



Biodiversity Working Group

Wednesday 22nd January 2025 2 - 5pm

Hybrid: Teams and Surrey County Council, Kestrel Room, Woodhatch, Reigate,
RH2 8EF

Minutes (Draft)

Present:

Ann Bailey **AB** (SCC), Anna Fjortoft **AF** (SBC), Andi Roy **AR** (RBC), Bill Downey **BD** (Ind), David Hatcher **DH** (BanCC), Helen Cocker **HC** (SCC), Ian Dunsford **ID** (RBBC), Lisa Creaye-Griffin **LCG** (SNP), Mark Dawson **MD** (NT), Mike Waite **MW** (SWT) - Chair, Ross and Lynn **SBG** (SBG), Stewart Cocker **SC** (EEBC) Seb Crichton **SC** (FC), Simon Elson **SE** (Ind), Sophie Holt **SH** (SNP) – Admin, Tom Childs **TC** (GBC), Viv Greenough **VG** (SCC)

Online:

Alistair Kirk **AK** (SBIC), Ann Sankey **AS** (SBS), Bridget Fox **BF** (WT), Catherine Kerr Smith **CKS** (WT), Dave Page **DP** (EBC), Helen Miller **HM** (FE), Isobel Girvan **IG** (SWT, SBS), Luke Dickson **LD** (MVBC), Lydia Pitcher **LP** (MVDC), Toneisha Williams **TW** (WaBC).

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Welcome and Apologies Adam Brown AB (SCC), Bronwyn Chinien BC (SHBC), Paul Davy PD (EA)</p> <p>2. Announcements: Sophie Holt - New SNP Administrative Officer Richard Murphy - new SNP Chair - Professor Emeritus University of Surrey Catherine Kerr – Smith - New Joiner from Woodland Trust Seb Crichton – New joiner from Forestry Commission</p>	
<p>3. Minutes from 21/09/2024: Approved subject to some minor corrections</p>	
<p>4. Matters Arising: LCG Nature South-East – update. Meeting in December 2024. Instigated by NE to bring all LNP’s together. Looked at benefits. Feedback has just come through. Suspended until there is a decision on how to move forward. Facilitator ran the meeting – funded by NE.</p> <p>MW – Local Nature Recovery Strategy; Species recovery prioritisation. Final version of the document being worked on. Distilling responses received to date. NE have responded with written comments -to be included and will involve some changes to the document. End of Feb – completion of the document. Presenting on this at Surrey Recorders Conference Feb 22nd.</p> <p>BD – Discussion about work at Hogs Back South Layby. Survey was to be done by Buglife. Call with representative from meeting (AB).</p> <p>Action: Pick up as the meeting hasn’t happened.</p> <p>Action: Follow up at next BWG meeting.</p>	<p>VG MW</p>



5. Surrey Old Grasslands Project – Mike Waite

Presented Slides to the group - Appendix 1

Initiated in 2021 and was due to be a short 1-year project. Funding received and will end FY 25-26. List of species rich grasslands. Initiated by SBS - Ann Sankey was keen to get this done. SBIC and NE Joint with SWT put in funding. Identifying habitats that can go on an inventory. Creating a level of protection for old grassland sites. Overlap with SNCI. Local planning level rather than national level of protection, if adopted. Grassland 4 Main Types that will come under the scope of the project. Presented SBS grassland Axiophyte species data base map. Many data sets were used to compile the data. 2023 – 2024 many sites identified. Now ready to bring together the first iteration of the inventory. Due in the next month. Working list is ready. Report will consist of background and detailed methodology, inventory and the history of the origins of the grassland habitats, and generic management recommendations.

Matt (SWT) is working on the presentation of the list to present the graphical mapping of the sites. Considering Borough Maps to detail the location of the sites. Project has 1 more year, further opportunity to iron out queries on a waiting list of sites, where unsure if they will make the grade. Biggest issue is authorised access to the many private sites. Esther Hill and Emma Randall are working through the Land registry. Ground truthing has been achieved through on-site meetings. There will inevitably remain an unresolved sub-waiting list.

