

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**
Date **20 July 2023**
By **Performance and Projects Manager & Project Management Lead**
Title of Report **Q4 Corporate and Project Performance report 2022/23**
Note

Recommendation: **The Committee is recommended to receive and consider the Q4 Corporate and Project Performance Report 2022/23.**

I. Introduction

- I.1 The SDNPA considers it important as a publicly accountable body, to monitor its performance. The Policy and Resources Committee has terms of reference which include “To monitor and identify improvements arising from the outcomes and evaluation of projects identified by the Committee, audits, survey and other feedback and make recommendations as appropriate” and “To monitor and review the performance, including financial performance, of the Authority in the context of its business delivery, and the management and maintenance of the Authority’s assets in accordance with the Authority’s agreed budget, Corporate Plan and other approved plans, and make recommendations for changes as appropriate”.
- I.2 The committee also has “... oversight of bids for grant funding including to receive updates on the submission of bids for grant funding and the application of grants funds received”.
- I.3 Whilst the report calls on the committee to receive and consider the content of the performance report, the terms of reference for the committee include considering if the committee wishes to make any recommendations arising from its consideration of the report. Any such recommendations would be subject to a vote at the committee meeting.
- I.4 The purpose of this report is to update the Policy & Resources Committee on the Authority’s corporate performance during Quarter 4 (Q4) of 2022/23: 01 January to 31 March 2023.
- I.5 From Quarter 1 onwards, we will also provide Members with a quarterly update on the High-Level Targets – see section 2 below.
- I.6 This report also provides Members with a progress update for the actions from the **Annual Governance Statement** and the **Human Resources and Health and Safety report** (see sections 16 and 17). It also updates Members on **Grant Funding** during Q4 (see section 10). We report against PMP outcomes via the nine Corporate Plan priority areas (see below for detail).
- I.7 In this report, corporate and project performance information is being reported on together.
- I.8 The **SDNPA Annual Review 2022/23** reflects on the last year of Authority performance and notable achievements, found at Appendix 9 to this report.

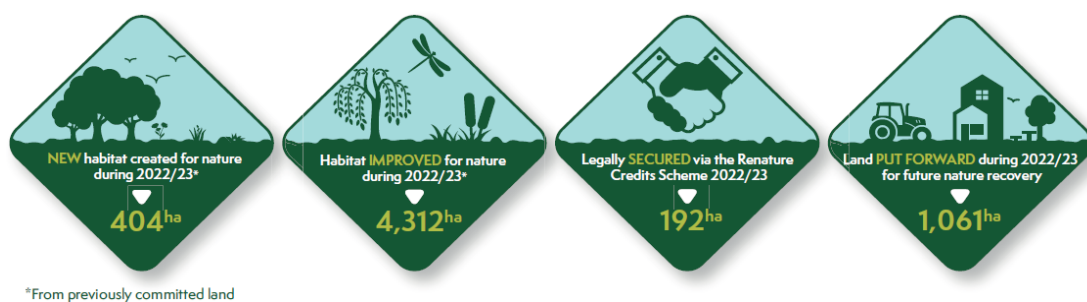
- 1.9 The Performance & Projects Team are in the process of reviewing and streamlining reporting processes for the Authority. We are proposing to change the way the Authority collates performance and project information and how this is reported to P&R Committee against the Corporate Plan. We ask P&R Committee to bear with us for Q4 reporting while we get new processes in place in the new report style. As such, there are no dashboards to present for Q4 for project progress, we hope to bring our new reporting system including new dashboards, to P&R in the near future.

2. Corporate Plan High-Level Targets: quarterly progress update

2.1 **HLT#1: To secure an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature by 2030 from a baseline of 25%.**

- 2.1.1 This year the South Downs Nature Recovery Programme has continued through a variety of mechanisms. Delivery successes have involved collaboration with a variety of partners and audiences including businesses, community groups, conservation organisations, local authorities, estates, education institutions, farmers, parishes and private landowners, see Figure 1 below.
- 2.1.2 For 2022/23, we have registered approximately **368 initiatives** on our 'Nature Recovery Log' which are contributing towards our Corporate Plan targets. Nature Recovery delivery is a long-term process ranging from first identifying a potential site, through habitat improvement and creation and ultimately towards quality nature recovery having been achieved.

Figure 1



- 2.1.3 **404ha of habitat creation** has progressed through key initiatives including Beelines, and Nature Based Solutions projects through the creation of new ponds, wildflower meadows and a farm restoration scheme.
- 2.1.4 **4,312ha of habitat improvements** have primarily progressed via FiPL funding, Trees for the Downs and the Changing Chalk project led by the National Trust along with SDNPA led and externally led projects at SSCP, Grandfather's Bottom (located at Butser Hill) and Lullington Heath.
- 2.1.5 Work has included management of grass verges, chalk grassland management, conservation grazing, tree planting, scrub management, field margins, woodland management, hedge gapping up, removing non-native species and deer management practices including fencing. Although action has been taken, it will take (in some cases) many years for quality nature recovery to be realised.
- **Estimated 16,383 trees** planted covering approximately **98ha** as part of Trees for the Downs initiative (2022/23)
 - **Ponds: 14** created/restored/maintained (2022/23)
 - **Estimated 24.5km** of hedgerow restored/created during 2021/22 to 2022/23

- 2.1.6 The above data should be considered in light of the follow factors:
- 1) all hectare figures are estimated on best available information. this includes where the recorded initiative maybe based on the site or field rather than the actual action for nature.
 - 2) hectares **Put Forward for Nature Recovery** represents land set aside with the intention of nature recovery - the full number of hectares may not be realised for nature recovery
 - 3) hectares where **Habitat has been Improved for Nature** means that work to improve the quality of the habitat has been actioned, a condition assessment would be required to determine overall condition, this could take many years to realise.
 - 4) for **New habitats Created for Nature** – new habitat has been created but may take years to realise its full potential for nature
 - 5) long term monitoring and verified condition assessment is necessary to ensure nature recovery has happened.
 - 6) The Corporate Plan Nature Recovery targets are cumulative which means some years may demonstrate more progress than others. There is also likely to be ongoing activity, beyond the initial year of interventions, for many initiatives.
 - 7) These figures represent the delivery mechanisms that SDNPA currently has direct control/ involvement with. There will be much more being delivered in the National Park by Partners, Farmers, members of the public etc that is not reported here.
- 2.2 **HLT#2: Maintain, enhance and/or restore existing key sites, habitats and species.**
- 2.2.1 **Habitat condition:** Rapid habitat condition assessments have now been agreed for Chalk Grassland and Heathland. The Biodiversity Officer has developed a survey schedule to cover 12 sites across 3 areas of chalk grassland habitat during Summer 2023. This work will complement the Chalk Grassland surveys completed through the Changing Chalk Project and will contribute to the evidence base for the condition of chalk grassland within the SDNP and start to quantify the effectiveness of different management activities. Heathland surveys will also take place and the Woodland Trust condition assessment methodology is expected later this year.
- 2.2.2 **South Downs Speciality Species:** Work to identify South Downs speciality species is nearing completion. A shortlist of species for long term monitoring is being developed by analysing the Natural England Red List Index species records from Hampshire Biodiversity Records centre and Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre against NBN Atlas species record data. The records have then been quantified by the extent to which each species is either entirely restricted or has a primary stronghold within the South Downs National Park. Final species will be selected in Summer 2023 for long term monitoring and species recovery programmes focussed on increasing abundance.
- 2.2.3 **Seven Sisters Country Park:** Action has been taken to restore the condition and biodiversity of key habitats.
- 2.2.4 Quality species-rich Chalk Grassland comprising 65.37ha and grazing marsh totalling 52ha have been a central focus with a management approach using cattle in a grazing rotation, as well as cutting by hand in hard-to-reach areas.
- 2.2.5 The previous grazing regime using sheep was allowing invasive Tor Grass to spread across the site, threatening the low sward required to support the rich array of chalk grassland species. Cattle will eat Tor grass and are already beginning to tackle this threat.
- 2.2.6 Semi Improved Grassland, comprising 101 hectares has been rested for another year as this was previously overgrazed with sheep and supported little biodiversity. This resting period is allowing nature to recover and large populations of mammals, birds, and reptiles to establish.
- 2.2.7 The first PAI survey has been commissioned to assess to quality of these chalk grassland patches and inform the future management and expansion of these patches across the park.
- 2.3 **HLT#3: South Downs National Park Authority to reduce its carbon footprint by 150 tonnes per annum in line with the 2030 net zero target.**

Table 1

Year	SDC ONLY Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO ₂)	% Change on previous year
2022/23	241.88	- 4.73%
2021/22	253.35	Baseline

- 2.3.1 Since 2021/22 there has been a slight reduction in gas, electricity and water consumption in the South Downs Centre due to the continuing implementation of the new ways of working project, allowing staff to only spend 50% of their working time in an SDNPA office. This reduction can also be attributed to the post COVID re-opening of the area offices to non-area staff as staff can now choose to work from one of the three area offices instead of travelling into Midhurst. Sadly, as these buildings are all leased and serviced by shared utilities, we are unable to obtain data from the landlords.

Table 2

Year	SDNPA Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes CO ₂)	% Change on previous year
2022/23	283.01	+ 6.17%
2021/22	266.57	Current baseline (to be updated Q4 2023/24)

- 2.3.2 However, there was an increase in emissions from the SDNPA as a whole (see Table 2) predominantly due to the first phase of refurbishment works ending at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) site. Emissions are expected to increase into 2023/24 as the Foxhole Cottages are completed. Works to be undertaken - such as the retrofitting of buildings, solar panel installation and nature recovery of key habitats at SSCP (particularly wetland) – are expected to mitigate against the emissions increase.
- 2.3.3 There was also an increase in the fuel usage from the SDNPA fleet as more people came back into the office following the COVID closedown. The redistribution of vehicles following the closure of the Wealden Heath office has also played a part in this increase, for example, one car that was put into the pool in the South Downs Centre was used more in that first month than the previous 4 months.
- 2.3.4 For future reporting, we will still report against the SDC baseline (see Table 1) but will also set a new baseline for SSCP and the SDNPA as a whole at end of Q4 2023/24 once most major works have been completed.
- 2.4 **HLT#4: 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019.**
- 2.4.1 In 2021/22 we commissioned Small World Consulting (SWC) to undertake a carbon baseline assessment for the SDNP. Utilising multiple datasets, the assessment provided a comprehensive review of the carbon footprint of the SDNP (and other National Parks) across key sectors to help us understand the implications for our Net Zero targets.
- 2.4.2 Across all 6 target categories (Land Use and Land Use Change Forestry (LULUCF) CO₂ and Non-CO₂, Travel, Non-food shopping, Food and Drink and Energy-only greenhouse gases) the SDNPA carbon baseline is **2,076,667 tCO₂e**.
- 2.4.3 Measurable progress towards the net zero target is currently possible for 2 of the target categories – LULUCF CO₂ and Non-CO₂ – which relate to carbon sequestration through tree-planting. Progress is calculated by counting the total, verified carbon savings achieved from accredited planting schemes under the Woodland Carbon Code. Additional Carbon Codes such as the Hedgerow Carbon Code and other verifiable reporting mechanisms are

being developed and we expect to report on a greater number of schemes in coming years along with analysis of new Land Use and Land Use Change Forestry (LULUCF) data provided by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero.

- 2.4.4 A number of large-scale woodland planting projects including new woodland planting and woodland pasture are in development within the SDNP; and progressing through the planning/approval stages. For 2022/23 this includes schemes on the Goodwood Estate and at West Dean Estate in the central wooded Downs. These schemes are being taken forward as part of the Woodland Carbon Code. Overall, these two schemes will **create 250 hectares** of new woodland planting. Once planting is underway, these will contribute to sequestering and storing more carbon - and the overall land-use based targets for 'Net-Zero by Nature'.
- 2.4.5 Note: The current Land Use, Land Cover Change and Forestry (LULUCF) targets within the SDNPA Carbon baseline assessment are **500 Hectares per year**. The two schemes progressing on the Goodwood and West Dean estates equate to 50% of the annual target for woodland creation. The two schemes represent a contribution of **3% towards the overall 2045 Net-Zero Target**.
- 2.4.6 These schemes take time to realise and we anticipate larger numbers in coming years which will accelerate progress towards the overall target.
- 2.4.7 The launch of the woodland opportunity mapping platform this quarter, will help to identify areas with the best potential for new woodland planting across the National Park. Alongside helping to deliver our Nature Recovery targets, it will also help to plan and design good woodland planting schemes that help us deliver carbon reductions and meet the Net-Zero target for the National Park.
- 2.4.8 The Farm Carbon project which began in 2021 sought to increase understanding of farm carbon budgets and how soil management and soil quality can influence carbon emission and sequestration. The project is now at a stage where farms have a baseline and it is expected that greater use of cover and forage crops, soil management and cropping rotations will also have a measurable impact on carbon sequestration over coming years.
- 2.5 **HLT#5: Increase the diversity of visitors to, and those engaging with, the South Downs National Park.**
 - 2.5.1 A number of projects delivered against this target during Q4 including: a walks programme for Carers held monthly walks with around 30 participants in total. The Timescape project continues to connect those experiencing loneliness and social isolation to the National Park 12 participants have attended 5 out of 12 sessions at Amberley Museum.
 - 2.5.2 We have been expanding our Writing Our Legacy programme to cover areas in Hampshire. We have started work with Climate Museum UK to deliver training and development activities for teachers, schools and museums in using creativity to help people understand and engage with climate and biodiversity issues. Current aim is to run the project from May 2023 – March 2024.
- 2.6 **HLT#6: Devise impact measure for direct engagement.**
 - 2.6.1 A Theory of Change Process has been completed. An action plan is in place. It is anticipated that new measures with baselines will be in place for the development of the new Partnership Management Plan in 2024/25 and its associated Corporate Plan. The measure for direct engagement will be part of that set of measures.
- 3. **Priority area 1: Nature Recovery**
 - 3.1 The **Call for Nature Sites (C4NS)** initiative was launched in November 2021 to stimulate interest and sites to support the South Downs Nature Recovery ambitions. At the time, this generated 77 Expressions of Interest. 41 initiatives have been or are currently being progressed largely through Beelines, Trees for the Downs or the ReNature Grant. A further 17 are “amber” which means they are more complex to deliver. The remainder did not qualify.

- 3.2 As an example of action undertaken in 2022/23, we have tracked a total of up to an estimated **312ha** of habitat creation from the C4NS initiatives; the Trees for the Downs schemes alone equate to approximately **3,000 trees**.

This has been delivered through a variety of audiences/ stakeholders including 11 Parish Councils, farmers, private landowners, conservation groups and colleges. A couple of large estates/ private landowners are progressing via the Nature Based Solutions route.

- 3.3 Ten ongoing projects that are working towards the Nature Recovery priority were delivered in Q4.

Ongoing projects:

- **Changing Chalk - Dew Ponds:** this project is 15% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Changing Chalk - Grazier Post:** this project is 25% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Cut and Collect:** this project is 66% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Grandfathers Bottom, Butser Hill:** this project is 50% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Hampshire Hedgerows:** this project is 75% complete and **green RAG**.
- **On Course to Flail:** this project is 60% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Rampion Monitoring:** this project is 40% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Seven Sisters:** this project is 98% complete and **green RAG**.
- **TAP (The Aquifer Partnership):** this project is 60% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Wealden Heath SAMM:** this project is 100% complete and **green RAG**.

4. **Priority area 2: Climate Action**

- 4.1 Highlights delivering progress towards our HLT target include:

SDNPA have worked towards developing a shared baseline and methodology for monitoring progress toward Net-Zero. The South Downs National Park Authority are currently piloting the work prior to roll out across the other UK National Parks.

- 4.2 The SDNPA has been supporting the PeCAN 'Whole House' Retrofit Project with match-funding since June 2021. The principal delivery partner is Petersfield Climate Action Network (PeCAN), an environmental community group with a mission to help Petersfield and surrounding villages reduce carbon emissions and protect nature. The overall grant for the delivery of the project was £750K. The £33,000 of match funding from SDNPA enabled to secure a project co-ordinator to effectively direct this inward investment. It also supported PeCAN to extend the scope of volunteer capacity within Parishes and local groups to enhance community resilience to climate change. The project is just coming to the end of its 2 year funding.
- 4.3 In October 2022 Ouse Valley Climate Action was awarded £2m from the National Lottery Community Fund, aiming to make the region a national pioneer in tackling the climate change emergency.

- 4.4 Six projects are delivering against the Climate Action priority area in Q4.

Ongoing projects:

- **Carbon Project:** this project is 66% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Ouse Valley Climate Action:** this project is 100% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Ouse Valley Climate Action (delivery):** TBC
- **PeCAN:** this project is 100% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) for Schools:** this project is 95% complete and **green RAG**.
- **WeCAN:** this project is 45% complete and **green RAG**.

5. **Priority area 3: A National Park for All**

- 5.1 Q4 saw the return of the Dark Night Skies Festival, held from 4-17 February, incorporating 6 large in-person events including nocturnal wildlife walks and stargazing parties. Over 2,128 people the in-person events with a further 560,000 people engaging digitally.
- 5.2 Across the Park, 17 young people attended 4 South Downs Youth Action (SDYA) sessions in Q4. The activities they have completed are hedge laying, hay cutting and litter picking. In total, 72 young people have benefitted from 25 SDYA days this year.
- 5.3 Work has also been focussed this quarter on delivering our new website hubs. The Nature Recovery hub is now available, other hubs (community, access and walks) will be live by the end of Q1 2023/24.
- 5.4 Twenty seven projects that are working towards A National Park for All priority area were delivered in Q4. These include 17 ongoing projects, 6 new projects that started in Q4 and 4 projects that are now complete.

New projects for Q4:

- **Climate Museums UK:** this project is 5% complete and **green RAG**
- **Conservation Conversations:** this project is 5% complete and **green RAG**
- **Deer Proposal:** this project is 5% complete and **green RAG**
- **Edgelands:** this project is 5% complete and **green RAG**
- **Timescape 2:** this project is 25% complete and **green RAG**
- **Walk the Chalk:** this project is 10% complete and **green RAG**

Ongoing projects:

- **Archaeology Walks Programme:** this project is 85% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Artist in Residence SSCP Heritage Coast:** this project is 90% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Beggars Bush Walk For All, Community Nature Area:** this project is 30% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Carers in Nature:** this project is 25% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Centurion Way:** this project is 19% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Communities in the South Downs:** this project is 60% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Community Travel Grant Pilot:** this project is 75% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Egrets Way- Phase 5:** this project is 99% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Egrets Way- Phase 6:** this project is 50% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Footsteps App:** this project is 70% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Iron Age Build at Butser:** this project is 55% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Miles without Stiles:** this project is 95% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Portraits of the South Downs:** this project is 50% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Project Thrive (Allen Gallery):** this project is 10% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Setting the Standard:** this project is 70% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Shifting the Gaze (extended):** this project is 50% complete and **green RAG**.
- **We See You Now: Legacy Project:** this project is 40% complete and **green RAG**.

Completed/closed projects in Q4:

- **Active Access (Newhaven Travel Hub)**

- **Community Wanderings**
- **The Forest: Stop Gap Dance**
- **Wriggle Room**

6. Priority area 4: Rural Economy

- 6.1 In Q4, Brighton and Hove CC WEP, or City Downland Plan, was endorsed by P&R Committee on 23rd February 2023. SDNPA now have 8 approved WEPs with a further four estates with scheduled Member Site Visits in the pipeline and one estate that is at Stage 4 of their WEP Journey.
- 6.2 Our South Downs business network has grown to 152 members by the end of 2022/23, with 540 businesses signed up to the, now monthly, newsletter.
- 6.3 After a successful pilot with 19 businesses, the Green South Downs Sustainability Certification scheme is now open to all Our South Downs members. The scheme is a bespoke sustainability award programme that helps businesses working in the visitor economy, food and drink or land-based sectors on their sustainability journey and get recognition for the work they are doing through Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards according to performance against the criteria.
- 6.4 Five projects have delivered towards the Rural Economy priority area in Q4. These include 2 new projects, 2 ongoing projects and 1 project that is now complete.

New projects for Q4:

- **ReNature West Dean:** this project is 5% complete and **green RAG**.
- **Revolving Fund Project:** this project is 75% complete and **green RAG**.

Ongoing projects:

- **South Downs Hub (SSCP):** this project is 75% complete and **amber RAG**.
- **South Holt Farm and Woodland:** this project is 75% complete and **green RAG**.

Completed/closed projects in Q4:

- **Green South Downs**

7. Priority area 5: Seven Sisters Country Park / South Downs Commercial Operations Limited (SDCOL) Performance

- 7.1 Although work had progressed at Foxholes, it was not yet complete. The expectation was that by mid-May 2023 the facilities block and Cottages 1 and 2 would be complete and Cottage 3 was expected to be completed, and therefore the completed accommodation handed over to SDCOL by the end of May 2023.
- 7.2 The Pump Barn had been outfitted during this period with a new AV system to support its role as a multi-use events space in the year ahead.
- 7.3 This quarter, 2 mobility scooters are now available at SSCP for members of the public to hire through a booking system. In addition, a six-seater golf buggy type vehicle has been purchased to help transport visitors to the holiday cottages. Events are continuing including those delivered through a partnership with East Sussex County Council social care for young people and families. These are all positive developments to improve accessibility at the site.
- 7.4 The landscape management undertaken by SDCOL continues to yield good results, particularly with the SSSI continuing to be in 'good and improving' condition. A rare plant species survey and a sward improvement survey, both with recommendations for management, have been awarded to local ecologists for visits in Q4 2023/24 with paperwork to be completed by July 2023. In addition, a bid for wetland habitat improvement plan by a local ecologist has been submitted to Natural England for their final sign off.
- 7.5 The SSCP Manager has been working with a land agent employed to assist the creation of a viable Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) for SSCP. This potential CSS agreement with Natural England looks to ensure that the condition of the SSSI will be 'improving'.

- 7.6 Grazing stock has improved this quarter with 54 cows and 13 ponies now on site with grazing focussed on the quality chalk grassland areas. The licence with Plumpton College has been extended to the end of November 2023 whilst we take stock of the needs and potential work required from the development of the new CSS.
- 7.7 SDCOL delivery against the KPIs is considered good, with all KPIs reported on being either on or ahead of target over the past year. See **Appendix 5** for detail on progress against the SSCP KPIs for Q4.
- 8. Priority area 6: Delivering the Statutory Planning Service**
- 8.1 All government targets for the operation of the planning system are being met. The Authority has achieved the following performance in Q4:
Majors 81.8%; Minors 73.7%; Others 84.3%
- 8.2 Local Plan: Review of the draft HEDNA is underway and Stage 1 of the LAA is now completed. The development of a detailed timetable for LPR up to Reg 18 consultation is underway. To support input in the LPR process, the Parish Priorities Statement template and request for information on Settlement Facilities and Open Spaces was sent to parishes.
- 8.3 There were two complaint decisions received from the Ombudsman in the reporting year. Both cases were closed after initial enquiries and no fault was found. Summary information about compliments, comments and complaints and the Ombudsman's investigations is at Appendix 7.
- 9. Priority area 7: Major Projects**
- 9.1 National Highways' Development Consent Order application for the M3 J9 proposal was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in December 2022. Officers are currently reviewing the application.
- 9.2 The 'call for projects' for the 22/23 CIL closed this quarter (3rd March) and the assessment period is now underway. Projects receiving funding this quarter include improving accessibility at Seven Sisters Country Park, a new public car park in Ditchling, new play and outdoor facilities at Droxford Junior School, West Ashling and Funtington District Hall refurbishment, improved access at Iping Common and delivering parts of Phase 2 of Centurion Way.
Total CIL spend this quarter:
£411,665.09 has been spent on 9 projects (from previous year's CIL allocations).
£3,015,308.45 total spend 2022/23
- 9.3 S106 projects funded this quarter include Centurion Way, nitrate monitoring and Solent Recreation Mitigation.
Total S106 spend this quarter:
£20,068.18 on specific obligations
£198,137.64 on 4 projects
- 10. Priority area 8: Generating Income**
- 10.1 At the end of the year total income generated across the Trust and Statutory Fundraising function totalled **£3,163,851**. This just below the figure forecast in Q3 predominantly due to the £35k secured via Lewes CIL for Ouse Valley Footpath improvements, which cannot be utilised as the EA have latterly self-funded it.
- 10.2 This is a significant result and includes £2 million secured for Ouse Valley Climate Action alongside funding for landscape scale projects, such as our LEI funding for Ebernoe Common and HLF development funding for "Downs to the Sea". It also includes funding via the South Downs Trust to continue our philanthropic grant funds (ReNature, Trees for the Downs and Beelines, alongside the new Dew Pond fund "Pounds for Ponds"), which will continue to support the SDNPA's Nature Recovery Ambitions over the next year.

10.3 During Q4 the Income Generation and Marketing Team paused new, large, statutory applications. This was due to the year-to-date success rate and the need to support the set-up of newly funded projects (i.e. OVCA Delivery Grant, Innovate UK Project, Downs to the Sea, Ebernoe LEI Project) and end of year close down/reporting on completed Grants (GBF SELEP Funding, HLF Hampshire Hedgerows, OVCA Development Project)

10.4 Trust activity for the full year was 23 Major Donor meetings, 60 Trust applications and 15 Corporate proposals.

11. Priority area 9: New Ways of Working

11.1 The MS Teams roadmap has been completed and is now in place following presentation to OMT in Q4.

11.2 A contractor has been selected and a contract is being finalised for staff EDI training to be delivered Q1/Q2 2023/24

12. Partnership Management Plan 2020-25 Performance Indicators Progress Update

12.1 The Partnership Management Plan Performance Indicators are reported annually (See Appendix 5). Many of the indicators rely on MEOPL indicator data provided annually by Natural England however in 2022-23, the full set of MEOPL data was not provided. Other datasets are also not necessarily available on an annual basis. Performance information has been updated where possible and commentary provided in Appendix 5.

13. Project Performance Reporting: Strategic Fund Implications

13.1 There is a balance of £284,226 unallocated in the Strategic Fund, this amount takes into account allocations made on existing projects up until 2027/28.

14. Annual Governance Statement

14.1 The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) 2021/22 detailed 5 actions for 2022/23. These are monitored and reported on quarterly. See Appendix 2 for progress on the Annual Governance Statement actions for Q4.

15. Human Resources & Health and Safety

15.1 The Human Resources & Health and Safety paper for 2021/22 detailed 8 actions for 2022/23. These are monitored and reported on quarterly. See Appendix 3 for progress on the Human Resources and Health and Safety actions for Q4.

16. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	Projects may come forward for approval in future. No further decisions are required as a direct result of this report.
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	There are no direct resource implications to this report, as the recommendations are to receive and review only.
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Value for money for individual projects and pieces of work are assessed at the development stage, midway through a project and at the end, through an evaluative process that is reported to this Committee. Setting aside a fund to support projects represents a positive return on investment as it enables projects to go ahead which might not otherwise.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	We have listed in the report and appendices which PMP outcomes and corporate plan objectives our corporate and project work link to

Implication	Yes*/No
Links to other projects or partner organisations	Where appropriate these are set out in the report.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	Please see the Climate Action section of this report which sets out high level targets around climate action.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	None
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes - Priority area three outlines the projects that have a specific focus on encouraging all people including those with protected characteristics to engage with and access the National Park. Projects across all priority areas are subject to an equalities impact assessment at the appropriate stage of their development and are monitored and adjusted accordingly. Any issues identified are highlighted within this report.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal??	None
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	None
Are there any Data Protection implications?	None
<p>Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5 principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living within environmental limits 2. Ensuring a strong healthy and just society 3. Achieving a sustainable economy 4. Promoting good governance 5. Using sound science responsibly 	No, not directly although during the development of the Corporate Plan, sustainability issues are included as part of the process. All projects will contribute positively to some extent to the delivery of Partnership Management Plan outcomes, all of which are aimed at delivering sustainability. We also consider sustainability issues as part of our project approval process.

