

surrey tree wardens

newsletter

october 2026

12 Tremendous Trees

Time to sign up. From the comfort of your own home find out more about how trees are intricately linked to human life, health and history. The next event for all Surrey Tree Wardens is on **Friday 16 October** and will be by Zoom. It begins at 7pm. The keynote speaker is Gwenda Kyd, chemist, scientist and complementary medicine practitioner. She will outline how humans have used trees from earliest times, for timber for defence and shelter, to their use in foods and medicines. There will also be an update on the Tree Council news from Sam Village, who coordinates Tree Wardens nationwide. Now is your chance to put your questions to her. The talks will be followed by the AGM for the Network.

Holding a Zoom meeting is a new venture for the STWN to try to engage and inform our members. Please sign up by telling Patricia Brookwick that you wish to come. secretary@surreytreewardens.org.uk
She will send you the link nearer the time.

Jon Stokes MBE



Jon Stokes, founder of the Tree Warden Network, received an MBE in the King's Birthday Honours in June. It is much deserved: Jon has been a tireless campaigner for trees for over 35 years at The Tree Council.

The Tree Warden network was set up in 1990 by Jon in the wake of two great storms. Local people caring for local trees is at the heart of it and Jon's drive, focus and enthusiasm have built an idea in 1990 into a thriving national network.

Money Matters

The Surrey Tree Warden Network has a new Treasurer. Thank you Addison Baigent for taking over the job, and an even bigger thank you to Elaine Griffiths who is retiring as Treasurer, and who has expertly handled our finances for the past few years.

The STWN is a small charity run entirely by volunteers. We must raise a certain amount of money each year to cover running costs. Here are a few ways you can help.

RAISE FUNDS FOR US FOR FREE WHILE YOU SHOP: We are now registered with easyfundraising. Over 8,000 retailers will donate to us when you use it to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself. All you need to do is sign up and remember to use it whenever you shop online.

Join Easyfundraising: <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/create-an-account/>

Business buying through easyfundraising is also one of the easiest ways to raise donations. What is “business buying”? Anything a business is buying online, e.g. office supplies, food for their employees, train tickets, flights, hotel bookings, technology, internet, couriers, and much more.

These donations really mount up, so please consider signing up at:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/surrey-tree-warden-network>

And check this: Easyfundraising Explained with this YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/E2Md8GncMas>

RECYCLE INK CARTRIDGES. Sue Henderson collects used ink cartridges, boxes them up and is rewarded by the recycling company: <http://recycle4charity.co.uk>. It meant £31.00 for STWN funds for the last box she sent. So save your cartridges for Sue. Or if you can collect used cartridges from your workplace, friends and family, you can set up your own account and link a charity to it, hopefully the Surrey Tree Warden Network!

THINKING SAFETY OUTDOORS: we have fluorescent tabard jackets for sale at £5.00 each with Surrey Tree Warden printed on the back. Sales help our funds. We also have stocks of printed greeting cards for sale. Look out for them at our events.

DONATE: Perhaps you could make a small donation to the STWN now:

CAF Bank A/C: 00014782 Sort Code: 40-52-40, and put the word Donate as reference.

Drones, Mulch and Cuckoo Trees



Outside, in a glade, under a cool tree canopy, there was no better place to be! This was the South East Tree Warden Forum in July at Sheffield Park, the world renowned landscape garden in Sussex. The theme of the conference was how best to protect important trees in world of rising temperatures, new diseases and inadequate legislation to protect them. First up in the woodland glade was Steve Feazey, Senior Gardener. He introduced us to the extraordinary new technology that is helping him plan for the future at Sheffield Park with its world class collection of trees. Drones are used to fly over the parkland measuring the rate of photosynthesis in the tree canopy below. Lidar is used to survey the spread of branches above ground, and roots below. And evapotranspiration

– new word – can then be measured for each tree. Evapotranspiration: water moving into the atmosphere from both the ground and from plant respiration. Put together, the garden becomes a network of microclimates. A tree species may not be thriving in one position, but another can be found with better conditions

The next speaker continued the theme: Jon Stokes described the research that has been going on since 2004 to work out the most important factors in tree decline, particularly for veteran and ancient trees. Among them, compaction, grazing damage, climate change, vandalism, disease, development. It turns out that root compaction is the biggest problem, and one that can often be easily sorted. Ancient and extraordinary trees attract visitors. Over the decades thousands of feet have compacted the soil around the tree; or maybe resting cows have used it over centuries for shade; or maybe vehicles were routinely parked there. The first easy answer to compaction is a fence around the tree, extending out beyond the drip line. And a second easy answer was provided by the third speaker Dr Jon Banks, of Bartlett Trees.

Mulch! Improve the soil, improve the health of the tree. His company has been researching mulches, and whether the addition of worms to the soil at the same time as the mulch is spread gives an extra boost to the tree. Answer – the worms made no difference; the mulch was the key. Wood chippings, with few fine particles, and spread up to the drip line to a maximum depth of 10cms seems to be the best answer. The mulch helps retain moisture and slowly decomposes to feed the soil – just as happens in nature. Leaving autumn leaves to decompose naturally has the same effect, though perhaps not volume. Gone are the days when autumn leaves were burnt ‘to look tidy’.





What a wealth of information from the morning session. Lunch was eaten al fresco. The afternoon was taken up with a tour of Sheffield Park and its collection of trees with Steve Feazey.

Sheffield Park is famous for its autumn colour, and it has become a big event. But how to judge when the spectacle will begin. A large *Carya* dominates the front entrance. When its leaves begin to turn gold the garden is open for the public in their thousands to enjoy its glorious autumn display. The end of autumn is signalled in November when a huge ginkgo turns buttery yellow – the final fling of the year.

Sight of the day: the cuckoo chestnuts. These ancient sweet chestnuts down by the lakes can be dated back to 1504 – ancient trees indeed. Two are now majestic stumps, but with new life springing from them. One has a thriving birch tree nestled into a cavity - a giant cuckoo in the nest.



News in Brief

Last Chance

Over the summer all members will have received two emails asking if they wish to continue as members of the Surrey Tree Warden Network. If you have not replied, this is your last chance to stay on the list. Your membership will lapse unless you contact Sue Henderson immediately at marchharecottage@gmail.com saying you want to continue to be a member. Membership brings you in touch with other people sharing a love of trees, and with events, talks, training - and inspiration - through the year. It also gives you insurance cover for the activities you undertake as a Tree Warden.

Training

There's training for all Tree Wardens through a series of Zoom sessions. It is essential that all TWs do the Induction module – how to be a Tree Warden – and this will be run again next year. Other modules include Tree Biology, Tree Threats, and Hedges. Watch out for the dates in the New Year.

Drought

Expect to see many casualties. The drought this summer will have had a serious impact on last winter's tree planting, though it won't be until next spring that the true cost is known, as many trees may have gone into early dormancy, but will bud again in spring. Street trees, planted through the Surrey Council scheme, have perhaps fared better than most. Bowsers were taken out regularly to keep new trees especially, well watered. Even so, Tadworth has reported that 5 of their 20 street trees planted last winter have died.

Contact Us

www.surreytreewardens.org.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SurreyTreeWardens>

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