Presented an information overview per site. Volunteer surveyors have been able to access an app to capture information. Met with a delegation of planners (incl. ID) before Christmas to discuss the project. Well-received and will be taken to the strategic planning group next.

Questions:

Ross SBG - Has space for Nature been involved with target sites? Yes, the aerial photography has offered upsides for the inventory. Reverse has happened - they have been using inventory sites to target use to inform AI.

SC - Can anyone assist with the Ground Truthing? Yes anyone can help. Connect with Alistair Kirk. SSSIs have been feeding into the inventory – regardless of designation. SC happy to help with EEBC sites.

TC - Are there any restriction on site size? No. Hedgerow? No - grassland sites only.

SC - Are you linking up with LNRS? Yes

SE - Is there anything we can do to help with Ownership? Yes please – it's a challenge as Land Registry doesn't always give you what you need.

LD - (online) In terms of planning Policy – how would with the different protections interplay? Interesting in the intention to include a model/template for a planning policy – what the expectation is regarding development? For private sites – would be no imposition on the owner to manage the site. Advisory only. For public owned sites – other factors take effect, such a Biodiversity Duty. Inventory will include sites in all designations, so they won't replace those.

SC - Will the inventory include enclosed areas in Woodland? Yes if its fenced off or managed as open space.

ID - Huge housing demand from government and will need to increasingly move into rural areas. Could the inventory sites be used as BNG offset sites? Possibly (see



below). Will add development pressure on these sites (to put new housing on). Added protection would feed into reasons for refusal. Always caveated to balance with weight of need however, and could look for compromise in terms of requirements for translocation. Would become more important with BNG and bar set on that too.

TC - Would you be able to use as BNG offset in the same way as your replacement habitat? **MW** - Depends on the site/habitat condition and if there is room for enhancement. **MW** Irreplaceability is confined to the statutory list (of which none of these grasslands features). NE originally announced a consultation was due on this – but there has been nothing further on this promised review on irreplaceability. **TC** – Shows the need to discuss with developer at an early stage – to raise importance of these grassland types to build their retention into the design layout.

6. Climate Change - Lisa Creaye-Griffin

LCG – Surrey has its Strategy for Climate Change (chaired by Cllr. Marissa Heath). But no group looking at climate change adaptation for biodiversity and ecosystem-system based approaches to achieving this. Decided it could become something to discuss in this group, and thus a ‘standing agenda item’. Feedback to the ADEPT group¹. Invitation to members to propose items to discuss. Adaptation (or mitigation) due to species responding to climate change. This group can feed into the LNRS so they can take that forward. SWT is looking at a fundraising campaign for rewetting of heathland – offers climate adaptation for flooding and heathland biodiversity. Strategic adjustment of land drainage would be part of the plan.

SC – Adaptable tree planting with biodiversity value. Many trees going in with no real benefit. See SyNP Policy on Tree Planting. [Trees for Cities](#) - good website. Forestry Commission – Ecological Classification System, more tailored towards woodland. Requires some data input but it gives you a check sheet of suitable species. Traffic light system for forward planning with climate change. Takes a grid reference and uses basic information. Tree planting and woodland management.

Ecological Classification System: [Forest Research Decision Support Tools Portal v2.0](#) This is the tool developed by Forest Research to help identify suitable tree species. There is also some training and support to help those wishing to make use of the tool [Training and support for ESC - Forest Research](#). Only as good as the data that is input into it.

Project WIDGET: Woodland Impacts of Development: Guidance, Evidence and Tools. This is a project by the FC and other partners to create a tool to help with planning decisions. In very early developmental stages so there is not yet any publicly available information but there is an email address for enquiries projectwidget@forestrycommission.gov.uk. Forest Research is also running a similar project [AWDev: Ancient Woodland and Development Impacts - Forest Research](#)

BF – Woodland Trust. Native planting should always be first and best. Biodiversity and landscape as well as climate change. Emergency Tree Plan – 2020. Nature Based

¹ ADEPT: Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT) represents directors of place who are responsible for providing day-to-day services including local highways, recycling, waste and planning as well as the strategic long-term planning and delivery of sustainable places. ADEPT members are at the very heart of delivering clean sustainable growth, tackling climate change at a local level.