17. Risks Associated with the Proposed Decision

17.1 Robust corporate planning and monitoring of performance are part of the mitigations for our corporate risk as detailed in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
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Unforeseen changes to the level of funding provided by relevant Government departments for future years	Likely	Minor	A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to relevant Committees on projects and the budget available along with a Corporate Plan which sets clear priorities to support delivery of Partnership Management Plan outcomes.
There may be some risks to our reputation if we are unable to provide match funding for some of our larger projects. This would also potentially reduce the types of funding we were able to apply for.	Possible	Moderate	<p>The main mitigation for this is to keep close scrutiny of the Strategic Fund and apply a rigorous prioritisation process when approving those projects that commit the SDNPA to significant funding over a number of years.</p> <p>Further mitigation for this risk is the work that will be carried out to generate income for the South Downs National Park and also potentially for the SDNPA.</p>

Liz Gent

Performance and Projects Manager

South Downs National Park Authority

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Appendices

1. Q4 Corporate performance 2022-23
2. Q4 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement update
3. Q4 2022-23 Human Resources & Health and Safety update
4. Q4 2022-23 Projects in delivery
5. Q4 2022-23 SSCP KPI
6. PMP Indicators 2020-25 progress update
7. Corporate Plan five year measures 2022-23
8. 2022-23 CCC (Compliments, Comments, Complaints) report
9. SDNPA Annual Review 2022/2023

SDNPA Consultees

Chief Executive; Director of Countryside Policy and Management; Director of Planning; Chief Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer; Legal Services, Interim Business Service Manager; Countryside and Policy Managers

External Consultees

None

Background Documents

[Corporate Plan 2020-25 year 3 action plan.](#)

Item 10 Appendix 1: Corporate Performance Report Q4 (January-March) 2022/23

Assist key for the RAG Performance column: Green = on track; Amber = slightly behind schedule; Red = significantly behind schedule

SDNPA Corporate Plan priorities	In Year 3 of our Corporate Plan we will:	Key data	Commentary	RAG Performance	Next steps and/or potential risks	PMP outcome(s) delivering against
1. Nature Recovery thematic area						
ReNature the South Downs National Park	Define a core nature network for the SDNP by end Q3 to inform Nature Recovery Networks (NRNs) and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)		Core Nature Network map for the SDNP is completed and available for internal use only on the Nature Recovery intranet page.	Green	Next steps: Promote internally as a resource on the intranet. Share with the LNRS Responsible Authorities at a suitable time.	Outcome 3: Habitats & Species
ReNature the South Downs National Park	Contribute to the development of approximately 2-4 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS)		The LNRS Regulations and Guidance were published on the 23 March 2023. This confirms NPAs along with LPAs (Local Planning Authority) as "Supporting Authorities", whilst the appointment of the Responsible Authorities is yet to be finalised with Defra. SDNPA continues to engage with our three local LNRS Responsible Authorities. We have also attended the national LNRS Stakeholder Engagement Group on behalf of National Parks England and the Defra LNRS and Protected Landscape meeting.	Green	Next steps: Continue dialogue with RAs re LNRS readiness and governance. Internally publish the core nature network for the National Park and share with RAs. Potential risks: Interpretation of the details of the Regs & Guidance. Resource/ capacity constraints affecting ability of SDNPA to engage effectively, but also lack of resources for RAs to develop LNRS.	Outcome 3: Habitats & Species
ReNature the South Downs National Park	Proactively deliver #ReNature through projects and initiatives using a variety of mechanisms.	Annual key data achievements Habitat created for nature: Total estimated area is 404ha Mechanism breakdown: Beelines 37ha ReNature Grant 4ha FiPL 5ha Pounds for Ponds 3ha Area team & volunteer work 16ha Nature Based Solutions 339ha Estimated length of hedgerow: 24.5km 14 ponds (restored or created) Habitat improved for nature: Total estimated area is 4,312ha Mechanism breakdown: FiPL (combined Yrs1&2) has contributed an estimated 3,735ha Changing Chalk 176ha SSCP 260ha (managed for nature) Trees for the Downs 99ha Lullington Heath restoration 6ha Grandfather's Bottom 9ha Area Team 27ha	<p>The South Downs Nature Recovery Programme continues through a variety of mechanisms. We have registered approximately 368 initiatives on the nature recovery log which are contributing towards Corporate Plan targets. The annual breakdown by mechanism is shown in the key data column</p> <p>Delivery has involved collaboration with a variety of partners and audiences including businesses, community groups, conservation organisations, local authorities, estates, education institutions, farmers, parishes and private landowners.</p> <p>192ha has been secured for nature through our Nature Based Solutions initiatives including work with Palladium. A further 1,061ha has been put forward for future nature recovery.</p> <p>In addition to the key data listed, there are 10 CIL/S106 initiatives that contribute towards nature recovery (ReNature) and a 35% average Biodiversity Net Gain on largest scale development sites.</p>	Green	Next steps: Continue to deliver action for nature recovery through multiple mechanisms, including through Nature based Solutions (NbS), BNG and FiPL. Continue to develop and invest in our ability to monitor and report on nature recovery effectively, including exploring the option of LandApp and One Planet platform for NbS. To review the Biodiversity Monitoring Framework to ensure it is fit-for-purpose for all our needs. To progress a Species Recovery strand as part of the overall Nature Recovery Programme. Potential risks: Resource (staff & budget) constraints affecting ability of SDNPA to take forward projects. The summer will see the new Strategy Lead Nature Recovery and Planning Ecologist starting in post. Unsuccessful funding bids. Investment if fit-for-purpose systems to support monitoring and reporting of nature recovery including field maps which will help with capturing and accuracy of data.	Outcome 3: Habitats & Species
Improve Core Nature in the South Downs National Park by ensuring all SSSIs in the South Downs National Park are in favourable condition	1) Define 'good condition' for each of the four key habitat types (chalk grassland, woodland, lowland heathland and wetland) and establish a baseline from the end of Q4 2) Improve the area/condition of the four key habitat types		There has been a delay from the Woodland Trust methodology and we are still awaiting their approved condition assessments. The Biodiversity Officer is working with the teams to assign the survey sites with the agreed condition assessments such as chalk grassland and heathland over the summer of 2023/24. Some of the Rangers will be involved if they are interested/ available, this enables them to also carry out some surveys in future without the Biodiversity Officer present potentially covering more sites. Natural England (NE) pointed us in the direction of the Biodiversity Metric surveys to use. These aren't rapid and would take more time. Further advice may be needed if these will be suitable	Amber	Next steps: Programme in a survey schedule to cover 12 sites across the 3 areas on chalk grassland. New Nature Recovery Strategy Lead will start in June 23 and they may be able to help with wetland condition assessment methodology. We are still working with Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) and Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) who are surveying sites for us also. We are getting positive feedback from the trials of the metrics trials. Potential Risks: We are still short on some staff and current new staff will need time to settle. Ranger time is fairly limited so this target is feasible even if ranger time is minimal.	Outcome 3: Habitats & Species
Better connect people with nature	Connect 50,000 people per year with nature through the #ReNature Campaign	2022/23: 15 press releases on Nature Recovery Total reach: 2 billion PR value: £1.3m Beelines PR led to more than 200 pieces of coverage for World Bee Day	2022/23 had a strong focus on ReNature success stories including Beelines.	Green	Next steps: Second ReNature Festival which will take place from 22-30 July 2023. Theme for this years' events and engagement is 'Take Action for Nature and Climate' which includes a pledge aimed at the general public.	Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences

Better connect people with nature	Target delivery of accessible natural greenspace through the #ReNature programme in areas where there is a deficiency of provision.		Data and evidence in the People and Nature Network (PANN) is still valid and this is feeding into the Local Nature recovery Strategy for Sussex. Green Spaces toolkit has been developed and was presented at Parish workshops in March. There has been one request for follow up from one of the workshops. Following on from the call for nature sites, a number of communities have initiated projects.	Green		Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience
2. Climate Action thematic area						
Work towards our Net-Zero target for the South Downs National Park	Work towards delivering emissions reductions through: 1) Nature-based solutions; working with farmers, foresters and other land managers and through greening the grey in development 2) Community based Net-Zero planning and projects 3) The launch of the Climate Change digital Resource Hub 4) Engagement with the launch of the 'Count Us In' campaign 5) Work with the Learning Network & South Downs Youth Action	PeCAN: 2 x webinars 90 attendees for webinar 1 on 'Home Retrofit' 60 attendees for webinar 2 on 'Solar Panels and Batteries' 58 new homeowners received retrofit information leading to 34 follow-up conversations about the project, and 18 confirmed sign-ups NEF have made £100k of capital funding available to homeowners who have received their Whole House Retrofit Plan. The project has supported 10 householders to make grant applications, with confirmation that 2 applications have already been approved.	PeCAN 2: Education and Outreach Project developed and funding agreement and MoU completed. Project to commence on the 1st April 2023 as a follow on to the PeCAN 'Super-Homes' retro-fit project Community Energy Pathway: CES have been developing a bid for Round 2 of the National Heritage Lottery Fund Climate Action programme, focussing on Petersfield/Winchester and the West of the National Park. Draft content of the CC Resource Hub has been developed. Application to join 'Race to Zero' was successful and confirmed by the secretariat in February of 2023. The public announcement is likely to be made later in the year. UK parks will also become UN Climate Exemplars and develop their reporting to comply with the International 'Carbon Disclosure Project' (CDP) standard. Funding bid to Innovate UK was successful, and the pilot project due to start on the 1st April 2023. It is one of thirty UK projects under the 'Pathfinder Places' programme. Plans for a national roll-out to the UK National Park family are also in development as part of a bigger Phase 2 bid for July 2023.	Green		Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience
Work towards our Net Zero target for the South Downs National Park Authority	Work towards delivering emissions reductions through delivery of a Sustainability Policy for the National Park Authority		A scheme of 'Invest to Save' works were presented to the NPA on 30th March 2023 for approval. These works include replacing the lighting in the SDC and SSCP office for LED units, new PV (photovoltaics) panels for the Memorial Hall and SSCP. Following approval at NPA these works will be completed (subject to Planning consent) in 2023/24.	Green	Next Steps: Awaiting outcome of various Planning applications for the changes to Listed buildings, no further plans in place in case of the applications being refused Potential Risks: Hand over of carbon reporting work complete but not tested. Possible errors in the reports.	Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience
Work towards our Net Zero target for the South Downs National Park Authority	Work towards delivering emissions reductions through the development of a localised offsetting option for the National Park	SDC emissions 2022/23: 241.88 tonnes Co2e - 4.73% SDNPA emissions 2022/3: 283.01 tonnes Co2e + 6.17%	SDC: Since 2021/22 there has been a slight reduction in gas, electricity and water consumption in the South Downs Centre due to the continuing implementation of the new ways of working project, allowing staff to only spend 50% of their working time in an SDNPA office. This reduction can also be attributed to the post COVID re-opening of the area offices to non-area staff as staff can now choose to work from one of the three area offices instead of travelling into Midhurst. Sadly, as these buildings are all leased and serviced by shared utilities, we are unable to obtain data from the landlords. SDNPA: There was an increase in emissions from the SDNPA as a whole predominantly due to the first phase of refurbishment works ending at Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) site. Emissions are expected to increase into 2023/24 as the Foxhole Cottages are completed. Works to be undertaken - such as the retrofitting of buildings, solar panel installation and nature recovery of key habitats at SSCP (particularly wetland) – are expected to mitigate against the emissions increase. There was also an increase in the fuel usage from the SDNPA fleet as more people came back into the office following the COVID closedown. The redistribution of vehicles following the closure of the Wealden Heath office has also played a part in this increase, for example, one car that was put into the pool in the South Downs Centre was used more in that first month than the previous 4 months. For future reporting, we will set a new baseline for SSCP and the SDNPA as a whole at end of Q4 2023/24 once most major works have been completed	Amber	Potential Risks: Hand over of carbon reporting work complete but not tested. Possible errors in the reports.	Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience

3. A National Park for All thematic area						
Be a representative and welcoming National Park for All, focusing on engaging currently underserved groups	Deliver South Downs Youth Ambassadors and Youth Voice		Youth Ambassadors have been invited to attend the Cairngorm Youth Climate Camp in August and support the microvolunteering elements of the renature festival. New Youth Ambassador recruitment on hold but will be resumed in the new financial year.	Green		Outcome 8: Creating Custodians
Be a representative and welcoming National Park for All, focusing on engaging currently underserved groups	Co-develop projects with organisations and individuals championing under-served groups accessing the landscape	<p>Writer in Residence at Seven Sisters project reached 106 creatives, artists and specialists and had 144 participants</p> <p>New products or commissions: 53</p> <p>Number of days of employment for artist, specialists etc.: 220</p>	Work continues to support Writing Our Legacy with delivering activities bringing together creative writing and the inspiration of the South Downs in Hampshire. Portraits of the South Downs has further developed content for the project website, including transport information and suggested walks in the Downs.	Green	<p>Next steps: Writer in residence Seven Sisters - Planning and delivery of a launch event in May 2023 at Seven Sisters to celebrate the project and the contribution of project participants. A funding bid has been submitted to cover costs of further work from April 2023 with a focus on connecting urban communities with the rural landscapes of the Heritage Coast through writing and walking</p> <p>Writing Our Legacy - A Poetry Room event is planned for June 2023, and a ranger led walk, in addition to ongoing conversations with Winchester Poetry Festival and Winchester City of Sanctuary to create some targeted co-designed and developed programmes for refugees in the area.</p> <p>Portrait of the South Downs - Filming for the project will start in May 2023.</p>	Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences
Be a representative and welcoming National Park for All, focusing on engaging currently underserved groups	Support the use of social prescribing and other mechanisms to connect people to the National Park for Health and well-being	<p>Timescape: 12 participants have attended 5 workshops at Amberley Museum since March 2023</p> <p>Carers in Nature: 3 walks have been delivered with around 30 participants in total.</p>	<p>Working with staff and service users to get Downs to the Sea engagement element of the project delivered through Chichester District Social Prescribers. We are delivering sessions to participants and 2 sessions to staff from this Primary Care Network. The staff include social prescribers, mental health support coordinators and health and wellbeing coaches from across the 4 surgeries in the Rural North of Chichester (Midhurst, Petworth, Loxwood and Pulborough). The second group is made up of Care coordinators, also across the patch.</p> <p>We have been supporting the Early Help Team by offering family days to support families to connect to nature at Seven Sisters Country Park.</p> <p>Timescape: Five sessions have been delivered at Amberley Museum. Engagement has been good and feedback positive.</p> <p>Carers in Nature : Monthly walks have been well attended and wordArt is being collected for the booklet due to be produced in November 2023</p> <p>Enableability: Delivered this quarters session</p>	Green	<p>Next steps: Timescape - deliver remaining 7 sessions at Amberley museum. Carry out evaluations. Begin delivery of 12 sessions at Butser Ancient Farm.</p> <p>Carers in Nature - a date has been arranged for training others to continue leading mindful walks once the project has finished.</p>	Outcome 7: Health & Wellbeing
Be a representative and welcoming National Park for All, focusing on engaging currently underserved groups	Connect with under-served groups through the Voices programme and our broad engagement programme	<p>Dark Skies Festival, 4-17 February: 6 large in-person events engaging over 2,128 people</p> <p>In person Parish meetings held in March: 13 people from 10 parish councils attended in East Sussex 19 people from 13 parish councils attended from West Sussex 27 people from 18 parish councils attended from Hampshire</p>	Video, audio and other content are being planned for ReNature Festival Q1 2023/24.	Green	<p>Next Steps: Discover National Park Fortnight in April 2023; Summer Engagement events with the Ranger Teams are being planned to commence in June</p>	Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences
Connect under-served groups to nature and the landscape through direct experience of the National Park	Deliver the travel grant scheme and explore new schemes to connect people to the National Park	5,830 young people have benefitted from grants this year	A total of 5,830 young people have benefitted from our grants for schools and colleges this financial year.	Green		Outcome 7: Health & Wellbeing

Connect under-served groups to nature and the landscape through direct experience of the National Park	Co-develop projects with organisations and individuals to empower/enable people from under-served groups to actively participate in/experience the National Park	<p>12 people attended a bespoke Archaeology walk and workshop session for Black and global majority participants at Highdown Hill.</p> <p>4 walks were delivered in Q4 at Cissbury Ring, The Caburn, Bignor Hill and Chanctonbury.</p>	<p>Portrait of the South Downs has further developed content for the project website, including transport information and suggested walks in the Downs.</p> <p>Set up the Edgelands Project which will work with 4 different groups of children/young people to develop new artistic outcomes, which are made in or linked to a South Downs National Park site.</p>	Green	<p>Next steps: Portrait of the South Downs - Filming for the project will start in May 2023.</p>	Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences
Connect under-served groups to nature and the landscape through direct experience of the National Park	Deliver a programme of Access infrastructure projects and National Trail management to improve connectivity and increase opportunities for active access	<p>730m of new cycle route along A31, Chilcomb.</p> <p>950m new multi-user Egrets Way Ph5 path (excludes 680m delivered 21/22)</p>	<p>Centurion Way Ph2: Construction of first section ongoing (West Dean-Singleton), due to complete May/June 2023. Prelim / enabling works ongoing for next section (Wellhanger Copse-Littlewood Farm), and funding secured at NPA for construction 23/24.</p> <p>SDW Chilcomb Link: Works completed.</p> <p>Egrets Way Ph5: Works completed.</p> <p>Egrets Way Ph6: Revised path design spec and ground stabilisation spec finalised and approved by Natural England (SSSI) and Environment Agency (Flood Risk Assessment Permit). Revised pricing and value-engineering ongoing and works programme to remobilise to site in May 2023.</p>	Green	<p>Next Steps: Centurion Way - continue enabling works; procurement for construction of next section to commence Q2; finalise legal agreements.</p> <p>Egrets Way Ph6 - Secure EA FRAP approval in May, construction re-commence May 2023.</p> <p>Potential Risk: Egrets Way Ph6 funding shortfall due to revised path specification cost</p>	Outcome 5: Outstanding Experiences
Encourage individuals, groups and communities to take action to help deliver Partnership Management Plan outcomes	Develop Youth Action & the Youth Action Fund and Micro volunteering	172 young people benefitting from 25 South Downs Youth Action days this year	<p>Youth Action Fund: another round of this brilliant grant scheme supported by Clarion Futures has just opened for applications with the deadline of 7 June 2023.</p> <p>South Downs Youth Action (SDYA): 17 young people attended 4 sessions between Jan and March. The activities they have completed are hedge laying, hay cutting and litter picking. One session with the western team, one session with the eastern team and two sessions in SSCP.</p>	Green		Outcome 8: Creating Custodians
Encourage individuals, groups and communities to take action to help deliver Partnership Management Plan outcomes	<p>1) Develop a digital community resource hub which promotes best practice and locally distinctive solutions, and provides communities with the necessary tools and advice to deliver community action</p> <p>2) Support and facilitate community action to enhance local assets to support under-represented groups to visit and use the National Park for wellbeing and enjoyment</p> <p>3) Support communities to create or restore nature and take action to mitigate or adapt to climate change, provide accessible greenspace for people's health and wellbeing/ sustainable communities</p>	<p>WeCan: 15 attendees at a network event in February</p> <p>167 people reached via the newsletter</p> <p>10 attendees at thermal imaging training</p> <p>3 presentations delivered</p> <p>15 parish councils and community groups engaged</p> <p>3 new groups started</p> <p>31 volunteers involved in activities</p> <p>8 new activities developed</p> <p>CitSD: 2 parishes have submitted CIL bids to support implementing their schemes</p>	<p>We have set up a pilot project with Climate Museum UK to deliver training and development activities for teachers, schools and museums in using creativity to help people understand and engage with climate and biodiversity issues. Current aim is to run the project from May 2023 – March 2024.</p> <p>Walk the Chalk has launched – artists are currently in dialogue with the project team and developing proposals for site specific installations.</p> <p>WeCan - Ongoing positive engagement</p> <p>Communities in the South Downs (CitSD) - A final draft of the catalogue has been produced by consultants. Draft guidance is being refined. Discussions with Cheriton and Fittleworth parishes re their proposed pilot interventions. Evaluation work has gone out to tender, returns are being assessed.</p> <p>Hubs on the website - Nature recovery hub available, other hubs, community, access, walks will be live by the end of June 2023.</p>	Amber	<p>Next steps: Climate Museum - Meeting with CMUK to agree timetable, contacts, audience and key opportunities. Planning and development of deliverables to begin.</p> <p>Walk the Chalk - Ongoing reporting by LYT Productions and Lewes District Council to partners on project progress.</p> <p>WeCan - climate literacy training due in September 2023</p> <p>PeCan - Start of schools outreach programme</p> <p>CitSD - Production of refined draft guidance and parish reports, workshops with Local Highways Authorities to agree process, develop schemes and gather baseline data for evaluation.</p> <p>Hubs on the website - due by end of June 2023.</p>	Outcome 9: Great Places to Live

4. Rural Economy thematic area						
Develop the 'Our South Downs' enterprise network	<p>1) Create a sustainable business network to help businesses work collaboratively, engaging with National Park Authority initiatives around Nature Recovery, Climate Action and A National Park for All where appropriate</p> <p>2) Deliver a new National Park bespoke business sustainability programme addressing climate change challenges and seeking carbon reduction of enterprise and visitors in the SDNP – e.g. by linking to nature recovery outputs such as tree planting</p>	<p>152 Our South Downs (OSD) Members</p> <p>540 businesses signed up to the Enterprise Newsletter</p> <p>£344.00 of income generated from e-card sales</p> <p>£20,000.00 income generation earned from South Downs Protector Initiative</p> <p>2 new businesses signed up to Visitor Giving</p> <p>2 businesses signed up to the South Downs Protector Initiative</p> <p>113 Instagram followers</p>	<p>In Q4, work has progressed well on enhancing the product with a view to creating an organically growing community of members.</p> <p>During this quarter, through an ITQ, Lets Do Business Group UK have been appointed for 6 months to drive business member numbers up to the critical mass target of 500 members in total.</p> <p>The Enterprise Newsletter is published monthly.</p>	Green	<p>Next Steps: The acceleration of marketing and publicity around OSD in pursuit of increasing the member base with the help of a dedicated resource in the form of Lets Do Business Group UK.</p> <p>The Enterprise Newsletter will continue to be published monthly.</p> <p>The new initiatives such as South Downs Guardian and South Downs Protector will be marketed at an accelerated rate alongside existing initiatives such as Visitor Giving, Cyclist Walkers Welcome and Dark Skies Welcome.</p>	Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
Facilitate and support the endorsement, actions and key priorities through the process of Whole Estate Plans (WEPs)	Facilitate WEP applications through a successful journey to encourage sustainability in key areas of the National Park to deliver Partnership Management Plan (PMP) outcomes	<p>8 endorsed WEPs</p> <p>4 in the pipeline</p> <p>1 at stage 4</p>	<p>In Q4, Brighton and Hove CC WEP, or City Downland Plan, was endorsed by P&R Committee on 23rd February 2023. The pipeline now consists of four estates with scheduled Member Site Visits and one estate that is at Stage 4 of their WEP Journey. The four estates with scheduled Member visits are: Westerland Stud Estate (27th April 2023), Glynde Estate (10th Oct 2023), Lancing College (27th Feb 2024), and Plumpton College (21st May 2024). Firlie Estate is the estate that is currently progressing into Stage 4.</p>	Green	<p>Next Steps: During Q1 we will see Westerlands Stud Estate host their Member Site Visit. During this quarter we will also continue discussions with Firlie Estate as to when they will target P&R Committee endorsement for their WEP.</p>	Outcome 9: Great Places to Live
Support and facilitate the South Downs Forestry Champions	In collaboration, deliver key outcomes under the South Downs Forestry Champions priorities (2019-2024) relating to people, place and prosperity		<p>Two forestry apprenticeships have been successfully recruited in partnership with SDFC members.</p> <p>Trees for the Downs and Bringing back elms work completed for the season.</p> <p>Engagement with key partners in the Sussex Woods area in particular addressing deer population.</p> <p>Early discussions occurring with SDFC about appropriate species reintroductions.</p>	Green	<p>Next steps: Making the business case for a Woodland Officer post to be 100% externally funded.</p> <p>Potential Risks: Lack of capacity to support this area of work.</p>	Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in the National Park	Deliver on time and within budget high quality outcomes on climate, nature, people, place, and relevant PMP outcomes	26 projects approved totalling £383,822.24	<p>Q4 saw the end of year two of the FiPL Programme. In total, 26 projects were approved by the Local Assessment Panel (LAP) totalling £383,822.24, including £29,832.32 from the National Pot. Applications covered all four of the FiPL objectives (nature, climate, people and place) including wetland management, fencing, traditional barn restoration, interpretation, pond creation and items to facilitate regenerative farming.</p>	Green	<p>Next steps: Start delivery on year four of the FiPL Programme. First Local Assessment Panel meeting planned for 20/04/23</p>	Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience
Position the National Park Authority to have a clear role in delivering Environmental Land Management (ELM) Schemes	Participate in the Environmental Land Management (ELM) National Pilots with regard to Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery elements	178 farmers in 6 farmer clusters across the SDNP	<p>In January, Defra made further announcements concerning the roll-out of Environmental Land Management (ELM). Headlines include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Six further Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) standards will be available in 2023: hedgerows, integrated pest management, arable & horticultural land, improved grassland, low input grassland - Local Nature Recovery will not be developed and will be replaced by the continuation of Countryside Stewardship (CS). By the end of 2024, 30 additional management options will be added. - CS payment rates have been reviewed to reflect changes in management costs. Changes will be implemented from 1st Jan 2023. - CS plus will be developed to facilitate farmers working together at a landscape scale. - A second round of the Landscape Recovery Scheme will be open in the spring (25 projects to be funded). 	Green	<p>Next steps: Work with farmers in the SDNP to disseminate information and work towards CS plus development to support the farmer clusters</p>	Outcome 2: Increasing Resilience

