

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK CITIZENS PANEL NEWS



Dear [name],

Your panel number: [.....] / Your email address: [.....]

(Something not right? Please email southdowns@walnutsurveys.com to update your details)

[Insert Tanya Hibberd photo]

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

- Results from the Autumn 2019 survey
- The Citizens Panel marches on!
- Citizens Panel get together, spring 2020
- Stargazing extravaganza returns to the National Park
- Winner of the annual National Park photo competition announced!
- Winners for the Design Awards 2019 announced – a celebration of innovation
- Major funding boost for local communities
- Introducing the new lottery from the South Downs National Park Authority Trust

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

[Insert photo 'Farming']

Results from the Autumn 2019 survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in our autumn survey. Your responses have been particularly useful for shaping the focus of our upcoming work. Sadly, the total number of survey responses was our lowest to date so please make sure you check your inbox for the Spring survey in April 2020.

Points of particular interest from the survey results include:

- The top three ranked highest expectations of a South Downs farmer/farm were as follows: **'food supplier to the UK'** (59%), **'biodiversity management'** (59%) and **'providing locally grown / sourced produce to the South Downs National Park'** (42%)
- Almost three quarters of you (73%) ranked **'planting trees to reduce flood risk and create new habitats'** as one of your top three preferred diversifications to generate additional income for South Downs farmers post Brexit. Other highly ranked schemes include **'diversification of crops'** (56%) and **'farm shop'** (38%)

The responses to the farming questions will be shared with our South Downs farm cluster groups as part of their ongoing discussions around the future of farming within the South Downs National Park.



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- Over half of you (54%) thought that an **increase in vineyards** in the South Downs National Park would have a 'positive' or 'very positive' impact on the views and general character of the landscape
- Your biggest concern regarding the increasing number of vineyards within the National Park is the **application of pesticides and/or herbicides** (64%) as well as the **increase in water usage** (43%)

These results will help inform an externally commissioned impact assessment on grape growing in the National Park.

- 17% of you **have heard of the National Park's 'Take the Lead' campaign** which is over twice the percentage of those who had previously stated awareness of the campaign in our spring 2018 survey (8%)

We noted that a few of you were frustrated by the lack of a 'back' button on the survey which should have been operational. We will ensure this is in place for future surveys.

The full autumn survey report will be on our website this spring.

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/discover/research/citizens-panel/>



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[Insert photo: 'Landscape']

The Citizens Panel marches on!

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our surveys, opened our newsletters or simply taken an interest in the South Downs National Park throughout the lifetime of the Citizens Panel.

The Citizens Panel was formed in 2017 and will shortly be coming to the end of its three year pilot phase. After undertaking an evaluation process in late 2019, we are delighted that the South Downs National Park Authority has recognised the value of the Citizens Panel and has agreed to its continuation. We will still be sending out two surveys per year in the spring and the autumn, however, we do need to make some changes to our process to make the Citizens Panel more efficient and cost effective. To that end, we will be reducing the number of Panel members to those who are particularly 'engaged' and who have completed all or most of the Panel surveys since they were recruited.

Please note that if you have been unable to complete our surveys but would like to remain on the Panel, please do get in touch with us at CitizensPanel@southdowns.gov.uk

We will also be reducing the number of e-newsletters we send to two a year, instead of quarterly. Look for these in your Inbox in June and December/January.



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[Insert photo: 'Access']

Citizens Panel get together, spring 2020

As outlined in the autumn 2019 survey, 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. The Authority are keen to arrange a get together 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.

The accessible events will include a short introduction to the National Park and an opportunity to meet some of the staff at the National Park Authority, including some of our Rangers. A **free** lunch plus tea and coffee will be provided. We expect the event to start at around 10.30am, with lunch at 12.30pm, giving you the opportunity to get to know your fellow Panel members.