<p>approach. Woodland Creation Tool. BF to provide links woodland species create the complexity that needs to be considered. Undisturbed soil is key – conservation led.</p> <p>Also some guidance from LGA: https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/environment/biodiversity-net-gain-bng-local-planning-authorities/lhrs-strategic-significance</p> <p>https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LNRS%20and%20SS%20Multiplier%20Transition%20Guidance_2.pdf</p> <p>Woodland Trust is in early days looking at piloting offsite BNG credit delivery on our sites, so not much to contribute on that end of the process, but keen to listen & learn.</p>	
<p>Application of Strategic significance – Ann Bailey [Discussion occurred]</p> <p>SCC cultural services team is investigating how strategic significance is being applied in the biodiversity net gain (BNG) metric. The statutory guidance splits this process into two, one for before and one for after a LNRS is published/exists (re. Table 7 & 8). Before; BNG management involves determining if a site is strategically important - rules in place until LNRS is published. Pre-LNRS rules hinge on whether LPA has specific documents to refer to. In Surrey, we had the SyNP recommendation to LPSs in October ‘23, then in following February ‘24 guidance altered the way you can use the strategic significance. What to do? Pre-LNRS rules across-the-board medium (neutral) banding. SCC have discussed the challenges of applying strategic significance on a case-by-case basis. BOA’s policies document – is this sufficient to refer to as ‘specific document’? More about how it needs to be presented. Sticking point – distinguished by local planning authority and needs endorsement by the local council to adopt the county policy. Default position is therefore site-specific with the applications that come in.</p>	
<p>7. Application of BNG – Bridget Fox</p> <p><i>Presented 2 slides – Appendix 2</i></p> <p>WT is responding to consultations on local applications. Has looked at requirement thresholds for local BNG. Applauds GBC and MVBC for their minimum 20% BNG policy., as established precedents for opportunity to set higher levels. Relevant is SDNP - consultations close 17/03/25; Consultation link. SHBC is also proposing minimum 20%. Collectively, it would be useful to know if their BNG policy is delivering through the development planning process. With Local Govt. reorganisations coming, would collective professional planning lobby pressure to a minimum 20% BNG to level up? WT would be prepared to seek views and work through/with SyNP to undertake structured survey – but how soon to launch?</p> <p>ID – Seen a distinct downturn in applications since operational BNG introduced, especially ‘small applications’. Benchmarking for those cases. Probably need more time to judge the effectiveness of policy – ie. let it mature a bit longer.</p> <p>SC – Looked at NE registered Off-site BNG habitat-bank list. At present, nearest site to E&EBC is in Lewes.</p> <p>SE – New planning bill is on the horizon. Speculation that there will be streamlining throughout the planning system – with potential to centralise Net Gain. We should be asking LPAs how they are planning to monitor and deliver.</p>	



SyBG – Concern for review/regulatory system to ensure it BNG-conditioned projects actually eventuate.

AB – Mycelia software is designed to track over the full 30-year period. Provides trackable information for what is/should be happening.

SyBG - Developers – experience to date in mitigation for protected species (BCT review?); 9/10 cases fail to deliver the promised outcomes to discharge condition(s). Significant developments would have a legal agreement.

SBG –Wild Justice report (not BNG) Through licensing and through conditions in section and the vast majority haven't been done or done properly.

VG - Onus is on LPA, to regulate in-house or out-source. Probably too early to say at present if BNG policy /system is working. LPA's reporting so the same KPI's are being measured. There is an appetite for consistent approach.

MW – All BNG is signed off at LPA level. Is any further requirement to report at National Level?

ID – Not a likely KPI at the moment. Annual Monitoring specialist reports – part of a longer term plan.

AR – Biodiversity Duty reporting runs 1/1/24 to 2026.

MW – Can ID update us on intended reforms to Surrey's planning authorities?