5. Seven Sisters Country Park thematic area						
Work towards Seven Sisters Country Park becoming commercially successful and financially self-sufficient, having a positive impact on the local economy	1) South Downs Commercial Operations Ltd to take over management of the site to allow commercial delivery 2) Complete and open Phase 1 works (Exceat May 2022, Foxholes Nov 2022), including food and beverage offer, holiday accommodation, and retail 3) Invest in pump barn as a hub for SDNP-based businesses 4) Complete and open Phase 2 works (Foxhole Cottage 3 and the Camping Barn with new facilities block) 5) Carry out urgent repairs and light refurbishment to New Barn Cottage		Although progress has been made at Foxholes it is not yet complete. Completion is expected on 12/05/2023 for cottages 1 & 2 and the facilities block (bar one splash back); completion for cottage 3 is expected by the end of May. Foxholes cottages are expected to be open to the public in June 2023.	Amber	Next Steps: Pump Barn AV equipment and furniture install (AV booked for April 21st). Completion of Foxholes by contractors, allowing furnishing and other work to be completed with opening to the public planned for June 2023	Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
Lay the foundations for Seven Sisters Country Park to become a high quality site for nature through exemplary management of the habitats	1) Use 'nofence' in partnership with Plumpton College to deliver targeted grazing. 2) Fundraise for habitat improvements including reseeded, pond repairs, and scrub removal	54 cows and 13 ponies on site and focussed grazing on the quality chalk grassland areas 2 potential Pond habitat improvements 3 Natural England/RPA funded surveys to aid the creation of a new Countryside Stewardship Scheme for the country park.	The SSCP Manager is now working with a land agent employed to assist with the creation of a viable/workable Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) for the country park Grazing animals have been grazing the key chalk grassland areas, the licence with Plumpton College has been extended to the end of November 2023 whilst we take stock of the needs and potential work required from the development of the new CSS. Funding is being sought for repair and improvements to ponds at Newbarn and Foxhole. Quotes are in place and surveys have been done to fulfil the paperwork requirements. A rare plant species survey and a sward improvement survey, both with recommendations for management, have been awarded to local ecologists for visits in Q4 2023/24 with paperwork to be completed by July 2023. In addition, a bid for wetland habitat improvement plan by a local ecologist has been submitted to Natural England for their final sign off.	Green	Next steps: Cows to be moved onto the valley floor once the ground dries up in Q1 2023/24 Awaiting sign off from Natural England for the Wetland Habitat improvement survey. This is meant to be 100% funded through the Rural Payments Agency and is estimated in the region of £22k. The risk is that they won't accept the bid and then the works cannot take place. Further work needed to complete the CSS with the land agent and ranger - looking to complete the paperwork in time for the end of April 2023. There is a chance that an agreement with Natural England may not be possible given the risks (fines) posed by not being able to meet the prescriptions inherent in a CSS. The board of directors of South Downs Commercial Operations will have the final say about whether SSCP goes ahead with the CSS	Outcome 3: Habitats & Species
Develop Seven Sisters Country Park as an exemplary site for public access to the countryside. Ensure that we attract a diverse audience that reflects our local communities and that people have an enjoyable, inspiring experience	1) Remove internal fencing (facilitated by 'nofence') to improve access 2) Install new Changing Places toilet and level access at Exceat 3) Develop new, diverse and accessible volunteering opportunities 4) Create new and improved walking routes across the whole Country Park 5) Fundraise for trampers (off-road mobility scooters) 6) Provide a year-round programme of activities for diverse audiences 7) Trial social prescribing in partnership with health providers	Up to 30 Volunteers are due to be in place for the summer season. 2 new mobility scooters are available for the public to hire using a booking system. 6 seater golf buggy-type vehicle purchased to help transport visitors to the holiday cottages	An Easter trail, Easter wreath making and art activities have been put in place for the Easter school holidays Work with Kate Drake and the Health and Wellbeing hub is continuing with a partnership with East Sussex CC social care for young people and families.	Green	Next steps: Volunteers are due to start as soon into Q1 2023/24 as possible once the paperwork and inductions are completed.	Outcome 10: Great Places to Work
6. Delivering the statutory planning service thematic area						
Effectively and efficiently process planning applications and appeals	1) Endeavour to ensure application decisions are issued in accordance with Government targets: Major 60%; Minor 70%; Others 70% and value added (and recorded), where possible when considering applications 2) No more than 10% of all decisions to be overturned at appeal in a 2-year period	Percentage of Appeals overturned 2022/23: 25% Q4: 36.8%	The Authority has achieved the following performance in Q4: Majors 81.8% , Minors 73.7% , Others 84.3% (NB No county appeals determined in period)	Green		Core work

Effectively deliver the enforcement role	To continue to deliver the enforcement function within the National Park together with the host authorities and metrics to be reported through the Annual Planning Performance Report to P & R Committee		The Authority has continued to deliver the Enforcement function within the National Park.	Green		Core work
Develop Shoreham Cement Works Area Action Plan (APP)	Planning Committee and the National Park Authority to approve Issues & Options AAP for consultation in Q1. Consultation to take place in Q2. Representations to be reviewed and Preferred Options AAP to be formulated in Q3-4		Review of the representations and preparation of detailed summaries of the points made is in progress.	Green	Next steps: Officers will complete the review of representations. These will be considered as the proposals for the Shoreham Cement Works site are further developed for the Regulation 18 Local Plan Review document.	Core work
Undertake the Local Plan Review (LPR)	1) Scope out work plan and budget for the Local Plan Review (LPR). Way forward to be decided by Members in Q1. Depending on the decision of Members work will begin in earnest on evidence gathering for the LPR for the rest of the year. 2) As part of the review ensure that the collective policy matrix for Nature Recovery, Climate Action and A National Park for All is designed to maximise integrated delivery of corporate priorities through the planning system		Review of the draft Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) is underway. Stage 1 of the Land Availability Assessment (LAA) is completed. Development of a detailed timetable for LPR up to Reg 18 consultation is underway. Response to the government consultation on reforms to national policy was prepared with feedback from Members and submitted. To support input in the LPR process, the Parish Priorities Statement template and request for information on Settlement Facilities and Open Spaces was sent to parishes.	Green	Next steps: Commence Stage 2 (site visits for the LAA), finalise detailed timetable for the LPR up to Reg 18 consultation. Begin commissioning relevant aspects of the evidence base to be agreed as per the detailed timetable.	Core work
Progress Minerals & Waste Local Plans	Submit East Sussex LPR for examination Q1. Examination Q2 and hopefully adoption Q4. Issues & Options Hampshire Local Plan Review Q2	2,456 representations received.	East Sussex Minerals & Waste (M&W) Plan proposed modifications drafted following hearings. Proposed Modifications to be submitted to Inspectorate on 24/3/23. Hampshire M&W Partial Review Reg 18 consultation complete. Assessing implications of representations, the majority relate to sites, all outside SDNP. Proposed change to LDS to allow more time for representations review and preparation of Reg 19 Plan. Reg 19 consultation expected Q3/Q4 2023/24. West Sussex Joint Minerals Local Plan (JMLP) assessment of relevance and effectiveness initiated in Jan 2023. Assessment decision expected Q1 2023/24	Green	Next Steps: Awaiting initial note from East Sussex M&W plan hearings with proposed modifications for consultation. Anticipated main mods consultation in summer 2023, pending inspectors correspondence. Hampshire Regulation 19 consultation anticipated Q3-Q4 23/24 West Sussex JMLP assessment of relevance and effectiveness to committee cycle Q1-Q2 2023/24	Core work
Support Neighbourhood Development Plans	At the same time as we are working on the Local Plan Review, we will support and work closely with Parish Councils wishing to prepare neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood plan reviews, to ensure that this work is progressed. It is anticipated that the Local Plan Review will be adopted at the same time that the neighbourhood plans are adopted	2022/23: 42 NDPs adopted (made part of the development plan in SDNP) 16 NDPs actively being prepared at different stage of production 3 NDPs abandoned	Template for Parish Priority Statement (PPS) was circulated to Town and Parish Councils in February with a deadline for completion of October 2023. PPS presentation given at March Parish Workshops. Greenville example PPS prepared in Q4 to be circulated to parishes in Q1 2023/34 Continue to support 11 Parishes in preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), light touch support offered. Responded to statutory consultations for Rowlands Castle, Peacehaven and Telscombe and Rottingdean NDPs. Lymminster and Crossbush NDP Made.	Green	Next steps: Rowlands Castle Reg Examination expected Q1 2023/24 Examination for Rottingdean anticipated Q2 2023/24; likely to require SDNPA input on site excluded by RPC located in the strategic Gap that SDNPA supported	Outcome 9: Great Places to Live
Work on the Duty to Cooperate in line with our Section 62 of the Environment Act section 11A duty	The need to work on cross boundary strategic issues is ongoing. During 2022-23 we are expecting local plans to come forward proposing substantial development in the setting of the National Park with new local plans in Chichester, East Hampshire, Horsham and Lewes Districts		Responses made to the East Hampshire, Eastbourne and Chichester plans. Horsham delayed consultation on their plan. The government consultation on planning reform (Dec 2022) confirmed the intention to remove the Duty to Cooperate and replace this with an 'alignment policy' as part of a future revised NPPF.National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Further consultation on what should constitute the alignment policy will be undertaken.	Green	Next steps: We anticipate plan consultations from Horsham in Q1 2023/24	Core work

Renegotiate S101 contracts with host authorities	The current S101 contracts with our five host authorities expire on 1 October 2022. The aim is to have contracts in place with Chichester, East Hampshire, Horsham and Winchester Councils for a maximum period of 4 years and with Lewes Council for up to 2 years. This would enable these Councils to continue to provide planning services on our behalf		All new S101 contracts now in operation.	Green		Core work
Performance monitoring and reporting	The need to monitor and report on performance is ongoing and so will continue for both the in house and host authority development management functions in 2022/23. Monitoring will include the Annual Planning Performance Report to Policy and Resources Committee and the Authority's Annual Monitoring Report		All government targets for the operation of the planning system are being met.	Green		Core work
7. Major Projects thematic area						
Deal with major planning applications and appeals; considering major development in plan making	1) Deal with major planning applications and appeals in an efficient and timely manner whilst driving maximum benefit for the National Park 2) Ensure that major development is robustly addressed in all our development plans		Speed of determination of major planning applications remains well in excess of Government targets.	Green		Core work
Administer the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 – key income streams for delivery	CIL will retain its link to funding infrastructure needed to support growth as required by legislation. As part of this we will also look to support and fund more projects that deliver the Corporate Plan priorities of Nature Recovery, Climate Action and A National Park for All	CIL: £411,665.09 (from previous yr CIL receipts) on 9 projects. Financial year (2022/23): Spend £3,015,308.45 S106: £20,068.18 for specific obligations and £198,137.64 on 4 projects.	CIL - Projects include improving accessibility at Seven Sisters Country Park, new public car park in Ditchling, new play and outdoor facilities at Droxford Junior School, West Ashling and Funtington District Hall refurbishment, improved access at Iping Common and delivering parts of Phase 2 of Centurion Way. S106 - Projects money has been spent on include Centurion Way, travel plan, nitrate monitoring and Solent Recreation Mitigation.	Green	Next steps: 'Business as usual' for preparing this year's Infrastructure Business Plan (IBP) - the spending of 2022/23 CIL Receipts. Closing date for submitting bids was 3rd March, assessment process has begun.	Core work
Deal with Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) within the National Park	Ongoing work to protect the National Park, to maximise development benefits and to secure appropriate mitigation and compensation from NSIP schemes. Responding to statutory consultations as required. The A27 at Arundel and Rampion 2 examinations in public are expected		SDNPA's proposed response on the M3 J9 scheme to be presented to June's Planning Committee	Green		Outcome 9: Great Places to Live
Provide specialist advice in respect of Conservation, Design and Landscape across the organisation – especially in regard to Nature Recovery, Climate Action and A National Park for All	Align and focus specialist advice on: i) Delivering the three Corporate Plan priorities ii) Assisting our work as the Local Planning Authority A South Downs Design Review Panel will continue to operate that helps deliver better design in the National Park		Advice provided across the organisation as required.	Green		Core work

8. Generating Income thematic area						
Aim to raise £2.5 million self-generated income per annum, supporting Partnership Management Plan (PMP) delivery, through bids to Statutory Sources and support for the South Downs National Park Trust in continuing to build a sustainable philanthropic income stream	Raise £2.5m of self-generated income through philanthropic gifts, corporate partners and competitive government grants. This additional funding will be paired with strategic projects that drive forward delivery against the High Level Targets	£3,163,851 secured	Total income for the year well above target. Slight drop on previous quarter figures due to £35k secured via Lewes CIL for Ouse Valley Footpath improvements, which has been self funded by the Environment Agency and therefore cannot be included.	Green	Next Steps: Deliver and build long term pipeline for 2023/24, which currently has £406k secured and over £2 million of warm opportunities.	Core work
Support the role of private finance for Nature Recovery, securing funding to restore 1,000 hectares for Nature	Restore 1,000 hectares p.a. through projects which support landowners to secure private funding, changing current land management practices in favour of nature	374 hectares implemented with 1864 hectares in the pipeline	We have now secured funding to deliver one of our two initial pilots. In addition, we have a number of other sites that have come forward to deliver off-sets required for Water Neutrality schemes and prospective Biodiversity Net Gain.	Amber	Next Steps: We will be looking to secure and implement the hectares currently within the pipeline and ensure we have strategic sites across the National Parks	Core work
Incubate a number of income generating initiatives, building on Seven Sisters and the South Downs Trust, scaling these up to generate £200k per annum	Generate £200k through full cost recovery, securing restricted funding against budgeted costs or via profit from new commercial ventures	£205k raised for full cost recovery and budgeted expenditure	In addition to the funding secured through full cost recovery and budgeted expenditure we have secured £155k through our off-set monitoring fees and ReNature Credits (this funding will be rolled forward and counted towards our 23/24 target).	Green	Next Steps: Over the next year we will continue to consider full cost recovery in all bids and launch our new Broker Role "ReNature Credits", establishing the business within the SDNPA, receiving core organisational support.	Core work
9. New Ways of Working thematic area						
Adopt a blended style of working that balances sustainability and flexibility whilst supporting business delivery	1) Undertake a blended working Staff Survey in Q3 2) Adapt the PDR process to reflect new ways of working by Q4 3) Train staff in the matrix management style of working by Q4		Blended working action plan is being delivered. New PDR process to be piloted in 2023/24	Green	Next steps: Continue to implement the action plan in 2023/24	Core work
Streamline levels of service to Members and Partners to ensure they are proportionate and reflect the resources available for their delivery	Complete a review of internal governance and propose recommendations for changes to structures and processes, as appropriate		The 12 actions from the May 22 Review of Governance have been implemented and completed: Nos.1-4: a streamlined cycle of Member meetings and workshops which have been agreed and implemented. No.5: switching of Members to the use of electronic payslips No.6: switch to paperless meeting reports packs, which has been implemented through the new eReports system. No.7: revision of the rules of debate. No.8: holding of P&R at a local other than Midhurst; the Feb 23 meeting of P&R Committee was held in Lewes. No.9: The schedule of Member events has been kept under review and has been adapted as the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic receded. No.10: A training session was held for Members on the new paperless system and the use of the SDNPA intranet; training of new Members will be ongoing. No.11: Work is being undertaken to upgrade the IT/AV equipment in the Memorial Hall and main meeting rooms to facilitate better hybrid meetings. No.12: The format of Member attendance stats has been agreed and are published on the SDNPA website from June 23.	Green	Next steps: Ongoing training for new Members.	Core work
Through the use of new technology and new approaches to internal decision making and internal communications, the SDNPA will have developed a culture of “the right information in the right place” – leading to improved decision making and organisational efficiency	MS Teams road map in place		MS Teams roadmap completed and is now in place following presentation to OMT at meeting on 6th February, 2023.	Green		Core work
Through the use of new technology and new approaches to internal decision making and internal communications, the SDNPA will have developed a culture of “the right information in the right place” – leading to improved decision making and organisational efficiency	Review of internal Comms outputs, processes and practices		Focus on sharing of key information internally. New Update continues to grow and develop plus we are developing a new nature recovery section on the intranet to keep staff and members updated on this core area of work.	Green		Core work

Ensure that the organisation is more diverse and representative both in its staff and Members and considers Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in service delivery and policy development	Adapt the way we recruit, to increase the diversity of applications received from the current baseline		Trial of applicant tracking system is underway	Green	Next steps: System to be rolled out to managers in 2023/24	Core work
Ensure that the organisation is more diverse and representative both in its staff and Members and considers Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in service delivery and policy development	Ensure that 100% of new programmes, projects, policies, services and strategies have EDI as a central delivery component. This will be evidenced by the completion and consideration of the EDI screening and impact assessment form at the start of the process		There has been a change in staffing for this priority, handover in process	Amber		Core work
Ensure that the organisation is more diverse and representative both in its staff and Members and considers Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in service delivery and policy development	Develop a training plan to prioritise EDI training and skills development for staff and Members and begin delivery of specific training		Pearn Kandola offered preferred bidder status - contract to be finalised.	Green	Next steps: EDI platform to be rolled out to staff and Members in 2023/24 Q1/2	Core work

ITEM 10 APPENDIX 2: ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTIONS FOR 2022/23: Q4 UPDATE

Action	Commentary	Next steps and/or potential risks
Further embedding of processes related to paperless meetings <i>(ongoing from 21/22)</i>	eReports system has been launched and has been well received with a number of Members having moved to fully paperless working for meetings and the majority of other Members at least partially paperless. The ongoing effectiveness will be monitored by the Senior Governance Officer.	Training to be done with new Members following the 2023 appointments to the Authority.
Review the position regarding the use of byelaws at Seven Sisters Country Park <i>(ongoing from 21/22)</i>	A thorough review and assessment of the use of byelaws at SSCP has been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Governance. The process of making byelaws is both lengthy and complex and potentially very resource heavy. Behaviour and issues at SSCP should be monitored to identify if byelaws would be required.	An update to be brought to a future meeting of the Authority.
Implementation of changes arising from the review of the staff PDR process <i>(ongoing from 21/22)</i>	The staff PDR process has been reviewed and is being trialled during 2023/24. Changes to the Member appraisal process have been made in consultation with the Chair of the Authority to streamline and improve engagement.	
Complete the review of the model councillor code of conduct recently published by the Local Government Association to identify whether further revision of the Member Code of Conduct is needed	The Monitoring Officer reported to the AM&S Committee in May 23 regarding proposed changes to the Member Code of Conduct following a thorough review.	The AM&S Committee is recommending the Authority approve the changes and this will be considered at the July 23 meeting of the Authority.
Implement the outcomes of the 2022 Member survey and review of governance as reported to the NPA in May 2022	The 12 actions from the May 22 Review of Governance have been implemented and completed. Nos.1-4: a streamlined cycle of Member meetings and workshops which have been agreed and implemented. No.5: switching of Members to the use of electronic payslips. No.6: switch to paperless meeting reports packs, which has been implemented through the new eReports system. No.7: revision of the rules of debate. No.8: holding of P&R at a local other than Midhurst; the Feb 23 meeting of P&R Committee was held in Lewes. No.9: The schedule of Member events has been kept under review and has been adapted as the restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic receded. No.10: A training session was held for Members on the new paperless system and the use of the SDNPA intranet; training of new Members will be ongoing. No.11: Work is being undertaken to upgrade the IT/AV equipment in the Memorial Hall and main meeting rooms to facilitate better hybrid meetings. No.12: The format of Member attendance stats has been agreed and are published on the SDNPA website from June 23.	

AGENDA ITEM 10 APPENDIX 3: HUMAN RESOURCES & HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIONS 2022/23: Q4 UPDATE

Action	Commentary	Next steps and/or potential risks
Implementing the HR responsibilities relating to the EDI action plan:	Pearn Kandola offered preferred bidder status - contract to be finalised	EDI platform to be rolled out to staff and Members in Q1/Q2 2023/24
Introduction of an applicant tracking system	Trial period of applicant tracking system	Roll out of system to managers
Design and communicate a staff survey to review the blended working arrangements	Action plan being implemented and is reviewed at each OMT meeting	
Review the organisation's approach to stress management	Stress policy communicated to staff via the intranet Toolkit and risk assessment approved by OMT	All documents communicated to staff Questions to measure stress included in the all staff survey to be launched in May 2023 Leadership Training in May 2023 to cover management of stress
Look at ways of digitalising existing HR processes to increase efficiency	Platform is now being used by Area teams to track upcoming refresher training New asset management system Arcspeed tested and staff trained	Continue to add new courses to system and review effectiveness of system Arcspeed software to be used for H&S auditing
Continuation of the work on internal health and wellbeing	Mental Health First Aid Refresher training took place in Jan 23. We now have 14 mental health first aiders across the organisation H&W portal Neurequity rolled out to all staff and Members in February 23 and is also being used by all other NPAs	Launch of face to face events during MHA week of 15 May
Ensure that Members are fully briefed and trained on their H&S responsibilities	Bespoke training programme delivered virtually by Jon Wayte, H&S Advisor at Peak District NPA on 7 February and 15 March 23	
Continuing development and implementation of robust safety systems of work and risk assessments at Seven Sisters Country Park accounting for the type of activities in place	Implemented actions from fire risk assessment New risk assessments e.g. mobility scooters	Phase 2 - H&S risks assessments and audit of cottages and camping barn

Item 10 Appendix 4: Q4 2022-23 Projects in delivery

Active Access/ Newhaven Travel Hub

This project involves the creation of a vibrant Active Travel Hub, with the engagement of the local community in achieving modal shift and access to green open and blue space assets of the area. Newhaven includes neighbourhoods among the 20-30% most deprived in England and the worst 10% for child poverty where residents can experience significant poverty, disadvantage, social isolation, and health inequalities. Working with partners, the project developed an extended concept of an Active travel Hub to include walking, cycling and water-based initiatives to overcoming barriers to sustainable transport to work and education.

Archaeology Walks Programme

This project will deliver a walk programme that inspires and engages participants from under-served groups in the archaeology of the South Downs, bringing opportunities to handle archaeological objects and see sites through deep time.

Artist in Residence SSCP Heritage Coast

This is a creative partnership that fosters new artistic responses to the Seven Sisters Country Park and wider Sussex Heritage Coast, which amplifies the voices, stories and experiences of ethnically diverse groups, exploring a vision for the futures for this landscape from the perspective of nature, climate, identity and community.

Beggars Bush Walk For All, Community Nature Area

This project will upgrade existing priority rights of way and permissive paths and the creation of a new Permissive route. This will create increased opportunities for circular walks to and from the urban fringes. The project will also enhance the visual landscape, as well as expanding, enhancing and connecting key habitats – chalk grassland, hedgerows and rough grass margins. It will create opportunities for community engagement through hedgerow planting and ongoing management.

Carers in Nature

During the ReNature festival 2022 SDNPA commissioned an organisation called Wild Gathering to deliver a Mindful Walk to carers, celebrating and promoting water. This session proved very popular and the feedback was very positive. Wild Gathering have since partnered with Carers Support West Sussex and approached SDNPA for funding to offer mindful walks and art sessions.

Centurion Way

The Centurion Way currently provides a segregated, shared use path, approximately 9 kilometres in length from Chichester into the SDNP, terminating at West Dean. The path provides a safe, sustainable access, Active Travel route alternative for visitors and the local community, importantly offering an alternative to the A286. The route is being extended in phases:

Phase One Extension. SDNPA constructed the northern extent of approximately 2 kilometres in 2015 terminating at West Dean Tunnel.

Phase Two Extension. In 2019 SDNPA secured planning permission for the Centurion Way Extension from West Dean (Tunnel) to Cocking predominantly on the alignment of the former Chichester to Midhurst railway and approximately 5 kilometres in length. When complete, it will connect with the South Downs Way National Trail above Cocking in the heart of the National Park extending approximately 14-15 kilometres in total from Chichester.

The final stage of the Centurion Way would be to connect from the SDW down past Cocking to Midhurst.

Changing Chalk - Dew Ponds

Dew ponds in the Eastern Downs are largely in a state of disrepair. Of the 280 thought to have existed in this region since the 1800s almost 70% have either been lost completely or are in poor condition. Largely due to the introduction of piped water to troughs across much of the Downs the maintenance of these culturally and naturally important habitats has declined. This has led to a fragmented network of surface water availability across this region, especially on the higher slopes of the Downs. This project is looking at targeted restoration of ponds in areas where we can achieve better connectivity, close to public access (South Downs Way Corridor), with opportunities for education and interpretation.

Changing Chalk - Grazier Post

This project aims to employ a conservation grazer to cover the Changing Chalk project area (broadly the Worthing to Eastbourne block of the Open Downs). This is a 5 year project to carry out specific targeted grazing, working with a number of partners and stakeholders. Phase 1 of the project will be a development phase, identifying 'quick win' sites, assessing grazing infrastructure requirements and the work required to bring priority sites under appropriate grazing management. Phase 2 will provide the funding for the necessary infrastructure and test approaches to establishing a sustainable grazing regime for nutrient poor chalk grassland sites as part of an economically viable farming system.

Climate Museums UK

Climate Museums UK represent a collective of cultural and creative specialists working in partnership to deliver interventions that increase individual and collective action for climate justice. This project proposes the delivery of a series of activities under a single programme of work, linked to the SDNP Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The focus is on key areas, including learning and young people and growing public engagement through cultural partners.

Communities in the South Downs

This project will work with 5 communities across the South Downs National Park to establish highway enhancement schemes which will conserve and enhance the special qualities of those villages. The enhancements could include village gateway signage, signage audits, planting schemes, traffic management solutions and parking management. Ultimately the pilot studies will work with the communities to address the local highways issues and identify solutions which are highways compliant and support the SDNPA special quality to 'conserve the distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area'.

Community Travel Grant Pilot

This is a pilot to test the idea that a Community Travel Grant would support community groups and service providers to enhance their offer and connect more people to the National Park. The project will offer four sessions of introductory mindful activities in two places for up to 12 participants in each session. Alongside the activity will be a transport offer to help people access the session. The sessions will also be used as focus groups, as part of activity delivery, to find out from participants what sorts of activities in the National Park would engage them and the extent to which a supported travel offer helped them to attend the pilot activities.

Community Wanderings

Community Wanderings with Saira Niazi has been taking small groups of people (predominantly from

London) into the South Downs. Participants have limited to no experience of visiting countryside and so far, all have been first time visitors to the South Downs. Saira uses storytelling as a way to engage the participants, encouraging people to share connections to nature and landscape across faiths and cultures. Drawing on the rich heritage of the South Downs, and telling stories often under-told about a landscape of migrating people, species and ideas, also opens up rural spaces for new visitors to find meaning and belonging.

Conservation Conversations

This project proposal will focus on communities and engagement with the Downs from Newhaven and the surrounding area to deliver facilitated walks for community groups exploring one of four key themes: history, geology/geography/flora/fauna and contemporary life. It will also deliver workshops with community groups to develop a creative response by each group to the themes. It will develop and deliver a symposium / event in Newhaven called Conservation Conversations, led by young people and working in partnership with Hillcrest Community Centre, Hospitable Environment and Tidemills Community Choir, plus invited guest facilitators. The event will explore the themes arising from this project, hosting conversations about climate change and the landscape.

Cut and collect

This project will work with West Sussex County Council on a project piloting Cut-and-Collect methods of verge maintenance in an effort to improve biodiversity in roadside verges. To this end the project is specifically to employ a consultant ecologist to carry out a program of biodiversity monitoring on areas attended under the cut-and-collect trial for three years.

Deer Proposal: University of Exeter AHRC

We are seeking to support the sector to explore innovative methods of communicating healthy woodland and healthy deer populations through cross sector partnerships. In collaboration with SDNPA, The British Deer Society and Sussex Archaeological Society, the project will deliver regional stakeholder engagement meetings to share research results and demonstrate public engagement methods. The project will also engage with the food industry to explore how venison and venison products can be created and distributed, as well as producing a series of films.

