

## Spring 2016 Newsletter

Welcome back to our latest newsletter. It is difficult to tell from the weather if it is autumn, winter or spring, but as it is March it must be Spring. Although no-one seems to have told the plants in my garden, I currently have roses, daffodils, snowdrops and geraniums all flowering at the same time!

**If you have not yet paid your subscription please can you do so as soon as possible, if paying by cheque please make sure that you put your farm/estate name on the reverse, alternatively payments can be made by BACS as detailed on your invoice.**

### Date for your diary:

25<sup>th</sup> May Executive Committee Meeting followed by Liaison meeting with the NPA

6th June 2016 AGM – The Dover Barn, Angmering, West Sussex

### SDNPA News in brief

- Work continued to manage and improve various sites across the South Downs with further scrub removal and grazing dexter cattle introduced at Mill Hill Nature Reserve; coppicing at Jointer Copse in Ditchling, Rewell Wood, Paper Mill Wood, Deeps Copse, Marwell Zoo, Arlington Reservoir, Stanmer Park and Tottington Wood; chalk heath restoration at Levin Down; tumuli clearance at Lewes golf course; and heathland restoration at Chapel and Ambersham Commons.



Radio-tracking surveys of the newly-discovered Barbastelle bat colony at Slindon showed that these bats are using a wide range of habitats around the maternity roost (some are even travelling across the A27). This important data will help the NPA to protect, expand and reconnect habitat for the Barbastelle, which is one of Europe's rarest and most threatened bat species. Bechstein and Barbastelle bats are the subject of a £2.9m EU Life+ bid which is being led by the National Trust.

- Staff & volunteers have been involved in doormouse monitoring on two sites in the NPA at Binsted and Alfriston. In Hampshire, during 7 days of surveying, 321 harvest mouse nests were also found. The last nest record was of only one in 1999. Staff also worked with five farms within the Selborne Landscape Partnership area to carry out harvest mouse habitat sampling.



- SDNPA staff met with partners to discuss the ongoing farmland bird work including the early results from this year's survey work and specific plans for two species that have suffered steep declines; turtle dove and lapwing.

- Staff continued to monitor the Construction of the Rampion cable route across the South Downs with a particular focus on archaeological issues, tree protection zones and the method for turf stripping and reinstatement on chalk grassland at Tottington Mount.
  - On 26 October the SDNPA supported National Parks England's Taste National Parks campaign, using the opportunity to promote the great produce from across the South Downs and the new South Downs Food Portal.
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## Meeting updates

### Landowner Breakfasts

A series of landowner breakfasts were organized by the SDNPA to which all members of the SDLM were invited. Feedback from these has been very positive, with presentations on local LEADER funding, the new Countryside Stewardship scheme, including details of cluster group facilitation funds, an update on the Local Plan, and an outline of permitted development rights. Anybody wishing to find out more can go <http://www.southdownsland.com/Meeting>. The next series of meetings will be in early 2017.

### Liaison Meeting

NPA staff updated the SDLM Executive Committee on a variety of projects at a recent Liaison meeting. Chris Fairbrother is leading on a potential Life + project based around the chalk as a follow up to the NIA Way Ahead project. The draft proposals for Whole Farm Plans, introduced in the Local Plan under Policy SD22, led to some interesting discussions, the SDLM raising a number of queries and suggesting improvements that could be made. Feedback was provided on the Local Plan consultation and clarification sought as to whether or not agricultural workers dwellings would be required to pay Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charges. On a more positive note Conal Stewart updated members on the success of the Food and Drink Portal [www.southdownsfood.org](http://www.southdownsfood.org) and David Doxford on various funding opportunities such as satellite broadband vouchers available in West Sussex (see below), LEP and Leader funding. Whilst Trevor Beattie outlined proposed restructuring changes.

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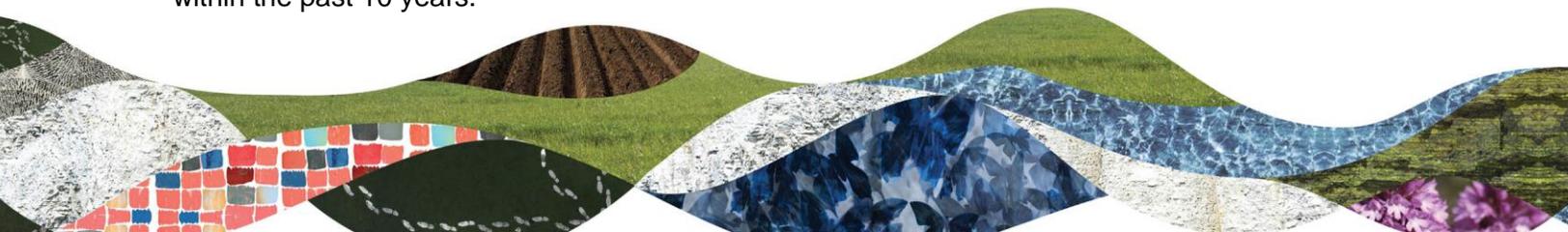
## Planning update

There was much to commend in the South Downs National Park Authority's recent consultation on the South Downs Local Plan Preferred Options. The SDLM welcomed the positive approach to development taken within the plan, providing a good balance between the statutory purposes of the National Park and the Authorities duty to have regard to the social and economic well being of the area.

