

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK
PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN
REVIEW

**Examples of community projects
that contribute towards the delivery
of the South Downs National Park
Partnership Management Plan**

Please use these examples during parish meetings and discussions to help to identify the projects in your own community which will enhance your community and contribute towards the delivery of the Partnership Management Plan.

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 1

The landscape character of the South Downs, its special qualities and local distinctiveness have been conserved and enhanced by effectively managing the land and mitigating the negative impacts of development and cumulative change.

Become a Dark Sky Community

In May 2016 the South Downs National Park became an International Dark Sky Reserve (IDSR). We think our star-studded skies overhead are as valuable as our beautiful rolling landscapes and, with properly dark skies in the South East of England under threat, this is a statement that the skies of the South Downs are worth protecting.

To protect your night skies, your community could prepare a Village Design Statement with lighting control guidelines to inform local residents of best practice to maintain dark night skies.



Local road verge enhancement schemes

Working with their Highways Authority some community groups now manage road verges within their community for the benefit of wildlife. For example, Hampshire County Council run a Road Verge Scheme.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 2

There is increased resilience within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

Local habitat surveying

Local nature groups carry out Habitat Surveys to ensure an accurate record of particular habitats or species.

The River Meon is a chalk stream and a 'principle brown trout fishery' fed by groundwater aquifers near East Meon, which swiftly flows through the South Downs and out to sea at Titchfield. The Meon is an important area for wildlife as well as for fishing.

At the end of 2013 the project ran a number of riverfly monitoring workshops to train volunteers and landowners. Participants spent the morning learning the theory and the afternoon in the river, learning how to produce "kick samples". Trained volunteers were then issued kit (including waders, sampling trays and buckets), paired up (for health and safety reasons) and started work at their monitoring points.



Neighbourhood Plan (NDP) biodiversity policy

Some NDP groups include very detailed Biodiversity Policies within their NDPs to ensure the protection of important habitats and species.



Policy Liss 5

Biodiversity

1. Development will not be permitted within 400m of the Special Protection Area (SPA) except in exceptional circumstances such as essential utilities provision which cannot be met elsewhere.
2. Development within 5km of the SPA will only be permitted if it is demonstrated that its layout, design and construction minimises any potential disturbance to the SPA.
3. Development will not normally be permitted on a site which is designated as a SINC unless it is demonstrated that this would not harm the biodiversity of the site.
4. Residential development included in the development briefs set out in Section 4 should provide measures to encourage wildlife including the creation of biodiversity buffer areas and the maintenance and improvement of existing wildlife corridors and habitats on the sites. Informal open space should be provided to restrict any increased pressures on the SPA.
5. Improvements should be made to the network of rights of way, quiet roads and permissive routes as set out in Policy 15 in order to contribute to preventing any increase in pressures on the SPA.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 3

A well-managed and better connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species now exist in the National Park.

Clausement Fen – restoring biodiversity

The Conservation Group, uniting a community aged from 9 to 99 years, wrote a constitution and consulted with relevant experts and stakeholders including; Hampshire County Council; Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust; South Downs National Park Authority; and the Environment Agency. A conservation management plan was developed with the aim of restoring lost biodiversity.

The Conservation Group started the regeneration process by:

- clearing bamboo growth the size of a tennis court,
- removing litter and clearing nettles, and
- experimenting with baffles and waterflow.



SMART – Improving the ecological status of the River Rother

The SMART (Sediment and Mitigation Action on the River Rother) project is a partnership project delivered by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), University of Northampton (UoN), University of Oxford and the Arun and Rother Rivers Trust and represents a PhD programme of work. The PhD bursary of £60,000 is funded 50-50 by the SDNPA and the UoN.

The project aims to establish:

- where the sedimentation issues are of most concern,
- the source of sediment within the river catchment area, and
- what can be done to rectify the problem.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 4

The condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their settings is significantly enhanced, many more have been discovered and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Pyecombe Church – a partnership funded community project

The decision was made to extend the church west through a previously existing Victorian door. The extension would house the kitchen, accessible toilet and storage and would require the removal of a number of pews.

The steering group estimated the cost of the project to be £146,000 and, with the support of a professional fundraiser, began seeking funds with the ambitious target of raising the funds in 18 months.

