

V2 Project Mid-Point Report Truleigh Hill Landscape Project

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1.1 Project Background

Truleigh Hill is home to one of the highest residential communities within the South Downs National Park, sitting at 216 m above sea level with stunning views of the Devil's Dyke to the east, the Adur river valley and Chanctonbury Ring to the west and the coastline of Shoreham-by-sea directly to the south.

The site is home to the Youth Hostel Association's Truleigh Hill hostel, a community hub for the area, offering accommodation alongside leisure, educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to this stunning part of the National Park.

The hostel is a landmark for recreational users travelling along the South Downs Way, including runners, walkers, cyclists and horse-riders, as well as other audiences, such as families, schools groups and local interest groups.

As well as the hostel, Truleigh Hill is the location of a residential community, consisting of ten dwellings, many of which were once part of the original farm at Truleigh Hill and the associated farm workers cottages. There is still a working farm in operation at Truleigh Hill, with associated farm buildings and infrastructure, as well as a Stables and Livery Yard, located alongside the South Downs Way.

Clustered at the summit and visible from the coast at Shoreham-by-sea, you can also see a number of operational telecommunication towers and satellite masts. For some this infrastructure is an eyesore distracting from the expansive sweep of the rolling Downland, for others they are a beacon and landmark guiding visitors travelling along the South Downs Way and traversing the local footpath network.

The masts current sit on the site of an historic WWII radar station, RAF Truleigh Hill and you will still find the remnants of the past military installation scattered across and below (the underground bunker) the landscape.

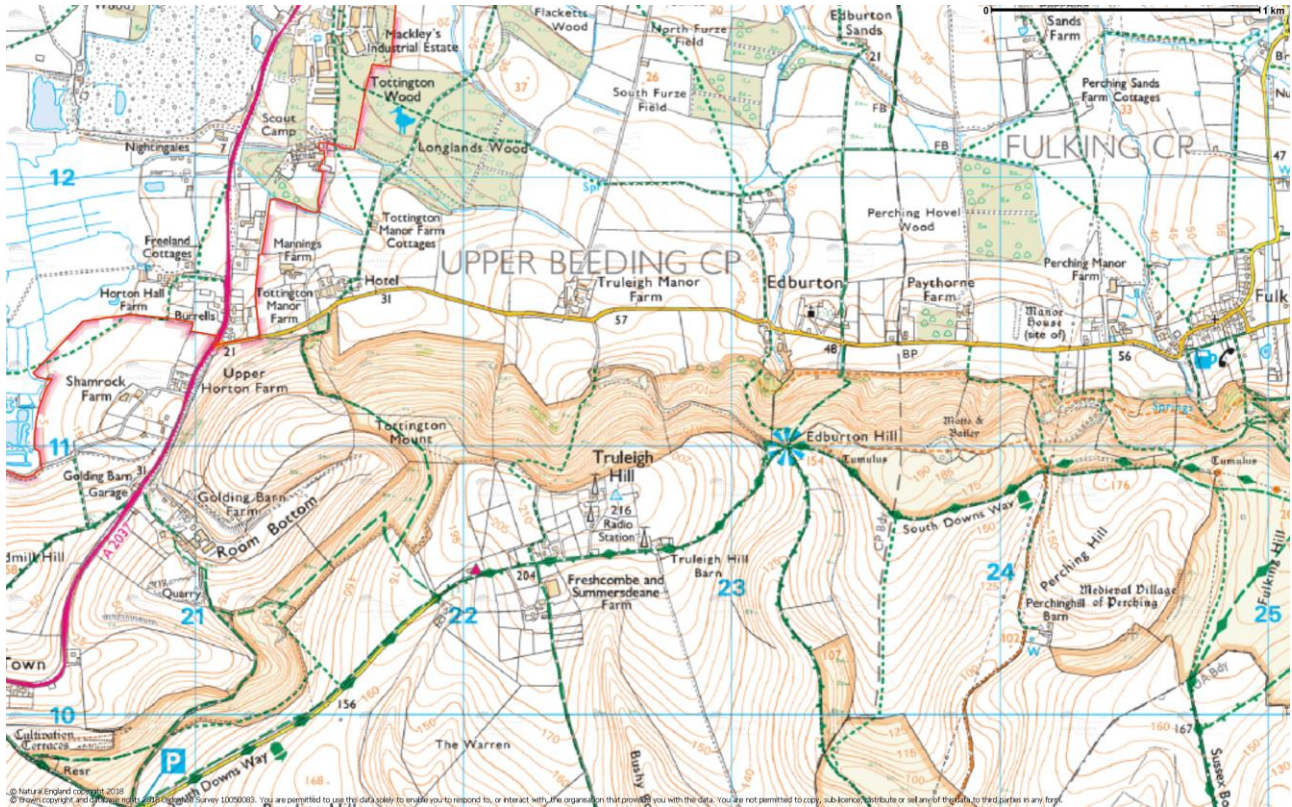
On a clear day from the summit at Truleigh Hill, you will also enjoy a panoramic view of the Rampion Wind Farm, which sits off the coast to the South. Sustainable, clean energy produced by Rampion travels a total distance of 27km through buried onshore cables, which run through the heart of the South Downs National Park at Truleigh Hill, to a new substation at Twineham, where after conversion to a higher voltage power is fed into the national grid network.

