

Report to	Policy & Resources Committee
Date	29 April 2021
By	Countryside and Policy Manager (Eastern Downs), Landscape and Biodiversity Lead (Water) & Landscape and Biodiversity Lead (Chalk).
Title of Report (Note)	Changing Chalk Project Update

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:

1) Note the update on the Changing Chalk Project

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Changing Chalk is a landscape-scale partnership project of organisations working together for a sustainable future for the South Downs. The partnership connects nature, people and heritage by restoring lost landscapes and fragile habitats, bringing history to life and offering new experiences in the outdoors on and around the Downs.
- 1.2 The partnership is being led by the National Trust, it involves 10 core delivery partners and a total of 18 projects. The work is also funded by the National Lottery Heritage. The overall value of the project is £5.2 million, this includes a mix of match funding, in kind contributions and volunteering. A total of £2.25 million is being requested for the delivery phase from the NHLF. The project is currently coming to the end of the development phase with submission of stage 2 in late May.
- 1.3 The project objectives are:-
1. Engage a wider range of people with the Downs to increase their wellbeing and connection with the landscape;
 2. Inspire change in ideas and actions to encourage active participation in caring for the Downs, sustaining its long-term future;
 3. Improve habitat and species richness and connectivity of rare chalk grassland;
 4. Support and work with landowners and farmers to enable sustainable management of chalk grassland;
 5. Engage communities as active participants in the discovery, interpretation and celebration of the cultural heritage of the Downs.
- 1.4 Changing Chalk is all about connecting **People, Nature and Heritage**. This project has three main themes that build on this vision:
- **Restoring Chalkland Biodiversity:** Support and work with landowners and farmers to enable sustainable management of chalk grassland, to improve habitat and species richness and the connectivity of the rare chalk grassland.
 - **Connecting Downs and Towns:** Inspire change in ideas and actions to encourage active participation in caring for the Downs, sustaining its long-term future. Engage a

wider range of people with the Downs to increase their wellbeing and connection with the landscape.

- **Hearts & Histories of the Downs:** Engage communities as active participants in the discovery, interpretation and celebration of the cultural heritage of the Downs.

2. Policy Context.

- 2.1 Changing Chalk projects cover a wide range of themes from Nature and wildlife, Cultural heritage to people communities and wellbeing. This contributes to our priorities across outcomes 1 to 8 in the Partnership Management Plan. The project covers the Eastern area of the National Park from the River Adur to Eastbourne.

3. Our Projects

- 3.1 The South Downs National Park Authority is leading on two projects as their contribution to the wider programme.

Reconnecting Dew Ponds

- 3.2 Dew ponds in the Eastern Downs are largely in a state of disrepair. Of the 280 thought to have existed in this region since the 1800 almost 70% have been lost completely or are in poor condition.

- 3.3 Since their initial historic use as sheep ponds, the purpose of dew-ponds has widened. This now includes as managed wildlife sites, mixed-use for sheep and wildlife, and as standalone public amenities with a strong visual appeal in the landscape. However, largely due to the introduction of piped water to troughs across much of the downs the maintenance of these culturally and naturally important habitats has declined. This has led to a fragmented network of surface water availability across this region especially on the higher slopes of the downs. The full project plan is in **Appendix I**

Project Aim and objectives

- 3.4 Aim:

- To enhance the biodiversity of the chalk downland landscape through targeted restoration of historic dew ponds.

- 3.5 Objectives.

- Work in partnership with the landowning community to develop sustainable networks of dew ponds.
- Build on the historic and cultural value of dew ponds in the landscape to inform and inspire the visiting public.
- Fully restore six ponds along the South Downs Way within the project area on or near chalk grassland sites.
- Increase ecological and landscape connectivity along the chalk ridge as well as improving the visitor experience.

Over the next 4 years

- 3.6 The project will restore 5 Dew ponds that contribute ecological connectivity but also have potential for community involvement, wider interpretation and education. The focus will be on ponds close to the South Downs Way. Work in Phase I has identified a short list of potential ponds, undertaken initial discussions with landowners and carried out baseline survey work.

3.7 Grazing Project

- 3.8 Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) is a rare habitat, it is species rich and of high conservation value. As a habitat it continues to decline, being mainly restricted to small and isolated sites. The project will help to restore and reconnect these fragmented sites.

