cyclists, or famous beauty spots, but for priceless biodiversity in every little bit of land we manage.

It's more difficult at the moment to go away on holiday to those places we used to go. But perhaps instead, if we get down close and lose ourselves for an hour or two in the enchanted world of the flowers, we may find it just as relaxing: and almost certainly at least as therapeutic.

Well done to all involved in agreeing the strategy, and in planning the detail and its implementation. I hope the spirit of this change will be reflected in land management throughout Surrey and make our county's roads, as they should be, as beautiful as the rest of our countryside, a pleasure to drive on and somewhere that promotes living in safety for both humans and other species.

**Jenny Desouter is a campaigner for biodiversity**

# Meet our new Volunteer Coordinator

**Julia Green** is the Volunteer Coordinator for the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England. This is a new post within the charity, with responsibility for recruiting, nurturing and working with local CPRE volunteers – the backbone of our organisation. It is a role which benefits enormously from Julia's infectious enthusiasm for nature and the countryside.

A lifelong Surrey resident, Julia lives in Godalming with her husband and 4-year-old daughter. She grew up on the outskirts of Guildford, between Newlands Corner and Pewley Downs. "I had a wonderful childhood," Julia explains, "exploring the local countryside. My favourite haunt was the hay bale barn at the local farm where I used to spend hours playing hide and seek with my friend!"

It was this passion for rural Surrey which led Julia, eventually, to discover CPRE and to offer her services to the charity.

Describing herself as a "nature addict", Julia says she loves the countryside so much because "it lifts my spirits. It gives me a sense of freedom. I have all my best ideas when I'm exploring the countryside. Being in the great outdoors is very grounding; there are no distractions from TV or the phone, being outdoors enables me to see things more clearly."

## Natural playground

Julia tries to spend as much time as she can outdoors, whether in the garden or in local parks and the countryside. "I don't want my daughter to grow up as part of the 'indoor generation'," she explains. "I want to be a good role model for her and to teach her the value of our local environment – how it supports our lifestyles from ensuring we have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, fertile soil in which to grow our food, and an amazing natural playground!"

CPRE's campaigning role, defending our precious green spaces, is extremely important to Julia. "We are all responsible for looking after the areas in which we live and enjoy," she believes.

"I used to think that it was all down to local government – we pay our taxes and I had a kind of 'well, it's their job' mentality. Over the years, I've come to realise that, yes, local councils have a role to play but they cannot



Julia Green with her daughter

do it all. If I see a bit of litter, these days I pick it up and tuck it into an old carrier bag. Why walk past when you can pick it up yourself?"

"So, when the new post of Volunteer Coordinator at CPRE Surrey came up, I felt this would give me the opportunity to get involved with a movement that places our natural assets at its very heart."

"But it's not just about wildlife and the countryside for its own sake – ultimately it's about preserving this asset for all our benefits – to support rural jobs, to provide green open spaces in which to quiet the mind from hectic 21st Century life, to provide places where we can be inspired and feel grounded and remember the things in life that really matter."

**See page 19 for more information on volunteering for CPRE Surrey**

# Breathing new life into Surrey's historic buildings

By Andy Smith

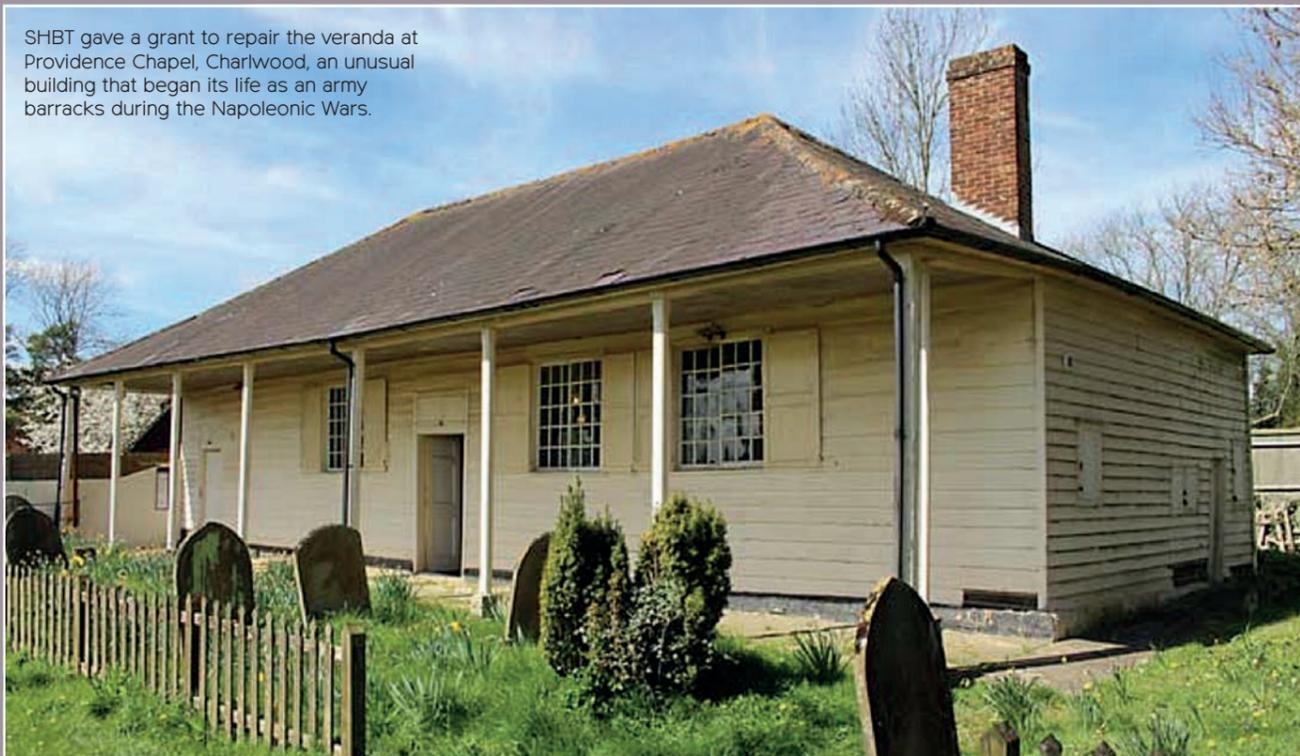
Our county has a rich architectural heritage, from medieval barns and gothic churches to grand Victorian and Edwardian villas and imposing civic buildings, town halls and public libraries. Surrey in particular has a wealth of 'Arts and Crafts' houses from the early 20th century including designs by the great Sir Edwin Lutyens. But this heritage is continually at risk. Passage of time, environmental conditions, changes of use or neglect can all do harm to historic structures.

Preserving Surrey's built environment is a never-ending task, requiring the expertise of conservationists, architects, craftspeople, stone-masons, roof-thatchers and other professionals who understand how these buildings were constructed in the first place and know how they can be repaired and maintained. It would not be possible at all without the vigilance of Surrey's dwindling band of conservation officers – and a commitment to conservation by the building-owners themselves.