The outcome of the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project is an improved landscape for the Truleigh Hill area. This will be delivered through the outputs of a landscape management plan, ecological surveys, engagement events and an action plan to physically improve the landscape. The benefits of these outcomes are an improved landscape, engaged community, ecological and environmental enhancements and improved access and understanding of the wider Truleigh Hill area.

The South Downs Joint Committee (AONB Board) commissioned a Landscape Assessment of the area in 1995 to identify the main detracting influences in the landscape and to act as a 'catalyst for action to upgrade the landscape of Truleigh Hill'. The resources to follow through with the whole scale recommendations of the study were never secured although smaller scale projects have been developed and undertaken by the area rangers, and the area was within the South Downs Way Ahead NIA Project. The current landscape project has had a wider more comprehensive approach to the settlement, its people and the landscape which will unify the legacy of this earlier work.

The Project has taken a holistic and stakeholder-led approach to improving the landscape character of Truleigh Hill through consistent and appropriate landscape management interventions. An important aspect of the project would be to link with surrounding schools and colleges (building on connections made with the Truleigh Hill Access and Educational project) in order to educate and engage with young people in the surrounding settlements.

1.2 Project Area



(telecommunications infrastructure associated with the landscape at Truleigh Hill)

1.3 Site Opportunities and Challenges

Truleigh Hill, is a site within the South Downs National Park ***blessed with opportunity and burdened with challenges.***

The location has high value as a key route along the South Downs Way (18.8 million visit to the SDW in 2016) and is one of the few location on the route which offers accommodation at YHA Truleigh Hill. Visitors can enjoy stunning views across the Open Downland to the coast to the south and inland across the Weald to the north. With the north edge of the settlement bordered by the Beeding Hill to Newtimber Hill SSSI the location can also boast precious chalk grassland habitat with associated species from a diversity of orchids to clouds of Adonis Blue butterflies.

For such as special site, it also faces numerous challenges, including telecommunications infrastructure and power lines dotted across the landscape, the remnants and structures remaining from RAF Truleigh Hill (a WWII radar station), as well as the negative visual impacts associated a residential community and working farm environment, from fencing and landscape compartmentalisation to dumped farm equipment and caravans and untidy land.

Historically the site has also been prone to antisocial behaviour, including regular fly tipping across the area and unauthorised and antisocial vehicle use on public rights of way and private land. The location is also subject to conflict between the different use groups, for example the challenges between dog walkers and the farming community resulting from stock worrying or dog fouling across the rights of way network.

It is these opportunities and challenges which have resulted in Truleigh Hill being a focal area for this project and additional background can be found outlined within the Project PID, (available on request).

