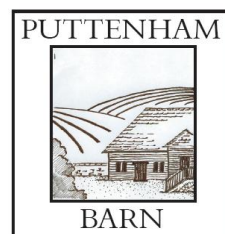


PUTTENHAM BARN BUNKHOUSE

Newsletter – Spring 2025



We send all Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse supporters our best wishes at this delightful time of year for outdoor activity and hope you will all enjoy a good Summer.

This year we will be opening the barn to visitors on Friday, 11 April – a week before the Easter weekend.

2025 – OUR 20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!

The poster for our 20th birthday party is reproduced here. The Ceilidh will be a splendid opportunity to have a fun-filled evening of traditional country dancing, meet up with friends old and new, and catch up with the latest happenings at the Barn.

The idea erupted out of an amazing weekend at Puttenham Barn when we welcomed Friends of Tanners Hatch folk. Then the main focus was seeking to ensure the future of Tanners as a Hostel, yet this also proved a wonderful opportunity for strengthening the relationship between our two groups to mutual advantage. One of the "positives" was the offer to provide a band for our celebration, and we are enormously grateful to the musicians for generously offering to perform at our 20th Birthday celebration.

This promises to be a lively and entertaining evening and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Please book your ticket(s) via the contact details given here, or get in touch if you have any queries or would like a bed at the Barn for the Saturday night.

Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse
20th Birthday Party

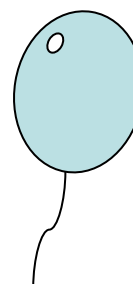
Ceilidh

Puttenham Marwick Hall
School Lane, Puttenham, Surrey, GU3 1AS

Tanners Hatch Ceilidh Band
Caller: Geoff Chapman

Saturday 17th May 2025
8 – 11 pm

Tickets £17.50 (concessions available) from 01483 424767, or ceilidh@puttenhambarn.uk
Tickets include vegetarian snacks. Please bring your own drinks.



20 years of welcoming outdoor-loving visitors to Puttenham Barn!



Follow our latest activities throughout the year on our Facebook page <https://facebook.com/puttenhambarn>

We are also now on Instagram - https://www.instagram.com/puttenham_barn/

WE CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF WELCOMING VISITORS TO PUTTENHAM BARN

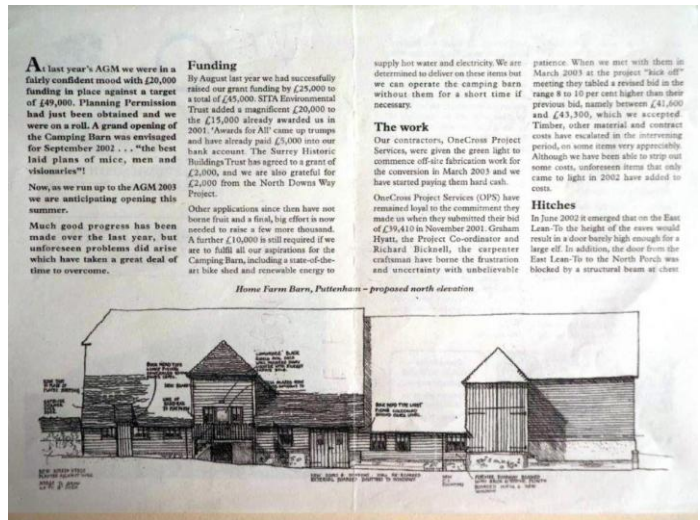
Over the next pages we feature a few of the innumerable photos as well as some scanned press releases and other documents stored in our archive - a brief reflection of some of the many activities recorded over the years.

A potted history of our vision! Godalming Friends of the Earth (FoE) conceive the idea of an environmental project within a traditional Surrey barn. The search for a suitable property commences. FoE creates a separate organisation, Project Oasis North Downs, to fulfil this dream. The Surrey Advertiser reports the acquisition of Home Farm Barn at Puttenham by Guildford Council; a councillor suggests its possible use as providing accommodation for ramblers. We respond! Surrey Wildlife Trust negotiates to use this property for their purposes but then withdraw. Our negotiations start, alongside fundraising, all of which goes on and on... Our charity raises about £140,000 which together with enormous voluntary work eventually enables the Project to come to fruition.

Work continues into 2005 and the first walkers and cyclists are welcomed in May of that year for overnight stays, with the official opening of the Barn taking place the following month (see next page).

We remain indebted to the many associations and individuals who supported us financially and through the vast numbers of volunteer hours.

Apologies for the blemished state of some of these images, time has taken its toll here and there!



Excerpt from a review issued in 2003.

A camping barn for Surrey?

An opportunity has arisen to create a camping barn and environmental centre by the North Downs Way at Puttenham – only five miles from the CTC's Godalming office – in a beautiful old disused timber barn. To this end, a small number of outdoor enthusiasts have come together, formed a charity, 'Project Oasis', and now seek the help of others to make the conversion happen.