- 3.9 The project seeks to address the core risk to its future, the lack of appropriate grazing. We will work with Farmers and land-managers to develop a conservation grazing system at a

landscape scale. This will help restore and reconnect this iconic habitat and ensure it is sustainably managed in the future. The full project plan is in **Appendix 2**.

Project Aim and objectives

3.10 Aim:

- Support the development of conservation grazing hubs to support delivery of the wider ‘Changing Chalk’ projects.

3.11 Objectives:

- Work with the Eastern Area Farm Cluster and other partners to deliver a targeted grazing programme for LCG sites across the project area.
- Identify priority sites and develop grazing plans and to address existing site constraints;
- Develop the capacity for conservation grazing at scale, develop a grazing database and improve the supporting grazing infrastructure;
- Investigate the long-term financial sustainability of grazing Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) sites as part of an economically viable farming system;
- Develop an evidence base and sustainable business model that can inform the development of future Agri-environment schemes.

Over the next 4 years

3.12 Through the support and development of the grazing hubs, the project will investigate the long-term financial sustainability of grazing on nutrient poor, Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) sites.

3.13 We will support a ‘Farmer led’ model to demonstrate how this can be supported as part of an economically viable system. This will provide a valuable evidence base and a business plan model that can help to inform the development of new Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes.

3.14 What the project will deliver:

- Increase in the area of land managed for Lowland Chalk Grassland species – with an increase of 520 Hectares of LCG in good ecological condition.
- Establishment of 5 grazing hubs across the Changing Chalk project area.
- Improvements to the grazing infrastructure of 40 sites across the Changing Chalk project area and development of a grazing database.
- 20 Volunteers trained up to support grazing activity on LCG sites (Looking, engagement with dog-walkers and other recreational users)
- 40 Volunteers trained up in LCG management, conservation grazing systems and site surveying.
- ‘Wild Chalk’ - 4 Engagement/Events to help people to learn about the importance of grazing for managing LCG, its historic importance, and why continuation of grazing is crucial for its future conservation.

4. Options & cost implications

4.1 The SDNPA contribution to the project has already been approved from the Strategic Fund.

5. Next steps

5.1 The Changing Chalk project will be submitted to Heritage Lottery for approval of stage 2 in late May 2021 and if the match funding is approved will move onto the delivery stage early in 2022.

6. Other Implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another	No

committee/full authority?	
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	Resources for the project have already been approved from the Strategic Fund
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	The proposal is part of a larger Heritage Lottery Funded suite of projects, bringing in substantial lottery funding.
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?	Within Changing Chalk there are a number of projects that specifically target inclusion of hard to reach groups.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy: 1.	The Five principles are built into the different elements of the project. Five principles are: Living within environmental limits, Ensuring a strong healthy and just society, Achieving a sustainable economy, Promoting good governance , Using sound science responsibly

7. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

- 7.1 Risks associated with individual projects are set out in the appendices.
- 7.2 There is a risk that the match funding is not approved however There was a project review with the Lottery Fund in February 2021 and that stage was passed without significant any issue. Therefore officers have evaluated this risk as low.

Claire Kerr

COUNTRYSIDE AND POLICY MANAGER (EASTERN DOWNS)

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Appendices
1. Dew Ponds Project Plan
2. Grazing Project Plan

SDNPA Consultees Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management;
Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services,

External Consultees 'none'

