



SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- What steps to take to **secure your community more affordable housing**
- More than 85 businesses are now actively **welcoming cyclists and walkers** to the National Park
- **Free guided South Downs walks** and bike rides no matter your level of experience or fitness
- Planting different crops can help **reduce nitrogen pollution in National Park water**
- Competition – still waiting for confirmation

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

CROPS CAN PROTECT OUR WATER

Research funded through the Brighton ChaMP project shows that farmers who plant different crops can help reduce nitrogen pollution in South Downs National Park water.

The South Downs' rivers and aquifers are an integral part of the South Downs landscapes, relied on by 1.2 million people as well as the wildlife that lives here. But our water is in trouble - like many aquifers and rivers across the world, it is polluted with nitrates from fertilisers, manure heaps and stock yards as well as pollution from road run-off.

Brighton ChaMP (Chalk Management Partnership) for Water is a collection of organisations, led by the South Downs National Park Authority, taking action to protect our groundwater – water which has fallen as rain and is held in the chalk rock beneath our feet.

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.



our water is in trouble - like many aquifers and rivers across the world, it is polluted with nitrates

Winter is a particularly vulnerable time as bare fields and higher rainfall allow the nitrates in the soil to leach through into the aquifer – this can be detected as nitrate spikes at the boreholes which supply our fresh drinking 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 Mark Eastes at the University of Brighton, are encouraging.

“We found that all types of cover crop significantly reduced nitrates leaching into groundwater compared to leaving it fallow over winter,” says Simon Deacon from the Environment Agency. “The amount of reduction varied from between 74 and 99% and this depended both on the crop but also on the crop’s location. Which suggests that other factors also play a role. It looks like the best results will come from individual farms using tailored ‘recipes’ for their cover crops.”

“all types of cover crop significantly reduced nitrates leaching into groundwater compared to leaving it fallow over winter”

There is clearly more work to be done in the area and future challenges for the ChaMP partners will include how to support and encourage more farmers to apply these results on their own land. 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 on the cover crops than in the control fallow areas.

The good news is that it is possible to improve water quality through sustainable land and water management, using catchment and aquifer based approaches.

About the ChaMP Water partnership

Established in 2016, the ChaMP partnership is made up of the South Downs National Park Authority, the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Brighton & Hove City Council and the University of Brighton, working together with the Brighton & Lewes Downs UNESCO Biosphere (The Living Coast) and Natural England.

Partners are working together to protect groundwater quality with both urban and rural programmes: promoting sustainable drainage systems to better manage polluted surface water running off the roads as well as rural programmes with farmers and landowners.

www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/water/brighton-champ-for-water/



MORE SOUTH DOWNS BUSINESSES WELCOME CYCLISTS AND WALKERS

More than 85 businesses are actively welcoming cyclists and walkers to the National Park now that the South Downs’ Cyclists and Walkers Welcome scheme has been extended into West Sussex following successful pilots in Lewes and Petersfield launched in 2017.

The estimated spend of walkers in the English countryside is £6.14 billion every year, which generates in excess of £2 billion in income and supports around 245,000 full time jobs. Cycle tourism is estimated to be worth £2.4 billion to the UK economy delivering 1.23 million overnight trips and 149 million day trips.

“We’ve got big cycling events like the Tour of Sussex and VeloSouth coming to the National Park this summer and evidence from similar events shows they can be a huge boost for the local economy,” says Jo Williams Sustainable Tourism Lead for the South Downs National Park Authority. “Cyclists and their families spend in local shops and stay in accommodation on the day but also come back to places they’ve seen at other times of year.”

Cycle tourism is estimated to be worth £2.4 billion to the UK economy delivering 1.23 million overnight trips and 149 million day trips.

All types of business are welcome to join the scheme, provided that they: commit to one of three levels of welcome requirements; maintain accurate up-to-date information and services and promote their cyclist and walker friendly services on their own website and promotional materials.

Businesses displaying a Cyclists and Walkers Welcome badge offer a warm, friendly welcome and are able to accommodate kit and backpacks. Those offering Welcome Support have first aid essentials for people or their bikes, tool kits, access to local maps and free water refills. Those offering Welcome Enhanced offer cycle parking and kit to clean muddy boots.

Sign up to the Cyclists & Walkers Welcome scheme at www.southdowns.gov.uk/cyclists-walkers-welcome-scheme-for-businesses/



SOUTH DOWNS WELCOMES NATIONAL PARK REVIEW TEAM

The head of the Government's review into National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) Julian Glover visited the South Downs National Park on 26 and 27 July as part of a fact-finding tour gathering evidence for the review.