The Surrey Historic Buildings Trust (Registered Charity No. 279240) is one of CPRE Surrey's partner organisations. The Trust was formed in 1980 when a former High Sheriff of Surrey, Philip Henman, pledged the sum of £25,000 for historic building conservation in the county, which the County Council then matched. The founding partners were Surrey County Council and CPRE Surrey (then known as The Surrey Society). Forty years later the Trust is still going strong.

As well as organising the Surrey Heritage Awards, the Trust has a Small Grants Scheme to promote 'Best Practice' in building conservation. These grants are typically between £1,000 and £3,000 each and can make a significant difference in enabling property-owners to undertake repairs using the correct traditional methods and techniques. Altogether, since its formation four decades ago, SHBT has given out over £500,000 in grants for heritage conservation, as well as playing a leading role in promoting awareness and understanding of Surrey's unique and diverse architectural heritage.



SHBT gave a grant to repair the veranda at Providence Chapel, Charlwood, an unusual building that began its life as an army barracks during the Napoleonic Wars.



The Trust gave a grant to re-thatch part of the roof of the Orpheus Barn, Godstone, which is now used as a theatre.

Here are just a few of the conservation projects that have been supported by the SHBT Small Grants scheme in the last year:

## Providence Chapel, Charlwood:

The Trust awarded a grant of £3,000 for repairs to the veranda of this former nonconformist chapel in the village of Charlwood, near Gatwick. This is a distinctive Grade II\* Listed building and is on Historic England's 'Heritage At Risk' register. The building has had an unusual history: in 1797 it was constructed in Horsham as the guardhouse of a barracks to house the troops assembled to repel a French invasion.

After the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 it became redundant and was moved twelve miles to Charlwood on horse drawn carts. There it was rebuilt with voluntary labour and in 1816 opened as a non-denominational nonconformist chapel. It was rescued by a local charitable trust, and with substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which enabled the people of Charlwood to give this unusual building a new lease of life, as a facility for all the community. SHBT grant-aided a specific project – the repair of the chapel's veranda.

## Claremont Garden Walls, Esher:

SHBT made several grants to fund repairs to Grade II Listed walls at Claremont dating from 1723. These walls were originally part of a walled kitchen garden designed by Sir John Vanbrugh for the Claremont estate, but are now very decayed and are on the Heritage At Risk Register. As well as funding repairs to brickwork, SHBT grant-aided the construction of new buttresses to support sections of wall which are in danger of collapsing.

## St Mark's Church, Hale, Farnham:

The chancel of the late-Victorian church is decorated with an impressive wall mural of 'The Song of Creation' painted by local artist Kitty Milroy between 1911 and 1920. There has been significant deterioration and a programme of repairs is now required, including restoration of lost plasterwork. SHBT agreed to provide £5,000 towards these repairs. This is an especially interesting project and a photographic record will be made of the work in progress.

## Orpheus Barn, Godstone:

Orpheus Barn, Godstone: The Trust gave £3,000 to patch and repair the thatched roof of this Grade II Listed 17th-century barn which is used as a theatre and performance space for disabled youngsters and local community organisations.

## Church of St Nicholas, Cranleigh:

The roof of this medieval church is made of Horsham Stone, which is unique to Surrey and Sussex – and is very expensive. SHBT's Trustees felt that it would be a great shame if the church could not be re-roofed with the correct fabric and in the traditional manner, and agreed a grant of £2,700.

Other grant-aided projects have included the repair of the War Memorial on Warlingham Green, cleaning and re-gilding the clockface on the Grade II Listed former stable block at Broome Hall, Coldharbour, and repairs to the seriously deteriorated lychgate of this Grade I listed church of St Mary's Church, Holmbury St Mary.

For further information about the work of the Surrey Historic Buildings Trust, including its Small Grants Scheme, visit [www.surreyhistoricbuildings.org.uk](http://www.surreyhistoricbuildings.org.uk).

# Stay Loyal to Local

With high-profile debates about national food standards and international trade policy ongoing and the practical challenges faced with lockdowns, it is more important than ever to know about the provenance of our food.

Having spent the past decade championing local food and drink from our base next to Priory Farm in South Nutfield, this year has proven to be an unusual one for Local Food Britain.

This is because, despite the hugely challenging circumstances, it's been incredibly impressive to see how well small, independent and rural businesses have adapted to the times.

As lockdown began to ease, however, we became increasingly aware that some of the wonderful support that local businesses had received was already on the wane as the economy opened up.

In a bid to support as many of these hard-working businesses as possible, we launched our 'Stay Loyal to Local' campaign via [www.localfoodbritain.com](http://www.localfoodbritain.com).

In recent months, we have featured Surrey's top food and drink producers and told their stories of transformation, NHS support and the challenges of balancing a small business with home schooling, etc.

Of course, farming doesn't stop whether we're all heading to the office or commuting, and 2020 has turned into something of a guessing game for those with livestock.

At Bramble Farm Turkeys in West Horsley, for instance, the Joy family had to think about that most festive time of the year just as the nation was heading into lockdown. With uncertainty swirling, they were faced



with ordering their chicks one week into lockdown. After much deliberation, they decided to rear a few less birds than they usually would.

Bramble Farm has been rearing poultry in the Surrey Hills since 1929, and their high welfare free-range turkeys are highly prized for their exceptional flavour. This year, it will most definitely be worth getting your orders in early to support them.

Other farming businesses, such as Hill House Farm at Beare Green, near Dorking, became powerhouses of collaboration and online enterprise to get quality food from farm to fork.

They teamed up with other producers to offer Mole Valley residents free delivery during lockdown. Since then, their website has become a sort of localised 'Amazon' for food and drink, adding a whole new side to an already proactive Surrey Hills business.

There is a more grass roots operation on offer at Brightleigh Farm in Outwood, meanwhile, where the cattle roam free, grazing the grassland and vegetation throughout the year.

They've launched a regular pop-up farm shop, which opens most Saturdays, from 10am to 2pm. From the farm gate, they now sell milk from Nutfield Dairy, honey from Hookhouse Farm in Outwood, Norbury Blue cheese from Albury and jams and chutneys from Epsom's Jam Packed Preserves, as well as the farm's own Pasture for Life beef and eggs from their flock of hens.



Farmer Patrick Deeley at Flower Farm Shop in Godstone, Surrey



Adrian Joy from Bramble Farm Turkeys at West Horsley



The Brightleigh Farm herd

Over in Godstone, the Glebe House smallholding is best known for its free range, rare breed pigs and cows. In a happy coincidence, they've been able to take local food and drink on the road in their 1961 Citroen H van, Maude, this year. You'll find them in Godstone village most Saturdays – and you can't miss their bright green machine.

On the more traditional side of retail, farm shops such as Priory Farm, Secretts, Garsons, Kingfisher, Noel's, Village Greens and Flower Farm have all had to adapt and change in dramatic ways too.

While delivery schemes became essential for a number of months this year and demand reached ever higher heights through lockdown as supermarkets became less of a draw, life has largely returned to a "new normal" at these bastions of local community with a few necessary tweaks in place.