Background Documents

Appendix I. Dew Pond Project Plan

Project Name	Reconnecting Dew Ponds
Project Lead	Jeremy Burgess
Lead Delivery Partner	South Downs National Park Authority
Total project budget (including volunteer time)	£98, 620
Short Project Description (50 words)	Over the next 4 years, the project will restore five dewponds that contribute ecological connectivity, support wider habitats but also have potential for community involvement, wider interpretation and education. The focus will be on ponds close to the South Downs way National Trail.
Location(s) including grid references	Burnt House Pond TQ319136, Kingston Pond TQ 382 078, Hodcombe pond TV 567 955, The street Pond, Wilmington TQ 534 034, Devil's Dyke Golf Pond TQ 262 108, Over Tenantry Down Pond TQ 547 030.
Project Timescale	Delivery over years 1 to 4 April2022 to March 2026.
Project Aim(s) and objectives	<p>Aim; To enhance the biodiversity of the chalk downland landscape through targeted restoration of historic dewponds.</p> <p>Objectives.</p> <p>Work in partnership with the landowning community to develop sustainable networks of dewponds, whilst at the same time building on the historic and cultural value of dewponds in the landscape to inform and inspire the visiting public.</p> <p>Fully restore six ponds along the South Downs Way within the project area on or near chalk grassland sites increasing ecological and landscape connectivity along the chalk ridge as well as improving the visitor experience.</p>
Why is the project needed? (Max 400 words)	<p>Dewponds in the Eastern Downs are largely in a state of disrepair. Of the 280 thought to have existed in this region since the 1800 almost 70% either have been lost completely or are in poor condition.</p> <p>Since their initial historic use as sheep ponds, the purpose of dewponds has widened to include managed wildlife sites, mixed-use for sheep and wildlife, and as standalone public amenities with a strong visual appeal in the landscape. However, largely due to the introduction of piped water to troughs across much of the downs the maintenance of these culturally and naturally important habitats has declined. This has led to a fragmented network of surface water availability across this region especially on the higher slopes of the downs.</p>
What will the project do? Tell us about the main activities you will deliver (Max 750 words)	<p>Identify the most suitable candidate ponds that contribute ecological connectivity but also have potential for community involvement, wider interpretation and education.</p> <p>Restore these ponds as sustainable systems, provide information and education.</p> <p>Engage volunteers and communities in restoration work where appropriate and long term pond care and monitoring.</p>
Who will deliver and manage the project?	Project led by Landscape and Biodiversity lead with delivery assistance from the area Lead Ranger, area Rangers and assistants. Liaising with landowners and contractors oversight of restoration work.

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Cross Collaboration- which other partners and stakeholders will be involved? (Max 400 words)	Direct cross collaboration with two other project partners, National Trust and Eastbourne BC who are landowners of two of the pond sites. In addition collaboration with farmers and Land managers and potential benefits in some locations to sustainable grazing. Local communities will also be involved at some pond sites.	
Audiences:		
Project Target Audiences:	Please provide details about the top three Changing Chalk target audiences your project will involve through engagement, participation and volunteering . Please try to provide as much detail as possible such as group/ school name, age of audience, locations of audience, community partners involved, as well as detail on what aspects of the project they will be involved in and how you intend to involve them:	
	People living in areas of low socio-economic deprivation	
	NEETS- young people not in employment, education or training	
	People living with mental and physical ill-health/ disability	
	People of Colour/ Black and minority ethnic audiences/ People of dual heritage	
	Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Communities in the project area	
	Farmers and landowners of the Downs	Farmers and landowners will be key in supporting the restoration of ponds on their holdings; in addition, pond restoration could provide a water supply to support sustainable grazing.
Other local audiences:	If applicable, please detail up to 3 other audiences you plan to engage including schools and local community/special interest groups . Please be as specific as you can:	
	Example: Primary Schools in Eastbourne	Pupils in Year 2 from St Andrews Primary, West Hill Primary, Beacon Primary and St Cuthbert's Primary
	I. Local communities	Where there is a local community near to a pond, we will seek to involve the community in restoration and 'adoption' of the pond including aftercare, continued surveys and monitoring. Local Rangers will utilise community contacts and develop interest groups of volunteers, this can also include the

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		local schools. Specifically, communities in Wilmington, Kingston and Poynings are close to identified ponds.	
	2. Volunteers	Dew Pond volunteers involved in survey and monitoring of chosen sites before and after restoration. Practical volunteers to assist in some site preparation work	
	3. Visitors	General visitors engaged through interpretation and education, local schools (Kingston, Poynings, and Eastbourne) could utilise sites for education work.	
Will people be trained as part of your project?	Please detail any training volunteers, groups or participants will undertake. Where possible provide likely numbers of volunteers/participants and what skills/qualification they will gain.		
	Who? Volunteers/community group/ farmers/landowners/ general public participant	What training and/or qualifications?	Number of people trained?
	Volunteers/ community group representatives	Pond survey and monitoring, this will include training in identification of aquatic and marginal species.	10
Changing Chalk objectives	Please list the Changing Chalk objectives that the project will fulfil. (Delete as appropriate from the list below) a. Engage a wider range of people with the Downs to increase their wellbeing and connection with the landscape. c. Improve habitat and species richness and the connectivity of the rare chalk grassland d. Support and work with landowners and farmers to enable sustainable management of chalk grassland e. Engage communities as active participants in the discovery, interpretation and celebration of the cultural heritage of the Downs.		
Which Steps to Wellbeing will your project involve?	Briefly state how your project will meet these steps:		
	Connect	Through interpretation and education materials that highlight the heritage and importance of dew ponds in the chalk landscape	
	Be Active	As a feature promoted along the South Downs Way trail and through volunteering opportunities.	
	Take Notice		
	Keep Learning	Opportunities for involvement in future surveys of wildlife around the ponds and monitoring changes.	
	Give Back		

Project outputs

Include volunteers recruited and trained – these should match those in you budget sheet.
Include people/groups trained.