Over the course of his visit Julian Glover spoke with many different people directly involved with the South Downs National Park representing businesses, communities, farmers, schools, environmental groups, health walk leaders, land owners, developers, National Park Authority officers and National Park rangers.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

"I hope the review I'm leading will help it do even more to protect the landscape while helping local people get the homes, jobs and opportunities they need."

"It was a huge pleasure to walk along the South Downs in bright sunshine, explore some of the beautiful woodland; and meet National Park rangers, farmers, walkers, local councillors and business people," said Julian Glover. "Our new National Park faces some big challenges but it's making a difference. I hope the review I'm leading will help it do even more to protect the landscape while helping local people get the homes, jobs and opportunities they need."

Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority, said:

"This is a welcome opportunity to introduce the review team to just some of the experiences of the people who visit, live and work in the National Park – whose stories are as diverse as the South Downs' landscapes themselves."

"In his announcement of the Government's review the Secretary of State stressed that the review should make sure that National Parks and AONBs are not only conserved, but also enhanced for the next generation. In this very short visit Julian Glover has had a taste of the variety of work done towards achieving that aim here in the South Downs National Park and we hope to welcome other members of his panel in future."

Julian Glover is associate editor at the London Evening Standard and has worked as leader writer and columnist at the Guardian and as a Special Adviser in Number 10 and the Department for Transport. He will be supported by an advisory panel bringing a vast breadth of experience in landscape, biodiversity, heritage, farming and rural issues.

Find out more about the review

www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review



GUIDED WALKS THIS WAY (AND BIKE RIDES)

If all this sunshine makes you long to be outside we have some ideas for you, whether you're a complete newcomer or an experienced hiker.

Guided health walks in East Sussex

A series of free guided walks, organised by Wave Leisure Trust and the South Downs National Park, are set to help people in Newhaven, Peacehaven and Seaford improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

The walks, running from July 31 to 9 November 2018, will take people to beautiful places close to their doorsteps in the South Downs National Park. They are designed to reduce stress and anxiety, increase cardiovascular fitness and improve mobility with trained leaders from Wave Leisure Trust on hand to help participants get the most out of the experience.

Participants can choose between several routes for different levels of fitness and experience. 'Health Walks' take between 90 minutes and two hours and 'Rural Rambles' last two to three hours. The full schedule of walks is available at www.waveleisure.co.uk.

Guided health bike rides in East Sussex

Dust off your bike and join Cycle Seahaven for fun evening rides of around 10 to 15 miles, ridden at a steady gentle pace.

These rides designed as an introduction to cycling in the South Downs and use cycle paths and gentle off-road tracks to get you started and build confidence. Ride Leaders are on hand to offer support and advice along the way.

All rides start in Seaford with a second meeting point in Newhaven. Details of rides can be found on the Cycle Seahaven calendar. Please contact the Ride Leader to let them know you will be coming or to ask any other questions.

cycleseahaven.org.uk/ride-the-downs-health-rides/

Walk the Heath Week

Get to know the South Downs National Parks' heaths on a series of free guided walks led by National Park Rangers and local experts, between Saturday 18 August and Friday 24 August 2018.

There will be routes for all abilities and different interests, whether you're a regular rambler or a countryside beginner, with routes that range from 1 mile to 15 miles. Different walk themes will include ecology, local heritage, conservation, health walks and even a wildlife dog walk.

Read the full programme of walks at www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Healthlands_Walking_2018_04.pdf

Book your place by emailing heathlands@southdowns.gov.uk



GRANT SCHEME TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING STOCK

Does your parish need affordable housing? Here are the steps you need to take to make it happen.

If you live in the South Downs you are probably already aware that the National Park has some of the highest house prices in the country. Homes are in high demand with towns and villages regularly appearing in property sections under headlines such as 'most

with/not_for_profit/housing/hampshire-for-rural-affordable-housing

If your community would like to know more about our grant scheme contact

affordablehousing@southdowns.gov.uk

desirable', 'happiest' etc. High-income urban households looking to move into the countryside and a shortage of land add to the problem. The consequences of a lack of affordable housing are severe with low income families facing a difficult future – having to move, leaving support and employment networks behind.

The National Park Authority has launched a new grant scheme, using money paid by developers, to deliver more affordable housing in the South Downs. Grants of between £10,000 and £30,000 are available for affordable dwellings constructed on rural exceptions sites (sites that would not be granted planning permission for open market housing) or for affordable housing delivered through community-led initiatives such as Community Land Trusts.

