

South Downs Park Life



December 2011 - Issue 1



The Ministry of Defence became the latest partner to sign up with the South Downs National Park to conserve and enhance heathland in the South Downs. More info at www.southdowns.gov.uk/news

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FUND

From day one of the National Park, our Sustainable Communities Fund has been available to community projects that help support our purposes. Since April we have supported 28 projects throughout the South Downs National Park with a total value of over one million. Approximately £230,000 of the fund has been allocated so far. To find out more visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/scf

JOIN IN THE DISCUSSION - ONLINE

Whether it be electric bikes, the meaning of natural beauty or debating what is a special quality of the South Downs National Park, our online forum allows anyone with an interest in the South Downs to discuss issues of common interest with each other and to help shape the future direction of the National Park Management Plan (see page 2). There are over 600 members already, why don't you join at www.southdowns.gov.uk/forum

The Purposes of the South Downs National Park are:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities by the public.

In carrying out its role, the Authority has a duty to:

- Seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the communities in the area.

Find out more...

Call

0300 303 1053

Email

info@southdowns.gov.uk

Visit

www.southdowns.gov.uk

The South Downs National Park is at the beginning of its journey - the Management Plan and the Local Development Framework will be our map for the future.



The Future of the Downs

The main vehicle for delivering the purposes of the National Park will be the South Downs National Park Management Plan. The National Park Authority must, by law, develop this within three years of becoming operational (i.e. by April 2014) although it intends to do so sooner than this.

We are committed to involving our partners and communities in the development of the Management Plan - as we believe it is essential that this plan is shaped and delivered not just by the National Park Authority but by all its partners too.

Preparations kicked off with a major event for 250 people at Stanmer Park in July, launching an online forum. This was followed by a series of Autumn Workshops across the Downs. With such a large number of interest groups and organisations to engage with we are now planning to continue the dialogue with those people we are already working with, and to engage harder to reach groups such as young people and small businesses.

Park Life!

Park Life is a new publication from the South Downs National Park Authority.

We will publish it every two months and it will be distributed by email to our mailing list of over 2,000 stakeholders.

We may occasionally produce printed versions but to keep costs down we will be producing most copies in electronic only format. If you know of anyone who you think might want to receive a copy, or if you don't want to receive further copies please contact:

comms@southdowns.gov.uk

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

How is the South Downs National Park different from the previous Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

1. National Parks are planning authorities in their own right. AONBs were only consultees on planning applications, with the final outcome being determined by the relevant local planning authority.
2. Most of the funding for National Parks comes through Defra, a more reliable source, whereas most of the funding for AONBs comes through Natural England and local authorities. National Parks are also better placed to attract external funding.
3. AONBs and National Parks are concerned with protecting and enhancing the landscape, a National Park must also promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the National Park's special qualities. National Parks also have a duty to promote the economic and social wellbeing of the area.

PLANNING - HOW DOES IT WORK?

Since April 2011 the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has been the local planning authority and also the minerals and waste planning authority for the South Downs National Park.

Due to the South Downs National Park's size we receive, on average, the 8th highest number of planning applications of any local planning authority in England.

To manage this workload effectively, we have drawn up partnership agreements with the 15 local planning authorities so that they determine 'minor' planning applications on the SDNPA's behalf, while we focus on determining 'significant' applications. Guidelines on what 'significant' means are available on the our website, under 'Planning'.

To help these innovative agreements work well we have Link Officers to work with the local planning authorities (see right).

PLANNING POLICY

The SDNPA has commenced work on the evidence base required for its own planning policy, called the Local Development Framework, which consists of a suite of documents including the Core Strategy. It is against this which the merits of planning applications will be judged.

Currently there are still 12 separate local plans or local development frameworks applying to different parts of the park, together with three different minerals and waste plans for the three counties.

We are working jointly with Wealden, Winchester, Lewes and East Hampshire district councils on joint core strategies. The National Park's own 'pre-submission' Core Strategy is scheduled for publication in September 2013, formal submission in February 2014 and adoption in October 2014. A project plan, called a Local Development Scheme, has been agreed and can be viewed at www.southdowns.gov.uk/ldf

Planning Link Officers

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David Townsend

07557 853267

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07872 410433

Mid-Sussex, Eastbourne, Wealden, Lewes, Brighton & Hove and East Sussex County Council.

Mike Bleakley

07557 853269

Adur and Worthing

Official Map

Whether you need a map of the South Downs for your work or just as a Christmas present for a friend. For just £11.99 + P&P you can order your map from our website today.

www.southdowns.gov.uk/buy-map

Field Guide

After the success of the 'Features of the South Downs Way' field guide produced in partnership with the Field Studies Council, we are planning to produce a second field guide. The new field guide will highlight features of the Serpent Trail which meanders through heathlands from Surrey through to Hampshire and West Sussex. The current field guide is available from www.field-studies-council.org/publications/pubs/features-of-the-south-downs-way.aspx



The Long Man of Wilmington

NEW SOUTH DOWNS WAY PARTNERSHIP

The South Downs Way (SDW) is the only National Trail that lies wholly within a National Park - 100 miles from Eastbourne to Winchester. We have just agreed a new partnership agreement to manage, improve and promote the trail with Natural England, Hampshire County Council, West Sussex County Council and East Sussex County Council.

Any problems with signage, waymarking, gates, stiles and minor surface issues on the South Downs Way will be dealt with directly by the South Downs National Park officers and maintenance works can be funded by the SDW partnership budget. Issues can be reported directly to the SDW team (see below) or to any South Downs National Park Ranger.

All obstructions and vegetation clearance issues should be reported directly to the respective County Council.

Any problems with rights of way that are not on the South Downs Way should be reported directly to the relevant County Council.

Website Changes

The South Downs National Park Authority's website is now easier to read for people with poor internet connections. On the top right hand side of every page there are a variety of accessibility buttons. We have now included a 'Text Only' option which will automatically strips out the photos and images meaning that viewers will be able to search and download much more quickly than on the standard site.

To see for yourself visit www.southdowns.gov.uk

SOUTH DOWNS WAY AND RIGHTS OF WAY CONTACTS

South Downs Way National Trail

Tel: 01273 625242 Email: sdw@southdowns.gov.uk Online: <http://bit.ly/sNetgY>

Hampshire County Council Rights of Way

Tel: 0845 603 5636 Email: row.central@hants.gov.uk Online: <http://bit.ly/rjxfm>

West Sussex County Council Rights of Way

Tel: 01273 777620 Email: prow@westsussex.gov.uk Online: <http://bit.ly/vL9XNX>

East Sussex County Council Rights of Way

Tel: 0345 60 80 193 Email: rightsofway@eastsussex.gov.uk Online: <http://bit.ly/rUIMeH>

Brighton & Hove City Council Rights of Way

Tel: 01273 292929 Email: cityparks@brighton-hove.gov.uk Online: <http://bit.ly/vtFmfi>

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

As part of the work on the South Downs National Park's own Local Development Framework, the Authority has produced a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how we intend to consult people on the various stages of our Local Development Framework documents.

This draft SCI was presented to the South Downs National Park Authority's Planning Committee on 10 October 2011 and the consultation period on this draft will run until 9 December 2011.

The comments will then be considered by NPA officers and a final SCI drawn up in 2012.

For more information visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/ldf