



South Downs

National Park Authority

Agenda Item 14
Report NPA20/21-19

Report to	National Park Authority
Date	17 December 2020
By	Communications & Engagement Manager
Title of Report	Communications & Engagement Strategy
Decision	

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the updated Communications & Engagement Strategy 2021-25 as set out in Appendix I.**

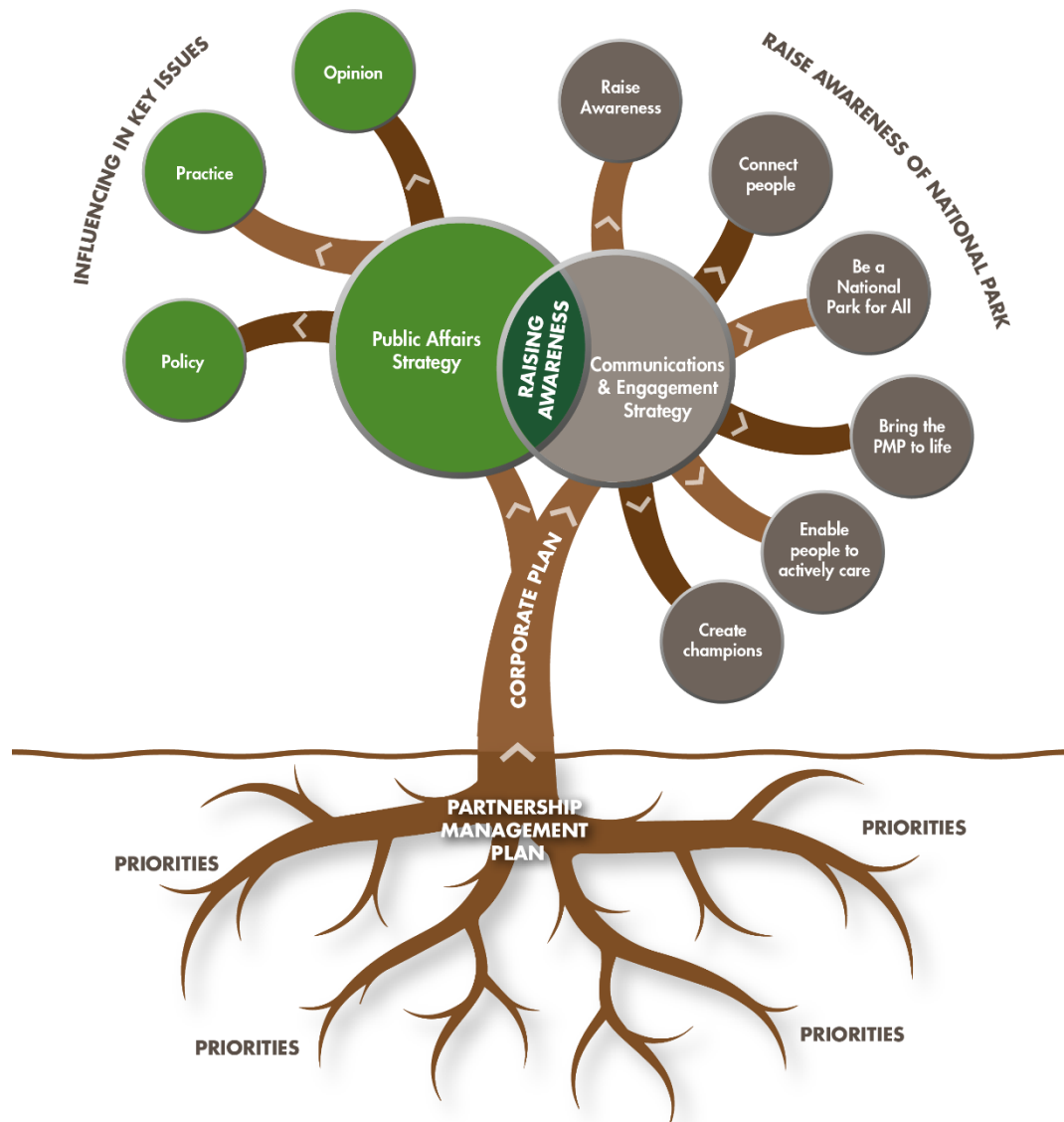
1. Introduction

- 1.1 Our communications and engagement work is designed to create a long-lasting relationship between people and the South Downs National Park, as individuals, part of communities, businesses and organisations. It is through this long-lasting connection that we enable people along the ladder of stewardship from awareness of the National Park to taking action to help secure its future, whether that be through positive behaviour, volunteering, financial support or being a champion for this internationally important landscape.
- 1.2 With endless possibilities for engagement and communication and finite resources, we must really focus our communications and engagement work so that we can not only deliver on our objectives, but so that we can respond quickly, proactively and effectively to the anticipated challenges and opportunities of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Glover review of Protected Landscapes, the public spending round, the White Papers on Planning and Local Government, the new ELMs and the Environment and Agriculture Bills. This means that this strategy is designed to help us decide when to say yes to communications and engagement opportunities and when to say no.

2. Context

- 2.1 The current Communications & Engagement Strategy was approved by the NPA in 2012 and then updated and presented to P&R Committee in November 2017. It sets out a strategic framework for how we can deliver against the Partnership Management Plan, Local Plan and the Corporate Plan, as well as the national agenda for National Parks as set out by Defra. The decision was taken in 2018 to review the strategy to align its timeframe with the PMP. The revised Communications & Engagement will therefore run from 2021-25.
- 2.2 The Communications & Engagement Strategy guides all of our communications and engagement work and sits alongside the revised Public Affairs Strategy, which is also before Members today. It guides our approach to our public affairs work and focuses on how we can influence changes in policy, practice and thinking in three priority areas to be agreed by Members.

Figure 1: How our Communications & Engagement Strategy and Public Affairs Strategy work together