Elsewhere, those purveyors of feasts over fire, The Salt Box have been able to get up-and-running again in the woodlands at their Priory Farm Estate home; Ockley Farmers' Market, which is organised by Michaela and Neil of Norbury Park Farm Cheese and held next door to Village Greens in Ockley is up-and-running again; and Dorking Brewery, who are based at Aldhurst Farm in



Glebe House Godstone mobile farm shop in Surrey

Capel, have been hosting Saturday Sessions with pre-booked places and street food weekly.

Of course, in the grand scheme of the great Surrey hamper of food and drink, we've barely started to lay out our spread of fantastic home-grown produce but we hope this has brought a little food for thought to your table.

So now, we call on all of you all this autumn and winter to please 'Stay Loyal to Local'.

**To find out more about Local Food Britain and their Stay Loyal to Local campaign, visit [www.localfoodbritain.com](http://www.localfoodbritain.com).**



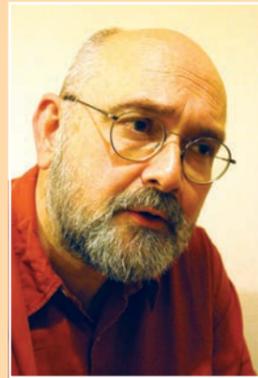
Ian Jones from Hill House Farm near Dorking



Village Greens Farm Shop in Ockley

# Now is the time to expand our AONB

By Andy Smith



We are extremely fortunate here in Surrey to have our own Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) stretching along the North Downs for the entire width of the county. The landscape of the Surrey Hills AONB – with its chalk escarpments and lush grasslands, its oak woods and wildflower meadows – is something of ‘an English rural idyll’, despite being just a short distance from the sprawling metropolis of London. And being an AONB gives this important stretch of Surrey countryside a high level of statutory protection as AONBs are second only to National Parks in their protected status.

With local authorities panicking over where to put the thousands of new homes the government is demanding should be built in the South East, the London Metropolitan Green Belt is no longer safe from development pressures. There are already plans in place for more than 10,000 new dwellings to be built on Green Belt land in Surrey under

the ‘Local Plan’ process. This means that large swathes of Surrey’s countryside and green spaces are at greater risk than at any time since the Green Belt came into being 65 years ago. If the Green Belt is so vulnerable to inappropriate development at this time, then it is more important than ever that the precious landscape of the Surrey Hills – our very finest countryside – should continue to be properly protected.

Recently, Natural England – the Government body responsible for the natural environment – concluded its review of the AONB boundary in Suffolk, resulting in a very welcome enlargement of the protected countryside in that county. It is expected that the Surrey Hills AONB will be next for a boundary review after the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB. If a Surrey Hills reviews goes ahead it should lead to an expansion of the area of preservation to cover the surrounding countryside, much of which is currently designated by Surrey County Council as an ‘Area of Great Landscape Value’ (AGLV), an important designation but which lacks the high level of protection that the AONB enjoys.

Welcoming the news from Suffolk, Heather Kerswell, Chair of the Surrey Hills AONB Board, said: “This

very positive news from our colleagues at the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is a step forward in a long process. The Surrey Hills were designated as worthy of national protection in 1958 but the boundary drawn was incredibly tight, difficult to understand or to manage. Many beautiful areas were inexplicably excluded. This makes the Surrey Hills very vulnerable, especially in east Surrey, which is particularly important as it is on daily international display from the M25.”

She added: “We want to see the boundaries redrawn to include these beautiful areas and give them the protection they deserve. We particularly want to see the hills in Tandridge included up to the boundary with Croydon, where we could link to the new London National Nature Reserve of South London Downs. Natural England agreed ten years ago to carry out this review and promised that Surrey Hills would follow on from Suffolk heaths so we look forward to an early start to the review, which we will support in every possible way.”

## High-quality countryside

The Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England has for a long time been calling for the AONB to be enhanced and strengthened through a boundary review. The Surrey Hills AONB currently covers around 25% of Surrey but if the AGLV is added that would increase its coverage by 11% (around 82 square kilometres). Back in 2007, CPRE Surrey commissioned a review of all the land abutting the AONB and we were able to show that the adjacent landscape could be considered of equivalent quality to the protected area of countryside. That review enabled CPRE to set out the case for incorporating all of the surrounding unspoilt land within the nationally protected area in order to protect it from encroachment and to ‘future-proof’ its sustainability.