Activity	Outputs				Total outputs
	Year 1 target	Year 2 target	Year 3 target	Year 4 target	
5 Dew ponds restored as part of network along the South downs Way	1	2	2		5
5 land owners and 4 local communities engaged with project	5	4			9
Interpretation and education materials provided for 5 sites		1	2	2	5
10 volunteers trained in pond survey and monitoring			10		10

Heritage Fund and Changing Chalk Outcomes

For ALL projects, please detail how your project will meet the NLHF mandatory outcome:

A wider range of people will be involved in heritage	Local communities and volunteers will be engaged with the Dewponds project and the long-term care and monitoring. As the Dewponds will be along the South Downs Way, a major access route then additional people will be reached through the onsite interpretation.
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Please then detail just the **top three Heritage Fund outcomes that your project will contribute to** and explain how your project will meet these additional outcomes:

<p>The Sussex Downs and peri-urban landscape will be in a better condition with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved habitat, species richness and connectivity protected cultural heritage on Downland sites 	5 historic dewponds will be restored providing greater ecological connectivity and improved sources of water in a dry chalk landscape; this in turn will support greater biodiversity in the wider area.
The Sussex Downs will be better identified and explained/understood	Interpretation and education materials alongside the restoration work will explain

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	the history of dewponds and importance in the chalk landscape.
People will have developed skills	Training in pond surveys and monitoring will be provided for volunteers (including local community volunteers)
People will have learnt about the Sussex Downs leading to change in ideas and actions and active participation in caring for the Sussex Downs	Interpretation and education materials alongside the restoration work will explain the history of dewponds and importance in the chalk landscape.
People in the Sussex towns and downs will have greater well-being	
The Sussex towns and downs will be a better place to live, work or visit	
The funded organisation will be more resilient	
The local economy will be boosted	

Risks

Risk	Likelihood (low/medium/high)	Impact (low/medium/high)	Mitigation	Lead
Reduction in available funding	low	Medium	Project is designed to be taken pond by pond when funding is available. If larger funds available then more can be achieved	Landscape and Biodiversity Lead
Landowner permission withdrawn	low	medium	Preliminary discussions have been held with landowners as part of site selection. Reserve list of sites if any can't be taken forward	Landscape and Biodiversity lead

Monitoring and evaluation

The baseline for this project is a Dew Pond database that has been developed by a volunteer over the last few years. This details all the dewponds in the area and their condition. In addition, an ecological baseline for each pond will be recorded prior to restoration.

	<p>Following restoration, we will carry out annual surveys of the ponds, with volunteers, to record species present and compare to the baseline data.</p> <p>The resources for monitoring will be provided in house with support from volunteers.</p> <p>Following pond selection, a plan for community engagement and awareness will be developed alongside the pond restoration work. We will record details of communities that are engaged with the project.</p> <p>Success will also be monitored by the number of restored ponds with sustainable management and the improved habitat connectivity and species permeability.</p>
Legacy plan	<p>This project has a specific target for restoring 5 ponds. Once complete the project will come to a natural end, however, this is only a part of the wider dew pond landscape and the National Park will continue to seek additional funding and encourage others to restore a network of ponds. Future Maintenance of the ponds will be agreed as part of discussions with landowners, but will be supported by the local community and Volunteer Rangers as part of their ongoing practical work programme. Volunteers will undertake monitoring; this is a development of current pond survey work undertaken in the summer months by VRS and others.</p>