Downs to the Sea – Development Phase

Downs to the Sea will help to restore and protect crucial ponds and wetlands, across the South Downs and in the Arun Valley, that are instrumental in nature recovery and resilience to climate change at scale, providing multiple ecosystem services. Through our engagement activities, we aim to reach underserved audiences, promote health and wellbeing, and develop peoples' skills and understanding of the landscape, especially the vital role that water plays in all of our lives.

Edgelands

The project will explore how creative approaches can communicate issues impacting landscape – whether climate change, the biodiversity crisis, belonging and agency. This will be explored through two methods. Firstly, by using drawing, making, sculpture and photography to map at different scales, ideally engaging with archaeologists, ecologists and historians to understand changes that have taken place in the landscape over different time periods. This phase would also explore details in the landscape that tell us stories about human relationships with it over time. The second phase will use psycho-geography, exploring how we emotionally engage with a place through creative activities.

Egrets Way- Phase 5

The Egrets Way scheme is about improving access with a key aim of increasing walking and cycling in

the local area. Phase 5 is the 1.5km section between Riverside Park and Piddinghoe, connecting Lewes to the current route running up to Southease.

Egrets Way- Phase 6

Phase is a path of approximately 4.1km, between Rodmell and Rise Farm.

Farm Carbon Project

This project will work with farmers/farmer clusters and other partners across the SDNP to increase understanding of farm carbon budgets and how soil management and soil quality can influence carbon emission and sequestration. It will also identify a suite of practical management options that farmers can undertake on their farms to reduce carbon emissions. We can then use the information to help farmers prepare for ELM, private finance opportunities and inform the SDNPAs net zero with nature by 2040 action plan.

Footsteps App

This project is developing high quality content for an App called “In Their Footsteps”, to showcase creative and cultural stories from the South Downs. The App combines walking with cultural heritage. SDNPA are providing partners with expertise and support in the development of digital content that enhances visitor experience, with the potential to increase dwell time, support visitor flow and encourage repeat visits.

Grandfather’s Bottom, Butser Hill

The project will protect and enhance 1.6ha chalk heath and restore 7ha chalk grassland at Grandfather’s Bottom by reducing scrub encroachment and installing infrastructure to support improved grazing. Scrub removal would widen the foreground views and enable the recreation of biodiversity-rich chalk downland. This would reveal the drama of the topography and reduce the visual interest in the skyline and line of pylons. Scrub clearance at Hilhampton Down will enable the creation of a new route through the hillside, creating a new vista and aspect to the downland and an interesting alternative to the SDW track. The visitor experience will be improved through new signage, interpretation and car parking improvements.

Green South Downs

The SDNPA has committed to working towards a ‘Net Zero with nature’ by 2040 in the SDNP. Both the SDNP Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan set challenging objectives in relation to rural economy and tourism which aim to support businesses to adapt their business operations and move to a low carbon economy. This project will develop a business sustainability journey, which will help businesses improve social and environmental sustainability and help achieve the SDNP Net Zero targets. Businesses of all sizes across the region are being invited to apply for Green South Downs – a new programme that awards enterprises for taking steps towards helping the environment and local community. Businesses that sign up to Green South Downs will receive a step-by-step bespoke package to help them on their journey and will receive training on sustainability and carbon literacy, as well as strategic support around waste management, climate action, nature, and energy.

The Forest - Stop Gap Dance

This project is developing a performance piece that inspires and engages audiences in the therapeutic benefits of nature and woodland, showcasing the creative talents of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) artists and which focuses on providing a magical and inclusive experience for SEND families and young people.

Hampshire Hedgerows

This project will work collaboratively with landowners through Selborne & Winchester Downs

Farmer-led Clusters to restore and enhance 20km+ hedgerows in the farmed landscape in the west of the SDNP to deliver high quality nature recovery across these exceptionally important habitats. Newly restored hedgerow will connect to other habitat types, creating important wildlife corridors. The project will ensure the traditional skills of hedge laying will be reinforced for farm workers and hedge laying training for young people will also be provided as part of the project.

Iron Age Build at Butser

This is a project working in partnership with Operation Nightingale to build an Iron Age roundhouse at Butser Ancient Farm. This project not only contributes to archaeological research by testing theories relating to Iron Age wall construction, it will also further support participants with positive health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly given the challenges faced by many current and former Armed Services personnel with regards to mental and physical health.

Miles without Stiles

The SDNP has paths and routes to suit all abilities and interests, making the South Downs the most accessible of all National Parks. This project provides and promotes Miles without Stiles experiences without steps, stiles or steep gradients. Although these paths are billed as being for people with limited mobility, they have a wide appeal. In addition to wheelchair users, they are ideal for families, the elderly and people with visual impairment. The main project outputs will be the replacement of 20 step stiles with gates or gaps to improve accessibility and the promotion of miles without stiles routes across the South Downs.

On Course to Flail

This project will provide the tools, knowledge and inspiration for better management of chalk grassland on golf courses in the Eastern Downs (starting with two golf courses).

Ouse Valley Climate Action – Development Phase

The Ouse Valley Climate Action project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The project area comprises the Ouse Valley from Barcombe to the coast, and the towns of Lewes, Seaford, Newhaven and Peacehaven. The development phase involves working directly with the communities and local groups to help refine and cost their plans, building links between the communities through action in response to the climate emergency.

Ouse Valley Climate Action - Delivery Phase

This is the delivery phase of the Ouse Valley Climate Action project. The project area follows the River Ouse downstream from the village of Barcombe – which is aiming to be the UK's first net-zero village – through to Lewes, the National Park's largest town, and further south to the coastal towns of Seaford, Peacehaven, and Newhaven. The river valley is a fragile landscape that has already felt the effects of climate change this millennium, including flooding, storm damage, coastal erosion and biodiversity loss. The project will focus on three key areas: nature recovery and climate resilience; people's knowledge and skills; and, finally, greener energy and travel.

PeCAN (Petersfield Climate Action Network)

The mission of PeCAN is to help Petersfield and surrounding villages reduce their carbon emissions and protect nature, by leading and supporting decarbonisation and nature projects in the community. The project works with local people and organisations to help make the changes to buildings, transport, natural environment, understanding and behaviour that the community needs to live sustainably. The vision is for the Petersfield area to become carbon neutral as quickly as possible. SDNPA are supporting this project through three strands of work: Schools and Youth Outreach, Community Engagement and Staff and volunteer wellbeing and capacity building support.

Portraits of the South Downs

This project will share photographs and stories of people from all walks of life with unique and personal connections to the SDNP, and the various hidden gems and features that render it so special. It is hoped that the project will inspire more people to visit the SDNP through sharing diverse and multi-layered stories of peoples' connections to the landscape. In addition, the stories and anecdotes will illustrate self-guided wanderings and bring the landscape to life, allowing more people to feel a greater sense of connection and belonging.

Project Thrive (Allen Gallery)

This project aims to support young people in growing their connection to nature and the rural landscapes on their doorstep, creating closer connection between Alton and the National Park. It will deliver workshops, taster sessions and trips for young people to grow connection to nature and the National Park. SDNPA is working in partnership with Allen Gallery.

Rampion Monitoring

The Rampion 1 Scheme consisted of 116 offshore wind turbines being constructed by E.ON 14km off the coast at Brighton and its associated 30m wide cable construction route which passed through 14km of the National Park. The wind farm started generating power in November 2017. All of the cable has now been laid through the Park and the landscape has been reinstated. As part of the planning consent E.ON committed to a 10 year monitoring period following reinstatement, including financial support to the SDNPA for a monitoring officer during this 10 year period to oversee the discharge of consents within the onshore construction area of the National Park. The SDNPA monitoring officer for the Rampion 1 scheme was responsible for monitoring and ensuring all reinstatement is suitably delivered as well as overseeing the S106 mitigation fund for SDNPA projects within the Rampion area.

ReNature West Dean

In June 2023, SDNPA and Palladium, working under the Revere Model, embarked on a complex and innovative nature-based solutions project with Partners West Dean Estate to provide local environmental and economic support to assist in the delivery of their ambitious 2,550ha nature restoration vision over a 15 year period. Through this project, SDNPA and Palladium will design and assess scenarios broken down into individual tenancies of land aligned to the estates vision for ReNature and create bespoke investment-ready business plans for each tenant to add value, facilitate and enable the transition of 2,550ha of mixed forestry and agricultural land to a new management scheme, generating high quality ecosystem services and new sources of sustainable revenues.

Revolving Fund Project

This project sees SDNPA and Palladium, working in collaboration under the Revere Model, testing the concept of a Revolving Fund for landowners, supporting them in their pursuit of nature restoration on their land through the creation of business plans which will support their transition of existing farm land to new space for nature through the adoption of management plans that can generate sustainable revenues from private finance. It is almost impossible for landowners to raise funding to pay for feasibility works around nature-based solutions. Therefore, the SDNPA and the SDNP Trust have developed the concept of a Revolving Fund whereby willing landowners can apply for funding to support their feasibility phase of their restoration projects and if/ when implemented in the future will re-pay the loan back to the Revolving Fund for other similar likeminded landowners to apply for. This project tests the concept with four landowners who applied for feasibility funding. Applications were assessed through an expert panel of professionals with the successful applicants benefiting from funding for their feasibility phase of their projects. The business plans generated through this work and the approach to funding their creation can be applied in the future to support and

empower landowners to look at nature-based solutions as a sustainable revenue alternative to their traditional farming income.

Seven Sisters

Ownership of the iconic Seven Sisters Country Park was transferred from East Sussex County Council to the SDNPA in July 2021, following a two-year negotiating process. Seven Sisters Country Park (SSCP) is a unique place. It comprises 280 hectares of chalk cliffs, meandering river valley and open chalk grassland. It's home to grazing livestock, rare flora and fauna and is a corridor for a large number of migrating birds. The Authority is making a long-term commitment to SSCP and is working with the South Downs National Park Trust to make substantial investment in the site. This investment underpins the Authority's long-term plans to conserve and enhance SSCP to ensure that it continues to be an iconic, healthy and cherished place for future generations.

Setting the Standard

Historic England are supporting a National Trust and SDNPA initiative to develop, test, trial and launch guidance and toolkits to support improved monitoring and recording of Scheduled Monuments in the National Park. The guidance has the potential to act as a national blueprint, and will ensure a consistent approach is established, including data sharing and collection protocols, terminology and templates. The inclusion of 'how to' guides (including, it is hoped, video guidance) will also enable landowners, land managers, ecologists, local communities and special interest groups to take the initiative when it comes to monitoring and engagement, and ensure better planning in projects that include Scheduled Monuments. The guidance may support farmers when considering and monitoring FiPL submissions and may also be of use in the development of Whole Estate Plans.

Shifting the Gaze (extended)

Continuing our partnership with Writing Our Legacy, this project builds on the successful Shifting the Gaze project, which has delivered small bursaries to emerging and established creative talent in the Southeast, supporting Black, Asian and ethnically diverse writers to develop and focus their creative practice on the landscape of the South Downs. This project enables us to build on that work, supporting Writing Our Legacy with the delivery of further small-scale bursaries, mentoring and professional development support, and the production of new work that supports the National Park to communicate and share the special qualities of the South Downs through diverse perspectives and experiences.

South Downs Hub (SSCP)

The Our South Downs Hub at Seven Sisters Country Park will create a versatile, rentable market space where members can promote and sell the best products from the South Downs direct to the public. The Pump Barn at Seven Sisters will be transformed into a functional space to host events and markets.

South Holt Farm and Woodland

The South Holt Farm Project represents an opportunity, working with Palladium under the Revere Model, to trial a nature restoration model that will enhance natural capital assets on the estate and within the greater South Downs National Park, including grassland, woodland and enhanced connectivity between habitats. These land restoration interventions have the ability to generate valuable nitrate reduction, biodiversity net gain and carbon services which hold substantial financial potential from private markets. Building on the pioneering work trialled at Broadreed Estate, through this project we are able to further test and develop the tools and resources required to conduct the baseline, enhancement and economic mapping and gain vital experience on how to deliver this

feasibility work. Following the completion of this project informed by the findings the estate have committed to 307ha of new space for nature.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for Schools

This project aims to create an innovative, exemplar Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in Schools scheme in the The Aquifer Partnership (TAP) area (Moulsecoomb, Carden Avenue and Lewes). The project aims to demonstrate a suite of SuDS from small (rain planters) to larger scale landscaped SuDS to deal with water quality and flood risk issues, stimulate interest, awareness and understanding of the value and importance of clean groundwater and engage young people in innovation and solutions, linking with the school curriculum.

The Aquifer Partnership (TAP)

This project is a collaborative approach to addressing the issue of groundwater pollution in the Brighton Chalk Block. The programme is designed to achieve greater impact together than each partner could achieve individually, bringing together significant technical expertise to create added value. TAP is dedicated to protecting the aquifer, which holds the precious groundwater we need to live.

Timescape 2

This partnership between the SDNPA, Artscape, Amberley Museum and Butser Ancient Farm seeks to engage isolated individuals, in the more deprived areas on the fringes of the National Park, in their local landscape and heritage, through art. It aims to create sustainable interventions which contribute to a reduction in loneliness and improve participants' health and wellbeing.

Walk the Chalk

'Walk the Chalk' is a festival that will bring together accessibility and creativity in celebration of the England Coast Path. The Festival will engage the community and facilitate as many people as possible accessing the England Coast Path over a 3-5 day period. We will work with artists to develop creative responses to key landscape themes, including the chalk geology and fossils, grassland, cliffs, flora and fauna and the sea, as well as with the Cuckmere Haven Estuary.

Wealden Heath SAMM (Strategic Access Management & Monitoring)

The aim of this project is to mitigate the impact of increased public access pressure on the Heathland Reunited project sites of Kingsely and Broxhead Common and ensure that engagement activities and messaging are consistent across the project area. This project links to the aims of the Healds Reunited project of 'bigger, better, joined-up heathland that people know about, care about, and use responsibly and sustainably.'

WeCAN (Winchester Climate Action Network)

This is a 2 year project, initiated in March 2022, supporting and developing community-based 'Net-Zero' plans, and rolling out of the IMPACT carbon assessment tool. The project is creating a Knowledge Hub to share ideas and implement actions that contribute to reaching net zero.

We See You Now: Legacy Project

Devised and led by Alinah Azadeh, our Writer in Residence for Seven Sisters, has researched and explored iconic chalk coast landscape and considered some of the most pressing issues facing countryside today, from representation and inclusion to biodiversity and climate change. Not only producing her own work inspired by this changing coastline, Alinah is working with a network of creative writers and thinkers, to foster new work inspired by the Heritage Coast. In this legacy project, We See You Now will seek to share the ongoing impact of the project on participants.

Wriggle Room

From May 2022, Towner will deliver an early years programme with pre-school children. Although delivery is focused on pre-school children, the aim is to engage families from target communities in and around Eastbourne through a partnership with Willingdon Trees Community Centre in Hampden Park. Creative sessions, called *Wriggle Room*, will be delivered by two artists, and will use sensory learning. The project will use the Willingdon Trees and Towner gallery venues to test new approaches that bring families from different backgrounds together. The project will also draw on Towner's collections and Eastbourne's unique natural landscape as inspiration for creative activities.

SSCP KPI Report 2022/23 Q4

Key Performance Indicator	Key data	Lead Officer	Annual Target	Year to date progress at current Q	Commentary at current Q	RAG	Next steps and/or potential risks
People Indicators							
Rating of Visitor Centre Experience (staff knowledgeable and welcoming, interesting interpretation and retail, etc.)	Data taken from SSCP Annual Visitor Survey and Visit England accreditation	Peter C	75%	Awaiting VAQAS inspection	Site was previously inspected by VAQAS on 19/09/2021 and achieved 69%.		Chase VAQAS for overdue inspection
Rating of cleanliness, including toilets			TBC	Awaiting VAQAS inspection			
Rating of catering offers on site			TBC	Awaiting VAQAS inspection			
Rating of wider park, landscape and things to do.			TBC	Awaiting VAQAS inspection			
Visitor numbers	Data to be provided from car park numbers, gate data and visitors passing through the visitor centre.	Peter C	N/A	As of end of March: Car park sessions (estimate) = 68519, VC visitors = 44299 YTD, Gate counters to 13/1/23 = 386132	Gate data just reports on 3 gates and total footfall through in both directions. Car Park data based on estimate from Ringo sessions accounting for 31% of total. Also doesn't account for annual pass holders. Some holes in VC data	N/A	This is not a target, it is just for information.
Number of events run (each would have individual satisfaction ratings on feedback forms)							
		Richard Ayres	4	24			
In person engagement: Number of people engaged; children, adults, etc.	In person engagement to be recorded using a "clicker" at events	Richard Ayres	1000	1588			
Digital engagement: Number of people engaged; children, adults, etc.	Digital engagement to be recorded using Social Media report	Richard Ayres		Instagram 1880 followers, average weekly reach 4,191 Facebook 2059 followers average weekly reach 9121, twitter 1,323 followers average weekly reach 8160	Average weekly reach is based on most recent month		
Local Economy Indicators							
Percentage of goods, services sold by Company originating from local suppliers.	Data taken from supplier list on Clover	Peter C	25%	87.00%			
Number of local businesses involved (trading, supplying)			10	47			
Survey of local businesses on ease of engagement, barriers and benefits (this would be infrequent, maybe every 3 years)	Business survey due 2023						
Overall contribution to local economy from visitors – derived from visitor survey questions on length of stay in area		TBC	TBC	TBC	Year 1 create baseline and set future targets		
Landscape Indicators							
Progress against key activities in annual action plan agreed in pursuit of landscape management plan	Data taken from annual action plan which will be updated quarterly with what has been completed/ delayed etc	Laura / Sam		begin monitoring in year 1			
Number of individual initiatives taken to improve habitats			1	1			
That the features of the SSSI are in good condition and improving	NE SSSI data - expected 2023	Laura/Sam	SSSI in good condition and improving	SSSI in good condition and improving	A new agreement is currently being worked on with Natural England to start January 2024. This we have been assured by NE will ensure that the condition of the SSSI will be 'improving'		

ITEM 10 APPENDIX 6: PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-25 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS PROGRESS UPDATE (2022/23)					
Assist key for the RAG column: Green = on track; Amber = slightly behind schedule; Red = significantly behind schedule					
Indicator	2022/23 data	2022/23 Target	RAG	Comment	Data status
PMP OUTCOME 1: Landscape & Natural Beauty					
Percentage of the National Park that is relatively tranquil for its area	86%	80%	Green	This calculation takes the total figure in hectares for those areas of high tranquillity, intermediate tranquillity, vulnerability and low tranquillity as reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The high, intermediate and vulnerable totals are then divided by the overall total and multiplied by 100 to reach the final percentage. This figure is unchanged and due to lack of staff resource, the evidence for this indicator will not be updated until the next PMP in 2025-30	Data due in 2026 if needed for next PMP
Percentage area considered to have a dark night sky	69%	69%	Green	66% of the SDNP has dark skies sufficient to qualify for dark skies Bronze level status, and 3% at the Silver level. On 10th May 2016, it was announced that the South Downs National Park had been awarded DNS reserve status. Due to lack of staff resource, no new data has been collected or analysed AND the evidence for this indicator will not be updated until the next PMP in 2025-30	Data due in 2026 if needed for next PMP
Percentage of woodland area that is managed under agri-environment or other schemes	70%	69%	Green	This is data collected by Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England and Forestry Commission and cut to English National Park boundaries (known as MEOPL data - Monitoring Environmental Outcomes in Protected Landscapes). The figure for 2020/21 was 69%. This increased slightly to 70% in 2021/22. This figure is unchanged for 22/23 as no MEOPL data was provided for 22/23. Natural England have committed to providing the data during 2023.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced in 22/23
Percentage of farmland that is managed under agri-environment or other schemes	50%	70%	Amber	This figure is inclusive of all schemes including HLS/ELS and Countryside Stewardship (CS) and is the percentage of Useable Agricultural Area covered by a scheme. Although we saw a large drop during the original transition between schemes (from 80-70% coverage), coverage stabilised at around 70% as CS increases at the same rate that HLS/ELS agreements decrease. This is MEOPL data. Whilst the figure for 2020/21 was 70.0%, this decreased to 50% in 2021/22. This may be due in part to the gap between existing agri-environment schemes expiring and the start of the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. This figure is unchanged as no MEOPL data was provided for 22/23. Natural England have committed to providing the data during 2023.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced in 22/23
PMP-4: Percentage of designated or notified Geological / Geomorphological Sites managed in better condition	20%	No target set yet as this is our baseline figure	No target set yet as this is our baseline figure	There are 60 geological sites within the National Park. This is broken down into 50 Local Geological Sites (LGS)/Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS) and 10 geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SDNPA do not have any involvement in their management as they are most often privately owned and in many cases do not have public access to them. The RIGGS were last surveyed in 2013 by volunteers from the Sussex Geodiversity Group (SGG) to get a sense of whether they still existed, or had been lost. We are not aware of any sites that are actively being 'managed' for their geological features other than the SSSIs. We will liaise with the Sussex Geodiversity Group regarding re-surveying these sites. It is anticipated that this will take place in 2023/24 or 2024/25.	Next update due in 23/24 or 24/25
Changes in character of the landscape, including historic elements is maintained	N/A as is not a measure	N/A as is not a measure	N/A as is not a measure	In 2020/21 LUC reviewed and updated the existing South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (SDILCA), originally produced in 2005, and the refresh carried out in 2011. This has provided us and our partners with a practical tool, readily available in a more accessible and interactive form, which can be used to inform and guide positive landscape change. We have established a method of monitoring change at Landscape Character Type (LCT) level – and have a baseline for this going back to 2015 (effectively one PMP cycle). We have also been using an Urban Greening Index which can measure trends in 'greening' within the urban areas as a result of Planning Policies/Green Infrastructure delivery.	n/a

PMP OUTCOME 2: Increasing Resilience					
PMP-8: Percentage of rivers and groundwater bodies with water available for abstraction	7.5%			Data is only provided every 5 years and will not be available until at least 2024. Therefore, the only figure we have is from 2019 (7.5%).	Next update not due until 2024
PMP OUTCOME 3: Habitats & Species					
Area, condition and connectivity of target priority habitats – percentage of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland that is in a favourable condition	81%	80%	Green	According to MEOPL data from 2019/20, 2,406 out of 2,966 ha (81%) of broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland SSSIs are in favourable condition. Note that this is consistent with 2017 as only three units have been surveyed since 2017, all of which were already in favourable condition. Note that we are reporting on 2019/20 data as no updated data was provided by Natural England for 2020/21 , 2021/22 or 2022/23. Natural England have committed to providing data going forwards.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced in 22/23
Area, condition and connectivity of target priority habitats – percentage of calcareous grassland that is in a favourable condition -	43%	41%	Green	According to MEOPL data from 2019/20, 1,348 out of 3,103 ha (43%) of calcareous grassland SSSIs are in favourable condition. This a slight increase from 42% in 2017. Note that we are reporting on 2019/20 data as no updated data was provided by Natural England for 2020/21 , 2021/22 or 2022/23. Natural England have committed to providing data going forwards.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced in 22/23
Area, condition and connectivity of target priority habitats – percentage of lowland heath that is in a favourable condition	29%	27%	Green	According to MEOPL data from 2019/20, 432 of 1,488 ha (29%) of lowland heath SSSIs are in favourable condition. This is a significant increase compared to 10% in favourable condition in 2017. This increase is due to the re-survey of several SSSI units in Woolmer Forest resulting in a reclassification from Unfavourable Recovering to Favourable condition, which was a key Heathlands Reunited site. Note that we are reporting on 2019/20 data as no updated data was provided by Natural England for 2020/21 , 2021/22 or 2022/23. Natural England have committed to providing data going forwards.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced since 2019
Area, condition and connectivity of target priority habitats – percentage of neutral grassland that is in a favourable condition	34%	33%	Green	According to MEOPL data from 2019/20, 479 out of 1,417 ha (34%) of neutral grassland SSSIs is in favourable condition. This is a slight increase on 32% reported in 2017. Note that we are reporting on 2019/20 data as no updated data was provided by Natural England for 2020/21 , 2021/22 or 2022/23. Natural England have committed to providing data going forwards.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced since 2019
Percentage of water bodies achieving ‘good’ or ‘high’ status or potential	32%	32%	Green	According to MEOPL data from 2021/22, 99.94km of 314.44km (32%) of streams and rivers in the SDNP were considered to have 'good' ecological status. This is a significant improvement on the baseline reported in the State of the Park Report (2012) when we reported that just 15% of streams and rivers achieved 'good' or 'high' ecological status. Note that we are reporting on 2021/22 data as no updated data was provided by Natural England for 2022/23. Natural England have committed to providing data going forwards.	MEOPL data from Natural England not produced in 22/23
Population and distribution of target priority species				Long term trend analysis was commissioned from the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Data for the South Downs National Park showed that over the period 2011-2021, more species increased than decreased. Nine of the 21 species showed a significant increase within the South Downs NPA, while just three species showed a significant decrease, five species were classified as stable and three species as uncertain. The ‘uncertain’ category arises more frequently with a limited number of sites and/or shorter length time series, as this produces wider margins of error. Across the rest of south-east England, there were 13 species with a significant increase, and four species showing a significant decrease, with three species classified as stable and one species as uncertain. There are no species over this time period which present a significant trend in opposite directions between the two study areas . This data will continue to be tracked along with key priority species in the sdnp.	22/23 data received

Distributions of target invasive non-native invasive species (INNS)				Area teams continue to monitor invasive species specific to their areas including American mink in the Western Area and Himalayan Balsam in the Wealden area. In addition, the five catchment partnerships are taking the lead on invasive species survey and control on a catchment wide basis. Invasive non-native species (INNS) projects have been set up on the Itchen, Ouse and Cuckmere and planning is in progress for the Arun, Rother and Meon catchments. No further updates to report.	No further updates to be provided - no accurate data sets
PMP OUTCOME 4: Arts & Heritage					
Percentage of heritage assets 'at risk'	0.8%	0.9%	Green	According to Historic England data, there are 5,815 heritage assets (<i>listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and registered battlefields</i>) in the SDNP. Of these, 46 (0.79%) were considered to be 'at risk' in 2022/23.	22/23 data received
Number of day visits to museums and heritage sites				To date, we have not been able to reliably collect this information from museums.	No updates
PMP OUTCOME 5: Outstanding Experiences					
Percentage of visitors who felt very satisfied with the visitor experience	98%	99%	Green	This information is collected via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey, undertaken every five years. The last survey took place in summer 2021. In 2018 and 2021, 98% of respondents rated their enjoyment of the National Park 'high' or 'very high'. Whilst this is an excellent result, this is a slight decrease from the 2015 survey (99%). The next Visitor Survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026
PMP-13: Percentage of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that is 'easy to use' or in good condition	93%	79%	Green	Note that we are reporting the figure from 2019/20 as no surveys were undertaken by the South Downs Society in 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to Covid-19. The 93% figure is an increase on 2018/19 where we reported 79% of PRoW were 'easy to use' or 'in good condition'. However, the figure each year is based on a 5% random sample of the entire PRoW route; as such there will be some fluctuation. As we build up a long term trend of sample data we will use rolling averages to smooth out these variations and create a more robust picture of the state of the PRoW network.	Awaiting reply from Andy Gattiker re: surveys since 2019 and plan going forwards.
Proportion of visits by public transport	8%	11%	Amber	This information is collected via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey, undertaken every five years. The last survey took place in summer 2021. In 2021, possibly due to COVID-19, there was a fall in the number of people using public transport to visit the National Park (down to 8% from 11% in 2015 and 2018). The next Visitor Survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026
Number of routes promoted as accessible	N/A as is not a measure	N/A as is not a measure	N/A as is not a measure	In 2022/23: 15 accessible benches and 4 accessible picnic tables have been installed at Seven Sisters Country Park . 150 metres of Stanmer Easy Access path refurbishment and West Dean Handrail with 110 Steps/Slope have been rebuilt. In addition, 6 new off-road mobility scooters are now hosted at 4 locations - including one 6-seater electric buggy for transporting visitors to beach. Access for All funding has also provided 6 inclusive cycles and also accessible kayaks and paddleboards. Access improvements have been promoted with 3 x miles without stiles films created for existing routes and a new audio trail created with Visual impaired visitors in mind . In addition to the above benefits, we have also revamped and relaunched a new "Inclusive South Downs" web hub to bring together all the information about inclusive routes. Equipment, facilities and partner organisations. This should make it much easier for visitors to find the information they need when planning a trip to the South Downs.	22/23 data received
PMP OUTCOME 6: Lifelong Learning					
Percentage of people who are aware of why the National Park is a special place	96.0%	95%	Green	This information is collected via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey, undertaken every five years. The last survey took place in summer 2021. In 2021, 96% of people surveyed noted that at least one of the seven special qualities was a contributing factor to their enjoyment. This is comparable to 96.5% in 2018 and 95% in 2015. The next visitor survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026

