

HGS / Horsham's Green Spaces



Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity and quality of large open green spaces, smaller green spaces and gardens Good range of habitat – forest, woodland, meadows, parkland, substantial bodies of water, rivers, allotments, cemeteries, rail embankments, deer park, one area of SSSI Connectivity via Arun corridor, Riverside Walk and railways; no big roads going through the centre – south eastern part of the area well protected and connected Good recreational provision, most with good disabled access 60,000 population – green and recreational spaces well-used, schools showing interest: forest schools/wildlife gardens etc, Wilder Horsham District initiative; HDC have a stated “green mission” and “health and wellbeing” strategy; HDC have a strong Parks Countryside Team Strong, active “Friends of” groups; a history of interest in green spaces HGS has agreed aims and objectives; umbrella group to share resources and expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historically building / planning not focused on nature connectivity Roads, pinch points reducing connectivity; non-wildlife friendly barriers increasing eg. Pedlars Way Disjointed management by WSCC / HDC /contractors Horsham Town Centre – disjointed local government structure Lack of protection of green spaces; land owned by HDC has previously been seen as a cost and not a community asset Lack of baseline data for most green spaces and corridors Lack of public resource to “police” green spaces (anti-social behaviour, vandalism) Lack of funding for HGS as a co-ordinating umbrella group; lack of time / resources among HGS – some apathy; HGS not yet influencing decision makers Connectivity improvement projects not yet identified or funded; target species for support not yet mapped
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To protect / enhance what we have Strategic joined up plan to identify and protect priority green spaces; influence the Local Plan with nature at the heart Make Horsham Town more resilient to climate change; improve biodiversity; improve health and mental wellbeing HGS and HDC / WHD work together and are aligned Mobilise / engage town population; engage with schools, colleges, community groups, landowners, businesses; educate growing population Projects to connect green spaces and their groups HGS sustainable for future generations Funding / grant applications / sponsorship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing population; increased need for housing; wear and tear on green spaces, no space for nature; green spaces become more fragmented Climate change; lack of water / flash flooding Ash dieback, horse chestnut, oak disease / pests Invasive species eg Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam Increase in anti-social behaviour / vandalism Recession impacts funding / eroding budget reductions / Parks and Countryside team under-resourced: causing harm to nature HGS / HDC / WHD not aligned; HGS / “Friends of “ groups lose momentum, volunteers, experts WHD initiative fails or doesn't get engagement in Town as perceived to be for south of the District Merging of local authorities and change of priorities