Appendix 2. Grazing Project Plan

Project Name	Changing Chalk Grazing Project
Project Lead	Chris Fairbrother
Lead Delivery Partner	South Downs National Park Authority
Total project budget (including volunteer time)	296K over 4 Years
Short Project Description (50 words)	Lowland Chalk Grassland is a rare and species rich habitat. The project seeks to address the core risk to its future, the lack of appropriate grazing. We will work with Farmers to develop a conservation grazing system at a landscape scale and restore and reconnect this iconic Downland habitat.
Location(s) including grid references	Proposed site locations are included in the summary table and map (included as Annex 1 & 2)
Project Timescale	The Grazing Project will run for the full 4 years of the Changing Chalk programme. During the three-month lead-in from January 2022 we would aim to establish winter grazing on 5 ‘quick-win’ sites that were identified during the development phase of the project. This will enable some rapid progress in the initial stages of the delivery phase of the project. This will address a potential lag in getting effective grazing on to site until October/November 2022. The project will run through till March 2026.
Project Aim(s) and objectives	<p>Support the development of conservation grazing hubs to support the delivery of the wider project;</p> <p>Work with the Eastern Area Farm Cluster and other partners to deliver a targeted grazing programme for LCG sites across the project area. Identify priority sites and develop grazing plans and to address existing site constraints;</p> <p>Develop the capacity for conservation grazing at scale, develop a grazing database and improve the supporting grazing infrastructure;</p> <p>Investigate the long-term financial sustainability of grazing Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) sites as part of an economically viable farming system;</p> <p>Develop an evidence base and sustainable business model that can inform the development of future Agri-environment schemes.</p>
Why is the project needed? (Max 400 words)	<p>Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) is a rare habitat, it is species rich and of high conservation value. It is a habitat that continues to decline, and many sites are small and fragmented. The project is needed to restore and reconnect these sites and to ensure they are maintained for the future. The most significant issue for these sites is often the absence of appropriate management. Chalk Grassland is a product of grazing and this is often difficult on these isolated or fragmented sites.</p> <p>The requirements around conservation grazing for these sites are very specific, and require focus and effort to achieve – and the economics to support this are marginal. As an example, grazing for conservation purposes often requires sites to be grazed in Winter. It may also require focussed and labour intensive grazing practices such as Mob-grazing to address particular habitat requirements. Not all Farmers and Landowners are willing or able to meet these requirements. The project</p>

	<p>can provide the necessary support and encouragement. To be fully sustainable, conservation grazing needs to become a viable part of a farming operation.</p> <p>The project is needed to support the development of conservation grazing at scale, and to establish a way to ensure it is economically viable for the future. This can also help to inform the development of future agri-environment schemes.</p>
<p>What will the project do? Tell us about the main activities you will deliver (Max 750 words)</p>	<p><u>Conservation grazing at a ‘Landscape’ Scale</u> The project will support the development of a contract grazing system to work with partners to deliver a targeted grazing programme across the entire Changing Chalk project area. This will be a ‘Farmer led’ approach.</p> <p>The project will support the production of bespoke grazing management plans for the priority LCG sites. It will help address the constraints that exist for the grazing of the priority LCG sites, establish required stocking densities and requirements (timing/type of stock). It will also help to address existing site constraints.</p> <p><u>Working with the farming community to develop grazing networks/hubs.</u> The project will work with the Eastern Area Farm Cluster and local farmers. During the development stage we have worked with the Farm Cluster Co-ordinators and have conducted interviews with interested Farmers. This has allowed us to scope the potential for grazing hubs across the project area – focussed on our target areas. There is interest in developing the role of volunteers to support the grazing activities. During the Delivery Phase of the project, this will help develop the capacity and infrastructure for conservation grazing at landscape scale. This will be flexible to local requirements, establishing the right number and mix of stock, establish rare breeds connections. In doing so we will work within existing restrictions on livestock movement and Bio-security measures.</p> <p>The project will support the establishment of the grazing hubs with necessary mobile equipment (Hurdles, bowsers, temporary Fencing). It will also support site management operations to prepare sites for appropriate grazing activity. The project will develop a conservation grazing database and identify back-up grazing sites (where required).</p> <p><u>Sustainability/Legacy of the project</u> Through the support and development of the grazing hubs, the project will investigate the long-term financial sustainability of grazing on nutrient poor, Lowland Chalk Grassland (LCG) sites. It will develop a ‘Farmer led’ model to demonstrate how this can be supported in the future, and as part of an economically viable farming system. This will provide a valuable evidence base and a business plan model that can help to inform the development of new Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes.</p> <p>What it will deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the area of land managed for Lowland Chalk Grassland species – with an increase of 520 Hectares of LCG in good ecological condition. • Establishment of 5 grazing hubs across the Changing Chalk project area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to the grazing infrastructure of 40 sites across the Changing Chalk project area and development of a grazing database. • 20 Volunteers trained up to support grazing activity on LCG sites (Looking, engagement with dog-walkers and other recreational users) • 40 Volunteers trained up in LCG management, conservation grazing systems and site surveying. • ‘Wild Chalk’ - 4 Engagement/Events to help people to learn about the importance of grazing for managing LCG, its historic importance (wool industry/food) and why continuation of grazing is crucial for its future conservation.
<p>Who will deliver and manage the project?</p>	<p>The SDNPA will manage the project. Along with the Changing Chalk partner organisations, we will work in collaboration with local Farmers and the Facilitation Group of the Eastern Area Farm Cluster to deliver the planned activities and outputs for the project.</p>
<p>Cross Collaboration- which other partners and stakeholders will be involved? (Max 400 words)</p>	<p><u>Engagement with Landowner and Farmers</u> The project will work with the Eastern Area Farm Cluster and local farmers. During the development stage we have worked with the Farm Cluster Co-ordinators and have established contacts with interested Farmers.</p> <p><u>Link to the development of the Sheep Share scheme</u> This will provide additional funding/revenue streams for grazing operations and to help deliver on the outcomes of this project. Two potential areas of expansion for the scheme that link well to the proposed grazing hub structure.</p> <p><u>Link to the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) project</u> Some of the target LWS sites may require grazing to bring them back into condition. This will contribute to the project aim of these sites being brought into positive management.</p> <p><u>Landscapes for Wild Pollinators</u> This will provide the opportunity to develop habitat corridors and create links between the existing LCG sites. This will help to buffer and connect them across the farmed landscape and offer the potential for creating new areas of habitat. There may be additional sites that require grazing as part of their management.</p> <p><u>‘Rewilding Waterhall’</u> Brighton & Hove City Council have existing experience of involving volunteers in Conservation Grazing operations on the urban fringe. There is potential to develop and deliver a joint training programme with the Grazing Project as part of the Delivery Phase of the project.</p> <p><u>‘Creating Connections’ project</u> This project will be developing and running a ‘dog ambassador’ scheme and promoting responsible dog walking around livestock. This is an area of collaboration, with activities targeted to the Grazing Hub locations.</p> <p><u>Heritage Protection, Monitoring the Downs</u></p> <p>Many of the priority sites identified as part of the grazing project include important heritage features. Many of these are currently neglected or impacted by scrub/lack of appropriate management. There is potential to improve site interpretation and improve public understanding of cultural</p>