Percentage of schools within a 10km radius of the boundary using the National Park for learning outside of the classroom experiences at least once a year	57%	58%	Green	The figure for this indicator is obtained through a contracted piece of research. Learning outside the classroom (LOC) is defined as any learning activity that takes place within the SDNP. The latest survey was undertaken in 2022 and saw a decrease to 57% of schools using the SDNP for LOC. The figure in 2017 was 69% . This decrease is most likely due to the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 and 2021 which severely impacted school trips.	22/23 data received
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PMP OUTCOME 7: Health & Wellbeing					
Percentage of visitors using the National Park for the improvement of their health and wellbeing	N/A	31%	N/A	This information was collected for the first time in 2021 via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey. The option 'It improved my health and wellbeing' was added to the question 'What factors contributed to your enjoyment of your visit to this part of the South Downs National Park today?'. We will continue to measure this in future surveys. The next visitor survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026
PMP OUTCOME 8: Creating Custodians					
Total number of volunteer days spent on activity relating to the special qualities	95,120	91,000	Green	This information was taken from a survey of volunteering organisations who were asked to provide information for 2015/16. This is an increase on 91,000 as calculated from the first Volunteering Audit in 2011. An updated Volunteering Audit is due to take place in summer 2024 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2024/25
Number and proportion of community led plans that are adopted and/or endorsed by the National Park Authority	47	40	Green	Seven community led plans were adopted in 2021/22 as follows: Boxgrove, Bramber, Henfield, Upper Beeding, Stedham with Iping and Twyford Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs), and Hambledon Village Design Statement (VDS). This totals 47 community led plans adopted to date (40 NDPs and 7 VDS).	Awaiting update from Chris P
PMP OUTCOME 9: Great Places to Live					
Percentage of communities with access to natural greenspace	90%	85%	Green	According to the 2014 Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG) Study, 90% of households within the National Park boundary were located within 2km of a 20ha site of ANG. This study will be refreshed for the next PMP .	Next data due 2024/25
Area of National Park with broadband connection (at or above national average speed)				This figure was defined as the percentage of properties able to receive greater than 10 Mbits/s Data derived from the Office for Communications Fixed Output Area Coverage for their Connected Nations Update. Due to reduction in resources - this data is no longer purchased as it is not an area that SDNPA has control over.	No further updates
Percentage of communities with access to key facilities.	55.6%	56.8%	Amber	Communities are classed as the 176 parishes with at least 33% of their boundary in the NP. Key facilities are classed as cashpoint, GP, primary school, pub, supermarket and post office. Of the 176 parishes in the NP, 98 have access to at least one of the above mentioned key facilities (55.6%). This has remained static since 202/21. This information is calculated from Points of Interest data which is cut to the National Park boundary. 2020/21 was the first time we were able to accurately report on this figure since 2013/14 when we reported 46.6%. In 2020/21, a new target of 56.8% was set.	22/23 data received
Proportion of new homes built that are 'affordable housing'	16%	19%	Amber	Note that this information is based on the 2021/22 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) as we always report a year in arrears. In 2021/22, 172 new homes were built. This compares with 175 in 2020/21. Of these, 28 are affordable dwellings (this compares to 11 in the previous year) - equating to 16% of total dwellings.	22/23 data received

PMP OUTCOME 10: Great Places to Work					
Spend per visitor per day in the National Park	£15.30	£12.31	Green	This information is collected via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey, undertaken every five years. The last survey took place in summer 2021. In 2021/22, the average expenditure per person on non-accommodation costs was £15.30 per person. This is <i>higher</i> than in 2018 (£12.31) and 2015 (£9.97). The next visitor survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026
Average length of visitor stay in the National park	3.9 nights	4.1 nights	Amber	This information is collected via the South Downs National Park Visitor Survey, undertaken every five years. The last survey took place in summer 2021. The average length of stay of overnight visitors staying within the National Park boundary showed a marginal <i>decrease</i> from 4.1 nights in 2018 to 3.9 nights in 2021 (and both are down from 4.3 nights in 2015). This further reduction in the number of nights staying is likely to be due to COVID-19. The next visitor survey is due to take place in 2026 when we will report updated data.	Next data due 2026
Number and diversity of business types that exist in the National Park.	7,985	8,115	Amber	This data comes from the Office for National Statistics Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), which is cut to best fit at Output Area geography using a population weighted centroid method. 2021/22 is the second year we have been able to obtain data cut to the SDNP boundary. Note that we are unable to provide information on the type of business alongside the number of each type. We are only able to report on the total number of small, medium and large businesses in the National Park .	Awaiting data cut to the SDNP boundary

Corporate Plan five year measures of success year 1 progress report (2020/21)

Corporate Plan 2020-25 measure	Achieved	Yr 1 target	RAG	Commentary
Increase our average unique monthly web visitors from @36,000 to 54,000 by 2025	129,563	39,000		We achieved higher than anticipated monthly website traffic as a result of increased reach on social media and an interest in discovering green spaces, probably as a result of Covid
Increase our social media following from @37,000 to 50,000 across all platforms by 2025	57,455	39,000		We achieved higher than anticipated reach on social media largely as a result of our content strategy - incorporating virtual events and live walks with rangers - and an interest in discovering green spaces, probably as a result of Covid.
% of contractors satisfied with SDNPA as a client	100%	80%		Based on feedback from 5 contractors, all of whom were satisfied with SDNPA as a client
% of contractors fulfilling their obligations as set out in their tender to quality, time and budget	89%	80%		Based on 9 contractors, 8 of whom fulfilled their obligations, one of whom did not
% of major applications determined within 13 weeks	85%	70%		In 2020/21 SDNPA maintained the 85% applications determined in time achieved in 2019/20. This is despite the pandemic and the Authority dealing with the highest number of major applications that it has ever dealt with. We have also far exceeded the government target of 60% and our target of 70%. 54 major application decisions were issued in 2020/21 with 46 determined within 13 weeks (85%).
% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	85%	80%		Similar performance, despite the pandemic, to 2019/20 when 80% of these applications were determined in time. We have exceeded the government target of 70% and our target of 80%. 1,977 minor and other application decisions were made in 2020/21, with 1,679 determined within 8 weeks (85%).
% of people aware of the South Downs National Park in a YouGov poll	61%	60%		Survey undertaken in October 2020. Results based on 2,080 YouGov pollsters residing in the UK. New survey due to take place in October 2021
Create two new gateways to the National Park between 2020 and 2025	1	1		We are on track to open a gateway at Seven Sisters Country Park in 2021/22 when we take over ownership of the site. The target was for one gateway between 2020 and 2022

% of new projects brought forward that have delivery plans	22%	100%		22 new projects started up in 2020-2021 (excluding all COVID ones). Of these only 5 had project delivery plans which is 22%. This is due to a combination of factors including COVID, but a refresh of the project management process is needed, and we have also made an efficiency going forward to remove the project brief and instead complete the project delivery plan at approval stage which clarifies the documents and reduces repetition.
Develop at least 3 Health and Wellbeing Hubs across the National Park by 2025	0	3		There have been some challenges around creating hubs, not least due to the impact of Covid 19. This has meant that we have not been able to have relevant discussions, as partners have been focused on managing their responses to the pandemic. We have been more focused on helping organisations support their communities and vulnerable groups. We are still confident we will reach our target of 3 health and well-being hubs created by 2025. The first of which will be at Seven Sisters Country Park where we will use it to test out what works and learn from that experience
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of young people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	N/A	N/A	N/A	Due to Covid, very few activities were able to take place in 2020/21. Therefore we will start measuring these targets in 2021/22
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of BAME people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	N/A	N/A	N/A	Due to Covid, very few activities were able to take place in 2020/21. Therefore we will start measuring these targets in 2021/22
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of people with disabilities participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	N/A	N/A	N/A	Due to Covid, very few activities were able to take place in 2020/21. Therefore we will start measuring these targets in 2021/22
CP-2.2d: Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of females participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	N/A	N/A	N/A	Due to Covid, very few activities were able to take place in 2020/21. Therefore we will start measuring these targets in 2021/22
Your National Park' campaign launched and reaching 20,000 by 2025	N/A	N/A	N/A	Covid delays pushed back the filming and subsequent launch of 'Your National Park'. We have most of the films but there are still delays on delivering the final two. We will therefore start measuring this target in 2021/22

CORPORATE PLAN FIVE YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS YEAR 2 PROGRESS REPORT (2021/22)				
Assist key for the RAG column: Green = on track; Amber = slightly behind schedule; Red = significantly behind schedule				
Five Year Measures (FYM)	Achieved	Yr 2 target	RAG	Commentary
CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL				
Increase our average unique monthly web visitors from @36,000 to 54,000 by 2025	130,911	42,000	Green	As more people spent time at home and online as a result of COVID-19 and lockdowns, our channels became refuges for those seeking an escape from doom scrolling and negative news. We made a conscious choice early on that channels were to be 'positivity engines' by helping people connect to the landscape at a time they were only allowed to leave their homes for specific periods or for a limited number of reasons. This accelerated our channel growth and engagement. More recently, we've seen higher volumes of international traffic to our website, probably as a result of an uptick in international visitations to the UK.
Increase our social media following from @37,000 to 50,000 across all platforms by 2025	65,747	41,000	Green	As lockdown restrictions slowly eased, outdoor venues and facilities opened first. This meant we had a big drive on our channels towards walking pages and to feature pieces on the website e.g. top picnic locations in the South Downs. Many were finding us for the first time and we've retained a high number of these users since.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of young people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	13%	5%	Green	This share of the volunteer cohort has increased from 4% in 2019. This is due to the targeted programme of South Downs Youth Action days coordinated by the SDNPA Volunteer Development Officer and delivered by staff across the SDNPA and partner organisations. The reduction in VRS tasks due to COVID-19 has also played a part.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of BAME people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	6%	1%	Green	This increase is due to aforementioned youth volunteering programmes and residential weekends working with diverse groups of young people from urban conurbations such as London.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of people with disabilities participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	12%	10%	Green	The way this data is captured could be improved. As disabilities are not necessarily visible and their disclosure is not compulsory, the figure is likely to be higher. The impact of Covid-19 may also have reduced the willingness of people with disabilities to volunteer due to the potential risks around social mixing.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of females participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	33%	32%	Green	This figure includes volunteers noting their gender as other (e.g. non-binary or gender-fluid).
Create two new gateways to the National Park between 2020 and 2025	1	1	Green	Year 1-2 aim to create gateway at Seven Sisters Country Park
% of people aware of the South Downs National Park in a YouGov poll	61%	65%	Amber	The year 2 target was 65% (a 4% increase on the 61% result achieved in the 2020 survey). However, the result remained the same with 61% of YouGov pollsters aware of the SDNP in 2021 (based on a survey of 2,030 residents of Great Britain undertaken over one day in October 2021). A new survey is due to take place in October 2024 when we will measure whether awareness has increased back to the 65% figure achieved in the 2019 survey, prior to the various restrictions imposed by COVID-19.
Develop at least 3 Health and Well- Being Hubs across the National Park by 2025	0	3	Amber	Target = at least 3 hubs created by 2025. There have been some challenges around creating health and wellbeing hubs, not least due to the impact of COVID 19. This has meant that we have not been able to have relevant discussions, as partners have been focused on managing their responses to the pandemic. We have been more focused on helping organisations support their communities and vulnerable groups. We are still confident we will reach our target of 3 health and well-being hubs created by 2025. The first of which will be at Seven Sisters Country Park where we will use it to test out what works and learn from that experience.

CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: DELIVERING THE STATUTORY PLANNING SERVICE				
% of major applications determined within 13 weeks	89%	70%	Green	54 applications were made and 48 determined within 13 weeks. <i>NB Statutory target is 60%, SDNPA internal target is 70%</i>
% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	81%	80%	Green	2,172 applications were made and 1,758 determined within 8 weeks. <i>NB Statutory target is 70%, SDNPA internal target is 80%</i>
CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: NEW WAYS OF WORKING				
% of contractors fulfilling their obligations as set out in their tender to quality, time and budget	100%	80%	Green	Request for feedback was sent with regard to 8 contractors. Of the 7 response received, all had fulfilled their obligations.
% of new projects brought forward that have delivery plans	71%	100%	Amber	This low figure is due to changes made to the reporting process and some projects may have been unaware of the new project delivery plan requirements. This has been addressed for 2022/23.

CORPORATE PLAN FIVE YEAR MEASURES OF SUCCESS YEAR 3 PROGRESS REPORT (2022/23)				
Assist key for the RAG column: Green = on track; Amber = slightly behind schedule; Red = significantly behind schedule				
Five Year Measures (FYM)	Achieved	Yr 3 target	RAG	Commentary
CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL				
Increase our average unique monthly web visitors from @36,000 to 54,000 by 2025	132,968	46,000	Green	Total unique visits in 2022/23: 1,595,614 (+1.88%) Total page views: 4,640,122 (-0.37%)
Increase our social media following from @37,000 to 50,000 across all platforms by 2025	79,349	44,000	Green	Social media saw an increase in followers of 9.6% to over 79,000. E-newsletter subscribers increased by 21% to more than 10,600
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of young people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	13%	6%	Green	Engaging young people (16-25 year olds) is a priority for us. We have delivered social and environmental action days and supported Youth Ambassadors and youth voice. We support young people to develop leadership skills and confidence in encouraging others to connect to the natural environment and learn to care for it.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of BAME people participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	6%	1.5%	Green	We continue to deliver youth volunteering programmes and residential weekends working with diverse groups of young people from urban conurbations such as London.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of people with disabilities participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	12%	12%	Green	The way this data is captured could be improved. As disabilities are not necessarily visible and their disclosure is not compulsory, the figure is likely to be higher.
Increase from the baseline in the 2018 Volunteer Development Strategy in the number of females participating in volunteering opportunities led by the SDNPA	30%	34%	Amber	This figure does not include SDYA as this is an optional monitoring question so the data we have for this group is very small.
Create two new gateways to the National Park between 2020 and 2025	1	1	Green	Work on the new part-funded gateway interpretation at QECP completed. This includes NP specific information and mapping in the main visitor centre and at 4 hubs throughout QECP including Butser Hill and the Juniper car park.
% of people aware of the South Downs National Park in a YouGov poll	61%	65%	Amber	This poll is conducted every three years. Next poll is to take place in October 2024.
Develop at least 3 Health and Well- Being Hubs across the National Park by 2025	3	3	Green	Hubs have been established at SSCP, Truleigh Hill and RSPB Pulborough Brooks. They have all been used for a range of H&WB activities over the last year

CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: DELIVERING THE STATUTORY PLANNING SERVICE				
% of major applications determined within 13 weeks	80%	70%	Green	49 major applications determined of which 39 in time (80%)
% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	84%	80%	Green	Minor: 449 decisions issued of which 356 in time (79%) Other: 1639 decisions issued of which 1,393 in time (85%)
CORPORATE PLAN THEMATIC AREA: NEW WAYS OF WORKING				
% of contractors fulfilling their obligations as set out in their tender to quality, time and budget	87.5%	80%	Green	We also seek feedback from contractors about whether they are satisfied with SDNPA as a client. In the year 2022-2023, 100% of responses received stated that contractors were satisfied with SDNPA.

Item 10 Appendix 8: 2022/23 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Compliments, Comments and Complaints Summary

Overview

During the year the SDNP received 2 compliments and 42 complaints about its services. Of these 42 complaints, one was in relation to Corporate Services, with the remainder relating to the Planning function (including for the host planning authorities where they undertake planning work on our behalf).

There were two complaint decisions received from the Ombudsman in the reporting year. Both cases were closed after initial enquiries and no fault was found.

Compliments

The Compliments, Comments and Complaints (CCC) panel have high standards of expectation in relation to reviewing submitted compliments. Compliments included in the recorded data reflect services provided above the expected day-to-day function of an Officers' role. In all instances, the CCC panel ensure line managers and Officers are informed of any feedback received.

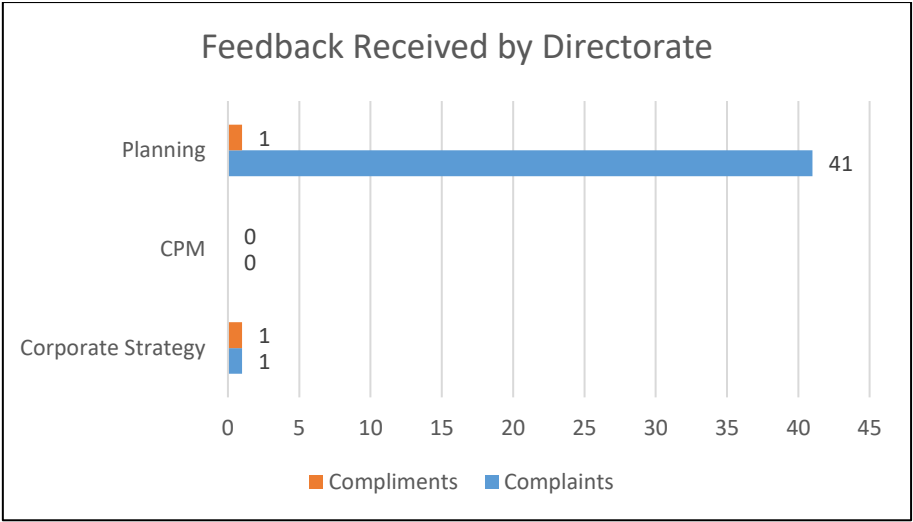
Complaints

The number of complaints received this year (42) has dropped back to the average number of complaints seen prior to the 2021-22 data (61 for 2021-22) for all directorates. The total number of planning complaints continues to represent a very small percentage of the business transacted by the planning team (in excess of 5500 applications handled during the year).

For the 2022-23 reporting period, 62% of complaint responses were issued on time (58% in 2021-22), this continues the trend of improvement in this area seen over the last few years but is still inadequate. The response times of the SDNPA team continues to remain good, it should be noted that the SDNPA handle all Host Authority complaints at later stages of the process if complaints progress that far.

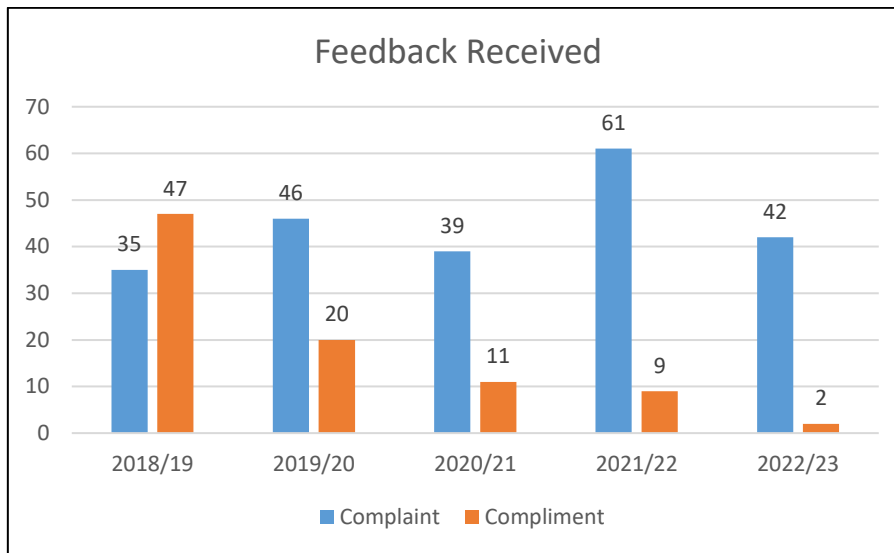
Feedback Received by Directorate 2022-23 (data table followed by graph)

Directorate	Number of Complaints	Number of Compliments
Corporate Services	1	1
CPM	0	0
Planning	41	1



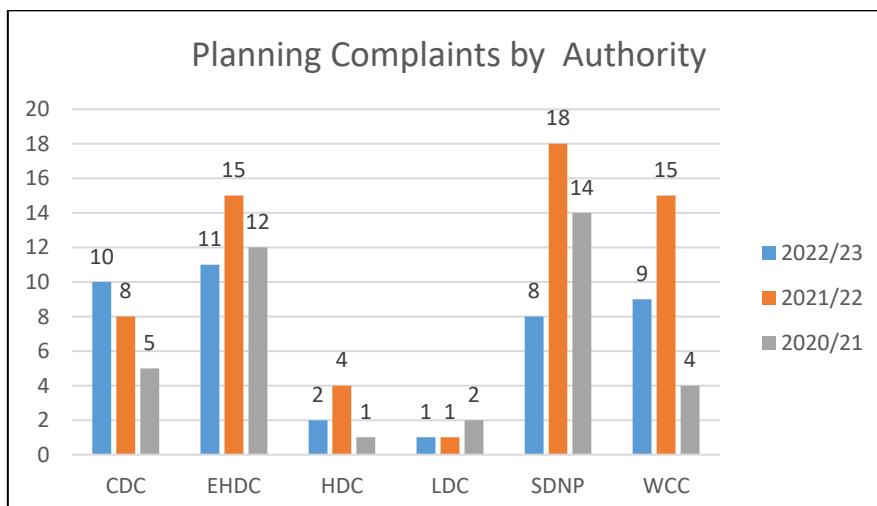
Feedback Received – 5 Year Comparison (data table followed by graph)

Reporting Year	Number of Complaints	Number of Compliments
2018/19	35	47
2019/20	46	20
2020/21	39	11
2021/22	61	9
2022/23	42	2



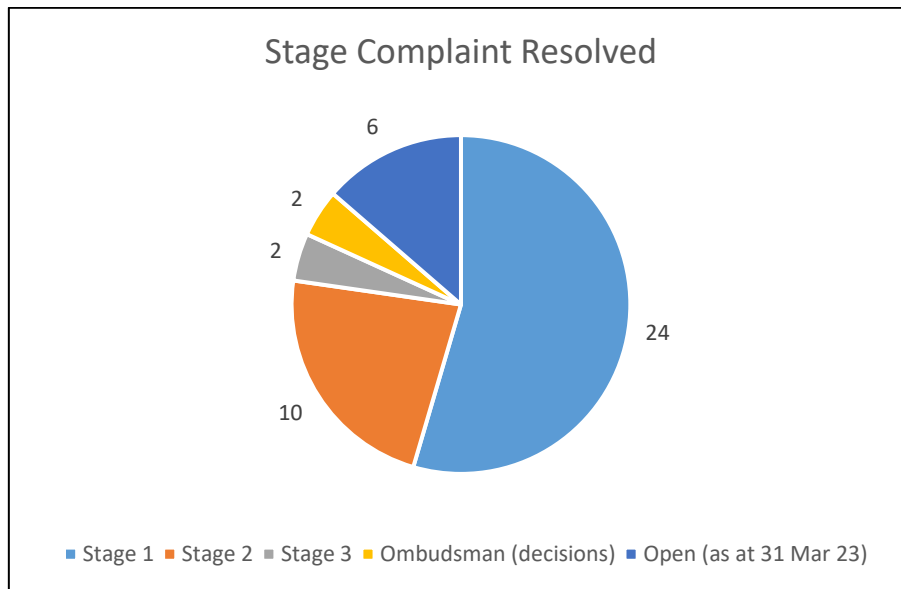
Planning Complaints by Authority (data table followed by graph)

Authority	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
CDC	10	8	5
EHDC	11	15	12
HDC	2	4	1
LDC	1	1	2
SDNP	8	18	14
WCC	9	15	4
Total	41	61	38



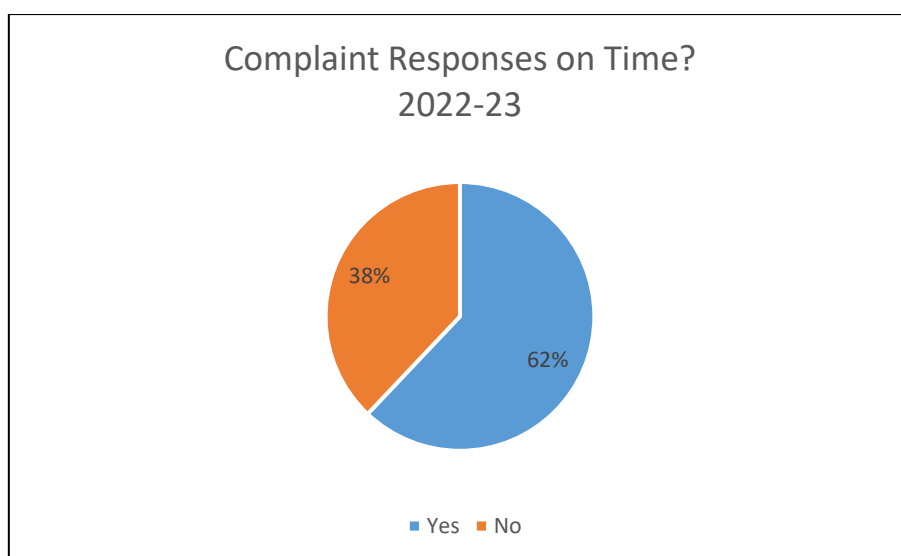
Stage Complaint Resolved 2021-22 (data table followed by graph)

Stage Resolved	Number of Complaints
Stage 1	24
Stage 2	10
Stage 3	2
Open (as at 31 March 22)	6
Ombudsman (decisions received)	2



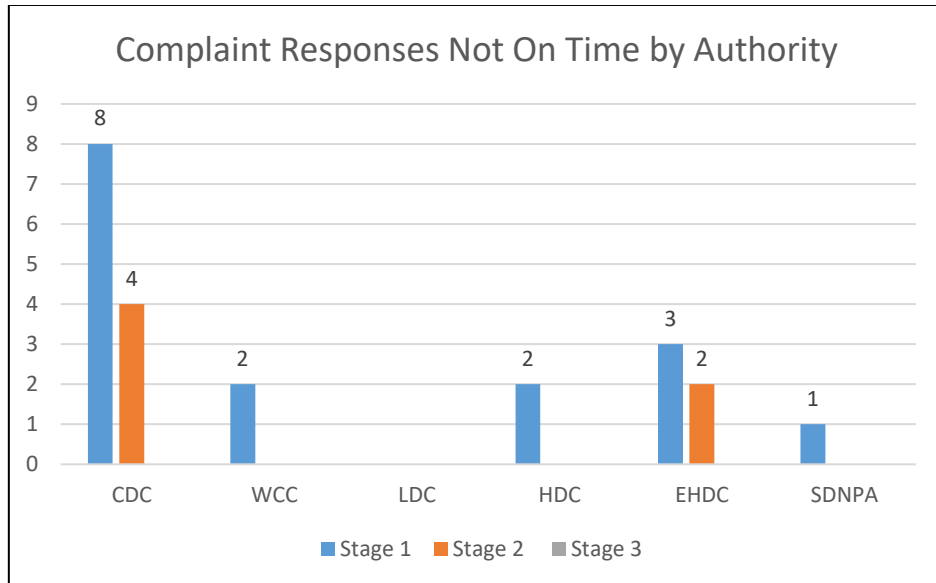
Percentage of Complaint Responses sent within time 2022-23 (data table followed by graph)

Yes	No
62%	38%



Complaint Responses not on time by Authority (data table followed by graph)

Authority	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
CDC	8	4	N/A
WCC	2	0	N/A
LDC	0	0	N/A
HDC	2	0	N/A
EHDC	3	2	N/A
SDNPA	1	0	0



SDNPA Complaints – Ombudsman Decisions 2022-23

Ombudsman Reference:	22 015 733
Ombudsman Decision:	Closed after initial enquiries
Decision Date:	16 March 2023

The Complaint

- A case was brought against the Authority in relation to their handling of a planning matter and the enforceability of an agreement restricting use of Mr X's land.

