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Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review
c/o Resources for Change
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MRA RESPONSE TO THE SURREY HILLS AONB BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Merrow Residents Association (MRA) is pleased to provide a response to the Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review, relating to the evidence gathering stage. Our focus will be on the **area within the EA6 area** that borders the village of Merrow and which lies to the south of the A25 to Epsom and to the west of the A25 to Dorking, a large portion of which lies in the Merrow Ward. The MRA very much welcomes and supports the prospect of the proposed EA6 boundary extension.

In summary, the MRA is focusing on the chalk meadow land of the privately owned Clandon Golf course, which includes large disused chalk quarry pits, and the woodland to the east of the golf course, all of which is designated as an AGLV area. The southern edge borders mature broadleaf woodland that is already within the Surrey Hills AONB, and the western edge borders the village of Merrow.

Prior to addressing the individual natural beauty quality elements that are relevant to this area, we would emphasise the following:

1. The golf course meadow grassland area is an important habitat for skylarks as well as a variety of butterflies (please refer to the attachment which lists the species of butterflies recorded by members of MRA).
2. One of the disused chalk pits is an area of particular scientific interest and is the habitat for important indigenous wild flowers (several of which are on the Surrey Rare Plant Register), as well as being a Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site. The golf course curves around the edge of the

quarry, the face which has been preserved because of its geomorphological importance.

3. The mature broadleaf woodland to the south comprises many very old yew trees, and is home to endangered wildlife species, such as dormice (the Surrey Dormouse Group has been monitoring here since 2016).
4. With the growing pressures of urbanisation imposed by housing developments in nearby areas, eg Boxgrove Gardens and Gosden Hill Farm, MRA believes that inclusion of this area within the AONB will help preserve the unique countryside attributes of this area, which sits right on the edge of Guildford, for future generations to enjoy and benefit from.

In MRA's view the landscape area we are focusing on is special for the following reasons:

1. **Landscape quality:** The land included still retains its rural and countryside character, and those past developments within it, such as the now disused and preserved chalk quarry pits and the beech plantation, are assets in terms of habitats, and in the case of the beech plantation outstanding visual quality as well.
2. **Scenic quality:** Views from the western and northern edges in particular lead the eye from the undulating chalk meadow land of the golf course to pristine woodland sloping up towards Newlands Corner. These views can and are appreciated from public footpaths 582, 58 and 76 which are used extensively by both pedestrians and dog walkers.
3. **Wildness and tranquillity:** When walking around the woodland perimeters of the golf course and on the public footpaths, one feels very isolated from the built-up area of nearby Guildford.
4. **Natural Heritage:** As already highlighted, this chalk land and woodland area provides habitats for rare and endangered animal, insect and plant species.
5. **Cultural Heritage:** This area borders on the village of Merrow with its seventeenth century pub (Horse and Groom) and Clandon Park with its historic 18th century Clandon House, which the National Trust plans to re-build after a disastrous fire in 2015.

Andrew Strawson
Chairman

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Attachments:

1. Photographs
 - i. View across golf course
 - ii. View over golf course looking in easterly direction towards woodland with Clandon House in the background
 - iii. Beech plantation within the woodland area



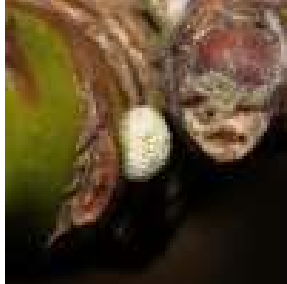







2. Insect species recorded by Gillian Elsom & Ken Elsom on the Clandon Golf course in area EA6 for Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review


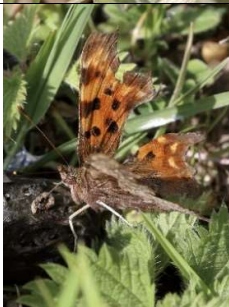

Attachment 1: Photographs





Attachment 2: Insect species recorded by Gillian Elsom & Ken Elsom on the Clandon Golf course in area EA6 for Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review

<p>Brown Hairstreak (<i>Thecla betulae</i>) 28 butterfly eggs on cherry plum and Blackthorn at TQ03965025 , TQ03855024, TQ03775033, TQ03695030, TQ03285024 on 18/01/2021 UK BAP status: Priority Species Butterfly Conservation priority: High</p>			
<p>Grizzled Skipper (<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>) 1 adult butterfly at TQ03925079 on 09/05/2020 UK BAP status: Priority Species Butterfly Conservation priority: High</p>			
<p>Dingy Skipper (<i>Erynnis tages</i>) 2 at TQ03945081 & TQ03265040 on 09/05/2020, 1 at TQ03935080 on 08/05/2020, 1 at TQ03545082 on 02/05/2017 UK BAP status: Priority Species Butterfly Conservation priority: High</p>			
<p>Green Hairstreak (<i>Callophrys rubi</i>) 2 at TQ03655084 & TQ03575083 on 02/05/2017 Butterfly Conservation priority: Medium</p>			
<p>Small Heath (<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>) 1 at TQ03385077 on 02/05/2017, 1 at TQ04015024 on 28/05/2016 Butterfly Conservation priority: High</p>			
<p>Holly Blue (<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>) 1 at TQ03435080 on 02/05/2017</p>			
<p>Peacock (<i>Aglais io</i>) at TQ03575083 on 02/05/2017</p>			

Speckled Wood (<i>Pararge aegeria</i>) at TQ03775087 on 02/05/2017			
Comma (<i>Polygonia c-album</i>) at TQ03975088 on 02/05/2017			
Cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>) at TQ03865079 on 02/06/2016			
Common Blue (<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>) at TQ04015024 on 28/05/2016			

Notes:

1. Small Blue (*Cupido minimus*) butterfly (eggs have been seen on Kidney Vetch (its larval host plant) in the ditch by the roundabout to the Park and Ride at TQ03435082 where there is Kidney Vetch of non-native origin. This butterfly has a conservation status: UK BAP status: Priority species and Butterfly Conservation priority: Medium
2. There were many Cowslips flowering in the rough areas in 2021. These may be of non-native origin but are a good early nectar source for insects.
3. West Clandon chalk pit is within the area of Clandon Golf and we were involved in work parties in 2016 and 2017 with Surrey Botanical Society, Gail Jeoffcoate from Butterfly Conservation and Mike Waite from Surrey Wildlife Trust to try to take out Buddleia and restore habitat for the Grizzled Skipper and Small Blue. This area also has several plants on the Surrey Rare Plant Register.