The day will finish at around 2.30pm when there will be an opportunity for attendees to explore the local area. We will be providing information about local walks and our South Downs National Park Rangers will be on hand to explain where the walks start and end and how long they take. They may even accompany you on your walk to explain more about the South Downs and our important work on the ground. Sign up sheets will be provided so you can walk in safe groups

The event dates and venues have now been confirmed as:

- **Saturday 25th April 2020 at Milland Village Hall**
- **Saturday 2nd May 2020 at Plumpton Village Hall**

Please note that we have amended the date for the Plumpton meet up due to the change of date for the national May Day 2020 bank holiday.

In order for us to gauge attendance numbers for each venue, please can you click on the link below and complete the registration form to confirm your interest by Friday 21st February:

[Citizens Panel Meet Up Registration Form](#)

If you have any questions relating to the meet up, please email CitizensPanel@southdowns.gov.uk.



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[Insert photo: 'Dark skies banner']

Stargazing extravaganza returns to the National Park

The South Downs National Park's Dark Skies Festival returns bigger and better than ever next month with an action-packed line-up of cosmic fun for all the family.

As the National Park marks its 10th anniversary in 2020, the SDNPA is pulling out all the stops to bring the wonders of the star-studded skies to people of all ages. The flagship free event, Stargazing South Downs, returns and is being extended this year to include a new roadshow in Steyning, joining Lewes, Midhurst and Petersfield.

Now in its fourth year, the festival celebrates the National Park's International Dark Sky Reserve status, which was awarded in 2016 and recognises it as one of the 16 best places in the world to view the moon and stars.

Visitors to Stargazing South Downs will be able to enjoy indoor planetarium shows, an incredible Virtual Reality experience exploring the Milky Way, nocturnal wildlife displays, talks by Dark Skies experts, a giant colouring wall of the solar system, science experiments and the ever-popular astronaut selfie booth.

[Insert photo: 'Dark skies interactive']

And, if the night's sky is clear, there will be moongazing and stargazing outside for people to see the universe in all its glory through large telescopes.

The roadshows will include expert guidance for stargazers on how to make the most of your telescope and one lucky person will receive a brand-new telescope as part of a quiz competition.

People will be invited to share their images of the stars and moon using the hashtags #EmbraceTheDarkness and #SouthDowns over the two weeks.

The line-up of events for Stargazing South Downs is:

Saturday 8 February – Midhurst Rother College, Midhurst, West Sussex

4pm to 8pm.

Saturday 15 February – Steyning Grammar School, Steyning, West Sussex

4pm to 8pm.

Tuesday 18 February – Festival Hall, Petersfield, Hampshire

4pm to 8pm.

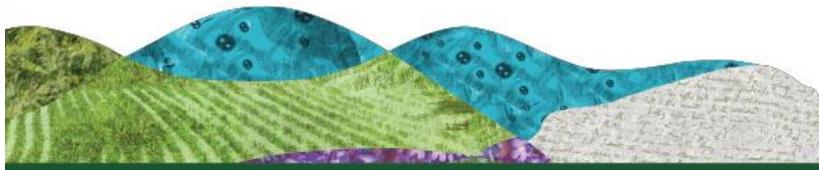
Thursday 20 February – The Town Hall, Lewes, East Sussex

4pm to 8pm.

All the above events are free to attend with no booking required.



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For the full list of events visit:

https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoy/events/events-calendar/?event_type=dark-skies-festival





An “otherworldly” misty sunrise wins the National Park’s photo contest

“Into The Mystic”, by Andrew Gambling, from Storrington, West Sussex, won first place in the popular photography contest, which attracted more than 170 entries capturing scenes from across the National Park.

The theme for the competition was “**Experiencing the Natural World**” and judges agreed that Andrew’s extraordinary photograph met the brief perfectly.

[Insert photo: ‘Into The Mystic’]

Andrew took the shot near Amberley Mount, capturing a misty scene in front of Houghton Hill. He said that the “sun had risen but was diffused by the mist, creating a ‘jaw’ around the sun for a few seconds, displaying the different levels of mist in the valley, just as a runner ran down the South Downs Way to disappear into it”.