Ombudsman's Conclusion

- The Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration and service failure and considers whether any fault has had a significant adverse impact on the complainant. They may decide not to start or continue an investigation if it is believed that the injustice is not significant enough to justify their involvement.
 - The Ombudsman concluded that the Authority was not at fault in making their decision to decline to discharge the agreement, it was a matter of professional judgement.
 - The Ombudsman decided that they would not investigate this complaint as the injustice stemmed from the refusal to grant planning permission and it would have been reasonable for him to have appealed the decision. Mr X accepted that the original agreement remained in force but wished to discharge it. This would require him to apply to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) to consider this matter. The Ombudsman could not achieve the desired outcome.
-

Ombudsman Reference:	22 000 367
Ombudsman Decision:	Closed after initial enquiries
Decision Date:	27 June 2022

The Complaint

- A case was brought against the Authority in relation to CIL surcharges for a property that was exempt from CIL.

Ombudsman's Conclusion

- The Ombudsman investigates complaints about maladministration and service failure and considers whether any fault has had a significant adverse impact on the complainant. They may decide not to start or continue an investigation if it is believed that the injustice is not significant enough to justify their involvement.
 - The Ombudsman concluded that the Authority was not at fault and followed CIL regulations, no exemption form was returned prior to commencement therefore a surcharge applied in accordance with the CIL regulations.
 - The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint as it was unlikely that they would find fault, they could not add to the Authority's response and would not achieve the desired outcome.
-

Full transcripts of the Ombudsman's reports are available on the [Local Government Ombudsman website](#).



ANNUAL REVIEW 2022/23

Agenda Item 11 Report PR23/24-03 Appendix 9



A YEAR OF CHANGE IN THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

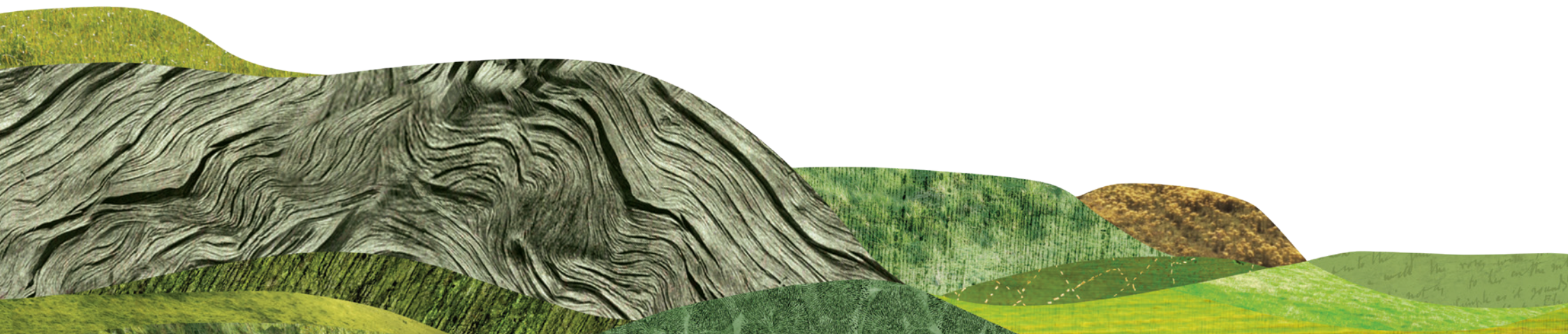
As we move into a post-pandemic era, it's clear that National Parks have never been more important, and never been so needed, for a nation grappling with a wide array of economic, environmental, health, social and international challenges.

The South Downs National Park remains one of the UK's vital "green lungs" and a place where nature and people can come together in this most treasured landscape that inspires, excites, nourishes and creates. Partnership working and collaboration have been particularly important this year and, combined with tremendous hard work from our staff, Members and volunteers, this means there is so much to celebrate. Just a couple of years on from the launch of our ReNature initiative, we're leading the way on nature recovery - with 4,716ha of habitat improved or created for biodiversity.

Almost 6,000 schoolchildren, many from cities with little access to green space, have enjoyed visiting and exploring the National Park, thanks to our grants for schools and colleges.

We're proud to have introduced six new mobility scooters at key sites, creating opportunities for everyone to be able to explore the outdoors and take home those memories of a "great day-out" in a National Park. Wherever you are, and whoever you are, everyone should be able to enjoy the South Downs National Park.

Farmers are the lifeblood of this National Park and we're pleased to have been able to successfully deliver Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme – helping over 70 unique initiatives that have taken a share of around £1m, with projects varying from nature-friendly farming to leading-edge diversification.



We're pleased to have been able to oversee the Community Infrastructure Levy, with 38 community schemes sharing just under £2m for projects such as new school playgrounds, new access paths and river restoration. Good planning delivers widescale, far-reaching benefits and this will be particularly important with mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain on the horizon. The National Park is already innovating and hopes to utilise this planning shift to help nature and make the South Downs an even better place to live, work and visit.

The list of achievements, breakthroughs and successes is long and none of it would have been possible without the support of local businesses, landowners, farmers, volunteers, charities, residents and community groups who share our commitment to protecting and enhancing the South Downs.

As Britain's youngest National Park, ambition is something we have never shied away from and we're proud to set the bar high. Our new high-level targets demonstrate that desire to make a real difference.

They include securing an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature from a baseline of 25%, and making the whole of the National Park nature friendly by 2030. We are also targeting a 5% reduction, per annum, in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019.

Amid an uncertain economic climate, the challenges undoubtedly remain but we know that now is the time for bold action. The SDNPA, its communities, visitors and

partners stand ready to help deliver our national response to two of the defining crises of our time – nature depletion and climate change.

We hope you enjoy reading this Annual Review that captures the wide spectrum of the Authority's work to conserve and enhance this beautiful National Park and improve understanding and awareness of this special place.



Trevor Beattie
Chief Executive



Vanessa Rowlands
Chair

This Annual Review highlights some of our key achievements for 2022/23 which link to the objectives laid out in our **Corporate Plan 2022/23**

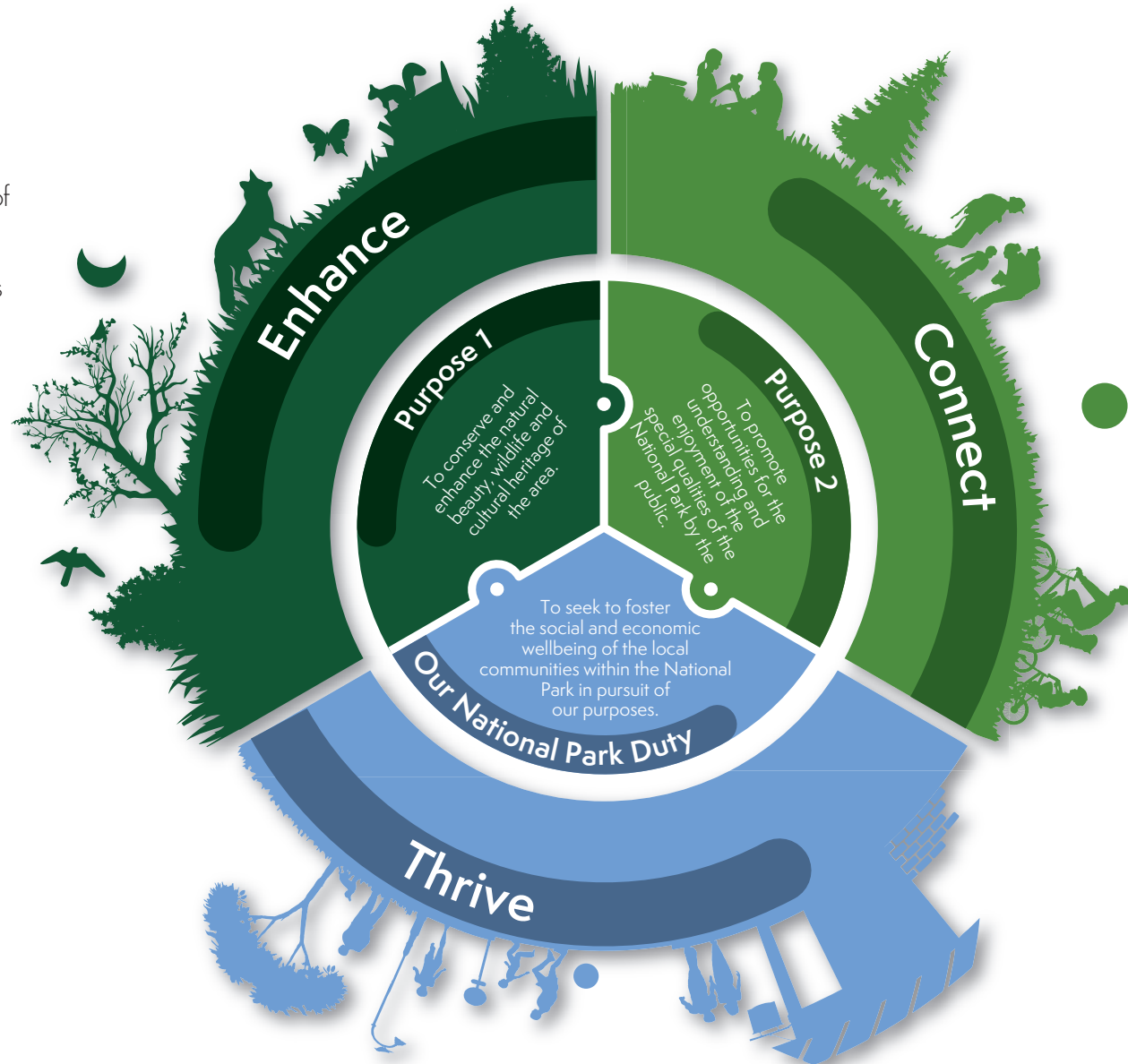
Cover image: © Matthew Thomas — Washington Chalk Pits, Wiston Estate



OUR PURPOSES AND DUTY

Our role as the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is clearly defined by Parliament in our statutory Purposes and Duty.

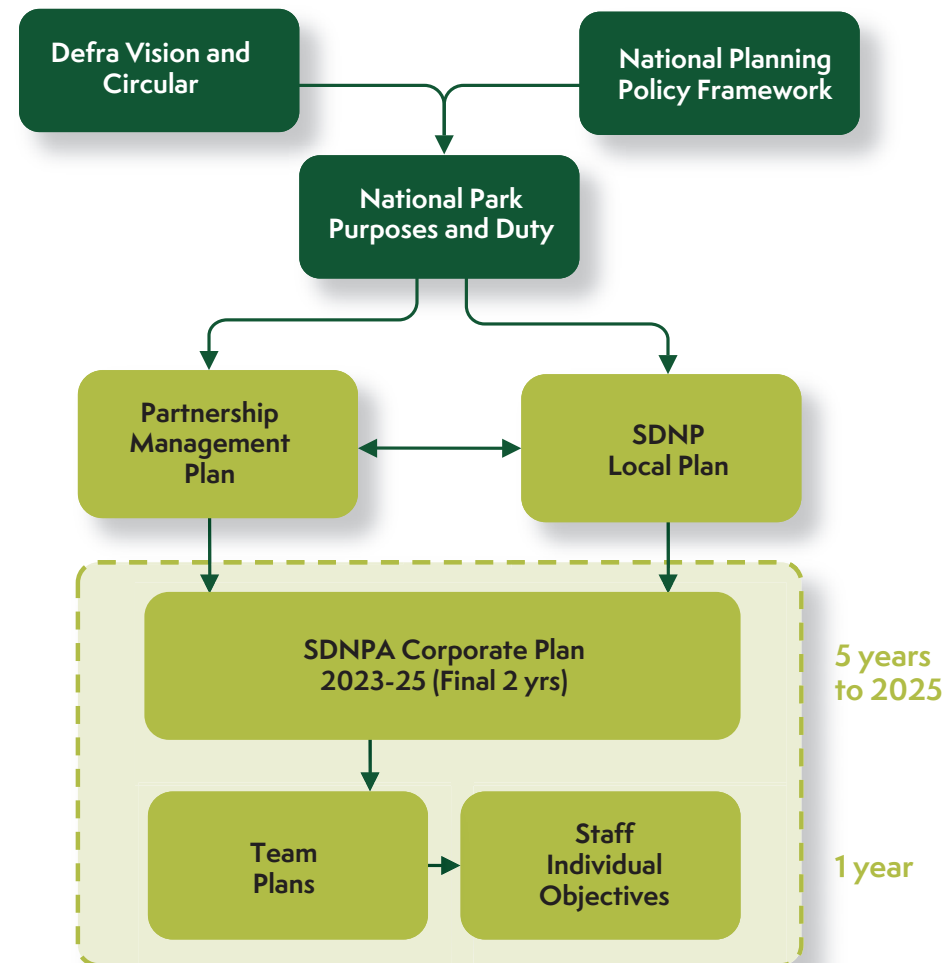
- **Our first Purpose is:** To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area.
- **Our second Purpose is:** To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.
- **The Duty on the SDNPA is:** To seek to foster the social and economic wellbeing of the local communities within the National Park in pursuit of our purposes.



THE CONTEXT WITHIN WHICH WE WORK

The diagram below sets out the policy and strategic framework steering the work of the South Downs National Park Authority. The South Downs National Park Authority's Corporate Plan sets out how we will deliver those elements of the South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) for which we are responsible.

All relate back to the 10 outcomes in the PMP. The Corporate Plan is one of our key management tools to ensure delivery of our Purposes and Duty. Progress towards demonstrating that we have delivered the success measures will be monitored by the South Downs National Park Authority annually and published in the **Annual Review**.



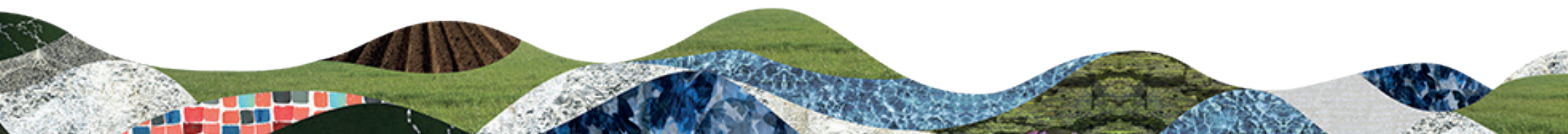
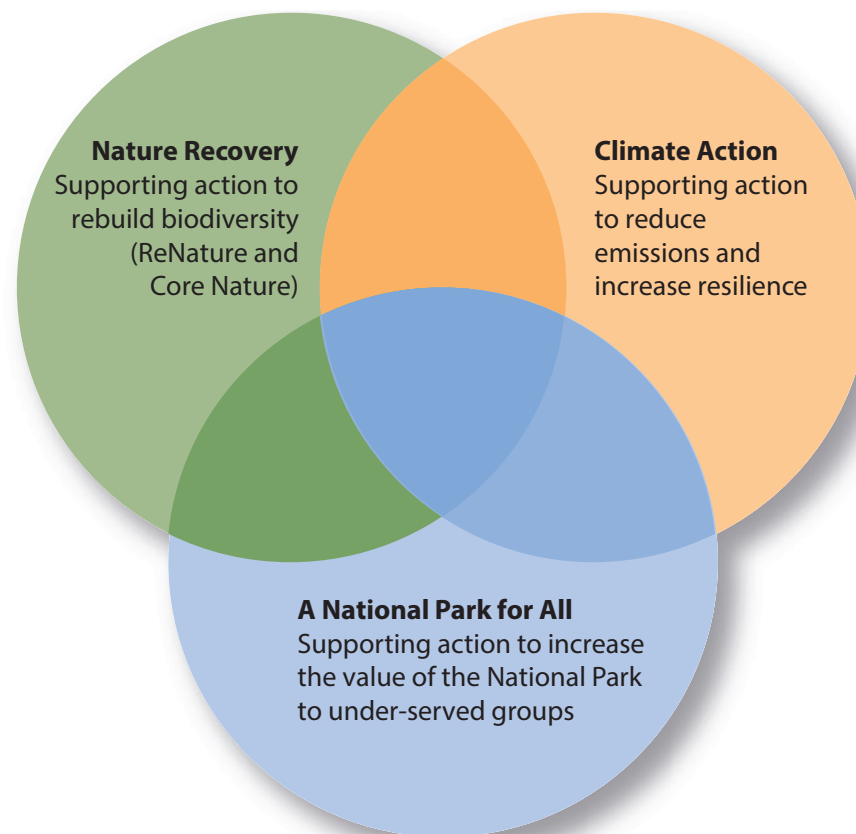
HIGH LEVEL TARGETS

The long-term ambitions of the Partnership Management Plan (PMP) are very broad, but for the next three years the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) will come under increasing financial pressure as rising inflation outstrips a flat cash funding settlement.

It is therefore essential that we focus on those areas where we know we can make the most impact against the priorities in the PMP, the Public Affairs Strategy and Government's Glover response. This does not mean abandoning the whole range of the PMP. We will maintain the breadth of its ambition with the associated partnerships so that we can respond swiftly when circumstances change and/or funding is secured. This Corporate Plan shows how we will make a greater impact with fewer, but better targeted, resources while maximising our potential to raise private and charitable finance. It is for this reason that we put in place a single set of high-level targets for this Corporate Plan. This is how we will measure the overall effectiveness of the SDNPA between 2022 and 2025 in terms of its impact on the ground. We will expect every team to maximise its contribution towards these targets.

- HLT1: To secure an additional 13,000ha, or 33% of land managed for nature by 2030 from a baseline of 25%
- HLT2: Maintain, enhance and/or restore existing key sites, habitats and species.
- HLT3: South Downs National Park Authority to reduce its carbon footprint by 150 tonnes per annum in line with the 2030 net zero target
- HLT4: 5% reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019

- HLT5: Increase the diversity of visitors to, and those engaging with, the South Downs National Park.
- HLT6: To be devised: an impact measure for direct engagement.



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK KEY ACHIEVEMENTS FROM 2022/23

FARMING IN A PROTECTED LANDSCAPE (FiPL)

26

...projects approved were awarded
£383,822

FARMING

178

...farmers in **6** farm clusters covering 2/3
of the NP

CIL FUNDING

£412k

...awarded to **9** projects

RURAL ECONOMY

152

...members Our South
Downs business network

19

...Green South Downs
Sustainability Certified
businesses

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(major, minor and other) dealt
with within agreed timescales

90%

16%

Affordable housing
...of homes built in the
National Park

NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL

EDUCATION

5,830

...school children from our more deprived
communities visited thanks to our grants for
schools and colleges

25

**YOUTH
ACTION
days**

...engaging **172** young people in
positive environmental action

VOLUNTEER RANGERS

369 Rangers spent...

1,587

...days
supporting
national
park work

104

...hours spent by **13** wardens
surveying and minor maintenance

SOUTH DOWNS WAY

11

...gates repaired

3
new
Waymarkers

2

...gates replaced

MOBILITY SCOOTERS

6

...for hire at 5
locations.

WRITER IN RESIDENCE

...at Seven Sisters:

106

...creatives,
artists &
specialists

144

...participants

New products or
commissions: **53**
Number of days
employment: **220**

SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

f

t

i

y

79,349 **+10%**

Total followers

20.3%

Youtube subscribers

WEBSITE VISITORS

1.60m **2%**

unique visits

10,638 **21%**

E-NEWSLETTER

signups to date

EVENTS & ENGAGEMENT

VIRTUAL

741k

Total content
reach

37k

Video
views

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT

5,091

at Pop Up Events ReNature and
Dark Skies Festival. Over **600**
ReNature packs sent to community groups

NATURE RECOVERY & CLIMATE ACTION

404ha

NEW habitat created for
nature during 2022/23*

Habitat **IMPROVED**
for nature during
2022/23*

4,312ha

TOTAL TREES

16,383

...planted in
2022/23 covering
approx. **98ha**

**TREES
FOR THE
DOWNS**
**SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK**

24.5km

HEDGEROW
restored/
created

PONDS

14 restored/created/
maintained

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

35%

...on largest scale
development sites

iNATURALIST/NPUK LOOK WILD PROJECT

23,059

...species observations were made inside the
SDNP by **1,069** observers clocking up a total
of **11,530** volunteer hours

*From previously committed land

CASE STUDY: SEVEN SISTERS

After a winter of building works, spring/summer 2022 saw the buildings at Exceat, Seven Sisters Country Park, open to the public – newly refurbished and with a new team of enthusiastic National Park staff.

The Easter weekend 2022 saw the opening of the visitor centre and new toilet facilities, including a Changing Places toilet and two accessible toilets. In late May the new 'Grab and Go' opened its door offering a selection of snacks, light lunches, hot and cold drinks and pots of ice cream. In both the visitor centre's retail space and the Grab and Go, there has been a focus on supporting local businesses; 87% of all products stocked come from within or close to the National Park with a focus on sustainability and minimising plastic waste.

Out on the park the landscape team have continued to make improvements to the habitats and site access. The new 4.8 mile 'Country Park Trail' was opened in spring 2023, taking in all the rare habitats the Country Park has to offer and encouraging visitors to explore lesser known parts of the Country Park.

Cattle and ponies have continued to graze the site, targeting the chalk grassland in the winter months and the wet grasslands in the summer months. This has meant an increase the diversity of plants and the eco-systems that are reliant on them. Future plans will seek to restore the ponds at Foxhole and New Barn, allowing them to provide an important source of fresh water for wildlife.

In time for summer, work will finish at Foxhole campsite and cottages. Bookings are already coming in from education groups keen to bring children to spend a night under the National Park's dark skies.

2022-23 also saw significant investment in improving accessibility at the Country Park with the arrival of; 2 off-road mobility scooters, multiple accessible benches, a chair lift and accessible canoes to provide access to the meanders and a selection of accessible bikes.

The work to improve Seven Sisters doesn't stop and exciting plans are developing to further improve the site for people, nature and also to minimise our own carbon footprint.



© Shelley Comes – view of the Seven Sisters from Hope Gap



© SDNPA

SEVEN SISTERS
SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

CASE STUDY: CHANGING CHALK

The four year Changing Chalk project is a partnership of organisations working together for a sustainable future for the South Downs. Led by the National Trust, the project is supported by a £2.23m National Lottery Heritage Fund grant and funding from People's Postcode Lottery and The Linbury Trust.

The project will connect nature, people and heritage by restoring lost landscapes and habitats, bringing history to life and offering new experiences in the outdoors. Working with the communities of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Lewes the project aims to protect and restore the Downs landscape for people to enjoy for health and wellbeing, for nature recovery and for climate resilience.

Much of the Changing Chalk project area falls within the South Downs National Park. Chalk downland is a big part of what makes the South Downs so special. It is a mosaic of habitat comprising of chalk grassland, chalk streams and chalk heaths. In just one square meter of chalk grassland, up to 40 different species can be found – practically a rainforest in miniature. Although common in England, globally it is very rare. These grassy downlands are the result of forest clearing as far back as Neolithic and Bronze Age times, grazed by sheep for centuries.

The SDNPA is delivering 2 of the 18 projects of Changing Chalk. At the end of the first year, we have achieved:

- Supporting conservation grazing at a landscape scale, through the establishment of multiple grazing hubs
142 hectares under improved grazing management (Yr1 target: 130ha)
- Restoring 5 key dew ponds in the Eastern Downs to provide water for grazing animals and much-needed havens for wildlife
1 dewpond restoration (Yr1 target: 1 dew pond restored)

You can find out more about the project on the **Changing Chalk website**.

Project partners: National Trust, Brighton and Hove City Council, Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, The Living Coast Biosphere, Natural England, Lewes Railway Land Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Buglife, Lewes and Eastbourne Councils.



© Ann Roe – Seaford dew pond

PURPOSE 1:

Enhance

Develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects that deliver the first Purpose of National Parks: **to conserve wildlife, the natural beauty of the landscape and cultural heritage.**

Progress against some of our key priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan 2022/23 are summarised below:

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO IN OUR CORPORATE PLAN	WHAT WE HAVE DONE
ReNature the South Downs National Park	<p>The South Downs Nature Recovery Programme continues through a variety of mechanisms.</p> <p>We have registered approximately 368 initiatives on the nature recovery log which are contributing towards Corporate Plan ReNature targets. This equates to 4,716ha of habitat improved or created for biodiversity for 2022/23.</p> <p>Planning and delivery has involved collaboration with a variety of partners and audiences including businesses, community groups, conservation organisations, local authorities, estates, education institutions, farmers, parishes and private landowners.</p> <p>In addition, there are 10 CIL/S106 initiatives that contribute towards nature recovery (ReNature) and a 35% average Biodiversity Net Gain on largest scale development sites.</p>
Better connect people with nature	<p>Our hybrid engagement, combining in-person events and digital engagement and content, has enabled us to reach more people than ever before. This shows us that people care about nature and want to know what they can do to help. For more information about hybrid engagement, see the National Parks for All section.</p>

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO IN OUR CORPORATE PLAN	WHAT WE HAVE DONE
<p>Work towards our Net-Zero target for the South Downs National Park</p>	<p>As well as discussions with partners regarding development of the SDNPA approach to offsetting the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions that it can't reduce; SDNPA's latest actions have been looking at fossil fuel use in SDNPA vehicles. Members of the sustainability group have arranged for an EV 4WD demo after undertaking research with Ranger staff and Seven Sisters Country Park staff to evaluate its ability and application.</p> <p>In December 2022, SDNPA submitted a bid for funding to Innovate UK to develop a common framework to track and accelerate progress towards Net Zero in National Parks using the One Planet Platform Funding bid to Innovate UK was successful, and the pilot project due to start on the 1st April 2023. It is one of thirty UK projects under the 'Pathfinder Places' programme. Plans for a national roll-out to the UK National Park family are also in development as part of a bigger Phase 2 bid for July 2023.</p>
<p>Work towards our Net Zero target for the South Downs National Park Authority</p>	<p>A scheme of 'Invest to Save' works were presented to the NPA on 30th March 2023 for approval. These works include replacing the lighting in the SDC and SSCP office for LED units, new PV panels for the Memorial Hall and SSCP. Following approval at NPA these works will be completed (subject to Planning consent) in 2023/2024. Carbon Accounting reporting will feed into the new proposal to monitor emission reduction targets across the Defra group.</p>



NATURE RECOVERY

HIGH LEVEL TARGETS

- To secure an additional **13,000ha**, or **33%** of land managed for nature by 2030 from a baseline of **25%**
- **Maintain, enhance and/or restore** existing key sites, habitats and species

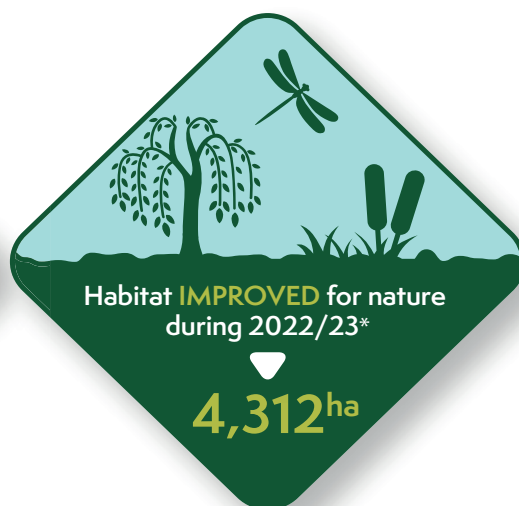
INTRODUCTION

The South Downs Nature Recovery Programme has continued through a variety of mechanisms. Delivery successes have involved collaboration with a variety of partners and audiences including businesses, community groups, conservation organisations, local authorities, estates, education institutions, farmers, parishes and private landowners.

