

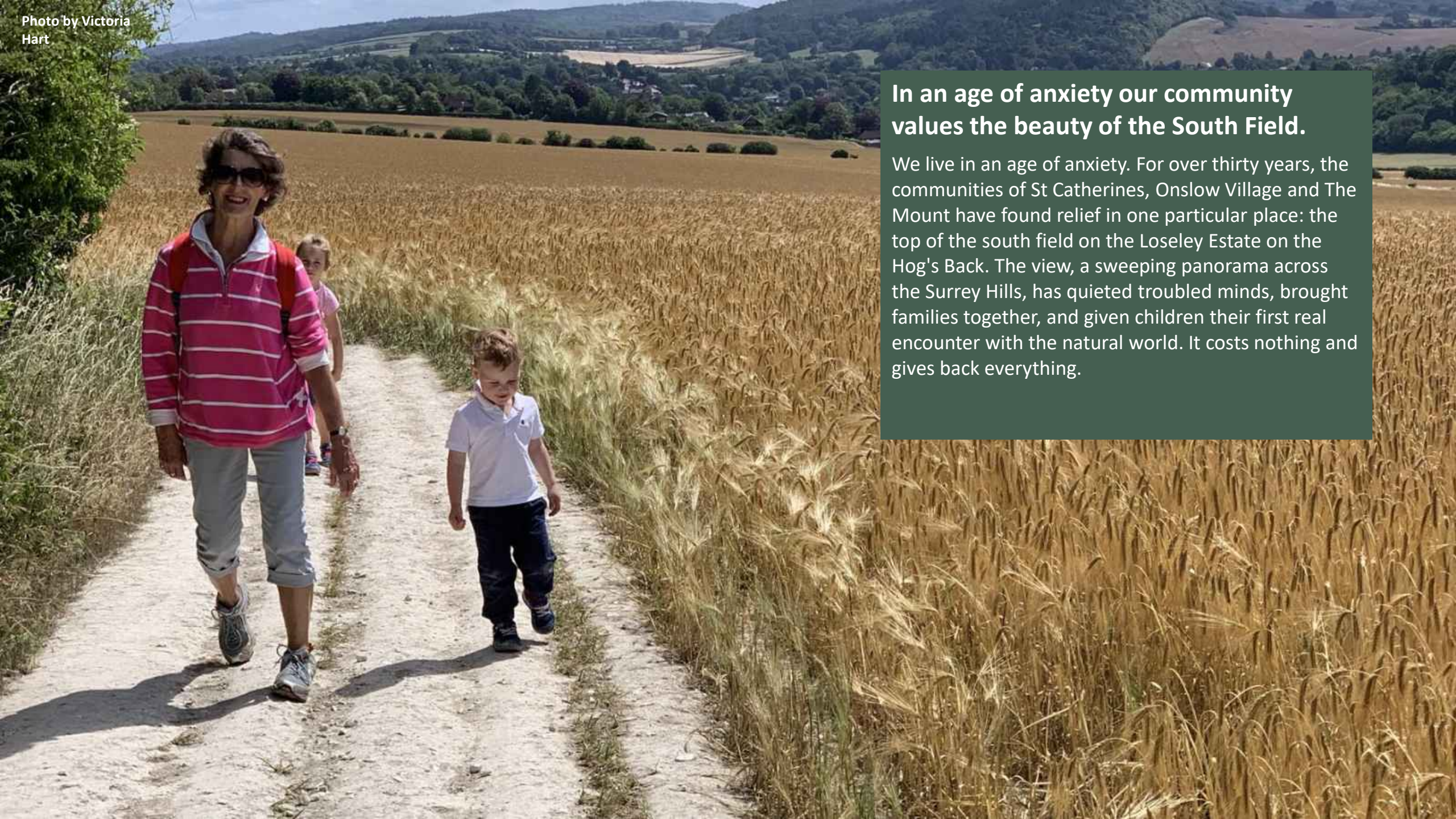
# Why We Care

The communities surrounding the north east of The Loseley Estate, including Onslow Village, St Catherines and the Mount, have been walking 'The South Field' for over 20+ years.