1.4 Key elements of year one delivery

Year one of the project has involved extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement, which has assisted in the development of a community driven landscape management plan for Truleigh Hill, with a supplementary Action Plan identifying both physical landscape intervention and opportunities for educational and community engagement, alongside steps to address access issues and ongoing antisocial and offending behaviour in the area.

Practical activities on a range of project themes commenced during year one, initially to engage new audiences, gather wider community opinion and also, to pilot activity based interventions with a view to making recommendations on projects with potential to be rolled out either over a longer delivery period or across a larger geographical area.

2. Consultation Mechanisms

The following approaches were employed to deliver consultation activity and gather community opinion during year one of the project.

1. Large consultation event delivered at Truleigh Hill
 2. Smaller targeted consultation events delivered to local audiences and interest groups including:
 1. Parish Council.
 2. Local History Society.
 3. Local Youth Group.
 4. Air Cadets and Uniform Groups.
 5. Local Schools and College.
 3. Electronic correspondence to local interest group memberships including:
 1. Local RSPB groups
 2. Sussex Bat Group
 3. Sussex Barn Owl Group
 4. Sustrans
 5. Sussex Wildlife Trust
 6. Green Tides (Local Community Network)
 7. Sussex Ramblers
 4. News articles and publications
 1. Friend of the South Downs/South Downs Society
 2. Beeding and Bramber Local History Society
 3. Door to door leafletting promoting consultation events/online
 5. Web publicity and online surveys
 1. SDNPA external website and social media
 2. Public online project survey
 3. Electronic Schools survey
 6. Face to face individual consultation meetings
 1. Local landowners
 2. Local farming community
 4. Local residents
 5. Other stakeholders (telecommunications infrastructure etc.)
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3. Consultation Results and Feedback

3.1 Priorities for local residents, landowners and the farming community

- Surfacing improvements to South Downs Way at Truleigh Hill to address surface water erosion.
- Restriction of unauthorised vehicles on South Downs Way beyond the YHA on the Restricted Byway.
- Reduce vehicle parking along the verge of the South Downs Way which results in an increase in vehicle congestions and negative impact on views.
- Address ongoing issues of fly tipping across the project area.
- Tackle antisocial behavior issues, including off road vehicle use in protected areas, farmland and on the public rights of way network (see *supporting antisocial behavior log*)
- Address ongoing criminal behavior within the residential area (see *supporting antisocial behavior log*)
- Provide infrastructure to reduce dog waste and fouling issues along public rights of way.
- Behavior change activities with local dog walkers to reduce issues of livestock worrying.
- Protect existing landscape character and features without excessive new infrastructure.
- Control unpermitted development within the residential area and surrounding Downland.
- To improve the landscape and visitor experience, but to also minimise impact of farming operations and local residents as a result of increasing visitor numbers.

3.2 Priorities of the public, wider community and local interest groups

Full details of public consultation responses are available on request.

Comments relating to Landscape and Habitats

- 88% of people surveyed would like to see a better managed landscape with improved habitat connectivity.
- 85% of people surveyed would like to see the character of the landscape preserved. This could include an increase in the number of wildlife surveys completed and an increase in conservation volunteering opportunities across the project area.
- 67% of people surveyed would like to see clutter removed from the landscape and untidy areas improved.

Comments relating to Education and Learning

- 72% of people surveyed would like to see improved opportunities for learning and skills development in the area linked to events. (*Main areas of interest included history tours – wildlife surveying – practical conservation – wildlife photography – wilderness skills*).
- 80% of people surveyed would like to see an increase in schools use at Truleigh Hill and resources to facilitate this.

- 86% of people surveyed would like to see more open access educational opportunities and resources available, both online and physical. This could include nature trails, local history information, wildlife and species information and family learning opportunities.

Comments relating to Leisure and Recreation

- 90% of people surveyed visit Truleigh Hill for leisure and recreation reasons, with the highest proportion walking in the area, 43% for nature watching activities and 25% as dog walkers.
- 80% of those surveyed would like to see improved facilities for leisure and recreation, with the main areas of interest being walking guides and maps at 61% of those surveyed, 54% of people would like to see improve bird watching facilities or groups in the area. A quarter of those surveyed would like to see a more regular events programme at Truleigh Hill and the same proportion would like to see Geocaching opportunities developed.
- 73% of people surveyed would like to see improvement to the public rights of way in the area, to include vegetation management and more information regarding available walking routes around Truleigh Hill.

