

South Downs Land Managers



Autumn 2018 Newsletter

Welcome back to our latest newsletter. If you have any issues or queries that you would like raised with the South Downs National Park Authority please contact your Liaison Officer, Alison Tingley on sdlm@southdownsland.com, who can help you get in touch with the right person.

Dates for your diaries

Landowner Breakfast Meetings

7th February 2019 South Downs Centre
12th February 2019 Plumpton College
13th February 2019 venue tbc

SDNPA News in brief

Farming Officer Appointed: Bruce Fowkes has been appointed as SDNPA Farming Officer. Previously with RSPB, Bruce's new role is to co-ordinate the Farm Clusters, working with the existing groups to get wider coverage over the South Downs. He facilitates communications between the groups in the South Downs and with the public, through initiatives such as the South Downs Farm Cluster Twitter and 'Meet the Farmer' videos. He also co-ordinates the Southern Facilitators Group which provides a joint voice of the clusters to Defra.

Meeting the public: Six farmers from the Arun to Adur Farm Cluster Group have been working with the SDNPA to produce short films about their work looking after the National Park. Twelve posts have now been placed on public rights of way between the Rivers Adur and Arun. Members of the public are invited to use their phones to access these films using either NFC function or QR codes. You can also watch the films on their website at:

<http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/watch-meet-farmers-care-national-park/>



Brighton Chalk Management Partnership (ChaMP): The Environment Agency, Natural England, Southern Water, Brighton & Hove City Council and University of Brighton ChaMP project partners have spent the past year researching whether using cover crops can reduce nitrates from fertilisers getting into our ground water.

Over the past year the team have worked with two farmers in the Brighton area who planted different varieties of crops and left a bare fallow control plot. They then collected water samples from the soil from each area of crop and fallow ground. The results of the research, carried out by University of Brighton, are encouraging. All types of cover crop were found to significantly reduce nitrates leaching into groundwater compared to leaving it fallow over winter. The amount it was reduced by varied from between 74 and 99% and this depended both on the crop but also on the crop's location. This suggests that other factors also play a role and that the best results will come from individual farms using tailored 'recipes' for their cover crops.

Other issues might come to light in the longer term but concerns that the introduction of cover crops might increase pests, resulting in the need for more pesticides, were unfounded. There were no more snails and slugs found on the cover crops than in the control fallow areas.

Meeting updates

Liaison Meeting: The SDLM Executive Group has met with the SDNPA three times so far, in 2018, with a further meeting due in December. Topics for discussion included Brexit and Glover Review, the Partnership Management Plan Review, relevant publications from the SDNPA and communications with farmers, Minutes of these meetings are available on the [SDLM website](#).

SDLM AGM: The AGM was held on 27th June at the South Downs Centre in Midhurst. Minutes of the meeting are available on the [SDLM website](#)

Work on the ground

A small selection of work carried out by staff and volunteers in the SDNP

- Completed field surveys along the River Meon, confirming their dispersal and continued breeding success.
- Harvested seed from a wildflower meadow near Selborne with the Winchester Downs Farm Cluster.
- Improved a permissive path at Southease.
- Carried out invasive species surveys on the Hammer Stream catchment.
- Cut and raked regrowth at Halcombe Farm Local Wildlife Site and Anchor Bottom SSSI to improve chalk grassland habitat.
- Completed a four year introduction program at Deep Dean in East Sussex by translocating warbiter crickets.
- Carried out Dormouse survey at Graffham Down and completed a deer exclusion fence on the site to protect hazel coppice regrowth.
- Cleared ramparts at Devil's Dyke Iron Age Hillfort to encourage grassland species.
- Carried out work at Verdley Wood near Henley to improve the habitat for the Pearl-border Fritillary.