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	heritage features through the project – and through the proposed ‘Wild Chalk’ events.	
Audiences:		
Project Target Audiences:	Please provide details about the top three Changing Chalk target audiences your project will involve through engagement, participation and volunteering . Please try to provide as much detail as possible such as group/ school name, age of audience, locations of audience, community partners involved, as well as detail on what aspects of the project they will be involved in and how you intend to involve them:	
	People living in areas of low socio-economic deprivation	Through its links with other elements of the Changing Chalk project, the grazing project will engage with, and offer volunteering opportunities to, a wide range of local audiences. This will include those living in areas of socio-economic deprivation within the coastal plain communities.
	NEETS- young people not in employment, education or training	The project will offer opportunities for new entrants to train and develop experience around Conservation Grazing, Site Management and Ecological Survey work.
	People living with mental and physical ill-health/ disability	
	People of Colour and minority ethnic audiences/ People of dual heritage	
	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities in the project area	
	Farmers and landowners of the Downs	Farmers and landowners are both a key audience and a delivery partner for the Grazing Project. The development of local grazing hubs will offer opportunities for new entrants, stock owners and graziers to get involved in the project. There are also opportunities for training and knowledge exchange through the Farm Cluster Group and the link with the research elements of the wider Changing Chalk Project.
	Other local audiences:	If applicable, please detail up to 3 other audiences you plan to engage including schools and local community/special interest groups . Please be as specific as you can:
	Example: Primary Schools in Eastbourne	

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		Pupils in Year 2 from St Andrews Primary, West Hill Primary, Beacon Primary and St Cuthbert's Primary	
	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Will people be trained as part of your project?	Please detail any training volunteers, groups or participants will undertake. Where possible provide likely numbers of volunteers/participants and what skills/qualification they will gain.		
	Who? Volunteers/community group/ farmers/landowners/ general public participant	What training and/or qualifications?	Number of people trained?
	Volunteers/General Public	Volunteer 'Lookers' trained up and actively supporting grazing of LCG sites.	20
	Volunteers/General Public	Volunteers trained up in LCG Management, conservation grazing systems and site survey work.	40
	Vocational Training and Apprenticeships	During the delivery phase we will establish links with the existing SDNPA Apprentice Ranger Scheme. We will link future provision to the project. This will offer a pathway to vocational training and employment.	2
Changing Chalk objectives	<p>Changing Chalk objectives that the project will fulfil:</p> <p>c. Improve habitat and species richness and the connectivity of the rare chalk grassland</p> <p>d. Support and work with landowners and farmers to enable sustainable management of chalk grassland</p> <p>e. Identify and protect significant archaeological sites and engage communities as active participants in the discovery and interpretation of their cultural heritage.</p>		
Which Steps to Wellbeing will your project involve?	Briefly state how your project will meet these steps:		
	Connect	The project will help people to understand the importance of Lowland Chalk Grassland in terms of its Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage value. It will help the public reconnect with the Downs on their doorstep.	

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	Be Active	Public access will be encouraged and supported – so people can be more active, but understand their responsibilities around accessing sites where grazing operations are taking place.
	Take Notice	The project will include a high degree of public engagement through the ‘Wild Chalk’ events. This will help people to better understand the value of their local sites.
	Keep Learning	The project will include opportunities to learn about Chalk Grassland, its wildlife and its management. It will also help them to understand the vital role that grazing plays in their management – both historically and for the future.
	Give Back	The project offers opportunities for people to take the next step and become an active volunteer. This includes additional volunteer roles to support grazing operations, helping with management of LCG sites, surveying and monitoring of sites. Through the wider project there is also scope to develop a network of ‘Dog Ambassadors’ to help address potential conflicts between recreational use of sites and their management by grazing.

Project outputs

Include volunteers recruited and trained – these should match those in you budget sheet.

Include people/groups trained.

Activity	Outputs				Total outputs
	Year 1 target	Year 2 target	Year 3 target	Year 4 target	
Increase in the area (hectares) being managed for Lowland Chalk Grassland species.	130 Hectares	130 Hectares	130 Hectares	130 Hectares	520 Hectares of LCG
Establishment of 5 grazing hubs.	2	2	1		5 New Grazing Hubs.
Improvements to the grazing infrastructure of sites. Development of a grazing database.	10	10	10	10	40 Priority Sites bought back into active grazing management and in good ecological condition.
Volunteers trained up to support grazing activity on LCG sites.	5	5	5	5	20 Volunteer ‘Lookers’ trained up and actively supporting grazing of LCG sites.
Volunteers are trained up in LCG management, conservation	10	10	10	10	40 Volunteers trained up in LCG Management, conservation

grazing systems and site surveying.					grazing systems and site survey work.
'Wild Chalk' Engagement/Events					4 'Wild Chalk' Public Engagement Events to help the public reconnect with the biodiversity and cultural heritage of the Downs.

Heritage Fund and Changing Chalk Outcomes

For ALL projects, please detail how your project will meet the NLHF mandatory outcome:

A wider range of people will be involved in heritage	'Wild Chalk' - 4 Engagement/Events will help people to learn about the importance of grazing for managing LCG, its historic importance (wool industry/food), it's cultural heritage value and why continuation of grazing is crucial for its future conservation.
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Please then detail just the **top three Heritage Fund outcomes that your project will contribute to** and explain how your project will meet these additional outcomes:

The Sussex Downs and peri-urban landscape will be in a better condition with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved habitat, species richness and connectivity protected cultural heritage on Downland sites 	The Grazing Project will help to improve the condition and connectivity of chalk grassland sites within the project area. It will also support the development of bespoke grazing plans for sites and bring them into better condition. The site plans will include an audit of Cultural Heritage features to ensure they are protected.
The Sussex Downs will be better identified and explained/understood	The 'Wild Chalk' - Events will help people to learn about the importance of grazing for managing LCG, its historic importance and why continuation of grazing is crucial for its future conservation.
People will have developed skills	The project will support knowledge exchange between the farming and the nature conservation community. There will be an opportunity to run training and share best practice in terms of ecological surveys and advice, site management, conservation grazing, scrub control and management. This can be facilitated through developing links with the existing Farm Cluster and encouraging local farmers to become actively involved with the wider project.

