

# Case Study

## Small Grant Scheme: Covid-19 Recovery Fund

### Background

The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is a loved and valued place to live and visit. The quality of the experience of this landscape is enhanced by the diversity of independent businesses, tourist offers and cultural destinations – from its fantastic food and drink and beautiful places to stay, to its cultural experiences.

It is the vibrant businesses and destinations within the South Downs that add to it being such a special place to visit.

The scale of the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic on the rural economy of the SDNP was vast, just as it was in the wider UK Economy.

To support businesses at a local level during this difficult time, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) set up a Recovery Fund of £375,000 for partner organisations and local communities impacted by the pandemic.

The SDNPA Small Grants Scheme, a support initiative funded by the Recovery Fund, primarily targeted local businesses who demonstrated innovation and good business planning when forced to pivot their traditional models in response to the restrictions of the Pandemic.

This grants scheme recognised the need for small businesses to be able to deliver crucial pieces of work during this difficult time.



*Creation of an online wine tasting experience by Tipple Talk, Hambledon Vineyard*

### The project

Local businesses were able to apply to the small grants scheme to fund business adaptation, innovation and to revisit business plans and strategies in light of Covid-19 impacts and opportunities.

The scheme launched in August 2020. It consisted of two panel assessment rounds offering funding of between £500 - £2000 to eligible businesses and organisations within the South Downs National Park.

The scheme proved to be very popular, a large number of applications were received and all proposals were carefully assessed and reviewed by an impartial panel.

There was a wide variety of approaches outlined in the proposals such as the creation of new products and courses, the improvement of an online presence, buildings adaptations and enhancements as well as marketing support.

In total, 22 local businesses received grants from the scheme, totalling £32,070.

---

*“Thank you again very much for supporting this exciting development in our business here and helping us navigate these challenging times.”*

**Camilla and Roly, Saddlescombe Farm**

---

## The outcome

The grant recipients included:

### Food and Drink producers:

Gospel Green Cyder (Hampshire); Sussex Lamb (West Sussex); Sinah Common Honey (Hampshire); Holos Kombucha (West Sussex); Noble and Stace chocolatiers (West Sussex); Ashling Park Estate (West Sussex)

### Pubs:

The Ship Inn (Hampshire); The Shoe (Hampshire)

### Visitor Attractions:

Camilla and Roly - Saddlescombe Farm (West Sussex); RSPB Pulborough Brooks (West Sussex)

### Accommodation:

Alfriston Cabins (East Sussex)

### Experiences

Pookles Farm Flowers (Hampshire); Made and Making (West Sussex); The Artisan Bakehouse (West Sussex); Hampshire Tours (Hampshire); South Downs Sourdough (Hampshire); Saira's Kitchen (Hampshire)

### Retail & farm shops:

The Hungry Guest bakery and café (West Sussex); Edgcumbes – Farm shop and Coffee roasters (West Sussex); Tipple Talk (Hampshire); Durleighmarsh Farm Shop (Hampshire); Gnarly Tree (West Sussex)

**The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2020–25** sets out a shared vision for how we all would like the National Park to be in the future. It includes 10 long-term outcomes, and provides a framework for communities, landowners, charities, businesses and public bodies to work together to make this vision and these outcomes a reality.

### This project supported the delivery of the following PMP outcomes:

**Outcome 10:** A diverse, sustainable, dynamic economy which is positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.

[southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/](https://southdowns.gov.uk/partnership-management-plan/)

## The future

The project was very successful although limited to the amount of funds available.

The number of applications received demonstrated the need for this type of support for small business during this challenging time.

Despite new restrictions during winter 2020, most recipients were able to deliver the adaptations outlined in their proposals. However, most had to then wait for restrictions to be lifted to actually see the project benefits.

For further information, please contact the **Thrive team** at SDNPA:

[enterprise@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:enterprise@southdowns.gov.uk)



The installation of a new outdoor canopy at the Shoe Inn, Exton

November 2021