

SDNPA : SDLMG : SDN Liaison Meeting
Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, GU29 9DH
Wednesday 27 June 2018
14:00-15:30



Present:

Margaret Paren – Chair of SDNPA, Trevor Beattie, CEO SDNPA, Andrew Lee – Director of Countryside Policy and Management, Jackie Nicholls – Executive Assistant to Andrew Lee, William Wolmer – Chair of SDLMG, Alison Tingley Liaison Officer SDLMG, Stan Abbott, Tim Bamford, James Cooper, Nigel Clutton, Andrew Elms, Patrick Glenn, Megan Lock, Alan Radcliffe, Pennie Radcliffe and Mike Tristram.

Bruce Fowkes – SDNPA [Items 2, 3 & 6]

Ruth James – SDNPA [Item 2]

1. Welcome

Margaret Paren welcomed attendees. The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 22 November 2017, were found to be accurate. Matters arising:

- A27 Arundel Scheme – SDNPA calling for a judicial review on Highways England’s preferred route.
- M3J9 update – SDNPA in regular dialogue with key stakeholders, with consideration of mitigation.
- Margaret Paren has a planned meeting with George Eustice MP on 11 July 2018; items for discussion may include: next steps on *Harmony and Health: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit*; EOI to Defra for farming pilots; the need to ensure the Agriculture Bill allows for local flexibility and tailoring in delivery.
- Other matters arising will be addressed in planned items.

2. Communications with farmers across the South Downs National Park – Ruth James

Ruth outlined how the SDNPA work and communicate with farmers and landowners, both currently and looking ahead.

- Working with farm clusters and the SDLMG enable us to share initiatives and best practice. How do we identify shared communications? Andrew Lee put forward the name of Mike Simms, Communication Officer for CLA. **Action:** Ruth James to make contact with Mike Simms.
- The future of farming is one the three key priorities set-out in our Public Affairs Strategy.
- The annual breakfasts with farmers and landowners are an excellent way for SDNPA colleagues to engage with farming communities. This year over 80 farmers, landowners and agents have attended the breakfasts; feedback from attendees has been very positive.
- Meet the Farmer plaques, which are situated along the South Downs Way, are proving very popular. The idea was formed by the Arun to Adur Farmers Group and will enable users to learn more about the land around them and to discover the farmer who owns that stretch of land. The plaques enable the user to connect to an application where farmers introduce themselves.
- There are various social media outlets, including: Facebook, Twitter and SDFC Network – all are well followed.
- The SDNPA can provide support on behalf of the land managers group.
- There is scope to extend some of the aforementioned initiatives into the forestry sector; through various forestry groups, SDNPA officers are working to explore possibilities.

William Wolmer commented that the Meet the Farmer plaques sounded an exciting initiative.

3. Farm Clusters update – Bruce Fowkes

- The formation of a Southern Facilitators Group, including clusters outside of the SDNP boundary but within the SE, will enable Facilitators to share ideas and issues, and provide a forum for discussion. As a large group, more impact is possible, particularly when lobbying Defra.
- South Downs Farm Clusters: made up of six clusters, covering at least two thirds of the Park. Each farm cluster on the South Downs has its own identity, priorities/targets and projects that have been set up to deliver them. Whilst it is important to maintain this identity, there are a number of common themes that offer an opportunity to share ideas and experiences, resources and to link delivery across the landscape.
- It was agreed that farming clusters is a positive initiative that offers real support and resources.

Andrew Lee pointed out that there is still work to do, for example, at the eastern end of the park there is patchy representation. 50% of Selborne cluster is outside of the park, but the SDNPA are relaxed about this.

Mike Tristram stated that it is gratifying to observe how far the farm clusters have developed since inception and that the structure is in place to further achieve the original vision.

4. National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Review (led by Julian Glover) – Trevor Beattie

The review was promised in the government paper, *A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment*. The review will be led by Julian Glover, supported by six advisory panel members; the review was launched approximately three weeks ago. The Terms of Reference for the review can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-parks-review-launched>.

The SDNPA welcome the review and have invited the review team to visit the SDNP, with a provisional visit date of 26/27 July.

Margaret Paren stated that the review is seen as a positive step by National Parks England, who have a roundtable meeting with Julian Glover on 05 July.

The Review will be discussed at the Landscapes for Life Conference, to be held on 24 July to 26 July, at the University of Kent.

5. Rural Development work with National Parks England – Andrew Lee

Kevin Bishop, CEO Dartmoor National Park Authority, is currently seeking comments from other National Parks as to whether further work on rural development is a priority for individual parks or for the collective body of Parks. Defra have a 'patchy' understanding of rural development, so there is real potential for impact here. LEADER funding, which is currently available as a part of the Rural Development Programme, providing grants, but any replacement/s for LEADER need to be fit for purpose.

6. Farming the Future: SDNP Pilot Scheme EOI and Defra – Andrew Lee

Andrew Lee confirmed that the SDNP had submitted an EOI to Defra, which had been well received. Defra have requested that all EOIs are now written into a Defra template, which we have duly done. We have once again expressed our interest in being involved in tests, trials and pilots.

Nigel James, Countryside and Policy Manager, is due to attend the Annual English Agriculture Rural Development Group later this week, items to be discussed will include: Environmental Land

Management Scheme (ELMS), current stewardship schemes and wider rural development – guest speakers will include Defra officers.

7. Updates

Local Plan

The South Downs Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 27 April 2018. We judge that the likely timing of the public hearings will be around October to November. Local Plan information can be found on our website: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/local-plan-examination/> - this is continually updated.

PMP Review

We are currently reviewing the Partnership Management Plan. Work is progressing well and we are planning to hold a Strategic Workshop on 25 September 2018, where Members, Partners and Officers will review priority programmes. We will then carry out public engagement and more work with partners before another workshop in January; this will include engagement at the farmers' breakfast meetings.

8. AOB

Velo South

It was noted that there have been concerns within communities around road closures, including access for medical visits, emergency services, getting to work and people who are generally cut-off. As the event is not National Park led, our permission for road closures is not required but a matter for WSCC and Highways. It was noted that special arrangements can be made if the organisers are contacts. The event will be evaluated and lessons learnt.

Agricultural Planning Application call-ins

The data was not provided for this meeting as it was noted at previous meetings that there are not particular patterns and the data only shows one call-in and that was approved. It was suggested that statistics could be posted on the website; however, quarterly reports already go to Committee meetings, the minutes of which are on the website.

Officers are working on *A Farmer's Guide to agricultural permitted development rights*, which should be available by the next meeting.

A27 north/south of Chichester

Has there been any further news on the possibility of the A27 Chichester road scheme? There is no pledge to carry out any further consultation; if the SDNPA receive any further proposals, we will respond.

Ragwort

Concerns were raised about the spread of Ragwort. A discussion ensued around the barriers to eradicating Ragwort and ways that it can be spread.

Meeting closed 15:30

Next meeting Friday 28 September 2018
