

SOUTH DOWNS PLANNING

NEWS FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



Welcome to the planning newsletter for the South Downs National Park Authority
Send your comments to us at planningnewsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

Biggest green roof will boost biodiversity

A huge wildflower meadow teeming with butterflies, bees and other invertebrates will be created on top of a new supermarket.

Work starts this spring on building a new Aldi supermarket on a vacant 0.9 hectare brownfield site in Frenchmans Road, Petersfield.

Once completed, the building is set to have the largest green roof in the National Park.

The proposals, which will create 50 new jobs, were approved by Planning Committee.

The site was previously occupied by a large 1970s building used as a factory, offices and warehousing and the structure was demolished in 2018.

The new building will meet the BREEAM 'excellent' rating and, in certain specific aspects of its design around energy performance, will exceed this standard.



Solar panels and a heat-loss recovery system connected with the chiller units will be other key sustainability features, as well as a water efficiency standard that is 25 per cent higher than current building standards.

The development include four electric vehicle charging points, together with a further 20 'passive' charging



spaces in which electricity infrastructure is installed ready for future implementation of new charging sockets for vehicles.

Thirty two new trees will be planted and rain gardens will be created to improve drainage and attract wildlife.

Forty cycle spaces will be provided for staff and customers.

Interpretation panels are also planned to help explain the flora and fauna on the roof of the supermarket.

Richard Ferguson, Development Management Lead for the Western Downs, said: "This is a contemporary design building making use of a vacant brownfield site.

"The development makes references to Petersfield in terms of the materials used, including hand-laid brick and flint work.

"An important aspect will be the green roof that will bring significant biodiversity benefits, making innovative use of a brownfield site to help local wildlife flourish."



Major development approved



More than 100 affordable homes and £1.7m towards access improvements are on the way with a new development in Lewes.

Permission was granted in March for up to 226 homes on land at Old Malling Farm, a 10-hectare site on the north eastern edge of the town.

The development includes 75 affordable rented homes, plus 28 shared ownership and 10 “Lewes low-cost housing” dwellings.

Significant financial contributions have been agreed, including improvements to the existing railway cutting permissive path to enable year-round use by walkers and cyclists.

There will also be traffic calming measures on Old Malling Way, Church Lane and Mayhew Way, together with better walking and cycling routes to connect with Lewes town centre.

Sustainability is high on the agenda for the new development, with all homes being net zero carbon and having high water efficiency.

A detailed **Design Brief** was approved alongside the permission and includes a Green Infrastructure Strategy to protect existing habitats, create new ones and make new links for wildlife.

The site is allocated for housing in the South Downs Local Plan.

The housing development will include a network of high quality, multi-functional, connected public open spaces, which will link to the existing wooded boundaries.

The creation of an entrance square will create a sense of arrival.

Vicki Colwell, Principal Planning Officer, said “During the course of the application, officers negotiated with the applicant to increase the affordable housing offer from 15% to 50%.

“The Design Brief has landscape at its heart and focuses on the biodiversity and sustainability benefits that can be gained from this high-quality development.

“As well as delivering much-needed affordable housing for the Lewes area, this development will deliver several community benefits, including more cycle and walking routes to connect people to both the countryside and Lewes town centre.”

Green light for affordable homes



Plans for 32 affordable homes on the site of a former school have been given the go-ahead.

The mixture of houses and flats have been approved for land at the former Pells C of E Primary School, in Landport Road, Lewes.

The school closed permanently in August 2017 and the 0.9 hectare site is now owned by the applicant, Raven Housing Trust, which is a registered provider of social housing.

The plans include a number of highway works, including providing two on-street parking bays on the Arundel Green Spur and a new footway along Arundel Green.

There will also be a new walking and cycling path through the site for public use, as well as community use of the forest school area.

The development achieves Net Zero Carbon through modern construction methods to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and reduce construction waste.

Stella New, Senior Development Management Officer, said: “The applicant has engaged collaboratively with officers to address the design and layout of buildings, open space, access, parking and sustainable drainage features, to ensure the development conserves and enhances landscape character, and achieves multifunctional benefits including biodiversity net gain and wellbeing.

