

SDLM Chairman's observations AGM 22.04.15

First of all I should like to thank our Liaison Officer Alison Tingley for shouldering much of the work I had previously had to do. Accordingly now much of the business which in previous AGMs would have formed part of the Chairman's report, will be covered by Alison in the Liaison Officer's Report.

As well as thanking Alison I would also like to thank all of the members of Executive Committee who have attended meetings especially those who serve and contribute in various Officer or Lead capacities. These are all named on the website Committee page. I would also like to thank our NFU and CLA colleagues on EC for their partnership working with us over the course of the year.

I would also like to thank all those members who have contributed to informing and influencing the Park Authority; for example in the Farmers Breakfasts organised by the Park Authority. In Jan/Feb 2015, Farmers Breakfasts included discussion of the new Countryside Stewardship scheme and Leader program, and of the new SDNPA Food and Drink Portal.

I would like to say a few words about the South Downs Partnership, which is not high profile but does useful work. Individuals on the Partnership have a role to bring their specialist knowledge and experience to bear on strategic work which the Authority has in progress. They help the Authority to shape its strategic thinking before documents get to a stage ready for wider consultation. SDLM has had three members on the Partnership since inception: Chris Passmore, David Taylor and myself. David Taylor's place has just been taken on by David Uren. A fourth SDLM member Jane Cecil also sits on the Partnership for the National Trust.

The Partnership has had a number of joint workshops with Park Authority members this year:

- Sep 14: how to embed an Ecosystems Approach in the planning system
- Nov 14: how to develop a Spatial Portrait for the Local Plan
- Feb 15: how to deliver access effectively
- April 15: how to develop the Local Plan spatial portrait(2), and, a Research Strategy

These discussions give Partners scope to influence the 'how not to' and the 'how to' do these things. We help key officers in the Authority to understand implications for the land management sector at an early stage. If any member would like their name to be considered when a Partnership vacancy comes up, please let me know. There might possibly be a role at this time for an additional Partnership member with a strong involvement in diversified tourism business activity.

There will be a vacancy among the Secretary of State appointed Members of the Authority itself this September. SDLM would like to encourage applications from land managers or others with understanding of land management; anyone with likely interest in this position please contact me.

This has been the first full year of SDLM sponsorship of the website of the South Downs Farmland Bird Initiative, www.sdfarmlandbirds.com, and the first year's South Downs Farmland Bird Survey results are now available. I would like to commend the site to anyone who has not yet looked there. The SDFBI partnership includes SDLM SDNPA GWCT and RSPB. It is an opportunity for SDLM to promote public and Park understanding of the wider benefits of farming.