Planning consent has been obtained and the owners of the property, Guildford Borough Council, are offering a long-term lease at a peppercorn rent, which is expected to be signed soon. Thanks to financial contributions from a number of sources, including the Cycle Touring and Countryside Trust, funds have been available for preliminary work such as the full structural survey; other funds are now needed for the renovation work itself, which has been planned with great care so that the new will harmonise with the old.

In addition, there will be a significant voluntary input to the venture and offers of help would be warmly welcomed. Incidentally, the plans include what could well become the finest cycle storage space in Surrey!

Further information: Chris Meeves, Project Oasis North Downs, 14 Victoria Road, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1JR.

CTC News

More Sustrans route maps route down the Suffolk coast now figures as a detour, and extensive off-road sections via Lowestoft

Three more strip maps covering



Project Oasis

PROJECT OASIS NORTH DOWNS
HOME FARM BARN, PUTTENHAM

Summer 2003 external works under way on the historic Puttenham barn

VOLUNTEERS URGENTLY NEEDED FOR THE FINAL PHASE

Project Oasis North Downs (P.O.N.D.) is an exciting local venture to restore a historic listed barn in Puttenham. The building is being converted into a Camping Barn for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and will open in April 2004.

The Camping Barn aims to provide basic, wardened accommodation. It is ideally located, being situated on the North Downs Way at a point not served by any Youth Hostels. The uses to which this old building is being put will have a minimal impact on the environment. They will conserve its essential character but at the same time make it accessible to many people.

As structural work on the Barn nears completion, we need voluntary help, and lots of it, to bring the project to fruition. Professional contractors are being employed for the bulk of the work and, alongside them, volunteers have already undertaken earth-moving and floor-laying tasks. They will really swing into action when the contractors finally leave the site, and the range of help needed is listed overleaf.

Please assist if you possibly can.

CAMPING BARN



Penelope Keith with John Bannister, POND chairman, at the opening of the camping barn in Puttenham.

The official opening ceremony takes place on 23 June 2005. We are delighted to welcome local resident and renowned English actress and presenter Dame Penelope Keith, also Patron of the Surrey Hills Society, to perform the honours.

Through the years the regular work parties have become agreeable social occasions too. Sunny weather always makes the tasks that much more enjoyable!



A reward after much hard work – a delightful ramble on Puttenham Common for volunteers.



The 2008 National Bike Week ride attracted a lot of interest.



One of our early Guildford Walkfest events, a grand turnout as you can see!



This amazing pedal-powered 'Conference Bike' spends a night at the Barn with its intrepid operators and is much admired by all.



August 2011 and full occupancy in the bike shed as these happy cyclists enjoy our facilities.



Also in 2011, this sustainably sourced oak bench is installed in the barnyard, in memory of former Treasurer David Kirk. Beautifully carved by Puttenham resident Pat Williams (see photo), it also depicts a hiking theme and incorporates a scallop shell, the symbol associated with pilgrimages. It has provided a comfortable resting spot for many a tired visitor and volunteer over the years.



The picnic bench donated by supporter John Summers has also proved invaluable, as here in 2019 when staff at Independent Hostels UK paid a visit to meet volunteers and discuss our partnership.



Over many years, Martin Taplin's very popular 'Round the Hogs Back' annual bike rides introduced numerous new visitors to Puttenham Barn.



The cyclists here in 2012 were treated to the usual warm welcome and refreshments as well as a brief talk about the Barn project by Martin.



Guildford Borough Council continue to look after the structure of the Barn. We are grateful for their assistance whenever an issue such as loose roof tiles arises.



May 2015 and the Barn's 10-year anniversary is celebrated with a guided walk through the Puttenham hop fields led by Bill Biddell of the Hampton Estate, followed by a tea party at the Barn with Parish Councillor John Green cutting this superb – and delicious - cake.



In late summer 2016 we remembered our friend Janet Torlot. Her family and many friends from her years of volunteering with us came together to celebrate her life. With a garland created from local hops, 'Janet's Gate' was officially opened by members of her family.



A few months later, native hedge whips were planted in memory of volunteer John Perry by 7 of our active supporters. All 40 plants thrived and we now have a beautiful screen providing privacy in our area of the barnyard.



A new event introduced in 2017 was the Farnham Walking Festival. The Surrey Hills Society led a group of people from Farnham to Guildford – with a welcome stop-off at the Barn for tea and a short rest.

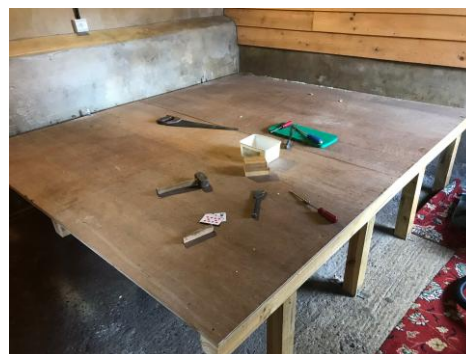


End of an era...for our first 12 years of operation we were fortunate to have been affiliated to the YHA, who also looked after our booking system. Sadly, in 2017 the YHA decided to cease their collaboration with all independent camping barns, and urgent measures had to be taken for us to 'go it alone' – somewhat challenging in the early days. We have appreciated generous support from the organisation Independent Hostels UK and here volunteer Jonathan Riddell is replacing the YHA sign with that of 'IHUK'.



