

**SDNPA and SDLMG Liaison Meeting**  
**Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, GU29 9DH**  
**Wednesday 22 November 2017**  
**14:00-15:30**



**SDNPA attendees:**

Margaret Paren (Chair)  
Andrew Lee  
Andy Beattie (Item 3)  
Rob Ainslie (item 4)  
Ruth James (item 2)  
Tim Slaney (item 4)  
Vicki Colwell (item 3)

**SDLMG attendees:**

William Wolmer (Chair)  
Alison Tingley  
David Taylor  
James Cooper  
Mike Tristram  
Oliver Harwood  
Simon Ward  
Stan Abbott  
Tim Bamford  
William White

**Apologies:**

Nigel James  
Trevor Beattie

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**1. Welcome**

Margaret Paren welcomed attendees. The minutes of the previous meeting, which included the South Downs Network, held on 07 September 2017, were found to be accurate. There were no matters arising.

**2. Reviews**

Health and Wellbeing Conference 11.10.17 – Andrew Lee

By way of background, Andrew explained that National Parks England have a joint accord with Public Health England, which was launched in the South Downs National Park on 08 September 2017; a key aim is to get more people using the National Parks to improve their health.

Andrew advised that the conference was very well received and feedback had been highly positive. A range of speakers both from the SDNPA and guest speakers, explored the health and wellbeing issues that face the international community, including: evidence and data, examples of projects and ways forward in this field. At the conference, it was emphasised that the National Park is a key asset and that interested professionals could be connecting with the Park to facilitate improvements in peoples' health and wellbeing.

Within the current review of the Partnership Management Plan, the SDNPA are looking at how to build-in Health and Wellbeing.

Discussion around cycling followed, in which the health and wellbeing benefits were recognised. However, the problem of cycle trespass was raised as a growing issue – this is often due to cyclists not planning their routes. Sponsored events have occasionally created hostility, causing pressure points and signage issues. Andrew advised the group that the SDNPA have a Walking and Cycling Strategy, which can be circulated after this meeting. **Action:** Jackie to circulate Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Mike Tristram alerted the group to care farms, the therapeutic use of farming practices to provide health, social or educational care services for vulnerable groups of people. The related costs of providing this service can be high, therefore funding is required. Andrew recommended to the group

the work of Dr William Bird, who spoke at the Health and Wellbeing Conference; Dr Bird advocates methods of healthcare beyond the current constraints of normal healthcare. In addition, Dartmoor National Park are currently trialling the benefits of care farms. It was recognised that health practitioners have to be sure of the health and wellbeing benefits when prescribing nature-related therapies.

### National Parks UK Conference 25.10.17 – 27.10.17 – Ruth James

Ruth James explained that every two years the 15 UK National Parks convene a conference to consider a particular theme, to learn from each other and stimulate debate through a range of renowned speakers, and through visits around the host National Park; 2017 was the turn of the South Downs National Park.

The conference was an opportunity to showcase the SDNP and enabled officers to highlight why the South Downs was designated a national park and emphasise its importance as a farming landscape. Delegates spent one and a half days in the Park, using the Goodwood Estate as a base. Highlights included:

- A lamp-lit tour of the Weald & Downland Living Museum, a hog roast and presentations from Frank Dean, President and CEO of Yosemite Conservancy and Dan Oakley, South Downs National Park Dark Skies Lead;
- Tours of the Eastern and Western Areas, where delegates visited key landscapes and business in the Park, met with Partners and sampled local produce;
- A drinks reception and banquet dinner at Goodwood House featuring local wine and food, with a welcome from Lord March and an after-dinner speech by Nicholas Crane, BBC 'Coast' presenter and author of the *Making of the British Landscape*;
- Presentations on the Conference theme of *National Parks for the Future* were given by:
  - Julia Bradbury: BBC presenter formerly of Countryfile and various walking series;
  - Professor Ian Bateman OBE: Professor of Environmental Economics at the University of Exeter and a member of the Natural Capital Committee;
  - Dr William Wolmer: Managing Director of Blackmoor Estate and Chair of the South Downs Land Managers Group;
  - Dr Sarah Mukherjee: formerly BBC Environment Correspondent, now CEO of Crop Protection Association;
  - Adam Philip Phillips: Mosaic Youth Engagement Project Lake District National Park

This was followed by a panel discussion and healthy debate, chaired by Julia Bradbury.

The delegate feed-back on the Conference was very positive.

### **3. Updates**

#### Post European Exit: Shaping Future Agricultural Policy – Andrew Lee and Margaret Paren

Andrew Lee and Margaret Paren updated the group regarding current developments, nationally and at local level, around future agricultural policy.

