

# SOUTH DOWNS PLANNING

NEWS FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



Welcome to the planning newsletter for the South Downs National Park Authority  
Send your comments to us at [planningnewsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:planningnewsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

## A message from your National Park

**Welcome to the spring edition of the South Downs National Park's planning newsletter. I hope you and your families are keeping well during this very testing period.**

Planning is at the heart of the National Park Authority's work and I just want to take a moment to update you all on steps that have been taken to minimise disruption to the planning service during these challenging times.

Following the most recent Government advice, we've been working hard to ensure continuity of the Planning Service.

I'm pleased to confirm that the Authority has been able to continue to meet its current arrangements in terms of publicity for planning applications. Site notices continue to be posted on applications, neighbour

letters are being sent out and (where required under legislation) publicity continues to be carried out in local journals. In addition, our support team continue to publish the weekly lists detailing new applications which have been received.



Parish councils and interested parties should therefore continue to submit any comments on applications as normal and these will be given due consideration by the case officer.

Planning case officers are not currently undertaking site visits, based on government guidance, however this will be reviewed as the situation develops. This may result in a small delay in applications progressing to a decision.

We have also been reviewing all upcoming Authority and Committee meetings including the Planning Committee.

Under delegated responsibilities (as set out in the Authority's Standing Orders) the Director of Planning is able to issue planning decisions where he has delegated responsibility to do so. However,

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I'd like to thank everyone for their co-operation and understanding during this demanding period.

In the meantime, I do hope you enjoy reading our newsletter and catching up on some of the highlights from the first quarter of 2020 – an important year indeed as we mark 10 years of the South Downs National Park.

Stay safe

**Margaret Paren**

**Chair**

**South Downs National Park Authority**



applications which fall into the categories below will need to be decided by Members of the Planning Committee:

1. Planning applications (except for householder and other minor applications) which are contrary to the approved or draft development plan or other planning policies but which are recommended for approval.
2. Applications (except for householder and other minor applications) which are requested for referral to the Planning Committee by any Member of the Authority, in writing or email to the Director of Planning and with specified reasons.
3. Applications (except for householder and other minor applications) which, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, have generated significant and material third party representations which are contrary to the officer recommendation.
4. Applications from Authority Members or employees.
5. Applications submitted by or on behalf of the Authority for its own developments, except for the approval of minor developments.

In addition to the above list, there are some applications that fall within the Director of Planning's delegated responsibilities but for a variety of reasons require Member consideration. The process for these applications will be:

- The Officer report and intended decision will be posted on the Authority website and letters will be sent to interested parties (including Parish Councils) who will have five working days to make any comments.
- Members of the public (and Parish Councils) who wish to comment (in the absence of being able to speak at Committee for up to 3 minutes) can submit additional information, other than what has been previously submitted, by email to **public.speaking@southdowns.gov.uk**

Please note that any submission should be no longer than a maximum of 500 words and should be restricted to any comments on the Case Officer's report.

- Members will provide their comments on the application to the Director of Planning and a decision statement will be issued on the Authority website 10 working days after public comments have been received.

The Authority is endeavouring to continue its Planning Enforcement Function. Officers are not currently carrying out site visits but continue to progress existing investigations.

These are exceptional times and we are keeping all these arrangements under review.

# Celebrating 10 years: Key planning milestones



**Ten years ago a long-standing vision finally became a working reality when 1,600km<sup>2</sup> of England's most-cherished lowland landscape was designated on behalf of the nation as a special place for natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage.**

A decade on and significant strides have been made to conserve and enhance the National Park, promote opportunities for people to enjoy its special qualities, and to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities in the National Park.

At the heart of delivering the National Park's core purposes and duty is planning, which provides an important frontline service for communities across the South Downs.

**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**  
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park, said: "Although we are a young National Park we have achieved much over the past 10 years and planning has been at the forefront. Perhaps the biggest success has been the adoption of the first-ever landscape-led South Downs Local Plan, incorporating 56 Neighbourhood Development Plans – an example of how planning can work in tandem with local communities to achieve great benefits for both people and nature. It has also been wonderful to be able to see towns and villages reap the rewards from the planning system through significant investment in infrastructure through the Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) schemes.