ID – National Driver is for proposed 'devolution'. Government is looking to save state regulatory money. Proposal is to develop larger authorities requiring less resources. Justified by number facing bankruptcy. Districts and Boroughs pushing back on local democracy retention issue, but Government are keen for this to proceed. 2027 would see this in place for the 'front runners', of which Surrey could be one. Merging the authorities would take time however, and not all will happen at once. **CE** are meeting regularly to work this out. Meanwhile all the daily stuff has to continue as normal throughout.

SC – Surrey Leaders published letter of support for SCC Leader Tim Oliver's proposal, with the exception of fore-going elections.

VG – Vision is for a Strategic Authority with 2 'unitary' authorities underneath (East and West Surrey).

ID - Regional Bodies could be created. Local services could be merged across counties. Quite a nervous time across local authorities in Surrey (and other places), should know more in February 2025.

SE – Waverley and Guildford now operate their planning service jointly.

BF – Keen that if we move to unitary planning situation, then the nature part is somehow protected. eNGO's have an advocacy role to keep an eye on it. Both Bucks and Berks went unitary. So far, no local plans have been produced – may be evolution rather than revolution. Appetite for getting an overview of how BNG has gone there. We can discuss at the conference and then put minds to it.

AB – Informally tracking takes a lot of time. Please do pose any questions to Ann in the interim.



Summary Point: Proposal to formally review how BNG is going in Surrey has popularity, but not immediately – too many unknowns in pipeline.

SyBG – Has SWT’s Ecological Planning Advisory Service considered filling this auditing/regulatory monitoring gap? **MW** – No; total of all planning applications across county is huge and we respond to a request service. Perhaps it might make sense to hold more post-determination overview on the applications where we have provided advice, to help guide accountability for LPAs towards their biodiversity targets.

LD – Habitat Banks – Mark Alden at SDNPA* has been very helpful regarding process and legal agreements. Good contact to liaise with.

SC – exposed potential dis-connect here with ‘official’ NE registration of habitat banking opportunities. Have SDNP actually registered their habitat banking sites. There is also the list of approved responsible bodies who can have conservation covenants with landowners.

8. Partner Updates

In person

BD – Butterfly Conservation has had round of compulsory redundancies. Outcome by end of Feb25. Quite concerned about the professional staff in the SE of England. Butterfly conservation declared a butterfly emergency following the Big Butterfly count in 2024. Requested information on clear phasing out of nicotinoids. Further bad news due end of March – UKBMS counts for 2024 are going to be well down. Work party program has been very successful this year, and several new UKBMS transects established. Heathland connections – key connectivity – key species are Adder, Nightingale and Grayling butterfly.

AR – Runnymede BC Planning policy 77 hectares of meadows are in better management. 5 hectares being restored to amenity management. SBS field meeting at St Peters Hospital. Potential acid grassland site. Restoring Chertsey meads. Harvesting seed from the site and redistributing. SFI – funding. RPA £11,500 farming recovery fund for flooding. Schemes to spend for flood recovery. Change of administration in May 2024. Activist Councillor – great. Climate Change working party and biodiversity duty is under where it should be. Nature based solution being considered. New private SANG – destroyed 1 hectare of wet woodland. May recover – a lot of drainage has gone in will change nature of the woodland. Steven Fry of TBH Partnership – undertaking SANG review across whole TBH area. Runnymede has been put forward along with SHBC. NE – trying to get enforcement – London SPA. Waterskiing overwinter period bird season.

DH – Bansted Commons Dog walkers licencing. Commercial activity not allowed on Bansted Commons. Can’t stop it but need to regulate. Reasons is because of tick treatments onto grasses and waterways. Faeces have ivermectin and other issues. Difficult to persuade people about the dangers of dogs to biodiversity. Due in April. Site management plans – SWT – finalisation this year. Paucity of records of records for plants. SBS, SBG etc to get a better inventory of what is available. British Trust for Ornithology initiative to monitor Woodlarks, Nightjars and Dartford Warbler, Old records DW and WL on the heath. Never had Nightjars to their knowledge. Council has funded ponds. Test Pits. All test pits have found geology wasn’t right. Money for clearance around the current ponds. Great Crested Newts found. Grasslands – don’t have lowland meadows. Part of education, new program for BioBlitzes.

