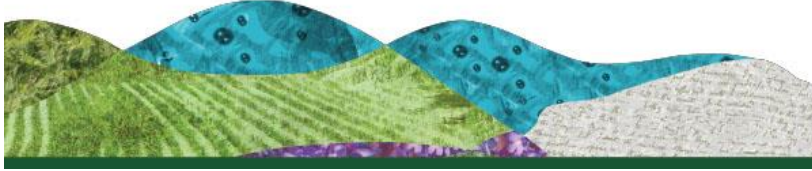


SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



June 2019

Welcome to our quarterly newsletter for citizens panel members. It is jam packed this month, including exciting information on the National Park Authority's plans to transform Seven Sisters Country Park and the launch of our photography competition. We are also asking for your feedback on your experience of being part of the **first** SDNP citizens panel.

If you want to know more about what's happening in the National Park please remember to sign up for the South Downs monthly newsletter <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter/>.

Best wishes,

Tanya Hibberd

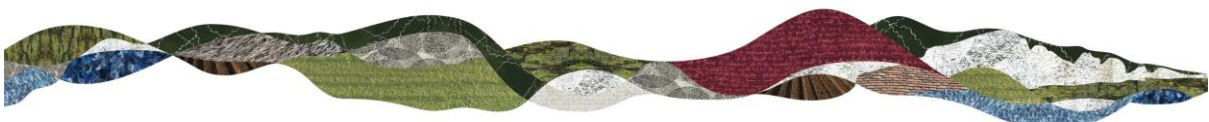
News just in! National Park Authority unveils £1.4m plans to transform Seven Sisters Country Park

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has been named as the preferred bidder for Seven Sisters Country Park with ambitious £1.4m plans, including:

- Improving habitat for seven important native animal and plant species – the **Breeding Lapwing, Adonis Blue Butterfly, Redshank, Meadowsweet, Ringed Plover, Reed Warbler**, and the **Wigeon**.
- Creating a world-class visitor experience to tell the story of the Country Park's landscape, habitats, wildlife and the effects of climate change.
- Refurbishing the visitor centre and extending its opening hours
- Improving trails and bird watching facilities to make the Country Park a destination for wildlife watching.
- Careful landscape management to increase chalk grassland, grazing marsh and wet meadows to enhance biodiversity.

Following a decision by East Sussex County Council, the iconic 280-hectare site will remain in public ownership and it's expected that the site will be fully transferred under the stewardship of the SDNPA by March 2020.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of SDNPA, said: *“Seven Sisters Country Park offers some of the most stunning views in the world. We'd like to make it a national centre for biodiversity and conservation, telling the story of this extraordinary landscape to a wide audience and using it to test out new approaches to the national challenge of climate change.*



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



South Downs National Park photo competition – call for entries!

The South Downs National Park photo competition is now open, with a **first prize of £250** on offer to the amateur or professional photographer who best captures this year's theme of **'Experiencing the natural world'**.

Judges are looking for inspiring images that capture the beauty of the National Park. There's also a **£100 prize** for best wildlife picture.

So whether it's walking, cycling, horse riding, walking the dog, counting butterflies, bird-watching or having a picnic, we're looking for images that show people out enjoying this amazing landscape.

Entries close at 12:00 GMT on Friday 18 October 2019

Download the [South Downs National Park photo competition entry form](#)

Read the [South Downs National Park photo competition terms and conditions](#)

Need inspiration? [See the winning entries of the 2018/19 photo competition](#)

South Downs Youth Action

This summer we're **challenging young people aged 16-25** to help us to protect the wildlife and landscapes of the South Downs. We're running a South Downs Youth Action programme where young people can sign up to volunteer for a few hours to make a difference to the environment and get an insight into the wildlife and history of this amazing National Park.

Activities will be limited to 10-15 spaces per event, so look out for details on our website, across social media and in the areas local to the activities. All events will run throughout August and are free to attend. Reasonable travel expenses are available for participants.

For more information please see our website or keep an eye on our Eventbrite page:

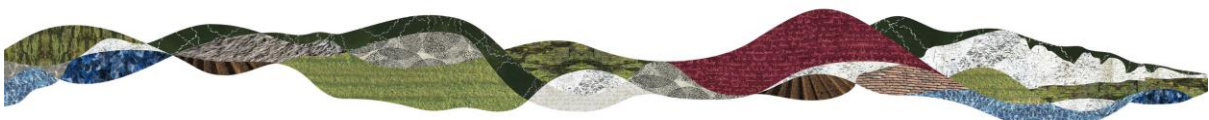
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/south-downs-national-park-authority-9884472334>

You can also contact Daniel Greenwood, our Volunteer Development Officer:

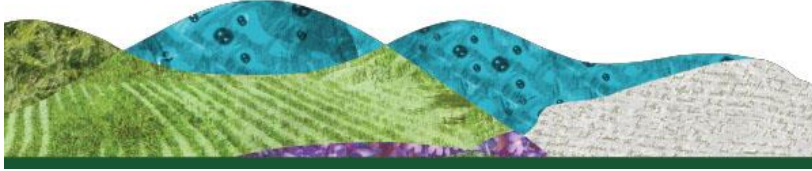
daniel.greenwood@southdowns.gov.uk

What does good design mean to you?

