

SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Restoring our treasured trees** An inspiring bid has been launched to plant 100,000 new trees across the South Downs National Park over the next five years.
- **Blooming brilliant!** Find out about how the community has rallied round to create a new pollinator hub and give space for nature in a town's cemetery.
- **Calling all budding wordsmiths** Can you pen a story inspired by this awesome landscape? Find out about our new competition and a chance to win some great prizes.
- **Beautiful butterflies!** We celebrate this iconic insect that brings joy every summer.

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

Treemendous! Bid to plant over 100,000 trees

A major campaign has launched to plant more than 100,000 trees across the South Downs and bring a welcome boost for nature.

Following a tremendous public response to the initial 2019/2020 appeal, "Trees for the Downs" has gone from strength to strength and will now look to plant tens of thousands more trees than originally planned.

The campaign has smashed its initial target of raising £61,500 – raising a staggering £175,000 in just 18 months after a flurry of large and small donations.

Now the South Downs National Park Trust has set its sights on raising a total of £260,000 to be able to plant 100,000 trees across Hampshire and Sussex.

The trees, a mixture of iconic species including black poplar, oak, field maple and disease-resistant elms, will be planted in community spaces and along roads and popular walking routes.

The charity appeal launched in autumn 2019 to restore trees that have been lost over the past few decades, including those to Ash Dieback and Dutch Elm Disease.

As well as scores of public donations, the campaign has received backing from a range of regional organisations and businesses, including Aspinall of London, Boltini Trust, Chalk Cliff Trust, Friends of the South Downs, Jude's, Nyetimber, South East Water and the Swire Charitable Trust.



Julie Fawcett, Chair of the South Downs National Park Trust, the official charity for the National Park, said: "The response to Trees for the Downs has been overwhelming and far exceeded our expectations. I think it shows how much we love our trees!"

"I'd like to thank each and every person, community group and business that has donated to this inspiring campaign – every penny counts and every tree planted will make a difference. Trees are just incredible for the environment – they provide a home to so much wildlife, provide oxygen, improve the soil, help fight climate change and, last but not least, are really beautiful to look at! Unfortunately, many wonderful trees have been lost from the landscape due to pests and diseases and that's why we want to restore them.

"Trees for the Downs also goes hand in hand with the National Park's nature recovery drive – helping wildlife to

flourish once again in our countryside, villages, towns and cities.

"We've significantly upped our target and would like to raise about another £85,000 to be able to plant a total of 100,000 trees for the campaign."

Some 10,000 of the 100,000 trees are already in the ground, with planting taking place last winter at more than a dozen sites across Hampshire, West and East Sussex. Farmers, landowners and community groups applied for funding for the trees from the Trust.

Almost 4,000 trees were planted in the Adur and Worthing area, with 2,000 trees at Lancing Ring, 1,300 trees planted at Sheepcombe Hanger in Findon Valley and around 650 trees now in the ground at Gallops in Findon Valley.



Peter Wish, Arboricultural Inspector for Adur and Worthing Councils, said: "Thanks to the Trees for the Downs we have been able to quickly begin the restoration of our public open spaces on the South Downs which have lost significant trees to Ash Dieback."

Supporters spoke of their admiration for the campaign and urged others to get on board.

Chow Mezger, Managing Director of Jude's ice-cream, said: "At Jude's we're lucky enough to be based in the beautiful South Downs where we experience the wonder of our planet every day."

Mariya Dykalo, Creative Director Aspinall of London, added: "The challenge is real and huge, but collectively we can make a positive impact and inspire other people and our children to do the same."

