

South Downs Land Managers

Annual General Meeting

12.00 noon 27th June 2018

Chanctonbury Meeting Room, The South Downs Centre, Midhurst

Present: Andrew Elms, James Cooper, Mike Tristram, Nigel Clutton, Simon Ward, Stan Abbott, William Woolmer, Phillip Kirk, Peter Munns, Steve Peach, Alan Radcliffe, Pennie Radcliffe, Ciara Williams, Richard Denman, Sally Maybury, Cameron McKillop

Minutes

1. **Apologies:** Andrew Thomas, David Ashcroft, David Taylor, Robin Edwards, Sabrina Harcourt-Smith, William White, Tim Hassel, Oliver Harwood, Carola Godman-Irving
2. **Minutes** of the AGM meeting held on 30th May 2017 were approved, there were no matters arising
3. **Chairman's observations:**
 - William Wolmer, reported that he had attended the National Parks' conference hosted by the South Downs NPA. He presented on his experience of farming in the National Park. There were also presentations on planning, local food networks and the future of agri-environmental schemes.
 - He had a second opportunity in March as a panellist in a Question Time Panel at Bedales where he shared a platform with the Permanent Secretary from Defra
 - The incorporation of CLA and NFU members farming within the Park into the SDLM has been completed.
 - 4 Liaison meetings with the NPA have been held covering a variety of topics.
 - The Local Plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State, with significant changes being made as a result of comments submitted on behalf of the SDLM.
 - A review of the Partnership Management Plan is now underway, which the SDLM Executive will respond to on behalf of Members
 - Many farmers have contributed to the Farmers breakfasts held by the NPA which fed into the Farming for the Future bid to Defra, based on the farm cluster groups and promoting landscape scale approach and the land app (local software to assist in Countryside Stewardship applications).
 - A number of Whole Estate plans have been endorsed by the NPA, SDLM has provided feedback as to how the process might be amended with a more relaxed approach to the ecosystem services approach.
 - More rangers have been appointed in each of the areas, and Farm Liaison Officer appointed – Bruce Foulkes. SDLM have long argued that such a post should be 2 way.
 - Planning: NPA regularly report to the liaison group on agricultural planning applications. Over the past year 94 have been approved and 13 refused.
 - Going forward Robin Edwards and William White from CLA and NFU respectively will be getting more involved in the SDLM

4. Election of Executive Committee

The following people had put themselves forward for election to the Executive Committee.

Proposed by Richard Denman and Seconded by Sally Maybury

Stan Abbott

David Ashcroft

Nigel Clutton

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James Cooper
Mike Tristram
William Wolmer

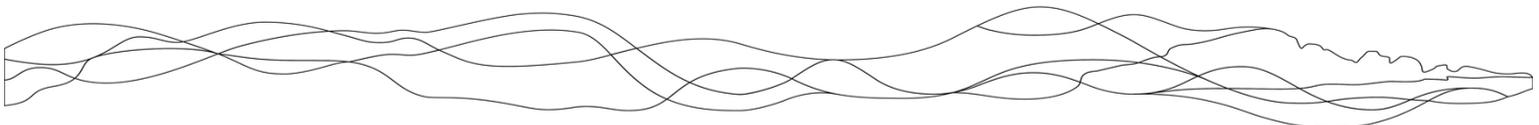
Sabrina Harcourt-Smith
Andrew Elms
Pennie Radcliffe

