



Surrey
Wildlife Trust



Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome to Surrey Wildlife Trust!

Now you have signed up to volunteering, you will be part of a network of volunteers who help the Trust to make a real difference for nature

You could be...



SAVING THREATENED HABITATS...



SURVEYING PROTECTED SPECIES



INSPIRING A THE NEXT GENERATION...



RAISING AWARENESS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) and this is your chance to make a real contribution to local conservation. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel part of our team.

Founded by volunteers in 1959 the same ideals still remain at the core of the organisation today, with volunteers working alongside our staff in just about every aspect of the Trust. The partnership between the Trust and its volunteers has enabled us to advance nature conservation and awareness in the county and we are committed to continuing this vital work.

This handbook has been produced by the Community Engagement team and includes the main information you'll need to know about volunteering with Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Welcome and thank you for your support!





About Surrey Wildlife

Surrey Wildlife Trust is committed to helping wildlife to survive and thrive across the county

Surrey Wildlife Trust is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts working across the UK. With the invaluable support of volunteers and members we manage over 8000ha of land for wildlife and people in Surrey. We also work with other organisations and landowners to protect and connect wildlife sites across the county and inspire local communities and young people to care for wildlife where they live.

Our history

The Surrey Naturalists' Trust was formed on 21st March 1959. Over 60 years later our name may have changed, but the motivation that inspired our founders remains the same.

Over the years the number of sites cared for by the Trust has grown steadily thanks to generous gifts of land and the purchase of reserves from fundraising. The Trust formed a relationship with SCC in 2002, and from April 2020 signed an agreement to manage conservation activities across the SCC countryside estate.

The Trust now employs over 100 members of staff to care for nature and inspire others to do the same - a far cry from our humble beginnings.



How we're run

A group of elected Trustees oversee the governance and strategic leadership of the organisation. They are members of the Trust and donate their experience and expertise.

How we're funded

Surrey Wildlife Trust is a charity and we rely on membership subscriptions, donations, grants, legacies and other local and national funding sources.

FIND OUT MORE

Find out more about the Trust and our mission at surreywildlifetrust.org/mission



Surrey Wildlife Trust's work inspiring people to love nature has never been more important. If we are to protect nature in the future we have to put people at the heart of it.

Sir David Attenborough

What is volunteering?

The term volunteer means ‘any person who freely chooses to carry out a task or role that we have specifically agreed for them to do, which contributes to the aims and objectives of the Trust and for which they do not receive any financial or material reward.’

What do volunteers do?

We have volunteers in almost every line of our work – from cutting scrub, counting butterflies, teaching children, checking on our cows and pretty much everything in between. A lot depends on people’s own level of skills and interests.

Who can volunteer?

The Trust encourages volunteers of all ages and abilities as long as they are able to take part safely. Our volunteers are from all over Surrey and they come from all backgrounds, bringing a variety of skills and experience.

For children under 16 years of age we require a parent or guardian to supervise them. Those aged 16 or 17 can volunteer without being accompanied but if so then we require a signed parental consent form and they must work as part of a group.

Why volunteer with us?

Volunteering doesn’t just provide us with a loyal army of helpers – it also provides a means for individuals to be engaged with local conservation. Volunteering has many benefits; it is a chance to do your bit for wildlife; an excellent way to stay fit and healthy; it can be educational and inspirational. It is also an opportunity to meet new and like-minded friends.

Do volunteers have to be members?

Some people give donations of money or join the Trust as members; some people offer their time as volunteers. Whichever you do, we are extremely grateful. Being a member does have additional benefits including a quarterly members’ magazine, invitations to member only events, a chance to participate in our Annual General Meeting and discounts on various courses. Please ask your staff contact if you are interested, or visit surreywildlifetrust.org/membership

Do you need prior experience?

We encourage people with a variety of life experiences to become involved. Some roles require specific skills or experience but most allow you to learn as you go along, or you may be offered appropriate training. You will always be fully briefed about your role and the tasks you will be involved in.