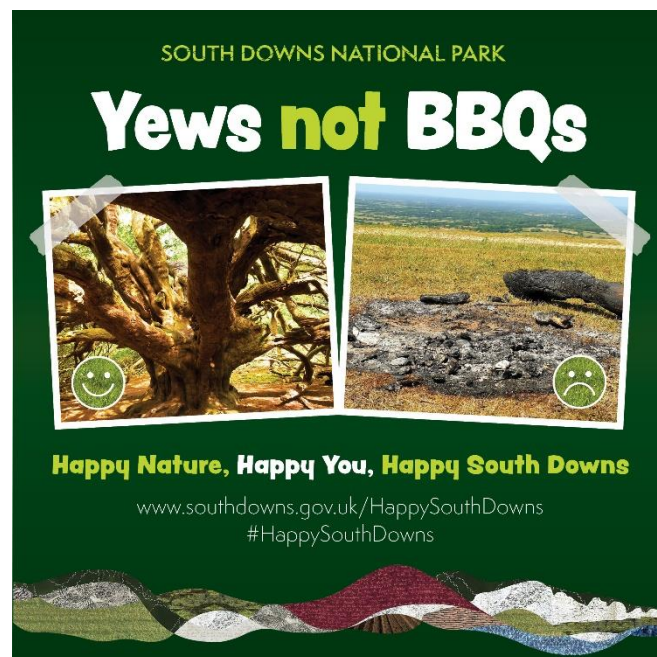
The Trust hopes to plant the trees in phases over the next four years, until 2025, and applications are now open for future rounds of planting. Those interested can email grants@southdowns.gov.uk for more details.



Applications are welcome from landowners, farmers, parish and town councils, schools and community groups, including those within the National Park and those near the National Park boundary.

To donate to Trees for the Downs, see www.southdownstrust.org.uk/trees-for-the-downs/

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY "Yews not BBQs" – giving nature a boost this summer



Quirky posters and graphics have been launched to encourage people to enjoy the South Downs this summer and help keep nature happy.

The posters are being used as rangers and National Park staff hit the road this summer for a series of mini pop-up engagement events at destinations across Hampshire and Sussex. Staff have engaged with more than 1,000 people at 13 different sites so far.

The powerful imagery will also be used as interpretation at key sensitive sites across the National Park.

Laura Warren, Events and Engagement Officer for the National Park, said: "Over the past year, we've come to really appreciate everything our green spaces have to offer – somewhere to exercise, somewhere to relax in, somewhere to socialise and spend quality time with those we love and care about.

"We want everyone to have a happy, positive experience in the National Park and part of that shared experience is helping to keep nature happy.

"These posters are rather tongue-in-cheek but have a serious underlying message. They are designed to make you think and see how easy it can be to give nature a helping hand by doing very simple things, such as keeping dogs on leads and taking all your litter home."

Find out more at www.southdowns.gov.uk/happy-nature-happy-you/

The South Downs initiative coincides with a high-profile UK-wide campaign, being run by National Parks UK, called "Love your litter". Filmed in beautiful woodland in the South Downs, the thought-provoking short film depicts two young women who visit a green space and, upon returning home, reminisce about their adventure as they unpack their used recyclable litter from their picnic.

[Watch the video here.](#)

Pen a South Downs story for chance to win prize!



Calling all budding wordsmiths!

This year the South Downs National Park Authority are hosting a story writing competition for children and teenagers, in partnership with MADhurst Festival 2021.

All we ask is your stories are up to a maximum of 500 words and based on an aspect of the National Park that inspires you.

Whether it's a spooky story set at the Cowdray Ruins or a swashbuckling adventure at the Seven Sisters, we encourage all children and teenagers to get involved and get creative.

A £35 book token will be awarded to the winner, runner-up will receive a £20 book token, and third place will receive a £10 book token in each age category. Their stories will be recorded and published on our website.

There are three age categories: 5-9 years; 10-13 years and 14-18 years.

The deadline for entries is 30 June 2021 and the winners will be announced at the MADhurst Unplugged Music event on Sunday 1 August.

Zara Kelleway, who is helping to organise the competition, said: "The South Downs has inspired many a wordsmith, from Rudyard Kipling to Virginia Woolf.

"The haunting beauty of the landscape and its fascinating wildlife and history really do stir the imagination.

"We know so many young people love the South Downs National Park and many more have developed a connection with nature over this past year, so we thought it was the perfect time to put pen to paper! We look forward to reading the range of stories about this treasured landscape. We are delighted to announce that Hugh Bonneville will be reading the three winning short stories and these recordings will be available on our website."