“The loss of the community use can be balanced against the benefits of a 100 per cent affordable housing scheme in a sustainable location.

“There are few opportunities in Lewes to achieve such a level of affordable housing, taking into account the viability challenges of brownfield sites typically coming forward for development in the town.”



Enforcement team to increase monitoring visits



Our monitoring role for larger planning applications is being strengthened to help protect landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The Authority's enforcement team have always investigated, and rectified where appropriate, potential breaches of planning conditions that are set out in a planning permission.

In addition to their regular duties, the team will now be taking a more proactive role to monitor planning conditions and ensure they are fully implemented.

These site visits will include monitoring conditions around landscaping and tree protection, amongst others.



Heather Lealan, who heads the Authority's enforcement team, said: "We have a number of larger developments under construction, or soon to be built, in the National Park and many have a long list of important conditions.

"Our approach will be to ensure strategies are submitted prior to building work starting and then, when it is considered necessary, to continue monitoring a site during the construction phase.

"It will not be feasible to closely monitor every site, but we envision that some sites will be visited several times in order to witness those key stages, such as when footings are put in or landscaping occurs.

"If breaches are identified, our team will investigate the harm it's causing and where appropriate, take action to address that."

Report a planning breach

To find out more about reporting a suspected planning breach in your area visit

www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning-applications/enforcement-report-a-breach/

Dragons delight as carvings are a hit at beauty spot



Beautiful tree carvings are delighting visitors to a nature reserve.

Thanks to Section 106 funding, the Authority has been able to support Horndean Parish Council on an arts project at Catherington Lith, near Waterlooville, in Hampshire.

The site is a 30-acre ancient woodland with remnants of chalk grassland and was used during the Second World War as an evacuation site for people from Portsmouth.

Ash Dieback meant that some trees had to be removed at the Lith and some stumps were left behind to be turned into elaborate carvings.

The sculptures were created by former tree surgeon and now woodcarver Michael Jones.

Gill Welsman, who oversees S106 payments in the National Park, said: "Catherington is one of the key urban fringe sites of the National Park and very much a gateway to the South Downs.

"It's lovely to see these inspiring sculptures in place, creating a sense of wonder about the natural world and local heritage and folklore. This artwork is on a walking route into the National Park and we hope it will encourage people to connect with the countryside and explore deeper into the South Downs."

This year the Authority has funded a range of projects through S106 developer contributions, spending just under £600k during the financial year. A selection of the projects supported include:

Corhampton and Meonstoke – ecological improvements at church green.

West Meon – Replacement bus shelter

Horndean – Tree planting at St Giles Churchyard and maintenance of public rights of way.

Chawton – Footpath improvements and interpretation boards.

Lewes – Car club provision.

Petworth – Retractable seating at Leconfield Hall

Binsted – Improvements to Bridleway 504

Affordable homes for village



The National Park Authority is pleased to have been able to support Angmering Community Land Trust (CLT) with the provision of five affordable new homes in the parish.

The parish, located on the edge of the National Park, has seen an increase in property prices in recent years, meaning local residents and workers have often been unable to find affordable homes in the village.

The development completed in March and includes three shared ownership properties and two affordable rental properties. The dwellings are the first homes supported by the Authority's Affordable Housing Grant to have air-sourced heat pumps installed. These pumps provide improved sustainability and further support the reduction of living costs for the new residents.

Tony Cross, Chair of Angmering CLT, said: "The grant from the South Downs National Park Authority quite simply made the difference between being able to buy the five affordable homes or not. It also helped to ensure the homes were in fact 'affordable' for local people by allowing us to keep rents well below typical market rents. The process for obtaining the grant was also straightforward with good communication and support provided by the Affordable Housing Grants Officer."

Gill Welsman, who oversees these grants at the National Park, added: "We mustn't underestimate the difference our Affordable Housing Grants can make to enabling the provision of affordable homes.