Volunteer roles & responsibilities

Each role will entail different tasks and carry different responsibilities. Key roles will have a role description and some will have a volunteer agreement.

Key roles include:

Voluntary Wardens; Voluntary Reserve Manager; Volunteers working with children; Volunteers dealing with confidential matters. Your supervisor will go through these with you when you start.

Your Responsibilities

- Ensure that you are respectful to other volunteers, members of staff, or members of the public
- Be mindful of your status as a Trust ambassador in your community
- Carry out your task(s) to the best of your ability
- Always work safely yourself and keep in mind your responsibilities for other people's safety
- Make sure you are aware of Trust policies and guidelines relevant to your role
- Inform the Trust if you are not confident that you have received sufficient guidance to carry out your role
- Always wear personal protective equipment provided for use
- Take good care of SWT resources and equipment
- Ensure that no illegal or criminal misuse of Trust assets takes place
- Ensure that you are not under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs whilst undertaking work on behalf of the Trust
- Report any accidents and near misses to your supervisor on the day of the incident or as soon as possible
- Respect confidentiality of information of which you may become aware whilst volunteering for the Trust

Our Responsibilities

- We will provide a friendly welcome
- We will provide supervision and support and discuss additional support required
- We will seek your feedback and views about your volunteering experience
- Wherever possible we will make good use of your skills, knowledge and abilities to further our aims and objectives
- We will endeavour to show our appreciation and to recognise the contribution of volunteers
- We will provide information about how the organisation works and your role
- We will provide relevant training for the tasks that we ask you to carry out
- We will ensure you are in a safe working environment and will insure you in the event of an accident that is not your fault
- We will address unacceptable behaviour in accordance with the Trusts Problem Solving Procedure
- We will properly plan and budget for involving volunteers
- We will address unacceptable behaviour in accordance with the Trusts Problem Solving Procedure
- We will handle volunteer data in accordance with the law



Important information

1. REGISTRATION AND INDUCTION

All of our volunteers are asked to register with us by completing a registration form. This information is held on our Trust database and only made available to the appropriate Trust staff or trained volunteers.

The information that is stored enables us to contact you and support your volunteering.

Details of any volunteer are treated as confidential and are only used for the purpose of volunteer management at Surrey Wildlife Trust. Details will not be passed on to any third party.

Induction training varies considerably depending on the role, but includes:

- Familiarisation with work area, key staff and volunteers
- Health and safety procedures
- Action to be taken in the event of an emergency
- Information on claiming expenses, learning opportunities, relevant Trust policies and social events

2. BEING A TRUST REPRESENTATIVE

As a volunteer you are informally representing the Trust to the public, whether as an events volunteer or even as a work party volunteer who happens to be chatting to a walker passing through the site.

As you get more involved you will learn enough about the Trust to be able to chat to people about the basics of what we do.

You can always refer the public to a member of staff or other appropriate person if they are asking about difficult or sensitive issues and media enquiries should always be referred to a member of staff.

Formal representation of the Trust by a volunteer to other organisations or media can only take place if authorised by your staff contact. This may require approval from our communications team and is governed by further procedures and guidelines. If you think this affects you and you have not done so already, please speak to your staff contact.

3. EXPENSES AND TIMESHEETS

The Trust's ability to pay expenses is dependent on resources being available and volunteers will be informed if the situation changes. All expenses must be agreed with the Community Engagement team beforehand.

To help promote recognition of the amazing contribution volunteers make to Surrey Wildlife Trust we record your time. We can often make particular use of recorded volunteer days in applications for

funding new work and in helping to evidence what we have achieved.

This can be done in a couple of ways, if you take part in a group your supervisor usually records the hours undertaken so you won't need to record this yourself. However you can also record your own volunteering time with a timesheet that can be supplied by the Community Engagement team. If you are unsure if your time is recorded please ask your supervisor.

4. CONDUCT

Surrey Wildlife Trust aims to make all volunteering experiences positive and enjoyable. We do realise however, that difficult situations may arise from time to time. Wherever possible you should talk to your supervisor for the problem to be addressed accordingly.

