



**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
Surrey Heath House  
Knoll Road  
Camberley  
Surrey GU15 3HD  
Telephone: (01276) 707100  
Facsimile: (01276) 707177  
DX: 32722 Camberley  
Web Site: [www.surreyheath.gov.uk](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk)

**Division:** Legal & Democratic Services  
**Please ask for:** Eddie Scott  
**Direct Tel:** 01276 707160  
**E-Mail:** [democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk)

---

To: All Members of the **EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS SELECT COMMITTEE**

The following papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting.

They were not available for publication with the rest of the agenda.

Yours sincerely

Damian Roberts

Chief Executive

---

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS**

		<b>Pages</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Surrey Heath Citizens Advice (CASH) - 19:20</b>	<b>3 - 4</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Basingstoke Canal Authority - 20:05</b>	<b>5 - 6</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership - 20:20</b>	<b>7 - 8</b>

This page is intentionally left blank



## Our work and our impact

### Help for all: our core service

At Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, we believe no one should have to face problems in life without good quality, independent, advice. We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward whoever they are and whatever the problem. Our advice is free, confidential, impartial and independent. And is available via telephone, email and face-to-face. People can trust our advice as it is constantly checked and audited and we hold the Advice Quality Standard.

No other organisation sees so many people with so many different kinds of problems, and this gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today. Although an independent local charity, we are licensed to National Citizens Advice which means we have access to checked and verified information and our client data can be combined with other local Citizens Advice to give an up-to-date picture of the problems people face both locally and nationally. This can be used to show organisations – including government – how they can make things better for people.

We see how problems can be linked. By helping people with the underlying cause of their problems and making sure they don't get worse, we save the government and public services millions of pounds every year.

In Surrey Heath, our advice is delivered by a team of around 40 volunteers who each give around 7 hours a week to support local residents ( 5 Receptionists, 35 Advisers). They need support, supervision and training which is provided by our paid staff including the FTE of two Advice Session Supervisors, a p/t Operations/Training Manager and an Administrator/Accounts Officer.

**The above forms the basis of our core service.**

### Help with more complex problems

Increasingly we are seeing people with more complex issues and dealing with difficult challenges such as mental health issues, poverty and language barriers. They need someone to take the time to not just provide information but to also take action for them and assist them with understanding what steps they need to take.

In order to support this we have designed a number of projects and recruited staff to provide more specialist help and add value to our core service for local residents. Funding for these projects comes from grant applications and fundraising. In 2022/23 this meant an additional **£176,000 brought into the borough** for the benefit of residents of Surrey Heath.

**We would not be successful in our project bids without our strong core service which both supports these and is, in turn, partially financially supported by our projects.**

Current projects include:

- **SCC No one Left Behind** - Money and benefits advice for those struggling to make ends meet including help with dealing with debt, budgeting, accessing grants and unpicking benefit issues. This includes providing advice at outreach venues across the Borough.

- **Social Prescribing** - We are part of Surrey Heath Social Prescribing project and provide a Wellbeing Adviser who can link people into activities, support and services across the borough to improve their Wellbeing. This project also enables us to fund an Independent Living Adviser who provides home visits and helps with advice and completing complex disability forms for those who are housebound or have health or caring responsibilities and struggle with advice over the phone.
- **Financial Services and Wellbeing Support** - In partnership with Catalyst, this project supports people with mental health issues by providing a wrap-around service of money advice from Citizens Advice Surrey Heath and Wellbeing support from Catalyst.
- **Cost of Living Support** - This project funds a Cost of Living Assistant to help people quickly access the most appropriate emergency and charitable support including food bank referrals, Fuel bank vouchers, the Household Support Fund and Surrey Crisis Fund.
- **Household Support Fund (HSF)** - We were agile enough to set up a system to rapidly distribute this Government funding with the result that every £1 allocated has gone to local residents in need. As of 10 August this year we have distributed £475,102 in total with almost 33% going to the two wards with the highest deprivation in Surrey Heath.
- **Macmillan Caseworker** - We have just secured funding and are in the process of recruiting a caseworker to support people who have been diagnosed with cancer to ensure they access any financial support available and can get advice on other matters.

