

Report to **Policy & Resources Committee**  
Date **20 June 2023**  
By **Grants Officer**  
Title of Report **Annual review of the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF)**

**Note**

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

**I. Note the year-end position of the Sustainable Communities Fund**

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**I. Background and Summary**

- I.1 The SCF is a rolling fund established to provide grants to community and voluntary groups, social enterprise organisations and businesses for ‘not for profit’ projects. Projects should take place within the National Park or within 5km of the boundary where there are strong links to Partnership Management Plan outcomes. To ensure proper scrutiny and well-informed decision making an advisory panel, chaired by an SDNPA Member, advises on bids for funding between £2,000 - £10,000. [SCF - South Downs \(southdownstrust.org.uk\)](https://southdownstrust.org.uk)
- I.2 In 2018 the national Park Authority agreed to transfer the Sustainable Communities Fund balance to the South Downs National Park Trust who fundraised to match the amount. This was successful and £331,390 was invested in an endowment fund overseen by the Trust Investment panel. Both the Authority and the Trust are recognised as founding patrons of the fund in perpetuity.
- I.3 The return from the endowment is used to run the annual grants programme whilst the remainder, alongside additional funds raised by the Trust, is invested so that the endowment can grow.
- I.4 The Endowment therefore now stands at £431,727. This is in line with the aspirations presented to the Park Authority at the creation of the endowment and included within the associated “Funding Agreement”.
- I.5 The Sustainable Communities Fund refresh mentioned last year is ongoing, with the aim to streamline and optimise the application and funding process. A re-launch later this year can be promoted through staff and external communications to generate interest in the grant fund.
- I.6 Two Panel Meetings were held for large grants over £2000 in 22/23 and three small grant rounds took place throughout the year.
- I.7 The fund has allocated an annual budget to the fund of £35,000. Underspends continue to be invested alongside additional funds raised by the Trust. Should significant high-quality projects come forward the Trust may consider increasing the annual budget to support these.

## 2. 2022-23 Grant Giving

- 2.1 The SCF has committed £51,402 to eight new projects across the National Park and the surrounding boundary which includes smaller grants under £2,000. The projects are listed with a brief description in Appendix I along with a map showing the allocations and second map showing all allocations throughout the life of the fund.

## 3. Other implications

Implication	Yes*/No
Will further decisions be required by another committee/full authority?	NO
Does the proposal raise any Resource implications?	NO
How does the proposal represent Value for Money?	Not applicable to content of this report, but each grant application is scrutinised for value for money.
Which PMP Outcomes/ Corporate plan objectives does this deliver against	To be eligible for a grant, applications must deliver towards a PMP outcome.
Links to other projects or partner organisations	The SCF Grant support a wide variety of organisations and groups in the SDNP.
How does this decision contribute to the Authority's climate change objectives	SCF projects contribute to the PMP, one of the outcomes of which is Increasing Resilience in relation to Climate Change.
Are there any Social Value implications arising from the proposal?	N/A
Have you taken regard of the South Downs National Park Authority's equality duty as contained within the Equality Act 2010?	Yes – as the subject matter of the report is an update on projects and funding no specific issues arise.
Are there any Human Rights implications arising from the proposal?	NO
Are there any Crime & Disorder implications arising from the proposal?	NO
Are there any Health & Safety implications arising from the proposal?	NO
Are there any Data Protection implications?	NO
Are there any Sustainability implications based on the 5	No – The Sustainable Communities Fund promotes these principles in the projects it supports.

Implication	Yes*/No
principles set out in the SDNPA Sustainability Strategy?	

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

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

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
The return on the endowment investments could reduce due to changes to the economy	Possible	Major	The investment is a medium risk portfolio and is reviewed regularly by the Trust's investment committee, which includes investment professionals.
Reputational risk if we are unable to provide cash match funding for some of our larger projects	Possible	Moderate	Work to generate income for the South Downs National Park through the South Downs National Park Trust.  A robust monitoring and project approval system and regular reporting to this Committee.

## VICTORIA CRESPI

### Grants Officer

#### South Downs National Park Trust

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Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sustainable Communities Fund Project List</li> <li>2. Sustainable Communities Fund Projects Map 22-23</li> <li>3. Sustainable Communities Fund All Projects Map</li> </ol>
SDNPA Consultees	Director of Countryside Policy and Management, Head of Income Generation
External Consultees	None



**I. Sustainable Communities Fund 2022-2023 Grant Allocations**

- I.1 Trees and Beed – Petersfield Tree Team, Petersfield, Hampshire - £9,500 grant towards total project cost of £38,466

Organisation: Future Shoots CIC

The Trees and Bees Project will support the successful establishment and care of trees and pollinator plots in Petersfield and the surrounding area through volunteer involvement in community social action.

- I.2 Renovating one of the UKs most important rare bat roosts – Lodsworth, West Sussex - £10,000 grant towards total project cost of £220,415

Organisation: Sussex Bat Group

Phase two of a three Phase project to restore Greater Horseshoe bats to the South Downs and beyond; providing optimum conditions for this native species absent locally for 100 years.

- I.3 Church Field – Greatham, Hampshire – £1,030 grant towards total project cost of £7,056

Organisation: St John's Trust

Purchase of a Shepherd's Hut as the base for our community environmental project in our field in Greatham. Purchase of gates to improve the accessibility and security for the project

- I.4 The Jubilee Tap – Selborne, Hampshire - £2,000 grant towards total project cost of £9,984

Organisation: Gilbert White and The Oates Collections

To create a Tap Room at the disused former Queens Hotel in Selborne to sell beers brewed by volunteers in Gilbert White's Brewery on draught.

