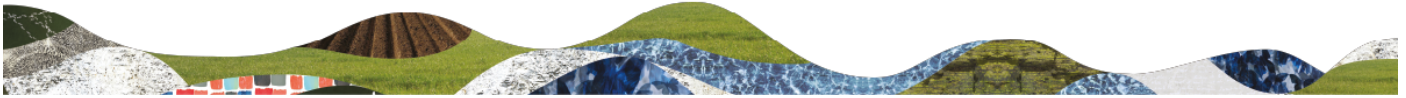


SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

SOUTH DOWNS NEWS



WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Awesome astrophotography** Find out about our first-ever Dark Skies photography competition and how you can win a prize, wherever you are.
- **Autumn uplift** As we enter a second lockdown period, find out about mindful and restoring walks in your beautiful National Park.
- **A helping hand** Learn more about a much-needed boost to the arts and heritage sector.
- **Quiz time!** Sign up for our fun Christmas Advent Calendar quiz and potentially win a hamper.

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

Win £150 prize by capturing incredible beauty of night sky

The enchanting Dark Skies of the South Downs National Park will be celebrated this autumn and winter with an awesome astrophotography competition.

As the clocks go back and the cosmos comes into view earlier in the evening, people are being invited to capture the beauty of the night's sky in and around the National Park.

There are three categories available to enter:

- **South Downs Dark Skyscapes** – an image that captures the star-studded Dark Skies of the South Downs National Park. Judges will be looking for awe-inspiring photography that shows off the landscape and/or cultural heritage and the dark skies above it!
- **Living Dark Skies: people and nature** – any image that captures human or wildlife activity. Ideas include images of people stargazing, people running or walking under the cover of darkness, or images of nocturnal wildlife or trees at night.
- **Our Magnificent Moon** – judges will be looking for breathtaking shots of our nearest neighbour in the solar system.



The Milky Way over the Cuckmere by Jamie Fielding

The South Downs Dark Skyscapes category must be taken in the South Downs, but there is no geographical limit on the two other categories and it's hoped people living in towns and cities around the National Park will take part.

Please note that images can be taken any time since January 2018 and you can see the full terms and conditions [here](#).

The first prize for each category will be £150, second prize is £75, and third prize is £50. Judging the contest will be Dan Oakley, "Dark Skies" Ranger for the National Park, Graham Bryant, a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Petersfield-based Tiffany Francis-Baker, author of Dark Skies.

Enjoying fresh air and walks this autumn



The South Downs is a beautiful place to explore at any time of the year, but there's something really special about enjoying a walk in the countryside in the autumn, with misty mornings and the crunch of frosted fallen leaves under your feet.

As we enter another national lockdown, there's plenty of space to walk, run and cycle safely in the great outdoors of the South Downs National Park while social distancing. Did you know the National Park has over 3,300km of rights of way?

Our advice is to prepare ahead and look to use your local green space for exercise and fresh air. See the full Government guidelines here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november



Allison Thorpe, Access and Recreation Lead for the National Park, said:

"During the first lockdown earlier this year, the importance of having a National Park on the doorstep really came to the fore and many people

found great comfort and uplift from walking in beautiful green spaces.

"A simple 30-minute walk can do wonders for your wellbeing and also give you a Vitamin D boost which is so needed during the darker winter months. This is also a particularly good time of year for a walk in the woods and to enjoy the benefits of "forest bathing".

"Our advice is to stick to the government guidelines of social distancing, plan your journey ahead, stick to the countryside code and avoid crowded areas. Please also bear in mind that some visitor facilities and toilets may be closed again during this period, so plan accordingly."

Here are some wonderful walks to inspire you:

The Meon Valley Trail, Hampshire

Discover a trail that leads you through English history. Once a railway line running from Fareham to Alton transporting local livestock and agricultural produce, the

Images submitted for the competition will be shared by the National Park Authority on social media during the annual Dark Skies Festival, which will take place from 12 to 28 February next year. The festival celebrates the National Park's International Dark Sky Reserve status, which was awarded in 2016 and recognises the South Downs as one of the 16 best places in the world to view the moon and stars.

Dan said: "The Dark Skies status of the National Park is very special indeed. We have some of the best, and most accessible, views of the stars anywhere in the UK and it's here to be gazed at and enjoyed by everyone.

"We're really excited to be launching our first astrophotography contest and hope it inspires people about the wonders of the Dark Skies. Looking up and seeing those immense views of the universe is a really calming and mindful experience – something that's perhaps needed now more than ever during these testing times.