We launched an exciting new awards scheme this year to promote outstanding and innovative design in the National Park. The South Downs National Park Design Awards celebrates high standard projects that have made a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment and our local communities across Hampshire and Sussex. An awards ceremony will be held on 12 November 2019 – tying in with the 10th anniversary of the National Park's official designation.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



More than 60 nominations have so far been received across the three categories – Residential; Non-Residential; and Conservation. A diverse mix of submissions have been received, including a visitor centre, cinema and restaurant, residential schemes, garden designs and extensions to listed buildings.

We will soon be shortlisting the entries to five nominations in each category. Our judges will pick winners for each category and then open all 15 nominations for the People's Choice award. Voting will take place throughout August and September via our website for the public to choose their favourite design.

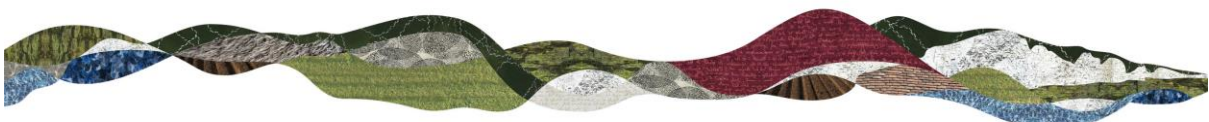
And this is where we'd like your help please! **We would like 20 members of the Citizens Panel to take a short survey based on the shortlisted Design Award entries – to establish what aspects of design SDNP residents are interested in. Walnut Unlimited will be contacting panel members in September to recruit people to this exercise so look for an invite email in your inbox!**

Our Design Officer Benjamin Terry explains: *“As a planning authority, we would like to better understand what the Citizens Panel think about good design in the context of a National Park. The information we collate will aid our future work.”*

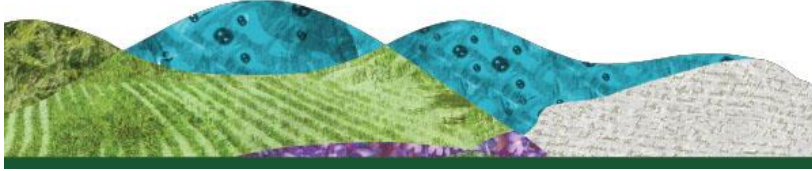
What are your thoughts on the South Downs National Park Citizens Panel?

The Citizens Panel was established in 2017 as a three year pilot scheme. Its purpose was to communicate with people across the South Downs National Park to help improve key areas of work and inform future working on important issues. As we're now in the last year of the Citizens Panel pilot scheme, we will be carrying out an internal review of the Citizens Panel, looking at what's working well, what's not working so well, and looking at how successful the panel has been to date. The results of the review will help shape the future development of the Citizens Panel and make it even better. As a valued panel member, your thoughts and opinions are vital to us so we would be grateful if you could spare some time to **complete our survey by 19th July**. Your feedback will be an important contribution to our review.

If you are willing to spend 10 minutes answering a few questions, then please click <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CitizensPanel>.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



Biodiversity and litter picking top the agenda in Spring 2019 survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in our spring survey. As always your responses are extremely useful. The spring survey report will be up on our website in July (<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/discover/research/citizens-panel/>), but until then, here are some key highlights:

- Your two main concerns as a result of ash dieback were **loss of ash in the landscape** (86%) and **general impact on biodiversity** (85%)
- For 75% of you the **quality of the product** was the biggest driver when buying wood products, followed by **that the source woodland is responsibly managed** (67%)
- Almost seven in ten (68%) of you were **interested in short-term, independent activities that allow you to make a difference to a cause you care about**, and you were most interested in **litter picking** (73%).

Please look for the next survey in your in boxes in October. Your response really does count.

Meet the panel members

If you would like to answer a few short questions about why you joined the panel and what the National Park means to you, please email tanya.hibberd@southdowns.gov.uk. You could feature in the next 'Meet the panel members' section!

And finally – a story to inspire you!

On our website, we recently featured the heart-warming story of Sathi Sivapragasam, who has found her “happy place” by volunteering in the South Downs National Park. Sathi openly admits that she felt like opportunities were limited in her life, but she has found a new lease of life helping to conserve and enhance this wonderful area. [Read Sathi's story here.](#)