Whilst the policy to conserve historic agricultural buildings was supported, particular concern was raised to the proposed requirement for redundant more modern agricultural buildings to be demolished after a period of 3 years. Not only would this be a significant cost to the landowner but also, it was felt, shortsighted due to the dynamic nature of farming.

The SDLM welcomed the proposed introduction of farm and estate plans delivering multiple benefits, to assist in seeking exceptional development or diversification projects, but sought assurance that the scale of the plan should be commensurate with the size of the farm/estate and the scale of the proposed development.

The SDLM objected to the inclusion of a condition in the policy on agricultural and forestry workers dwellings that no other dwellings on or closely connected to the holding have been sold within the past 10 years.



We were pleased to see that the SDNPA had taken up our suggestion to use the FARMA guidelines for the split between local, regional and other produce that can be sold at farm shops.

The full response can be found at: <http://www.southdownsland.com/Currentissues>

A further consultation will take place in October 2016 prior to submission of the Local Plan. The SDNPA hopes to adopt the Plan sometime in 2017. Further information can be found at: <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/national-park-local-plan/>

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## Project updates

### Broadband

The NPA hosted a summit for businesses, communities and interested organisations aimed at finding a way to close the 'digital divide' that is limiting people without access to superfast broadband and/or 4G mobile network coverage in the National Park. (Presentations are available here <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/south-downs-digital-access-summit/>, or you can watch the webcast here [http://www.southdowns.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/196754](http://www.southdowns.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/196754))

### Ultraslow broadband? In a 'not spot'?



If your current broadband connection is less than 2Mbps, and no better service is available locally, then you could qualify for a new satellite broadband voucher to help you achieve a better connection.

This is being delivered as part of the Government's Universal Service Commitment.

The scheme contributes towards equipment and installation of a satellite broadband connection.

It may be especially relevant for remote properties or businesses.

You need to apply through your county broadband programme:

Hampshire: <http://www.hampshiresuperfastbroadband.com/residents/usc/>

West Sussex: <http://www.westsussex-betterconnected.org.uk/satellite-scheme>

East Sussex: <http://www.esussex.org/national-satellite-broadband-scheme/>

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## Other news

### Dog attacks:

According to Sheepwatch UK 456 sheep have been killed by dogs and a further 140 attacked and injured, throughout the UK, so far this year. Aiming to reduce the number of dog attacks on sheep over the next year, Sheepwatch UK was launched on 1st February. They are keen to hear from anybody whose livestock has suffered an attack. You can record an attack at the following website <http://www.terena.co.uk/dog-attack-record-sheet.html>



## CLA Report stands up for Rural Businesses

The CLA has launched a new report to persuade politicians to unlock the potential of the rural economy.

‘Standing Up for Rural Businesses’ was presented by CLA President Ross Murray to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Rural Business in the House of Commons.

The report demonstrates the vital contribution that rural businesses make to the countryside and to the wider economy. It also highlights key issues for rural areas within the current political agenda, focusing on the Housing and Planning Bill, the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, and the anticipated Digital Economy Bill. Following the launch of this report, the CLA will be meeting with MPs and Peers to help ensure these important legislative changes deliver the right outcomes for rural areas.

The Standing Up for Rural Businesses report highlights four priorities relating to the current political agenda.

- Digital connectivity
- Rural housing
- The planning system
- Devolution

[Click here to read the CLA Standing up for Rural Business paper](#)

## Invasive Aliens

Arun & Rother Connections are working throughout the Arun & Rother Valleys to tackle four invasive non-native species; Himalayan balsam, Giant hogweed, Skunk cabbage and Floating pennywort. Contact [sarah.mcintyre@rspb.org.uk](mailto:sarah.mcintyre@rspb.org.uk) 01273 763 623

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## Funding

### Countryside Stewardship grants - Defra

The new hedgerows and boundaries capital grant opened for applications on 1 February and closes on 30 April 2016. It offers up to £5,000 for farmers who want to restore boundary features, such as hedges and stone walls, to protect their local wildlife or landscape. For more information go to

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/countryside-stewardship-hedgerows-and-boundaries-grant-manual-2016>

### Woodland Creation Grant

The Forestry Commission’s woodland creation grant is also opening this month (16 February to 31 March 2016 for initial applications) and offers farmers and other land managers up to £6,800 per hectare to plant, weed, and protect young trees.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/countryside-stewardship-grants-soon-to-open-for-applications>

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