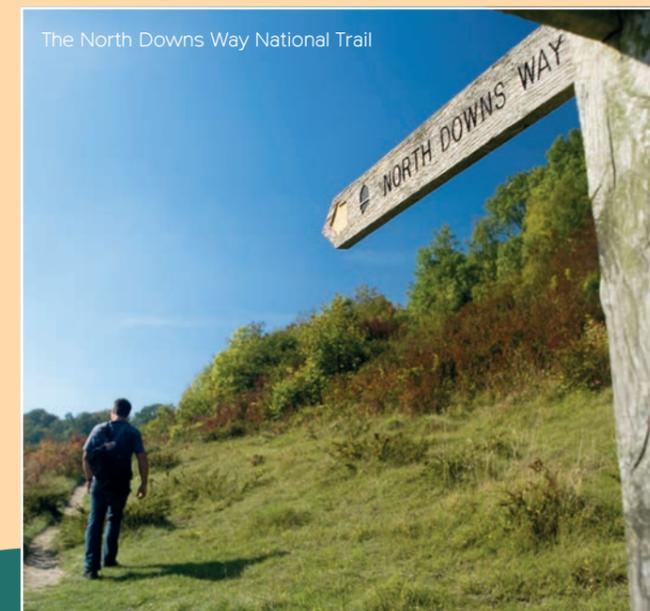
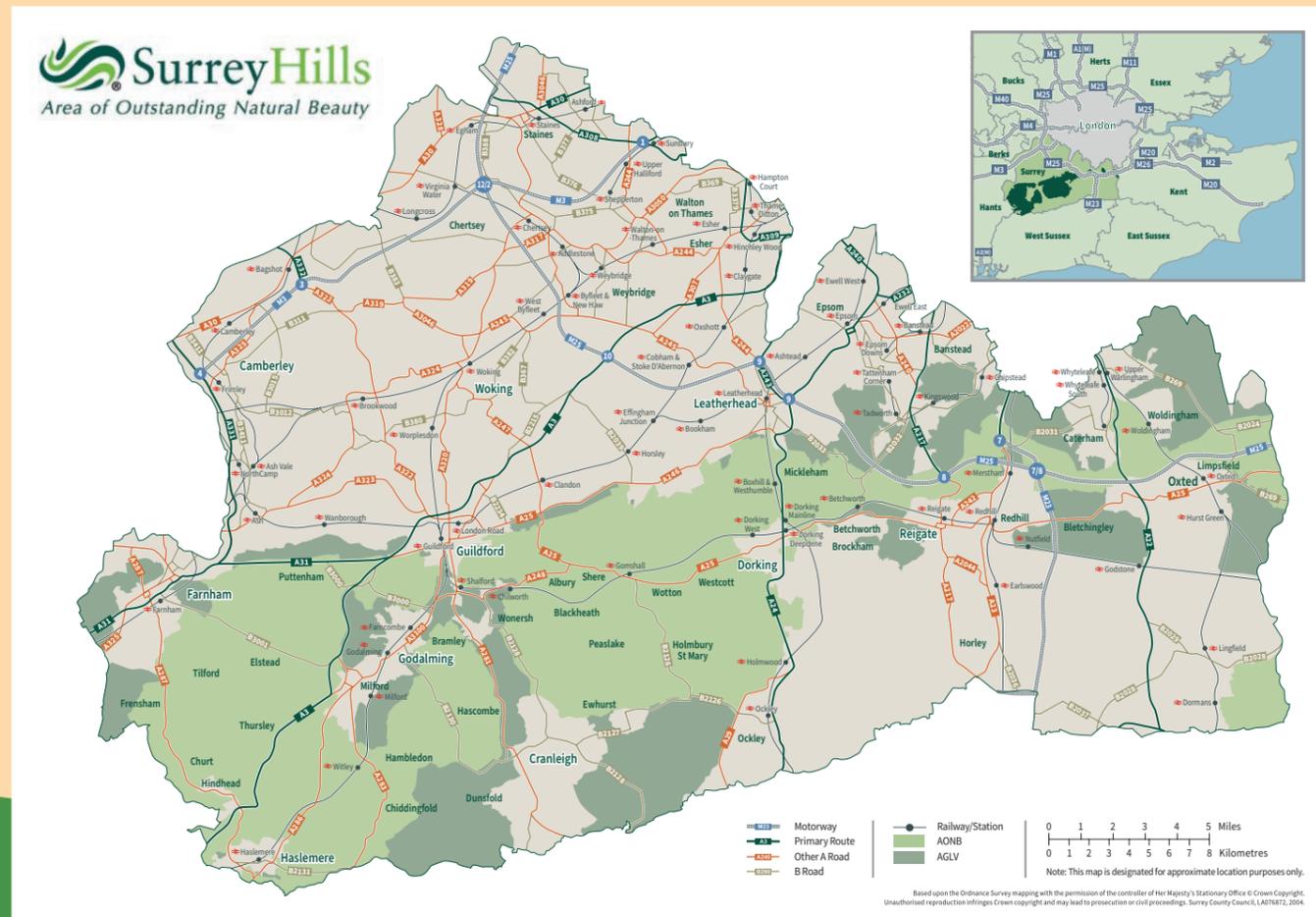
Reigate Hill

CPRE’s review was followed in 2011 by a further study, this time commissioned by Natural England themselves, which drew similar conclusions and which recommended extending the boundary. Expansion of the Surrey Hills AONB to include the AGLV is vital because it would help to secure permanent protection of unspoilt countryside in five of Surrey’s eleven districts – Tandridge, Reigate & Banstead, Mole Valley, Guildford and Waverley – and to free many open spaces from the threat of development. CPRE Surrey’s Chair, Kristina Kenworthy, has written to Tony Juniper and Marian Spain, respectively the Chair and Chief Executive of Natural England, about the long promised and eagerly awaited review of the Surrey Hills AONB boundary, and urging swift action.

As Kristina explained in her letter to Natural England: “Our members feel passionately about the Surrey Hills AONB, and if Surrey is to maintain its allure then its landscapes and habitats are going to need this additional layer of protection and sensitive management. We would seek to assist in any way that we can to make this possible and urge that you do not delay this process further given the immense pressures that Surrey faces from many quarters.”

In her reply to Kristina, Marian Spain makes clear that Natural England is in favour of the review but the final decision will have to be taken by Defra. So we have recently launched an online petition at [change.org](http://change.org) aimed at persuading Natural England and Defra to prioritise the review of the Surrey Hills AONB. If you agree that we need to secure our most beautiful countryside for the sake of future generations, please sign our petition. For more information please go to [www.cpresurrey.org.uk](http://www.cpresurrey.org.uk) or [www.surreyhills.org/boundary-review/](http://www.surreyhills.org/boundary-review/).

**Andy Smith is Director of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England**



The North Downs Way National Trail

Please respect our countryside and communities

- TAKE YOUR LITTER HOME
- NO FIRES OR BBQS
- CLOSE GATES
- NO CYCLING ON FOOTPATHS
- KEEP DOGS ON LEADS

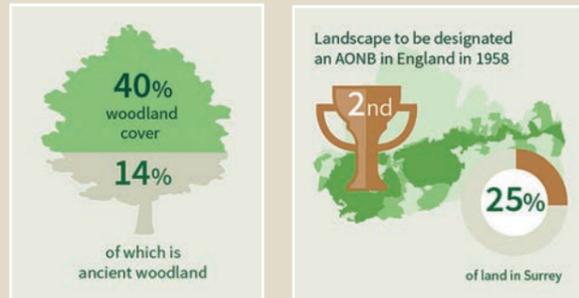
Report any antisocial behaviour to Surrey Police on 101

Published by the Surrey Hills AONB Board



# – FACTFILE –

The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty was the second landscape to be designated an AONB (in 1958). Today, some 37,000 people live in the Surrey Hills, but 1.5 million people live within 10km of the AONB! There are seven market towns and 51 parishes. Woodland makes up 40% of the Surrey Hills (14% is *ancient* woodland) while heaths and commons make up 18%. Around 40% of the AONB is agricultural land.



## Surrey Hills Artisan Trail

Surrey Hills is home to an exceptional group of talented artisans who make a wide range of traditional as well as more modern and innovative arts, crafts, food and drink. To celebrate the artisan heritage and culture of the Surrey Hills, Surrey Hills Enterprises have launched a free self-guided Surrey Hills Artisan Trail. The Artisan Trail will enable both visitors as well as residents, to explore the Surrey Hills and meet a wide range of artisans, sample local food and drink, take part in artisan workshops and experience traditional artisan craft skills. The artisans will offer a range of entertaining and fun experiences and will help visitors to understand more about the culture and heritage of arts, crafts, food and drink in the Surrey Hills. To discover more about the Surrey Hills Artisan Trail visit [www.surreyhills.org/artisan-trail](http://www.surreyhills.org/artisan-trail).



# Go slowly – and enjoy the scenery!

By Rob Fairbanks



Since the pandemic the London-based explorer and campaigner Dan Raven Ellison has developed an idea called ‘Slow Ways’. It’s an ambitious project to create a network of walking routes between the country’s towns and cities, as well as linking thousands of villages. The idea is to get people walking between locations and promoting slower types of travel.

“Historically, footpaths were created for walking to work, visiting relatives or trading, but many routes have been forgotten. We want to re-imagine them for use today,” Dan explains. “We have fantastic national trails and long-distance paths, and walking is important for so many reasons. There’s a climate, ecological, health and financial emergency, and walking can help reduce personal emissions, save money and bring joy. Life has slowed down in lockdown. Now people are reconnecting with their surroundings and discovering new things about the country. I hope Slow Ways will help them to continue to do this.”