"These successes have only been possible thanks to constructive and deep partnerships, forging links with the many local authorities, parish councils, community organisations and planning agents across the National Park.

"As we look forward to the next 10 years, there are big tests ahead, particularly from the pressure of global

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climate change, threats to biodiversity and the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis that is affecting so many aspects of our society. But I am optimistic that the passion people have for this varied and dynamic landscape will remain our strongest asset and stand us in good stead for the challenges and opportunities ahead."

We now reflect on 10 key planning achievements:

### Local Plan

The first South Downs Local Plan covers the entire National Park and was formally adopted last July following extensive public consultation with local communities and detailed scrutiny and examination by the Government's Planning Inspectorate.

The Plan, covering 2014 to 2033, replaced more than 1,000 overlapped policies that were in existence across the area of the National Park with 92 clear policies covering all aspects of planning.

The Plan sets out measures to mitigate climate change including that any major new developments should seek to be carbon neutral, have better drainage schemes to reduce flood risk and limit water consumption for new developments.

The Local Plan also delivers vital "ecosystem services", which are the services provided by the environment, such as clean water and air, dark night skies and tranquillity.

The affordable housing policy prioritises on-site provision of rented affordable homes

### Supporting communities

People and communities lie at the heart of the National Park. In the past 10 years the Authority has invested directly into these communities to help them plan for the future.

Highlights include:

- £1.75m invested in 202 community projects across the National Park as part of the Sustainable Communities Fund.
- Through its planning function, £2.9m has been invested through Section 106 agreements, funding 109 projects.
- £2.5m of Community Infrastructure Levy was collected between 2017 and 2019, with £300,000 given to local parish councils to spend and dozens of community projects allocated funding.

### Neighbourhood Planning

Communities across the National Park have led the way in developing their local planning needs and 56

Neighbourhood Development Plans have so far been incorporated in the Local Plan. Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community.

### **Delivering with distinction**

The National Park has won four national and regional planning awards to recognise excellence, in different categories. Last year the Authority picked up a prestigious award from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), which recognised the environmental excellence of the Local Plan.

### **Whole Estate Plans**

Estates, institutions, public bodies and farms across the National Park have a



key role to play in the conservation of the landscape, the development of a sustainable rural economy and ecosystem services.

Whole Estate Plans (WEPs) are a document prepared by individual landowning organisations and set out the assets of the organisation and the opportunities and threats which the organisation may encounter, and describes their plans for the future. Five WEPs have so far been developed and endorsed – West Dean, Highfield, Iford, Newton Valence and Wiston.

### **Advisory Service**

The National Park Authority has pioneered a Specialist Advisory Service, which was set up to share the planning team's expertise with communities outside the National Park.

The team prides itself on sharing knowledge and expertise needed to provide neighbourhood planning support to communities and Planning Authorities in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), market towns and rural areas. Examples of recent work include Local Green Space assessments on behalf of Horsham District (for Storrington Parish) and Thrupton Parish and a Housing Needs Assessment for Rudgwick Parish.

### **Successful hosting**

The South Downs National Park is one of the largest planning authority in the country in terms of the number of planning applications we receive each year

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and also one of the largest in terms of the geographical area we cover. This level of demand has seen new and innovative partnership models to ensure planning-related matters are dealt with as efficiently and effectively as possible.

The Authority has developed successful hosting partnerships with Chichester, East Hampshire, Winchester, Horsham and Lewes.

### **Guardians of the landscape**

The first purpose of the National Park is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the area and the Authority takes its role very seriously as the guardian of this beautiful nationally-important landscape. Direct action is rarely used and is often a last resort, but enforcement action has been taken against unauthorised harmful development.

### **Supporting farmers and farm diversification**

More than three quarters of the South Downs is farmland and farmers remain the lifeblood of the National Park. The Local Plan includes policies around creating sustainable communities and a key part of this is farm diversification, which is intended to increase the long-term viability of farming in the National Park by enabling farmers to set up additional income streams to their core business. Recent highlights include the approval of multi-million pound projects at the Wiston Estate, North Farm, Washington, and Sky Park Farm in West Harting.