If you think there's a need for affordable housing in your parish here are the steps that you need to take:

1. Prove there is a genuine need. You may know of local people in need of affordable homes but anecdotal evidence isn't enough. You'll need to carry out a housing need survey or work with a housing need enabler such as Action Rural Sussex HARAHA - Hampshire Alliance for Rural Affordable Housing (actionhampshire.org/who-we-work-with/not_for_profit/housing/hampshire-for-rural-affordable-housing)
2. Start looking for potential sites. Work with the parish, community and local landowners to identify several possible sites. But don't spend any money on land or designs yet!
3. Consider how you're going to deliver the housing. A not-for-profit firm such as a community land trust (CLT) may be your best option if you want to access Government grants.
4. Start conversations with us, the National Park Authority, we can guide you through site selection and help you identify sites that won't damage the landscape, local wildlife etc. and are therefore more likely to get planning permission – avoiding disappointment and wasted money later down the road.
5. It's time for formal discussions to buy the land before starting to work on designs and going into pre-application discussions with the National Park Authority.

Housing need enablers work across counties in the National Park.

Action Rural Sussex www.ruralsussex.org.uk

HARAHA (Hampshire)

www.actionhampshire.org/who-we-work-



BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT NEEDS YOUR HELP

Spend fifteen minutes sitting in the sun and, while you are there, count some butterflies. What an easy way to help some of the National Park's most iconic species says South Downs Ranger, Tim Squire.

Don't take my word for it. As Sir David Attenborough, Butterfly Conservation president says: "Spending time with butterflies lifts the spirits and reinvigorates that sense of wonder in the natural world."

You can do your count in any sunny spot where there are butterflies. If you have a garden, that's a good place to start, but if you want to see something special my top tip is to head to some of the South Downs' precious areas of chalk grassland. Fingers crossed you'll spot some of the specialist blue butterflies that only live in this rare habitat, among some more common species.

On a good year we see big crowds of chalkhill blue butterflies. Last year was a good year for Adonis blues on some of our chalk grassland sites and hopefully numbers will build again this summer. Both these butterflies rely on a plant called horseshoe vetch, the food plant their caterpillars live on, although the adults will take nectar from many of the profusion of flowers found on our hills.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

The marbled white butterfly lives on chalk grassland where it prefers purple flowers.



The Adonis blue is one of the iconic butterflies you might spot on the South Downs' chalk grassland



Look out for large groups of chalkhill blue butterflies.

They also both have an amazing symbiotic relationship with ants that live in the chalk grassland. The ants protect the caterpillars from predators in exchange for a sugary secretion that the caterpillars produce. The caterpillars even sing to the ants to attract them!

Other butterflies to look out for on the South Downs this summer are the amazing small copper and the beautiful marbled white.



Look out for territorial male small copper butterflies basking on bare ground, looking out for females.

The Big Butterfly Count runs until 12 August. Find out how to get involved by visiting the Big Butterfly Count website www.bigbutterflycount.org/ or downloading the app



BUS ABOUT THE SOUTH DOWNS

Catch the bus into the National Park for a relaxing day. Sit back and enjoy the views without the hassle of traffic or finding somewhere to park.

Here are five of our favourite journeys.

- 54 to Kingley Vale
A small, family-owned company run this picturesque route from Chichester to Petersfield from which you can **explore the famous downland churches** of St Mary's and St Michael's or the stunning ancient yew trees at Kingley Vale.
- 60 to Midhurst
Not many bus routes can boast a medieval cathedral, downland villages, **deep wooded valleys through a National Park and a romantic Tudor ruin** but the number 60 from Chichester to Midhurst has it all.

- 67 to the Meon Valley
Weaving its way from Winchester, the Saxon capital of England, to the market town of Petersfield this route takes in **picturesque villages in the Itchen and Meon Valleys** with opportunities to explore crystal clear rivers and wooded hills.
- 79 to Ditchling Beacon
At 248m above sea-level Ditchling Beacon is one of **the highest points in the South Downs National Park and commands amazing views**. This bus from Brighton runs on weekends & bank holidays.
- 99 to Petworth Park and House from Chichester
If the pretty market town and dramatic National Trust house and parklands aren't enough you can also **request a stop at Halnaker to see the iconic (and newly restored) windmill**.

Find links to timetables www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/South_Downs_Transport_Guide_2017-18_web.pdf



NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR NATIONAL PARKS VOLUNTEER AWARDS

It's time to recognise the volunteers across the country who give thousands of hours every year to the UK's National Parks.