A snowy welcome to Puttenham and a reminder of why we do not open all year round!

Another major change, this time instigated by Covid 19 and the need for better night-time segregation of our visitors. The decision was made to remove two of the three sleeping platforms and replace with four sets of bunk beds.



This work took place between 2020 and 2021 while the Barn remained closed due to national restrictions. We finally re-opened in July 2021, albeit with restricted access and many special measures in place to minimise the risk of infection to visitors and volunteer wardens alike.





With the introduction of the bunk beds, our name is officially changed from 'Puttenham Eco Camping Barn' to 'Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse'. Dave Williamson removes the old sign, to be replaced with this new version.



Thanks to the dedication and knowledgeable care of our volunteers, the barnyard has developed into an oasis of beauty and calm – a wonderful space for our visitors to relax after a day of cycling, walking or enjoying other active pursuits nearby.

A treat for dedicated volunteers who were free on the day was a special invitation to a guided tour of the nearby Watts Gallery in 2022. This was arranged and led by Hazel Putland, who also looks after the Barn garden.



A special additional work party in April 2023 resulted in a number of impressive visitor-friendly improvements inside and out, including new signage and slabs to make kitchen and dormitory access easier and safer. Awesome results achieved in just one day!

2024 and into 2025 and beyond – our door is not just open for our Heritage Day visitors but for all looking for a warm welcome and comfortable stay in our lovely and unique Barn.

Many thanks to all contributors of the photos supplied for this special feature.

We thank all volunteers past and present – our Operations Committee, Trustees, volunteer wardens, admin team, gardening, maintenance and improvement volunteers, as well of course as you, our loyal Supporter - for 20 years of ensuring our Barn goes above and beyond in providing and maintaining such a wonderful amenity for our visitors.

FURTHER FUTURE EVENTS

- We will be holding the next Volunteer Warden Training Day on Friday, 30 May. If you or a friend are interested to find out what this invaluable role entails, please get in touch (contact details on Page 8).
- This year's Heritage Open Days run from 12 to 21 September. We plan to open the Barn on Saturday the 13th. Helpers who can spare a couple of hours would be much appreciated.



Not blooming but airing...a colourful array of blues and reds adorns the barnyard!
On a bright and sunny Spring day our sleeping-bags are being freshened up in readiness for the 2025 season.

Volunteering

Our team of volunteers is always eager to welcome new people to help share the load. We would be very pleased to have a chat, with no obligation, about any type of role that you feel could be of interest. This could be of a practical nature such as helping out at work parties or in our barnyard, or in one of the areas of admin such as secretary to the trustees. Younger people in particular could benefit from gaining insights into a more environmentally aware view of the world and how each of us can offer a valuable contribution.

Please feel free to contact us via the telephone number or email address given at the bottom of this page for an informal chat.

Donations

Please will you consider making a "Birthday present" gift to our charity to help enable us to go on into the future...? Thank you.

Leaving a legacy

Puttenham Barn costs a surprising amount to run, despite the fact that our core group of staff and our fantastic army of wardens are all volunteers. We have to pay for electricity, water and insurance, and carry out essential maintenance. Last year, for example, our combi oven failed and we had to buy a new one. Our income from visitors helps pay for all this, but what is difficult is to plan for the future. We have been lucky to have received wonderful donations from individuals and various bodies who recognise the value of what we are doing, but we are always looking to go further.

We would like to install multiple charging sockets for our visitors' electronic devices. We have detailed ideas on how to provide safe charging points if every visitor came with an electric bike. Our solar panels and rainwater harvesting systems are coming to the point after long use where they need significant maintenance. We would very much like to install efficient radiant heaters in the kitchen area to give an even cosier room for visitors to enjoy. These are typical examples of ideas for the future, and of course there are more.

There is so much pressure on family finances at the moment that many charities find donations are less than they once were. People feel understandably that they must plan for their old age and families first. This is where leaving a gift in your will can help. By leaving a certain percentage of your legacy to charitable causes, you can ensure that both families and society receive the benefit of your inheritance. Legacies up to a significant amount receive tax advantages too, meaning a gift in your will is worth more. A formally written will makes your wishes clear without ambiguity, and will give you peace of mind that your legacy will continue to fund what you find important.

We hope that you will consider supporting Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse in your will. Please do get in touch if you would like to talk about this further.

~~ *Newsletter contributions welcomed by Hilary* – support@puttenhambarn.uk ~~

*This newsletter is published by Project Oasis North Downs,
the registered charity that manages Puttenham Barn Bunkhouse*

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