If this proves unsuccessful or you feel the matter is more serious please contact the Community Engagement team to resolve matters through the Problem Solving Procedure. Conduct which causes immediate danger to others will be handled swiftly by those supervising on the day.

5. SUPERVISION AND SUPPORT

All volunteers should have the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and discuss work you are involved in. For practical conservation volunteers this may only require an open discussion over the tea break. For Voluntary Wardens/Voluntary Reserve Manager a phone call or meeting with staff. Other roles such as trainees or interns will require quarterly catch ups or regular meetings with a staff contact.

6. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The amount and nature of training offered to volunteers will vary according to the roles being carried out and any existing experience and skills levels.

The Trust will endeavour to provide appropriate training where required, enabling volunteers to feel confident and competent when carrying out tasks.

For most roles you will receive relevant 'on the job' training from your staff or volunteer contact. Often someone will continue to be on hand to give you further support, advice and help. If you are unsure about what you are doing please ask.

For some roles formal training may be required and this should be discussed during your induction.

To allow volunteers to progress in their skills, we offer a members discount to all volunteers to attend Adult Learning Courses. To book your course online, use

the **discount code vol2023**. Contact the Community Engagement team for more information.'

7. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Like all large organisations Surrey Wildlife Trust has a number of policies and procedures to ensure we work safely, effectively, fairly and consistently.

In most cases you will be introduced to policies as and when they affect you. All policies and procedures are available from Trust offices.

A few are important and general enough to be introduced below:

Equal opportunities

We work to equality and diversity guidelines for ensuring fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in all the organisation's employment, volunteering and membership practices and procedures. We will not accept discrimination by staff or volunteers.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, abuse or bullying (mental or physical) will be dealt with in accordance with the Trusts Problem Solving Procedure.

Health, safety and welfare

Surrey Wildlife Trust has both a legal and a moral obligation to provide and maintain working conditions, equipment and procedures which are safe and do not adversely affect the health of our staff and volunteers. The Trust has a Health & Safety handbook, and volunteers are treated in the same manner as staff with regards to Health and Safety.

The Health & Safety handbook is available on request from any SWT office.

The nature of our work means that we do undertake potentially hazardous work, so we use a risk assessment process for identifying hazards and managing risk. For all tasks a risk assessment will have been undertaken by the organiser (staff or volunteer).

Risks specific to your volunteering role will be discussed with you either as part of your induction, when undertaking a task or at a group briefing.

Tools will be provided as appropriate by the Trust. If volunteers wish to bring their own hand tools, it must be appropriate for the task, well maintained and safe for use. Permission must be granted by the task leader as this is down to the discretion of individual group leaders. If permission is granted, then tools are used at the individuals own risk.

Whilst volunteering for the Trust volunteers must:

You must provide us with details of any medical conditions that might affect you while volunteering and provide us with emergency contact details.

We ask that you keep us informed whilst volunteering, allowing us to have up-to-date information in the event of illness or accident.

If you observe anything that you think might be unsafe or you are involved in or see an accident or near miss you must report it.

If it becomes apparent that a volunteer is failing to fulfill their role due to the effects of alcohol or illegal drugs, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Problem Solving Procedure. If the Trust recognises that a volunteer may have a dependency on drugs or alcohol, then some assistance may be given to find appropriate support, in strict confidence.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the Trust's insurance policy whilst undertaking authorised voluntary work for us, providing they follow our policies and procedures and any instructions or guidance we have given.

Accident reporting

All accidents however minor they might appear to be should be recorded and submitted to your staff or volunteer contact. All offices and supervisors will have access to an accident reporting book.

This also applies to any near misses and dangerous occurrences where the potential for harm was recognisable.

Safeguarding

Surrey Wildlife Trust works with children and adults with safeguarding needs on a regular basis. However we recognise that such vulnerable people need extra care and attention when interacting with us.

The Trust has a safeguarding policy which is available on request from the Community Engagement team.

