

# TRULEIGH HILL LOCAL LANDSCAPE PLAN

**A COMMUNITY-LED GUIDE  
TO IMPROVING THE  
LANDSCAPE FOR PEOPLE  
AND NATURE**

By and for businesses, farms, land owners, local residents, local authorities, planning authorities, visitors, existing and potential users of the South Downs Way, the Youth Hostel and the surrounding network of footpaths and bridleways



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Truleigh Hill is home to one of the highest communities within the South Downs National Park. It sits at 216 m above sea level north of Shoreham-by-Sea and is located on the South Downs Way National Trail (SDW).

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO PROTECT THE SDNP LANDSCAPE

**1.1** There are several businesses (in addition to the residential properties) which are based at Truleigh Hill, for example a boat builder, a livery yard, farmers, a telecommunications company and a café together with the YHA offering accommodation and educational opportunities. From the many vantage points along the South Downs Way there are stunning views of the sea and the surrounding countryside. Most people come to Truleigh Hill to enjoy the landscape. These range from the many regular visitors from the urban areas around the National Park to users of the South Downs Way travelling the length of the SDNP. Truleigh Hill Youth Hostel is a key focus for the local community and provides rare facilities for visitors at the top of the Downs. Whilst the backdrop and setting of Truleigh Hill in the Downs is dramatic and breath-taking, there are unique pressures on the landscape which affect its character, wildlife and beauty and hence how the landscape is perceived and experienced

**1.2** This **Local Landscape Plan** (LLP) describes the outcomes of many conversations, workshops, sessions and meetings which were undertaken by the Truleigh Hill Landscape Project Officer between 2018 and 2021. The purpose of this work was to develop with a wide range of stakeholders, an understanding of the issues they experience and to shape solutions to them into a coordinated landscape plan. It is hoped that in time this approach will help to restore the natural beauty of Truleigh Hill and re-engage people with the story of the area and its part in the landscape history of the South Downs.

Figure 1: The South Downs scarp slope at Truleigh Hill



© SDNPA/Sam Moore

Figure 2: Where to find Truleigh Hill in the South Downs National Park



### Working with Partners to protect the SDNP landscape

The National Park Authority does not have the statutory powers or resources to resolve all the issues identified during the consultation process, but through the creation of this plan will act as an enabling body to help convene partners around common goals (see Figure 3). The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the Planning Authority working with Horsham DC as host authority. It is also the responsible authority for Access land (Land notified under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000), and the South Downs Way Partnership and will, wherever possible use these statutory powers and levers to help deliver the LLP. Figure 3 shows the National Park purposes

Figure 3: National Park purposes



## DEVELOPING THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE PLAN (LLP)

1.3 Since 2018, with funding from the Rampion Wind Farm community fund, the SDNPA has been working with local people and visitors to develop the LLP. There are many visitors to the area and we wanted to capture both the views and feedback from people familiar with Truleigh Hill and also to engage with under-represented audiences and those individuals and communities who may experience barriers to accessing and enjoying the area. We also talked to the residents, and the business owners and farmers of Truleigh Hill to understand the day to day issues they experience.

### OBJECTIVES FOR THE LLP

1.4 The following **objectives** for the LLP emerged from this process:

- Enhance and reinforce the open downland character at Truleigh Hill;
- Enhance biodiversity, particularly by improving habitat connectivity across the project area;
- Improve the accessibility and experience of the Public Right of Way (PROW) network in the project area;
- Improve the management of vehicular access, movements and parking in the area;
- Work with landowners to consider ways to reduce the unintended impacts of outbuildings, fencing, clutter and unused structures;
- Produce landscape guidance and advice for planners and users of the planning service.

### OUTCOMES FOR THE PROJECT

1.5 The intended outcomes for the project which have emerged from this process are:

- Retelling the history and evolution of Truleigh Hill will lead to greater understanding of its value and place in the history of the South Downs;

- Greater understanding about Truleigh Hill and its landscape will create better decision making when changes in the landscape are being considered;
- Re-engaging with local people and the wide range of visitors to Truleigh hill will increase the sense of guardianship of the landscape and lead to changing behaviours around anti-social activities and actions and a sense of collective ownership.