## Our support across Surrey Heath in numbers

<p><b>In 2022/23, we supported:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5,836 individual clients with</li> <li>● 20,240 issues through</li> <li>● 21,675 activities including</li> <li>● 6,345 advice phone calls,</li> <li>● 1,126 advice emails and</li> <li>● 909 face to face appointments.</li> </ul> <p><b>With the help of:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 49 volunteers whose estimated value of volunteering hours was <b>£317,545</b></li> <li>● 9 FTE staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Of the people we helped:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 43% had long-term health issues.</li> <li>● 9% had disabilities.</li> <li>● 15% classified themselves other than White British.</li> </ul> <p><b>In an independent survey:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 91% found a way forward from our advice.</li> <li>● 77% said their problems were solved or partially solved.</li> <li>● 86% would recommend our service.</li> </ul>	<p><b>On top of our advice, we delivered:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2,803 small grants through HSF and dealt with 3,282 claims.</li> <li>● 425 food bank referrals supporting 947 individuals.</li> <li>● 157 additional small awards for charitable support.</li> <li>● 164 home visits.</li> <li>● 27 outreach sessions across the borough.</li> <li>● 369 disability forms and appeals completed.</li> </ul>
--	---	--

## Our impact

In 2022/23 our work has delivered:

- £1,015,430 in debts written off.
- £3,992,374 in value of benefits advice.
- £1,886,665 in fiscal value, helping stop problems occurring or escalating.
- £12,681,633 in public value, improving people's wellbeing and productivity.
- £5,119,848 in value to the people we help by increasing income, writing off debts, taking up benefits and solving consumer problems.
- £350,000 in savings to housing providers by preventing evictions.
- £304,000 to the NHS by reducing use of health services.
- £1,088,000 in savings to DWP by keeping people in work.



### About the Basingstoke Canal

The Basingstoke Canal was built in the 1790s to take agricultural products from central Hampshire to the London Docks via the Rivers Wey and Thames. At the time waterways were much more efficient means of transport, but within 50 years the railways had largely taken their place. The Basingstoke Canal became less commercially viable, until by 1960 it was derelict.

The Canal passes through a range of different geology, from alkaline chalk at the Basingstoke end to acid Heaths at the Surrey end. Despite being entirely man made, native plants and invertebrates that liked the differing water conditions quickly colonised the canal. Unlike many canals the traffic on the Basingstoke was in horse drawn barges until near the end of commercial operations in 1950, this allowed plants to thrive.



The Canal today is 32 miles long, stretching from its junction with the Wey at New Haw, passing through Woking, Frimley, Mytchett, Ash Vale and on into Hampshire near Aldershot and now ends at Greywell near Odiham. It passes through a number of different greenspaces both those geared towards recreation (such as Frimley Lodge Park) and conservation (such as Ash Ranges) and acts as a linking corridor for nature. Today 90% of the Canal is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

At 230 years old the Canal is a prominent landscape feature through West Surrey and Northeast Hampshire. It passes through Deepcut, Frimley Green and Mytchett within Surrey Heath Borough – having given the village of Deepcut its name (after the deep canal cutting). The entire Canal and in some areas land important to its setting was designated as a Conservation Area in the 1980s.

The Canal in a derelict state was purchased by Surrey and Hampshire County Councils for public recreation in the mid-1970s. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the County Councils supported by the District and Boroughs and many hundreds of volunteers restored the Canal to a navigable state.

### About the Basingstoke Canal Authority

The Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA) was established in 1991 as an unincorporated local authority partnership to manage the waterway as a whole for public recreation (including navigation) and nature conservation. The BCA partnership consists of both County Councils, and 6 District and Borough Authorities, which govern the BCA through a Joint Management Committee. They are supported and advised by other stakeholders, such as the Basingstoke Canal Society (a registered charity that campaign and support the Canal).

The Canal has become very well used as a doorstep greenspace with an estimated 1.75 million visits per year, with a particular hot spot being in Mytchett – Frimley area due to the location of Frimley Lodge Park and the Canal Visitor Centre being in close proximity. This Surrey Heath section of towpath is enjoyed for air and exercise and closeness to nature free of charge by up to 18,000 people per month., including approx. 1500

people per month taking part in the Frimley Lodge Park Run. Cycling is also permitted on the towpath. Its proximity to residential areas as a doorstep greenspace was highlighted during the Covid 19 pandemic, when use was up to 3x normal levels.

Although fully navigable by craft up to 22m (72ft) long, most waterway users are in canoes, kayaks and paddleboards – this is also complimentary to the core purpose of owning the Canal for public recreation. The Basingstoke Canal Canoe Club is based at the Canal Centre at Mytchett. The BCA generates around 11% of its revenue funding from boat licence and mooring fees.