In the South Downs alone our volunteer rangers gave more than 14 years (5,221 days) of their time just last year. The National Parks Volunteer Awards recognise this incredible work with nominations accepted in four categories – Individual, Young Person (25 years and below), Group and Project.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Nominees need not be volunteering for a UK National Park to be eligible. All that is required is that the volunteer service or project take place within the boundaries of one of the UK's 15 National Parks.

The group and project winners receive a £1,000 bursary towards their future volunteering efforts. The 2018 National Parks Volunteer Awards are supported by UK National Parks partner Columbia Sportswear and the individual and young person winners will receive Columbia Sportswear outdoor kit. Presentations will take place at a special awards ceremony at the Kendal Mountain Festival in November.

Nominations close at midday on Friday 21 September 2018. www.nationalparks.gov.uk/volunteerawards2018



COMMUNITY HEROES

With spectacular views across the National Park, the 16.5-acre Stedham campsite, run by Midhurst Youth Trust, feels like a small piece of heaven for anyone who loves to camp – but not just anyone gets to come here. The site, run as a community asset, is exclusively available for community groups and no matter how big or small the group is they get the entire site to themselves.

Whether they're young carers, guides or have social, emotional or mental health needs, the families and groups who stay here can run wild, build camps, climb trees and make as much noise as they like without worrying about the neighbours. The site takes around 2,000 people every year and by May 2018 was already completely booked through to the middle of October 2018.

families and groups who stay here can run wild, build camps, climb trees and make as much noise as they like

As all campers know, sometimes it rains. When the Trust's old marquee wore out they decided to replace it with something more fitting to the site. Thanks to a £10,000 contribution from the South Downs National Parks Sustainable Communities Fund towards the costs of an excellent improvement to the camping site, this summer the campers will be taking shelter in a stunning new oak and slate structure

Photo shows Anne Murphy and Colin Hughes from Midhurst Youth Trust

Find out more at www.midhurst-youth-trust.org.uk/web/stedham-camp-site/



WIN A HAMPER FROM STANSTED PARK FARM SHOP

The harvests may be coming home but it's still picnic season in the National Park and we have an array of award winning local food and drink providers ready to tempt you.

The lovely people at Stansted Park Farm Shop are kindly offering one lucky person the chance to win a hamper worth £50 containing a selection of their homemade deli items, sourdough bread, Tunworth

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Cheese, Longman Beer and more. Stocking the finest food and drink from more than 90 Sussex and Hampshire artisan producers this is an amazing opportunity to try some of the tastiest treats from the South Downs and surrounding area.

Anyone who signs up as a new member of this newsletter during August 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 31 July 2018.

Links To enter the draw email us with the subject 'I'd like that Stansted Farm Shop hamper!' to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

Terms and conditions apply, please read them here https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/South_Downs_News_St_ansted_Park_Farm_Shop_prize_draw_terms_conditions.pdf

Visit Stansted Park Farm Shop's website <https://stanstedfarmshop.com/>

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/



- Wild Families Pondemonium at RSPB Pulborough Brooks
- Walk the past with St Hubert's Church
- Join our Dog Fun Day at Woolbeding Common
- Try yoga on a vineyard
- Enjoy free live music at Langhams Brewery

ON THE GROUND

From meeting with farmers, offering training and support to local communities, leading walks, organising and training volunteers, controlling invasive species and supporting key species, South Downs National Park rangers are out in the National Park every weekday and many weekends over the year.

Don't forget to say hello if you spot them out working. Here's a taste of what they achieved with our volunteers in July 2018:

- **Removed invasive Himalayan balsam** in the Meon Valley and in Ditchling; pulled ragwort at Long Furlong LWS to make space for other species to come through; **pulled ragwort on Chapel Common** to enable grazing; **controlled thistle at Pheasant's Field** Local Wildlife Site; and sprayed **invasive floating pennywort in a pond at Frog Farm** near Petworth to prevent it spreading into the River Rother
- Found a **new population of rare triangle web spiders** at a wood in Duncton
- Supported **bird ID walks** at the Heathland Reunited bioblitz at Lynchmere Common
- Continued post and rail fencing at Lodge Copse – almost finished!
- Recced sites along the Rother and its tributaries and **recruited volunteers to monitor riverfly** there
- Helped organise a **moth morning for the South Pond Group** with the Sussex Moth Group
- Held **Rangers on Tour events in Crawley, Southsea and Worthing** for National Parks Week
- Carried out the second of three **surveys at Stedham Mill meadow**. Now the showstoppers such as cornflower and ox-eye daisies had died down, smaller plants such as birds foot trefoil and self heal were thriving
- Took **work experience students out** to experience surveying some Scheduled Monuments, such as barrows, bridges, roman roads, dykes, and a brick/tile works
- Surveyed some of the **upper reaches of the Hammer Stream catchment area for invasive species**, including the dreaded Himalayan balsam, and unfortunately found some