20 months later all funds had been secured and the contractors were instructed to commence work. Funds were raised from a variety of sources including; the SDNPA's Sustainable Communities Fund (£20,000), Mid Sussex District Council (£20,000), Veolia, Garfield Weston Estate, West Sussex County Council, generous private donations and community fundraising events – the events had the added benefit of keeping the community engaged with the project.



Bedham Church near Fittleworth

Identify Local Heritage assets that could be submitted to the SDNPA for consideration on a local list

Local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets. These are buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets.

Communities can identify specific heritage assets to be submitted to the SDNPA for consideration.

Alternatively Neighbourhood Planning groups can identify their own non-designated heritage assets.

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 5

Outstanding visitor experiences are underpinned by a high-quality access and sustainable transport network supporting improved health and wellbeing.

Monitoring Rights of Way condition

Many of our local communities have established volunteer groups who monitor the condition of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and report problems to the Local Highways Authority, this ensures the relevant Authority is aware of issues and can programme maintenance appropriately.



For example, see guidance below from West Sussex County Council on How Parish and Town Councils can help:

How Parish and Town Councils can help

- Build links with the local Access Ranger, liaise with them over PRoW issues.
- Report issues accurately, with relevant information e.g. location, photos, where issues originate from etc., and understand our timescales for investigating issues.
- Assist with landowner issues, if the landowner is known you can contact them to try to resolve issues before escalating to West Sussex County Council (WSSCC).
- Work with WSSCC to gain improvements, both to existing and creation of new PRoWs, via the planning system.

The Egrets Way

The Local Communities of the Ouse Valley have established a formal group with a constitution and an aim to developing a network of accessible routes to enable local people and visitors to move through the local area without the need to rely on cars.

The Egrets Way is a new and developing network of interlinking, safe and accessible cycle and walking routes within the Ouse Valley between the County Town of Lewes and the channel port of Newhaven including the parishes of Kingston, Swanborough, Iford, Northease & Rodmell, Southease, and Piddinghoe.



Miles without Stiles

Miles Without Stiles are routes that are suitable for people with limited mobility. Wheelchair users, families with pushchairs, dog walkers and less agile walkers can choose from a list of routes from across the South Downs. A number of local communities are using Developers contributions (Section 106 money) to replace stiles with kissing gates or other accessible solutions.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 6

There is widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

Learning through LiDAR

At the beginning of this project a LiDAR survey was carried out; this is where a plane flies over the landscape and uses laser beams to 'map' the ground surface producing computer images known as LiDAR tiles. These LiDAR tiles are then compared with existing knowledge of the area and new potential archaeological features are identified.

The project has recruited and trained over 108 community volunteers to take part in archaeological fieldwork activity at local sites to check if the features do exist. This activity also included two community excavations in April and May of 2016.

More community volunteers have been busy researching the evidence from historical maps and documents of this area to provide more information about the sites from the medieval period onwards, for example, researching how people lived on, and farmed the landscape, and took part in pleasure pursuits such as deer hunting.

Other volunteers have been involved with the oral history element of the project, meeting with local residents and voice recording their stories and memories of the area and how use of this landscape has changed over time.

From all this work a wide range of learning resources (including electronic media) have been produced to share the information, encourage young people to visit and explore, learn about the stories, and engage with the area.



Lessons of the Landscape

A project working with seven schools designed to address the key issue that many children of school age are unaware of where their food comes from. It also looked to redress the growing disconnection that many children have with nature and the landscape in which they live.

"A great project that kept the children engaged throughout. It was of great value for them to understand more about the local landscape and history"

Rachel Lewis, Hamsey Community Primary School



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 7

The range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected and there is an increase in contemporary arts and crafts that are inspired by the special qualities of the National Park.

The Carnival of the Creatures

Patina applied for a £5,000 grant from the Sustainable Communities Fund and was successful because the artwork was inspired by the Downs and the project was firmly embedded in education on the species of the South Downs for the many youngsters and adults involved. The fact that the event had such a strong track record of community support and involvement also gave strength to the bid.

In order to deliver this theme Patina entered into its first ever partnership with Sussex Wildlife Trust.

Caroline Croft of Patina said "This was a fantastic partnership which brought so much to all the children and families involved in our project and established a relationship which will be enduring for our two organisations. This is a model which we would definitely like to repeat."

Michael Blencowe of Sussex Wildlife Trust inspired the year 6 students, artists and parents with 16 hugely informative and entertaining presentations on the species of the South Downs. This work was supported with further in-class learning and events.