"By supporting not-for-profit organisations, such as Community Land Trusts, who are committed to delivering sustainable affordable homes in perpetuity, we protect affordable living within parishes in the National Park for future generations."

One new resident works for Angmering-based charity Cancer United, which provides support for cancer sufferers through indoor and outdoor fitness and other group activities.

They said: "We're delighted with the opportunity that has been provided for us to get on the housing ladder. Without the provision of shared ownership homes such as ours we simply would have had no opportunity to purchase our own home in Angmering."

Support for education centre



Thousands of children will benefit from revamped educational facilities to help them learn about the countryside, nature and sustainable farming.

A new purpose-built Education Centre has been built at Seeley Copse, on the Goodwood Estate, near Chichester.

It comes after Goodwood Education Trust received a £40,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) grant from the National Park towards the cost of the new facilities.

The previous building was inadequate, with insufficient space for wet weather activities, and unsuitable access for disabled students and visitors.

The attractive new building has a bright and airy classroom for up to 60 children and provides access to safe, practical hands-on learning and enrichment activities year-round. The building is now wheelchair accessible and has disabled and unisex toilets.

Nikki Allen, CIL Planning Officer, said: "It's wonderful to see this brand-new centre that will benefit so many children in the local area.

"Connecting with nature, and learning how we can care for it, starts at a young age and that's why education centres like the one at Goodwood are so vital.



"It gives young people the chance to be immersed in the countryside and learn about where their food comes from and understand how the natural environment plays a part in it."



Sports pavilion takes shape



Work is well under way on creating a new pavilion in heart of a village.

Fernhurst Recreation Ground has been a hive of activity over the past few months as the 50-year-old pavilion is modernised and expanded.

The National Park has supported the project with £200,000 of CIL funding, along with financial support from other bodies, including Sport England. It's hoped building work will be finished by October.

Update on First Homes

The Government's First Homes scheme is now relevant to the determination of all new full and outline applications in the South Downs National Park.

A First Home is a new affordable housing product introduced by Government and considered to meet the definition of affordable housing for planning purposes. The key components of First Homes are:

- First Homes are sold with a minimum 30% discount on the open market price. The percentage discount is kept in perpetuity;
- The value of First Homes, after the discount has been applied, is capped at £250,000.
- Eligibility criteria applies to buyers; who must be first-time buyers, with a household income not more than £80,000, have a mortgage covering at least 50% of the discounted purchase price value and meet a local connection and/or key worker criteria

The Authority will seek to implement the Government's First Homes policy while allowing flexibility in order to prioritise local needs for affordable housing and maintain a focus on affordable rental tenure.

To ensure the local needs of communities in the National Park are prioritised, the established local connection criteria of the Local Plan will apply to First Homes.

Key milestone is reached



The final piece in the housing strategy for the National Park has been completed after a community voted overwhelmingly for its neighbourhood plan.

The referendum at Twyford, in Hampshire, marked the final step in the process of completing the housing allocations set out in the South Downs Local Plan.

The award-winning **Local Plan** was formally adopted in 2019, but several Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) still needed to be completed and voted on by the community. NDPs give local communities the power to shape development in their area through the Localism Act 2011 and address how growth can be managed over a 15 to 20 year period.

The referendum on the Twyford Neighbourhood Development Plan saw 349 Yes votes and 70 No votes (83% to 17%).

Once Twyford is formally adopted, it will mean 40 NDPs are now incorporated into the Local Plan for the National Park. Some communities are still developing their NDP, but they do not include housing allocations.

The process started in 2014 when Arundel was the first community to green light its NDP. Over the past eight years, there have been thousands of hours of consultation, engagement and meetings with local communities to work up the NDPs.



Lucy Howard, Planning Policy Manager, said: "This is a key milestone for the local communities of the National Park and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every person who has contributed and given their time

to this really important process in planning.

"Local communities sit at the heart of our landscape-led Local Plan and this is a great achievement for them and everyone who has worked so hard on these Neighbourhood Development Plans.