**Figure 4: Scattered scrub along a historic track at Truleigh Hill**



**Figure 5: Volunteers working on the Youth Hostel Field – Truleigh Hill**



**Figure 6: Walkers and cyclists on the South Downs Way at Truleigh hill**







## PARTS OF THE LLP

The LLP is designed to be non-technical and accessible for a wide range of audiences. It comprises the following sections all of which can be accessed from [southdowns.gov.uk/truleigh-hill-local-landscape-plan](https://southdowns.gov.uk/truleigh-hill-local-landscape-plan)



### Truleigh Hill Summary Report (This document)

- Non-technical description of the project,
- Objectives and outcomes
- Recommended actions

### Guidance about the landscape

- Land Management Guidance
- Links to planning documents:
  - SDNP Local Plan
  - Shoreham Cement Works Local Area Action Plan
  - Sustainable Design SPD
  - Equestrian Technical Advice Note

### Technical Reports

- Landscape character
- Woodland opportunity mapping
- South Downs Way Report
- Maps of designations and landscape information
- Stakeholder engagement activity 2018-2021

### 'What's on' page

- Live information page for:
- Works and projects
  - Volunteering information and sign up
  - YHA info
  - Meet the Farmer
  - Countryside Code
  - Where not to Park
  - FAQs – answers to common questions



### VEHICLE ACCESS & USE OF THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**2.3** The South Downs Way is not a road but a restricted byway at Truleigh Hill. This means it is open for public use for non-motorised traffic only. Authorised motor vehicles including farm vehicles and residents cars may use it to gain access to land and property only. Use of the byway by other unauthorised vehicles occurs regularly and causes friction, congestion and erosion of the South Downs Way surface making it problematic for legitimate users. Large vehicles, for example, coaches visiting the YHA, have nowhere to turn at the Youth Hostel and have to go further along the South Downs Way byway to turn round. Excessive unauthorised traffic in this area impacts considerably on the experience of visitors and residents and there are concerns with public safety.

**Figure 9: The South Downs Way byway**



### LIMITED PARKING AND LOTS OF VISITORS IN CARS

**2.4** There are car parks at Mill Hill Nature Reserve, close to Shoreham and at Beeding Hill Five Ways (National Trust – see photo) at the top of the hill above Upper Beeding. Both have limited spaces and overspill car parking along the single track lane is commonplace. The YHA car park is intended for visitors to the YHA and when the site is busy can also be at capacity, which forces vehicles to park along the National Trail. The length of the lane between Five Ways and Truleigh Hill is alongside the South Downs Way with its many users on bikes, equestrians and walkers/runners. Parking along the narrow lane causes congestion which affects the many users of the SDW and others who have to walk /ride/cycle alongside parked cars and moving vehicles. Vehicles are often left in gateways and residential drives and can block access for residents, business users and agricultural workers. Vehicle clutter impacts on other users and their enjoyment of the views and the area.

**Figure 10: The Beeding Hill/Five Ways National Trust car park**



## WILDFLOWER CONSERVATION VERGES DAMAGED BY VEHICLES

**2.5** Frequent parking along and on the verges of the lane is causing damage and loss of areas of chalk downland verge. Collectively the verge areas provide a significant area for wildflowers, invertebrate habitat and food for pollinating species. The verges also contribute to the natural beauty and sense of place in the downland and demonstrate the importance of conservation management versus regular cutting for 'neat/amenity' style verges. The erosion and compaction of the verges due to traffic pressure affects the rural character of the lane and undermines the road construction affecting drainage patterns and access for users, many of which will be on foot or bicycle.

**Figure 11: Parking on verges at Truleigh hill**



## GRAZING MANAGEMENT FOR CHALK DOWNLAND

**2.6** The size of land parcels around Truleigh hill is much smaller than the surrounding downland and this creates a patchwork of different uses and management styles. Some of these areas could be brought into conservation management with the agreement of the landowner. Conservation grazing could be used in these areas to re-establish chalk downland to enhance nature recovery and bring the downland character through and along the South Downs Way. Consistent management of the landscape immediately around Truleigh Hill through appropriate grazing or cutting would contribute significantly to landscape character. There are also learning opportunities for schools and the wider community through locating grazing schemes alongside the National Trail and other prominent locations, for example, the YHA.

**Figure 12: South Downs shepherd**



**2.7** Horse keeping has unintentionally led to a number of associated impacts on the quality and visual appearance of the land at Truleigh Hill. The increasing number of horse shelters and out buildings within the open landscape and in some cases on the skyline of the downland break up views and affect the wild and open quality of the landscape. The management of horse grazing has over time led to a range of different fencing types being used to divide pasture which can affect views, be detrimental to soil health, biodiversity, and drainage and the overall fabric and pattern of the landscape.

### ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS

**2.8** It is unfortunate that illegal and antisocial behaviour are significant issues at Truleigh Hill. This impacts on the quality of experience for visitors to the area and for local residents and businesses.

- Off roading motorbike users are damaging some of the most highly sensitive and valuable habitat, for example, Beeding Hill SSSI.
- Inappropriate speeds of drivers and cyclists particularly on steep sections of the SDW track affect the enjoyment and safety of other users. This is of increasing concern given the increase in popularity and use of the YHA by families and community groups, children and visitors with special needs.
- Joyriding along bridleways in stolen cars happens periodically. The cars are raced and then burnt out.
- Regular and ongoing littering and fly tipping on the approach road to Truleigh Hill, along the South Downs Way National Trail, across farmland and in front of field entrance gates.
- Wilful damage to fences affecting livestock and security

**Figure 13: Damage to the downland by unauthorised vehicles**



## INTERPRETATION AND INFORMATION

**2.9** Many people fed back that they felt there was a lack of information and interpretation about Truleigh Hill, both online and on the ground. Of those surveyed, 80% said that they would like to see more schools using Truleigh Hill for educational purposes and more open access educational resources. There was a particular interest in nature trails, local history and heritage information and resources on wildlife conservation and habitats.

**2.10** Information about parking arrangements, accessibility, facilities, accessible signposted circular routes were also raised as important to visitors and would also assist local residents in addressing problems in advance, for example, parking.

**2.11** Interest groups at Truleigh Hill would like to explore the use of Near-Field Communication (NFC) technology to share educational resources and content about the area and habitats. This has been used successfully elsewhere in the SDNP eg 'Meet the Farmer' initiative.

**Figure 14: SDNPA 'Meet the Farmer' NFC based interpretation**



## LEARNING, ENGAGEMENT AND VOLUNTEERING

**2.12** Sustained community engagement will be an extremely important component in securing long term change and landscape improvement at Truleigh Hill. Also there are a wide range of stakeholders who visit Truleigh Hill for group events. Many of these groups would welcome the opportunity to do more. Previous groups have fed back that having Truleigh Hill on their doorstep is an invaluable asset that supports and contributes to treatment for a range of health conditions. Initiatives such as self-led schools programmes, health and well-being activities, engagement programmes for specific groups like the elderly, people with disabilities and young people could include vocational skills development, creative and arts based activities, local history and heritage or surveying biodiversity. Curriculum linked guided walks for schools and the possible development of flexible/drop in volunteer opportunities to complement other more formal groups, for example the Volunteer Ranger Service, and deliver long term habitat and landscape improvement works.

**Figure 15: 'Bike it wild' with Sustrans at Truleigh Hill**



## UNCERTAINTY AROUND PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

**2.13** Truleigh Hill has developed largely since the 1940's through a range of post war development following its use as a radar station in WW2. There is archaeology embedded in the surrounding landscape, but Truleigh Hill itself was open downland, a barn and the South Downs Way before the mid 1900's. Its character is very different to other downland settlements within the National Park because of its more recent history. There is nowhere else like it in the SDNP. There has been significant cumulative change in the landscape since 1940 onwards. Because of this more clarity is required for users of the planning system about recognising its unique character and the key features which contribute to positive character at Truleigh Hill.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS MASTS

**2.14** The installation of the radar station at Truleigh Hill during WW2 was the trigger point for further telecommunications equipment to follow as technology developed and there are now four masts in two locations on the hill, one of which is next to the SDW. It is possible that over time the range of equipment on them could be consolidated into fewer masts, but that is not currently planned. Where possible, the compounds and ancilliary equipment on the ground around the base of the towers could be screened or broken up in views by using scattered scrub plantings along verges and adjacent land. This is particularly important along the South Downs Way national trail.

**2.15** Some stakeholders would like to see the masts removed altogether and others see them as a land mark/ home marker. They are visible for miles around, from across the downs and beyond the National Park and are part of the history of the area.

**Figure 16: Contrasting character at Truleigh Hill**



**Figure 17: Truleigh Hill radio station c1947**



### 3. TABLE OF IDEAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations and ideas for Truleigh Hill have come from the engagement work and the advice and opinions of the various stakeholders. This list could form the basis for a community led plan for the area. The SDNPA will play its part based on its expertise, powers and resource, but to be successful, the plan will require strong engagement and support from a wide range of partner organisations.