Buildings at Risk

A survey has shown a number of structures for which there is no economic use but which require repair to ensure they survive, such as churchyard tombs, flint boundary walls etc. Repair work would also provide training in traditional building skills, provide volunteering opportunities and could use local businesses.

The historic flint wall at Stanmer Park runs for more than three miles around the western and northern boundaries of the estate. It's believed to have been built by French prisoners of war in the 1760s.

We have been working with volunteers in Stanmer Park to rebuild/repair sections of the Estate's flint wall, highlighted within the Historic Landscape Plan for Stanmer Park.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 8

More responsibility and action is taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.

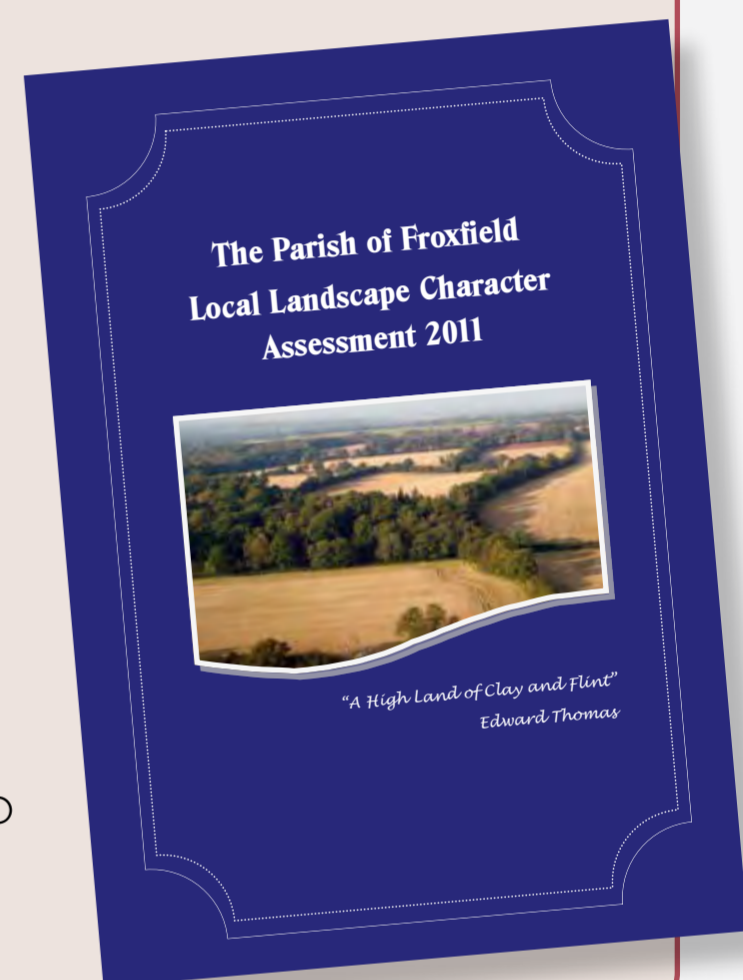
Neighbourhood Plans

53 Neighbourhood Plans have been prepared across the South Downs National Park. Whilst all these Neighbourhood Plans differ, most have included policies to protect important local landscape features, important local green spaces and often include policies to protect important local heritage features, such as flint walls.



Parish Plans & Village Design Statements

Over 100 of the towns and parishes in the South Downs have prepared a Parish Plan or Village Design Statement. These documents are an invaluable resource to the Authority in understanding local concerns and aspirations. The documents also provide a useful tool for Town and Parish Councils to focus resources on projects to meet local needs.



Signage

The SDNPA is considering the preparation of a toolkit which would support communities in carrying out an audit of highways signage in their community.

We are also beginning work with a number of towns and villages across the National Park to look at gateway / village entrance signage.



Fixed Point Photography

This is an exciting opportunity for members of the local community to become more involved with the Heathlands Reunited project which aims to reverse the continuing decline of the very rare and internationally important lowland heathland within the National Park.

Volunteers will take and collate photos bi-annually throughout the duration of the five year project, providing a valuable record of the results of the practical work on the ground.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 9

Communities in the National Park are more sustainable with an appropriate provision of housing to meet local living and working needs and improved access to essential services and facilities.

Fittleworth Shop

The Fittleworth Neighbourhood Plan responded to local people's desire for a small village shop. A site was identified for the shop and with support from the Sustainable Communities Fund. Fittleworth now has a very popular local shop run by volunteers and providing an important local service including a playground and a space for older children to gather.



