



SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month we are:

- Feeling **inspired by Hugh Bonneville to give something back to the National Park's landscapes** – and hoping you will be too!
- Learning more about the **health & wellbeing benefits of green space** – and how we can make sure more people are getting them.
- Talking about **our position on the A27 bypass** at Arundel.
- Giving you the chance to **win a day of lemurs** with a family ticket to Marwell

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

HUGH BONNEVILLE HELPS LAUNCH NEW SOUTH DOWNS CHARITY

Hugh Bonneville has shown his support for the South Downs National Park Trust, a new charity for the National Park.

"The South Downs has been my home on and off for 40 years and I can see the ways that gaining National Park status has helped both the environment and communities," says Hugh. "I often walk my dogs on the Downs and like thousands of others, locals and visitors alike, I appreciate the moments for reflection and inspiration that the South Downs National Park gives me."

This October Hugh joined charity trustee Toni Shaw to help monitor the health of a local chalk stream. This is just one example of the kind of work the new charity will support.



"The South Downs National Park Trust is a great opportunity for us to give something back," Hugh continues. "To help care for the National Park and help more people gain access to it and enjoy it."

For the price of a cinema ticket you could help a child take part in an outdoor education activity that helps them discover the National Park for the first time.

The South Downs National Park Trust is independent but will be supported by South Downs National Park Authority staff for its first three years – ensuring that funds raised can be focused on work in the National Park.

“We’re so grateful to the hundreds of people already volunteering their time to the National Park,” says Trustee Toni Shaw. “Monitoring the health of rivers is just one tiny part of the amazing work they do and the new South Downs National Park Trust is another way people can show support for this great cause.”

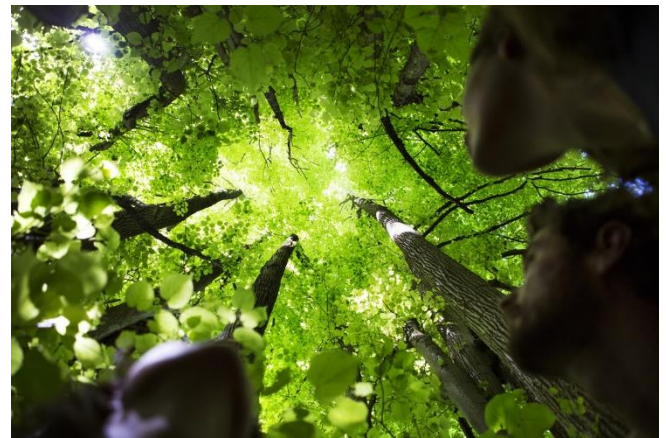
By donating through our website or leaving a lasting gift in your will you can show your love for the National Park. “The National Park Authority and our partners have big ambitions for the South Downs,” says Margaret Paren, Chair of the SDNPA. “We want to see more of the land managed for wildlife, more rare habitats protected, more local communities thriving and more people able to access and enjoy the landscapes. This goes far beyond our current funding. The new Trust will help it flourish and stay protected for future generations.”

Find out more and donate at
www.southdownstrust.org.uk

10 THINGS WE’VE LEARNED ABOUT HEALTH & WELLBEING

Nature is good for you. Exercise is good for you. Getting exercise in nature is really good for you. And yet the people who could benefit most from nature are also those who are least likely to get out and use it.

In October we held the first ever South Downs Health & Wellbeing Conference to see what can be done to bridge this gap. Here are just a few of the things we learned:



1. **Nature is good for babies.** A 2016 study showed that high blood pressure in pregnant women increases by 14% for every 300m they lived away from green space. Other research shows that birth weight and baby’s head size were larger within 500m of green space.
2. **Nature is good for everyone.** There’s so much evidence out there for the benefits of green space and trees in improving cognitive performance, reducing stress, depression and visceral fat. Just looking at pictures of trees can make a difference but, good news for us, not as much as being out among trees or having someone talk to you about the trees.
3. **For nature-lovers it can be hard to imagine the barriers.** Someone living in a very urban area could be as nervous of going for a walk in the countryside as someone from the country would be if they found themselves in an inner city estate. This has nothing to do with actual stats on safety but on each person’s perception of where they feel at home. Some folk are afraid of getting lost, some are afraid of not being fit enough, some think it’s just too difficult to get out, and for others the countryside just isn’t on their radar.
4. **Lecturing people doesn’t work.** We all know that we should be getting off the bus one stop earlier, parking further away or taking the stairs. But do you actually do it? And why would someone who already feels miserable, make their life feel worse by getting off the bus one stop earlier or walking up the stairs with heavy shopping? Let alone going into the countryside for a walk!
5. **Distraction can help.** There’s less to be afraid of if you make exercise outdoors incidental to the end goal. If you enjoy the social side of walking with other people to a place you actually like visiting then the exercise becomes invisible. The example

given was 'Bob' who had type 2 diabetes and joined a supporters group who walked to Anfield football stadium every week. His passion and his favourite place in the world. He felt better and didn't even know that he was taking exercise.

6. **Convenience is everything.** People are more likely to use a green space on a regular basis if it's less than five minutes' walk away. And people who regularly use local green space are more likely to then go further afield – for example, visiting a national park. Unfortunately in south east England only 8% of people live within 300m of green space!
7. **There are some really inspiring people making the case for nature.** If you ever get the chance to hear Dr William Bird, creator of Health Walks and the Green Gym, speak on the subject grab it with both hands. Having told us that sitting down was killing us we couldn't help noticing that he only sat down once during the entire conference – and that was during his panel discussion. You can watch his talk now on the webcast below.
8. **Social prescribing can work.** A group of health services in Surrey experimented with giving 'wellbeing prescriptions' with clients referred to trained Wellbeing Advisors – now available in all GP surgeries in the East Surrey CCG area. 93% of clients say they've found it useful or very useful, 88% say they've made a positive change as a result and 78% have visited their GP less since using the service.
9. **How the NHS actually works and how it's changing.** Watch this short film made by the King's Fund, an independent health & care charity. It honestly does make it all a bit clearer. <http://bit.ly/2y8qiKB>
10. **There is a lot of work to be done but we're not alone.** As a National Park Authority we can make changes through our planning system and green infrastructure work; through improving access; and through our communications and education work to make the National Park a friendly, welcoming and safe space. But we don't have the resources or remit to achieve what's needed by ourselves. We're looking forward to working with Public Health England, educators, local authorities, health care experts and health care providers so that more of the people who really need nature are able to benefit from it in the South Downs National Park.

Watch key talks from the day now on our webcast southdowns.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/312033



WIN A DAY OF LEMURS!

We have a family day-ticket to give away to Marwell Zoo where you can get up close to these much-loved primates.

The Lemur Loop walkthrough is home to four different species of lemur and aims to closely resemble the animal's natural habitat – encouraging them to leap, climb and sunbathe freely as people walk alongside.

In addition to being a fantastic family destination, Marwell also carry out vital local conservation work. They own and manage tracts of semi-natural ancient woodland and agricultural land surrounding the zoo and have undertaken extensive ecological surveys and research with the aim of enhancing local biodiversity such as butterflies, bats and reptiles.

Marwell is also part of our South Downs Barn Owl Box (BOB) project, with several nest boxes installed on the grounds. They are carrying out research across the National Park looking at how the birds' breeding success changes with prey availability, vegetation characteristics and other variables.

We have a family day-ticket to Marwell to give away! Anyone who signs up as a new member of the Newsletter during November will automatically be entered but to make sure our existing readers don't miss out you can also enter by emailing us at the address below before 30 November.

To enter the draw email us with the subject 'Marwell Prize Draw' to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk.