"Whether it's an awesome image of the moon from your garden, or a stunning shot of the South Downs at night, we hope people have fun capturing the beauty. It doesn't matter if you're seasoned astrophotographer or a total novice, we're keen to see a range of photographs that show off the spectacle of the big universe out there."

Please remember to stick to the Government guidelines around COVID-19 and being safe outside. Our advice is to plan your trip ahead and look to visit your local green space, rather than travelling long distances, as per the current government guidance.

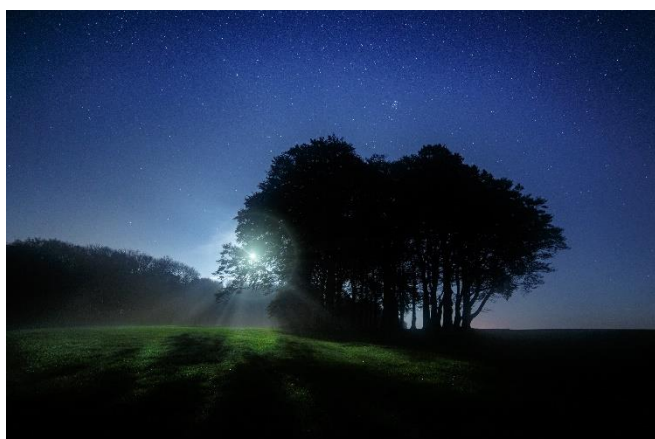
Please wrap up warm and remember to take a warm drink! For other tips on taking pictures at night please visit **www.southdowns.gov.uk/dark-night-skies/top-tips-for-photographing-night-skies/**

There are 10 Dark Skies Discovery Sites in the National Park and these are a good place to start stargazing and taking pictures:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/dark-night-skies/where-to-stargaze/>

Entries for the South Downs National Park Astrophotography Competition should be submitted by midnight on 10 January.

To download an application form please visit **www.southdowns.gov.uk/AstroPhotoComp**



Hampshire Downs at night by Chris Nesbit

trail now spans 11 miles through picturesque countryside, from West Meon in the north to Wickham in the south.

The trail is suitable for cyclists, walkers and horse riders (carriages are only permitted north of West Walk). There are no stiles along the way and as the gradient is mostly flat with a wide path, it's suitable for pushchairs and mobility scooters.

Alice Holt Forest, Hampshire

This serene royal forest in Hampshire is situated some 4 miles (6.4 km) south of Farnham, Surrey. Once predominantly an ancient oak forest, it was particularly noted in the 18th and 19th centuries for the timber it supplied for the building of ships for the Royal Navy. It's now planted mainly with conifers. The woods are ideal for just about everyone to enjoy some exercise, from a gentle family walk to a good long invigorating stroll.

Slindon Woods, West Sussex

Slindon Estate is 3,500 acres of Sussex woodland, farmland, and downland, all divided by paths, hedges, lanes and tracks. You can explore the estate by 25 miles of public footpaths and bridleways, as well as over 900 acres of open access woodland. Take in the long wide views down to the Weald, along the Downs, and out across the coastal plain to the sea.

Friston Forest, East Sussex

This expansive beech woodland makes a perfect family trip out for those who love exploring the countryside. With walking and cycling trails, great views of the Cuckmere and the sweeping South Downs, Friston Forest has something for everyone!



Friston Forest in the autumn by Sam Moore

Stansted Forest, Hampshire/West Sussex

With 1,200 acres of ancient woodland and a patchwork of different ages of coppice, Stansted offers a subtly changing landscape that is a feast for the senses.

There are many footpaths and bridleways across the Stansted Park Estate, including the Sussex Border Path, offering opportunities to really soak up the calmness of the woods.

Response submitted to Planning White Paper

The South Downs National Park Authority has submitted its response to the Government's consultation on its Planning White Paper: "Planning for the Future".

The White Paper sets out a number of proposed changes to the current national planning system and the SDNPA has made detailed comments on nine key matters:

- Clarification on the Status of National Parks
- Local Plans and Zoning
- Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Environmental Protection
- Climate Change
- Design and Beauty
- Development Management
- Infrastructure Levy
- Public Engagement.

The response was approved by Members at a meeting of the National Park Authority on 15 October.



Ian Phillips, Chair of the Authority, said: "The past six months has shown that National Parks and protected landscapes are needed now more than ever, not just by the communities who are lucky enough to live in and around them, but by the whole nation.