Self-Build

The Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan allocated two sites in the town to deliver self-build housing. The two sites propose 112 self-build dwellings. The new homes will be offered to those who can demonstrate a local connection to the town or surrounding villages. This will support the SDNPA's drive to provide housing to meet the needs of those living in the South Downs National Park.



Community Land Trusts

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are local organisations set up and run by ordinary people to develop and manage homes as well as other assets important to that community, like food growing or workspaces. People set up and join CLTs for all sorts of different reasons.

17 CLT projects are under development, 9 of which are in the SDNP. Slaugham, Steyning and Lewes are the most advanced; Lewes CLT has a 12–15 unit scheme in the business planning stage as part of the North Street Quarter development.

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 10

A diverse sustainable, dynamic economy has developed that provides a wide variety of business and employment opportunities, many of which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park and local people have access to skilled employment and training opportunities.

The successful development of a
Community Interest Company

Bespoke Biking

With strong motives also focused on the benefits of cycling for the community, the environment and personal health it was felt that a Social Enterprise would be the best 'organisational' vehicle to develop a bespoke biking service.

Heather attended the School for Social Entrepreneurs and through the training developed her skills and confidence in putting a strong business case together. Heather decided that 'Bespoke Biking' would take the form of a Community Interest Company, which gave her a good basis to begin fundraising.

As Heather's training drew to an end she shifted her focus to project development and started working on a bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) of the South Downs National Park Authority.

In 2013 Bespoke Biking began working in partnership with YMCA who provided the premises for their activities. They were also awarded £15,000 from the LSTF, which was spent on capital items such as the bike fleet (for hire), maintenance facilities and tools.

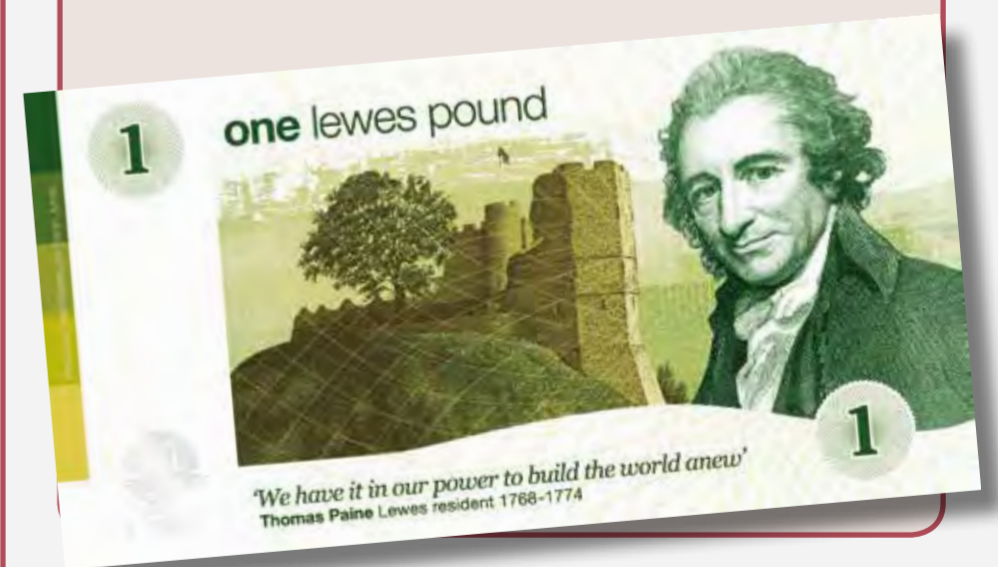
With these foundations in place Bespoke Biking started operating one day per month in September of 2013. It also received additional support from Hampshire County Council, who sponsored a 'bike doctor', which is an onsite bicycle mechanic and marketing in the form of a flyer delivered to every house in the SO23 postcode.



The Lewes Pound

The Lewes Pound is a creative yet practical way for local people to make money work for Lewes. The Lewes Pound is essentially a voucher or token that can be traded locally as a complementary currency and used alongside Pounds Sterling.

