



Black Down & Hindhead Supporters of the National Trust

Annual Report and Accounts

Year ended 28th February 2022

Chairman's Report

1. Introduction

The Black Down and Hindhead Supporters of the National Trust is a long established charity whose principal function is to support the activities of the National Trust in the areas of Black Down and Hindhead. We also raise funds locally by way of membership subscriptions and donations the associated monies being utilised to fund local and relatively small-scale National Trust initiatives originated by the Lead Rangers of, respectively, Black Down and Hindhead. The associated properties include:

The Devil's Punchbowl	Hindhead Common
Black Down	Swan Barn Farm
Golden Valley & Woodcock Bottom	Polecat
Whitmore Vale & Park & Windy Gap	Stoatley Green
Weydown Common	Roundhurst Common
Kingsley Green	Barfold
Marley Common including Marley Wood	Marley Heights
Shottermill Ponds & Fields	Grayswood Common & Pond
The Quell & Quellwood Common	Valewood & Valewood Park
Nutcombe Valley, Craig's Wood & Tyndall's Wood	

2. The Management Committee

The Black Down and Hindhead Supporters of the National Trust is managed by a committee comprising:

Robert Daniels	Chairman
Philip Currie	Treasurer
Malcolm Ogilvy	Membership Secretary
Phillida Hall	Secretary
Susan Stathers	
Liz Goodwin- retired from the committee March 2022	
Nicholas Harding,	
Michelle Garner	
Kit Powell	
Bryony Chapman	

Helen Silk - joined the committee March 2022
Peter Wallis - joined the committee March 2022

3. Role of the Committee

- To meet regularly with the Regional National Trust managers and the Lead Rangers for the Black Down and Hindhead National Trust estates to advise on all aspects of management plans, local issues and opinions.
- To promote goodwill and enhance mutual communications between the local community and the National Trust professional team in the area by representing local views and providing background knowledge.
- To raise funds through subscriptions, donations and events to pay for local improvements and projects which National Trust budgets do not cover, as proposed and agreed with the associated National Trust Lead Rangers.
- The Committee will be responsible to both the membership of the Supporters Group and to the General Manager of the South Downs National Trust and/or to the General Manager of the Surrey Hills National Trust as appropriate.

4. Review of the year to 10 May 2022

Covid 19 has continued to impact our activities and those of the National Trust, but we are slowly getting back to normality. Work, partially funded by the Supporters on the new footpath and car parking facilities at Hindhead has now been completed. The newly planted trees are being watered regularly to ensure their survival. The work on the new fence around the Punch Bowl and associated cattle grids which was seriously delayed by the pandemic is also now nearing completion. It will enable a more intensive programme of grazing of the site in due course.

Gorse on Marley Common had got a bit out of hand due to C19 restrictions on staff & volunteers and was causing local concern. With considerable effort from the Rangers and volunteers it is now fully under control. The cattle will also enjoy eating the new growth!

The path to the, little known, memorial to Jonathan Hutchinson on a small site on Marley heights has been restored using funds provided by the Supporters. The old Lime Kiln, on which the memorial is mounted, will be restored during the course of 2022.

The Annual Bird walk, once again kindly led by Paul Matson, continues to grow in popularity. The June 2022 event is already oversubscribed. Whilst on the bird walk Malcolm Ogilvy picked up enthusiasm for a Fungal Foray. Dr Andy Swan subsequently very kindly offered to lead a Foray on Black Down. It too was very well attended and has become a regular feature of our calendar.

The Punch Bowl Challenges was, thankfully, once again able to go ahead as a live event. Organised jointly with Haslemere Borders Athletic Club It attracted 240 enthusiastic runners. It was kindly sponsored by The Royal School, Yeoman Honda (Churt), Fitstuff

and Tesco. Prizes were kindly handed out by the Mayor of Haslemere (Seniors) and the Principal of the Royal School (Juniors). Thanks to Philip Currie and Phillida Hall for organising the event on behalf of the committee and to Bob Monteath of HBAC who sets the routes and handles the races themselves.