Whilst most readers will welcome the growth in walking, the extensive footpath network is limited. There has been little investment in surfacing, maintenance or promotion and they are very much the poor relation compared with roads. Our footpaths also do not provide a resource for wheelchairs, equestrians or cyclists.

The Bicycle Association reported that Britons bought 60% more bikes in April as the nation turned to two-wheeled transport during the coronavirus lockdown. Steve Garidis, of the Bicycle Association, said: “It’s brilliant that the UK has been out buying and repairing their bikes under lockdown and E-bikes have the potential to make even longer or more hilly cycling commutes practical and enjoyable.” It’s reasonable to assume that less traffic on the roads has been a boon for cyclists. Research from the charity Cycling UK identified that the biggest barrier to people cycling is unsurprisingly road traffic and that the quieter roads have largely been responsible for this growth in cycling. But how sustainable is this growth in cycling now we are seeing higher levels of car use returning to our roads?

### National pastime

In countries like Holland and Belgium where cycling

has become a national pastime, they benefit from an extensive and well-maintained network of cycle routes away from roads. This is the ambition of Greenways. It’s a Cycling UK proposal that was presented to the Surrey Hills AONB Board this summer to create a network of multi-access routes for walking, family cycling, wheelchairs and equestrians.

Greenways are not about attracting more road cyclists. Road cyclists will always keep to roads. It is not about encouraging renegade mountain bikers who create trails over our woodlands, commons and heaths. Greenways are about getting cyclists off our busy Surrey roads onto a network of well-maintained gravel trails that can be shared with walkers, wheelchairs and horses, where appropriate, and to reduce conflict on the wider footpaths and bridleways. Walking and cycling infrastructure investment in Surrey is still overly focused on heavily engineered town centre schemes where there is limited opportunity to provide traffic free environments or links into the countryside and villages.

The opportunity to invest in the surfacing, maintenance and promotion of a discreet network of bridleways, quiet (green) lanes and creating new permissive access could transform how residents and visitors access the Surrey Hills that would benefit their health and wellbeing. Such a network should also be part of the green economy, providing sustainable access to train stations, pubs and village shops.

The Surrey Hills team is working with Surrey County Council, Cycling UK and partners to demonstrate how this could work with the new Leith Hill Greenway. This is creating a 7 mile trail that includes new permissive access through Denbies Wine Estate and National Trust land, including accessing a tunnel under Ranmore Common Road. The next stage will be planning how Greenways can be rolled out across the Surrey Hills and connect with wider Surrey, London and the South Downs National Park. Having better access to the countryside is only the start. Greenways should be the backbone of green corridors that also connect habitats as we embark on our slow journey to nature recovery.

**Rob Fairbanks is Director of Surrey Hills AONB**



# Where do the Surrey Hills go at night?

By John Evans

Where do the Surrey Hills go at night? Nowhere, of course. They're still exactly where they were. But now, as twilight softens the landscape and darkness falls, they undergo magical change, each transient moment suggesting new things of interest and beauty to explore. The creatures of the day make way for those of the half-light and the deep night. The colours of the day fade and the contours of the land slip away.

The Sun is reluctant to relinquish the day. Long after its disc snaps out below the horizon, the West clings to the glow of its scattered embers. With the coming of the New Moon, we see the Sun's reflected light as a faint crescent, low in the evening sky. At this stage in the Moon's cycle, you can often see the part of the Moon not lit directly by the Sun, glowing with a spooky light. How is this possible?

There is no atmosphere on the Moon to scatter sunlight. What we're seeing is Earthshine – sunlight reflected from the Earth, now shining brightly in the lunar sky, beaming down onto the Moon's night-time landscape. People used to call this “seeing the Old Moon in the New Moon's arms”. Catch the New Moon around 16-17 November and you'll see the Earthshine effect better in the few days following the Moon's first emergence as a slim crescent.

As the Moon waxes, it is still the Sun's light that we see lending the Moon brilliance to penetrate dark woods, shimmer on waters, bring silver to snowy hill-tops and, in the old days, give work-light at harvest time. On moonless nights, at least when there are planets in the sky, the chances are that sunlight will *still* be visible, for it is sunlight reflecting from the planets that enables us

to see them. Through October, one planet is prominent in the evening sky: Mars, the Red Planet.

## Naturally dark

And then there are the stars. The darker parts of the Surrey Hills are the best places in the county to experience something of the drama and inspiration of a naturally dark sky. There are plentiful viewing points and access is good; the Surrey Hills website is a superb source of guidance and information.

Such places are precious, not just for their daytime beauty but as oases of relative darkness. Decades of uninformed lighting design and practice consorting with carelessness and ignorance have given us light pollution on an unprecedented scale. Many people don't realise that light pollution is a serious environmental threat. It wipes out the natural beauty of the night sky which, until recently, had always been there for humans to marvel at and draw upon for inspiration and understanding. It is associated with risks to human health and well-being. It damages wildlife and biodiversity. It is a visible sign of waste and contributes to climate change.

For all these reasons, it is for individuals and communities to reduce polluting light at night. Fortunately, it is quite easy to achieve this just by following good lighting practice and design and by switching off lights that are not needed. At the same time, the remaining places of relative darkness, such as those to be found within the Surrey Hills, deserve and need our support and protection.

“On a clear day you can see for miles.” But how far do think you can see on a clear *night* from the Surrey Hills? To the lights twinkling on the South Downs? Yes. Say, 30 miles or so. To the Moon. Yes. Roughly, a quarter of a million miles. To the stars. Yes. To that bright star there, Vega in the constellation of Lyra, the Lyre? About 25 light years, which is around 150 million *million* miles. Many of the others stars visible to the unaided eye are far more remote.