To download an entry form visit

www.southdowns.gov.uk/short-story-competition-2021/



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY Blooming marvellous! Pollinator haven is created



A sea of wildflowers and other pollinator-friendly plants are coming into full bloom after people rallied round to create more space for nature at a cemetery.

Scores of wildflowers and hedging trees, along with over 500 plug plants, have been planted at Lewes Cemetery to help pollinators such as bees and butterflies thrive.

The inspiring initiative is a collaboration between the National Park Authority and Lewes District Council. It comes after Chris Bibb, who works at Lewes District Council as a consultant on green projects, successfully bid for funding from the National Park's Bee Lines fund to create a new wildlife hedge and wildflower patch.

The fund is looking to create a network of wildflower corridors across the South Downs – essentially a "road system" for bees – that will help pollinator populations move through the landscape. Bees have been in steep decline across the UK for several decades due to habitat loss and are now under threat from climate change.

Jan Knowlson, a Ranger for the Eastern Downs, explained: "It's these kind of small-scale grassroots projects that make a real difference towards nature recovery, forming part of a bigger network to help bees and other insects thrive.

"We've planted a mix of trees that will provide a long season to benefit pollinators with species such as Maple, Guelder Rose, Spindle and Dog Rose.

"We're now at the start of summer and it's a blanket of glorious colours. It's already busy with bees! The joy of seeing a project literally blossom is immeasurable.

"This area will now be a fantastic source of food for a large part of the year, helping our pollinators thrive."

The project builds on the success of a previous nature recovery project at Lewes Cemetery Local Wildlife Site to alter grass cutting management and plant an area of chalk grassland plants.

The team would like to thank the following local organisations that helped with the supply and delivery of the plants: Wildflower Lewes, Lewes Urban Arboretum, Wildflower Conservation Society – Brighton and Beyond and Special Branch tree nursery.

Muddy bridlemway to get a welcome makeover



A rundown bridlemway is undergoing a much-needed revamp that will help give horse riders, cyclists, and walkers improved access to the countryside.

The British Horse Society (BHS) and Tarmac started work in April on improving bridlemway 504, running from Binsted and Kingsley to Frith End in Hampshire.

The work will help connect more than 50 miles of route, including the Shipwright's Way and Alice Holt Forest, and will make the route safer for all users. The work is set to be completed by early July.

The route had become very unsafe due to poor drainage, which meant that users could sink over a foot in depth in clay. As a result, riders, walkers and cyclists were being forced to use the busy B3004, which is heavily used by HGV lorries.

A total of £77,438 was put forward for the project, £50,000 of which was kindly granted by Tarmac through the Tarmac Landfill Communities Fund. The remaining funds were secured from the BHS Ride Out Fund, Binsted Parish Council, South Downs National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council, BHS local Hampshire Committee and the local Ramblers committee.

Tracy Casstles, Director of Fundraising at BHS, said: "The partnerships formed here to restore this unsafe route highlight the importance of our access efforts and how the work benefits many people in the local community. We're delighted that this work will allow groups such as equestrians, cyclists and walkers access to safe off-road access opportunities."

Elaina Whittaker-Slark, Lead Ranger for the Western Downs, said: "Having safe access to green spaces has never been more important and this bridlemway was in desperate need of a revamp."



"We're really pleased to be able to support this very worthwhile access-for-all project and know it will be particularly welcomed by the riding community who rely on these bridlemways."

Temporary closure for path due to essential tree works



A temporary closure has been put in place on a section of the Centurion Way pathway to allow important tree maintenance work to take place.

The closure will affect the section between Binderton Bridge and West Dean Tunnel and is necessary to remove diseased ash trees that have suffered Ash Dieback to ensure public safety on the route. The temporary closure is expected to last for four months from Friday, 21 May until October 2021.

Two alternative routes will be available for cyclists and walkers that link Binderton Bridge with West Dean – via bridlemway 455 and bridlemway 457 or by using the paved shared-path along the A286. Temporary signage and diversions will be put in place to help people take the alternative routes.

Allison Thorpe, Access and Recreation Lead for the National Park Authority, said: "Our absolute priority is the safety of the public using the Centurion Way and in liaison with the West Dean Estate we've had to take the difficult decision of temporarily closing a section of the route."