"These adopted plans are a powerful way of local people helping to shape where and what development happens in their communities."

New guidance on renewables



Amy Tyler-Jones, Senior Planning Policy Officer, provides an update about new guidance of renewable energy projects in the National Park.



In April the Authority published the **Small Scale Renewable Energy Technical Advice Note (TAN)**.

The purpose of the TAN is to help applicants (householders, community organisations or local businesses) to make successful planning applications for small-scale renewable energy schemes in the National Park as part of the drive to achieve zero carbon emissions. The TAN provides guidance on appropriate renewable energy in the South Downs National Park and advice on submitting a planning application. Case studies are also included and potential sources of funding.

For the purposes of the TAN, small-scale renewable energy is defined as a proposal designed to serve an individual building i.e. 'microgeneration' (mainly covered by permitted development rights) or larger scale technology to serve multiple buildings and part of a project designed and led by the local community.

The TAN is now a material consideration to be taken into account when determining planning applications for small-scale renewable energy and associated development in the National Park.

Calling all agents!

The Agents' Forum is for all agents who regularly submit planning applications to the National Park Authority and/or the host authorities.

The next meeting of the South Downs Agents' Forum will be held in person at the South Downs Centre, in Midhurst on Thursday, 16 June at 4pm.

Please let us know by email at agentsforum@southdowns.gov.uk if you would like to attend.

We are working on the agenda and would be grateful if you can send in any topics you would like addressed.

There will be plenty of time for general questions and answers 😊

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY £2m makeover almost complete



Vicki Colwell, Principal Planning Officer, writes about the £2m renovations at Seven Sisters Country Park and how the planning team have led a key role in helping to create first-class facilities.

The first phase of works at the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre are almost complete and visitors are starting to enjoy these bright and airy facilities. The creation of a world-class visitor experience is a big step forward for the Authority and has involved staff from teams across the organisation.

The Planning Team have worked to ensure that it represents an exemplar development, in accordance with our Local Plan. We ensured that we had all the right information about the sites – the visitor centre, Foxhole Cottages and the Camping Barn – in terms of ecology, water, trees, heritage, landscape character and how the place was used, to work out what was important.

This was used to shape the delivery of the first stage of proposals, including how best to extend the cottages, how to improve facilities at the camping barn and how to make it easier to navigate around the visitor centre area and create a space people wanted to explore more.

Our Local Plan policies include requirements for development to make a positive contribution to ecosystem services, deliver biodiversity net gain and deliver energy efficiencies.



We made sure that these measures were built in to the proposals from the beginning, so that they are fully integrated into the designs – for example, the garden space at Foxhole Cottages now provides enhanced water management opportunities, and a more diverse habitat which is also better connected. The buildings and their surroundings at the visitor centre have been sensitively adapted to improve drainage and re-use water efficiently.

Thinking about how each design decision relates back to the evidence, and using this evidence to influence the choices made, has ensured that the whole scheme has been landscape-led and ultimately will result in a much better visitor experience at this treasured site.

“The value of National Parks in this world cannot be underestimated”



Tim Slaney, Director of Planning, reflects on a fascinating visit to Oman in which he shared ideas and best practice on planning in protected landscapes.



Richard Ferguson and I travelled to Oman in February in what was one of the most fascinating, wonderful, hardworking and enlightening trips I have had in ages.

The SDNPA won a sponsorship ‘competition’ helping emerging nations implement the concepts of planning and National Parks in particular. Huge thanks go to those involved as, despite restrictions, we flew out there at no expense to the SDNPA and embarked on days of touring potential sites, workshops and meetings with local leaders and those interested including leading botanists and archaeologist.

As a nation, we have always had good relationships with Oman, which stands at a strategic location between Iran and Yemen on the Gulf of Oman within the Arabian Sea. In 1970 there was just 2 miles of tarmac, no airport, a population of around ½ million and Muscat was a little port town. They now have over 5m inhabitants and huge infrastructure projects as well as being part of the middle east oil and gas production stream. What a change in two generations from almost the middle ages to the 21st century.