This is a response by those communities to the barricading and closure of The South Field.

Note: The Loseley Estate may call 'The South Field' by the name Rutherfords.





**In an age of anxiety our community values the beauty of the South Field.**

We live in an age of anxiety. For over thirty years, the communities of St Catherines, Onslow Village and The Mount have found relief in one particular place: the top of the south field on the Loseley Estate on the Hog's Back. The view, a sweeping panorama across the Surrey Hills, has quieted troubled minds, brought families together, and given children their first real encounter with the natural world. It costs nothing and gives back everything.



## Blocked

In February all entry points to the south field were blocked. The farmer, for reasons that are entirely understandable from a land management perspective, moved to restrict access across the whole of the top field.

In frustration, some community members began removing the barriers. The farmer replaced them. A cycle of escalation began.

The closure has not only hurt people, it has hurt the land. Historic boundary hedges and mature trees have been removed in the process. The plant species that defined those hedgerows will take decades to recover.



The ecological loss is quiet, but lasting.

There is no winner in this scenario, only a hardening of positions and an erosion of trust.

Over 110 people joined a WhatsApp group focused solely on this issue. The Onslow Village Residents Association, who represent over 400 homes, raised it as a priority.

The community stands at a crossroads: pursue a legal right of way or find another solution?



## **The community are advocates of Loseley**

What matters: nobody in this community wishes harm to the farmer or the Loseley Estate. The estate's farm products, its friends of Loseley programme, its bakery, its events, these are loved. But a community of 400+ daily walkers, thousands across the year, that once felt welcome now feels estranged, and that estrangement carries a real reputational cost for a brand built on pastoral goodwill.

If nothing changes, everyone loses. The community loses a landscape that cannot be replicated. The estate loses its most natural advocates. The land loses the stewardship that community engagement and grants can unlock and provide.

Photo by Victoria Hart



## Seeking a win win

The community's preference is a win win partnership. Having had uninterrupted use for over 20 years the community is looking for a section 25 creation agreement, with a fenced and agreed path along the edge of the field. This would protect the farmer's land while restoring access.

Those daily summer walkers, directed by QR codes on the fence posts to the farm shop and estate events, become free and powerful advocates.

Grant funding exists for exactly this kind of community-access and conservation initiatives. The community can help identify and support applications rather than oppose them.

Stronger links with Surrey Hills and other NGOs would follow naturally.

The south field on the Hog's Back is one of the finest views in Surrey. The path to resolution we believe starts with a conversation, an agreement, and a shared belief that some things are worth protecting together.

Here are some of our stories.



Photos by Victoria Hart



## Victoria Hart

This path, five minutes walk from our home, has long provided our family with a place for recreation, exercise and peaceful enjoyment of the countryside. It has been a setting for many happy family memories and moments with friends. We all agree it is so special and uplifting because of the incredible and inspiring views along its entire length.

When running alone, I feel safer in the open space it provides, in contrast to the enclosed bridleway. We felt truly lucky to have access to this wonderful footpath and without it our home doesn't feel quite the same.





Photo by Nicola Slynn

## Nicola Slynn

When I had cancer I tried to walk along that field every day, how far would depend on my chemo cycle. The beautiful view raised my spirits. When we got our dog I walked along the south field every afternoon.





Photos by Becca Burn



## Becca Burn

These photos date back to about 2020. However, I have lived on this hillside for nearly my whole life. I grew up in the Guildown area (where my parents still live), and now I live with my own family in the Onslow area.

I have walked this path for well over 30 years. My children are the third generation of our family to do the same. It is a place that is treasured by all of us. It has deep meaning to us historically, emotionally, spiritually and environmentally. We have charted the seasons there for years and watched the crops grow, the skylarks sing, and the sun set.

We understand that maybe some people have not cared for this landscape well and damaged crops. But to have access suddenly ripped away feels incredibly painful.

You cannot separate a landscape from its people. It is a part of our story. And has value way beyond money. We go there to walk and talk, pray and laugh, feel great joy and peace when life is stressful.