Volunteer roles that involve working with vulnerable people are assessed to determine the extent of that involvement. There are roles such as education leaders or work party leaders for which we ask you to undertake an enhanced disclosure check via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

We will also ask that you become familiar with our policies and procedures for volunteering with children and adults with safeguarding needs.

Information management

As a volunteer you may handle or become aware of information that is of a confidential nature. This might be about protected species, new projects, financial or personal information. We expect you to respect this confidentiality and to check with us if you are unsure about the status of any information you are privy to.

The social aspect

SWT aims to support its volunteers, recognise and celebrate their valuable contribution wherever possible.



Social Events

We aim to hold regular volunteer social events throughout the year, across the Trust.

Staying in touch

NEWSLETTER AND BLOG

You will find all the latest news on our website. Various projects and teams within the Trust have their own newsletters, email groups and blogs. You can also find and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

FEEDBACK AND MOVING ON

Your feedback is valuable to us. At any time you can contact the Community Engagement team with your thoughts so we can make improvements. Each year we send out volunteer surveys asking about your volunteering experience. Your help in completing these and your honesty is appreciated.

Please help us to keep your information up to date by notifying us of any change of address, telephone number email address or skills.

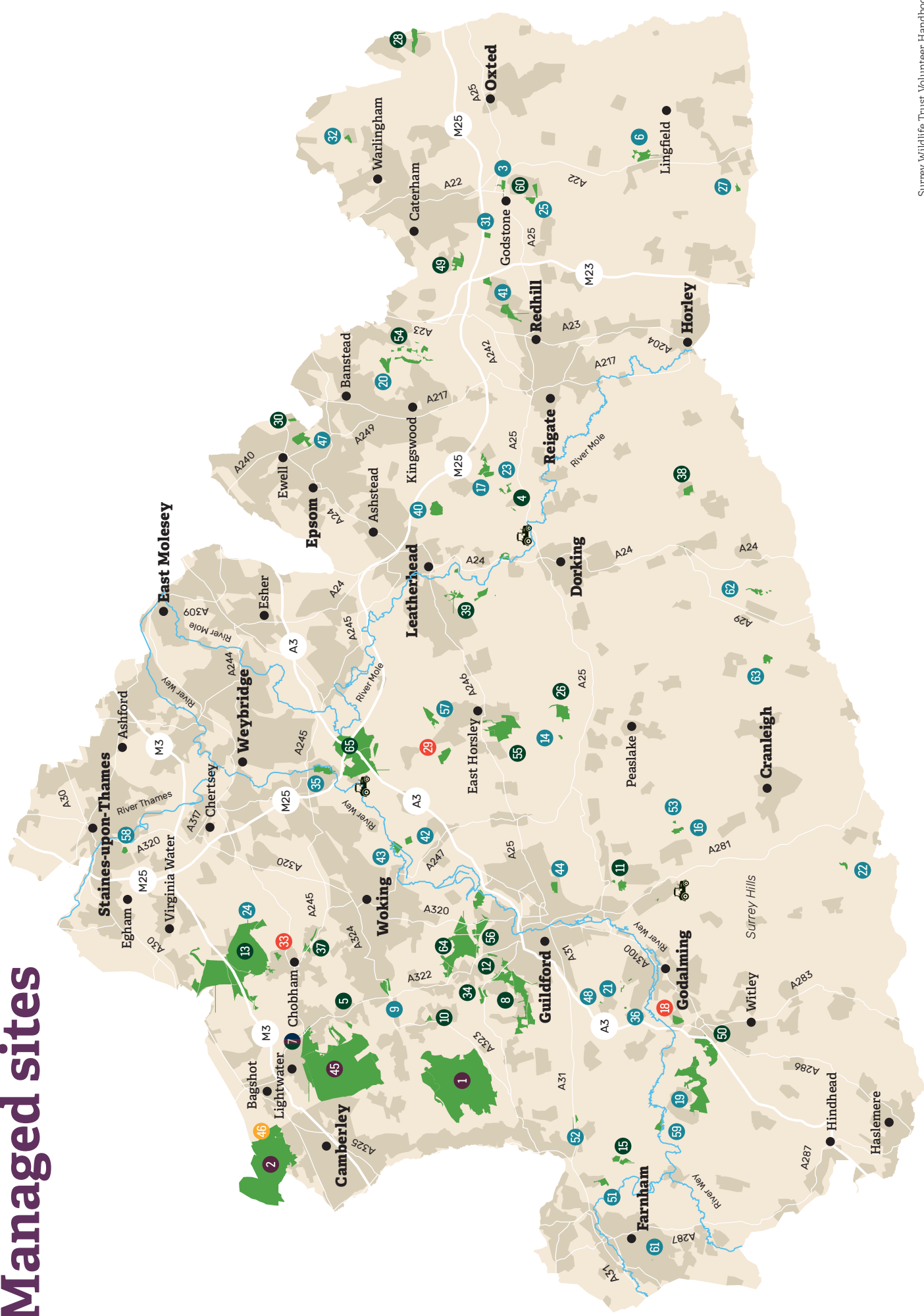
If you decide to stop volunteering please tell the Community Engagement team. It would be helpful to us if you also tell us why you are leaving.












































