Ross Baker - Surrey Bat Group – First round of hibernation checks undertaken. Counts have been above average. Brockham Line Kilns – record count. At Betchworth



there are 2 banks of kilns with one now under new ownership. The western bank had a Bechstein's Bat in hibernation, only the second time one has been recorded hibernating here before. (Post script: there were two present in February!)

MD – National Trust Surrey Hills. Felling licences over the next 10 years. 900 hectares of woodland. Imposing management plan for the whole area. Difficult to plan but easier to manage. Ash Die-back – tree survey and tree safety management plan by 1st March. Cost approx. £622,000. Only doing the high level – houses and public footpaths. Changing compartment group which help manage sites – have at Box Hill for example. Denbies – butterfly conservation, it was a tremendously important site which has lost focus with staff changes. Staff shortages have been difficult and finding good people a challenge. A large % of scrub work will be completed by 1st March 2025. Electric Collars brand name – No Fence.

SC – Forestry Commission Focus on getting Trees in the ground. ELM will come out soon – no date. Will be better and give landowners and woodland Managers more freedom in terms of scale. Supposed to reduce it to 0.5 hectares the minimum which will make a difference to all. FC Improving their responses to planning applications and being more active with responses. Project Widget – new system being produced in partnership. Mapping system with reporting abilities. [See link in section 6] WT can provide expertise, ancient woodland database. Aim to amalgamate all data sets to do with planning applications. Issue with obtaining exact maps of planning applications. Look out for a local Workshop – SC to advise.

SC – Epsom & Ewell RPA mapping issues, NE supporting. New conservation Trust have approached about newt pond creation. Surveys carried out by Keystone ecology – useful but need to do some sense checking. Largest Hay Meadows recommended for tree planting. Ok in their case that they have inhouse people to pick up on it. Important to be careful with assuming all information on reports.

Fake metric – Rogue version of the metric. Evade the detection methods. Mycelia will pick it up. Search for word “DATA”. Someone has managed to edit the Excel metric. No one understands whether malicious or a genuine mistake. DEFRA website – download new one every time (Full Statutory Metric).

TC – Guildford BG Space on site, using concrete Lego bricks, old ones – learned that its more sustainable but harder to use the old style ones. Bat work on site – Norfolk Bridge. Interesting project and collaborative working. Case study could be made. Habitat improvements on site. Working with Buglife – reclaiming land from Hawthorne spread. Rosamund gardens. GCN – Site. One vole removed. SNR for the LNRS consultation – confusion over what they should be responding on. Wisley Airfield – BNG.

Action: Clarify SNR requirements to TC

HC – Surrey CC HC – Surrey Countryside Partnerships Battery Powered brush cutters and chainsaws have arrived thanks to funding from the Surrey Hills Access Fund and FIPL. Application successful based partly on noise. So far really pleased with the equipment. FIPL have also funded a mini baler which can bale up cut grass on flattish areas. Makes removing grass off site, where required, easier and opens up possibility of seeding other areas (to be investigated). City of London have awarded a grant to the Lower mole Countryside Trust for the coppicing and work to monitor dormice on Ashted Common. SCP team staff are leading the WT Woodland Working group twice a month at Langley vale. Second autumn/winter season of practical conservation volunteer tasks at the Surrey Heathland Partnership for Woking and

AB



Guildford completed . Hoping to get grazing back on Sheets Heath, a malfunctioning automatic gate and vandalism to other gates has held it up.

SE – Independent Working with ID on the team. Theme – wet meadows of Reigate. Proactive restoration with 2 of the 3 landowners. Ticks – Guided walks it was raised and key that education is needed as dog walkers shocked. Would be good to know where to signpost dog owners’ site. Neonicotinoids and Ivermectin are the troublesome products.