- Defra have recruited new officials to deal with the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.
- We are awaiting the 25 Year Environment Plan, which we are hoping will be published in the next few months.
- Environment Minister, Dr Thérèse Coffey MP, has announced an ambition to plant 12 million trees by 2020.
- The National Parks England Future of Farming Task and Finish Group has developed a Policy Discussion Paper, entitled Farming in the English National Parks.

- Lord Gardiner is visiting the South Downs National Park on 01 December 2017 as part of National Tree Week; his schedule will include a visit to Petersfield to see and hear about the i-Tree Eco Study and addressing the South Downs Partnership meeting.
- Andrew Lee and his team has met with the water companies working in the South Downs Park to ensure that their next 5 year business plans take account of farmers and land-owners.
- The South Downs National Park is continuing to raise the profile of the importance of Natural Capital and has recently met with a specialist group in this area, led by Legal and General. The recently published Brite Blue Report, supports the importance of Natural Capital and recommends a long-term commitment of central government funding of at least £3.1 billion a year on rural payments until 2026-27. The Green Halo Report also explores the importance of understanding how natural capital can help tackle the big economic, environmental and societal challenges we face.

### Arundel A27 and M3 J9 - Andy Beattie

Arundel A27 consultation finished on 16 October 2017; the South Downs National Park Authority has responded in line with statutory purposes.

In the response, we pointed-out that alternative routes outside of the SDNP had been discounted; the reason for this is given on page 40 of the Highways England A27 Arundel Bypass Public Consultation Document. The reason for rejection of option 5B is stated to be that this route, “Significantly exceeds the allocated budget, and provided less value for money that [sic] the options being consulted upon.”

In addition, we have raised concerns that the process followed by Highways England would not allow an Inspector to apply the Major Development Test because routes, which would avoid the National Park altogether were excluded from the public consultation purely on cost grounds.

The level of mitigation proposed is unclear and the degree of compensation proposed is not clear; without such clarity a definitive assessment of the impact is not possible

It is also worth noting that the SDNPA are not the planning authority and that all three of the proposed routes pass through Ancient Woodland.

The M3 J9 is a strategic route and is being managed by a different Highways England department to the Arundel A27 team; the consultation period will be at the beginning of 2018. The M3 is a significant barrier between the population of Winchester and the National Park, which leads to increased pressure on vulnerable and sensitive areas of land. The SDNPA hopes to ensure good mitigation or compensation should the route travel through the SDNP.

### Whole Estate Plans – Vicki Colwell

Vicki Colwell updated the group on Whole Estate Plans (WEPs). Currently there are two WEPs endorsed, Newton Valence and Wiston, which can be viewed on the SDNPA’s website. There are currently nine estates actively developing their plans and a further 10 landowners who are engaged in dialogue with us. The WEPs are very diverse and vary from independent landowners, to schools and public bodies. In light of the first two WEPs being endorsed, Vicki advised that the process notes would be updated and published to help other potential landowners.

Vicki informed the group that WEPs are taken to the Policy and Resources Committee for endorsement, not Planning Committee and, as part of this process, members and officers make site visits to help understand the plan.

It was asked if there is scope to shorten the WEP process as we learn more about it; Vicki Colwell advised for interested parties to approach her team as early as possible, even if they were not sure about progressing further; this can often sort out any issues early. A concern was raised as to whether there might be pressure to produce a WEP, but Vicki reassured the group that WEPs are voluntary.

**Action:** Jackie to liaise with Chris Paterson re including an item on the next Parish Council Meeting agenda.

There has been much interest in the WEP approach, including: planning magazines, local newspapers, Argus, CLA, other national parks, Savills and bodies interested in natural capital.

#### **4. Planning**

##### Agricultural Planning Application call-ins [Q2] and Farming and the Development Management System – Andrew Lee, Tim Slaney and Rob Ainslie

Planning application statistical data was explained, including the total number of applications (broken down into authorities), types of applications and a summary of decisions made.

The group were reminded that in the forthcoming Farmers' Breakfast meetings items will include: a Planning Update as well as a Ranger and Planning Surgery.

Rob Ainslie talked through two planning application examples, firstly cattle related intensive farming and another for farm diversification related to tourism. Discussion followed regarding the impact of delays in the planning process to applicants' businesses as well as the terminology used; it was suggested that the use of the word 'intensive' creates a negative public perception and is not helpful. In addition, responses from Rob Ainslie reported that the framework and legislation that planners work from are not always understood, from which a discussion ensued about how processes and behaviours could change in the future.

The role of host authorities was explained and feedback given on planning application experiences. Rob Ainslie reassured the group that concerns had been noted and there would be opportunities for the SDNPA to explore the concerns at various forthcoming meetings with planning teams.

**Meeting closed 15:30**

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