Money spent locally circulates within, and benefits the local economy. Money spent in national chains doesn't. The Lewes Pound encourages demand for local goods and services. In turn this builds resilience to the rising costs of energy, transport and food.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

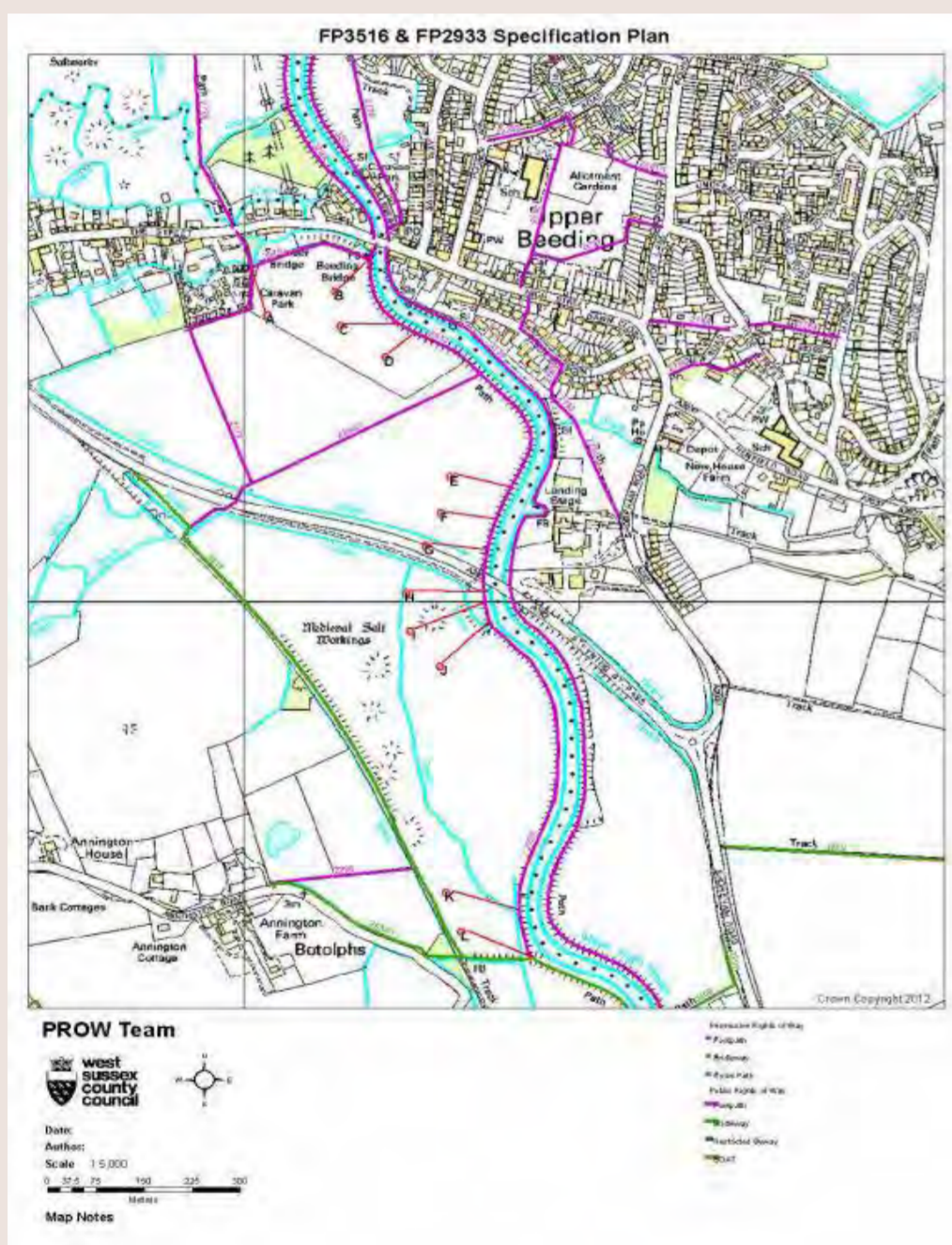
SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW

OUTCOME 11

The South Downs National Park is a well-used and well recognised asset for improving mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Bramber Walk for All

The Steyning & District Community Partnership (SDCP) proposed a major upgrade to a 1.5km section of public footpath alongside the river Adur. The idea was for a path linking with village facilities that would allow all, including disabled users, to take a scenic walk along the river.



HeartSmart

The Chichester HeartSmart walks programme, administered by Chichester District Council, offers an incredible range of walks most days of the week all free of charge. The success of the programme is down to the many dedicated volunteer walk leaders, from across the community, who lead the walks on offer. These volunteers include rangers from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) as many of the walks venture into the National Park.



SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK