

# SDNPA, SDN and SDLMG Liaison Meeting

Memorial Hall, South Downs Centre, Midhurst, GU29 9DH

Wednesday 19 October 2016

15:00-16:30



## Present:

Margaret Paren – Chair of SDNPA, Chloe Beckerson – Executive Assistant to Margaret Paren and Andrew Lee, David Johnson – Chair of CPRE Sussex, Mike Elliott – Fittleworth & District Association, Tony Whitbread – Chair of Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) and South Down Network (SDN), Nigel Brown – Funtington Conservation Group and South Downs Society (SDS) Planning Group, Martin Vasey – Wiggonholt Association, Robin Milner-Elland – Sussex Archaeological Society, Steve Ankers – Policy Officer SDS, Robert Cheesman – Chairman SDS, Geoff Cook – Sussex Ramblers, Alison Tingley – South Downs Land Managers Group (SDLMG) Admin, Robin Edwards – SDLMG and Regional Director CLA, Tim Bamford – SDLMG and Rural Surveyor for CLA, Chris Todd – SDN Administrator, David Ashcroft – SDLMG, James Osman – NFU, Christopher Napier – CPRE Hampshire, Minette Palmer – CPRE Hampshire, Sebastian Anstruther – SDNPA Member, John Templeton – Chichester Society, David Taylor – SDLMG, James Cooper – SDLMG, Mike Tristram – Chair SDLMG, Tim Slaney – Director of Planning SDNPA, Trevor Beattie – CEO SDNPA.

## Apologies:

Stan Abbott – SDLMG.

### 1. Welcome and introductions – Margaret Paren

Margaret opened the meeting, brought together following the decision to leave the European Union in June and introductions were made around the table.

### 2. Brexit updates from each partner

#### Outcomes from South Downs Partnership – Trevor Beattie

Trevor gave an update on the SDNPA position and work programme following the South Downs Partnership meeting, held on 22 September. The implications of Brexit will be fed through to the Member budget session on 20 October. Trevor noted that Brexit will present challenges for agriculture, research, environmental protection and production in the National Park in the years ahead, but that it also offered some major opportunities.

The priority for the National Park was established in the Partnership meeting as; evidence gathering on Natural Capital and Eco System Services and the importance of remaining flexible and focused on delivery. The biggest opportunities identified were localising delivery, simplifying the delivery of funding to support farmers, influencing government and being proactive, facilitating case studies (in particular farm clusters), promoting opportunities in health and wellbeing and maintaining focus on research. SDNPA's discussions with partners had identified the following areas where these opportunities might be exploited;

- continued dialogue with the farming community
- pilot new initiatives and ideas
- continued cross partnership working
- solutions for more affordable housing

**Work Plan – Trevor Beattie** Trevor said that SDNPA was currently preparing a National Park wide natural capital account. This would focus on 2 key areas; evidence gathering on Eco System Services, and modelling the impact for delivering agricultural-environment schemes to farmers, working with the farming community. Trevor envisaged that this programme of work would take 1-2 years, but the intention was to submit an initial proposal to Defra early in the New Year.

**SDLMG update – Mike Tristram**

Mike welcomed the gathering of the SDNPA, SLDLMG and SDN. He suggested that the areas that could be most influenced with the government are the economics of how the landscape and land management might work together in the future. Any imposition of tariffs would affect the viability of sheep production and farming. There had been lots of talk about capping funding and ultimately there was a need to look at the service provided. Practical research work was currently taking place within the land manager community and emerging papers and debates were available to view. **ACTION:** Mike to circulate links to NFU & CLA papers.

**SDN update – Tony Whitbread**

Tony noted three key points within the Environment Pledge which the Wildlife Trusts had been asking their MPs to sign. Tony added that each key point had both opportunities and threats and that the movement towards a clearer system for payments for public benefit would be the right direction. Christopher Napier explained that the CPRE paper (entitled ‘New model farming, resilience through diversity’) was a discussion paper which talks about a new system to increase the diversity and resilience of the farming sector and addresses how to get new blood into farming and enhance multipurpose farming.