	The project will also train up volunteers to support conservation grazing and in the management of LCG. We will also train volunteers up on LCG surveys so they can support the monitoring of sites in the future.
People will have learnt about the Sussex Downs leading to change in ideas and actions and active participation in caring for the Sussex Downs	The 'Wild Chalk' - Events will help people to learn about the importance of grazing for managing LCG, its historic importance and why continuation of grazing is crucial for its future conservation.
People in the Sussex towns and downs will have greater well-being	
The Sussex towns and downs will be a better place to live, work or visit	
The funded organisation will be more resilient	The project will help to engage with local farmers and support grass-roots delivery, in doing so it will ensure that the Eastern Area Farm Cluster is actively involved and is more resilient for the future.
The local economy will be boosted	The grazing project will investigate the long-term financial sustainability of grazing on (LCG) sites, how this can be supported in the future as part of an economically viable farming system. The intention is to develop a sustainable business plan that can help to inform the development of new the agri-environment schemes. The establishment of the grazing hubs will also help to boost the rural economy.

Risks

Risk	Likelihood (low/medium/high)	Impact (low/medium/high)	Mitigation	Lead
Livestock movement between sites – risk of spread of TB and other diseases.	Medium	High	Project will develop strict Bio-security measures and restrict movements to local area. Stock records and regular tests will be part of the project as required.	Grazier
Risk to stock from ticks and other parasites that may be	Medium	Medium	Presence of any parasites that may be an issue – Coastal Red	Grazier

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present on sites.			Ticks will be assessed as part of the grazing management plan. Use of stock that are less prone.	
Lack of stock-proofing on some sites – risk of animal escapes	High	Medium	Site grazing plans will ensure that sites are stock-proof so they can be grazed safely.	Grazier
Some sites may be publicly accessible – risk of gates being left open or stock being disturbed.	Medium	High	Site grazing plans will ensure that they address issues around access on the site. Clear signage to help the public understand the grazing operation.	Rangers/Grazier
Risk of dog attacks on stock causing injury or death of stock	Medium	High	Project will help develop a scheme of ‘lookerers’ to support the grazing operation. Also public messaging around the risks and impacts – with training of ‘Dog Ambassadors’ to engage with the public.	Rangers/Grazier/ Wider Project
Risk to stock that may be grazing on site over winter – exposed conditions or poor grazing.	Medium	Medium	Site grazing plans will include back up land or if supplementary feeding may be required.	Grazier/Rangers
Monitoring and evaluation	<p><u>Current Baseline</u></p> <p>The selection of the priority LCG sites for the core project were based on a previous condition survey. This provides us with the baseline for the project. We would be repeating the survey towards the end of the project to provide evidence that site condition is improving as a result of</p>			

	<p>the appropriate management being introduced. Though the project is only 4 years, and restoration of LCG can take longer, it should be possible to demonstrate quantifiable improvement over that time in terms of overall condition and key indicators.</p> <p><u>Site Monitoring</u></p> <p>The monitoring of outcomes for the grazing sites will be through carrying out site surveys. We will develop and adopt a ‘Rapid Site Assessment’ approach for the project that will monitoring the improvement of the sites quality, species richness, presence/absence of key indicator species. This will be developed from existing ‘best-practice’ across the partnership.</p> <p>In terms of habitat connectivity, the modelling we have done using the Natural England Connectivity Tool has established a base-line. We will be able to measure improvements in habitat connectivity as sites are bought into improved management. This will help us demonstrate how restoring and expanding LCG sites across the project area is delivering greater connectivity at a landscape scale.</p> <p><u>Volunteer Engagement with the project</u></p> <p>The project will also create new opportunities for volunteering around conservation grazing, site management and ecological survey techniques. We will monitor the effectiveness of these programmes and the links with vocational training and apprenticeship programmes. During the course of the Delivery Phase we will develop links with the National Parks Volunteer Ranger Service in terms of additional support and training.</p>
<p>Legacy plan</p>	<p>Through engagement with the Eastern Area Farm Cluster, the development of this approach can be farmer led. It will help to develop capacity and set up a system (grazing hubs and ‘at landscape scale’) that can continue beyond the course of the project. The aim will be for this to become part of economically viable farming system.</p> <p>The results and lessons learnt from the project would feed into the development of the new ELM support grants. The grazing hub model will be extended to other areas of the South Downs National Park.</p> <p>A new cohort of volunteers will be recruited during the course of the project. At the end of the project they will be supported in their volunteer involvement by main-streaming them with the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS). Through this mechanism we can offer continued support and training beyond the timescale of the project.</p>