Issue	Recommendations which could be taken forward by relevant partners working with each other	Priority	Comments and suggestions for taking forward
<b>Vehicle access &amp; use of the South Downs Way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Traffic calming and control measures, signage and public information at the YHA at the start of the restricted byway. Options could include CCTV, speed bumps, kent gap or entrance gate. Intervention must not impede farm vehicles or residential traffic</li> <li>■ Work with residents of Truleigh Hill, local farm, County Council and Sussex Police to implement stronger enforcement action for persistent offenders, (use of DISC system and CCTV ?).</li> </ul>		
<b>Limited Parking and lots of visitors in cars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Delivery of public information and behaviour change campaign to discourage parking on the verge areas</li> <li>■ Creation of temporary parking area in partnership with local landowner (could encourage more cars by mistake)</li> <li>■ Pre-booking system for parking and access – possible revenue, Community Interest Company ?</li> <li>■ Lack of public transport needs to be addressed to provide an alternative</li> </ul>		



Issue	Recommendations which could be taken forward by relevant partners working with each other	Priority	Comments and suggestions for taking forward
<b>Trees, hedges and scrub</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Phased removal of non-native tree species from the public realm.</li> <li>■ Replanting with native species.</li> <li>■ Improve woodland management to increase species/habitat diversity.</li> <li>■ Planting new scattered native scrub in priority locations to mimic existing character of hedges in partnership with landowners. These would provide habitat connectivity and support nature friendly farming. Should not block views or become dominant as a feature in the landscape.</li> </ul>		
<b>Wildflower conservation verges damaged by vehicles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Option to initiate conservation verge management at identified locations along the National Trail at Truleigh Hill. Schemes should be piloted with a view to roll out over a larger area if successful.</li> <li>■ Additional signage and sensitively designed preventative measures could be used, support delivery of public information and conservation verge management.</li> <li>■ Behaviour change campaign to discourage parking on the verge areas alongside the South Downs Way National Trail.</li> <li>■ Regular surveys and species monitoring should be employed to evaluate the successfulness of the pilot schemes, utilising volunteer surveyors where possible.</li> <li>■ Cut and collect mowing is a viable alternative to grazing for conservation management of chalk downland and species rich grassland. Hay cutting is another alternative. There are potential opportunities for training and apprenticeship placements for grassland conservation management if access to the right machinery can be arranged to support such a project.</li> </ul>		

Issue	Recommendations which could be taken forward by relevant partners working with each other	Priority	Comments and suggestions for taking forward
<p><b>Grazing management for chalk downland</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disseminate information to farmers and horse managers relating to good land management practice in protected landscapes.</li> <li>■ Work with landowners to minimise subdivision of fields within the landscape resulting from the use of stock and equine fencing.</li> <li>■ Remove redundant and unsightly fencing and standardise fencing especially alongside the South Downs Way National Trail.</li> <li>■ Review outfield structures which are prominent in the landscape and consider clusters or relocation to reduce impacts on the panoramic views and open downland character.</li> <li>■ Look to decrease stock densities or increase rotations, particularly with reference to equine areas, in order to reduce land damage as a result of poaching.</li> <li>■ Expand grazing at Truleigh Hill and raise public awareness with regards to chalk downland conservation, regeneration and preservation.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Anti Social Behaviours</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase high visibility signage at entrance points to problem hotspots, to inform riders that they are committing an offence. Regularly assess signage to ensure it is not being removed or damaged by riders.</li> <li>■ Pilot and evaluate the installation of covert trail cameras and CCTV at identified problem hotspots, to capture offending and identify offenders, so that enforcement action can be implemented (Use of DISC system).</li> <li>■ Work with partners including Sussex Police to disseminate information to local riders and initiate a behavior change campaign across the area. Look to engage offenders on site and co-produce solutions and alternatives in preference to enforcement action.</li> <li>■ Expand the local Neighbourhood Watch programme, so that a greater number of users of the South Downs National Park are capturing and reporting incidences of ASB within the park (in a safe way). This could include walking groups, horse riders, cyclists and local residents.</li> <li>■ Volunteer and community litter picking and community clean ups.</li> </ul>		