"The Dower Report of 1945 understood that 'If the National Parks are to carry out their task to public and Parliamentary satisfaction, they must have a direct and first-instance concern in the whole range of planning operations, including not least the case-by-case administration of planning control.' This key point is as relevant now as it was when National Parks were being created – understanding that planning is not just about buildings, it's also about connecting people to place. It guides not just where and how we live, but also provides a clear means by which we both connect people to their protected landscapes and conserve those protected landscapes for this and future generations.

"Last year's Defra Landscapes Review by Julian Glover focused on the critical role the planning system plays in protecting National Parks, stressing the importance of each National Park Authority's planning powers. This milestone report also recommended a strengthened place for national landscapes in the planning system. Our response to the Planning White Paper consultation focuses on nine clear areas and we look forward to working with Government to ensure that planning continues to conserve and enhance our protected landscapes on behalf of the nation."

Read the full letter of response here:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/south-downs-national-park-authoritys-response-to-planning-white-paper/>

Arts and heritage sector receives funding boost from National Park



New nature trails, a community exhibition and a scheme to support wellbeing for service personnel are among the initiatives to receive a boost from the National Park Authority's COVID-19 Recovery Fund.

Earlier this year the National Park set up a Recovery Fund of £375,000 to help support partner organisations and local communities in the wake of the impact of the pandemic.

The Authority is pleased to announce the first tranche of successful projects – all of which help to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the National Park and surrounding areas and create opportunities for people to enjoy arts, landscape and history.

The National Park awarded grants totalling £81,272.59 to 12 individual organisations that applied for funding:

• **Amberley Museum**

For the reinstatement of nature trails, new interpretation and an improved outdoor learning space.

• **Arundel Museum**

Development of a community digital archive focused on the South Downs as a theme.

• **Butser Ancient Farm, near Waterlooville**

Support for a partnership with Operation Nightingale, an initiative which assists the recovery of wounded, injured and sick military personnel and veterans by getting them involved in archaeological investigations. The fund has additionally supported Butser Ancient Farm with developing a digital offer.



• **Chawton House and Gardens**

Activities and equipment to improve the outdoor visitor experience, including a takeaway refreshment service and

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new heritage-themed walks.

• **Gilbert White's House and Gardens, Selbourne**

Activities and equipment to support an enhanced outdoor visitor offer with a particular focus on nature (plants, birds and insect species), linking the visitor experience to White's own experiences and observations of landscape.

• **Pallant House Gallery, Chichester**

A contribution towards production of a film exploring the work of contemporary printmakers inspired by the work of Gilbert White.

• **Petworth Vision**

Development of a virtual visitor experience for a collective of heritage organisations and churches in Petworth.

• **The Novium, Chichester**

Support for a community exhibition on the history of Chichester's Cattlemarket, and its links to the Downs.

• **The Towner Gallery, Eastbourne**

Support to distribute art supplies through local food banks, focusing on connecting people with nature through creativity and working with Eastbourne Food Bank, Community Stuff, NetworX Eastbourne and the Enthum Foundation.

• **University of Chichester**

Support for a pilot project using creative writing to engage new visitors to the National Park.

• **Take Shelter, Brighton**

Funding to support the creation of digital resources to take their offer online, including a monetised platform for 'Pay as You Feel' donations. The digital assets will connect the story of Take Shelter to the South Downs during the Second World War.

• **Charleston Trust, near Lewes**

Support for business and innovation events for the organisation and support new fundraising strategies.

Anooshka Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead for the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "This year has been exceptionally hard for arts and heritage organisations right across the region, but it's been inspiring to also see the flexibility, innovation and sheer determination shown by so many people in the sector amid such unprecedented challenges.

"Our Recovery Fund is all about giving organisations and partners a helping hand as they adapt to a 'new normal' and look to adapt their business operation while also developing new ways of connecting people with the landscape and amazing heritage in our area. We also recognise that communities are changing due to the psychological and economic impacts of COVID-19, and we need to understand those impacts to better serve communities as we explore what 'recovery' looks like.

"We're pleased to announce these funding awards and look forward to seeing these inspiring projects come to fruition."

Further projects in other areas, such as wildlife, tourism and sustainable access, that receive funding from the Recovery Fund will be announced later this year and into 2021.

Budding artists are "Truleigh inspired" by beauty of South Downs



The breathtaking South Downs has inspired many forms of artistry over the centuries, from poetry to world-famous oil paintings.

Now a beautiful collection of sculptures, wood carvings and wood paintings have been created, thanks to a community project called "Truleigh Inspired".

The South Downs National Park Authority teamed up with Creative Waves, a community arts organisation based in Worthing and Adur, to take small groups of people up to Truleigh Hill to help boost their mental health and well-being.

