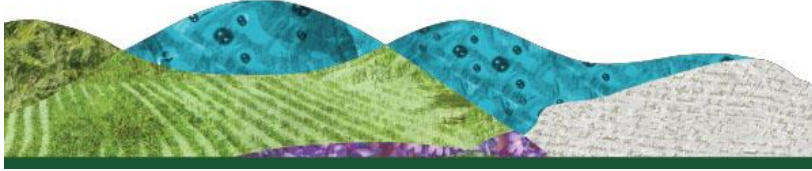


## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



Welcome to our quarterly e-newsletter for Citizens Panel members. News items in this edition are:

- Proposed meet-up for panel members
- Evaluation of the Citizens Panel pilot and next steps
- How to become a Dog Ambassador
- Launch of the 'Forever Fund'
- Release of the Landscapes Review

If you would like 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/>. It will only take a couple of minutes to sign up!

Best wishes,

Tanya Hibberd

### **Meet your fellow panel members**

Citizens Panel members are very important to us. We really appreciate the time and effort that you dedicate to engaging with the South Downs National Park through panel surveys and the e-newsletter. We would like to arrange a meet-up for panel members to give you the chance to learn more about the National Park, hear how your feedback is being utilised and meet some of your fellow panel members. Look out for the next survey in October which will ask you about your interest in meeting up and your preferred venue – either Plumpton Village Hall or Milland Village Hall.

### **Citizens Panel approaching the end of the pilot phase**

Many thanks to those of you who provided valuable feedback about your experience of being on the Citizens Panel and recommendations for the future once the pilot phase has ended in May 2020. The feedback from panel members, Authority staff, Walnut (who manage the panel) and Authority Members has been collated and analysed and a report drafted with four suggested options regarding the management and structure of the panel moving forward. Our report and recommendations are being presented to our Operational and Senior Management Teams in October, when we will be given a steer as to the future of the panel. We will update you when we know more.

### **Love dogs? Love the heathlands?**

The Heathlands Reunited project team are recruiting volunteer 'Dog Ambassadors' to help encourage responsible dog walking on heathlands in the South Downs National Park. Dog Ambassadors are given full training and receive ongoing support throughout their post. This volunteer role is great for anyone who loves dogs, people, and the South Downs. You will need to



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be able to dedicate one day per week for this position. To learn more and apply, please visit: <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/take-the-lead/become-an-ambassador/>

### **‘Forever fund’ launched to support community projects in the National Park**

Over the past few years funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF) has made a big difference to a number of community projects across Sussex and Hampshire. These include:

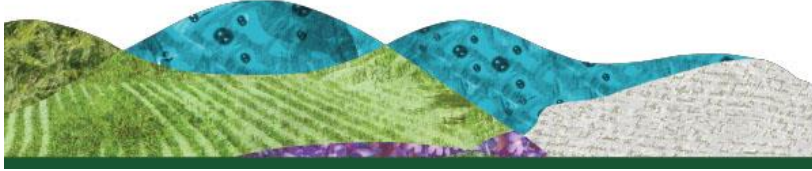
- £10,000 to help create Fittleworth Community Shop, a now thriving hub of the village;
- £30,000 to help create a community shop, café and information point in Slindon; and
- Almost £12,000 to restore a historic dewpond on the Sompting Estate – a wildlife haven that is now used by community groups for conservation activities.

More good causes and community projects in the South Downs National Park will be helped in the future as a new **‘forever fund’** has been created by the South Downs National Park Trust, the official charity of the National Park, in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority. The Trust’s endowment will provide a permanent funding stream for the National Park’s SCF. Doug Jones, Chair of the SCF Grant Panel, explained: “Until now the Sustainable Communities Fund has relied on piecemeal donations. In a climate where charity funding is never guaranteed, this initiative provides a dedicated and dependable income stream to support community projects in the National Park.”

Grants awarded are considered by the SCF Grant panel, which meets two times a year. Grants are available for up to 50 per cent of the project cost from £250 to a maximum of £10,000. Any organisation interested should email [mark.rose@southdownstrust.org.uk](mailto:mark.rose@southdownstrust.org.uk) or call 01730 819219 for an initial conversation about the project.



## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



### Landscapes Review released

On 21 September 2019, the Government released their long-awaited independent review into England's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - the **Landscapes Review**. The full report can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-landscapes-national-parks-and-aonbs-2018-review>.

Key points from the report include:

- The call for evidence received around 2,500 submissions from organisations and individuals
- The central proposal is to bring National Parks and AONBs together as part of one family of National Landscapes, served by a shared National Landscapes Service (NLS)
- Without structural reform and greater shared ambition and status, National Landscapes will always struggle to do more than make an incremental difference
- All National Landscapes should be priorities for ELMs (Environmental Land Management schemes) payments delivering nature recovery and other benefits through farming
- AONBs should be given statutory planning consultee status
- National Landscapes – especially National Parks – should take on a more active role in coordinating and promoting low-carbon, accessible forms of transport
- The key mechanism for change will be strengthened Management Plans with clear targeted actions to recover nature, underpinned by robust assessments of the state of nature and natural capital in our National Landscapes
- Existing budgets for National Parks should be secured in real terms and sustained for at least five years so they can plan with confidence.

As a National Park Authority we will endeavour to work more closely and effectively with other National Landscapes to form a cohesive, strategic way forward. We are about to release our new Partnership Management Plan for 2020-25 which will address many of the issues raised in the Landscapes Review. We will inform you when this has been released.

### 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](mailto:tanya.hibberd@southdowns.gov.uk). You could feature in the next 'Meet the panel members' section!