The new communications process has embedded in well this year with Kit Powell compiling and sending regular communications to members and donors. These consist of a newsletter three times a year, event invitations and updates to donors. The process has been modernised to be entirely by email and over the Mailchimp platform which allows an element of design and photography to be included. Analytics show that an average of 78% of newsletters are read by recipients with event invitations around 68%.

The committee recently agreed that the current website needs to be updated to a system that allows nominated committee members to upload and update information without relying on the goodwill of others. A huge thank you to Melanie Odell for her many years of support of the BDHH website. Following a 'request for proposal' from 5 website design companies, 2 responses were received and a local company has been awarded the project. This will begin in September and will be fully operational by the end of the year. Once this is up and running the next objective is to automate and manage a social media presence that will link to the website - at the moment it relies on someone manually posting information.

Bryony Chapman took the lead in organising the 2021 Photo Competition. This year it attracted entries from 74 people, who submitted a total of 129 photographs. The prizes were, once again, kindly provided by Raymond Reid Photo and the judging panel was led by Dr Clinton Blackman, Chairman of Haslemere Camera Club.

Membership has remained steady with 155 paid up memberships as of May this year. This includes The Royal School and Haslemere Natural History Society. We are always keen to welcome new members and would be grateful if all existing Supporters could encourage their family members and friends to join

5. Local Rewilding project

The beavers have continued to make a dramatic impression on the Valewood site, coppicing small trees to make increasingly large dams and, of course, to eat!

It is, however, not all about the beavers! The number of saplings in the grassland continues to increase. Whilst some get grazed by the deer or cattle others will certainly become established in due course. The wildflowers to be found in the meadows change with time. These include the humble dandelion, a key food plant; the flowers for a wide range of insects and butterflies; the seed, food for sparrows, goldfinches etc. There have been a number of clumps of primroses and the tiny, blue flowered, speedwell is currently partnering with the white flowers of common mouse-ear to give beautiful displays. The more unusual yellow pimpernel is currently to be found round the edges of the woodland.

The February storms caused 2 large trees to fall across the fences. We provided the funding for temporary and now permanent repairs.

Our guest speaker for the annual "Educate & Inspire" talk, Dr Stewart Clarke, is the National Trust co-supervisor of Sarah Fairbrother a Ph.D. student at Birmingham University who is using Valewood as a key site for her project work. Stewart and I are also working actively with Prof Guy Woodward at Imperial College who has a number of Masters projects running at Valewood. Requests for funding for Ph.D. projects are also in place.

The considerable challenge which badgers and other burrowing animals have presented to the integrity of the beaver fence has stimulated a huge increase in the number of local individuals who have volunteered to take part in the daily fence checking rota. 25 people are currently active members and 3 others await training. I would like to thank all participants for their efforts in all weathers. To date we have jointly filled in 155 holes!

6. Funding

The Black Down and Hindhead Supporters of The National Trust and, of course, the local National Trust teams are very appreciative of the generous support received from both the members and third-party donors. Further planned developments of the site which were part of the original budget are being implemented as the National Trust resources to manage them become available.

7. Annual Accounts

The annual accounts for the year ended 28 Feb 2022 are appended to this report. These accounts are the subject of an 'examination' by an independent Chartered Accountant who charges no fee for the service provided. The accounts demonstrate the charity to be in a sound financial position.

8. Conclusion

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to Liz Goodwin a stalwart and key organiser of the Quiz Nights which, prior to Covid 19, were one of our most successful events. I am delighted that the Quiz Night is back on the schedule for this year and that, despite her decision to leave the committee, Liz will continue to help with organisation of the event.

I am delighted that we have been able to welcome two new committee members: Helen Silk and Peter Wallis. They are both already actively involved - Helen has taken responsibility for the Quiz Night and Peter for the Bird Walk.

Equally I would like to express my appreciation of the efforts of Committee colleagues who are integral to the smooth running of the charity and continue to offer full support as and when required.

I would also like to, once again, thank you all for your continued support in these very unusual circumstances. I am sure that the National Trust properties we support have taken on a new significance for many local people. I hope this will generate renewed interest in contributing directly towards their protection via an increase in membership of the Supporters.

Robert Daniels
Chairman
May 2022