As a man-made waterway one of the key roles of the BCA is to manage water levels continuously so that it doesn't overtop and flood housing, which is now in some instances built right up to the waterway, or directly below its embankments. Similarly, the aging infrastructure is continuously inspected, with BCA staff either taking urgent action if required or advising the appropriate owner that major maintenance is required to a built asset.

The BCA always have someone on duty 24 hours / 365 days per year to ensure that there is a rapid and proportionate response should something go wrong. Unsurprisingly, staffing costs take more than 60% of the BCAs budget – to employ the Rangers and Lock Keepers who look after the waterway on a day to day basis.

As well as the small team of paid staff the BCA engage with volunteers and voluntary organisations (such as the Basingstoke Canal Society) to assist in running the waterway and helping with public engagement through schemes such as the Lengthsman programme.

All of the maintenance activities carried out by the BCA are guided by a Conservation Management Plan agreed with Natural England, so that it compliments and enhances the SSSI.

### In summary

- The Canal is a significant historic landscape feature with many C18th features, it is prominent in the southern end of the Borough and is a conservation area in its own right.
- It is a 32-mile blue-green space, acting as a corridor for nature. It links other green spaces such as the military ranges and Frimley Lodge Park.
- The Canal is an SSSI for aquatic plants and invertebrates – including the entire length in the Surrey Heath. It was the most diverse freshwater body in England when last redesignated in 1995.
- The public enjoy the towpath and other accessible areas of canal land for free – enabling people to exercise and get close to nature. In 2021/22 there was an average of 18,000 people per month using the Surrey Heath section of towpath
- The water is also available for public use, but chargeable. However, canoeing, kayaking and paddleboarding remains a low-cost accessible activity.
- The BCA are a key mitigation in keeping the historic assets of the Canal safe for continued use, and that water levels are continually managed.
- The Canal is managed in partnership to make the best of the resources we have, including capital investment by the County Councils.
- The BCA engage with the community to help run the Canal this includes over 20,000 hours of volunteering a year.



Public  
recreation -  
1.75m visits  
per year



Conserving  
heritage assets



Significant for  
biodiversity



## **1 Organisational Objectives**

The BVCP works to improve the countryside environment throughout the Blackwater Valley. We work with local authorities, private landowners and local communities to identify projects that will improve the landscape and wildlife value of the area and increase public access to enjoy it.

Initially concentrating on improving degraded land along the River Blackwater our successes have led to long term management of these areas and also being asked to help on sites in the wider Blackwater Valley.

The BVCP is a Local Authority Partnership with a small number of staff, we work closely with the local charity Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust to maximise the synergy that the two different organisations provide e.g. the charity's fund raising ability supporting staff and volunteers to carry out projects.

## **2 Work in Surrey Heath**

Each year Partnership staff carry out projects to support the Surrey Heath BC Ranger service, this year has included mowing and tree clearance at Blackwater Park, and mowing at Diamond Ridge.

We support two volunteer groups in the Borough, the Surrey Heath Tree Wardens, and Friends of Frimley Allotments with advice, tool loan and joint conservation tasks.

We are currently working on a project to install a footbridge to link the new Watersedge SANG to the Blackwater Valley Path, and are in contact with Network Rail to ensure their bridge project at Frimley Hatches causes no damage to the river or surrounds.

## **3 Valley-wide Projects**

The creation and maintenance of a footpath linking the various greenspaces along the river is ongoing, use of this path is estimated at 500,000 visits p.a. and is increasing at 5% each year. At least 100,000 will be from residents of Surrey Heath.

Another ongoing long-term project is improvements to the River Blackwater itself. Liaison with the Environment Agency, landowners and anglers has enabled annual projects to improve habitat including sections at Frimley.

The Partnership manages 25 sites, totalling 475 ha, two of these are SANGS that were used to enable development in Surrey Heath.



We support 10 volunteer site-based groups as well running a midweek volunteer group. Last year this involved 1,200 volunteer days, worth over £100,000. In Surrey Heath we organised 15 projects involving 105 people.

The need for SANG has opened up many new sites for public access and we have helped set many of these up, with a new one of 14ha due to open shortly. On all these sites we look to create attractive countryside landscapes that integrate access with increased ecological value.

We are currently working on four meadow enrichment projects and three for tree planting, These projects are typical of the many that we have undertaken over the years. Continuing this work will help our local authority partners meet their new statutory duties to improve the environment.

Steve Bailey  
Manager BVCP  
30<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Email [steve.bailey@hants.gov.uk](mailto:steve.bailey@hants.gov.uk)  
Tel 0370 7791762