



Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum

Thursday 29th February 2024

Location: Online

10:00-11:30am

<p>Present</p>	<p>Chair- Lisa Creaye-Griffin (SyNP) Alexander Bagnell (MVDC), Andrew Thwaites (Ashtead Common) Cara Thomas (SCC), Dave Page (EDC), Helen Cocker (SCC), Hendryk Jurk (GBC), Lawrie Baker (SCC), Peter Leamore (SHBC) Rob Fairbanks (SHS), Sally Astles (GBC), Steve J Harris (SHBC), Mark Beaumont (Hurtwood Control), Adam Brown (SCC), Sarah Cliff (EEBC), Sharon Bayne (Blackwood Bayne) Chris Swatridge (RBC), Thomas Carmona (RBBC) James Herd (SWT)</p> <p>Admin- Zoe Williams (SyNP)</p>	
<p>Apologies</p>	<p>Arran Henderson (WoBC), Hamish White (EBC), Mark Richards (NT), Steve Mitchell (SCC), Stewart Cocker (EEBC)</p>	
<p>Matters Arising</p>	<p>Minutes from the last meeting to be approved.</p> <p>Matters arising from previous meeting</p> <p>GSP health and wellbeing LCG meeting has been arranged with the GSP Team, to talk about accredited work, from this a small working group will be set up. Any people who want to join can. Lawrie Baker has offered to be part of this working group.</p> <p>Dog walking incident The incident was opened in January and then suspended. 10 dogs were being walked at the time and the main damage came from the dog walkers' own dog, an XL Bully. We await this to be reopened to see the consequences.</p>	
<p>Adam Brown (SCC) LNRS lead introduction</p>	<p>The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be going by name Surrey Nature Recovery, this will be the wording used going forward. SCC are the Responsible Authority for Surrey. The LNRS came out of the 2021 Environment Act. 48 LNRS across the country.</p> <p>The first stage is to do a baseline and produce a map for Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB). Irreplaceable habitats as defined for the BNG metrics. (This means that heathland and species rich grassland and woodland that is not ancient are not currently included in this baseline.) This will need to be considered for engagement as it will appear to have areas missing on the map. There is a consultation expected from Defra on the definition of Irreplaceable Habitat this year.</p> <p>We should designate these as local wildlife sites. To have them counted, this may be for the next round of the LNRS.</p> <p>A description will be written based on the Surrey State of Nature Report.</p>	



	<p>There will be a long list of priorities for nature in Surrey, this will be targeted by reaching out to groups in Surrey, landowners, NGO, non-farming landowners such as golf clubs.</p> <p>The priorities will be reduced to a shorter list through engagement and shown on a spatial map for the county. There are some areas of 30 by 30 targets that are not clear for example, the woodland coverage. Surrey is over the canopy coverage percentage already. The species list will be following the same process a long and then short list. Mike Waite Surrey Wildlife Trust is working on this.</p> <p>Delivery Mechanisms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BNG • Farming subsidy we are hoping there will be a payment uplift for farmer if they adhere to the priorities. This is not confirmed and is being lobbied for. • Corporate Social Responsibility • High integrity Nature Markets <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carbon 2. Natural Flood management 3. Biodiversity credits <p>BNG SCC will be looking at 56 sites around the county to habitat baseline for BNG, the plan is to use this habitat bank to offset units for work to be done on schools for example. This is being done by a company called Keystone.</p> <p>Questions AR, SNCI would you still like to know about ones that have been lost, there are some in Runnymede. AB, Yes, I will be speaking to Alistair and SBIC. AR, You wanted a volunteer for the working group, we know a professor from the Open University who has political involvement, can he put himself forward as a citizen and professor? He has a document that replicates the LNRS. AT, Noting the link to SSSI is there a link to other designations, in line with protecting 30% more space. AB, All designations will be mapped, nation and local reserves. They are counting all towards their 30 by 30 bid. OACMs (other effective area-based conservation measures) will hopefully include ancient woodland. Which will also count towards the total.</p>	<p>Action: AR to connect with AB with contact information.</p>
<p>Round table</p>	<p>AT, Here at Ashted common we have finished our cutting season mid Feb, we have focused on our fire resilience work, volunteering remains strong.</p> <p>LB, One area I am working on is around access to cycling, removing barriers to those on lower income and other barriers. I am developing a partnership with Suez to work to repurpose the bikes that go to landfill. To encourage year 6 bike ability level 2. To raise this to 80% from 40%.</p> <p>AB, Ashted park has been our focus getting a plan for that..</p>	



PL, We are looking at our grounds maintenance contract, we are looking at extending or going back out to the market. We are four years into a five-year contract. Costs have increased so we are looking at options for this. We normally plan between 4-5,000 trees each year, this year the supply is less, we have only received 1,500. This has been delayed due to the weather conditions. We hope to finish this in the next month.