Catch up with the latest news on our social media pages

surreywildlifetrust.org/volunteer







Managed sites



Site List

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1  Ash Ranges | 28  Hill Park | 56  Stringer's Common |  |
| 2  Barossa | 29  Horsley Meadows | 57  The Forest & The Highland |  |
| 3  Bay Pond Nature Hub | 30  Howell Hill | 58  Thorpe Hay Meadow |  |
| 4  Betchworth Quarry & Lime Kilns | 31  Kitchen Copse | 59  Thundry Meadows |  |
| 5  Bisley & West End Commons & Reidon Hill | 32  Ledgers Wood. | 60  Tilburstow Hill |  |
| 6  Blindley Heath | 33  Little Heath | 61  Underdown |  |
| 7   Brentmoor Heath & Folly Bog | 34  Littlefield Common | 62  Vann Lake & Candy's Copse |  |
| 8  Broadstreet, Backside & Rydes Hill Commons | 35  Manor Farm | 63  Wallis Wood | |
| 9  Brookwood Lye | 36  Middlebriars Wood | 64  Whitmoor & Rickford Commons | |
| 10  Burner's Heath & Swallow Pond | 37  Milford Green & Coxhill Green | 65  Wisley & Ockham Commons & Chatley Heath | |
| 11  Chinthurst Hill | 38  Newdigate Brickworks | | |
| 12  Chitty's Common | 39  Norbury Park | | |
| 13  Chobham Common | 40  Nower Wood Education Centre | | |
| 14  Colekitchen Down | 41  Nutfield Marshes (The Moors & Spynes Mere) | | |
| 15  Crooksbury Hill | 42  Papercourt Marshes | | |
| 16  Cucknell's Wood | 43  Papercourt Meadows | | |
| 17  Dawcombe | 44  Pewley Meadows | | |
| 18  Eashing Meadows | 45  Pirbright Ranges | | |
| 19  Elstead Group of Commons | 46  Poores Allotment | | |
| 20  Farnes Rough & Coneyboro Hill | 47  Priest Hill | | |
| 21  Farncombe Wood
(McAlmont group of reserves) | 48  Pucks Oak Barn & McAlmont Reserves | | |
| 22  Fir Tree Copse | 49  Quarry Hangers & Park Ham | | |
| 23  Fraser Down | 50  Rodborough Common | | |
| 24  Gracious Pond | 51  Runfold Wood | | |
| 25  Graeme Hendrey Wood | 52  Seale Chalk Pit & Meadow | | |
| 26  Hackhurst Downs | 53  Secombe's Wood | | |
| 27  Hedgecourt | 54  Shabden Park | | |
| | 55  Sheepleas | | |

Site owner

-  Surrey Wildlife Trust
-  Surrey County Council
-  Ministry of Defence
-  Land Trust
-  Surrey Heath Borough Council
-  Windlesham United Charities