Comments relating to Local Knowledge and History

- The majority of people visiting the site know little about its history 63% and there was a lot of interest in more information being available either digitally or in hard copy format.

Comments relating to Access and Parking

- 63% of visitors use their own transport (car) to travel to Truleigh Hill with 53% of those surveyed wanting to see improved parking in the area, but not at the expense of landscape quality.

Comments relating to the YHA

- 62% of visitors to the area, have never used the facilities at the YHA and the majority felt that there needed to be more publicity around the YHA, informing people of the opportunities on offer.
- 80% of those surveyed would like to see facilities available throughout the year, for example a rain shelter or access to the café, rather than facilities closing between October and April.

3.3 Schools engagement and consultation

In total 20 local schools were contacted and provided with an opportunity to comment on the educational facilities which they would like to see developed at Truleigh Hill.

The response rate to this survey was very low, with only three schools engaging with the process. A number of schools have continued to visit Truleigh Hill independently over the year and opportunities have arisen to develop partnerships with Upper Beeding Primary and Shoreham College. The project has also delivered a very successful educational schools pilot project Bike it Wild.

4. Progress against project outputs

4.1 Stakeholder Groups Engaged (Target 15 groups)

The project exceeded this target early in year one and is continuing to increase the number of stakeholders interested in involvement at Truleigh Hill, groups involved to date include:

- Local residents
- Residents from the surrounding urban communities
- Landowners including National Trust, farming community, county council and local residents.
- Parish, district and county council representatives. (Upper Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex)
- Utility Companies (Southern Water, UK Power Networks and British Gas)
- Telecommunications Companies (Arqiva, AP Wireless, BT)
- Youth Hostel Association
- Cycling organisations (Sustrans)
- Walking organisations (Sussex Ramblers, Friends of the South Downs)
- Natural History/Environmental Groups (Sussex Wildlife Trust, TCV, Froglife, RSPB, Greentides)
- Heritage Groups (Steyning Museum, Local History Society, RBL and Air Cadets)
- Local businesses (Truleigh Hill Stables, Golding Barn Raceway, Community Transport)
- Schools and Colleges (Upper Beeding, Shoreham College)
- Youth organisations (Esteem, Sussex clubs for young people, uniform groups)
- Local Social Prescribing Network (Going Local and South downs)
- Site base volunteers and members of the VRS. (volunteer ranger service)

4.2 Events delivered at Truleigh Hill (Target 3 events)

The first community event was delivered on the 3rd March 2018 and was a consultation event with family activities on offer. The event was attended by between 70 and 80 people and was used to publicise the project and gather community opinion.

There have also been a number of smaller consultation events delivered during year one, including at the Parish Council AGM and also Local History Society AGM.

The second community event is planned for early May 2020, when YHA Truleigh Hill reopens following its refurbishment. This will be an opportunity to showcase the new facilities at the YHA, share the Truleigh Hill Landscape Plan and Action Plan as well as delivering a range of family focused educational activities.

The last event will be delivered as an end of project celebration between August/September 2020 depending on final project end date. Planning is currently underway for the events in 2020, with these events being an opportunity to promote the findings of the study and practical interventions delivered in the earlier stages of the project and to promote future opportunities available at Truleigh Hill and

delivery behaviour change interventions such as [take the lead](#) and collaborate with Sussex Police focusing on antisocial behaviour.

4.3 Number of volunteer days delivered (Target 30 days)

10 practical volunteer sessions have been delivered to date including a youth action day and youth session for vulnerable young people. The Project Officer have started to develop a regular VRS group specifically for Truleigh Hill and has engaged youth volunteers undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh Award and also adult volunteers referred through the local social prescribing and NHS mental health clinical support services. We have an additional 10 VRS and Health and Well-being volunteer sessions confirmed between January and March 2020 and will be increasing sessions as we move into the more practical second year of the project. The project is on track to exceed the outcome target at completion.

