

## South Downs Land Managers

### Annual General Meeting

9.45 am 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019

Chanctonbury Meeting Room, The South Downs Centre, Midhurst

#### Draft Minutes

**Present:** William Wolmer, (Chairman) Tim Bamford, Nicola Braithwaite, Henry Brice, Pen Davey, Andrew Elms, Oliver Harwood, Katherine Haslam, Ned Mersey, Steve Peach, Edward Seymour, Edward Smith, Mathew Strugnell, David Taylor, Trevor Trigg, Mike Tristram, Simon Ward, William White, Alison Tingley

- 1. Apologies:** Nigel Hanbury, Sabrina Harcourt-Smith, Annie Brown, James Cooper, Nigel Clutton, Penny Stokes, Sarah Le May, Kevin Powell
- 2. Minutes of the AGM meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018** were approved. **Matters arising:** 9. Privacy policy was amended as per discussions at the last AGM and are available on the SDLM website. Other items will be dealt with under Chairman's observations or Treasurers Report.

#### **3. Chairman's & Liaison Officer's observations SDLM Chairman's review 2019**

**3.1 Meetings:** Only 2 Liaison meetings (September 2018 and April 2019) have been held this year. The December meeting was postponed until Feb then cancelled by SDNPA as they had nothing to report.

Topics discussed at Liaison meetings were:

- NPA reflections on Agricultural Bill and what SDNPA doing in connection – Farm clusters, Farm Liaison Officer
- SDNPA Permitted Development Guidance
- Glover review – SDNPA/SDLM responses
- Whole Estate Plan updates
- Chalara situation in SDs and SDNPA response
- Partnership Management Plan review: 10 revised outcomes organised under Purpose 1 -Enhance; Purpose 2 - Enjoy and Duty – Thrive. Priorities relevant to SDLM Members:
  - Outcome 1 Conservation and enhancement of landscape character Priority 1.3 Maximise environmental, cultural and economic benefits of agri-environment and forestry schemes across the NP
  - Outcome 2 Increased resilience of habitats and species to adapt to climate change impacts and other pressures. Priority 2.1 Improve soil and water

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quality by reducing soil erosion, improving carbon capture and filtration and reconnecting wetland habitats. Priority 2.2 Improve the resilience and quality of trees and woodlands in the NP

- Outcome 3: Well managed and connected habitats and increased populations of priority species. Priority 3.1 create, restore and improve areas of priority habitats. Priority 3.2 increase genetic diversity and resilience of target species and implement landscape scale strategy for dealing with invasive and pest species and diseases.
- Outcome 4 Enhancing cultural heritage. Priority 4.1 Increase conservation, awareness and understanding of cultural heritage in SDNP
- Outcome 5: Outstanding experiences for visitors and residents. Priority 5.2 Improve accessibility through network of high-quality routes connecting communities with the landscape, heritage, attractions transport hubs and gateways
- Outcome 9 Communities in NP are more sustainable. Priority 9.3 support improvements to digital infrastructure, broadband speed and coverage.
- Outcome 10 A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the NP. Priority 10.1 Strengthen and support sustainably managed land-based industries and local enterprise. Priority 10.2 Increase awareness and desirability of SD as a destination. Priority 10.3 Establish SD as an exemplar in sustainable tourism.
- New Environmental Land Management Scheme Tests and Trials: further round of workshops to develop

SDLM **Executive Committee** met once on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2019

Discussions included difficulties with pre-application planning advice, SDLM membership

**3.2 Consultations:** Two main consultation responses put together on behalf of SDLM by Liaison Officer

### **3.2.1 Response to Glover Landscape Review Call for Evidence.**

Main points:

What works well – support for SDLM, breakfast meetings, support for some farm clusters, Whole Estate Plans;

and what could be improved - better engagement with farmers on day to day basis, reducing the impact of the increasing number of visitors, delays in planning applications.

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Other comments: How NPAs might work with landowners post Brexit; better support for landowners in managing access and recreation; greater powers to control public walking, running and cycling events using public rights of way and demand contributions towards the upkeep of PROW; enabling installation of high speed broadband and affordable housing; increasing the proportion of SoS appointees on NP Authorities ensuring a minimum of 3 are active land owners/managers; Need to adequately fund landowners and farmers to take into account full range of ecosystem services that they provide.

### 3.2.2 Response to consultation on SD Local Plan Main Modifications

In general, previous comments from SDLM had been taken on board but there was still one policy on Farm and Forestry Diversification, where it was felt that wording was restrictive and would have a deleterious impact on a landowners' ability to diversify or develop their farming operations and therefore remain economic.

### 3.3 Liaison Officer's Report

The Chairman covered the consultations that were submitted on behalf of the SDLM members. Additional work is mainly administration (arranging meetings, recording minutes etc) and communications with landowners. These included:

#### 3.3.1 Communications with Members

- **2 Newsletters Autumn 2018 and Spring 2019**
- **9 Blogs:** B&H City Council CIL draft submission of charges, Ash Die Back, Big Butterfly Count, Affordable housing grant scheme, Countryside Stewardship deadline extension, Upcoming Southern Water, SE Water & Portsmouth Water Stakeholder workshops
- **Email circulations:** 6 including
  - Landowner Breakfast dates
  - Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme
  - Woodland Conference

Of the last 4 circulations percentage opens of email have been between 37 and 41%

- Another area of work is keeping the **website** up to date
- Eight Enquiries via website were dealt with during the year, these included: advice as to who to contact at SDNPA for planning advice, farmer comments on no deal Brexit,

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how SDLM set up and works from Broads Authority NPA who are looking to put in place a similar liaison group.

**3.3.2 SDLM Contacts:** SDLM currently have 670 contacts on the system (239 SDLM, 234 NFU, 197 CLA)

#### 4. Election of Executive Committee

Members of the SDLM Executive Committee were proposed from the Chair and agreed unanimously. New members are shown in bold

David Ashcroft  
James Cooper  
**Oliver Harwood**  
Simon Ward

**Henry Brice**  
Andrew Elms  
David Taylor  
William Wolmer

Nigel Clutton  
Sabrina Harcourt-Smith  
Mike Tristram

5. **Election of Officers:** William White proposed that William Wolmer continue as Chairman. This was seconded by David Taylor

There being no other nominations, William Wolmer proposed James Cooper and Mike Tristram to continue as Vice Chairman. This was agreed unanimously.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Craig Anderson of B4Bookkeeping had prepared the financial statement which was explained by the Liaison Officer. In 2017 SDLM stopped taking subscriptions. In accordance with wishes of Members at the last AGM, standing orders that had not been cancelled have been treated as donations. It was agreed at the 2018 AGM that the Liaison Officer should write again to members, reminding them that we were no longer charging subscriptions. The majority of people who had standing orders still in place have now cancelled these, although a few have confirmed that they are happy to continue to support the SDLM. These donations have decreased from £780 in 2017 to £220 during the current year.

Since 2017 SDLM have also reduced expenses by reducing administrative costs and saved on bookkeeper expenses invoices no longer need to be sent out. Other expenses such as meeting costs, printing and website are kept to a minimum.

Although total outgoings are expected to be less than last year, due to the reduction in income for the coming year, it is expected that there will be a slightly higher deficit than last year which will be covered from Reserves, which now stand at £3418.

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Mike Tristram gave an explanation as to why subscriptions are no longer being charged. As a 'Committee' of CLA and NFU Members, SDLM are able to reach a much wider audience. At current rate of income/expenditure it is expected that reserves will last 2-3 years at which point the situation will be reviewed. Not all were in agreement to not charge a subscription, but a majority voted to retain the status quo for the time being..

There being no questions on the Treasurers Report it was approved.

## 7. Way forward for SDLM

William White outlined discussions that had taken place between NFU/CLA and the Chairman as to how to raise the profile of SDLM, following comments from the SDNPA that many farmers at the Landowner breakfasts did not know that they were 'Members' of SDLM. It was felt that SDLM had benefits as a third organisation that can hold the SDNPA to account. There were a number of areas where it was felt that improvements could be made.

- Be more proactive in setting agendas and venues for the Liaison meetings
- Raise awareness of SDLM as opposed to SDNPA communications
- Seek out landowner representation to sit on NPA and Partnership
- AT to provide content to NFU/CLA to go in their newsletter to raise awareness of SDLM and its links to NFU/CLA
- Carry out a Member survey to seek issues of concern: climate change and how farmers can become more resilient in order to deliver the management plan in face of turbulence in markets, NPA support for farmers in NE compliance issues and Stewardship applications
- Highlight positive examples of where SDLM has helped Members
- Look at possibility of SDLM online Forum where Members can provide support to each other
- Get up to date staff list of SDNPA to ensure correct contacts are available on the website

## 8. Any other business

- William Wolmer brought to Members attention a book called 'Who Owns Britain? By Guy Shrubshole, which claims that landowner interests are over represented on NPAs. It proposes that more land should be in public ownership, in order to promote rewilding and that agricultural land within NPs should have greater controls.
- MT suggested that SDLM should liaise more closely with the Farm Cluster Groups. AT to seek Cluster Group in put to newsletter and explore potential for inviting facilitators to meeting with NPA

## Dates of future meetings

- 5th September 2019 10-11.30 am Joint Liaison meeting; followed by Executive Committee
- 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019 10-11.30am SDNPA/SDLM Liaison Meeting; followed by Executive Committee

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