AB – Surrey CC BNG in Surrey. Update later this month. Keystone report proposals were good. Amenable to discussing better options. County Habitat banks to support schools/hospitals. Work with BF on her proposals. **Q.** DH – Told by a landowner that they couldn’t register a site because they had already had grants paid out. **A.** Can’t count Carbon credits and BNG credits for the same thing. BNG is about showing additionality. Government website shows stacking and what’s allowed – worth exploring.

ID – Reigate & Bansted BC new green spaces strategy coming through to guide the team on areas to work on. Includes Management Plans. Green Infrastructure study – informing local plan policies. BNG coming out of that. Reg 18 due late summer/Autumn. Is the greenspace strategy being published for consultation? Yes spring.

LCG – Surrey Nature Partnership Biodiversity and Planning Conference – 25th March 2025 Dorking Halls. New Chair of Board – Richard Murphy. Now looking at new skill areas to build up new board.

VG –Surrey CC 80% sent back of BNG. Lots of push back from applications. Having to use the statutory requirements to quote reasoning for rejection. Adam Brown circulated the draft (LNRS) measures and priorities last week. Next step is to map the measures spatially. Ash Die Back – looking at high risk areas. Countryside estates are reviewing now. NE consultation of holding licences. E.g. Bats countywide licence to speed up the process and make it more efficient. Steve Mitchell in Countryside Estates Team - Bat Boxes, Bird Boxes Dormouse houses made from the Ash. Kent design and void shaped boxes. BCT dimensions followed. Biodiversity Duty is key this year. From May budget from Highways team to review the verges. Botanical interest verges (60-70). Pulling together a scope of works to assess if they are a conservation verge. Good to assess to know current state. **DH** – Local Verges discussion with AB – does he need to represent the information. **AB** – Highways process is to have a better system. Streamline Blue Heart verges. Once better idea of defining and parameters then they will share.

Action: Share with AB & VG – Keen to know of important verges. Blue Hearts aren’t always ecologically interesting.

SC – If 80% of BNG applications are being rejected why? **VG:** Asking for exemptions, 50% not related to ecology or Ecological consultant submitting poor information. VG Survey – Small Sites metric has proved difficult.

Action: to be circulated on the group.

AT – Spelthorne Borough Council . SSSI’s - Dumsey Meadow. Persistent Traveller Grazing. NE been approached. No advice or help. Seeking advice. Horse Wardens used? Enforcement signage has been put on site. Can’t call the Bailiff as the travellers are so erratic. Staines Moor – flooding on site. Awaiting to get embankment amended. Shortwood Common – after a couple of years of landowners not engaging, they have now allowed Countryside Stewardship Agreement. With the council. BNG

DH

VG



– Slowed down in progress, planning team and working on local plan. Grants to be used for pre-enhancement work. Miyawaki tiny forest going into Spelthorne in next few weeks. Thames Water land. Council have been involved. Interesting to see measurable benefits. Climate Office calculating carbon sequestration. Struggling to identify best practice and cost effective. Suggestion to talk to Runnymede Councillor. Suggestion to talk to SCC team – via VG.

ii). **Those online:** [Email updates received]

Dave Page – Elmbridge BC Local Plan – Elmbridge have been told they must resubmit the Local Plan within 12 months.

Elmbridge is officially number one! Elmbridge has been referred to as the UK's number one Oak Processionary Moth hotspot. Hopefully the trend is downward now, with the 2 species of parasite fly increasingly well established. Arboricultural Association Arb Magazine No.205, Summer 2024 had a report by Alasdair Nicol, Senior Arborist, Hampstead Heath, City of London, attached (copyright probably, so not sure you can distribute it?). Highlights a high average kill rate by the parasitic flies, and the need to leave nests in situ to overwinter, in order for the parasite flies to complete their life cycle.

EBC have cleared 2ha of Ash dieback at Stokes Field, Long Ditton, along with 7 ha thinning of Ditton Common.

EBC have greatly increased their active volunteer resource in the last few years, with 2 new weekly groups well attended and 2 groups established for Claygate Common and Weybridge Heath. As resources have never matched the workload, this is seen as a necessary template for continuing to manage conservation interest on our sites.