## Beyond the Milky Way

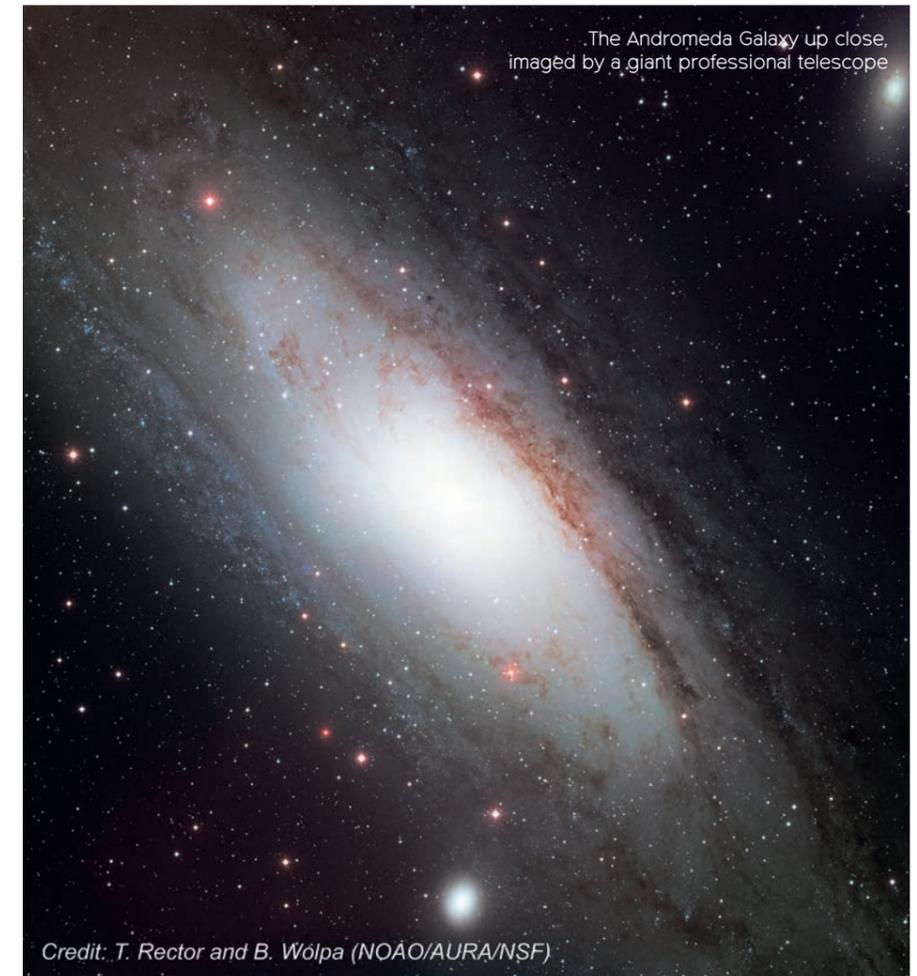
Is that as far as you can see? Well, no. On a clear, moonless night from dark spots in the Surrey Hills, people with ordinary eyesight, with or without specs, can glimpse the Andromeda spiral galaxy, a vast star system, one of many billions in the known Universe, lying outside our own Milky Way galaxy. All of the stars you see in our sky are members, along with our own

Sun, of our Milky Way galaxy. They are, relatively speaking, ‘locals’. When you see the Andromeda galaxy, you're looking past and beyond all the stars in our own Milky Way to another vast spiral, separated from ours by enormous spaces, a galaxy broadly similar to ours but bigger and containing maybe twice as many stars. And, incidentally, due to collide with ours – but not for more than four billion years!

Finding the Andromeda galaxy is not difficult and this is a good time of year to do so. You'll need a night with no bright Moon in the sky – the Moon has a fascination and beauty all its own but its brilliance makes faint objects in the sky impossible to see. First you'll need to locate the Great Square of Pegasus. At 8pm on 15 November, the Moon will not be obtrusive and, looking South from the Surrey Hills, the Square of Pegasus can be seen high in the sky. Look for a big ‘square’ of moderately bright stars with no really bright stars within its boundaries. The chart will help you. Don't worry if you miss this date – the starry sky changes slowly from night to night and Andromeda will be there to see for many weeks yet. On 15 November, below the Square and to the left, the planet Mars still shines bright and orange-red, though now moving away from its closest recent approach to the Earth. Throughout November and into December, it remains a good pointer to the Square – just look up from Mars and to the right and you'll come to the Square's bottom left hand corner. Let your eyes continue a similar distance upwards and to the right and you come to its right hand top corner. Phew! The Square looks *big* on the sky.

Now that you've got the Square, follow the line of stars that leads eastwards from its top left corner, about the same distance as the length of the Square's side – you'll stepping stone another star on the way. Climb the trail of faint stars that leads up at right angles from the track you've just followed, again for a similar distance. Can you glimpse a faint, misty glow? That is the Andromeda galaxy. From the Surrey Hills, it is there to see on moonless nights; from super dark places, it is easy to see. It's a good plan, but by no means necessary, to bring binoculars with you to help your search.

To have the best chance of seeing it, allow your eyes to become dark-adapted. That means not looking at lights



for 20 minutes or so before you start. Dim red lights won't affect your eyes too much but bright LEDs will. Be comfortable and warm. While heeding whatever is the prevalent distancing guidance, observe with others because it's more rewarding, safer in the event of mishap and a lot more fun.

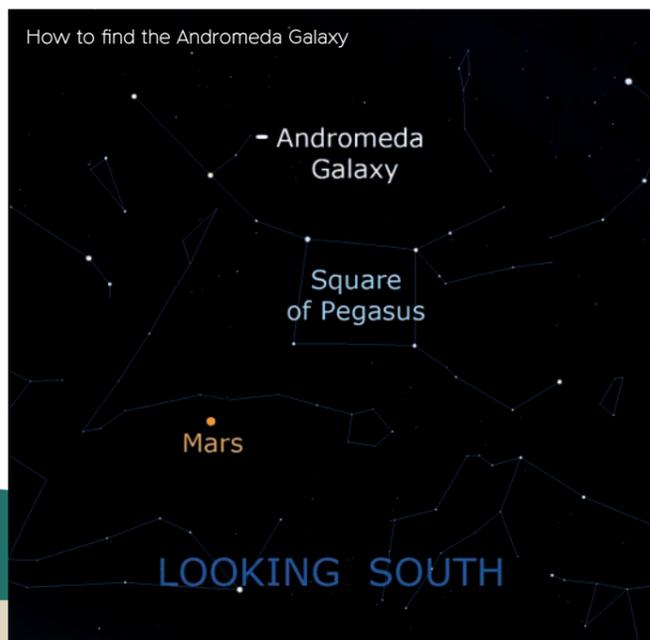
So how far can you see from the Surrey Hills at night? At far as the Andromeda Galaxy, for sure. And how far is that? About 2.5 million light years or roughly 15,000,000,000,000,000 miles. So if anyone asks you how far you can see from the Surrey Hills, be sure to ask: “Do you mean by day or at night?”

## Useful apps:

**Stellarium:** free and usable across most devices, is a beautifully presented planetarium app that will help you find your way around the night sky for any place and any time of year.

**Moon calendar:** free, useful for tracking the phases and rising and setting times of the Moon so that you can plan your observing.

**John Evans FRAS is Coordinator of the Dark Skies Matter initiative**



# Saving Spelthorne's Green Belt

By Margaret Mulowska

Residents from across the North Surrey borough of Spelthorne have come together to protect their Green Belt. With a petition attracting over 6,000 signatories, collaboration between residents' groups and environmental activists, and now through a borough-wide Community Assembly, the people of Spelthorne are working hard to keep the borough's green spaces safe.

So, how have the residents in the borough of Spelthorne been getting organised? At first, different groups of residents were protesting for the protection of their own local sites. A key part of their campaign has been the realisation **that protecting ALL of the sites is the best protection for EACH of the sites**. As Paul Hollingworth, chair of one of the local residents' associations, says: "The feeling is growing that 'this is an issue beyond my own patch'."