TC, Earlswood common and Reigate Heath plans are waiting to be signed off by the executive. Updating the Redhill Common management plan. We are negotiating on a sewage leak on Chipstead Downs.

AR/CS, We have been directed by councillors to write a meadow management policy, we have held discussion with the flood plain meadows project, we are a borough that borders the Thames and we are looking to better managing our flood plains and species rich meadow. The government announced their new funding levels for species rich grasslands, with new options under SFI (Sustainable Farming Incentive). ESSO have finished going through the borough, a five-figure sum has been paid and will be used for nature restoration.

Andi is being tasked with the SANGS, waymarking.

CT, Code of conduct for Dogs, we soft launched this in Jan 25th, we engaged with dog walkers in car parks on some of our sites, we partnered with Heathland Hounds, it was a positive first day with 6 people signing up. BBC did an article on this, and we now have 97 signed up, majority in Surrey.

HC, Busy winter season, Surrey Heathland Partnership volunteers has been really successful, not negativity with trees being taken down on the heathland. The Lower Mole Partnership, has done some work on fire breaks on Ashted Common. Linking in with lots of projects already running and mentioned.

JH, The wildfire management plan written for Chobham Common is finished, works started this winter, which are nearly finished. It is about fuel breaks instead of fire breaks. Following on from going to Grounds Well we met people from the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology promoting their Automated monitoring of insects (AMI) traps, allowing ecological monitoring on sites we don't have access to.

We have some traps on the MOD site, one on Nower Wood and one they will have bio acoustics to help us monitor birds and bats. It wont replace boots on the ground but to aid us.

SC, Hogsmills wetland creation has been nearly completed, we met our new NE officer yesterday, Catherine Cosgrove. Ash dieback work on Epsom Common and Horton Country Park focusing on work next to the paths is almost complete. We are trying to improve our grasslands, we are looking to manage bigger sites like Epsom downs better.



	<p>RF, Pushing Natural England on boundary extensions done. Developing the new management plan, a 75 year vision. Surrey Hills Arts Programme Nature calling. Surrey Hills Society has secured lottery funding to promote accessibility. Commissioned work on the deer strategy, looking at markets for venison. Loads of funding next year for access improvements. Public transport campaign Working with Growing Health Together, Horley/Merston areas, working with a network of farms.</p>	
<p>Item 2</p>	<p>RoWIP (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) Sharon Bayne, Director, Blackwood Bayne Ltd We are looking at meeting the needs of the public, also looking at those who are not currently using it. Looking to the future and the demographic of Surrey. The RoWIP must be reviewed and updated every 10 years. Climate change is being brought into the conversation for the RoWIP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of evidence – Summer 2024 • Drafting ROWIP - Autumn 2024 • Consultation draft – 12-week consultation – autumn/winter 2024 <p>Carrying out extensive stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>Questions LB, Interested in other RoWIP reviews across the county, what changes as opposed to the light touch of ten years ago. SB, We will be looking much broader to see where the public rights of way sit with in access to greenspace. RF, The importance of the outcome of access to space. 25% of Surrey Hills is permissive open space. What was the impact of the last RoWIP?</p> <p>SB, It will be useful for me to understand where publicly open areas of green space are available. An ask for the districts and boroughs for that information. I will be looking at the last RoWIP what was achieved. SC, With this review will there be extra funding to put in these paths and maintain them? SB, I can't speak for SCC on their funding. Other councils have successfully managed there RoWIP's to get funding from active travel. LCG, Looking at national funding for access and seeing where it all fits in. TC, What is your view on sponsorship such a local companies sponsoring paths? SB, I am freelance, this question should go to the Surrey County Council. LCG, companies may well do this as part of their corporate social responsibility. The key will be building a relationship with the company.</p>	<p>Action: Districts and boroughs to share publicly open green space file to better connect and understand the RoWIP.</p>



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	<p>RF, It is a statutory responsibility of the Highway Authority, it would be an idea to set out a statutory minimum, that the authority is responsible for.</p> <p>LCG, On the survey, it looked more intended for individuals?</p> <p>SB, this is a public survey is for individuals, I sent SyNP a letter with questions, which has also gone out to other groups.</p>	
Topics for Future Meetings	<p>Brief discussion on topics for future meetings</p> <p>23rd May</p> <p>Ann - BNG and habitat banking</p>	
Dates for next meetings	<p>Next Meeting: All 2024 dates have been sent out via email.</p> <p>23rd May 2024 at 2.00pm</p> <p>Biodiversity and Planning conference</p> <p>12th March 2024</p>	