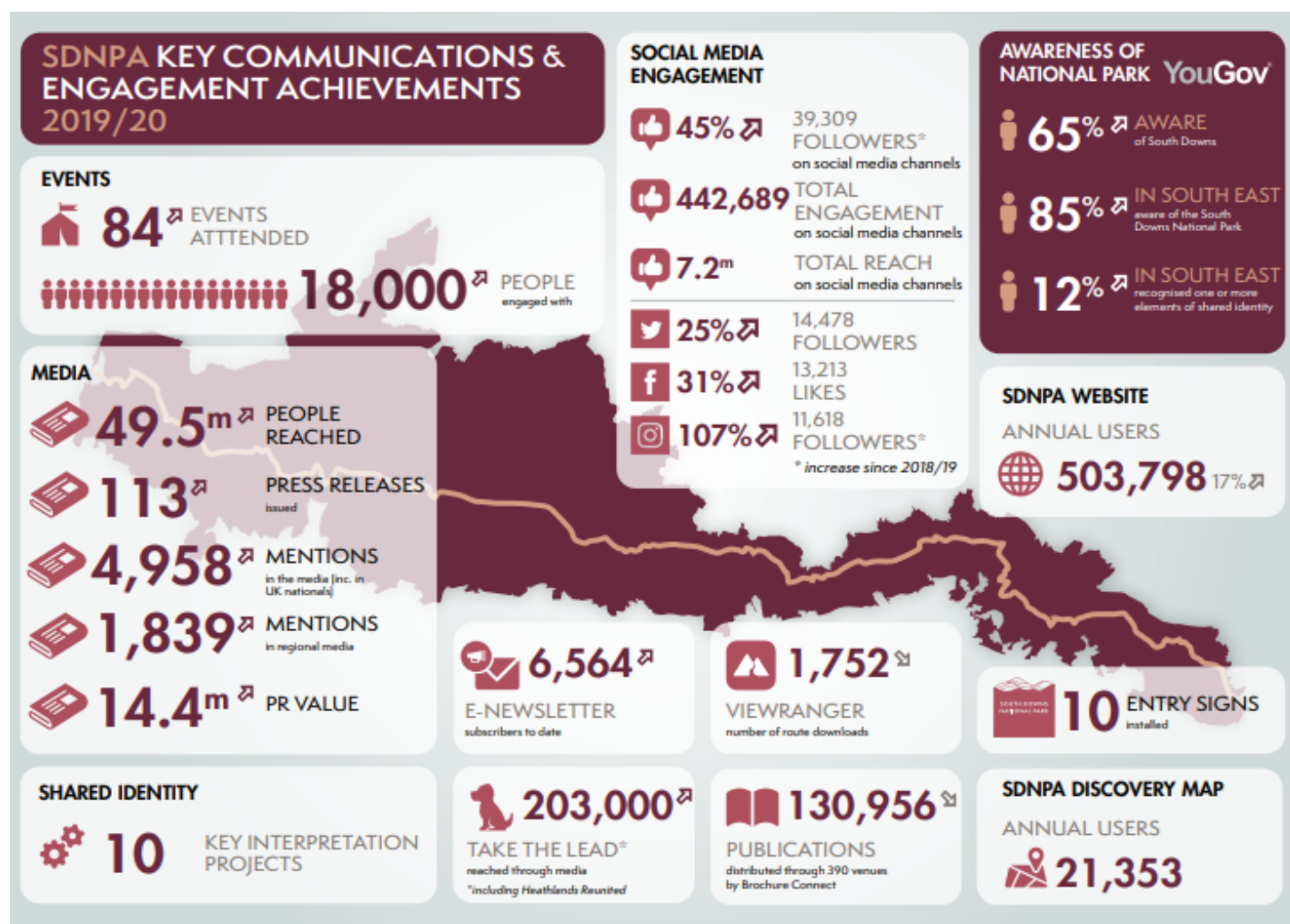


- 2.3 Our strategic direction as an Authority and as a National Park for the next five years has been set out in the 10 Outcomes of our new Partnership Management Plan (PMP). In reviewing and developing the new PMP, it was agreed that both the Authority's own Corporate Plan and the Communications & Engagement Strategy should align with the five-year timescale of the PMP.
- 2.4 Communications & Engagement is a complex and ever-changing area of work and it is important that the strategic direction set out allows us to both deliver on our objectives and to be flexible and responsive enough to respond to changing external environments and changing preferences for how people like to be engaged and communicated with. We must be brave enough to say no when needed and focus on quality over quantity, ensuring we use our capacity, resources and opportunities most effectively.
- 2.5 The Communications & Engagement Strategy does not, and should, not define every operational activity or piece of communications work that will be carried out over the next five years. Rather, it sets out the framework and principles upon which we will build and prioritise our engagement work. This will allow us to get the most from our communications and engagement resources and to understand when to say "no".
- 2.6 Positive communications and engagement is happening right across the work of the Authority in our day-to-day work, from our ranger and planning teams to our strategic leads and our reception. This Strategy does not seek to capture or plan for all of this important

engagement work. Rather, it seeks to support the achievement of the ten outcomes of the PMP through our centralised corporate communications, and to ensure that we have the right mix and focus of channels and media to reach, engage and bring on board our key audiences through our wider work.

- 2.7 Our ultimate aim is to raise the profile of the National Park and to create a lasting and personal relationship and commitment between our key audiences and the South Downs National Park. We want this to be a win-win relationship with both the National Park and people benefitting from it.
3. **How are we doing?**
 - 3.1 We currently use a wide range of engagement techniques and channels that expands all the time as new technologies emerge and people's preferred means of communication changes. We have a comprehensive programme of communications and engagement activities and are operating at full capacity of the resources available to the Authority. Any new work means shifting or reducing work elsewhere.
 - 3.2 Despite a disappointing end to the year with the cancellation of key 10th Anniversary Events due to Covid 19, 2019/20 was a hugely successful year in terms of our engagement (Figure 2). The greatest growth was seen across our digital platforms with our social media followers (↑ 45%), reach and engagement sharply increasing, and a 40% increase in e-newsletter subscribers. This is on top of the substantial growth seen in 2018/19. We also saw strong growth in our face-to-face engagement at events, where we engaged with 18,000 people in 2019/20 compared with 13,000 people in 2018/19.

Figure 2: Key Communications & Engagement Achievements 2019/20



- 3.3 Since Covid we have had to completely rethink how we do much of our Communications and engagement work. In doing so we have successfully tried new things and reached huge new audiences. Our first two virtual festivals, Wild Chalk and Secrets of the Heath, reached a combined total of 167,000 people – many from urban areas in and around the National Park, in London and further afield. We must grasp the learning opportunity that Covid has given us to respond to how people want to be engaged with and to make full use of the opportunity to reach people who have never engaged with the National Park. It is in this way that we will truly become a National Park for All.
- 3.4 To create this long-lasting relationship over the next five years of the Communications & Engagement Strategy we will focus on:
- engaging people with the Partnership Management Plan and its delivery;
 - communicating, promoting and connecting people with a National Park that is for everyone; and
 - enabling people to understand and engage with our statutory functions such as planning.
- 3.5 Whilst we are a public body, we are first and foremost a protected landscape and our engagement must have at its heart, the connection between people and this landscape. Only by creating this connection and an understanding of the many benefits the National Park provides, can we ensure its future. We must not only engage, but inspire people to care.
- 3.6 As with many areas of life, the temptation is always to skip the process and get straight to the “interesting bit”, the actual communications and engagement products to be created. There is a huge and continually evolving array of engagement and communications methods available which, together, form our delivery “toolbox”. However, we must resist the urge to select the means before the ends – that is choosing the method before deciding on the desired audience and outcome. We must begin from our objectives and our audience.