Read the draw terms & conditions <http://bit.ly/2irkEZg>

Find out more about Marwell www.marwell.org.uk



“ARE WE PREPARED TO BE RADICAL?”

This was the question raised by SDNPA Chief Executive Trevor Beattie as he summed up the UK National Parks conference on 27 October. As the 70th anniversary of the 1949 National Parks Act approaches the conference was an opportunity to debate the future of our National Parks.

Frank Dean, the President and CEO of the Yosemite Conservancy, joined us to talk about the central role that the US National Parks play in American culture as well as their success at income generation – ‘friends’ groups generated \$253m for US National Parks in 2013. His presentation highlighted both the challenges and opportunities for UK National Parks.

On the final morning of the conference Julia Bradbury chaired a brilliant debate. Prof Ian Bateman of the Natural Capital Committee, challenged us to quantify the widest possible range of natural capital; Dr William Woolmer, Chair of the South Downs Land Managers Group, described our approach to farm clusters; Dr Sarah Mukherjee, CEO of the Crop Protection Association, urged NPAs to become more diverse and to reach wider audiences; and Adam Philip-Phillips, the former Mosaic youth engagement champion, challenged us to communicate in new ways, particularly using the technology that is the main portal for information for a younger audience.

The conference demonstrated that National Parks are outstanding national assets but also asked National

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Park Authorities whether they could do more to exploit this. Summing up, SDNPA Chief Executive Trevor Beattie suggested four different areas where National Parks are already delivering but which now need to be extended or even redefined:

Asking: National Parks are masters of consultation but Dr Mukherjee challenged us to seek out new audiences and to ask – not tell – how we can best address them.

Engaging: National Parks must be everyone’s experience and National Park Authorities need to broaden engagement, including by making greater use of mobile phones and new technology.

Evidence: Information is power and Prof Bateman told us that the UK has the best environmental data in the world. We need to put the evidence to work and tell everyone about the public good that national parks provide.

Investment: If we create strong partnerships, if we are willing to take some risks and if we succeed in transforming our approach as above then investment in our national parks should follow.

Thank you again to the 100 or so delegates who joined the event – representing all 15 UK National Parks, Natural England, Defra, DCLG, RSPB, National Parks Partnerships, the South Downs Society, CNP, the CLA, private sponsors, some AONBs and several areas seeking National Park status such as the Cotswolds and the Dorset Coast. And our sponsors for making the event possible.



FIVE THINGS TO DO IN THE SOUTH DOWNS THIS MONTH

Find these & more events across the National Park and submit your own events at southdowns.gov.uk/events/



- Join the people of Fernhurst as they mark the 50th anniversary of the Blackdown Air Disaster
- Improve your landscape photography
- Learn about sustainable woodland management
- Get your pre-schooler excited about nature
- Make festive beeswax candles

ON THE GROUND

Don't forget to say hello if you spot our rangers and volunteers out working in the National Park. Here's a taste of what they achieved in September 2017.

- Completed **ten days work at Binswood, managing the site's rides** with the Woodland Trust.
- Began **enhancement work on Petersfield's greenspaces** in partnership with Petersfield Town Council
- Started **winter scrub management** across many heathland sites.
- Started clearing hedges either side of an old drove road in Fernhurst, **new hedges will be laid in traditional style** and the old drove road opened up.
- **Removed floating pennywort at Frogs Farm** with the Leconfield Estate
- Led **16 people on a Heartsmart walk at Bignor and 45 people at Slindon**
- Coppiced woodland at Church Copse; and **coppiced blackthorn at Pheasant's Field for the brown hairstreak butterfly.**
- **Installed new gates** on open access land at Lychpole hill, Sompting; at Mount Caburn; on Ambersham Common; and a new stile at Pepperscombe.
- Completed **autumn Catchment Invertebrate Fingerprinting on the River Meon** with Wessex Chalk Streams Trust and Portsmouth Services Fly-fishing Association.
- Began **new season of scrub** clearance at Long Furlong to open up chalk grassland habitat and cleared scrub from: Medley Bottom and Stoke Bottom SSSI; SSSI chalk grassland at Willingdon down and Anchor Bottom; and Local Wildlife Site at Mile Oak Farm.
- **Cleared scrub to protect an ancient field system** Scheduled Monument at Cloth Farm and **cleared a permissive path of vegetation** at Rodmell.
- Put up **electric fencing to allow grazing on Mill Hill** Local Nature Reserve.
- Carried out **meadow management to enhance biodiversity** on Lewes Golf Course.
- Began **installing interpretation panels at Tide Mills**, funded by a successful application to ESCC Mitigation fund in Partnership with Sussex Past Archaeologist Luke Barber
- Advised Ovingdean Friends of St Wulfran's Church on **creating wildflower meadow.**
- Worked with Lewes District Council to plan and agree **new management and planting scheme to improve condition of Lewes Cemetery Local Wildlife Site.**

southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/our-work/on-the-ground

MOST ASKED...

Send us your questions about a particular area of work in the National Park.

Answering this month is: **Matthew Bates, Local Plan Lead**



WHO IS WRITING THE LOCAL PLAN?

I'm part of the planning policy team, and we play a leading role in coordinating and drafting the Local Plan alongside others throughout the organisation. Members of the National Park Authority have also contributed greatly, as have the numerous stakeholders (including the district, borough, city and county councils that make up the National Park) and members of the public through various stages of consultation on the Plan. Our policies should broadly follow national planning guidance, except where there is strong local evidence that we need to take a different approach.

WHAT IS PLANNING POLICY?

We do the policy work which enables our colleagues in Development Management, the SDNPA Members and planners in other local authorities acting on our behalf under agency agreements, to make recommendations and decisions on planning applications. The main focus of this work at the moment is producing a Local Plan.

As well as the Local Plan we are supporting the production of more than 50 neighbourhood plans and many more village design statements. We provide advice on some planning applications and proposals. We work with colleagues to bring forward supplementary planning documents to provide further detail on Local Plan policies – for example affordable housing or design.

We spend a lot of time working with partner organisations, in particular local authorities, to promote the statutory purposes and duty of the

National Park. This might include addressing issues that have impacts across administrative boundaries such as protecting large sites designated for wildlife importance; conserving important views and landscapes; or delivery of appropriate new infrastructure such as affordable housing.

Finally, we monitor the impact of our policies and produce an annual report.

WHY DID YOU BECOME A PLANNER?

I have always enjoyed learning about the world around us, whether it be naturally formed landscapes, or settlements and buildings created by human society and from a young age enjoyed walking countryside footpaths and trails. So it was natural that I should study first geography and then town planning at university.

An enjoyable aspect of being part of the Local Plan is that I get to work on a diverse range of planning issues at different scales, from individual sites to strategic matters spanning a whole sub-region, and with all the different types of people that involves. Planners are in demand and I'd recommend this as a career for anyone with a keen interest in how communities interact with both their environment and each other.

Read more of Matt's answers

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/most-asked-matthew-bates/>

The consultation on the Local Plan ends on 21 November – find out more and submit your comments at [southdowns.gov.uk/localplan](https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/localplan)

NEXT MONTH: Trees!

Send your questions for Bob Epsom, South Downs Woodlands Officer to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

YOU SAY: A27 at Arundel

Do you have a story you want to tell about the National Park? A burning issue that you think needs to be addressed? Please let us know.



M.S. from Arundel says:

I was shocked to learn that 'a substantial majority' of National Park Authority Members have voted to reject all three routes put forward by Highways England for public consultation. What on earth were they thinking? How grossly unfair on the people of Storrington and those who live along the B2139 from the roundabout on the A24 to the top of Bury Hill.

That road is absolute lethal at certain times of the day and with it being a B road it's used by cyclists and farm vehicles which understandably cause delays and subsequent huge frustration to motorists who can't resist trying to squeeze by thus endangering cyclists and drivers alike.