David Taylor
Simon Ward

5. **Election of Officers:** William Wolmer agreed to stand as Chairman for another year there being no other nominations William was duly elected. Proposer: Andrew Elms Secunder: Simon Ward. James Cooper and Mike Tristram agreed to support William as Vice Chairmen. Proposed: Simon Ward Seconded: Andrew Elms. Andrew Thomas had asked to stand down as Treasurer. It was agreed that as the book-keeper did most of the work of the Treasurer that he be asked to act as Treasurer in an Ex-officio capacity.
6. **Treasurer's Report :** In the absence of the Treasurer the Chairman presented the report. In response to a question regarding the SDNPA grant AT reported that the invoice is normally sent out in November. Richard Denman asked if the report should include a forecast. It was agreed that in future years that this would be done. SW raised the issue of those people that were still paying subscriptions. AT reported that everybody had been contacted when it had been agreed that we would no longer be charging subscriptions informing them of the decision, suggesting that they stop their direct debits. MT suggested that in future they should be shown as donations rather than subscriptions. It was agreed that AT should write again to those who had not cancelled their Direct Debits.
7. **Liaison Officer's Report** AT outlined activities that she had carried out over the past year.
 - Organisation of the Summer meeting at Ridgeview Estate
 - Email circulations included events and information that are felt will be of interest to those farming within the Park such as SDNPA Landowner breakfast meetings, Broadband & Coast to Capital LEP capital funding, Big farmland bird count, Farmland bird ID training day, Secretary of State appointments to NPA Board, Sheepwatch conference, the endorsement of the Wiston Estate WEP by SDNPA,
 - Newsletters x 2 Autumn and Spring
 - Drafted and drew together comments on behalf of the SDLM on the South Downs Pre-submission Local Plan. Which led to significant changes.
 - In line with new GDPR laws all members have been contacted and a new Privacy Policy drafted. 4 people chose to withdraw membership. Current membership stands at 490
 - Updated website including the addition of minutes of meetings, agendas and papers
8. **Way forward for SDLM:** WWo had met with WWh and RE It was agreed that:
 - it is useful to have a third lobbying group – above and beyond their individual and joint efforts – as it allows for a multi-channel approach.
 - It is a potentially useful proxy/stalking horse for sensitive issues.
 - It is timely to learn the lessons of SDNP with a number of further NPs being proposed in our region.

There is an opportunity for the NFU/CLA to make better use of the group and deliver, to a greater extent, the 'handover' of responsibilities envisaged in 2016.

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The problem, however, is that:

- both NFU and CLA are struggling to find new volunteers to join the Executive Committee to replace some of the longstanding members who are now keen to move on. This is not a specific problem to SDLM – finding volunteers for any committee is becoming increasingly difficult.
- The suggestion at the last EC meeting that representatives from farmer clusters in the NP be seconded to SDLM was likely to hit the same barrier.

But the Glover review of National Parks presents an opportunity to co-opt members for the purpose of contributing to this review from a South Downs perspective. It was thought that seeking volunteers for 'task and finish' groups of this nature would potentially have more traction than recruiting committee members.

It was agreed that it was important to be clear about what SDLM was not:

- It did not need to respond on national (non SDNP specific) consultations
- It was not the unfiltered mouthpiece of SDNP

There is, however an opportunity for the group to be more proactive in taking issues to the SDNP, to make better use of liaison meetings and make them more interactive – giving more feedback and constructive criticism to the park and pushing back harder where necessary.

- 9. Privacy Policy** The Liaison Officer presented the proposed Privacy Policy. It was agreed that it should be re-written in the third person otherwise it was approved for putting onto the website.
- 10. Review of National Parks:** 70 years after the Hobhouse Report the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan set out plans to review the 34 AONBs and 10 NPs to see if there are opportunities to expand their areas, how designated areas can boost wildlife, support recovery of habitats and connect more people to nature. The Chairman suggested that the SDLM might have a role to play in reviewing the lessons learnt in the South Downs. CW asked for feedback on the Review should further details be forthcoming at the Liaison meeting.
- 11. Any other business**
 - SA reported that Ash die back has been found throughout the South Downs. Wholesale clearance has been taking place in some areas. Guidance is available on the FC website.

Dates of future meetings

- 28th September 2018 10-11.30 am Joint Liaison meeting; followed by Executive Committee
- 5th December 2018 10-11.30am SDNPA/SDLM Liaison Meeting; followed by Executive Committee

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