In January, three local councillors started a petition. Once it gained over 4,000 signatories, it had to come before a full council meeting for debate and a decision on the petition demand. The petition met this threshold easily with over 5,000 signatories by the time it was presented at February's council meeting. Local residents gathered outside Spelthorne's council offices to protest, joined by Staines Extinction Rebellion who brought a typically eye-catching funeral procession with drums, and a light projection beamed onto the council offices.

A third of Spelthorne councillors voted to protect the Green Belt, in line with the residents' petition, another third voted to keep the matter 'under review', and a third didn't show up to the council meeting. Residents were appalled that two thirds of their elected representatives failed to protect the Green Belt when they had the opportunity to do so. Further attempts to bring motions to protect the Green Belt were not permitted by the Council. With the petition attracting more signatures by the day (it currently stands at over 6,000) and an apparent deadlock in the council, with most failing to listen to the views of residents, we felt it was time to try something else.

## Myth-busting

A group of local residents, inspired by a community-organising course ([www.trustthepeople.earth](http://www.trustthepeople.earth)), decided to bring everyone together at a 'Community Assembly' to plan together what steps they could take next. (Community Assemblies bring people together to discuss issues and deliberate



Precious green spaces should not be sacrificed for unsustainable development

on solutions, with no one person or view being able to dominate.)

Local councillors were invited to participate, but with the same speaking rights as everyone else. The first assembly was held online in late August. Everyone agreed that it was an extremely empowering forum. Participants decided to form three working groups: one to prepare a 'myth-busting factsheet' to dispel the misinformation being spread by those in favour of building on the Green Belt, another to prepare a press release for local media, and the third to start a desktop study of what local brownfield sites the borough could develop as an alternative to building on the Green Belt.

Following an online meeting (via Zoom) with representatives of CPRE Surrey and the London Green Belt Council, a second Community Assembly took place at the end of September. Richard Knox-Johnston, Chair of the London Green Belt Council, attended and spoke about the importance of protecting the Green Belt. He told the assembly that they were running an 'excellent campaign' and recommended that we form a fourth working group to consider options for starting a residents' association for the whole of the borough. A third Community Assembly was due to take place just as this magazine went to press.

This is an exciting new front in the battle to keep Spelthorne's Green Belt safe. Whatever happens next, it is clear that these residents are a force to be reckoned with. You can find their campaign on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/spelthornegreenbelt](http://www.facebook.com/spelthornegreenbelt)). And remember: releasing Green Belt for development benefits only a very few, whereas protecting the Green Belt benefits ALL residents.

**Margaret Mulowska is a Community Campaigner in Spelthorne**

# 'Build Back Better' is not good enough

By Sally Pavey



Many residents seem to be unaware of Gatwick Airport's plans to rebuild the emergency runway as a second runway. Perhaps this is because Gatwick is not on people's minds? Due to the comparative lack of flights because

of the Covid-19 pandemic, communities in the locality are not currently being disturbed by 24/7 flights as they were previously, and as they could be again after the pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic has forced airlines to cut up to 90% of their capacity, with Gatwick estimating that they are back to 1971 traffic levels. The estimated losses are colossal. Time and again, the instability of Gatwick has ramifications for service industries, resulting in shockwaves well outside the immediate Gatwick catchment area.

No-one knows how long travel will be restricted, and it's therefore extremely hard to predict what is needed to keep companies afloat, not to mention the differing opinions over which companies should be helped. There are also serious questions as to how the climate crisis can, or should, figure in any airline and airport bailouts. With Airbus and Rolls Royce drawing a line under electric planes, the future for fossil-fuel-free planes still seems only a theory. Alternative fuel is also expensive and demanded by other industries that can reduce the everyday carbon footprint of households so can these fuels also meet the huge demands of aviation?

For local authorities to place long-term strategy plans in one basket – Gatwick's basket – is far from a 'green' strategy. Although Gatwick Airport declares itself green, it does this because it purchases reusable power and has water fountains but omits to mention the incinerator and the fossil-fuel-burning planes, over 285,000 in 2019. Gatwick pre-lockdown (without using its emergency runway) expected to be served by 297,000 aircraft movements annually by 2050, generating 2.7MtCO<sub>2</sub>. With two runways this would add nearly 1MtCO<sub>2</sub> to this figure. It is also dependent on delivery of a large number of modelling assumptions including the application of a carbon price that reaches £221 per tCO<sub>2</sub> by 2050.

Gatwick is not only reliant on consumer spend and confidence but caters for a luxury industry **(70% of UK flights are made by a wealthy ABC1 15% of the population, with 57% not flying abroad at all)**.

With so many job losses at Gatwick, we have to encourage government and local authorities to look to greener forms of industry to bring sustainable economic benefits to the country. Both West Sussex County Council and Surrey County Council have adopted climate change strategies that ignore the pollution created by Gatwick Airport, focusing purely on the economic benefits which, once again, are questionable. Gatwick had already planned job

losses prior to the coronavirus lockdown. The issue with the promise of a plethora of airport jobs is the ongoing efficiency drive in the industry, driven by processes like automation. Many low-skilled positions on zero-hour contracts will disappear anyway, so we need to retrain in sustainable, greener, jobs, instead of supporting a polluting industry. Job creation is always an airport expansion argument, but the economic value of these jobs could actually be wiped out by the cost of the associated carbon emissions, assuming the jobs will ever be created.

## Level playing field

Taxation must be connected to emissions; the CAGNE response to the recent Government consultation on Taxation of Carbon Emissions argued that Air Passenger Duty must remain, green taxes must be paid as well as VAT and Duty, from which aviation is exempt. There needs to be a level playing field where aviation no longer receives such subsidies. Investment needs to go into green forms of transport and so we are delighted to see the first hydrogen trains and buses being trialed.

Even after much lobbying by aviation and the travel industry, the Government recently announced that Air Passenger Duty (APD) will rise 2.5% for economy and premium carriage on medium and long-haul flights from April next year. The duty on economy fares goes from £80 to £82, while the tax on premium seats is to jump by 2.3 per cent from £176 to £180. Domestic flights and short haul are not included. Airlines can also expect to see increases in the costs of air traffic control as they seek to recoup losses in revenue during the Covid-19 pandemic, with some airlines stating that they have only 6.3 months of cash available and may not see next summer, whilst some regional airports face bankruptcy.

The UK Climate Assembly report (September 2020) is supporting holidaying in the British Isles to reduce aviation-generated climate change. They propose the scrapping of incentives that encourage people to fly more, such as Air Miles; the introduction of a frequent flier tax; and the promotion and incentivising of UK holidays. They reject the airport industry's forecast of an increase in air passenger numbers by as much as 65% between 2018 and 2050, labelling it as counterproductive.

Talk of Gatwick Airport expansion not only blights the communities of Sussex, Surrey and Kent, with the threat of 50,000 extra planes a year on top of the 285,000, but we should remember that aircraft are not 'green', and they do not look to be green any time soon. Carbon trading is a marketing myth, and so, until Gatwick can properly reduce the carbon it produces, growth *must* be stopped.