Recognising climate change and the need for less reliance on fossil fuels there is a drive to both manage their own affairs and utilise all their attributes.



As we discovered primary amongst these were the stunning and varied landscapes and friendliness of the people. Exploring the opportunities for tourism and diversification in some of the most incredible places I have ever seen was an honour. They did, as a Government – Government relationship (avoiding consultancies trying to get commissions) work Richard and myself hard. We had a series of workshops (some involving translation into Arabic!), training sessions and even a pre-application planning hearing in a Bedouin

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

tent in the desert, whilst travelling some six hours a day. In the desert Richard and I presented and listened to a debate on tourism growth vs conservation of the landscape at 7pm, just when we thought we were off the hook after another large Omani meal. The irony is that, despite the language barrier and formality, with the odd word translated we understood the entire proceedings and tensions expressed by the various parties who were, in effect, the developer, the Parish and the District as well as local residents. It seem the issues arising from living working beautiful landscapes, treasured by people for different attributes, are worldwide.



We met the Minister of Housing and Urban Planning twice, which was encouraging, as well as the British Ambassador. It struck us that whilst they have the evidence and some local expertise to draw on there is less organisational structure, culture and political will to succeed than we did as regards a National Park for all. We did advise that trying to ‘adopt’ 10 Special Planning Zones (SPZ - their word for National Parks as they do not want the word to be associated with wilderness of the American model interestingly) was a tall order. Given they have emerging governance structures that are at more risk than ours and that it took us 60 years to get our ten National Parks designated they do need to consider timeframes, whilst getting one in place quickly.

Some of the team we met are coming over in June. This is allow us to show what can be done as well as what we have learnt after 11 years. We are also hoping they bring forward their plans for a first SPZ in Oman, which we can assist with. We have an exciting set of workshops and visits arranged whilst they are here. This includes them visiting the Peak District and North York Moors National Parks so they get a wider perspective. This international perspective to our work is so important given the much wider issues of stability and climate change in the world. The value National Parks can play as brands encouraging local business and agricultural production to flourish, as well as provide healing and respite from the busy and sometimes frightening world we live in cannot be underestimated.

If you just happen to see us out and about please do come up say hello and feel free to speak. They really appreciate talking to those doing and implementing as opposed to ‘advisors and consultants’. We also have things to learn from them and they are in a position to avoid our mistakes. I hope our plea to plan waste infrastructure on a large scale to avoid piecemeal sewerage systems, plan sensitively for growth in the mountains even though they are so much cooler at 9000ft and to please use solar power now, given its their most abundant energy source in the long term, features in their emerging Plan and policies!

What's been happening in planning...at a glance

Appeals submitted to the Planning Inspectorate	17
Appeals started	23
Appeals determined	12
Appeals successfully defended	6
Statutory submissions received	1,150
Statutory submissions determined	1,103
Neighbours notified	3,746
Representations received	1,394
Consultations issued	3,023
Conditions imposed	3,555
Enquiries for planning advice	291
Enforcement complaints received	180
Enforcement cases opened	138
Enforcement related site inspections	239
Enforcement notices served	2
Enforcement cases closed	184

Statistics taken from 1/10/21 to 31/12/21

Planning position statement

An update to the Planning Position Statement was approved at Planning Committee in April.

It seeks to 'build back better, greener and more local' as we emerge from the Pandemic and deliver on high-level targets in our Corporate Plan for nature recovery, climate action and a national park for all. It is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications both by the SDNPA and local authorities acting on our behalf through hosted arrangements.

The Update sets out three sets of actions:

- **Planning process:** we will work pro-actively with small and micro businesses in our three key sectors of farming, forestry and tourism particularly when they are applying for grants or funding that must have planning permissions in place prior to submission of their full funding application.
- **Financial factors:** Free pre-application advice for a number of developments including small scale renewable projects
- **Policy interpretation:** Firstly, we will continue with the flexibility on marketing requirements for change of use applications set out in the original statement. Secondly, we will allow some market housing on rural exception sites to encourage more of these schemes to come forward and thus increase the delivery of much needed new affordable homes in the National Park.

Breathtaking views of countryside are restored



A picturesque view of the National Park has been restored thanks to the undergrounding of electricity infrastructure.

The £150,000 programme of works by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN), which started in late summer of last year, has been completed and restores an historic view from the medieval Hampshire market town of Bishop's Waltham (*before view below*).

The site had been proposed by local stakeholders as having the potential for visual improvement through the removal of the overhead network.

The project – carried out across land on the Franklin, Dean and St Clair's Farms – has removed a one-kilometre section of overhead cables and supporting poles, replacing them with modern, robust underground cabling and providing the many people who use the local footpaths with an uninterrupted view across the local countryside.

Kim Wilkie, from Franklin Farm, said: "SSEN has made a big difference to



the landscape and bridleways at this entrance to the National Park. The poles and lines have all gone and the trees are now allowed to grow uninterrupted."

Veronica Craddock, who leads landscape and green infrastructure for the National Park, said: "This valuable work by SSEN has restored the breathtaking views across this part of the South Downs National Park.

"Many people will now be able to enjoy the uninterrupted landscape from footpaths and bridleways, whilst our wildlife will enjoy the new areas of tree growth which were previously trimmed under the overhead lines."

Help SSEN find new areas of the National Park where undergrounding overhead lines could improve the landscape for both people and nature by nominating them using this [online form](#).

Ten questions with...



This edition we catch up with Sabrina Robinson, Senior Development Management Officer.

Three words that sum up your job in planning?

Problem Solving, Project Management, Communication

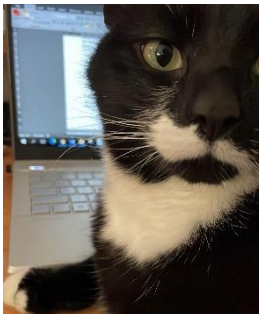
Okay, so what's your role at the National Park?

My role is to determine planning applications that are submitted for a range of developments that include housing, commercial and I have been known to do the odd minerals and waste application.

What appealed to you about working in planning?

I fell into the role of planning. I saw my previous job as monitoring and compliance officer advertised and the draw was to work in the National Park. Throughout my time in this role I became very interesting in planning applications and started working towards becoming a planner. I find the problem solving within the planning applications, as well as working with different people every day, really interesting. I would say my passion topic would be Minerals and Waste and then commercial/agricultural applications.

Can you describe your typical day?



Sign on to work, go through and deal with emails with a cup of coffee, then work on various planning applications and appeal statements. When I am working from home I usually have the assistance of Timothy the cat.

Best thing about working in planning for a National Park?

My colleagues and advocating for something that doesn't have a voice.

What do you love about the South Downs National Park?

I love the varied and peaceful landscapes which I am lucky enough to see both in my job and also in my spare time.

Currently reading/watching?

I am currently reading The Witcher and re-watching The Crown.

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Pizza

Who inspires you?

My Nan, she grew up during the Second World War and the aftermath and worked very hard to be an independent woman and put herself through a course for typing and secretary work at Pitman's College so that she could work independently and buy her own place. I admired her worth ethic and her values and it has always inspired me to work hard and to continue with my education.

Describe your perfect day (when not working, of course!)

Perfect day would be to wake up, feed the very hungry cats, grab a coffee, sit down and do my daily requirements on World of Warcraft, break for lunch for a walk along the seafront, back to the flat to play with the cats for a bit, then depending on the day I will either play another game for the evening or do Mythic Dungeons and Raiding on World of Warcraft.



Dates for diary – Planning Committee

The next Planning Committee meetings will be held on 12 May, 9 June and 14 July.

You can watch the meetings on-demand for up to six months after the meeting through our [webcasting portal](#).

You can look at previous and upcoming agendas on the website [here](#).

Picture credits

- P1 - Silver-studded blue butterfly by Nigel Symington
- P4 – Goodwood Estate
- P5 right – Anne Purkiss
- P7 top – Rudiger Nold