- I.5 The Lost Railway – Steyning, West Sussex - £6,904 grant towards total project cost of £13,808

Organisation: Steyning and District Community Partnership

Design, produce and erect four educational presentation boards depicting the history of Steyning & Bramber Railway stations plus the overall history of the now defuncted Steyning Line Railway – including QR codes to link to walks and sustainable transport.

- I.6 Petersfield Community Garden Shelter – Petersfield, Hampshire - £10,000 grant towards total project cost of £25,171

Organisation: Petersfield Community Garden

Creating a large round eco shelter within the community garden making this unique space more flexible for all current and future users. A shelter giving encouragement to be outside.

- I.7 Lewes High Street – traffic reduction, greener streets travel pilot – Lewes, East Sussex - £8,000 grant towards total project cost of £31,000

Organisation: Cycle Lewes

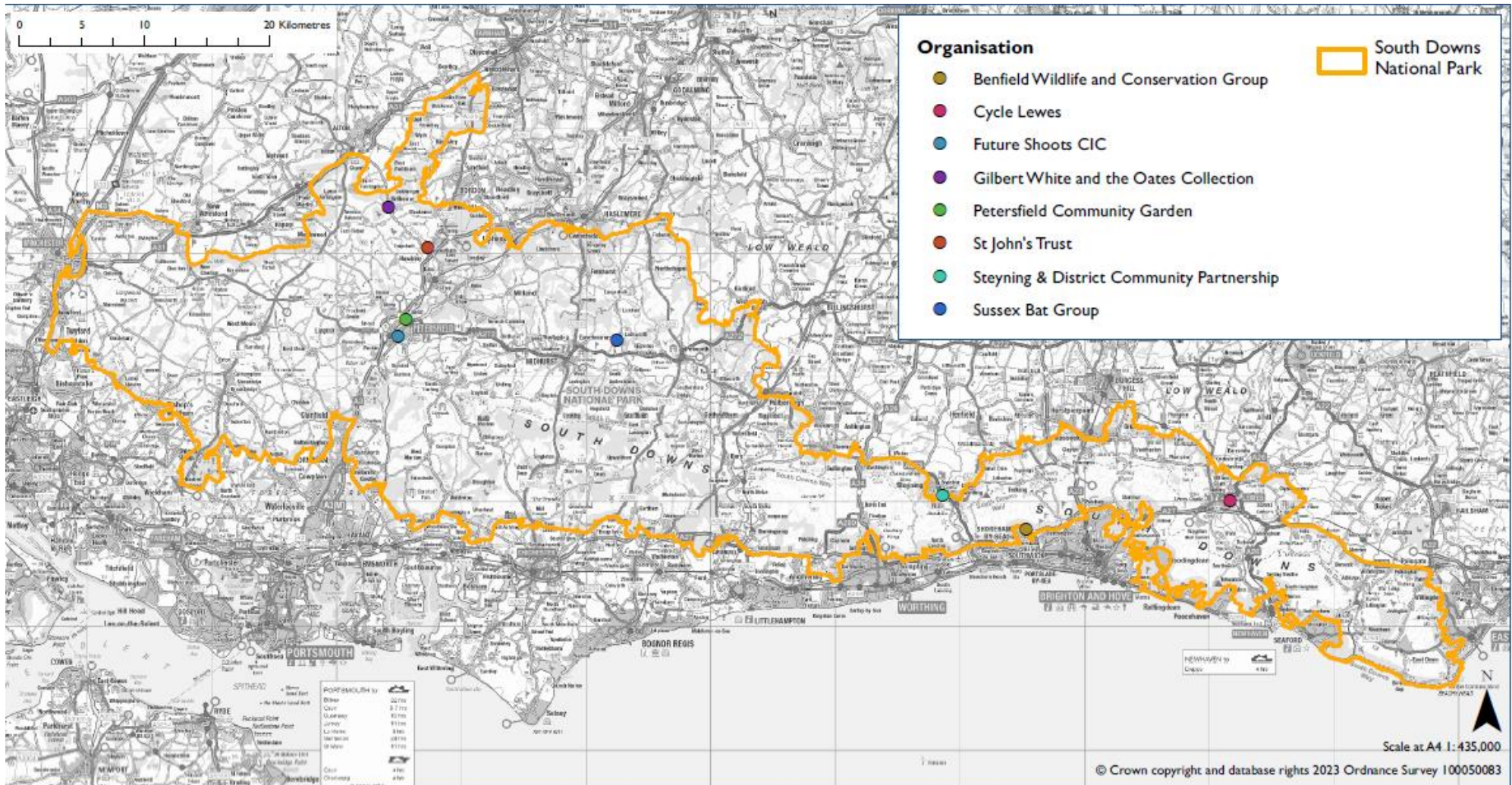
The pilot project aims to reduce carbon emissions and mitigate climate change whilst boosting town centre vitality by removing traffic, increasing active travel options and re-imagining a pedestrian-friendly town.

1.8 Benfield Hill Local Nature Reserve – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Hove, East Sussex - £3,968 grant towards total project cost of £9,333

Organisation: Benfield Wildlife and Conversation Group

Installation of two interpretation/information boards showing the walking trails and what to see during the year. Celebrations commemorating that Benfield Hill was designated as a LNR in 1993.

Sustainable Communities Fund - 2022/23 Grants Map







Sustainable Communities Fund – All Grants Map