### **Innovation and design**

The Authority has raised the bar in landscape-led planning design and held its first Design Awards last year to champion outstanding design in the National Park.

More than 60 nominations from across the National Park were received and five exceptional projects won the top accolade for making a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment and local communities of the National Park.



A highlight was more than 1,200 votes being cast for the People's Choice Awards, won by Easebourne Community Space – a great example of how planning can capture the public's imagination.

# Environment, equity and economy

**Tim Slaney, Director of Planning, looks at the three pillars of planning.**



At the moment we're facing far bigger issues than planning so I hope all are staying safe and keeping well. If nothing else I trust people within and close to the National Park appreciate how lucky they are to be in or near such inspiring places and have been able to stay local but get out where appropriate.

The planning system is, at its heart, about balancing the three elements of environment, equity and economy. This is particularly so as we re-evaluate what is important and how we support the economy. Against this broad philosophical background, there are a number of thoughts that occur.

In light of Julian Glover's 'Landscape Review', which came out in the autumn of 2019, there is a new focus on planners' role within designated landscapes. This is largely welcomed, particularly as Glover recognises that planning powers are important for National Parks, the protections they give are essential and that he does not think they hold back progress. The review goes on to say that planning, for the most part, does a difficult job well. That is not to say that there aren't some challenges and stimulating ideas presented within the report, such as the rate of delivery of affordable homes (for key workers). This is an ongoing priority for the South Downs National Park Authority, addressed through policy making and development management, and some grants.



Glover also picks up on wider governance issues and whether, in order to address lack of direct elections to planning

committees and the time spent on planning by some National Parks at full Authority meetings, whether there should be a planning sub-committee. His proposal is that this would be made up of part National Park Members and part Local Authority and/or Parish representatives. This would place the planning committee at arm's length to the main National Park Authority. I'm not sure there is any

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evidence that this would make for better decision making or that addressing the perceived 'democratic deficit' in the way proposed would result in better plan making and development. I believe our unique model of delegating the majority of decisions to District Councils, using our award-winning Local Plan and other material considerations relevant to a National Park, with only more significant decisions being taken at our own planning committee, is the right balance. This allows for local input while recognising that planning in a National Park relates to guardianship of a national asset.



It is vital that all involved in environmental management at a landscape scale have clear strategies and plans. Key to this is broad agreement with local communities and society more generally, as to whether and what the right offset might be, and where. It's not just a case of the right tree in the right place. A question that arises is are we prepared for landscape change such that areas that traditionally have one look and feel are altered to provide much-needed climate change services and therefore have a different look? In the years ahead there will be debates around what sort of forms the landscape takes, whether it be additional water bodies, substantive tree planting on a scale thus far unimagined, more vineyards and the like.

Planning should be a strong mix of evidence and engagement, particularly with local communities as well as traditional statutory consultees, but also involve leadership. I am glad to see that in some quarters, planning is recovering its leadership role and championing the virtues of planning in England and in designated landscapes.

It is necessary for all of us charged with temporary guardianship of the land to show appropriate leadership, always remembering that social equity and a vibrant economy within a cared for environment are central to the way forward.

# Major funding boost for local communities



**A new cycle path, study centre, play facilities, fitness trail and “green infrastructure” are among the community projects to benefit from a major funding boost from the South Downs National Park Authority.**

Twenty projects across Sussex and Hampshire are set to benefit from a share of £555,000. The funds have been raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is administered by the SDNPA and paid by developers as a means of supporting new community infrastructure.

A total of £113,000 of CIL funding has been allocated for the next phase of Egrets Way, giving cyclists and walkers year-round access to the heart of the National Park. When completed the Egrets Way will form a network of multi-user paths running from Lewes to Newhaven and connecting the villages in between. Nearly half of the planned network has been built and is in use, with sections of pathway running between Lewes and Kingston, Southease and Rodmell, and Southease and Piddinghoe. Lewes District Council is also allocating its own CIL funding of £250,000 to pay for the next phase of the project.

