

## **The Surrey Countryside Access Forum**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum Surrey Hills AONB Office, Warren Farm Barns, Mickleham Monday, 17 October 2022**

#### **Present:**

##### Members (and their primary interests):

- Elliot Cairnes, Chairman (Walking)
- John Barber (Motorcycles)
- Ian Wilks (Walking)
- Penny Carey (Equestrian)
- Vicky Keller (Countryside Management)
- Paul Marshall (Mountain Biking)
- Gail Brownrigg (Carriage driving)
- Pamela Lyman (Landowner)
- Neil Baker (Commons)
- Gareth Jex (Motor Vehicles)

##### Officers:

- Joanne Porter, Countryside Access Assistant
- Daniel Williams, Senior Countryside Access Officer Legal Definition
- Jonathan Wall, Countryside Access Assistant
- Rob Fairbanks, Director - Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Oliver Wild, Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

##### Observers:

- Peter Hattersley

## **1. Membership of Forum 2022/23**

### 1.1 Joanne summarised the membership situation

- Pamela Lyman and Paul Marshall have both been reappointed
- Pat Lewis has been appointed as a new member – her interests are Walking, Conservation and she has been involved in a lot of community groups
- Susy Jones was not reappointed.

1.2 There are currently 21 members of the Surrey Countryside Access Forum out of a maximum 22.

## **2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

2.1 Elliot Cairnes nominated by Pamela Lyman and seconded by Paul Marshall was unanimously elected as Chair for the forthcoming year.

2.2 Corinna Osborne-Patterson nominated by Elliot Cairnes and seconded by Gareth Jex was unanimously elected as Vice-chair for the forthcoming year.

### 3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### 4. Apologies

4.1 Sophie Gordon (Cycling), Avril Sleeman (Equestrian), Corinna Osborne-Patterson (Landowner), Pat Lewis (Walking), Carolyn McKenzie (Surrey County Council), Yasmin Broome (Surrey Coalition for Disabled People)

### 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2022 were confirmed with minor amendments.

### 6. Matters arising / Action points

6.1 Joanne read an email from Avril regarding North Park Farm Quarry, and her disappointment that the temporary routes will not become permanent routes across the site despite positive feedback regarding this in the past.

**Action** - Joanne will pass the email on to Dan Williams for him to look at and he will contact Avril to discuss her concerns.

6.2 Users are still experiencing problems when using the web reporting page to report rights of way issues. Ian is concerned that issues are still showing in the system when he knows they have been dealt with. Dan said that it may be worth someone from one of the user groups to talk directly to a maintenance officer so they can see what their problem is and whether it is a problem with the system, or that the issues haven't been resolved by officers within the system hence them still showing up.

**Action** - Joanne to liaise with a maintenance officer.

6.3 Pamela asked if volunteers carry out works on rights of way. Gail said that there is a path warden scheme and asked if it was back up and running. There is information about the path warden scheme on the Surrey County Council website.

6.4 Elliot said that there had been no progress regarding anything to do with the MoD.

6.5 Elliot reported that there had been a Local Access forum (LAF) liaison forum meeting with Chairs and Secretaries of nearby LAFs, although most of them were for unitary and more urban authorities so the issues they dealt with and how they worked was different from the SCAF.

**Action** – resend the presentations from the July meeting.

6.6 Dan said that the organisation chart relating to the Countryside Access Team is still not correct. He said that there will be something more detailed put together as well that details not only the roles, but also a bit about what each role does. The team is nearly up to full strength and a couple of new positions have also been created which will take the pressure off the team and enable it to hopefully be more proactive.

**Action** – Joanne to circulate an Organisation chart when updated

## **7. Matters dealt with since the previous meeting**

7.1 There were no matters dealt with since the last meeting.

## **8. Wey and Arun Canal**

8.1 Elliot reported that the sub-group held a meeting just before the main SCAF meeting and that Ian had taken members on site visits to look at certain places along the canal to look at issues with the Canal Trust's restoration / recreation plan.

8.2 Ian, Gail and Elliot have put together an objection letter regarding the latest planning application from the Wey and Arun Canal Trust. The sub-group discussed this and made a few amendments. Elliot outlined the main points of the response and amendments.

**Action** – Joanne to circulate the updated response to agree and then submit to Waverley Borough Council

**Action** – Write a letter to the WACT saying SCAF would like to liaise further and invite them to a further sub-group of full meeting

## **9. M25/A3 junction 10 consultation for non-motorised users**

9.1 National Highways are carrying out a consultation for non-motorised users. The event is in early November and in in Guildford / virtual.

**Action** – Elliot will circulate details to those members that are interested. The details of the proposals are available online

9.2 Gail said that any new rights of way should have the status of restricted byway so there is a possibility that carriage drivers can use the right of way.

## **10. Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Access Funding and other projects of interest**

10.1 Rob reported that there is a new access fund of £7.6 million, of which the Surrey Hills AONB have received a large sum.

10.2 There is a new countryside code campaign which uses QR codes that are available on posters in the countryside which links to videos aimed at people that are walking, cycling, horse riding, dog walking, or using vehicles in the countryside. There is also a video about the risk of fires in the countryside.