We ask you to support CAGNE and CPRE's campaigns against Gatwick expansion by contacting your local elected representatives, both in Westminster and local government, and ask them to ensure that Gatwick Airport's owners put a stop to their unsustainable plans for growth.

**Sally Pavey is Chair of CAGNE (Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions)**

# Feel more alive: Join our team of volunteers

By Julia Green

"I came for lunch, watched the video, cried my eyes out and was hooked." This is Val describing how she became a volunteer. More and more people are turning to volunteering as a way to enhance their skills, do something meaningful, build their confidence or just because it's something they enjoy doing.

CPRE Surrey has lots of interesting and exciting opportunities for anyone who'd like to get involved and help us to protect Surrey's beautiful countryside. It doesn't matter if you've never volunteered, if you only have a small amount of time to give, or if you can only do it for a short period. Get in touch and you could be part of something which is genuinely making a difference to the people and wildlife where you live.

There are many reasons to become a volunteer and, in the words of one volunteers: "I hadn't anticipated how much volunteering would enrich my life; everyone should give it a go at least once."

## Why volunteer?

- You can flex when you volunteer so it fits in with your life
- You can make a positive and genuine difference to issues you care about

**Volunteering: Four ways to feel healthier and happier**

Volunteering **connects** you to others  
 Volunteering is good for your **mind and body**  
 Volunteering can advance your **career**  
 Volunteering brings fun and **fulfilment** to your life

- You are joining a team of friendly and professional people where everyone is welcome
- Do something that brings you joy and that you feel good about
- Learn new skills and enhance your CV
- You are under no obligation to do it. It's your choice.
- It aligns with your interests and priorities

So, why not volunteer? Take the first step and get in touch. You are under no obligation to become a volunteer but you have nothing to lose by having a chat about your interests. We have a number of current volunteer vacancies including Trustee (Marketing) and Office Administrator. Email [cpre.surrey@btconnect.com](mailto:cpre.surrey@btconnect.com) or call Julia Green on 07867 901129.

**Julia Green is the Volunteer Coordinator for CPRE Surrey**



A big thank-you to the CPRE Surrey volunteers Sarah Newman, Samantha Anastasi and Alex Debicki who have been assisting our Planning team – Keith Tothill, Gillian Hein and Tim Murphy – by screening and monitoring planning applications in Surrey's eleven districts, and have also been assisting our Director, Andy Smith, with research and number crunching for the London Green Belt Council's report on development threats to the Green Belt. This report will be published shortly and will be available to download from our website.

## Reversing decline with 'Making Space for Nature'

Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and species are becoming extinct every day. In a bid to reverse this decline work is underway with farmers and land managers in the Surrey Hills through the new 'Making Space for Nature' project. With funding from Defra and support from Surrey University, Ordnance Survey and conservation bodies, the project will map key species and identify what habitat improvements could be made to encourage these species to thrive as part of a greener, healthier and wilder landscape. One of the species already identified is the Skylark, renowned for its impressive display flight and distinctive birdsong. It has suffered a dramatic population decline in recent years placing it on the Birds of Conservation Concern 'Red List'. Learn more at the Surrey Hills Symposium on 25 November (see Back Cover for more information).



The Skylark has suffered a dramatic population decline



## Field to fork: on the trail of local produce

HRH The Countess of Wessex visited Surrey Hills producers and retailers recently to experience first-hand their 'field to fork' collaboration, following the path from Coverwood Farm near Peaslake to Squires Food Hall in Frensham. The Royal visit highlighted the importance of local food production, the challenges and opportunities facing farmers and food producers due to Covid-19 and the opportunities to meet the growing interest in supporting and buying locally and sustainably.

The importance and popularity of locally produced food and 'field to fork' tracing has never been higher – ticking all the boxes of sustainability, reduced carbon footprint, high-quality local collaboration and exceptional taste.

The Royal visit began at Coverwood Farm near Peaslake where the Countess met Bill Biddell, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Surrey, and farmer Tim Metson, his family and staff who produce pasture-fed beef. Mr Metson spoke about the key challenges and opportunities faced by farmers as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and other issues facing farmers, including pasture-fed meat production. The Countess officially opened the farm's new 'Provenance Cuts' building, a new facility purpose built to process and butcher locally farmed, sustainable meat.

Next on the itinerary was the Food Hall at Squires Garden Centre in Frensham where she was introduced to Sarah Squires, Chairman, and Martin Breddy, Managing Director, who provided a tour around the Food Hall showcasing local produce and meeting staff who had worked throughout the lock down to provide food for the local community. The Countess also met Simon Taylor of Surrey Hills Butchers and Captain of Team GB for Butchery, specialising in high quality, ethical and locally sourced pasture fed meat.



## Artwork opens up a hidden view

A striking new artwork, 'Optohedron', has been installed along the North Downs Way National Trail, a short walk from Newlands Corner in the Surrey Hills. Created by artist Will Nash, this distinctive 'sculptural seat' is the latest addition to a Surrey Hills Arts project titled 'Inspiring Views', which opens up hidden views, undertakes conservation work, improves access and commissions artists to interpret the views through art.

This installation has been made possible by the generous donations received through a crowdfunding campaign and support from Surrey Arts and the North Downs Way National Trail. The crowdfunding campaign received a huge amount of local and regional support with the target of £8,000 achieved in just 12 weeks! Created from weathering steel and packed with timber from the surrounding woodland, the seat blends into the landscape sympathetically. Concealed within the timber are three spherical kaleidoscopes, one looking up at the branches against the sky, one capturing the tree foliage and one down towards the earth. The artwork's name, Optohedron, is derived from the ancient Greek words

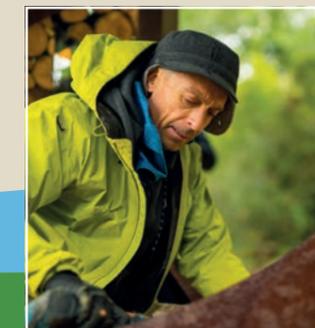
*optikós* ("of seeing") and *hédra* ("raised seat"). Wildlife conservation work led by volunteers from the charity Butterfly Conservation undertook work parties to create habitat areas for butterflies



to flourish around the new viewpoint. This work is particularly beneficial for the declining Small Blue butterfly. Creating food sources and linking patches of habitat across the North Downs helps the species to disperse and increase in number.

Bill Downey, one of the volunteers involved in the project, told *Surrey Voice*: "I loved being a part of this project and working with Butterfly Conservation to help this vulnerable species. We've been scraping the soil back to the chalk and planting Kidney Vetch, a food source for butterflies and by keeping the scrub down we hope will allow butterflies and other wildlife to thrive".

The Inspiring Views programme was launched in 2016. For further information on all the Inspiring Views projects visit [www.inspiringviews.org](http://www.inspiringviews.org).



# SPACE FOR NATURE?

MAKING



## SURREY HILLS SYMPOSIUM 2020

Come and hear a panel of experts debate why nature recovery matters and how we can reverse the drastic decline to achieve a healthy natural environment.

**JOIN THE DEBATE**

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