

SDNPA, SDN and SDLMG Liaison Meeting
Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, GU29 9DH
Thursday 07 September 2017
14:00-15:30

SDNPA attendees:

Margaret Paren (Chair)
Trevor Beattie
Andrew Lee
Andy Beattie (Item 8)
Nigel James (Item 3)
Jackie Nicholls note-taker
Chris Passmore

SDLMG attendees:

William Wolmer (Chair)
Alison Tingley
Andrew Elmes
James Cooper
Mike Tristram (& SDN)
Oliver Harwood
Simon Ward
William White

SDN attendees:

Adrian Webb
Cindy Jones
David Johnson
Jim Glover
John Templeton
Martin Vasey
Nigel Brown
Owen Plunkett
Robin Milner-Gulland
Robert Cheesman
Steve Ankers
Tony Struthers

Apologies:

Andrew Thomas
Chris Passmore
David Ashcroft
David Taylor
Nigel Clutton
Robin Edwards
Stan Abbott
Tony Whitbread

1. Welcome

Margaret Paren welcomed attendees and introductions were made.

2. Review of Partnership Management Plan - Andrew Lee

The South Downs National Park Authority has to review its Partnership Management Plan (PMP) every five years and we are currently reviewing the PMP in preparation for 2019-2024. As part of the review, we have judged the PMP as generally fit for purpose with the long-term vision still relevant. There are many opportunities for celebration to which we are building a library of case studies reflecting the wide range of projects, achievements and learning that has taken place so far in the South Downs National Park.

The focus for review will be around delivery plans; we have divided the work into eight parts:

Landscape and Biodiversity
Cultural Heritage
Walking and Cycling
Education
Volunteering
Health and Wellbeing
Economy
Tourism

As we look ahead, we are developing a framework that has more focus and priority; as part of this we are strengthening links with our partners, for example, the water companies, who are also currently in their own review cycle of which we can make sure links to the National Park's PMP are included.

3. Post European Exit: Shaping Future Agricultural Policy update – Nigel James

Nigel explained that between April to June 2017 the SDNPA held three Farmers' Workshops with the working title 'Your chance to influence the Future of Farming in the South Downs National Park'. The main aims of the workshops were to start building an evidence base to shape a future agricultural / agri-environment scheme in the South Downs and to discuss how it could be market-tested. Paul Silcock, from Cumulus Consultants, has been commissioned to help to develop an evidence-base and a possible way forward for a pilot scheme/s. The workshops focussed on the following areas: key

priorities and principles; delivery and practicalities; future scheme and pilot scheme; the Summary Report on the workshops was circulated before this meeting. The workshops were well received by attendees; a smaller group of farmers will be invited to help develop said pilot at the appropriate time. Nigel added that Natural England (NE) are committed to the idea of developing a pilot scheme and have agreed to collaborate with the SDNPA in appointing a Farming Officer to oversee future works.

William Wolmer queried whether the funds available for a Farming Officer could not be given to people already on the ground. Nigel advised that by collaborating with NE it would enable consistency; NE have also hinted that there may be more money available next year and this could be used on the ground.

Trevor Beattie added that the European Exit should be seen as an opportunity and has created rich ground for pilot schemes.

Steve Ankers commented that the Future of Farming post European Exit and the work that the SDNPA are carrying should be on the Network Agenda; consideration should be given to how the Network can support the SDNPA and SDLMG.

Parallel to our own work, National Parks England have set up a Future of Farming group to consider how National Parks in England should respond to both the wider Brexit situation and the two Green Papers when they come out (discussed at the last meeting on 30 May); this group have produced a Policy Paper, which will be circulated to attendees of today's meeting.

4. Agricultural Planning Application call-ins [Quarter 3] – Andrew Lee

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.

Discussion followed regarding concerns around specific planning applications by farmers. William White raised concerns about how long parts of the planning process takes and the subsequent negative impact it has on farmers – these were noted and Andrew Lee took an action to raise with Tim Slaney, Director of Planning for SDNPA.