4. Our Communications & Engagement Objectives

- 4.1 The Strategy identified six key communications and engagement objectives upon which we will focus our efforts (see Figure 3):
- Raise awareness of the National Park
 - Connect people with nature and the National Park
 - Be a National Park for All
 - Bring the National Park Management Plan to Life
 - Enable people to actively care for and Support the National Park
 - Create well-informed, inspirational champions for the National Park.

Figure 3: Our Communications & Engagement objectives



5. Audiences

5.1 The audiences we want to engage with can broadly be broken down into five key groupings. Each of these groupings contains both current and new audiences, those we have reached and those we have yet to reach:

- **Our communities:** includes our parishes, businesses, farmers and community groups.
- **Our stakeholders:** includes landowners, organisational partners such as NGOs, water companies. Natural England, local authorities, LEPs and businesses etc.
- **Our visitors:** includes visitors who live outside the National Park, residents using their or other parts of the National Park for recreation, recreational user groups etc.
- **General public:** includes anyone interested in the National Park and can include people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This group also includes those who do not yet know about or engage with the National Park.
- **Policy and decision makers:** includes politicians and civil servants at Defra, MHCLG and other Government bodies and our local MPs etc.

5.2 It is important to remember that people fall into one or more of these audiences, for example, visitors can also be residents living within our communities.

- 5.3 Each piece of communications and engagement work we do will be guided by the intended audience and only then will we look at what communications and engagement methods we will use.

6. Principles of engagement

- 6.1 With the support of our partners we have committed to an ambitious five-year Partnership Management Plan (PMP). This ambitious plan combined with more people than ever wanting to connect with nature, means we must target our finite resources carefully and to best effect.
- 6.2 As with all of our work as a National Park, our Communications & Engagement strategy will require careful choices to be made in terms of time, staff, other resources, and in the number of stakeholders we can engage with. This makes having a clear strategic focus from Members even more important. We have an experienced, responsive and innovative Communications & Engagement Team, who will use this strategic focus to develop flexible and targeted annual delivery plans that ensure we use the right communications tool for the right stakeholder at the right time.
- 6.3 To do this we will:
- have a tighter focus on the core outcomes and messages enshrined in the PMP;
 - have a focused, proactive targeting of those messages to key audiences;
 - make greater use of digital channels and less focus on other channels such as physical events;
 - invest in developing new and engaging content;
 - work even more closely with partners both current and new. In particular, giving voice to those we are not currently successfully representing or reaching.
- 6.4 In order to achieve this, six core engagement principles were agreed by P&R Committee in September 2020, pending adoption of the strategy. These principles will guide the prioritisation of our communications and engagement work:
- Embed equality:
 - Informed by the audience
 - Collaboration
 - Sustainable
 - Flexible and responsive
 - Focused and cost effective

7. Channels

- 7.1 We use many different channels for our communications and engagement work and these channels change and are added to as new opportunities arise. It is vital that we use our channels with precision, based on chosen objective and audiences. Each channel has its own merits. Guided by our objectives, audience and guiding principles of engagement, we are committed to using our channels to best effect.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The last few months have seen an unprecedented reconnection with nature. This has led to both increasing opportunities and increasing demand for information about the National Park and how to engage with it. This is a huge opportunity for us that we must grasp, but we must do so in a way that does so within the resources available to us.
- 8.2 We face a period of great challenge for the environmental agenda as a whole and for National Parks, in particular, so we must focus our communications effort on proactive, sustained and targeted messaging.

- 8.3 This may mean that we may not always be able to respond to every request for information and engagement and, at times, will have to and should say “no”. This focus will strengthen the organisation and increase its positive impact for the National Park. Members are therefore asked to approve the Communications & Engagement Strategy at Appendix I, to ensure we make the best use of our communications resources.

9. Cost implications

- 9.1 The delivery of Communications & Engagement Activities will be costed and budgeted for through the annual budget setting process. Any additional projects will be brought before a relevant Theme Programme Board for funding deliberation.

10. Next steps

- 10.1 The Communications & Engagement Manager will develop a one-year Delivery Action Plan for approval by SMT.

11. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Not outside of the annual budgeting process.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The Communications & Engagement Strategy sets the strategic focus for our communications and engagement work. The budgets for our communications and engagement work is set through the annual budget setting process and monthly with monthly budget monitoring. All externally commissioned projects follow and are compliant with the Authority’s procurement guidelines.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority’s equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes. The Strategy includes a number of principles of engagement designed to ensure both equality and equity in engaging with as wide an audience as possible.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No. The Strategy proposes a number of principles of engagement designed to ensure both equality and equity in engaging with as wide an audience as possible.
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No: All communications & engagement activities are managed to ensure that we are GDPR compliant.

Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	Yes: One of our principles is to be Digital First and to reduce the amount of printed products we produce.
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12. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Risks to the Authority's reputation by being unable to deliver on important relevant national issues such as the Glover Response	Medium	High	The Communications & Engagement Strategy helps mitigate the risks to the Authorities reputation and ability to respond quickly and effectively to such external events as the Glover response and the spending review by providing a clear strategic direction from members enabling the prioritisation of work.

RUTH JAMES

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Appendices	1. Examples of positive engagement
SDNPA Consultees	Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Business Service Manager, Engagement & Events Officer, Learning & Outreach Lead, Cultural Heritage Lead.
External Consultees	None
Background Documents	https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NPA_2017December19-Agenda-Item-11.pdf https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NPA_2017December19-Agenda-Item-11-Appendix-1.pdf https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/PR_2017November21_Agenda-Item-10.pdf https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/PR_2017November21_Agenda-Item-10-Appendix-2.pdf

South Downs National Park Authority
Communications &
Engagement Strategy
2021-25

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Contents

Introduction	3
Objectives	6
Audiences	7
Key messages	7
Principles of engagement	9
Channels	10
Measuring success	11
Conclusion	11
Appendix 1: Draft Delivery Plan 2021	12
Appendix 2: Our Communications and Engagement Channels	14

Introduction

The South Downs National Park covers over 1,600km² of England's most valued lowland landscapes shaped over millennia, by the people who have lived, worked and visited here. Its inspirational and varied landscapes, internationally important wildlife, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant market towns and villages hold a special place in the hearts of millions. It is truly where people and place come together. To ensure the future of one, we must secure the hearts, minds and commitment to care of the other.

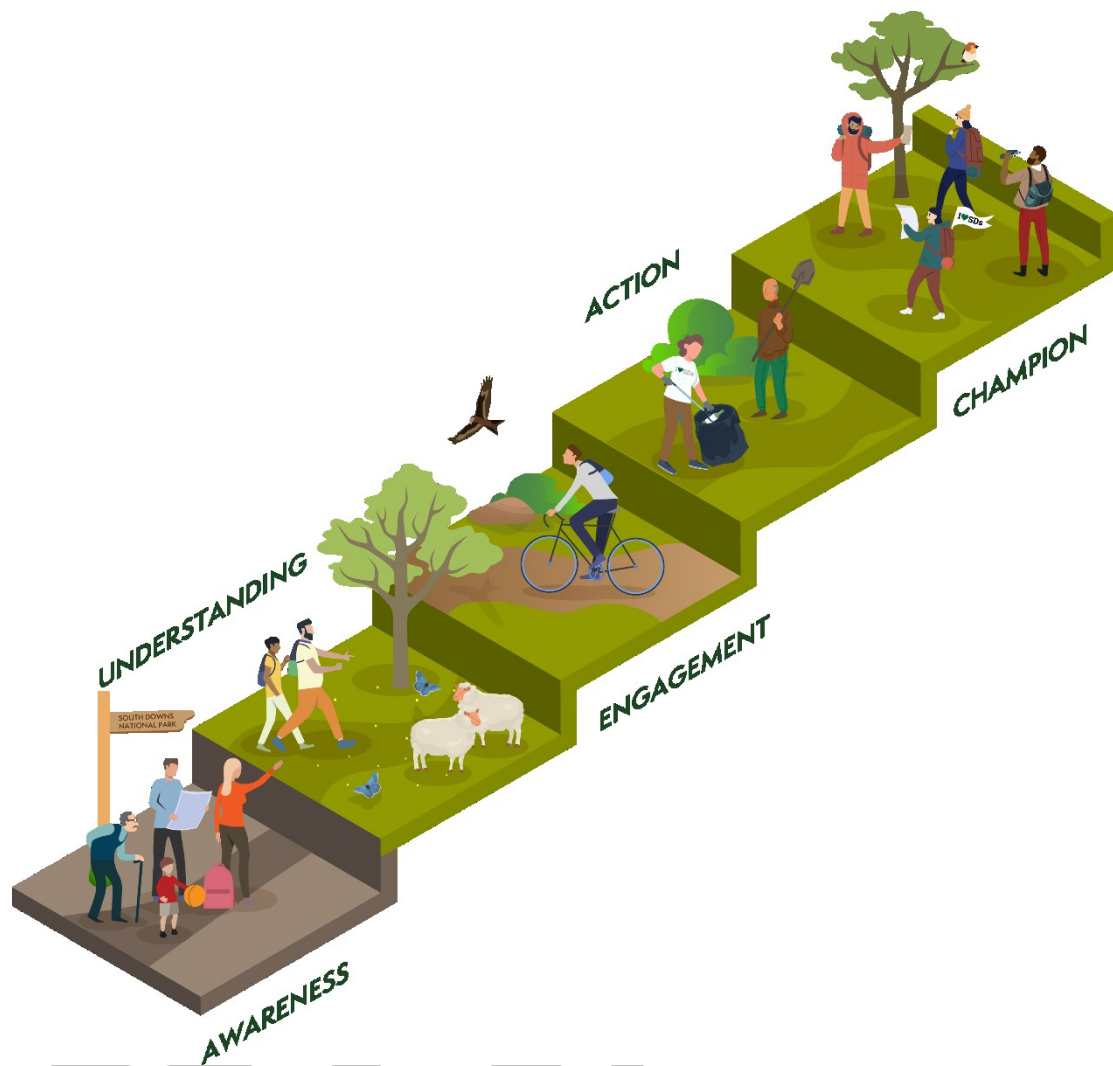
Situated in the busiest part of the UK, 117,000 people live within the National Park and a further 2.2m live within 10km of the boundary. This creates challenges that we must work with our partners to manage, but also huge opportunities to deliver a National Park that is truly for the nation – a National Park for all.

Our goal is to create a long-lasting relationship between people and the South Downs National Park, as individuals, part of communities, businesses and organisations. Great achievements have been made since the designation of the National Park, from achieving International Dark Skies Reserve Status, to developing the first landscape-led Local Plan for the whole National Park, to helping thousands of children to learn outside in their National Park, and reintroducing water voles and restoring rare chalk grassland and lowland heath. So it can be all too easy to forget that the National Park is only ten years old and that we have much to do to continue to make people aware of the National Park and its special qualities.

In particular, we must rise to the challenge of truly creating a National Park for All – a place that represents, gives voice to and welcomes everyone, and that works to ensure that everyone has a role to play in the environmental movement and in determining the future of the South Downs National Park. This Communications & Engagement Strategy is built on two important premises – we will bring the National Park to people and we will listen and learn about how we can do better to be a National Park for All.

It is through a long-lasting connection that we move people along the ladder of stewardship from awareness of the National Park to taking action to help secure its future whether that be through positive behaviour, volunteering, financial support or being a champion for this internationally important landscape (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Ladder of Stewardship