Meanwhile, £50,000 has been allocated to an education scheme for children and young people at Queen Elizabeth Country Park in Hampshire. A new outdoor shelter will be provided, along with improvements to ponds, allowing children to explore and learn about the natural environment. Just over £80,000 has been allocated to a second phase of improvements at Easebourne Park in West Sussex – including new play equipment and a multi-use shelter. Further south in West Sussex, a new study centre will be constructed using £40,000 of CIL funding at Home Farm to support the Goodwood Trust’s educational programme.

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Just over £35,000 has been allocated to green infrastructure projects, including improvements to habitat water meadows and hedgerows at Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve.

Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: “All the projects represent infrastructure improvements that enrich the quality of people’s lives, whether that be recreation, health and well-being, transport or having a wildlife-rich environment.

“We know CIL funding can make a real difference to local communities, encouraging them to thrive and prosper and benefitting future generations. The Community Infrastructure Levy is an important element of our role as a planning authority and will continue to be so in the future.”

Regarding Egrets Way, Alister Linton-Crook, Cycling Project Officer for the National Park, added: “I’m delighted for the communities in the Lower Ouse Valley who have been championing for the Egrets Way network since 2011. The funding will contribute towards a further 1.1km of multi-user path providing better access to the countryside and amenities and a safer alternative away from the highway.”

The 20 projects allocated funding are:

- Ponds, bugs and kids – improvements to an area of Queen Elizabeth Country Park to provide outdoor shelter and improvements to ponds – allowing children to explore and learn about the natural environment. £50,000
- South Downs Way, Winchester – improvements to South Downs Way and creation of cycle route to improve links to and from Winchester to the National Park. £41,370
- Meon Valley Trail, Wickham Springs – to upgrade and improve drainage system to help alleviate the problems of flooding / surface water on the existing trail. £35,000
- Upstream of Liss – Natural Flood Management Project by Arun and Rother River Trust - plant trees and hedgerows in strategic low risk locations to slow surface water and river flooding. £25,000
- Liss Triangle Centre – construction of rain cover to entrance and improve damp proofing to building. £18,275
- Liss Village Hall – new toilets. £15,000
- Twyford – refurbishment of basketball court at Hunter Park. £12,700
- Twyford - Pavilion at Hunter Park – repair and renovate pavilion building at Hunter Park. £5,000

## Putting landscape first

### An update from Landscape Officer Ruth Childs.

The South Downs National Park was honoured to host the annual joint RTPI (Royal Town Planning Institute) – LI (Landscape Institute) evening event. Attended by architects, landscape architects, urban designers and planners, the event focused on the 'Landscape-led Approach to Design'.

This approach is the golden thread that is at the heart of the new design policies in the recently adopted South Downs Local Plan. It turns landscape on its head as it challenges applicants to respond



to the landscape first, instead of at the end of a planning application. Typically landscape architects have been brought into a team last, at the end of the design process – often to design the spaces left around buildings and areas of hardstanding and planting. The Authority now requires landscape evidence to be used to directly influence the layout and design of a scheme.

The benefits of forming a thorough understanding of a place subject to potential development are numerous and often far reaching, improving obvious things such as aesthetic quality to the more nuanced, such as maximising the benefits we get from the environment (reducing flood risk for example) or improving well-being (through enhancing dark skies or access to nature). The main result is it provides applicants with the means to design out any negative effects of development and helps create new places which contribute positively to local landscape character, sense of place and the Purposes of the National Park. By considering opportunities early on, applicants can really maximise them, improving the benefits for people and wildlife the development of a new site can bring.

Attendees heard two presentations, the first setting the landscape context, describing how landscape character can be understood, in a way that easily translates into urban design principles. Following on from this a series of case studies were presented by our Design Officer to illustrate how successfully and unsuccessfully the approach could be applied. A series of thought-provoking Q and A's followed the presentations – a great way to round off a really fulfilling event. The evening turned out to be one of the best ever attended and both professional bodies received some very positive feedback.