4.4 Landscape Management Plan Produced (Target 1 plan)

Following slight delays, the draft Landscape Assessment and Project Action Plan have been completed and are being considered by the Project Steering Group. Full details of the draft Landscape Assessment and draft Action Plan are available on request.

The Project Steering group is currently evaluating the Landscape Assessment and full list of Action Plan Interventions (36 physical interventions), with the objective of having the approved Landscape Assessment, additional Landscape Plan and supporting Action Plan ready for circulation Nov/Dec 2019, following Steering Group review and approval.

4.5 Land brought into positive management (Target 10 land parcels)

10+ areas of land have been identified within the Draft Action Plan with 36 associated physical interventions. Opportunities and interventions are currently being considered by the Project Steering Group, with a shortlist of potential projects to be compiled. The list of opportunities and interventions exceeded the allocated project budget by over £55,000.00 It will therefore fall to the Project Steering Group to select appropriate works for delivery in year two of the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project and suitable projects for which additional funding can be requested, if appropriate for future delivery.

4.6 Planning Guidance Produced (Target 1 document)

This outcome will be delivered early 2020, in collaboration with the SDNPA Planning team and Landscape Officer. The SDNPA Landscape Officer has recently release guidance for host planning authorities, promoting the Landscape Led Approach to Planning within the National Park. It will be appropriate to use this new resource to develop planning guidance for Truleigh Hill and deliver training to local residents and landowners during year two of the project.

4.7 Telecommunications equipment removed (Target 1 tower)

Consultation has occurred with the telecommunications companies in operation at Truleigh Hill during year one of the project. Due to the cost associated with the replacement of telecommunications masts and the value of this infrastructure, it is unlikely that this target will be achieved during the lifespan of this project. Arqiva who oversee the larger of the mast at Truleigh Hill, would be very happy to consider consolidation of the equipment in the future, should any of the existing mast reach the end of their lifespan and require replacements. It is recommended that a dialogue should be continued with these stakeholders, with opportunities for consolidation to be explored in the future. The Project Officer has also established a dialogue with the owner of the underground bunker at Truleigh Hill and although the bunker is currently under lease, there are opportunities to explore use of the facility for community benefit and education in the future.

5. Schools and educational opportunities

Truleigh Hill has continued to receive unannounced informal and self-led schools visits during year one of the project, even though we had a low number of schools responding to our online consultation.

During year one the Project Officer has been developing the educational resources available to schools and community groups at Truleigh Hill to facilitate an increase in schools visits and engagement in future years. The opportunity has also arisen to develop some stronger partnerships with two local schools and local educational partners which will potentially result in sustained engagement at Truleigh Hill following completion of the project.

5.1 Upper Beeding Primary

The Project Officer coordinated and hosted a whole school visits from Upper Beeding Primary on 21st May 2019. The visit involved the children walking from school to Truleigh Hill, with the delivery of some curriculum linked environmental activities on arrival at the YHA. The school have confirmed that they now plan to make the Truleigh Hill visit part of their annual programme and will make use of educational resources available on site.

5.2 Shoreham College

A new partnership has also been developed with Shoreham College and we will be delivering the [John Muir Award](#) with a class of year 6 students between November 2019 and March 2020 at Truleigh Hill. Older students undertaking their Duke of Edinburgh award will also be involved with the project and we will be gathering a case study to promote this type of opportunity to other local schools and community audiences. Following the completion of the project, Shoreham College plan return to the site on an annual basis to deliver the John Muir Award on a self-led basis, supporting sustained engagement at Truleigh Hill.

This pilot will dovetail with the objectives of the new SDNPA Families Outreach Officer and we will be promoting Truleigh Hill as a venue for the delivery of the John Muir Award. During the remainder of the project we have the objective to engage a larger number of local families who are currently not engaged with the South Downs National Park and to offer opportunities to those who may have barriers to accessing and enjoying the National Park.