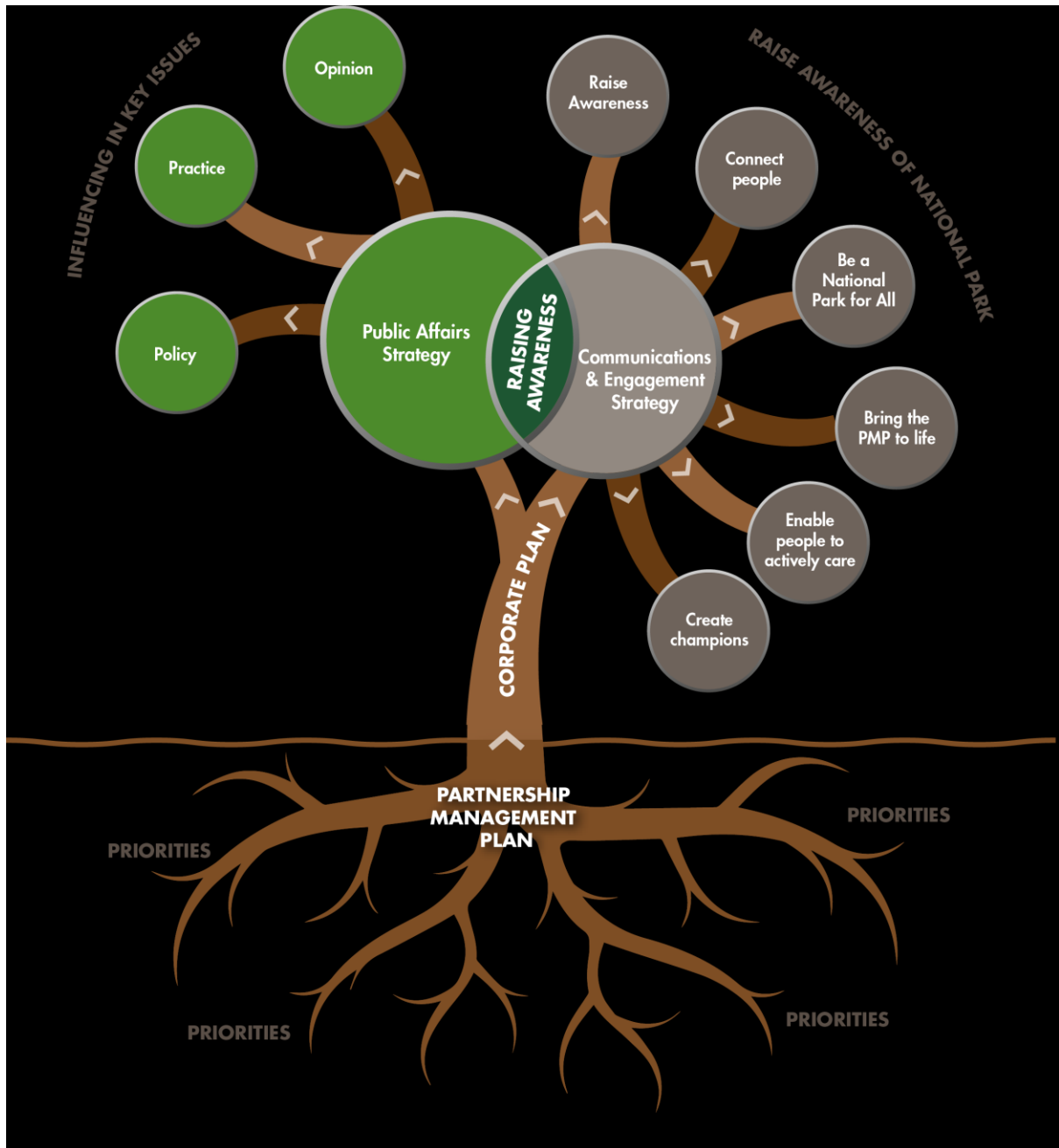


This connection and commitment to care underpins all of the work of the National Park Authority over the next five years, as set out in the Partnership Management Plan (PMP).

This Communications & Engagement Strategy sets out a framework to enable us to meet these challenges and to grasp the opportunity to build on the connection and commitment of all those who should and would join us in working towards securing the sustainable future of the South Downs National Park. Its scope is set by the outcomes of the PMP and it is, in turn, crucial to the delivery of the PMP. Our communications and engagement work will also enable us to deliver on the key priorities of the Authority's Corporate Plan, the National Park's Local Plan and the national agenda set out by Government.

The public affairs element of our Communications & Engagement work is captured in a separate Public Affairs Strategy. The Public Affairs Strategy identifies the three key strategic issues affecting the National Park where the Authority has the opportunity to influence policy, practice and opinion in pursuit of our Purposes and Duty (see Figure 2). The Public Affairs Strategy will be for a period of 2 years and will be reviewed by SMT every six months to ensure we continue to prioritise the right topics in a fact changing external environment.

Figure 2: How our Communication & Engagement Strategy and Public Affairs Strategy work together



Positive communications and engagement is happening right across the work of the Authority in our day-to-day work, from our ranger and planning teams to our strategic leads and our reception. This Strategy does not seek to capture or plan for all of this important engagement work. Rather, it seeks to support the achievement of the ten outcomes of the PMP through our centralised corporate communications, and to ensure that we have the right mix and focus of channels and media to reach, engage and bring on board our key audiences through our wider work.

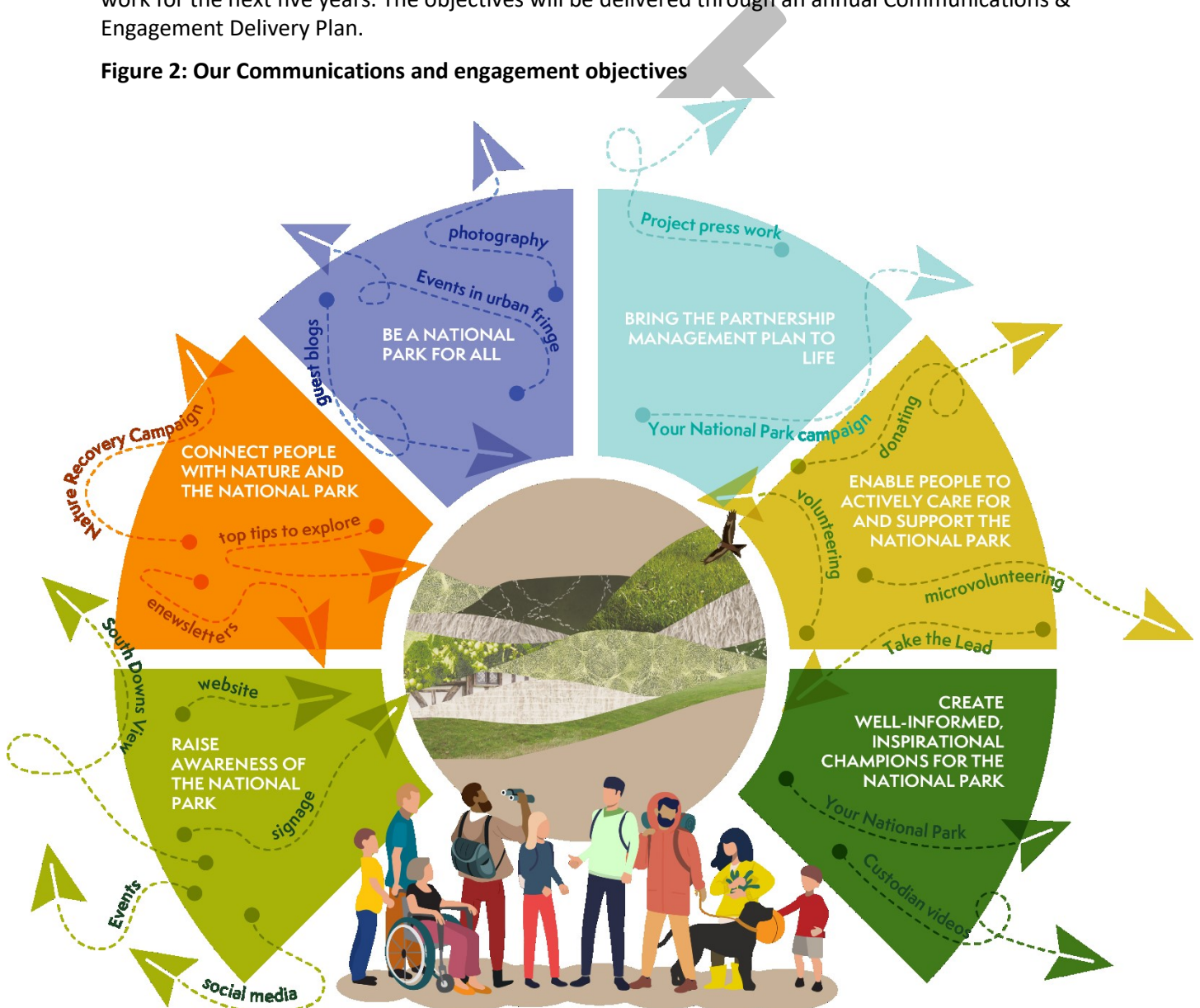
Our ultimate aim to raise the profile of the National Park and to create a lasting and personal relationship and commitment between our key audiences and the South Downs National Park. We want this to be a win-win relationship with both the National Park and people benefitting from it.