"There are alternative off-road routes in place for cyclists and walkers and so people will still be able to access the heart of the National Park and enjoy some wonderful views. We're committed to keeping disruption to a minimum while this essential Ash Dieback work takes place."

The work to remove the diseased trees will be carried out in stages by arboriculturalists and professional ecologists, with the first phase including habitat surveys to ensure compliance and good practice.

The Centurion Way is an 11km cycling and walking path between Chichester, Lavant and West Dean and follows the old dismantled Chichester to Midhurst railway line, which closed in 1991. Following the latest path upgrade in 2015 as part of a project led by the National Park Authority, plans are now being developed to extend the Centurion Way from West Dean to connect with the South Downs Way at Cocking.

For more information about the works and frequently asked questions please visit the [**dedicated website page**](#).

Diverse stories explored as writers awarded bursaries



Seven Sussex-based writers have been awarded £500 bursaries as part of 'Shifting the Gaze', a new creative writing bursary for Black, Asian and ethnically diverse writers whose work aims to explore the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the South Downs National Park.

The initiative is offering 15 bursaries of £500 to writers to fund time researching and developing new writing projects that focus on the beautiful South Downs landscape.

Shifting the Gaze is a Writing Our Legacy project, in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority and in association with New Writing South.

The first round of recipients for seven bursaries are:

- Jenny Arach, Eastbourne
- Emily Abdeni Holman, Saltdean
- Joyoti Grech Cato, Brighton
- Dulani Kulasinghe, Brighton
- Lu-Hai Liang, Hastings
- Georgina Parke, Brighton
- Akila Richards, Brighton



Akila Richards

Amy Zamarripa Solis, CEO of Writing Our Legacy, said: "The scheme will give these talented writers a chance to explore, research, write, ask for help, make connections and help create a new map for the landscape of the South Downs, which is a cherished shared heritage by so many and whose stories are to be told by even more voices."

Anooshka Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead for the National Park, added: "The South Downs landscape has so many stories within it, yet untold or not well known. This project sits as part of our wide ranging work to engage people with all aspects of the National Park."

A second round of applications for a further eight bursaries opens on Monday 12 July at 9am and closes on Wednesday 11 August at midnight.

Visit www.writingourlegacy.org.uk for more information.

New podcasts to showcase our connection with rivers



Wild garlic, the Sussex dialect, and recollections of the Shoreham Cement Works were among the topics discussed as writers held community workshops that will inspire a series of new podcasts.

Seven writers have been commissioned to pen 10 audio stories or poems – each one focussing on one of the seven rivers that weave across the National Park.

As part of their work, the wordsmiths have been engaging with local communities in the South Downs area to find out more about how people and the landscape interact.

Sarah Hehir focussed on the River Ouse and in particular the town of Lindfield. She spent time in Lindfield leading a poetry writing workshop, which encouraged a combination of abstract poetry with first person monologue to reflect living and working by the river. Through this, Sarah learnt some Sussex dialect, foraged for food, and even ended up with inspiration for her piece – wild garlic.

Meanwhile, Sara Clifford drew inspiration from the River Adur and was intrigued by the cement factory at Beeding, above Shoreham on the river. Sara interviewed people who used to work there, as well as taking several walks along the river, taking in view of the derelict factory on one side and Cissbury and Chanctonbury Rings rising above the fields on the other side.

Rosanna Lowe has been working with Arts On Prescription, a Hastings-based organisation that links arts and wellbeing through social prescribing. She made three river trips with group members – tracing the Cuckmere from Alfriston to the sea, visiting various bridges along the Arun and a trip to the River Rother. Rosanna said: "The creative writing workshops produced an amazing stream of stories, dreams and images and our river trips were a wonderful exploration of the delights on our doorstep. Water is such a balm for mind, body and soul."

The project, called Full Harvest, is being run by arts organisation Applause in partnership with the South Downs National Park Authority.

The podcasts will be launched to the public this summer and will be available to download and listen on the SDNPA and Applause websites and popular listening platforms such as Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

Our beautiful butterflies!



The green hairstreak butterfly, by Neil Hulme

Seeing the first butterfly of the season is nature's little way of teasing us that summer is here so we can break out the sunscreen and plan for some lazy afternoons to quietly work on our tan.

Like people, every butterfly is uniquely beautiful. They are a symbol of change, rebirth, growth, endurance and life.

They are also an indicator species whose variety and volume inform us how our environment is faring. And, over the last few decades, their decline has been one of the starkest warning signs that our natural world is in crisis.

Yet concerted efforts are under way, led by the National Park Authority and partners, to create more high-quality habitat, such as chalk grassland, woodland and heathland, to support these beautiful creatures.

And there have been some real conservation success stories – such as the remarkable comeback of the Duke of Burgundy butterfly which is now thriving in small pockets.

As June sees Butterfly Education and Awareness Week, we look at five well-known, and lesser-known, butterflies you might see out on your walks in the National Park this summer.

Duke of Burgundy

This dainty butterfly is still extremely rare but has been seen in greater numbers over the past few years thanks to conservation efforts. It frequents scrubby grassland and sunny woodland clearings, typically in very low numbers. The adults rarely visit flowers and most sightings are of the territorial males as they perch on a prominent leaf at the edge of scrub. The females are elusive and spend much of their time resting or flying low to the ground looking for suitable egg-laying sites.

Eggs are laid in small batches underneath the leaves of primrose and cowslip plants.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Green Hairstreak

The green hairstreak holds its wings closed, except in flight, showing only the green underside with its faint white streak. Males and females look similar and are most readily told apart by their behaviour: rival males may be seen in a spiralling flight close to shrubs, while the less conspicuous females are more often encountered while laying eggs.

Grizzled Skipper



This small butterfly, typical of southern chalk downland, begins to emerge in late April to early May, having spent winter as pupae within cocoons of leaves and silk among low vegetation. Once on the wing it's easy to miss, darting quickly between perches and nectar sources – typically common bird's-foot-trefoil and bugle. If you are lucky enough to get a glimpse of one perched on a twig, it can be easily identified by the checkerboard pattern on its wings.

Holly Blue



The holly blue is easily identified in early spring, as it emerges well before other blue butterflies. It tends to fly high around bushes and trees, whereas other grassland blues usually stay near ground level. It is much the commonest blue found in parks and gardens where it congregates around holly, in spring, and ivy, in late summer.



Ringlet Butterfly

When newly emerged, the ringlet has a velvety appearance and is almost black, with a white fringe to the wings. The small circles on the underwings, which give the butterfly its name, vary in number and size and maybe enlarged and elongated or reduced to small white spots. Bramble and wild privet flowers are favourite nectar sources.

With thanks to Butterfly Conservation and photographers Charlie Hellewell and Neil Hulme.

Get involved in conservation and nature recovery!

There's a golden opportunity this summer to help the fortunes of our butterflies and their ongoing recovery.

The Big Butterfly Count is a UK-wide survey aimed at assessing the health of our environment simply by counting the amount and type of butterflies (and some day-flying moths) we see.

This year's survey will run from 16 July to 8 August and you can download the app on your phone to take part.

[Click here for more details!](#)

Things to do in the South Downs this June

Please follow the links as booking may be necessary. Find these and more events across the National Park and submit your own events at southdowns.gov.uk/events/



- Join West Sussex Record Office and Screen Archive South East on Sussex Day to celebrate the history of the South Downs National Park. This virtual event on 16 June, coming live from the Record Office, will take you behind the scenes to explore a fascinating series of films, photographs, documents, maps and artworks. [Register here.](#)
- The Box Office for the action-packed Petworth Festival 2021 opens on 15 June. Find out about what's on and get tickets [here.](#)
- Visit Winchester Science Centre and Planetarium to find out about how sound is created in nature and enjoy a new science show called [Sound Detectives](#). The free show runs every weekend until 11 July.
- Looking ahead to early next month, [The Coultershaw Heritage Site](#), just south of Petworth, will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary on 4 July with a Big Open Day. Come and see the 240-year-old water wheel and beam pump at work and join in fun craft activities!

YOU SAY:

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



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

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