5.3 Bike it Wild

The Truleigh Hill project also supported a very successful schools collaboration between Sustrans, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Blatchington Mill School. The project had a focus on supporting more female pupils to cycle and experience the National Park, which also supporting improved physical and mental health and confidence. We have some useful evaluation of this project in the form of a case study, short film and feedback from the participating school, all available on request.

The Bike it Wild project provides a fantastic opportunity to encourage a growing number of young people to explore the South Downs National Park, in support of improved physical and mental health. The Project Officer would like to recommend that the SDNPA considers providing a match funding contribution towards the roll out of a larger multiyear project between 2020 and 2023, to be delivered at Truleigh Hill and other suitable venues in the South Downs National Park.

6. Health and Wellbeing and Social Prescribing

In support of the SDNPA strategic objectives to diversity our volunteer demographic and to provide more opportunities to support health and wellbeing initiatives within the National Park. The Project Officer has been piloting health and wellbeing sessions at Truleigh Hill during October 2019, in collaboration with the local social prescribing service (Going Local Adur and Worthing) and the regional NHS mental health clinical support service (Sussex NHS Partnership Trust).

The objective of the pilot was to:

- Support health and wellbeing initiatives at Truleigh Hill, resulting in improved mental and physical health through engagement with the natural environment.
- To diversify the range of opportunities on offer to volunteers within the National Park.
- And to broaden the range and demographic of individuals volunteering with the SDNPA.

The project has also seen the establishment of a relationship with both Sussex and Worthing Community Transport, community organisations which are able to provide a minibus service to support groups without their own transport to access opportunities within the National Park.

We had a reasonable number of initial referrals to the pilot from the Social Prescriber service, with 25% of those referred attending one session or more. Feedback from participants has been positive with two individuals progressing to register with the VRS to continue their volunteering.

The Project Officer plans to further develop the pilot with the delivery of regular weekend health and wellbeing sessions at Truleigh Hill commencing March 2020.

In addition the project will also be delivering a programme of health and wellbeing sessions to existing community groups in the spring and summer 2020, including adults with learning disabilities from the **Buddy's Friendship Group** and vulnerable elderly people at risk of isolation in partnership with **Independent Lives**. We are also working in collaboration with community transport to identify other local audiences which may benefit from opportunities at Truleigh Hill

and within the South Downs National Park. It is the objective that these groups will continue with self-led visits following the completion of the project.

The Project Officer will be collaborating closely with the new SDNPA Health and Wellbeing Officer to pilot a number of interventions during the remainder of the project. Following evaluation there will be opportunities to explore the extension of these programmes in collaboration with external delivery partners including the YHA to sustain engagement and involvement at Truleigh Hill beyond the life of the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project and in line with the YHA's [Strategy for 2020](#).

7. Antisocial behaviour



Ongoing issues in and around Truleigh Hill with antisocial vehicle use, including joy riding and burnt out vehicles and unauthorised off road motorbike use on restricted By-ways and also on sections of SSSI.

The following page demonstrates ongoing issues with fly tipping, including asbestos sheeting and a dismantled caravan on a public right of way.



One of the significant areas of concern for project stakeholders and local residents at Truleigh Hill, is the ongoing issues of antisocial behaviour including:

- Repeat fly tipping and littering.
- Joy riding and antisocial vehicle use.
- Motor vehicle use on restricted byways, public rights of way and SSSI.
- Criminal behaviour and drug dealing.

Details of the ongoing antisocial behaviour issues at Truleigh Hill have been logged within the incident logs which are available on request.

The Project Officer and local stakeholder are working with Sussex police to address some of the ongoing antisocial issues, which are impacting on the quality and the experience of visitors to the South Downs National Park.

One of the interventions suggested by the Project Officer is the installation of number plate recognition enabled CCTV at YHA Truleigh Hill, as a part of the scheduled refurbishment works. This intervention has the capabilities of considerably reducing antisocial behaviour in the area, by acting as a deterrent and supporting enforcement action, while also having minimal impact of landscape character.