Objectives

The past year has seen an unprecedented and heartening reconnection with nature. This has led to both increasing opportunities and increasing demand for information about, and engagement with, the National Park from both current and new visitors. This is a huge opportunity for us to inspire and connect people with the National Park that we are keen to grasp.

The following objectives (Figure 2) set a focused blueprint for our communications and engagement work for the next five years. The objectives will be delivered through an annual Communications & Engagement Delivery Plan.

Figure 2: Our Communications and engagement objectives



In our work on raising awareness a key focus for us will be on those in the South East who currently don't know about or use the National Park, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented groups.

To be a National Park for all we must represent, share the voices of and welcome everyone to both enjoy and be actively involved in securing its future.

Audiences

To achieve our Communications & Engagement Objectives, we need to communicate and engage with specific audiences to ensure they are aware of the National Park, are enabled to discover and enjoy it and understand how they can care for and support it.

The audiences we want to engage with can broadly be broken down into five key groupings. Each of these groupings contains both current and new audiences, those we have reached and those we have yet to reach:

- **Our communities:** includes our parishes, businesses, farmers and community groups.
- **Our stakeholders:** includes landowners, organisational partners such as NGOs, water companies. Natural England, local authorities, LEAs and businesses etc.
- **Our visitors:** includes visitors who live outside the National Park, residents using their or other parts of the National Park for recreation, recreational user groups etc
- **General public:** includes anyone interested in the National Park and can include people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This group also includes those who do not yet know about or engage with the National Park.
- **Policy and decision makers:** includes politicians and civil servants at Defra, MHCLG and other Government bodies and our local MPs etc

It is important to remember that people fall into one or more of these audiences, for example, visitors can also be residents living within our communities.

Each piece of communications and engagement work we do will be guided by the intended audience and only then will we look at what communications and engagement methods we will use. Appendix 2 looks in more detail at our key channels. Now that we know who our audiences are, we need to be clear what are key messages are.

Key messages

Where people and place come together:

The landscapes of the South Downs National Park are living, changing landscapes that have been shaped by people over millennia. Everyone has a role to play in positively shaping the future of the National Park.

The South Downs National Park is a living, dynamic place where vibrant communities combine with rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, and spectacular landscapes.

A diverse and rich tapestry:

The National Park has some of the most iconic views in the UK, but it's more than beautiful views, it's a tapestry of different and internationally-important habitats. Beneath lies a rich history and above it floats the star-filled skies of one of only 16 international Dark Skies Reserve in the world. It has been shaped and enjoyed by many different people, who have each brought a piece to the story of the South Downs. It's this rich tapestry experience that makes the South Downs National Park so special.

A National Park for All:

National Parks were designated for everyone. We want everyone to appreciate, feel connected with and enabled to enjoy nature and the National Park.

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring the future of the National Park and we welcome new voices, new ideas, fresh perspectives and new ways of doing things.

Large parts of society are missing out on enjoying the UK's protected landscapes. As the closest National Park to London and with 2.2 million people within 10km, and with good public transport access, the South Downs National Park is an ideal landscape to engage people who have yet to connect with nature.

Connecting young people with nature is essential to supporting their health and wellbeing, and to creating the future custodians of the South Downs National Park.

Caring for the National Park:

We all have a role to play in caring for the National Park and securing its future.

75% per cent of the National Park is farmed managed by over 500 landowners, and we have a shared responsibility to care for it and to secure its future.

We are committed to working in partnership with landowners, communities and stakeholders from across the South Downs and beyond to secure the positive and sustainable future of the National Park.

Nature recovery:

Nature is increasingly under pressure and it needs all of our help to recover. The South Downs sits at the heart of nature recovery in the South East. We want the National Park to be a place where wildlife flourishes, habitats are maintained, restored, and expanded, and where everyone can experience nature and wildlife at their best.

Climate change

With its understanding of nature-based solutions to climate change, the National Park Authority has a key role to play to helping to deliver the Government's important agenda on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

We have a range of tools to help influence and deliver actions, including the PMP, Local Plan and People and Nature Network. The Climate Change agenda is broad and resources are limited, so the SDNPA is focussing on the areas where we can have the greatest impact and influence, including strengthened partnership working and community-based initiatives.

Health and wellbeing:

Connecting with nature and green space is vital for mental health and wellbeing. In the wake of the pandemic, the role of the South Downs National Park as a “natural health service”, complementing our wonderful NHS, has never been more important.

The NHS identifies five ways to mental health and wellbeing: be active, keep learning, give to others, connect and be mindful. The National Park is a place where all of these can happen.

Everyone should be able to access the South Downs National Park for its health and wellbeing benefits.

At the heart of a thriving rural economy:

Being part of the National Park adds value to and benefits the communities, businesses and landscapes of the South Downs.

We work with businesses and communities across the National Park to support a diverse and sustainable rural economy which is positively linked with the special qualities of the National Park.

South Downs National Park Authority:

The South Downs National Park Authority sits at the heart of efforts to help nature recover and to connect people with nature and the National Park.

We work in partnership to get the best for the National Park.

As the planning authority for the National Park, planning is at the forefront of our efforts to conserve and enhance the National Park and to ensure that everyone can access and enjoy it.

Principles of engagement

Together with our partners we have committed to an ambitious five-year Partnership Management Plan (PMP). This ambitious plan combined with more people than ever wanting to connect with nature, means we must target our finite resources carefully and to best effect.

To do this we will:

- have a tighter focus on the core outcomes and messages enshrined in the PMP;
- have a focused, proactive targeting of those messages to key audiences;
- make greater use of digital channels and less focus on other channels such as physical events;
- invest in developing new and engaging content;
- work even more closely with partners both current and new. In particular, giving voice to those we are not currently successfully representing or reaching.

In order to achieve this, we have identified six core engagement principles that will guide the prioritisation of our communications and engagement work (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Principles of Engagement

Embed equality:	The Glover review of protected landscapes has rightly placed great emphasis on the need for National Parks to be National Parks for All. Our greatest assets are our platform and our voice. To truly be a National Park for All, in addition to targeted interventions and projects with specific groups, we must open our platforms and widen our collective National Park voice so that everyone can see, hear, feel and create their connection with the South Downs National Park. We commit to working with and giving voice to those that we are not yet successfully representing and reaching.
Informed by the audience:	We will focus on targeted communications designed to meet the needs of our different audiences, and support and build on their connection to the National Park rather than trying to connect everyone in the same way through the same engagement means.
Collaboration:	We are a partnership-based organisation and are committed to working with our partners and creatives, current and new, to find the best communications and engagement solutions. This means knowing when we are best placed to lead and develop new products and when we should forge partnerships to use the products and platforms of others who are already doing it well.
Sustainable:	As a National Park Authority, we are committed to operating as sustainably as possible. In practice, this means digital first. We will give strong focus to our digital and social media activities, and capabilities in recognition that more people than ever are also engaging with us in this way and that it provides an opportunity to bring the National Park to those who have yet to or cannot access and enjoy the National Park.
Flexible and responsive:	We are committed to making better use of emerging technologies and platforms, and to having the capacity and channels to respond quickly and effectively to engagement and communications opportunities and challenges.
Focused and cost effective	With finite resources we will increase our impact through greater focus, improved delivery and stronger targeting. We cannot and should not try to cover everything. This will spread us too thinly and weaken and lessen our impact. This means that at times we will need to say no.