Issue	Recommendations which could be taken forward by relevant partners working with each other	Priority	Comments and suggestions for taking forward
<p><b>Interpretation and information</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Work with educational partners to develop educational resource packs and curriculum linked learning materials, which will be available to visiting schools, community groups and families. Develop a bank of equipment which can also be used to support environmental learning and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC).</li> <li>■ The production of short educational films in collaboration with local interest groups, focusing on the habitats and biodiversity at Truleigh Hill, which can be available to download on smart phones via NFC tags. Include elements which explore the inter-relationship between food production, land management and biodiversity value.</li> <li>■ The production of educational resources which share information about the history and heritage of Truleigh Hill, which can be made available to local visitors as hardcopies through the YHA and also electronically.</li> <li>■ Continue developing proposals for the production of downloadable educational content with existing stakeholders including Shoreham College, Esteem and Company Paradiso (Local Youth Organisations).</li> <li>■ Information about parking arrangements, accessibility, facilities, accessible signposted circular routes were also raised as important to visitors and would also assist local residents in addressing problems in advance, for example, parking.</li> </ul>		

Issue	Recommendations which could be taken forward by relevant partners working with each other	Priority	Comments and suggestions for taking forward
<p><b>Learning, Engagement and Volunteering</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sustained independent and self-led schools programs.</li> <li>■ Curriculum linked guided visits for schools delivered by community partners (Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT)/So Sussex).</li> <li>■ Health and Wellbeing focused activities to engage under-represented and disadvantaged groups with the natural environment and National Park, for improved health and wellbeing. Examples include the Bike it Wild project with Sustrans and SWT or Walks and Talks for the elderly with the Independent Lives project).</li> <li>■ Engagement programmes of specific user groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities and young people – individual projects could include vocational skills development, creative and arts based activities, local history and heritage or surveying and biodiversity.</li> <li>■ The development of an independent casual volunteer group for Truleigh Hill which can complement the work of the Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) and delivery longer terms habitat improvement works and landscape interventions.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Uncertainty around planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Disseminate information about this project with planning teams and Horsham District Council who provide delegated planning authority services to the SDNPA. Possibly through online workshop.</li> <li>■ Prepare land management guidance, materials palette, guidance on hedge, scrub and tree planting and links to other relevant planning documents.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Telecommunication Equipment</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop regular contact with the mast operators to understand any issues they experience.</li> <li>■ Potential for interpretation about the history of telecommunications at Truleigh Hill.</li> <li>■ Explore any opportunities which may exist for consolidating equipment and reducing the number of masts.</li> <li>■ Seek opportunities for scattered scrub and tree planting to reduce the up-close impacts from the mast compounds and service areas on the SDW.</li> </ul>		

## TRULEIGH HILL LANDSCAPE PLAN

## 4. NEXT STEPS

**4.1** This Local Landscape Plan (LLP) has been developed in partnership with a wide range of individuals, organisations and groups who have an interest in Truleigh Hill and its landscape. Through the sharing of experience, knowledge, ideas and problems it is hoped that the LLP will be a springboard to encourage the partners to coordinate and collaborate to take on some of these difficult issues.

**4.2** The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) will be supportive to these efforts wherever possible but in particular where the issues align with the **SDNPA Corporate Plan 22-23**. Such as; meeting the targets for nature recovery; climate action and the reduction of the carbon footprint of the National Park; also through targeting under-represented groups working to ensure that the National Park is for everyone to enjoy. The SDNPA, as part of its day to day work will also continue to host to the South Downs Way Trail Partnership and the team who look after the trail. Also the National Park Eastern Ranger Team will continue to work locally with volunteers, landowners and groups to achieve conservation projects on the ground. There are other initiatives such as **Farming in Protected Landscapes** (FIPL) which the SDNPA may also be able to assist with, depending on resources.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Rampion I Wind Farm Section 106 Community Fund
- All the stakeholders who gave their time generously to help develop this plan and to implement things on the ground; landowners, Businesses, local residents, visitors, and volunteers
- YHA Truleigh Hill who provide the ongoing local community resource and facilities
- Terra Firma Landscape Consultants who helped with the landscape analysis for the plan
- SDNPA Eastern Ranger Team who provide ongoing land management advice and a link between the Authority and local stakeholders
- Resources for Change LTD who worked with stakeholders to finish the plan
- Phillip Paulo the Truleigh Hill Landscape project officer 2018–2021





# TRULEIGH HILL LOCAL LANDSCAPE PLAN