Planning update

National Park Local Plan:

The examination in public for the South Downs Local Plan is now underway. The program and details of the examination can be found on the website, with links to core documents:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/local-plan-examination/>

Agricultural Permitted Development Rights – A Farmers Guide

A new guidance document has been produced by Bourne Rural Planning Consultancy Ltd on behalf of the SDNPA, in order to provide farmers and landowners with a better understanding of the key requirements and procedures concerning agricultural permitted development rights legislation. The document is available on their website at: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/A-Farmer%E2%80%99s-Guide-to-Agricultural-Permitted-Development-Rights.pdf>

Other news

Glover Review call for evidence

Nearly 70 years after legislation was brought in to protect some of England's finest landscapes, the Government is carrying out a review into whether National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are still fit for purpose. Led by Julian Glover the review will look at:

- the existing statutory purposes for National Parks and AONBs and how effectively they are being met
- the alignment of these purposes with the goals set out in the 25-Year Environment Plan
- the case for extension or creation of new designated areas
- how to improve individual and collective governance of National Parks and AONBs, and how that governance interacts with other national assets
- the financing of National Parks and AONBs
- how to enhance the environment and biodiversity in existing designations
- how to build on the existing eight-point plan for National Parks and to connect more people with the natural environment from all sections of society and improve health and wellbeing
- how well National Parks and AONBs support communities
- the process of designating National Parks and AONBs and extending boundary areas, with a view to improving and expediting the process

Members of the Panel have visited many AONBs and National Parks, including the South Downs. If you have strong views on how any of the above you have until 18th December to submit evidence via their online consultation: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/land-use/landscapes-review-call-for-evidence/consultation/intro/>



Agriculture Bill

The UK Government has pledged to continue to commit the same cash total in funds (some €4bn per year) for farm support across the UK until the end of this parliament, expected in 2022. It has pledged that “any changes made to agricultural funding would reflect the Government’s aim of securing a better future for UK agriculture and for the environment”.

The Secretary of State will have new powers to provide financial assistance to those managing the land and delivering public benefits such as air and water quality, public access and productivity. To make way for this system, direct payments (as currently provided for under the Common Agricultural Policy) will be phased out over a seven-year transition period from 2021 to 2027, after which no direct payments will be made. Powers to ‘de-link’ the Basic Payment Scheme from farming requirements will allow ‘de-linked’ payments to be made in a lump sum allowing farmers to invest in their business, diversify or retire from farming.

FC Ash die back guidelines

In light of ash die-back, Forestry Commission have published new [guidance](#) to support woodland owners in the management of ash in woodlands, note 46 provides practical advice to those with responsibility for the management of ash in woodlands in England.

The guidance has been informed by UK researchers and practitioners, and draws on evidence from Europe, where the disease has a 25-year history.

Individual landowners are responsible for the care and management of trees on their land and should take a strategic approach to the management of ash. The FC strongly recommend that all owners of woodland containing ash prepare or amend existing management plans to describe how ash will be managed. This guidance should not be considered proscriptive, and the choice of action will depend on owners' and managers' objectives, the woodland setting, and the level of ash dieback infection, including any immediate health and safety concerns. Use the ash dieback management decision tool at the end of the guidance to help with this.



[The Woodland tree health grant](#) is available year-round to support the restocking of those woodlands that have been felled due to a confirmed tree health issue. Please see their [Woodland Support page on GOV.UK](#) for more information and eligibility criteria.

Unless trees are dead or pose a danger to the public, felling of diseased ash currently requires a [felling licence](#) from the Forestry Commission. Landowners should ensure that they have long term felling permissions in place, including on open farmland, to allow outbreaks of ash dieback to be managed without delay. Such a felling licence application should consider all the trees on the property, including those outside of woodlands e.g. on roadsides, hedgerows and public rights of way, and not just those in woodland settings.

Separate advice on managing non-woodland ash will be published later in the year.

Forestry Commission Felling Licence Online

A new online service is now available and can be used to apply for, track, manage and print approved felling licences online. You can access the service and guidance via www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-online-for-a-felling-licence

If you have made a felling licence application since January 2018 please contact the Forestry Commission before you apply for a new licence using Felling Licence Online, as they may be able to save you time by transferring your land profile (mapping and property profile data) to your user account. Email: fellinglicenceonline@forestrycommission.gov.uk to arrange this.

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