- Hangers Way – improvements and upgrading of rights of way between Petersfield and Alton. £11,000
- Easebourne Park Phase 2 – new play equipment, multi-use shelter, enhanced perimeter path and composting toilet. £80,270
- Goodwood Education Centre – to construct a new study centre and toilet facilities at Home Farm to support Goodwood Trust's educational programme. £40,000
- Petworth – Sylvia Beaufoy Pedestrian Crossing – provide a new pedestrian crossing on A272 close to Sylvia Beaufoy car park. £33,000
- Findon Play Facilities – installation of new play and exercise equipment at Homewood, Horsham Road. £31,500
- Lavant River Walk – Marsh Lane to north of Playground. To improve connections from mid-Lavant to Village Green (East Lavant). £10,000
- Stedham with Iping Recreation Ground – installation of climbing dome on Village Green. £4,850
- Stedham with Iping – installation of fitness equipment to create a fitness trail. £2,500
- Egrets Way Phase 5 – a new shared-use path between Lewes and Newhaven. £113,000
- Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve – Improvement to habitat water meadows and hedgerows and Signal Box hide. £15,500
- Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve – footpath improvements. £10,000
- Lewes Railway Land Local Nature Reserve – Installation of interpretation boards. £1,000

**April 2020 will see just over £156k provided directly to 20 parish councils from funding generated by CIL. The parishes will be able to put this money towards their own infrastructure projects.**

## Section 106 Update

- The Lych Gate in Liss, located at the footpath at junction of Newman Collard Playing Fields and Hill Brown Road, is used by many pedestrians and was in desperate need of repair. S106 funds of £8,800 have revitalised the gate, providing a feature the village can be proud of.
- Also in Liss, £6,365 has been spent replacing play equipment at Riverside Walk Picnic and Play area. The Parish Clerk said they had great feedback on the revamp, and, prior to the current restrictions, lots of people were using the activity trail.

# Former industrial site to become high-quality wildlife-friendly housing scheme



**A brownfield site will be transformed into a landscape-led housing scheme, providing new affordable homes, a café, shop and a community hub.**

The Planning Committee of the South Downs National Park Authority voted unanimously to approve plans submitted by Comer Homes Group for the former Syngenta site, south of Fernhurst village, in West Sussex.

The 10.5-hectare plot was developed as an army barracks at the end of World War II, before being redeveloped in the 1980s as the UK headquarters for ICI.

The scheme delivers a number of benefits, including the creation of new wildlife habitats, sustainable drainage and high-quality landscape-led design.

Among the highlights are:

- 210 dwellings, a small café, a retail unit and a community hub to be provided.
- 20 per cent of the new homes will be affordable housing, and three quarters of these affordable units will be social rented.
- 57 per cent of the site will be green/blue infrastructure, including a new 20m-wide stretch of woodland running east to west across the site for 465m.
- A net zero carbon emissions development. Emissions to be tackled by improvements to the building fabric beyond Building Regulations

requirements, photovoltaic panels and wood burning stoves

- Net gain of around 209 trees.
- 10 per cent of roofs will be green roofs.
- Comprehensive range of measures to protect species including:
  - Replacement bat roost
  - Bat, bird and dormouse boxes
  - Information and educational packs for residents
  - Improvements to adjacent Nature Reserve
- Re-opening of a culverted watercourse
- Approximately half of car parking spaces to be provided underground
- A range of sustainable transport measures, including:
  - A 1.5m footway from the site to Fernhurst village
  - All dwellings to have electric vehicle charging points
  - A minibus service to Fernhurst and Haslemere
- 10 per cent of all dwellings to be fully wheelchair accessible.

Landscape Officer Ruth Childs said: "This scheme integrates with the landscape character of the area, driven by woodlands and water. Significant enhancements include resurfacing a culverted watercourse and the creation of meaningful new managed woodland connecting key habitats together through the site.

"The scheme brings positive woodland management into the heart of a new housing scheme for residents to see, experience and take part in. It's a wonderful way to connect people with the landscape and celebrate the area's local history. The opportunities for net gain in biodiversity are significant, and the different architecture offers a huge variety of niches for all sorts of species."



Kelly Porter, Major Projects Lead, added: "This scheme delivers housing on a brownfield site, allocated in a Neighbourhood Plan, that has been vacant for many years.

"The high-quality landscape-led design of this major

development is to be commended and will provide multiple benefits, including health and well-being benefits for the people living in these new homes in the future."