The YHA management team are open to hosting the equipment and the Project Officer would like to put forward a proposal for the SDNPA to fund the installation.

We are also collaborating closely with the B D Harris Farm Trust and the local PCSO Erica Baxter 27123, Rural PCSO for Sussex Police and are planning a programme of interventions for 2020 with the objective of reducing antisocial and offending behaviour in the area.

8. Sharing findings and securing continued community support

The project steering group are currently evaluating and scrutinising the draft Action Plan with the full scope of interventions, in order to short list those interventions which will inform the next phase of project delivery and those which will form part of the project legacy. On completion this revised Action Plan will be available as an online resource via the SDNPA website with the accompanying Landscape Assessment and Plan.

We will utilise our planned public events during 2020, (based at YHA Truleigh Hill) to publicise our findings to the local and surrounding communities. We will also share this work directly with project stakeholders, in order to secure their continued support, engagement and involvement and so that conclusions can be shared more widely through stakeholder networks and publications for example partner websites and e-news, parish council updates and the local press and publications such as Downsman and Sussex Life.

9. Project timeline

As a result of the Project Officer being unexpectedly signed off work for health reasons during August and September 2019, there has been a small amount of slippage to the project timeline. As a result the Project Officer is approaching the Project Steering Group to propose extension the project end date to September 2020, in order to maximise outputs and impact achieved.

10. Value for money

The project is currently underspent on the budget forecast for year one, although the interventions and opportunities identified within the project Action Plan exceed the remaining allocated project budget.

During year two it is the objective of the Project Officer to work in collaboration with project partners and stakeholders to secure external funding to continue activity at Truleigh Hill, beyond the initial 2 year duration of the project.

The Project Officer is currently working in collaboration with Sustrans and the Sussex Wildlife Trust to secure funding for the expansion and rollout of the Bike it Wild project.

The SDNPA are also working with So Sussex and the YHA (delivery partners), with a view to securing funds for the delivery of a number of engagement programmes, including family events, health and wellbeing/social prescribing and youth engagement/crime diversionary.

In addition to this we are working collaboratively with Froglife to resubmit a recent unsuccessful application to HLF for the Sussex Living Waters project. A project focusing on Dew Ponds and which will complement the recently approved HLF changing chalk project.

11. Intervention Highlights and Priorities

It is the recommendation of the Project Officer that the following proposed physical interventions are seen as priorities for second stage of project delivery, the full draft Action Plan containing all of the proposed project interventions is available on request.

11.1 Interventions 8 & 9 – Track consolidation and associated drainage on the South Downs Way National Trail.

11.2 Interventions 12 to 14 – Conservation Verge Management alongside the South Downs Way National Trail.

11.3 Intervention 17 to 19 – Dew Pond creation to support rare breeds conservation grazing and address surface water erosion on the South Downs Way National Trail.

11.4 Intervention 20 – Meadow creation alongside the South Downs Way National Trail.

11.5 Intervention 21 – Phase one tree removal (pines) around the YHA.

11.6 Intervention 30 – Trial temporary vehicle parking area around the YHA.

Other priority interventions

- 11.7 Installation of CCTV at YHA Truleigh Hill to address ongoing antisocial issues at Truleigh Hill.**
- 11.8 Installation of NFC Tags on Way Markers across the project area to support the download of education information and content.**
- 11.9 Installation of Dog Waste facilities at strategic locations across the project area (minimising impact on landscape character and views).**

Priority activity interventions

- 11.10 Establishment of a sustainable volunteer programme at Truleigh Hill.**
- 11.11 Delivery of a behaviour change campaign linked to ‘Take the lead’ targeting dog walkers in the local area.**
- 11.12 Delivery of a behaviour change campaign, tackling antisocial vehicle use in the local area.**
- 11.13 Develop and secure longer term partnership projects for the continued delivery of engagement activity at Truleigh Hill as a part of the project legacy including:**
 - Schools engagement – Bike it Wild.**
 - Health & Wellbeing – Social Prescribing.**
 - Local community – YHA events programme.**