Channels

We use many different channels for our communications and engagement work and these channels change and are added to as new opportunities arise. It is vital that we use our channels with precision, based on chosen objective and audiences. Each channel has its own merits. Guided by our objectives, audience and guiding principles of engagement, we are committed to using our channels to best effect. See Appendix 2 for more details on our current channels.

Measuring success

Progress on our communications & engagement work as set out in this strategy will continue to be reported back to members as part of the annual reporting cycle.

Translating this strategy into delivery will be accomplished through an annual Delivery Plan. This annual Delivery Plan will be agreed by the Senior Management Team (SMT). This Delivery Plan will identify and timetable key pieces of communications and engagement work, including:

- core communications and engagement work such as our digital engagement, events, interpretation, e-newsletters, parish meetings etc etc;
- communications and engagement work of key projects funded by the Theme Programme Boards;
- planning related communications and engagement;
- internal communications.

It is crucial that this Delivery Plan is flexible enough to accommodate the fast-changing nature of communications and engagement work and so will be reviewed every quarter by the SMT.

We will continue to use a number of means to assess how we are doing including:

- You Gov, visitor, partner and other surveys.
- Citizens' Panel
- Both output and engagement stats from across our channels and activities.
- Project evaluations and recommendations on communications and engagement activities.

Conclusion

This Communications & Engagement Strategy sets out the strategic direction for our centralised communications and engagement work for 2020-25. Its clear objectives, key messages and principles of engagement will help us to prioritise our work so that we can support delivery of the National Park's *Partnership Management Plan*.

Appendix 1: Draft Delivery Plan 2021

Communications Engagement Draft Outline Delivery Plan 2021 (Please note this is an outline of some of our activities. Many unknowns remain due to Covid. A full annual delivery plan will be agreed and reviewed by SMT)			
Parish Workshop (Webinar) (March)	Entry Signage – 2 nd round of installation	Parish Workshop (July)	Parish Workshop (Webinar) (November)
Dark Skies Festival (12-28 Feb)	Launch of Nature Recovery Campaign	Wild Chalk Festival	Winter Planning enewsletter
Launch of new Dark Skies Film	Discover National Parks fortnight	Launch of SSCP opening and Visitor centre (July?)	Autumn Downland Thymes
Online guide to 10 Dark Skies Discovery Sites	Your National Park campaign restarts	South Downs View Autumn/Winter	Enewsletter x 3
Entry Signage– 1 st round of installation	Media/PR focus: Get outside/caring for/nature recovery/things to do/habitats and species/ promoting National Park as a destination and buy local/microvolunteering, focus on public affairs strategy	Secrets of the Heath Festival	Media/social media focus on: Public affairs issues, volunteering, accessibility, Halloween and end of year success stories
Launch of Seven Sisters Country Park website and social media channels (?)	Launch of Footsteps app for National Walking Month	Nature & Culture Festival at SSCP (?)	Winter Downland Thymes
Enewsletter x 3	Relaunch of Serpent's Trail	Truleigh Hill Interpretation	

Spring Planning newsletter	Events programme focusing on 10 year achievements	Enewsletter x 3	
South Downs View Spring Summer + distribution of SDV and leaflets	Enewsletter x 3	Summer Planning newsletter	
Photo shoots to widen representation		Summer Downland Thymes	
Spring Downland Thymes		Planning films	
Media and social media focus on: Recovery Fund, nature recovery, connecting people with nature, health and wellbeing, Trees for the Downs campaign, Dark Night Skies, focus on free things to do in the National Park and focus on public affairs strategy Photo comp. 10 th anniversary (ish), care for messaging/John Muir		Events programme focusing on 10 year achievements Media/PR focus: Get outside/caring for/nature recovery/things to do/habitats and species/ promoting National Park as a destination and buy local/microvolunteering, focus on public affairs strategy	
Bluebell Community Hub		Revamp of SDNPA intranet	
Kingley Vale Interpretation			
Push on Take the Lead messaging for lambing/ground nesting bird season.			
Swanbourne Lake interpretation			
Cissbury Digital Interpretation			

Appendix 2: Our Communications and Engagement Channels

Digital: Social media		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To bring the South Downs National Park to the broadest audience possible To engage directly with the broadest audience possible To inform them of the unique character of the landscape that makes the South Downs a National Park To enable responsible visits to the National Park To drive traffic to the website where it makes sense e.g. news stories, trail guides & leaflets, Covid information To grow our social channels to increase our reach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We use social media to connect and communicate with our audience directly and also provide value to help them enjoy their South Downs experience (either virtually or physically) The audience is exposed to over 5000 messages per day so our goal is to arrest their attention through the use of inspiring images or video We 'hijack' awareness days and hashtags to grow social channels e.g. #MondayMotivation, #WildlifeWednesday, #FridayFeeling Not all content is suitable for all channels so content has to be optimised Types of content that are particularly effective are factoids & 'did you knows.' These are often 'shareable' which increases both reach & acquires new channel followers Increasingly there is a growing audience inspired by wildlife & nature stories, along with cultural heritage enthusiasts (#HillfortsWednesday & #FolkloreThursday are popular tags), as to is health & wellbeing-led content 	<p>Going forward, we will be focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being generous with our channels & offering more channel takeovers e.g. Insta Story takeovers. We've done these in the past but we will be more targeted in making overtures to content creators e.g. photographers & younger environmentalists/outdoor enthusiasts More 'Live' content, using the Facebook & Instagram 'Live' features. Virtual walks led by rangers have proven to be popular Providing more dynamic video content & investing more resource in curating the SDNPA YouTube channel to build a community on that platform