After enjoying short walks at the beauty spot to gain inspiration, the budding artists headed back to a studio in Worthing to let their imaginations run wild, creating weird and wonderful creations using natural materials.

It was hoped to have a celebration at Truleigh Hill, with all the participants displaying their artwork, but the pandemic lockdown meant this was not possible.

Some of the artwork has, however, been featured at Worthing Pier and the National Park's Health and Wellbeing Officer, Kate Drake, recently ventured back to Truleigh Hill to look at all the artwork and reflect on the success of the project.

Kate said: "Truly inspiring is certainly a good way to sum up this initiative!



"The artwork really is beautiful and it's interesting to see how everyone takes different inspiration from the South Downs.

"These kind of community projects focusing on the health and well-being benefits of National Parks are part of a growing area of our work. We're in a very challenging time for many people and this pandemic has highlighted the profound need people have for their local green space, so we'll be

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looking to help deliver similar projects as we move into 2021."

One of the participants, Daniela, said: "It was one of the most enjoyable projects I have taken part in – a chance to discover, explore and reflect on a part of the South Downs I would not normally have access to, and did not know before, and the opportunity to regularly meet and work with a group of interesting, inspiring and lovely people.



"The project has had a wholly positive impact personally – from the fresh-air benefits of spending more time outdoors, to talking and laughing with others, to experimenting freely with materials and 'playing' with ideas. It has made me more aware of the landscape of my local environment and given me the impetus to spend more time in the South Downs. I believe the project also made us really feel part of the environment of the Downs and has given us a sense of being custodians of the landscape."

Another participant, Nora, added: "The project has led to a new found theme of work, new friends and continued enthusiasm for 'up on the Downs'.

"Access to the outdoors on South Downs in safe ways is invaluable, life-affirming and enhancing."

Creative Waves is run by Vanessa Breen and Nadia Chalk, both professional artists and art educators, who work with people across the community dealing with a wide spectrum of issues, including loneliness, anxiety and depression.

Vanessa said: "I saw the confidence of all the participants really blossom from the start to the finish of the project.

"Some days, you would start and people might be feeling a bit low. But after being up on the South Downs with all the fresh air and views, it really did change people's outlook in a very positive way.

"What was amazing is how many of the participants hadn't been to Truleigh Hill before, even though it was on their doorstep.

"After the project, many of them have been back and taken their families up on the Downs. We're so lucky to have the South Downs near where we live – it's a great place to escape and recharge your batteries."



Introducing the “Wild Winter” Family John Muir Award



An exciting initiative launches on 23 November to help connect families with the joys of nature through fun learning activities.

Following the success of the Family John Muir Award during the summer months, the National Park Authority is once again looking for families who want to learn about our amazing natural environment.

Whether at home, in their garden or local park, or in the area of the National Park near where they live, families will be able to do a range of nature-based activities and work their way towards a Family John Muir Award.

The Authority has teamed up with conservation charity John Muir Trust to run the prestigious internationally-recognised environmental award, which is focused on connecting with and caring for wild places and is inspired by the “founding father” of the National Park movement, John Muir.



Siân Jones, Families Outreach Officer for the National Park, said: “It may be winter, but there are still plenty of reasons to be spending time outside in the natural world. Our Wild Winter John Muir Award newsletters will be full of nature based activities

that you can do either at home or outside. From what to look out for on your wild winter walks, to things you can do to help bugs, birds and beasts throughout the colder months! We will also include nature based mid-winter celebration craft ideas along with sustainable Christmas tips.”

To achieve your award all you need to do is 25 hours or more of activities which will help you to discover, explore and do something to care for a wild place, and then share your experience with others. Siân added: “You might even want to link up virtually with family members in other households to achieve the award, sharing your discoveries by text, film, over the phone, or through social media.”

The programme will run until 10 January.

To sign up, please visit

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/learning/john-muir-award/introducing-the-wild-winter-family-john-muir-award/>

Discovering the crickets and lizards of new Sculpture Trail



Glyn Dodwell, Ordnance Survey GetOutside Champion, recently tried out the Heathlands Sculpture Trail and describes his adventure here.

The heathland of West Sussex and Hampshire is a landscape very close to my heart. My father was a lepidopterist and a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society. My recollections, as a young 10 year old, were journeys to the heaths from Somerset to study the butterflies unique to this environment. My father died over 30 years ago but his passion for the heathlands of the South Downs still lives on as strongly in me as it ever did.

Less than one per cent of the original heathland remains in the National Park and what's left is very fragmented. As a result, this has reduced the diversity of plants and animals that make heaths both interesting and scientifically important.