Action: Andrew Lee to speak with Tim Slaney and suggest a meeting with William White.

5. Whole Estate Plans –current status – Andrew Lee

Andrew Lee set out the context of Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) in the South Downs National Park. Large estates are encouraged to produce WEPs as they allow the SDNPA to have an overview of large estates, also helping the Planning Committee to see the context, and they support the Purposes of the National Park.

It was reported that the SDNPA currently have 24 ongoing conversations about WEPs. Wiston WEP was endorsed on 20 June 2017 and can be viewed on the SDNPA website. Newton Valence WEP is due to be presented at P&R committee on 19 September.

6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – Andrew Lee

The SDNPA began charging CIL on 1st April 2017; the details of the rates charged and what types of development it applies to can be found on the SDNPA website.

It was explained that the SDNPA will be producing an Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP), which will be a 5 year plan setting out how the SDNPA will collect and spend CIL – within that 5 year plan will be a rolling annual list of projects which will be prioritised for CIL funding. The SDNPA are currently 'calling for projects' to go on that rolling annual list. Closing date for this year's call for projects is 29 September 2017. Interested parties can make enquiries and request a form by emailing cil@southdowns.gov.uk

7. Future of publically owned sites in the South Downs National Park – Steve Ankers

Steve stated that it was good to hear that the Eastbourne Downlands are not now to be sold. Steve asked for any update on Seven Sisters as it was known that discussions were ongoing. It was explained that a National Park partnership approach was being taken to explore the future of Seven Sisters and

that the SDNPA are trying to ensure farmers' voices come first. With regard to Brighton and Hove Downland sales, these are currently on hold.

8. Transport infrastructure, to include A27 and Exceat bridge – Steve Ankers and Andy Beattie

A27 Arundel: Public consultation is currently live for A27 Arundel, and the different bodies involved in raising awareness of options proposed and giving opinions were discussed. Andy Beattie advised that the SDNPA were developing their response, which would go through due process within the authority and be submitted in the near future.

Andy Beattie explained that Highways England will be announcing the preferred route for improvements to the stretch of A27 east of Lewes on 26 September 2017 – consultation starts late 2017 and the proposed date for the start of the work is 2020.

During discussion about how proposals and options are developed and taken forward, Trevor Beattie stressed the importance of all proposals / options being evidence-based before they are allowed to proceed. Andrew Lee pointed out that Highways England have a responsibility to do this through S62 of the Environment Act.

Margaret advised that she sits on the Transport for the South-East Shadow Partnership Board, representing protected sites.

9. AOB

- **West Sussex / SDNPA Draft Minerals Plan** – this item was proposed by David Johnson, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE). Concerns were raised about the Minerals Plan. The Mineral Local Plan will be subject to a public examination, with hearings due to take place between Tuesday 19 September and Thursday 28 September.
- **Planning applications** – It was pointed out that it was just as important to devote enough resources to individual planning applications as it is to planning enforcement. As part of the discussion Trevor Beattie reminded members of the SDLMG and SDN to encourage subscription to the SDNPA monthly Newsletter; this allows people to become directly involved and keep up-to-date with news and developments.
- **South Downs Food Network update** - Alison Tingley, SDLMG. Trevor Beattie explained that the South Downs Food network was created by Natural Partnerships Community Interest Company and manages projects to promote food and farming. The network continues to develop and offers many ways of supporting local food and farming, including: commercial initiatives, showcasing, programmes of activities to help link-up local businesses and the Sussex Food and Drink Awards.
- **Shared Identity** – Discussion followed regarding how the SDNP's shared identity was being used across the Park. It was reported that there are over 90 users of the shared identity, although non-government organisations are reluctant to use it. Some examples of the shared identity being used includes: on some buses that travel around the Park; on boundary markers of the SDNP; on new designs for finger posts and Langham Brewery.

Meeting closed 15:30