## Recent community highlights



### An update on Neighbourhood Planning by Chris Paterson, Communities Lead for the National Park.

Over the past three months a number of our Neighbourhood Planning groups have made significant progress. There are now 56 Neighbourhood Plans in the South Downs National Park, with 31 of these plans adopted by the Authority. A number of Neighbourhood Planning groups are considering updates and reviews to their adopted Plans. The highlights of the last quarter include:

- Arundel Neighbourhood Plan is the first Neighbourhood Plan to be reviewed and adopted by the Authority. The modified plan was adopted by the Authority in December 2019.
- The Fittleworth Neighbourhood Plan passed referendum in November 2019 and was made the SDNPA in December 2019, the 30th Neighbourhood Plan to be made by the Authority
- The Seaford Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a community referendum on 6th February 2020, with 89.21 per cent voting yes in the referendum. Following the successful referendum the SDNPA made the Neighbourhood plan in March 2020
- Hassocks Neighbourhood Plan passed its community referendum on 5 March with 94.8 per cent voting yes in the referendum.
- Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Plan has successfully passed its Examination, the Examination was concluded after a brief pause to allow the South Downs Local Plan to progress to its adoption. Following the successful examination the modifications proposed by the Examiner were agreed in a decision statement presented to the SDNPA Planning Committee in January 2020. The Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Plan referendum was scheduled for May 2020. However, due to the Coronavirus and the announcement that all referendums will be suspended until May 2021 this referendum has now been postponed indefinitely. The Stedham with Iping Neighbourhood Plan will carry significant weight in decision making as per Government Guidance

We will continue to support all our neighbourhood and community planning groups through this challenging time, and officers are on hand should groups have any questions relating to the changes to neighbourhood planning in the South Downs National Park.

## Changes to Neighbourhood and Community Planning

**As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic the Ministry of Communities Housing and Local Government have announced some important changes to Neighbourhood Planning. While most of the SDNP Neighbourhood Plans have progressed to their adoption there are a number of groups who continue to prepare plans that will be affected by these changes. The changes can be summarised as:**

- The regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020 mean that no elections or referendums can take place before 6 May 2021. This will have implications for some of our Neighbourhood Planning groups, whose Neighbourhood Referendums will be delayed. These provisions will be kept under review and may be amended or revoked in response to changing circumstances.
- The ministry recognise that this will be frustrating for many communities who have invested a lot of time, effort and resources in the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans, for that reason the MHCLG have also updated the Planning Guidance to set out that Neighbourhood Plans awaiting referendums can be given significant weight in decision making.
- Planning Guidance also provides advice for Communities and Planning Authorities planning public consultations relating to Neighbourhood Plans, the advice asks Authorities and communities to consider the Governments current guidance on staying at home and away from others before running Regulation 14 or Regulation 16 Consultations.
- Planning Practice Guidance provides advice for Communities and Planning Authorities planning public consultations relating to Neighbourhood Plans. The advice asks Authorities and communities to consider the Governments current guidance on staying at home and away from others before running Regulation 14 or Regulation 16 Consultations. Given the guidance from MHCLG the South Downs National Park Authority has taken the decision to suspend any public consultations relating to Neighbourhood Planning or other Community Planning documents given their nature and the timeframes involved. This decision will be kept under review and amended should circumstances change. Any Neighbourhood or Community Planning groups affected by this decision should contact the Authority on [Neighbourhood@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:Neighbourhood@southdowns.gov.uk) or contact their SDNPA support officer.

## Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability Planning

The SDNPA is keen to build on the work planners already do to benefit the health and wellbeing of communities, both within the National Park and in surrounding areas.

Kirsten Williamson, Planning Policy Lead, explained:

“We’re working with our colleagues



in counties, districts and boroughs on a number of projects and strategies across planning and public health. Our most advanced work is with West Sussex County Council and we’ve had two very successful workshop days. The first concentrated on the potential for joint working across the whole of the SDNPA and the public health teams at WSCC. The second day included partners from NHS England and Sports England, as well as district and borough authorities in West Sussex which aimed to promote collaborative working and productive discussion in a whole systems approach to developing the ‘West Sussex Health, Wellbeing and Sustainability Planning Guidance’. Both days illustrated the enthusiasm, support and desire amongst stakeholders to engage with this work.”