**The NPE perspective – Margaret Paren**

Margaret is also Chair of National Parks England (NPE) which is responsible for bringing together the 10 National Parks in England. Margaret spoke of a recent meeting with Lord Gardiner, the new Minister for National Parks. Defra are looking at an outcome based solution and partnership working, but the main priority is farming. One concept is flexible delivery on a National Park basis. These are very early days but this is the direction the National Park family is heading. A post at NPE has been funded for a year to look after Brexit, and a future of farming group has also been set up. This will look specifically at modelling the future of farming in the National Parks. The group will be chaired by Jim Bailey (Chair of North York Moors National Park Authority), and will include Sebastian Anstruther (Member of SDNPA, also land owner and farmer), Robin Milton (Deputy Chair of Exmoor National Park and Chair of NFU hill farmers group) and a farmer from the Yorkshire Dales who has transformed the way he runs his own farm. The SDNPA have set up a European Exit Working Group, Norman Dingemans will Chair and Sebastian Anstruther is a member.

James Cooper noted two areas that need to be reinforced to government; first to identify the importance of what we hold and manage in landscape, nature conservation, social and economic terms, secondly to demonstrate a clear need to achieve this in the long term. Margaret added we are stronger as a National Park ‘family’ and emphasised the importance of partnership working. Sebastian Anstruther raised the question, “is farming essential to the delivery of National Park purposes?” Tony responded and referred to four ecological driving forces, growth of trees, natural disturbance, grazing and hydrology. Tony argued that these areas require management which can only be done by farming.

Robin Edwards asked whether SDNPA have been involving water companies and it was confirmed that they are important members of several farm clusters and other initiatives. CLA are running a Natural Capital Conference on 18 November in Oxfordshire at the Earth Trust. James Osman added that the health of the whole economy will have the main impact, by investigating other channels we can meet standards and focus on trade.

### 3. **Markwell's Wood Oil site – Tim Slaney**

The SDNPA had received an application for oil production in Markwell's Wood, West Sussex. This was for appraisal and production of oil incorporating the drilling of one side-track well from the existing well (for appraisal), three new hydrocarbon wells and one water injection well and to allow the production of hydrocarbons from all four wells for a 20 year period. This was not an application for hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. The application will be considered by the SDNPA Planning Committee in due course and there are many points of contact on the website.

### 4. **A27 – Trevor Beattie**

Trevor gave a brief update regarding the proposals for the A27 east of Lewes. There will be a workshop with SDNPA Members, to look at the site, work on a response and give rigorous evidence based submissions. The work on the special qualities is element by element and the economic analysis will look at the total impact of all of the proposed A27 schemes. Andy Beattie is the lead officer at SDNPA.

### 5. **Eastbourne Downland sale – Trevor Beattie**

The latest on the sale of Eastbourne Downland is that it is understood to be going forward slowly following some complex water supply issues. SDNPA and SDS have registered the seriousness of the proposal to Eastbourne Borough Council. SDNPA have made it very clear they are looking for a whole estate plan (WEP) approach to the downland, whatever its eventual ownership, which had been accepted by Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC). SDNPA had also requested EBC to place a series of covenants on the land to ensure that there are some protections after the sale. The best option would, however, be for EBC to retain the land in public ownership to protect the chalk grassland in perpetuity, in line with the intention of the original acquisitions. SDNPA had a particular interest in the future of Bullock Down Farm which is close to the South Downs Way.

Steve noted there had been very good dialogue between SDNPA but also, National Trust, CPRE Sussex and SDS. Trevor added that this is an opportunity where the Network could be really helpful, in presenting a united front for the protection of the landscape.

### 6. **AOB**

- **Bus services, improvements and branding** – John Templeton asked how the funding was organised for re-branding of the number 60 Stagecoach bus. Trevor responded saying SDNPA did not fund this, instead it was an agreement on the basis it was good business for the company.
- **Centurion Way** – John Templeton asked for an update on the Centurion Way extension. SDNPA Members had made £150,000 available to do design and project preparation work on the next 7 kilometres, taking it through the current tunnel to the South Downs Way at the junction at Cocking. There was a huge amount of work to be done and it was estimated that this would cost around £2 million.
- **Brochures** – Trevor presented a new publication 'Walks on the South Downs Way' using public transport, this will be launched next week in time for half term. Trevor also mentioned the newly produced Climate Adaptation Plan and that the Take the Lead campaign would continue as part of Heathlands Reunited.
- **Stanmer Park** – Chris Todd asked about the new 257 space car park at Stanmer Park. Trevor advised Chris to take the issue up with Brighton and Hove.

**Close.**