

## **Annual Report**

Report of the Board of the Lower Mole Countryside Trust for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003.

### **Introduction**

This is the first annual report produced by the Lower Mole Countryside Trust and covers the period from its incorporation as a private limited company on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2002 to the end of the Trust's first accounting period on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2003.

The Lower Mole Countryside Trust is a company limited by guarantee, company number 4454401 and is a registered charity, number 1095771.

The registered office is 2 West Park Farmhouse, Horton Country Park, Horton Lane, Epsom, KT19 8PL.

The objects of the charity are:

- (1) To advance the education of the public on matters connected with countryside management within and around the Boroughs of Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell, Kingston upon Thames and the District of Mole Valley (north of Dorking) and such other areas as the charity may from time to time decide.
- (2) To promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the physical and natural environment and promote the management of the countryside, wildlife habitats and characteristic landscapes by supporting, promoting and improving public access to the countryside, promoting the participation of the public in countryside management and supporting conservation projects and programmes within the area of benefit.

The Mission Statement is 'to support the provision of a high quality countryside management service for north Surrey and Kingston upon Thames for the benefit of landscape, wildlife and people'.

### **Activities and achievements**

#### **Registration as a Charity**

Registration as a charity was achieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2003. The Charity Commission required rewording of the Trust's Objects before registration. An Extraordinary General Meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003 at which the changes were agreed.

### **Board Meetings**

The first board meeting following incorporation was held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2002. Ten board meetings have been held in the reporting period. The early meetings concentrated on achieving registration as a charity and agreed items such as the Trust's bankers, the membership subscription rates, logo and promotional leaflet design.

As registration as a charity loomed closer the meetings concentrated on overseeing organising a launch event and associated publicity material.

Since the launch event the meetings have concentrated on the formal business normally associated with boards such as membership applications, financial reports and reports from sub-committees, and at the last meeting before the year end the first application for funding assistance was discussed.

### **Business Plan**

A Business Plan, incorporating a five year action plan with a detailed list of actions for year 1, was agreed prior to incorporation and updated in June 2003. For the purposes of the Plan the first year began at registration as a charity. The main items for action in year 1 were production of a leaflet, holding an event to launch the Trust, recruiting members (target 75), production of a newsletter, setting up a website, compiling a display and its use at 4 events and at libraries. Good progress has been made on these despite being only 7 months since registration.

### **Organisation**

There are seven trustees. Michael Bramwell was elected chairman. Bryan Muddle is treasurer and membership secretary. Helen Cocker is company secretary.

Two sub-committees have been established, publicity and fundraising.

### **Finance**

The Trust was very grateful to receive a substantial start up grant from the Lower Mole Countryside Management Project, which has covered items such as the promotional leaflet and launch event. Large donations were also received from the Epsom Common Association and the Elmbridge branch of CPRE. The Trust is also grateful to member, Barbara Webb who made a significant contribution by giving 7 talks to local groups in return for donations to the Trust. Donations received by the Project staff for public walks that they have led have been given to the Trust.

Major expenditure in this first year has been on items designed to promote and publicise the Trust such as the promotional leaflet, launch event and purchase of sweatshirts bearing the Trust logo for resale.

### **Membership**

The number of members recruited in this first year was 67, including 24 individuals, 28 OAPs, 7 families, and 8 groups, including 1 local authority.

The first newsletter was sent to members in May 2003.

## **Publicity and Activities**

The launch event was held at Horton Country Park on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2003 and was attended by over 60 people. Although there was some press coverage as a result of this event it was not as much as had been hoped. The best coverage was in the Cobham News and Mail with a half page spread and colour photo of the trustees.

The promotional leaflet and a display were ready for the launch and have subsequently been used at 4 events and 5 libraries over the summer. A website has been set up which is regularly updated with news and events and is linked to the Lower Mole Project's website.

## **Projects**

The main project that the Trust has been involved in is charcoal production on Epsom Common. Volunteers from the Trust, in conjunction with the Ecovols, have been carrying out regular charcoal burns using wood produced as a byproduct of conservation management. A total of 110 bags of charcoal have been produced, plus 31 bags of fines. All the charcoal produced has been sold, with the proceeds split between the Trust and the Ecovols. The Trust also bought in a further 30 bags of charcoal, sold on for a small profit in order to keep up with demand.

## **Grants**

No grants were offered in the first year, however the first application was received for the last meeting of the year from the Ecovols. The board required more information so a decision was deferred until the next board meeting in September.

## **Policy for the selection of individuals and institutions who are to receive grants**

The Board will determine which projects to support based on the following:

- It must be in accordance with the aims of the Trust
- It should be visible to the public and/or of benefit to the public
- If the proposal relates to conservation interest it must be in line with the relevant Habitat Action Plan or Species Action Plan
- If the proposal improves public access it must not be detrimental to any conservation interest
- It should be supported by the local community.

The Board will consider applications for up to £200 submitted as a brief report outlining the project and any other funding sources. Larger applications can be considered but the budget available is small. The total grant fund available each year is based on the total income of the Trust minus predicted annual running costs for the next five years.

## **The Future**

The Trust has been established as a charity for just over six months. Much of this first period has been spent raising awareness of the new charity. The next period needs to build on this with the development of more projects carried out and supported by the Trust.

### **Statement of relationships**

Relationship with organisations with which the Trust co-operates

Lower Mole Countryside Management Project: The Lower Mole Project hosts the Trust by providing office space, meeting rooms, computing facilities and the time the Company Secretary, who is employed by the Project, spends on administration of the Trust is donated by the Project.

Epsom Common Association: The Trust works with the volunteer arm of the ECA, the Ecovols, on the charcoal project, with proceeds from sales split between the Trust and Ecovols.

### **Names and addresses of other relevant organisations or persons**

Lower Mole Countryside Management Project, 2 West Park Farmhouse, Horton Country Park, Horton Lane, Epsom, KT19 8PL

Solicitor - Brian Carr, Downs Solicitors, 156 High Street, Dorking, RH4 1BQ

Bankers – CafCash Ltd, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA

Auditors – Conor Morrow, John Haworth

### **Charity Trustees**

Chairman	Michael Bramwell
Company Secretary	Helen Cocker
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	Bryan Muddle
Member of the Board	Mike Beuzeval
Member of the Board	Anne Durrant
Member of the Board	John Haworth
Member of the Board	Keith Poulton

Company Number: 04454401  
Lower Mole Countryside Trust  
**Abbreviated Balance Sheet for year ended  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2003**

**Income and Expenditure**

**Incoming Resources**

	£
Subscriptions	640.00
Donations	902.45
Charitable Sales	546 20
Bank Interest	35.07
Gift Aid refund	88.85
Start up Grant	<u>4000.00</u>
	<u>6212.57</u>

**Resources Expended**

Costs of generating funds	<u>1558.44</u>
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**Charitable Expenditure**

Cost of activities in furtherance of the charity's  
Objectives

Legal expenses, insurance and subscriptions	226.25
Printing, postage and stationery	579.49
Training	87.00
Goods for resale	<u>387.40</u>
<b>Total Charitable Expenditure</b>	<u>1280.14</u>

**Total resources expended** 2838.58

**Balance carried forward 1<sup>st</sup> Sept. 2003** 3373.99

**Directors Statement**

For the year ended 31st August 2003 the company was entitled to exemption under section 249A(1) of the Companies Act 1985

Members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 249B (2) of the Companies Act 1985

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for

a) ensuring the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 221;  
and

b) preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company at the end of the financial year, and of its profit or loss for the financial year, in accordance with the requirements of section 226, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the company.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions in part V11 of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

B.F.W. Muddle

Director

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