The West Sussex draft guidance will be available in early summer and the SDNPA planning guide will be available in the Autumn.

## Update on Soft Sand Review

**Kirsten Williamson, Planning Policy Lead, gives the latest update on the Soft Sand Single Issue Review.**

We held a consultation from January to early March 2020 on the draft Soft Sand Single Issue Review (SSR). If adopted, the SSR will replace the soft sand policies in the West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan. The SSR proposes three allocations for soft sand. The first, Ham Farm, is outside of the SDNP. The other two proposed allocations are extensions to sites with existing planning permission within the SDNP. The site allocations are set in a policy framework that looks for soft sand resource outside of the SDNP in the first instances and seeks to avoid, minimise and mitigate any impacts that arise from development.

The next step will be an Examination in Public which will be led by an independent Planning Inspector. Around 80 people and organisations responded to the

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consultation and all correspondence will be forwarded directly to the Planning Inspectorate (with the SSR and all the supporting documents) by the end of April. It is hoped that the Examination will take place this summer. As the Planning Inspectorate is not able to hold public hearing sessions at the moment, our examination may be postponed. All the relevant information will be made available on the website for our work on waste and minerals with West Sussex County Council: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/mwdf](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/mwdf)

## Restoring a sensitive woodland site



**Sabrina Robinson, Planning, Monitoring and Compliance Officer, gives an update on the restoration of the Markwells Wood site, near Forestside, West Sussex, following the cessation of exploratory works.**

A Breach of Condition Notice was issued to UKOG (GB) Ltd relating to the site Markwells Wood. UKOG(GB) Ltd were in breach of condition 2 of SDNP/15/01470/CONDC which required all buildings, plant and machinery, including foundations and hard standings should be removed and the site restored according to an approved scheme.

Following discussions with the SDNPA on the restoration scheme, we are pleased to confirm that UKOG (GB) Ltd have complied with the Breach of Condition Notice and have removed all buildings, plant, machinery, including foundations and hardstandings and implemented their restoration scheme.

The site currently has a temporary stock proof fence to prevent wildlife from entering and to protect the juvenile trees to ensure that they are not compromised. The site will continue to be monitored by the Minerals and Waste Team for the next five years to ensure that UKOG (GB) Ltd complete their aftercare scheme.

housing revolution is promised with a new Future Homes Standard on carbon emissions.

Interesting times ahead, although some of the promised reforms such as changes to the Housing Delivery Test and a new formula for calculating housing need will not apply in the National Park.

## A Conservation Area for Nepcote?



**There are currently 166 Conservation Areas in the South Downs National Park and we are now considering the possibility of a new one, which would be the first ever designated by the National Park Authority.**

The area under consideration is Nepcote, part of Findon parish, and this was at the request of the Findon Neighbourhood Planning Group.

As part of considering the possibility of the Conservation Area, a draft Appraisal and Management Plan has been written and can be found [here](#). This sets out what is special about the area and why it is appropriate to designate it as a Conservation Area.

David Boyson, Historic Buildings Officer, said: "Nepcote Green was home to one of the largest sheep fairs in Sussex. With importance of sheep husbandry to the Downs, this has a particular local resonance.

"Also on the Green is the Wattle House, built in late 18th century to house the wattles when not in use. Within the proposed boundary is Cissbury, a largely 19th century small country house standing with a parkland landscape, and between Nepcote and Cissbury is a lane which has a number of attractive properties – including some which are listed."

We will be pleased to receive any comments that you have on (1) the principle of designating the area as a Conservation Area, and (2) the contents of the Appraisal and Management Plan. These can be emailed to [HistoricBuildings@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:HistoricBuildings@southdowns.gov.uk) and should reach us by 27 April 2020.