Margaret Paren, Chair of the SDNPA responds:

It is important to understand the SDNPA's role in the consultation on the Arundel By-Pass consultation. In this process we are not acting as the Planning Authority – a role in which we have to find a balance between conflicting needs and priorities before reaching our decision – but as a statutory consultee. Our role here is confined to assessing the impact of the proposals on the Purposes for which the National Park was established:

- Purpose 1: To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- Purpose 2: To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

We are always conscious of our duty to the communities in the National Park and we appreciate that an Arundel by-pass could relieve the misery suffered by many. But until we have more information on the full extent of the proposals, both positive and negative, we would be failing in our statutory responsibility towards the National Park to do anything but object.

Other consultees, like the County and District Councils, have other responsibilities and will assess the proposals accordingly. Highways England will then select a preferred route taking into account all these and wider responses to the recent public consultation. A public inquiry will hear and balance all the evidence before the Secretary of State makes the final decision.

At this stage of the process the information provided by Highways England has been limited, though it does show that all three routes on the table would harm the National Park. Our own evidence supports this assessment.

We need more information on the detailed design, what mitigation measures might be adopted to minimize the adverse impact on the National Park, and how the loss of irreplaceable ancient woodland might be compensated. We also lack information on other issues, like a comprehensive assessment on the resultant traffic flows within the National Park, both positive and negative.

Routes that avoid the National Park and ancient woodland were excluded from the consultation, we understand on the grounds of cost and value for money. We are not promoting such routes – we have no information to assess them – but are concerned that their exclusion prevents making comparison against the routes in the public consultation.

In our view, all of this information will be needed by the Inspector if they are to properly apply the 'major development test' in national planning policy – set out below.

For all these reasons, based on the information available to us, we have objected to all three proposed routes. We will continue to work with Highways England and provide further comments as the detailed design for the preferred option and proposals for mitigation and compensation become available.

To submit a comment for our newsletter please email newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk. For a fast and direct response to your questions please email info@southdowns.gov.uk

Please note that only contributors who submit their full name and address can be considered for publication though we will not publish your full address. Please make it clear whether you are speaking on your own behalf or that of an organisation you represent. We reserve the right to shorten comments and edit where necessary.



NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR FELLED ELMS

Elm trees felled following infection with elm disease are being given a new lease of life, being made into timber planks which will eventually be used to clad a new building in Stanmer Park. The building, known as 'the kiosk' will house cycle hire, an information centre and toilets as part of the Stanmer Park Restoration Project, a joint initiative between Brighton & Hove City Council, the SDNPA and Plumpton College which will see the country park become a gateway into the National Park.

Watch a video about the project

www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4n8_h6AYqc



PETERSFIELD TREE REPORT LAUNCHES

We're proud to have supported the people of Petersfield to carry out their i-Tree Eco Survey. The publication of the work, as *Petersfield's Trees – their importance and value*, was celebrated on 30 October.

The report is a true piece of partnership work, led by the community; supported by the South Downs National Park Authority, the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service, East Hampshire District Council and Petersfield Town Council; with local expertise of Petersfield Society and national expertise of Forest Research.

"It is work such as this which provides the vital evidence base from which we can manage our environment," said Margaret Paren, Chair of SDNPA at the launch. She challenged the partnership to the improve Petersfield's average tree cover from its present 15% to 24%, the average for the National Park.

Petersfield's Trees – Their Importance and Value is available to download from the Petersfield Society at www.petersfieldsociety.org.uk



LAST CHANCE TO HAVE SAY ON LOCAL PLAN

People have until 21 November to submit their comments on the first Local Plan for the South Downs National Park. The plan will replace more than 1000 policies from 12 different local authorities with just 96 new policies covering the whole of the National Park from Winchester to Eastbourne.

Find out more and submit your comments southdowns.gov.uk/localplan