- **Rolled bracken** at Laundry cottage Heath area
- **Supported farmers** from the Arun to Adur farmers group with their open day at Lee Farm Patching, 600 people attended; and helped to organise a grey partridge training day for the South Downs farmers group
- **Replaced a stile with a gate** to improve access at Steyning Rifle Range
- Carried out **wartbiter cricket survey** at translocation sites and found evidence that it had been successful with seven adults found
- Carried out a **dormouse survey** at Graffham Down and completed a deer exclusion fence on the site to protect hazel coppiced during the winter
- Continued **ringing barn owl chicks**
- **Led a Heart Smart walk** in Petworth
- Carried out **brushcutting as part of ongoing management of Tower Hill SSSI** and at Bepton Down SSSI to improve vegetation structure
- Moved cattle to **support grazing on Steyning Downland**
- **Cleared ramparts of Iron Age Hillfort** at Devil's Dyke to encourage grassland species to spread and safeguard the monument for future generations
- Started work to **install a dipping platform and easy access trail** at Trueligh Hill YHA
- Carried out **survey work out at France Bottom Local Wildlife Site** in partnership with Natural England and Kew
- **Cleared sycamore and regrowth from an important chalk grassland** Local Wildlife Site at Winton Field

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

MOST ASKED...

Answers to questions about a particular area of work in the National Park – some sent in by you and others that we get asked all the time.

Answering this month is: **Laura Warren, Events and Engagement Officer** for the South Downs National Park.



WILL YOU COME TO OUR EVENT? WHY DIDN'T YOU COME TO MY EVENT?

We get asked to attend hundreds of events across the National Park every summer, from village fetes to huge festivals and I wish we could go to every one of them.

With a small team of staff we have to look carefully every event and make sure we select the ones which will allow us to talk to the widest variety of people.

HOW MANY EVENTS DOES THE NATIONAL PARK GO TO EVERY YEAR?

We go to about 60 events every year, including our own. It's tricky to know the exact number of people we reach but I estimate it's more than 10,000 a year.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH EVENTS YOU GO TO?

We have an events strategy and during the winter our events group (made up of rangers, educators, volunteers, Members and other staff) will meet up to decide which groups of people will be our priority for the coming year, what messages we want to share with them and what kit we'll use to achieve this. For example evidence shows that there are groups of people who are less likely know that the National Park exists and others who, even if they did, wouldn't feel like it's a place for them.

This year we've been trying to reach out to some of these groups which has taken us to some new places such as the Big Church Day out at Wiston and Crawley

town centre. We'll also be attending Boomtown for the second year in a row – well out of my comfort zone but a great place for us speak to hard-to-reach Millennials about why the National Park is important.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT KIT TO TAKE? WHY DO YOU HAVE SO MANY FAMILY ACTIVITIES?

I'm quite proud of our reputation for bringing engaging and innovative activities along to events. I'm lucky to work with some very creative people – for example our River-opoly giant board game shares stories and issues on biodiversity, invasive species and habitat improvement using cuddly water voles knitted by one of our rangers' mum.

We'll always try to tailor the kit to the event so for example when we go to school STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics) events we'll take along astronomy activities ranging from telescopes to our dark night sky giant jigsaw. For our Wild Chalk event in Brighton this year we introduced a giant colouring wall featuring flowers and insects you find on chalk downland.

The main thing is to start a conversation. It's important to get young people interested in nature and being outdoors from a young age – both for their wellbeing and the future of the National Park. Whilst the kids are playing we also have great conversations with their parents which may vary from planning or access issues to just getting out and enjoying the South Downs.

NEXT MONTH: Tourism in the National Park

Jo Williams, SDNPA Sustainable Tourism Lead answers your questions.

Send them to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

YOU SAY:

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.



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.

SIGN UP TO THIS NEWSLETTER

Sign up to receive this newsletter by email every month. With the latest South Downs news, stories, ideas for days out, competitions, to hear about our ranger and volunteers' work and much more...

www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter/