

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**  
Date **19 July 2022**  
By **Grants Officer**  
Title of Report **South Downs National Park Trust: Annual review of the Sustainable Communities Fund**

**Note**

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**Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. Receive the year – end position of the Sustainable Communities Fund provided by the South Downs National Park Trust**
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**1. Background and Summary**

- 1.1 The SCF is a rolling fund established to provide grants to community and voluntary groups, social enterprise organisations and businesses for ‘not for profit’ projects. Projects should take place within the National Park or within 5km of the boundary where there are strong links to park outcomes. To ensure proper scrutiny and well informed decision making an advisory panel, chaired by an SDNPA Member, advises on bids for funding between £2,000 - £10,000. [SCF - South Downs \(southdownstrust.org.uk\)](https://southdownstrust.org.uk)
- 1.2 In 2018 the National Park Authority agreed to transfer the Sustainable Communities Fund balance to the South Downs National Park Trust who fundraised to match the amount. This was successful and £331,390 was invested in an endowment fund overseen by the Trust Investment panel. Both the Authority and the Trust are recognised as founding patrons of the fund in perpetuity. This report is provided by the Trust as part of the funding conditions imposed by the Authority.
- 1.3 The return from the endowment is used to run the annual grants programme whilst the remainder is reinvested so that the endowment can grow.
- 1.4 The Sustainable Communities Fund re-opened to new applications from late summer 2021 having been paused in 2020 due to Covid. Two panel meetings have been held for larger grants over £2,000 and three application rounds took place for small grants under £2,000.
- 1.5 Covid continues to impact community groups which may have contributed to a smaller number of applications this financial year. Some volunteer-led groups are only recently beginning to meet again to generate the match funding and local support required for an application.
- 1.6 A refresh of the Sustainable Communities Fund is currently being planned for implementation next financial year. This aims to clarify the current criteria, reflect the changing context of internal and external funding as well as consider new practices in the wake of the pandemic. A re-launch in the next financial year can be promoted through staff and external communications to generate interest in the grant fund.

1.7 The fund draws an annual budget of £35,000 from the return on the endowment. Underspend continues to be invested and a reasonable request can be made to draw a larger sum to support high quality projects where this would exceed the budget.

1.8 In 22/23 the NPA made a contribution to the SCF of £25k.

## 2. 2021-22 Grant Giving

2.1 The SCF has committed £22,366 to six new projects across the National Park and the surrounding boundary. The projects are listed with a brief description in Appendix I along with a map showing the allocations and second map showing all allocations throughout the life of the fund.

## 3. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	No
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	No
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Not applicable to content of this report, but each grant application is scrutinised for value for money.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	To be eligible for a grant applications must deliver towards a PMP outcome.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	N/A
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	N/A
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	N/A
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes – as the subject matter of the report is an update on projects and funding no specific issues arise.  The Trust is required to ensure that any arrangements it makes for the provision of future grant funding is compliant with the Authority's enhanced equalities obligations
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	No
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the	No

<b>Implication</b>	<b>Yes*/No</b>
proposal?	
Are there any Data Protection implications?	No
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	No – The Sustainable Communities Fund promotes these principles in the projects it supports.

#### **4. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision**

- 4.1 There are no specific risks associated with the subject matter of this report. Individual applications are scrutinised to ensure appropriate management of the project funded.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
The return on the endowment investments could reduce due to changes to the economy	Possible	Major	The investment is a medium risk portfolio and is reviewed regularly by the Trust's investment committee, which includes investment professionals.

### **MIRIAM SWAN**

#### **Grants Officer**

#### **South Downs National Park Trust**

Contact Officer: Miriam Swan

Tel: 01730 819223

Email: [Miriam.swan@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:Miriam.swan@southdowns.gov.uk)

Appendices:

1. Sustainable Communities Fund Project List
2. Map of grants given 2021-22
3. Map of all SCF grants given

SDNPA Consultees Director of Countryside Policy and Management

External Consultees None



**I. Sustainable Communities Fund 2021-2022 Grant Allocations**

**I.1 Reinterpreting the Marsh – Eastbourne, East Sussex - £5,950 grant towards total project cost of £50,800**

Organisation: Look then Leap CIC

Outdoor workshops on common marshland with West Rise School and local community groups culminating in design and installation of an interpretation panel. Other partners include Arts Council England.

**I.2 Power Tools – Easebourne, West Sussex - £2,997 grant towards total project cost of £5,992**

Organisation: Friends of Easebourne Parish

Power Tools for enhanced footpath clearance and other public spaces around the parish.

**I.3 Newton Valance Pond Restoration Project – Newton Valance, Hampshire - £955 grant towards total project cost of £3,636**

Organisation: Newton Valance Toad Patrol

Improvements to pond to improve oxygen levels for migrating toads. Part-funded by the SDNP Area Ranger Team.

**I.4 Petersfield Walking Festival – Petersfield, Hampshire – £1,345 grant towards total project cost of £5,174**

Organisation: Petersfield Walking Festival

A walking festival including 46 walks taking place across eight days 20<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The grant has contributed to the costs of creating the event booking portal, fees, insurance and PPE. Petersfield Walking Festival

**I.5 Roots to Resilience – Stanmer, Brighton and Hove - £9,704 grant towards total project cost of £19,409**

Organisation: Samphire CIC working with Hearts and Flowers and Stanmer Organics

A new polytunnel housing stock nursery for organic flowers for customers to pick their own rather than buy imported cut flowers. Delivery of up to 16 sessions with groups adversely impacted by Covid-19 and with low level access to outdoors. Sessions will promote organic flower growing and awareness of South Downs wild flowers including instructor-led walks within the National Park and indoor activities for participants with restricted mobility.

**I.6 Village Information Boards – Singleton and Charlton, West Sussex - £1,415 grant towards total project cost of £3,055**

Organisation: Singleton and Charlton Parish Council

Production and mounting of two oak information boards containing information about local history and landscape as well as a QR code to display local walk leaflets. Part funded by the Parish, local business and organisations.