For 2022/23, we have registered approximately **368 initiatives** on our 'Nature Recovery Log' which are contributing towards our Corporate Plan targets.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Nature Recovery delivery is a long-term process ranging from first identifying a potential site, through habitat improvement and creation and ultimately towards quality nature recovery having been achieved.



*From previously committed land

NEW HABITATS CREATED FOR BIODIVERSITY

ReNature delivery has progressed through key initiatives such as Call for Nature Sites and Beelines, and Nature Based Solutions projects through the creation of new ponds, wildflower meadows and a farm restoration scheme.

CALL FOR NATURE SITES

The Call for Nature Sites (C4NS) initiative was launched in November 2021 to stimulate interest and sites to support the South Downs Nature Recovery ambitions. At the time, this generated 77 Expressions of Interest. 41 initiatives have been or are currently being progressed largely through Nature Based Solutions, Beelines, Trees for the Downs or the ReNature Grant. A further 17 are “amber” which means they are more complex to deliver. The remainder did not qualify.

As an example of action undertaken in 2022/23, we have tracked a total of up to an estimated 312ha of habitat creation from the C4NS initiatives predominantly through a Nature Based Solutions farm restoration (307ha) involving the creation of future woodland, scrubland and lowland meadows. The Trees for the Downs schemes alone equate to approximately 3,000 trees.

This has been delivered through a variety of audiences/ stakeholders including Parish Councils, farmers, private landowners, conservation groups and colleges. A couple of large estates/ private landowners are progressing via the Nature Based Solutions route.

HABITATS IMPROVED FOR BIODIVERSITY

Habitat improvements have primarily progressed via FiPL funding and the Changing Chalk project led by the National Trust along with volunteering and SDNPA led and externally led projects at SSCP, Grandfather's Bottom (located at Butser Hill) and Lullington Heath.

Work has included management of grass verges, chalk grassland management, conservation grazing, tree planting, scrub management, field margins, woodland management, hedge gapping up, removing non-native species and deer

management practices including fencing. Although action has been taken, it will take (in some cases) may years for quality nature recovery to be realised.

- Estimated **16,383** trees planted covering approximately 98ha as part of Trees for the Downs (2022/23)
- Ponds: **14** created/restored/maintained (2022/23)
- Estimated **24.5km** of hedgerow restored/created during 2021/22 to 2022/23

LULLINGTON HEATH NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE (NNR)

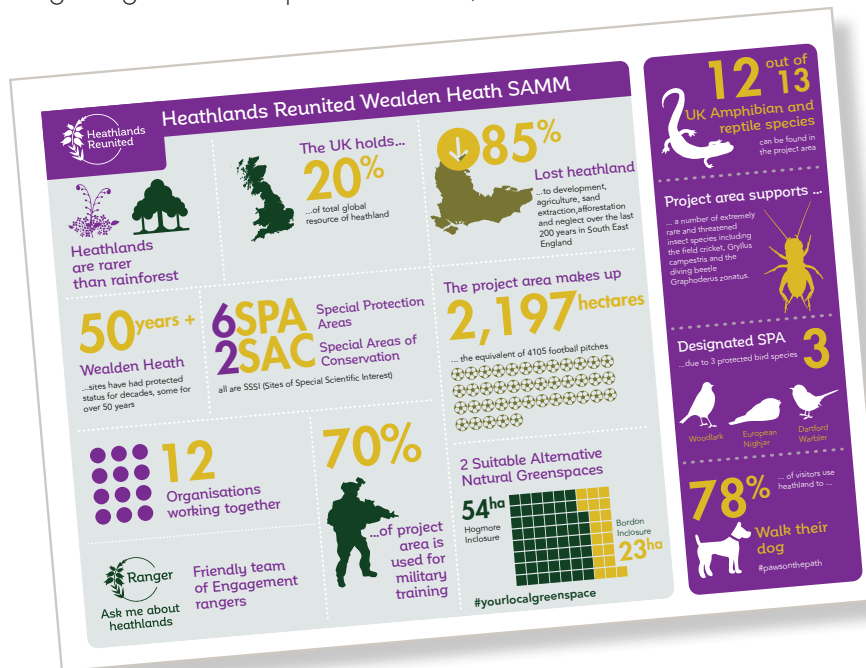
Lullington Heath NNR is situated in the South Downs between the villages of Jevington and Litlington. This project, led by Natural England and supported by the South Downs National Park Authority, to restore the only substantial example of chalk heath left in the South Downs, and one of the few remaining in Britain. Over four years, the heath has undergone major scrub clearance and increased grazing to allow the regeneration of chalk heath and chalk grassland habitat. Vast areas of invasive dense Gorse have been removed and the cleared heath is showing good signs of recovery. Visually the landscape has been restored almost completely.

The chalk heath is special because it is extremely rare for acid soils to appear on top of chalk, as they do here. A unique mixture of heathers and heathland plants such as tormentil grow amongst chalk-loving plants, including thyme and salad burnet. These attract butterflies including grayling and grizzled skipper. Time will be required for the habitat to establish as the project now enters a maintenance phase. Pony grazing on site is continuing and yielding excellent results. The ponies are exceeding expectations in controlling the regrowth of the Gorse and will be absolutely key to restoring the precious Chalk Heath Habitat.

In addition to the above, there are **10 CIL/S106 initiatives** that contribute towards nature recovery (ReNature) and a **35% average Biodiversity Net Gain** via planning on largest scale development sites.

LOOKING AHEAD

- To continue with the Nature Recovery Programme using multiple mechanisms (eg grants, projects, green finance, agri-environment schemes inc FiPL, and through Planning) and in collaboration with multiple partners and stakeholders.
- To take forward the requirements of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which goes live in November 2023.
- To engage with and support the development of three Local Nature Recovery Strategies: Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex with Brighton and Hove. For the SDNPA to fulfil its role as a Supporting Authority.
- Refresh the SDNPA Biodiversity Monitoring Framework (BMF) to further improve our monitoring (ability to measure success) capability and further developing systems to support monitoring and reporting. This will include celebrating success with appropriate case studies underpinned by data and evidence. There is also an investment required to support appropriate systems being put in place such as field maps and LandApp.
- To develop a Species Recovery strand to the Nature Recovery Programme of Work, with targets agreed and in place for 2024/25



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

WEALDEN HEATH SAMM

The 'Heathlands Reunited Wealden Heath SAMM' project, which started in spring 2021, has brought together 12 like-minded organisations to protect the Wealden Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA). The project, which is funded by East Hampshire District Council and Whitehill Town Council, aims to promote bigger, better, joined up heathland. The Wealden Heath SPA is home to many rare species and the breeding site for three threatened ground nesting bird species: Dartford Warbler, European Nightjar and the Woodlark. As well as protecting fragile habitat, the project aims to inform, engage and involve communities to use their local heathland in a responsible and sustainable way southdowns.gov.uk/help-your-heaths.

The town of Whitehill & Bordon (W&B) is undergoing major transformation to become a green, healthy, and connected town. The ambitious regeneration programme will deliver around 3,350 new homes, 5,500 new jobs, a new town centre and a new leisure centre, along with associated infrastructure such as new education, health, and leisure facilities. The town developments are within 5km of the Wealden Heaths Phase II Special Protection Area and Shortheath Common Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SPA is designated for its three species of ground-nesting birds - nightjar, woodlark, and Dartford warbler - which critically depend on lowland heathland.

The project team at SDNPA have been responsible for

- access management of the sites
- the provision of public Engagement Rangers to carry out site patrols and provide a positive presence across the sites
- the delivery a programme of public engagement activities, campaigns and events
- site monitoring - SPA monitoring and survey requirements (i.e. Visitor surveys, car park counts, bird surveys and habitat surveys)

So far the team have engaged with 4,245 people in the areas surrounding Whitehill and Bordon through events and activities to promote sustainable and responsible use of the Special Protection Area.

The team hope to bring about a change in dog walker behaviour on Heathland sites, increase the knowledge of the importance of heathland amongst local communities, and co-ordinate partnership working and consistence across Heathland Sites.

The project will run until 2025.

CLIMATE ACTION

HIGH LEVEL TARGET

- South Downs National Park Authority to reduce its carbon footprint by **150 tonnes** per annum in line with the 2030 net zero target

INTRODUCTION

The South Downs National Park Authority continues to design and implement initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint. A scheme of 'Invest to Save' works were approved by the National Park Authority meeting in Spring 2023. These works include:

- replacing the lighting in the South Downs Centre (SDC), Midhurst, and Seven Sisters County Park (SSCP) office with LED units
- New solar electricity panels, also known as photovoltaics (PV) panels, for the SDC Memorial Hall and SSCP

Following approval at NPA, these works will be completed (subject to Planning consent) in 2023/2024.

ACHIEVEMENTS

There has been a **decrease** in our greenhouse gas emissions based on SDC and our area offices. Emissions (tonnes of CO₂) were down -3.1% (from 266.57t in 2021/22 to 258.3t in 2022/23). This is due to the continuing implementation of the 'new ways of working project', allowing staff to only spend 50% of their working time in an SDNPA office. This reduction can also be attributed to the post COVID re-opening of the area offices to non-area staff as staff can now choose to work from one of the three area offices instead of travelling into Midhurst.

However, due to the opening of the new visitors centre and offices at SSCP, there has been an overall **increase** in SDNPA greenhouse gas emissions of 6.1% (total 283.01t). An increase next year also looks likely as work has taken place on refurbishing visitor accommodation at Foxhole Cottages which will receive booked guests this year. When works and improvements are completed at Seven Sisters Country Park, we will look to establish a new Park-wide baseline.

LOOKING AHEAD

SDNPA carbon accounting reporting will feed into the new proposal to monitor emission reduction targets across the Defra group.

HIGH LEVEL TARGET

- **5%** reduction per annum in the overall carbon footprint of the South Downs National Park from the baseline reported in 2019

INTRODUCTION

In February 2022 the SDNPA re-affirmed the Authority's commitment to addressing the climate and nature emergency by;

- Agreeing to work with our constituent Local Authorities and other partners, in particular local communities and landowners, to deliver actions that respond effectively to the climate and nature emergency;
- Working towards the South Downs National Park becoming 'Net-Zero with Nature' by 2040.

The following are some of the key projects SDNPA has supported and developed as part of the Climate Action Programme during 2022/23:

COMMUNITY ENERGY PATHWAY

Supporting local communities to develop community-based energy projects. The project provided mentoring and advice to early adopters and for local

communities considering renewable and retrofit projects through to the submission of external funding bids.

SDNPA CARBON BASELINE WORK

Develop a shared baseline and methodology for monitoring progress toward Net-Zero. The South Downs National Park Authority are piloting the work prior to roll out across the other UK National Parks.

WECAN PROJECT

This community 'carbon-zero' project was funded by SDNPA to support and develop community-based 'Net-Zero' plans, aided by the adoption of the IMPACT carbon assessment tool.

PECAN 'WHOLE HOUSE' RETROFIT PROJECT

The SDNPA has been supporting this project with match-funding since June 2021. The principal delivery partner is **Petersfield Climate Action Network (PeCAN)**, an environmental community group with a mission to help Petersfield and surrounding villages reduce carbon emission and protect nature. The project is just coming to the end of its two year funding.

The project set out to develop and test a non-profit expert retrofit advice service by providing retrofit services to 300 local households over two years (150 in the Petersfield area, 150 in Winchester). The project delivered retrofit plans for householders and provided support with installation to a mix of able-to-pay and low-income / vulnerable households.

In addition, the project helped to build capacity of a passionate and dynamic community group to develop other projects that reduce carbon emissions and protect nature.

PeCAN secured funding from the National Energy Foundation (NEF) and the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to deliver the project. The overall grant for the delivery of the project was £750K. The £33,000 of match funding from SDNPA enabled to secure a project co-ordinator to effectively direct this inward investment. It also supported PeCAN to extend the scope of volunteer capacity within Parishes and local groups to enhance community resilience to climate change.

LOOKING AHEAD

In October 2022 Ouse Valley Climate Action was awarded £2m from the National Lottery Community Fund, aiming to make the region a national pioneer in tackling the climate change emergency.

The East Sussex partnership covers 10 organisations, including the South Downs National Park Trust and Authority and Lewes District Council, and has an ambitious goal of empowering local people to help create one of the first communities in England to fully embrace climate action.

The project area follows the River Ouse downstream from the village of Barcombe – which is aiming to be the UK's first net-zero village – through to Lewes, the National Park's largest town, and further south to the coastal towns of Seaford, Peacehaven, and Newhaven.

The Climate Change Action Plan for 2023/24 was approved by Members in February 2023. The priority areas for delivery are:

- Work with the wider National Parks family to establish the NPAs as leaders in meeting the challenge presented by Climate Change;
- Delivering 'Net Zero with Nature' – Linking the high-level targets and Climate Action and understanding the carbon contribution of our nature recovery work;
- Delivering Climate Action through the Planning System;
- Supporting the Land-based sector to transition to a low-carbon future;
- Working with our local communities – supporting them to become more resilient;
- Working with our Local Authorities and Sector Partners to deliver positive action;
- Support rural businesses to adapt their business operations and transition to a low-carbon economy.



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS: ENHANCE

FARM CARBON PROJECT

The Farm Carbon project, working in partnership with Stephen Woodley (agronomist and advisor), aimed to work with farmers, farmer clusters and other partners across the SDNP to establish baseline data for soil quality and farm carbon budgets.

As part of the data collection element of the project, site visits were completed to all **18 participating farms**. As well as the 'in-field' tests, e.g. earthworm counts and VESS (Visual Evaluation of Soil Structure), soil samples were sent to the NRM laboratory to be analysed for trace elements, organic matter and carbon content.

All participating farms have now received reports detailing their soil analysis results and have created a carbon budget for their holding using the Farm Carbon Toolkit. The results generated are being used to identify and develop practical measures that individual farms, farmer clusters and the wider farming community can take to improve their soils and carbon footprints; aided by the implementation of the Farm Carbon calculator across the Farm Cluster groups in the SDNPA.

The results of this project will also represent a baseline from which to plan future improvements and measure change as well as help prepare for future ELM and private finance opportunities, and contribute to the development of the SDNPA's net zero with nature by 2040 action plan.



© SDNPA/Simon Verrall

Planned events are now taking place to discuss results, identify practical actions and demonstrate soil analysis methods so that farmers can undertake them themselves.

MAP OF PARTICIPATING FARMS



PURPOSE 2: Connect

Develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver the second Purpose of National Parks: **To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.**

Progress against some of our key priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan are summarised below:

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO IN OUR CORPORATE PLAN	WHAT WE HAVE DONE
Link into social prescribing and place based health networks to increase use of the National Park for health and well-being (H&WB) via social prescribing	<p>This year we have been working with staff and service users to get the 'Downs to the Sea' engagement element of the project delivered via Chichester District Social Prescribers. We are delivering sessions to participants and x2 sessions to staff from this PCN. The staff include social prescribers, mental health support coordinators and health and wellbeing coaches from across the 4 surgeries in the Rural North of Chichester (Midhurst, Petworth, Loxwood and Pulborough). A second group is made up of Care coordinators also across the patch. Regular activity sessions, with transport provided, have been delivered for participants engaged through Enable Ability to supporting young people with disabilities to connect with nature, develop skills and confidence. Other work includes:</p> <p>Offering family days to support families to connect to nature at Seven Sisters Country Park, supporting the Early Help Team; Carers in Nature – Monthly walks have been well attended and 'Word Art' is being collected for a booklet due to be produced later this year</p>
Be a representative and welcoming National Park for All, focusing on engaging currently under-served groups	<p>Our hybrid engagement combining in-person events and digital engagement and content, has enabled us to reach more people than ever before. Two key hybrid festivals this year have been our ReNature Festival in July and our Dark Skies Festival in February. Both festivals focused not just on creating connection with the National Park, but with nature itself, and empowering people to explore, engage with and take action for nature both in the National Park and wherever they call home. More short videos and lives have seen our engagement increase. Together these festivals enabled us to reach more than 700,000 people; with over 5,000 attending in-person events and over 600 ReNature packs being sent out to community groups in and around the National Park and its urban fringe. Our hybrid engagement shows us that people care about nature and want to know what they can do to help. This is helping to shape our hybrid events and engagement for the 2023/24 when we will focus on empowering people to "Take Action for Nature and Climate".</p>

A NATIONAL PARK FOR ALL

HIGH LEVEL TARGET

- Increase diversity of visitors to, and those engaging with, the South Downs National Park
- 'Your National Park' campaign reaches 20,000 people by 2025

INTRODUCTION

National Park for All means that we want everyone, residents, communities and visitors from all walks of life to experience, enjoy and care for the National Park. Some audiences continue to be underrepresented and so, to deliver our priorities, we target certain activities at those audiences: young people (aged 16-24); people from black, Asian and ethnically diverse communities; people facing forms of health and access inequalities including disabled people; people living in urban areas, especially people facing socio-economic barriers to inclusion.

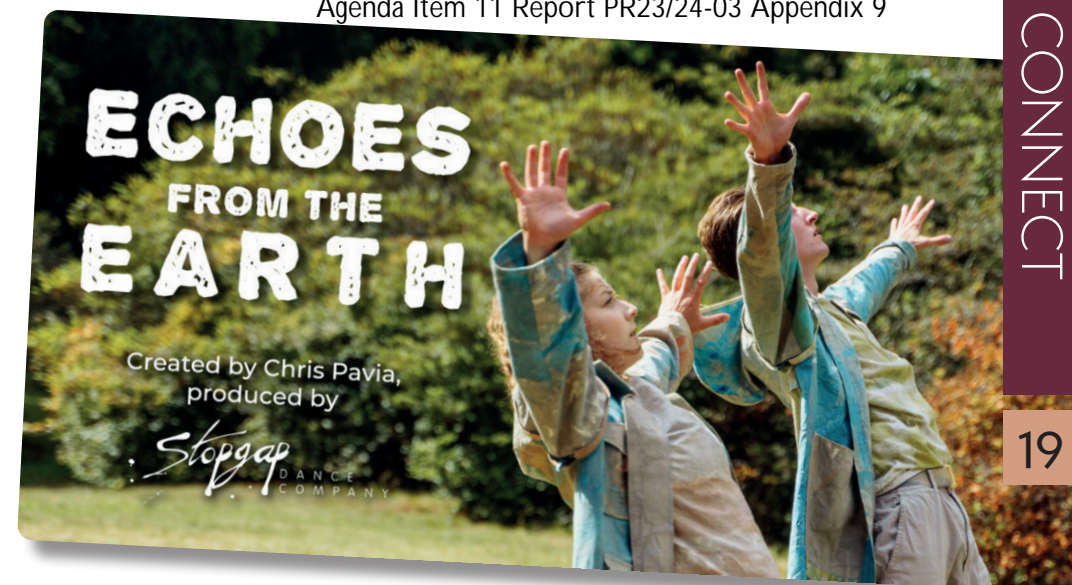
Projects and Programmes aimed at our target audience have included:

- **Arts and Creative activity / writing**
Echoes from the Earth

We supported the choreographer and Mencap ambassador Chris Pavia to develop an immerse dance production inspired by trees in the South Downs. With Stopgap Dance Company, he created Echoes from the Earth working with Special Educational Needs and Disability audiences in the outdoors. It toured Petworth Park, Gilbert White's House and Seven Sisters. The video from the production can be viewed here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTSgMLIXun8>

We See You Now

A unique writer residency for Seven Sisters Country Park and the Heritage Coast. The project engaged 106 writers and 144 participants from intersectional and marginalised backgrounds. Fifty three new creative works



were produced, inspired by the South Downs and contemporary issues, including biodiversity loss and climate change, with one shared on BBC Radio 3.



- **Youth Action and Education work with schools**

- **South Downs Youth Action**

Engaging young people (16-25 year olds) is a priority for us. We have delivered 25 social and environmental action days, reaching 172 young people. We have also developed and supported Youth Ambassadors and youth voice, enabling young people to develop leadership skills and confidence in encouraging others to connect to the natural environment and learn to care for it.

- **Events and Engagement**

Our emerging hybrid engagement style has enabled us to reach different audiences. As part of the ReNature festival in 2022 over 600 packs were sent out to targeted community groups in and around the National Park and in the urban fringe. These were filled with tips, tools and fun goodies to help people get outside to explore and to help nature to #ReNature.

- **Volunteering**

- **Volunteer Ranger Service**

We support over 300 registered volunteers who deliver practical conservation tasks, biodiversity monitoring, event support, administrative support and project volunteering. This generates over £1 million in net benefits a year. As a result of volunteering 96% feel more connected to the wildlife, landscape and heritage of the National Park.

LOOKING AHEAD

We want to inspire individuals and communities to experience The South Downs National Park and take action to care for it. We want to work with individuals and communities to break down the barriers that stop them from feeling that the National Park is not for them, or which make it difficult for some to visit. We want to continue working to make the landscape more accessible and inclusive to people of all ages and abilities and from all backgrounds



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OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS: CONNECT

COMMUNITY WANDERINGS

This small but impactful project aimed to deliver inclusive, intergenerational community wanderings connecting various hidden gems in different parts of the South Downs National Park and bring them to life through storytelling and anecdotes of people and place. Four walks were held in locations in the east of the South Downs National Park, with a focus on new visitors inbound from London. Working with small groups of six participants per walk, the project lead, Saira Niazi, created a guided programme including public transport from London into the National Park and guided walk experiences using storytelling as a basis for people to connect with the landscape outside the usual narratives, and share their own stories of connection. Participants included a leader from a London based walking group (Wanderers of Colour), who have since taken an interest in including guided walks into the South Downs for first time visitors from London as part of their own delivery programme.

"It has inspired me to go back out to South Downs and the nearby areas and to bring friends and family with me. It also opened me up to the idea of going there to write and be creative..."



© SDNPA

TIMESCAPE

The Timescape project was delivered in partnership between the South Downs National Park Authority – who funded the £25,420 project – and Artscape, a small independent charity. It sought to engage isolated individuals in the more deprived areas on the fringes of the National Park, with their local landscape and heritage, through art. The aim was to create sustainable interventions

which contribute to a reduction in loneliness and improve participant's health and wellbeing. Participants were targeted from social prescribing pathways in Portsmouth, Chichester, Waterlooville and Havant, in some of the more deprived areas on the fringes of the National Park.

The project was delivered at museums in the National Park aiming to bring new audiences into the Weald and Downland Museum, Butser Ancient Farm and the surrounding landscapes, and to increase the confidence of these organisations in delivering social prescribing and wellbeing programmes. In addition the project aimed to Support participants to learn new artistic skills and traditional crafts; upskill staff and volunteers to work with new audiences; create a legacy for individuals to continue their journey through support and signposting.

The project successfully engaged 27 people through a variety of recruitment methods. As the majority (85%) had a long term mental/physical health problem or disability, the project team enabled access to the host venues and project sessions by providing transport for vulnerable participants. The project would not have been possible without this support.

Participant feedback demonstrated overwhelmingly positive experiences of spending time in nature with 57% of participants spending more time outside as a result of the project. Participants learned new traditional craft skills including pottery, stone carving, spinning wool and weaving amongst others culminating in an exhibition of their work at Petersfield Museum. Inspired, almost all participants planned to continue practising their new creative skills outside of the project.

Several participants have gone on to volunteer at the host venues and join artistic and cultural organisations demonstrating improved confidence and a lasting interest in project themes. The video (**Timescape Chat**) that was made as part of the project beautifully captures how participants felt about their experience of the project.

PURPOSE 3:

Thrive

Develop strategies and support or lead strategic overarching partnerships and projects which deliver the Duty of National Parks: to build sustainable communities which are engaged and shaping their environment and supporting sustainable businesses and tourism.

Progress against some of our key priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan is summarised below update:

WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD DO IN OUR CORPORATE PLAN	WHAT WE HAVE DONE
Facilitate and support the endorsement, actions and key priorities through the process of Whole Estate Plans (WEPs)	There are eight endorsed WEPs across the SDNP up from six at the start of the financial year. In Q4, Brighton and Hove CC WEP or City Downland Plan was the latest WEP to be endorsed by P&R Committee on 23rd February 2023. The pipeline now consists of four estates with scheduled Member Site Visits and one estate that is at Stage 4 of their WEP Journey. The four estates with scheduled Member visits are: Westerland Stud Estate (27 April 2023), Glynde Estate (10 Oct 2023), Lancing College (27 Feb 2024), and Plumpton College (21 May 2024). Firle Estate is the estate that is currently progressing into Stage 4.
Deliver the Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in the National Park	Q4 2022/23 saw the end of year two of the FiPL Programme. In total, 26 projects were approved by the Local Assessment Panel (LAP) totalling £383,822.24, including £29,832.32 from the National Pot. Applications covered all four of the FiPL objectives (nature, climate, people and place) including wetland management, fencing, traditional barn restoration, interpretation, pond creation and items to facilitate regenerative farming.
Administer the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and S106 – key income streams for delivery	<p>CIL 2022/23 spend: £411,665 on nine projects; 2022/23 collected: £3,015,308 Projects include improving accessibility at Seven Sisters Country Park, new public car park in Ditchling, new play and outdoor facilities at Droxford Junior School, West Ashling and Funtington District Hall refurbishment, improved access at Iping Common and delivering parts of Phase 2 of Centurion Way.</p> <p>S106 2022/23 spend: £198,138 on four projects; 2022/23 collected: £20,068 Funded projects include Centurion Way, travel plan, nitrate monitoring and Solent Recreation Mitigation.</p>

RURAL ECONOMY

The last year has been a busy period for SDNPA. Since launching the 'Our South Downs' (OSD) in May 2022, our business network has grown to 152 members by the end of 2022/23.