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media allows us to have a more casual tone of voice, it can best be summarised as: light-hearted, informative, conversational, occasionally humorous (or attempts to be) and engaging. We are not: corporate, too serious or lecturing (although occasionally we have to be) 	
Digital: website and other		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide users with relevant information to help them to learn about & explore the National Park • Provide users who are also residents up to date information on the work of the Authority, including the Planning service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The redesign of the website created a new structure that could communicate both the work of the Authority & act as a digital home for the South Downs National Park • The dual navigation & drop down menus are designed to reduce the number of steps a user must take before finding the information they're looking for • Traffic to the website is directed through social media & links to recent press releases, walking & cycling routes, newsletter sign-ups, photography competitions & events 	<p>Going forward, the website will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide relevant information for users • Utilise new photography to ensure the SDNP is reflective of the people who visit the National Park • Be a resource space for ongoing projects that help us to achieve the PMP outcomes. • Creating a digital presence and gateway for SSCP.
Media and PR		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise broad public awareness about the South Downs National Park, including the work of the Authority and the 10 outcomes of the Partnership Management Plan. • To celebrate and promote the achievements of the National Park through our range of initiatives and project work across all directorates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content first, so we focus on developing pieces that tell a story, are clear to understand and have wide appeal. • Substantive, trustworthy and impactful – content that is based on fact (ever more important in the days of fake news!) • Inspirational and positive – we want to celebrate the good work of the 	<p>Going forward will be focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media that ties to the Public Affairs Strategy and focuses on key strategic moments, including Seven Sisters, Heathlands Reunited evaluation, nature recovery and health and wellbeing. • Continuing to build the news agenda for the National Park as we enter the post-pandemic era.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give the South Downs National Park hyper-local, local, regional, national and international profile. • Target some of the key niche audiences, such as farmers, foresters, and under-represented groups. • To protect and enhance the reputation of a publicly-funded organisation and give transparency, prestige and authenticity. • To help deliver PMP and Public Affairs Strategy by influencing decision-makers and policy makers, including Government, MPs, Local Government, parish councils, charities, not-for-profits, developers, agents and business leaders. • To inspire people – to visit, enjoy, learn and care for the National Park. 	<p>Authority, bringing the audience with us rather than just talking at them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varied – delving into every facet of the Authority's work, while also focusing on the main themes e.g. nature recovery, farming. • Quality over quantity – not every piece of work needs to be a press release. Optimising impact regionally and nationally. • Content is king – so while over 100 press releases were issued last year, this content can be repurposed for all our channels, including website, social media, newsletters, and publications. • Prepared – having the right answers when difficult questions are posed by media. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiming to reach under-represented groups in urban locations – particularly those who will potentially be more disconnected and disenfranchised following the pandemic. • More user-generated content where appropriate.
Interpretation		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of the National Park for visitors using key sites. • Increase the sense of place in the National Park with the incorporation of the Shared Identity into interpretation projects, both SDNPA-led and partner-led. • Work with partners and landowners to manage visitor behaviour through interpretation, including messages around Take the Lead, Scheduled Monuments and Open Access land. • Tell the stories of the people and landscapes in the National Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our approach to interpretation is led by audience and landscape. What is appropriate for one project is not always appropriate for another, so we work closely with partners and stakeholders to determine the best approach that will target the right audience and deliver the key messages. • Traditional style lecterns have their place and are a valuable way to convey information and stories. • We are using NFC tags and QR codes more frequently, recognising that these offer an excellent platform for sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a continued push towards 'invisible' interpretation strategies, such as NFC plaques, that blend in with the landscape and add value to sites without taking away from their beauty. • 2020 has shown the need for increased public understanding of the landscape and its history. Interpretation projects that help to tell these stories while also educating the public about management of habitats for wildlife, the value and meaning of Scheduled Monument sites and how they can become custodians for

	<p>digital content and films. This is a flexible approach to interpretation, allowing content to be updated when required and connecting with different audiences who might not stop to read a lectern board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further digital interpretation work is being explored through the use of apps. The In their Footsteps app will launch in May (delayed due to Covid-19) and the application process for an additional tour based in the west has opened, with the tour launch planned for summer 2021. This app offers partners the chance to tell potentially unknown stories about creatives who were inspired by the South Downs, add value to the visitor experience and tap into new audiences. 	<p>the National Park will be a big focus going forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to highlight gateway sites and grow public awareness of the National Park. • Working with the Heritage Coast partnership to plan and deliver interpretation that will increase awareness of the area and its value. • Logging Shared Identity projects and gaining a better understanding of its use by partners.
Publications		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise public awareness of the South Downs National Park, it's hidden gems and all the different activities people can discover here. • National Park for all - To inspire anyone to learn about, visit and enjoy the National Park • To give practical tools, hints and tips for the best way to explore and enjoy the National Park, landscape, wildlife and dark skies. • To deliver the PMP, the Local Plan and other strategic documents in a way that is both attractive and accessible to all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring readers – with positive, inclusive and straight forward content • Factual and informative. • Image led – let the photos do the talking 	<p>Going forward we will be focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring our publications have National Parks for All at their heart. • Accessibility

Events		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness of the National Park and its special qualities as a first step of the ladder of stewardship To make a National Park for all, where everyone feels welcome to visit To create a national awareness of the special qualities and the identity of the SDNP To bring the National Park to people in areas outside the boundary especially urban To promote projects being delivered within the PMP To promote positive behavioural norms in visitors to the SDNP To promote specific messages to targeted user groups, such as dog-owners and farmers To establish a two-way dialogue where everyone has a chance to express their views and record their experiences To engage in ways that suit our audiences, especially those that are underrepresented in the visitor profile of the SDNP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will run a range of physical and digital events seeking to inform and engage our audiences in a diverse range of delivery mechanisms We will seek to maintain our links with traditional shows and events but increasingly incorporate digital elements to broaden our reach and the accessibility of our events We will increase the audience participation and the diversity of our presenters in our on-line events to make more inclusive We will continue to target town centres, festivals and multifaith festivals in order to engage with our under-represented groups <p>We will seek out specialist events where we have relevant messages to deliver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Merge our events delivery more seamlessly with our social media presence to appeal more to audiences who do not find us through more traditional family events Seek to give a greater platform to new voices so that our users see a wider demographic range of personalities speaking about their experiences and passions Seek to instil behavioural norms in new visitors through peer influencers
Campaigns		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To create a connection between people and the National Park To create an understanding of how to care for the National Park and to take positive action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use positive social norming behaviour change approach to create a positive community for change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take the Lead Nature Recovery Fundraising campaigns for the National Park Trust.

Internal Communications		
Goals	Approach	Priorities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making information easily accessible and available to help inform and direct staff to the latest news in all sections of the National Park • Create well informed and inspired custodians of the National Park • Keep morale high and ensure everyone feels part of the Authority family. • Increasing readership of Update and the intranet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get staff to step outside their familiar ways of working to offer wider engagement opportunities • Use technology available to further opportunities and to keep interest and interaction – e.g. creating films for All staff events • Create inspiring content and opportunities for staff to get involved with celebrating their work stories with the whole of the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping the approach fresh to keep interest alive. Continually adapting to the requirements – e.g. moving to virtual events • Ensuring a wide range of staff involvement to keep a good spread of information • Revamp our internal communications channels

