



Surrey Network for Social Enterprise

Surrey Wildlife Trust



Photo courtesy of Surrey Wildlife Trust

Background

Surrey Wildlife Trust is a registered charity based in Pirbright, near Woking. Although it is an independent organisation it is part of a nation-wide network of Wildlife Trusts, which together form the largest movement working exclusively in the UK on all aspects of nature conservation and wildlife habitat protection, in both town and countryside.

The Trust was established in 1959 and is now one of forty seven, mainly county based, apart from Scotland and Northern Ireland, Wildlife Trusts affiliated to the Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC). Today the Wildlife Trusts movement has a combined membership, UK-wide, of over 600,000 individuals. Here in Surrey the first expansion took effect during the 1970s and 80s when the range and scope of the Trust's

activities grew dramatically through the acquisition of land for nature reserves and two education centres. The second materialised in 2002 with the signing of a groundbreaking agreement with Surrey County Council. Altogether, in partnership with Surrey County Council, Mole Valley District Council and the MoD, SWT currently manages over 9,000 hectares of Surrey's countryside.

SWT has 25,000 members. Funding comes from membership subscriptions and donations, grants from Natural England and the Environment Agency, local businesses, charitable trusts, the Landfill Tax Community Fund and local authorities in Surrey. Last year the Trusts turnover was £3.6million. It employs 85 staff working from a number of locations across Surrey and has over 150 volunteer helpers.

Achievements

Over the years SWT's sensitive management of nature reserves throughout Surrey eventually led to ground-breaking partnership agreements with local authorities and other landowners. In 2002 SWT formed a unique partnership with Surrey County Council, assuming management responsibilities for their entire countryside estate (4,000 hectares). SWT has also entered an agreement with the Ministry of Defence to conservation graze the MOD's Ash Ranges in the north-west of the county, and Mole Valley District Council has awarded the Trust the management of five open spaces. In the past 10 years alone the amount of land under the Trust's management has increased by 1,000%.

Lessons learned

The Trust has gained valuable experience in effective countryside management and the active protection of wildlife habitats, but has had to carefully balance the needs and requirements of conservation and habitat protection on one hand with providing public access and enjoyment of these reserves and open spaces on the other. However, this is not simply about access to the land, as the Trust's Jill Barton explains. "Today the demands for further development continue apace and Surrey's countryside is still under threat from more roads, houses and airport expansion. If we want to prevent Surrey's open spaces and hidden places from disappearing forever we have to act now."

continued

One of the ways Surrey Wildlife Trust is trying to do this is through the Surrey Biodiversity Action Plan, which addresses the priorities for nature conservation in Surrey as part of a national initiative. Other ways include such pioneering projects as “wildlife corridors” and the creation of “living landscapes” in partnership with neighbouring trusts and conservation bodies.

The future

An ambition for the Trust is to put more resources into its community work. Pilot projects are already underway with residents groups and with parish councils in rural areas of Surrey, and it is hoped that this work can be significantly expanded in the years ahead. Jill explains, “Over the next five years we wish to achieve more interaction with communities. We are looking at developing more partnerships with public, private and voluntary sector organisations throughout the county. In the future there needs to be a stronger social dimension to our work. We intend to expand our educational programme and work with a wider range of community groups. We can do so much more by bringing tangible benefits to communities in the areas around the land that we manage. Surrey Wildlife Trust has a key role to play in the future of Surrey.”



Photo courtesy of Surrey Wildlife Trust

Surrey Wildlife Trust’s mission is to protect and regenerate Surrey’s wildlife through:

- Making a major contribution towards the effective implementation of Surrey’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)
- Managing our landholding to best effect for people and wildlife
- Protecting and enhancing areas of nature conservation importance and community value
- Fully developing the potential wildlife and community value of Surrey’s countryside
- Enabling the collection, data management and distribution of information about our local wildlife
- Promoting the value of biodiversity to Surrey’s communities
- Encouraging people to adopt environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

Surrey Wildlife Trust

Address: School Lane, Pirbright, Woking, Surrey GU24 0JN

Telephone: 01483 795440 / 451

Website: www.surreywildlifetrust.org

Email: info@surreywt.org.uk



Surrey Network for Social Enterprise

Surrey Wildlife Trust is a member of the Surrey Network for Social Enterprise.

To contact the Network Co-ordinator telephone 01483 566072.

Sponsored by:



Printed on recycled paper



When you are finished with this sheet, please recycle it

Written, designed and produced by Otterson Smith Gordon Limited www.osgl.co.uk