The launch of new OSD social media channels has helped to boost reach as well as champion some of our OSD members. Additionally, the administration of business-facing schemes such as *Cyclists & Walkers Welcome* & *Dark Skies Welcome* has moved to the Our South Downs team, enabling more joined up communications.

We have also introduced bespoke Corporate income generation schemes :

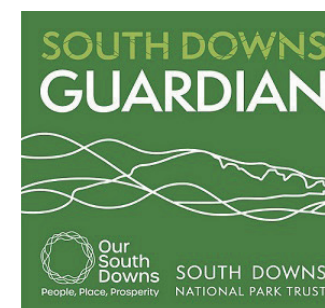
- **South Downs Guardian:** Businesses can donate £1000 to become an official Guardian of the South Downs for a year. In doing so, they can gain access to our unique South Downs Guardian 'Mark' and become listed on the South Downs Trust Website.
- **South Downs Protector:** This scheme invites corporate partners to support the South Downs National Park for a year with a £10,000 contribution helping to fund our ReNaturing target of 13,000 hectares recovered for nature by 2030. For businesses, it's a way of demonstrating ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) commitments as well as forming closer ties with the South Downs National Park. Scheme benefits for businesses include a year's subscription to the Green South Downs Sustainability Certification, ranger talks, volunteer days and free venue hire.

This year, the Green South Downs Sustainability Certification scheme was successfully piloted with 19 businesses. The scheme, now open to all Our South Downs members, is a bespoke sustainability award programme created by the South Downs National Park Authority in partnership with Green Tourism for businesses based and/or working in the South Downs National Park. It helps businesses working in the visitor economy, food and drink or land-based sectors on

their sustainability journey and get recognition for the work they are doing through Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards according to performance against the criteria.

"We are completely thrilled and chuffed to bits with our Silver award and will proudly print and display in the taproom and brewery, on our website and our social media... spreading the word and promoting awareness far and wide."

Lesley Foulkes, Langham Brewery



SUCCESSSES

- Quarterly OSD Newsletter moved to monthly communications since Sept 2022
- Two South Downs Protectors signed up – committing £20,000 in funds to the South Downs National Park Trust
- Six **'Meet the Business'** Videos produced, showcasing member businesses and their journey towards sustainability
- 'Our South Downs' Instagram, from 0 to 100+ followers in one month
- Four Gold, nine Silver and six Bronze Green South Downs Sustainability Certified businesses



LOOKING AHEAD

We are looking forward to continuing our established and developing relationships with our partners and local stakeholders. **Lets Do Business Group** has been instrumental in helping promote Our South Downs to its extensive network. Similarly, our partnership with **Green Tourism** greatly contributed to the success of the Green South Downs pilot.

For this coming year, we are looking to:

- focus on promoting sustainability in business, shortening and strengthening rural supply chains and generating business income for the South Downs Trust;
- at least double the Our South Downs member numbers in the next financial year to 300+ and grow our Instagram to 1000 Followers;
- launch light Destination Management signposting, linking the public to Our South Downs accommodation providers to generate income through Visitor Giving, and to promote sustainability through championing Green South Downs accommodation providers;
- strengthen Rural Supply chains: Launch a simple business directory – digitally searchable and PDF to help Our South Downs businesses transact with one another (B2B) and later, to consider a B2C directory;
- increase year on year Corporate Income through the South Downs Protector and Guardians schemes;

launch Visitor Giving Lite; simple QR code donation points to be added to rooms and lobbies for accommodation providers.

PLACE MAKING

The SDNPA's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) continued its success raising a total of £3.015m in the financial year, the most raised since CIL started in 2017.

This will enable the SDNPA to spend more on the implementation of projects than in any other year. In the 2022/23 financial year £552k was given directly to Parish and Town Councils for them to spend on projects in their communities. Additionally, within the year a significant number of projects funded wholly or partly by SDNPA's CIL funding were completed benefitting both people and nature within the National Park and case studies can be viewed [here](#). SDNPA are the only National Park to administer CIL.

5106 legal agreements have been largely replaced by CIL but the Authority released £862,318.94 in funding to 19 projects in the financial year.

In terms of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) work, officers were heavily involved in three NSIP projects that will have impacts on the National Park:

- The M3 Junction 9 scheme (the Development Consent Order (DCO) application has been submitted and is now with the Examining Authority for a six month examination)
- Rampion 2 windfarm (the DCO application is expected to be made in Summer)
- The A27 at Arundel (this scheme has since been deferred to RIS 3, covering 2025 – 2030).

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

As ever, our Conservation, Design and Landscape Officers were kept busy by a high planning workload due to SDNPA being one of the biggest planning authorities in the country, determining more planning applications than most

London Boroughs. Multiple gains from development have been derived throughout the year working with planning officers and we have achieved high compliance with our Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) helping to mitigate the impacts of new development on Climate Change. The Authority also recorded its 'best ever' performance at appeal with 77% of appeals in the financial year being dismissed.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Government have stated that they want to replace CIL with a new Infrastructure Levy and SDNPA will be monitoring what any future changes may mean for the Authority. Government is suggesting Parish Priority Statements as alternatives to Neighbourhood Plans and the Authority is expecting a number of such Statements to be completed within the National Park.



Completed Chilcomb route on SDW now bypassing busy A31 roundabout © SDNPA



Further riverbank repairs for watersport access at SSCP © Buzz Active



Leighside pond renovation at Lewes Railway Land © Helen Meade

CASE STUDY: PETERSFIELD WALKING FESTIVAL – SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Petersfield Walking Festival was set up as a constituted community organisation with the aim of promoting the area and its surroundings, in consideration of the neighbourhood plan which identifies the town as a gateway to the South Downs. This year's festival took place between the 20th and 27th August 2022 and included a programme of over 40 walks catering for a range of interests and abilities.

With an initial cash budget of £3,000 to cover the event website, fees and equipment associated with the events such as high-vis jackets and first aid kits, the project drew in financial support from a range of partners. These included Petersfield Town Council, Hampshire County Council and the Petersfield Society.

provided a small grant of £435 towards the final project costs from the South Downs National Park's Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF). A considerable amount of volunteer time was committed by festival organisers estimated at over £7,400 in non-cash contributions.

The SCF funding contribution was put towards an event website with integrated booking system, associated insurance and fees in order to hold walks free of charge.

The aims of the festival were to:

- Encourage people to get outside for exercise or well-being;
- Attract visitors from further afield, boosting the Town's visitor economy;
- Provide opportunities to promote local businesses, organisations and walking groups;
- Provide an opportunity for local people to better appreciate the Town's location within the National Park and get to know the area better.

The programme covered an extensive range of events from Sunday strolls and Nordic pole-walking to 'Walking with Wheels' with Disabled Ramblers UK. The South Downs National Park Authority also took part leading three walks, including a 'heathlands safari'. Carefully planned routes promoted pubs and vineyards, local attractions and

events, charities, community shops/cafes, conservation programmes, local transport networks and local walking groups.

The festival took advantage of the August bank holiday weekend, being inclusive of working people and young families. Where possible, there were circular and linear walks positioned near train stations to encourage sustainable transport. The impact of parking was reduced by asking local attractions and businesses to allow for parking.

A total of **46 walks** were held over the one week period, well in excess the originally planned programme. There were **688 bookings** made through the website, although a portion did not show and there were challenges affecting attendance, such as a train strike.

The walks attracted people from major cities such as London, Birmingham and Brighton (even a tourist from Australia!) as well as those from the local area. It was promoted via online and print media and reported in the local press.

Considerable volunteer and financial support resulted in all of the walks being held for free. This included the walk run by Disabled Ramblers UK who are obliged to charge fees to cover the cost of providing mechanical repair assistance for mobility equipment.

The next festival is planned for 2023 and will instead be spread across the year, taking in the beauty of different seasons.



© Petersfield Walking Festival

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS: THRIVE

APPROVAL FOR NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES

Twenty-five new affordable homes have been approved as part of the redevelopment of a brownfield site in Bepton Road, Midhurst. The SDNPA's Planning Committee voted to give the green light to plans submitted by Metis Homes for 69 homes, the approved plans include 12 affordable rented flats and 13 shared ownership houses.

A total of £100,000 is set to be invested by the developer to deliver access and path improvements at nearby Midhurst Common, together with a £12,660 contribution to deliver ecological compensation measures on the Common.

The provision of a public footpath and cycle route through the site is among the benefits of the development. This will safeguard a potential future non-motorised travel route along the former Petersfield to Pulborough railway line. Historically part of the site was the Midhurst Brickworks, famed for producing the 'Midhurst White'. The brickworks closed in 1985 and some of the original structures remain in situ.

The approved development includes a number of features tailored to helping the environment, including 10% green roofs and provision of electric vehicle charging points for all properties. The scheme will achieve an approximate site average of 17% reduction in regulated carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions through a fabric first approach and with the inclusion of PV panels it will reduce to a site average of 40.5%.

FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES

The Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme is a part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan offering funding to farmers and land managers in AONBs, National Parks and the Broads.

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Within the South Downs National Park, FiPL is delivered by the Authority's Farming Team. A Local Assessment Panel, comprising predominately of farmers, meet to decide on which projects should be supported. Decisions are based on national scoring criteria set by Defra; the programme will fund projects that:

- support nature recovery
- mitigate the impacts of climate change
- provide opportunities for people to discover, enjoy and understand the landscape and its cultural heritage
- protect or improve the quality and character of the landscape or place

Q4 saw the end of year two of the FiPL Programme which runs until March 2025. In total, 26 projects were approved by the Local Assessment Panel (LAP) totalling £383,822.24

Some of the projects funded include:

LYCHPOLE FARM, SOMPTING – AWARDED £6,370

This project involves the creation of a farm brand, website and social media following to inform the public about the farm's general farming activities and with particular regard to its pumpkin diversification event to drive forward farm diversification and public engagement. It comprises four outputs:

- Branding for the farm and pumpkin business to increase visibility and presence.
- A website for the farm and pumpkin business, including a blog, to provide information and updates.
- Promotional materials for the pumpkin patch (leaflets, signage etc).
- A social media presence, linked to the website, to provide another route to share information and updates.

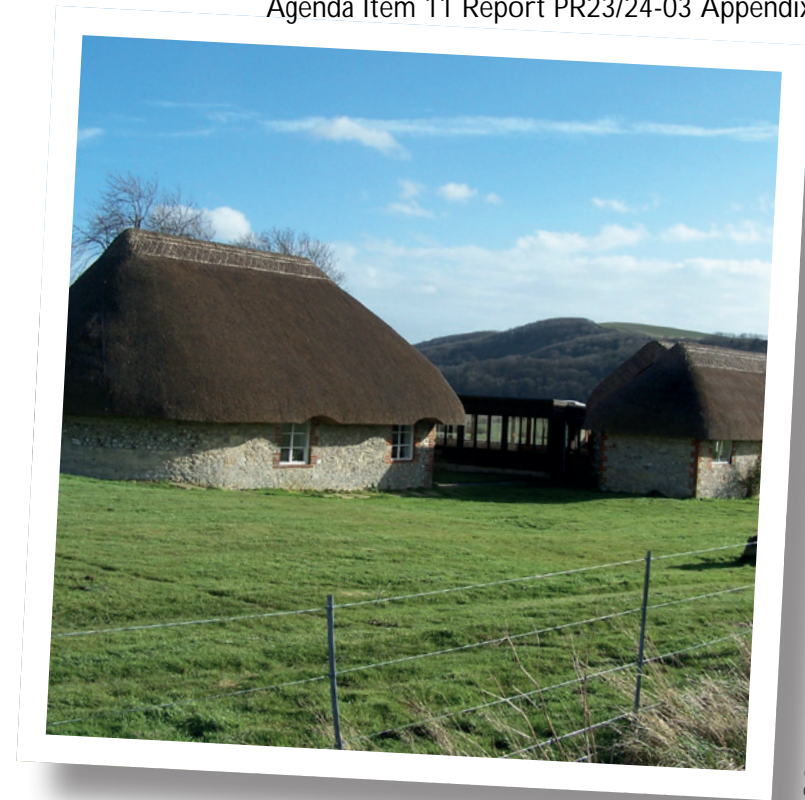


© Guy Edwardes

THE BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA CHARITABLE TRUST – AWARDED £59,823.32

This project involves roofing repairs to and re-thatching of historic buildings at Bignor Roman Villa to help protect and conserve both the Roman remains/ mosaics and the buildings themselves (which are rare examples of surviving Georgian thatched agricultural buildings within the landscape of the South Downs National Park). It comprises two objectives/outputs:

- The replacement of the flat roof over north corridor museum building conserving roman mosaics.
- The re-thatching of surviving Georgian agricultural buildings conserving roman mosaics.



© SDNPA

ON THE GROUND AND GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

Relationships are fostered and developed daily between the National Park Authority and the local councils, with Officers attending AGMs, special meetings and workshops with the 176 Town and Parish councils across the National Park. Together numerous projects are initiated every year 'on the ground'. Here are just a few highlights from 2022/23:

WEST BURTON STREAM

A small groundwater-fed chalk stream that rises from the northern scarp of the Downs, near Bignor, and flows west until it joins the Arun just north of Bury. Where the stream reaches the hamlet of West Burton in West Sussex, it flows through a small parcel of common land known as Pill Common. Owned by Bury Parish Council, this site contains both a community orchard and a small pond, known locally as the "Pill Pond".

The Parish Council periodically dredges the pond to remove sediment that builds up behind an impounding structure – an earthen dam, wooden step boarding, and a concrete fish-pass. However, water was found to be leaking in multiple places making the fish pass obsolete and acting as a wildlife trap for amphibians, mammals and birds. Proposals were put together to remove the dam and restore the stream connecting the upper and lower reaches for the first time in 100 years. Works were carried out throughout 2022.

This project has made a significant contribution to nature recovery, enhancing ecological connectivity for a range of species, and



© SDNPA

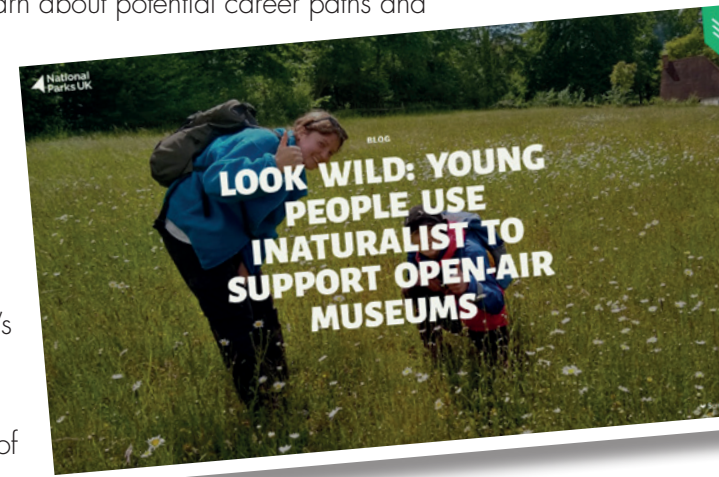
providing potential spawning habitat for a native species – the Brown Trout – that is increasingly threatened by climate change and habitat.

The £11,000 project, funded by SDNPA, was designed in partnership with the Wild Trout Trust.

MICRO-VOLUNTEERING WITH iNATURALIST

South Downs youth volunteers have been leading the way with the rollout of iNaturalist in the National Park by adding important sightings to the **NPUK LookWild** project. One-off volunteer days took place during 2022 to give people aged 16-25 the opportunity to try volunteering and meet professional rangers for a day. It's a great way to learn about potential career paths and ask experts questions about their experience. Participants are also learning about community science initiatives and improving their general knowledge of wildlife ecology. Because iNaturalist is an app on people's personal phones, it's something they can take home, share with friends and family, and use to build up a portfolio of observations.

One of the most popular activities has been using iNaturalist to survey woodland and meadow habitats at unlikely locations, in this case, museums. In April, as part of the Brighton & Eastern Downs City Nature Challenge, young people visited Amberley Museum. The task was to observe wildflowers in a steep section of ancient woodland that long pre-dates the chalk quarrying heritage of the museum



grounds. 180 observations were made of 82 species of plant, animal and fungus.

In May, another Youth Action day took place in West Sussex at the Weald and Downland Living Museum. The young people helped to survey a large area of meadow that is currently managed by the Museum's volunteers with traditional scything and raking techniques. 210 observations were made recording 86 species. The day gave young people a taste of what ecological monitoring is like, as well as experiencing an open air museum rich in fascinating heritage. The observations will help inform the Museum's understanding of how heritage land management shapes the ecological elements of the landscape.

EXPLORING TRULEIGH HILL

Asphaleia are a Worthing based charity who work with unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugee children. Their mission is 'to impact as many lives of children and young people who have experienced disadvantage'.

In autumn 2022, a group of 16 – 17 year olds from Asphaleia visited Truleigh Hill, nr Shoreham, to experience the countryside and spend time in nature with SDNPA staff.

All the young people come from a diverse range of countries including Sudan, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Turkey and are currently living with foster carers in West Sussex.

The young people arrived with Sussex Community Transport and spent the morning walking, taking the opportunity to appreciate the spectacular views enhanced by the



© SDNPA

changing season, and see some of the National Park. For all, it was their first time being out in the English countryside.

All participants are studying English and maths, personal and social skills development, careers education and awareness of UK culture.

RENATURE CREDITS

An innovative scheme to restore biodiversity and deliver nature-based climate action was launched by the South Downs National Park Authority this year.

"ReNature Credits" will bring together developers and landowners to unlock private finance streams that deliver multiple benefits for nature recovery, including restoring lost habitats, woodland creation and wildflower meadows. It comes as the compliance and offsetting market widens significantly this year with the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain from November for most types of development.

Developers will be able to acquire ReNature Credits through the National Park Authority's brokerage service for phosphates, nitrates, and Biodiversity Net Gain. Carbon offsetting may also be introduced at a later date.

The National Park Authority is uniquely placed as a Local Planning Authority with thousands of hectares of land already identified for biodiversity restoration as part of its existing ReNature initiative.

Acting as a sustainability-focused broker, the Authority will work with developers and landowners to maximise benefits for nature and local communities within the National Park. The brokerage service is initially launching with two strategic sites: Iford Estate and Warnford Park Estate.



RENATURING OF CISSBURY FIELDS

Work is well underway to “renature” a popular site and ensure it becomes a thriving environment for wildlife and visitors alike. Cissbury Fields, located at the foot of Cissbury Ring, were previously farmed by a tenant, but were taken back under the control of the Worthing Borough Council in 2021 as part of its pledge to support biodiversity and help tackle climate change.

The council has been working closely with the SDNPA Central Ranger team as well as the National Trust, nature groups, residents and dog walkers to help create a new future for the 40-hectare fields that prioritises biodiversity. The aim is to turn the field into a mosaic of wildlife-rich habitats, including chalk grassland, hedge and scrub.

One of the bigger changes to the management of the site will be the re-introduction of livestock, hopefully next year. The livestock will act as conservation grazers, increasing the diversity of flowers and plants and encouraging more pollinators to visit the site.

Community involvement is also at the forefront of the plans, as well as creating dedicated walking paths, entry points and an on-site car park.

SUSSEX HERITAGE AWARDS

A garden restoration project, regenerated farm buildings and a winery with visitor attractions were announced as the winners of the South Downs Award at the 2022 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards.



© SDNPA

Vanessa Rowlands, Chair of the National Park Authority, presented the South Downs Award at a glittering ceremony at Pangdean Old Barn.

The prestigious accolade is sponsored by the Authority and aims to promote outstanding design in a nationally-designated landscape.



One Garden Brighton in Stanmer Park was announced as the overall winner of the South Downs Award. The new facility is a partnership between Brighton and Hove City Council and Plumpton College to restore Stanmer Park. An amazing walled garden and community space has been created, with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, in 20 hectares of the park with the aim to also deliver training, education and outreach opportunities. The South Downs National Park judging team said of the project: “A much-needed, accessible space for everyone, which connects the South Downs National Park with Brighton and Hove.”

Two highly commended projects were also announced: Southview Farm in Pulborough (submitted by Nicholls Countryside Construction), a new family home created from a series of redundant farm buildings, collectively known as ‘Bone Barn’ arranged around a courtyard and 17th century barn

NEW SUSSEX SECTION OF THE ENGLAND COAST PATH

The first complete section in Sussex opened in summer 2022, giving walkers new opportunities to connect with nature and all the wellbeing benefits of a coastal ramble with all of that fresh sea air.

The 33-mile (53km) route goes from Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne and takes in the iconic chalk cliffs of the National Park. This new stretch of trail is also a vital



link in the South East section of the England Coast Path. Once complete, the whole of the South East Coast Path will run from Shoreham-by Sea to the London Borough of Bexley.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the National Park Authority, said: "This is wonderful news and a fantastic opportunity for walkers to get out and explore.

"The path goes over Seaford head, crosses the Cuckmere at Exceat Bridge and then follows the South Downs Way through Seven Sisters, providing another easy-to-follow walking route into the Country Park.

"This route will form a key part of the 2,700-mile-long England Coast Path, which will become the longest walking route in the world."

There is a host of wildlife along the route including migratory and nesting birds such as lesser whitethroat and fulmars, wildflowers including birds' foot trefoil and thrift, and plenty of butterflies and insects.

For more information visit the England Coastal Path information page [here](#).



Oystercatchers © Tim Squire



HOW THE AUTHORITY IS FUNDED

The main source of funding, for all National Park Authorities, is a National Park Grant from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). In 2022-23 the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) received a grant totalling around **£10.9 million**.

As the Planning Authority for the National Park, a significant part of our budget is dedicated to processing and determining planning applications for development. In 2022-23 the SDNPA received income of just over **£4.3 million** through planning activities (including Community Infrastructure Levy).

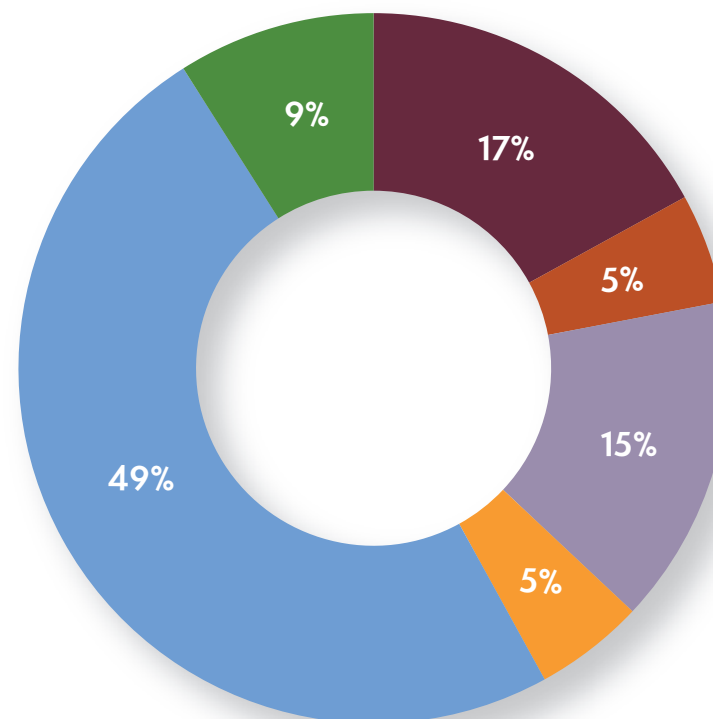
The SDNPA was also successful in attracting significant funding for projects to deliver the Partnership Management Plan. During 2021-22 the SDNPA received **£3.1 million** of income through specific grants and contributions in addition to funds secured by other partners to deliver work in the National Park.

In total the income received by the SDNPA in 2022-23 was **£17.6 million**.



HOW THE MONEY IS SPENT

As well as the statutory duty to act as planning authority for the National Park, and the need to provide proper governance by supporting the roles of Members, Audits etc., the SDNPA spends the funds it has available in pursuit of the purposes and duty. The allocation of how those funds are spent is illustrated in the following chart:



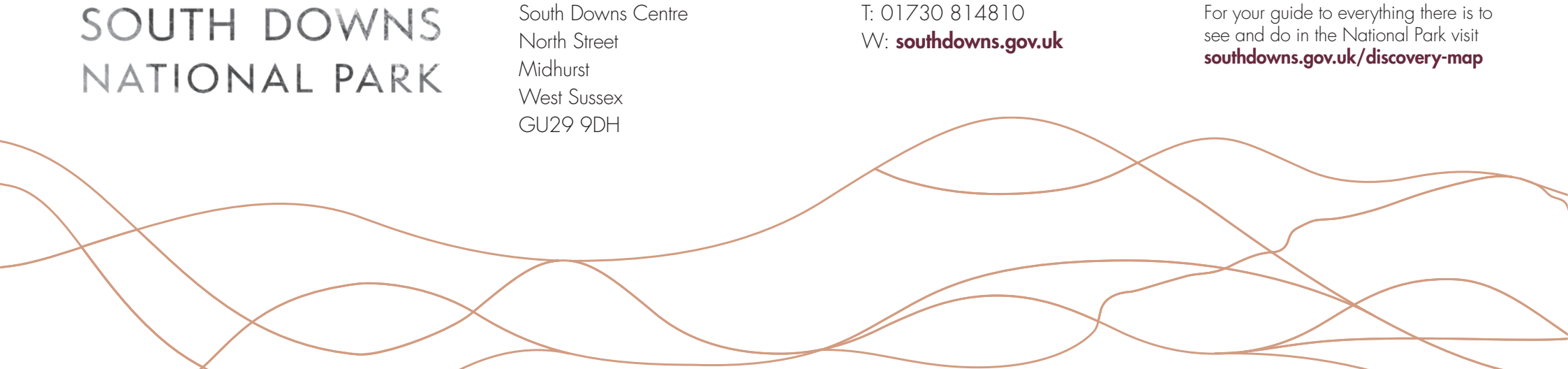
THE SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK VISION

At the creation of the National Park Authority we set an ambitious vision for the South Downs National Park. By 2050:

- the iconic English lowland landscapes and heritage will have been conserved and greatly enhanced. These inspirational and distinctive places, where people live, work, farm and relax, are adapting well to the impacts of climate change and other pressures; people will understand, value, and look after the vital natural services that the National Park provides. Large areas of high-quality and well-managed habitat will form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape;
- opportunities will exist for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities. The relationship between people and landscape will enhance their lives and inspire them to become actively involved in caring for it and using its resources more responsibly;
- its special qualities will underpin the economic and social well-being of the communities in and around it, which will be more self-sustaining and empowered to shape their own future. Its villages and market towns will be thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses and supporting the wider rural community;
- successful farming, forestry, tourism and other business activities within the National Park will actively contribute to, and derive economic benefit from, its unique identity and special qualities.

This document demonstrates that we are well on track to achieve our vision for the National Park. For more information on how we and our partners are delivering this vision please have a look at the following documents:

- **Partnership Management Plan 2020–2025**
- **Corporate Plan 2020-2025 (Year 2 Action Plan – 2021–22)**
- **Corporate Plan 2020–2025 (Year 3 Action Plan – 2022–23)**



South Downs Centre
North Street
Midhurst
West Sussex
GU29 9DH

For your guide to everything there is to see and do in the National Park visit southdowns.gov.uk/discovery-map