Andrew, who wins a £250 prize, said: “I am incredibly honoured, and slightly humbled to have won. I find there is nothing better, on so many levels, to be out in the South Downs National Park as it wakes from its slumber on a misty morning with the camera on a tripod, and a freshly boiled cuppa in hand, trying to capture the essence of this very special place. I hope this picture, and many others that I look forward to sharing in the future, make people feel the same.”

[Insert photo: ‘Hare in Wildflower Margin’]

Meanwhile, the competition also included a separate category for best wildlife image – with first place going to an adorable picture of a hare munching on leaves in a colourful blanket of wildflowers.

“Hare in Wildflower Margin”, was taken by Adam Huttly, from Littlehampton. The picture was taken just north of Arundel.

Adam, who wins £100, said: “I really hope this image encourages people to get out and discover the wonders of nature that can be found on the magical South Downs and surrounding areas.

“It also highlights the great work the farmers do by leaving margins and wildflower borders. So many people work very hard to protect our green space and the precious wildlife that need this space to survive and flourish.”



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Winners for the Design Awards 2019 announced – a celebration of innovation

Thank you to the Panel members who took part in a survey relating to the inaugural South Downs National Park Design Awards. Your feedback is contributing to an on-going project about design in a National Park. The survey results identified a desire to learn more about architectural design and, what makes good architectural design, specifically in a National Park context. It also identified areas where we can improve our service, particularly around the use of open and accessible language – to maximise the understanding ‘good’ design can offer people and our environment.

In November 2019, architects, local community representatives, designers, and planners gathered at the South Downs Centre for a special awards ceremony.

More than 60 nominations from across the National Park were received following the launch of the awards in March 2019. The awards celebrated innovative and inspirational projects that have made a standout contribution to the landscape, heritage, built environment and local communities of the National Park.

Insert photo: ‘People’s choice winner: Easebourne community space’]

The full list of winners and those highly-commended and commended can be found on our website <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/celebration-innovation-winners-announced-south-downs-national-parks-first-design-awards/>

Margaret Paren, Chair of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: “We believe that it is a privilege to build in a National Park. High-quality design matters to the National Park and to the local communities within it.

“These schemes demonstrate incredible innovation and creativity, using the diverse landscape as a compass for great design.

“With our Local Plan adopted earlier this year and setting the bar high for design excellence, it certainly bodes well for the future of the South Downs National Park.”



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[Insert photo: 'Cycle path']

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.

For the full list of projects that will benefit visit:

www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-begins-new-decade-major-funding-boost-local-communities

[Insert photo: 'Trust']

Introducing the new community lottery from the South Downs National Park Trust

In October 2019, the South Downs Lottery was launched by the South Downs National Park Trust to help support vital projects in the National Park.

Julie Fawcett, a Trustee and Chair of the South Downs National Park Trust, explains: “We want to see more rare habitats protected, more local communities thriving and more people able to access the National Park.

“This requires more investment and we want to direct the substantial goodwill that exists for the South Downs to places where it can make a real difference.

“A community lottery is one of the ways we’re raising funds to support our work. It adds an element of fun to giving that encourages people to sign up to a regular, modest contribution to the charity.”

The weekly draw offers a jackpot of £25,000 for a matching sequence of six numbers and other prizes being £2,000, £250, £25 or three free tickets. Each ticket has a 1 in 50 chance to win a prize each week.

Tickets will cost £1 with 50p going towards the South Downs National Park.

A fully-accredited lottery management company, Gatherwell, has been appointed to run the initiative, having already launched similar lotteries on behalf of local authorities and not-for-profits, such as the Fire Brigades Union, with over 5,000 good causes benefitting from their lotteries.



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For more information visit www.southdownslottery.co.uk.

The South Downs National Park Trust is the official charity of the South Downs National Park. To find out more about the Trust and the work they do visit www.southdownstrust.org.uk.