## Latest stats

- Appeals submitted to the Planning Inspectorate **21**
- Appeals started **22**
- Appeals determined **24**
- Appeals successfully defended **19**
- Statutory submissions received **1,058**
- Statutory submissions determined **1,008**
- Neighbours notified **5,446**
- Representations received **1,437**
- Consultations issued **2,843**
- Conditions imposed **2,981**
- Enquiries for planning advice **291**
- Enforcement complaints received **163**
- Enforcement cases opened **159**
- Enforcement related site inspections **252**
- Enforcement notices served **5**
- Enforcement cases closed **157**

*(covers last quarter of 2019/2020 December – March)*

## Planning for the Future

**Lucy Howard, Planning Policy Manager, gives an update on upcoming planning reforms.**



The Government announced after the Budget in March its intention to publish major planning reforms in the near future. An ambitious planning White Paper will aim to modernise the planning system, support the delivery of new homes and create greener communities. It will be accompanied by a raft of other documents: a Building Safety Bill, a Renters' Reform Bill and a Social Housing White Paper. Undoubtedly this flurry of Governmental activity will be delayed by the pandemic, but March's statement give a good indication of changes to come.

The 'Planning for the Future' document sets out a number of measures to accelerate planning and create a new English planning system that is fit for the future. A new planning fee structure is promised along with automatic rebates for planning applications that are successful at appeal. Zoning will be expanded through local development orders and the compulsory purchase orders accelerated.

The intention is also to make planning more beautiful and greener. National planning policy will be reformed to embed principles of good design, and a green

## Laser technology shines a light on new ways to support landscape-led planning

**David Hopkins, County Archaeologist for Hampshire County Council, writes about the importance of LiDAR in enhancing our knowledge of the South Downs Landscape.**

The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to protect and enhance, amongst other things, our historic environment. The planning system is reliant on the evidence collated in HERs – the Historic Environment Record – a dynamic database recording archaeological, landscape and built heritage information. This information comes from a wide range of sources; chance discoveries; development and community related archaeological projects; Maps and aerial photographs offer an opportunity to search whole landscapes for clues.

Aerial photographs in particular can include soil marks and cropmarks that portray buried archaeological sites but find it harder to reveal earthworks, unless the light is low and raking. Where there is tree canopy cover it may not be possible to see the ground at all. But in recent years HERs have been able to use LiDAR, light detection and ranging. Measuring laser light between an aircraft and the ground reveals earthworks. But over woodland if the data is processed to deduct the first return (the light that bounced off the tree canopy) from the last return, (the light that bounded off the ground) it is possible to see the archaeology beneath the canopy, so the trees no longer prevent the prying eyes of archaeologists.

The Hampshire HER has been reviewing the public access LiDAR, which has provided a once in a lifetime opportunity to enhance the data available on the HER. Woodlands have been searched for the banks and lynchets of prehistoric field systems, burial mounds and settlements revealed by LiDAR images, and the field systems and lost boundaries of the wider landscape have also been plotted. LiDAR has provided a new layer evidence to support HERs and the planning system.



*Pond barrow and field system in Cheriton Wood, Hampshire*

## Uncovering the fascinating history of a downland church

**Not all the best archaeology is beneath the ground. James Kenny, Archaeology Officer for Chichester District Council, highlights the case of the parish church at Upwaltham.**

Referred to as the ‘untouched and lovable’ church of St Mary the Virgin, Upwaltham, sits in a picturesque location

overlooking the A285 between Chichester and Petworth. It’s one of only a handful of medieval churches in West Sussex



that retains its apsidal chancel and the basic plan of the building is virtually the same as it was when first built in the 12th century. However, like many a downland village, the church is now almost the only survivor of the original medieval settlement.

The Parish Church Council was awarded funding to undertake repairs from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and planning permission was granted subject to a condition requiring appropriate recording of archaeological evidence that might be uncovered during the works. Monitoring of the ground-works produced little of archaeological interest.

However, the really important archaeological discoveries were revealed through the removal of render from the exterior and interior of the chancel and from the south-east corner of the nave. The quite regular, face-alternate stone quoins at the corners of the nave, the loosely coursed/herringbone masonry and the use of an apsidal chancel are typical of the late 11th or 12th centuries. All four windows are clearly insertions into the original fabric, being set in areas mortared with a different, creamish-white, chalky lime mortar. The two pairs of inserted trefoil-headed windows are stylistically typical of the 14th or 15th centuries.

The repairs have now been completed and the walls and the archaeological interest they contain are now sealed beneath a protective coat of limewashed render. St Mary’s Church has been safeguarded for the foreseeable future, and we have a much better understanding of its architectural history and significance.