These sculptures are beautifully carved and, as well as looking good, they also serve as a seat for the weary. The locations are detailed in an excellent leaflet that is **[available to download](#)**.

One side shows a stylized map of the area and highlights where each of the heaths are and their related sculpture. The other side of the leaflet details each sculpture in turn with background information and an Ordnance Survey grid reference. However, the grid references are 6-figure, so their accuracy is 100m. The aim is to get the visitor to explore the whole of the heath while looking for the sculpture. Having said that, I found the Lavington Lizard very easy to find but the Wiggonholt Cricket frustratingly difficult!

Five of the seven sculptures are located on, or very close to, the Serpent Trail – a 64-mile footpath running from Haslemere to Petersfield though some of the best heaths and commons in the National Park. It's important the heathlands are preserved and fully understood by the generations to come. The use of technology with the sculptures allows everyone to access further information on their mobile devices.

Even if you cannot visit all the sculptures and heaths; select one close to where you live and learn more about this magnificent landscape and natural environment. You will also walk through some of the most beautiful scenery in the south of England.

Challenge yourself in our South Downs Christmas Advent Calendar quiz!



Ditchling Beacon by Sam Moore

The first day of December will see the return of our popular Advent Calendar quiz – and we have some great prizes on offer!

Every day until Christmas, people will be able to open a door to reveal a new question about the South Downs.

The trivia will cover all kinds of topics, including the festive season, wildlife, history, landscape and weird and wonderful facts about the South Downs.

At the end of quiz, the winner with the most correct answers will receive a £150 hamper of South Downs produce and a bottle of The Grange Estate Pink Sparkling Wine from the Hampshire vineyard. The runner-up will receive a Magnum of Nyetimber's Classic Cuvee, while third place will receive a bottle of The Grange Estate Pink Sparkling Wine.

Luke Walter, Digital Officer for the National Park, said: "It's been a tough year for many people and we wanted to bring a bit of festive cheer as we come to the end of 2020. We hope people have fun doing the quiz and learn lots about the South Downs National Park. Be sure to sign up in advance before 1 December to avoid missing out on the first door. Good luck everyone!"

To sign up visit

<https://southdownsnationalparkauthority.adventcalendar.com/>



Sheep grazing on the north slope of the South Downs at Ditchling. Pic by Martin Offer

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY Public notice – revised conduct for SDNPA members

At its meeting on the **15th October 2020** the National Park Authority agreed a revised code of conduct for its Members. This can be **[found here](#)**.

This code sets out clearly the standards expected from all members of the SDNPA.

For further information contact

committee.officer@southdowns.gov.uk

Legislation requires the SDNPA to publish any revisions to the code.

Have your say on vision for city's downland estate



People living in and around Brighton and Hove are being invited to have their say on a new long-term vision for the council's Downland Estate.

A century ago land was purchased around the city within the South Downs to protect the area's water supply.

With the effects of climate change becoming increasingly apparent, the city council is now at a pivotal point where a new long-term vision is required.

The Plan will refresh and develop the existing Downland Estate Policy, building on current successes and finding new opportunities to meet the demands of a challenging future and a changing world. The development of the strategy will follow the South Downs National Park's Whole Estate Plan process, which has been successfully used by other major landowning bodies.

People can have their say by joining an online discussion group on Zoom on 17, 21 or 24 November.

If you would like to take part please contact

Citydownlandestateplan@brighton-hove.gov.uk

More information about the Plan will be available soon at **www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/CDE**

Things to do in the South Downs this November



- Take part in the Making Natural History online festival in Eastbourne. The online event showcases examples of environmental activism, conservation and education through a series of family-friendly virtual presentations, discussions and masterclasses. [Find out more here.](#)
- Get active in the National Park by finding a walking route near you. Visit our website at www.southdowns.gov.uk/get-active/on-foot/

YOU SAY:

Do you have a story you want to tell about the National Park? A burning issue that you think needs to be addressed? Please let us know!



To submit a comment for our newsletter please email newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk. For a fast and direct response to your questions please email info@southdowns.gov.uk

Please note that only contributors who submit their full name and address can be considered for publication though we will not publish your full address. Please make it clear whether you are speaking on your own behalf or that of an organisation you represent. We reserve the right to shorten comments and edit where necessary.

Sign up to receive this newsletter by email every month! Catch up on the latest South Downs news, stories, ideas for days out, competitions, to hear about our rangers and volunteers' work and much more.

To sign up visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/join-the-newsletter/