10.3 Neil said that they are a good way of communicating – there are lots of QR codes available on Thursley Common due to the risk of fire. The QR codes saves putting a lot of signage up in the countryside.

10.4 Rob said that the web address is also displayed on the posters in case people can't use QR codes. All the information that is available via the QR codes is also available on the Explore Surrey website.

**Action** – Joanne to ask for SCAF to be put on the Visitor Services circulation list.

10.5 All the promoted walks in the Surrey Hills AONB will be linked from the webpages, as well as information about access by public transport. Information about 'Making

Space for Nature' and habitats and species found on the promoted routes is also available on the website.

- 10.6 Ian asked if the AONB boundary review had been completed yet. Rob said that the new boundaries will be published in the New Year and will include an extension to the Surrey Hills AONB. There will be a public consultation once it is published. Pamela asked if designated sites would be included in the AONB and Rob said they would be if they meet the criteria for the AONB.
- 10.7 Rob said that the government is encouraging AONB's to refer to themselves as National landscapes, and Jeremy Hunt MP is pushing for the Surrey Hills AONB to be designated a National Park. The difference between a National Park and AONB is that the National Park is the planning authority. The same funding formula is now being applied to AONB's and National Parks.
- 10.8 Pamela asked how the AONB is working with landowners. Rob said that the NFU and CLA are involved at a Surrey Hills Board level. Individual landowners are also involved in projects at a local level.
- 10.9 Rob will circulate the terms of reference for the Surrey Hills Working Groups

**Action –** Rob to send details of the terms of reference.

- 10.10 Elliot asked about the AONB view about area speed limits in the AONB. Rob supports appropriate speeds but isn't happy about having more signage in the AONB. Having white centre lines removed from country lanes is also being investigated. There is also an issue with road cyclists speeding along the lanes.
- 10.11 Pamela asked if it known when there are enough visitors in area and there are problems that too many visitors can cause, such as lack of toilets. Rob said that areas that are promoted are focused on places with facilities, and that they are encouraging places with facilities such as pubs, café's and garden centres to be involved.
- 10.12 Pamela is concerned about the impact of more visitors on landowners, for example increased litter and antisocial behaviour.

## **11 Wisley Airfield development**

- 11.1 Elliot reported that the consultation period has been extended by Guildford Borough Council. There are lots of issues regarding the proposals but not many to do directly with access to the countryside. It would still be good if a member could look at the proposals.
- 11.2 Peter Hattersley said that there had been hundreds of objections as there were plans for 2,100 dwellings but very little infrastructure. All the local parish councils have objected.

**Action -** Penny volunteered to look at the application to see if there was any impact on rights of way and opportunities for improved access to the countryside.

## **12 Surrey Countryside Access Forum Annual Reviews 2020/21 and 2021/22**

- 12.1 The Forum discussed the two Annual Reviews. Gareth asked if there was any measure of how effective the responses to consultations were. Joanne responded

that the forms are based on ones that were originally from Natural England. SCAF hasn't really received any feedback about how responses have effected any outcome of a consultation. This could be something that is looked at in the future.

### **13. Forward Plan**

13.1 The forward plan was discussed, amendments made and new suggestion added.

**Action** – amend Forward Plan as discussed

13.2 Elliot is concerned about the lack of representation from someone with an interest in disability access

### **14. Outstanding consultations**

14.1 Outstanding consultations were noted.

### **15. Any other Business / urgent questions**

15.1 Penny said that Network Rail are doing consultations for two potential level crossing closure. Ian said that for the Lilac Cottages consultation there are several options that are being consulted on, and there are no formal applications to divert or extinguish rights of way yet.

**Action** – Ian to send a copy of the consultation to Joanne.

15.2 Peter said that Helyn Clack opened the Discovery Centre at Newlands Corner and would like to know when it's open and if the tramper is still available and he can't find any information online.

**Action** – Joanne to find out this information

15.3 Pamela objects to people using flour /chalk to lay trails for other people to follow through her land as it attracts rats. It was suggested that Pamela should contact the police if she suspects criminal damage to her property.

15.4 Pamela is also concerned about Surrey County Council promoting foraging courses that then encourage people to forage on private land and removing plants that belong to the landowner. Neil said that at Thursley Common they are trying to educate people not to do this.

15.5 Joanne said that she will be stepping down from doing SCAF Secretarial duties and that Jonathan Wall who has just joined the team will be taking over. There will be a handover period and she will be attending the next meeting to help Jonathan out. Elliot thanked Joanne for her work with the SCAF over the last 10 years.

### **16. Dates of next meeting**

16.1 It was provisionally agreed that meetings will take place next year on the following dates:

- Monday 16 January 2023 1.30pm  
Woodhatch Place, Reigate

- Monday 24 April 2023 1.30pm  
Venue to be confirmed
- Monday 17 July 2023 1.30pm  
Venue to be confirmed
- Monday 16 October 2023 1.30pm  
Venue to be confirmed