We also love the contrast of the two sides of the hill: town and countryside. It is unique in many ways as a chalk landscape. The thought of never being able to be embodied in that landscape anymore is deeply distressing. It is the place I want my ashes scattered one day. These pictures are just a snapshot of what it means to us. And we hope it will continue to be a part of our story, and this community's story.



Photos by Emma Whiteacre

## Emma Whiteacre

I'm not a big photographer but the sheer beauty of the location has always just drawn me to try to capture it.

I never dreamt that it would be under threat though. I have so often stood at the top western corner of the South Field just breathing, listening to the birds, restoring my equilibrium and thinking how lucky I am to be able to see such a view on a walk from my house.



Photos by Eve and Mike Fraser



## Eve and Mike Fraser

We walk here regularly as a family and with our dogs. It's an incredibly special place with the most wonderful view and a stark contrast to the view over the town from the Mount.

I genuinely feel my shoulders relax and my worries melt away by doing the circular walk which incorporates this part of the farmer's field and has the most phenomenal views over the South Downs and Surrey Hills. It's so so good for the soul. This view is so very special I feel extremely sad at the prospect of not being able to walk here again.



Photo by Rebecca Elliot 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020

## Rebecca Elliot

This image captures our loss. This walk has been a successful medicine for all of our community. The walk offers such a unique view, it allows you to feel completely encompassed, offering strong feelings of hope and freedom and never fails to deliver a much needed mental-health reset.



Photos by David Lamph



## David Lamph

Every week for the past four years between April and September I walk a set route or transect on the Mount on behalf of Butterfly Conservation as part of the UK butterfly monitoring survey which has been collection data on butterfly numbers since 1976.

The top path of South field was a sector on this transect and was uniquely the only path with a southerly aspect on the walk and therefore attracted butterflies not seen on the rest of the transect.

The loss of this sector will have a detrimental impact on the survey since I will loose this habitat, especially the nettle patches which attracted small tortoiseshell butterflies and blackthorn bushes for the brown hairstreak.

The small tortoiseshell is locally only found here and is a nationally rare butterfly. With the recent habitat destruction this places this species further at risk.

## Stephanie Webster

We had a family party for a pre-Christmas Sunday lunch. Then after lunch the younger members of the family wanted to go for a walk and you can see two of the cousins striding out into the setting sun. It is (was) such a privilege to be able to just walk out the door onto the hill.



Photo by Stephanie Webster December 2018



Photo by Ella Groves 15<sup>th</sup> November 2014



## Ella Groves

I have taken regular walks here with our children and dogs since 2010, when we moved into Guildown Road and had our first child.

# Thank you

**The community surrounding the  
north east of The Loseley Estate**



Photos by Oliver Clark



## Oliver Clark

This path became very special and very important to me and my family over the past 20 years.

We used to walk and run it regularly and it was calming and uplifting, and in the toughest of times you could always rely on it to feed the soul. It was thought provoking and grounding, and it was wonderful to witness the unlimited variations in all weathers and all seasons.

The amazing view of this beautiful countryside is now very sadly lost to the residents of Guildford and its visitors, and the people and the town are much poorer for it.



Photos by Margaret Hollendoner



## Margaret Hollendoner

It was really difficult to pick only 10 photos from the number of photos we have walking in this area. I selected the ones I did because they clearly show the peace and beauty and the natural wildlife (the deer!) that we have encountered over the years of walking here.

The path was always very clearly separated from the crops, so it was easy to keep to the path. You don't see crowds pushing folks out of the path, so it's easy to stay in the lane and respect the boundaries.

The view is unparalleled, looking out over the downs and we enjoy it daily walking our dog (and our kids when they were younger). We walk at all times of the year, and all times of the day, and the peace and beauty of this particular aspect are unique and a huge part of the value of living here.



## Anna Cade

My favourite walk for nearly every day over the last 20 years with beautiful views over AONB. We moved to the area in 2025 and path has always been accessible and used by the public. I also used to come here with my family in the 1970s.