For any managers who have Highways England land adjacent to their sites, I can report that the managing agents, Connectplus M25, have a good Biodiversity Net Gain Adviser in post called Ben Paternoster. Very sympathetic to wildlife, he has been very helpful in agreeing work sympathetic to reptiles on the verges of the A3 at Fairmile Common, and mapping the wildlife data for future managers to refer to. Could be a useful contact if you are concerned about overgrown verges.

BF – Woodland Trust (Policy side)

1. Woodland Trust nationally is planning an advocacy campaign aimed at local authorities, asking them to commit to nature emergency/recovery action plans. Originally aimed at county council elections but given possible impacts of devolution, will probably now be more broadly aimed at all councils. Due to go live early March so we will have more to share at the Planning Conference.
2. Planning to have a stand as usual at the conference (and always happy to contribute to panels etc if appropriate) showcasing our Ancient Tree Inventory, Tree Equity maps and other related guidance. Do let us know if there are particular topics you'd like us to cover on the stand.
3. The Trust is working on an update to the State of UK Woods & Trees report, due to be published Q3 of 2025. Happy to present on that at a future meeting if of interest.
4. Thanks again and look forward to seeing you as part of the Woodland Trust team at the BNG conference in Dorking.

CKS – Woodland Trust Rather than any updates I was going to introduce myself. I am Catherine Kerr Smith, I started at the Woodland Trust in October. I am the Landscape Partnership Lead for Weald and Downs area. I work across, Surrey, part of Hampshire, Kent and both Sussex's. Internally I am known as the Treescape Lead which is an initiative to create transformative nature recovery at a landscape scale. A focus on developing projects with partners to protect, restore ancient woodlands



and hedgerows etc, and only where appropriate create habitat creation. I look forward to being part of the group going forward.

BC – SHBC

- Local Plan submitted to Inspector on 10th Dec, for examination in mid 2025. To be examined against NPPF 2023, under Transitional Arrangements i.e. NOT new housing requirement
- First consideration Biodiversity Duty report has been drafted, along with agreed policies (simply a list of existing relevant policies including new Local Plan) and specific objectives
- Windlemere Biodiversity Gain site proven feasibility in ecological terms; now working on investigating feasibility of business case and options for legal agreement, either S106 with SCC, or Conservation Cov with a Responsible Body (have an initial discussions with RSK Wilding and, more recently, Lifescape.
- New SANG being developed at St Cats woodland in Frimley. The scheme itself will be subject to statutory BNG, as is not exempt. Anticipating that small losses from car park creation can be compensated for by onsite gains from implementing woodland management plan to improve condition, plus providing required % net gain.
- Have introduced a Biodiversity Statement template for BNG (adapted from Chelmsford)

9. **AOB None**



Abbreviata

Organisations

BanCC – Banstead Common Conservators; **EBC** Elmbridge Borough Council; **EEBC** Epsom & Ewell Borough Council; **FC** Forestry Commission; **FE** Forestry England; **EA** Environment Agency; **GBC** Guildford Borough Council; **Ind** Independent; **MVDC** Mole Valley District Council; **NE** Natural England; **NSE** Nature South East; **NT** National Trust; **RBBC**; Reigate & Banstead Borough Council; **RBC** Runnymede Borough Council; **SBC** Spelthorne Borough Council; **SBIC** Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre; **SBG** Surrey Bat Group; **SBS** Surrey Botanical Society **SCC** Surrey County Council; ***SDNPA** South Downs National Park Authority; **SHBC** Surrey Heath Borough Council; **SLSP** Surrey Local Sites Partnership; **SNP** Surrey Nature Partnership; **TW** Thames Water; **WaBC** Waverley Borough Council; **WoBC** Woking Borough Council; **WT** Woodland Trust

Technical

BNG – Biodiversity Net Gain; **GCN** – Great Crested Newt; **LNP** Local Nature Partnership; **LNRS** Local Nature Recovery Strategy; **NFM** Natural Flood Management; **NNIS** – Non-Native Invasive Species; **NR** Nature Reserve; **RAWI** Revised Ancient Woodland Survey; **SANGS** Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space; **SPA** – Special Protection Area;