

# Parish Priorities Statement



## Introduction

The South Downs National Park Authority decided in May 2022 that it would review parts of its Local Plan in line with Government Policy and to ensure the Plan delivers on corporate priorities relating to Climate Action, Re-Nature and a National Park for All. The views and input of the local community into the Local Plan Review are vital to us particularly those of our town and parish councils. One way in which town and parish councils can contribute to the Local Plan Review is through a **Parish Priority Statement (PPS)**.

Neighbourhood Priority Statements (NPS) as a concept were introduced in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (LURB), which was published by the Government in May 2022. NPS are statements prepared by local communities that summarise the principal needs and prevailing views for their local area. There is currently very little information available from the Government, but this will be provided at a later date through secondary legislation and regulations.

In the interim we are inviting all our town and parish councils that are located entirely in the National Park or whose main settlement is located in the National Park to prepare a PPS. A full list of these councils is set out in the appendix to this letter. It will not be necessary for the Council to be designated for the purposes of neighbourhood planning in order to do this. The format and content of PPS follows the very broad approach set out in the LURB, to enable any PPS to evolve into NPS as legislation and guidance is provided by Government.

Please use the attached template to prepare your PPS, following the template will assist the SDNPA in collating information and reviewing priorities across the National Park. There are guidance notes for each question about the sort of information we are looking for. The PPS should focus on the principal needs and prevailing views of your local community. Please identify any opportunities to contribute to the Authority's priorities on Climate Action, Nature Recovery and a National Park for All. More information on these priorities can be found in the [SDNPA Corporate Plan](#). We have indicated a word limit for each section to ensure the documents are focused on the main issues any text beyond the word limit may not be considered by the Authority.

It is really important to gather the views of as many people as possible, who live, work or visit your parish. The second question of the template asks you how you have consulted with your local community. A PPS that demonstrates a high level of community engagement and support will ensure the document will influence when informing the Local Plan Review process. As a minimum the draft PPS should be published inviting comments from the wider community. Town and Parish Councils should also make particular efforts to engage with hard to reach and underrepresented groups such as young people. To help you with the template we have written a PPS for the hypothetical parish of Greenville.

Please submit your PPS to us at the address below by 20 October 2023. Officers from the Authority will review your PPS and get back to you with any queries. The intention is for all PPS to be considered by our Policy and Resources Committee with the intention of publishing them on our website.

Your PPS will not be made part of the development plan for the National Park, but it will form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan Review. We will consider the principal needs and prevailing views set out in your PPS as we progress the Local Plan Review and update local planning policy. PPS will also be useful when applying for funding from the Authority, for example, from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Sustainable Communities Fund. Finally, your PPS may be useful for funding applications to other bodies. Where a Town or Parish Council have an adopted Neighbourhood Plan the PPS will supplement the Plan not supersede it as the PPS will not form part of the Development Plan.

## I. Your Details

Information Required	Response
Contact name	Clerk to the Council
Town or Parish Council	Coldwaltham Parish Council
Main contact address	████████████████████ ████████████████████ ██████████ ████████████████████
Main contact telephone number	██████████
Main contact email	██
Details of public consultation and engagement used in the preparation of the PPS	<p>Questionnaires were sent out via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parish Councillors</li> <li>Parish website</li> <li>Parochial Church Council</li> <li>Joint Parish Newsletter – The Link magazine</li> <li>Village Hall Committee</li> <li>Lodge Hill Centre</li> <li>Champs Hill Music Centre</li> <li>Coldwaltham School, St James</li> <li>Parish Facebook page – 297 members</li> </ul> <p>The Village “Plan” of 2014/2019 onwards has been used to contextualise the responses below as sources of existing evidence / consultation results (Neighbourhood Plan, Parish Plan, Village Design Statement).</p> <p>Approximately 10% of the community have contributed observations to this document, also comprising responses to previous documents.</p>

## The vision for the future...

What are the three key changes you would like to see in your Parish over the next 15 years? These changes should relate to the priorities set out below. It will also be helpful to explain when you think these changes should happen over the 15 year period.

**This input is based on a review of the previous Neighbourhood/Village Review in 2014 (updated 2019) plus recent input from residents. The former highlighted the following concerns: the A29; the need for better environmental management; the desire to develop community-based events; the need for new cycleways; additional bus services; local parking facilities; greater use of local communications media, such as “The Link” magazine.\***

\*We appreciate that the SDNP is not always the 'prime actor' in many of the matters noted here. However, we wish to make it plain that we believe the SDNP has influence to promote many of the concerns noted below".

### **1. Sustainable traffic management and viable alternative travel options:**

**Better control and management of traffic type, volume and speed along the A29 and connecting routes, through:**

- **reduction and enforcement of speed limits – reduce ‘main’ A29 to 50 mph; a new 40 mph zone on the southbound approach to Coldwaltham; a new 20 mph zone around St James school at school start/end; new ‘village’ architecture (gates, signage, safe crossing points, etc.) through Coldwaltham and Watersfield. Proper enforcement of speed limits and a crackdown on illegal motorcycle exhausts is needed. A comprehensive review of the status of the A29 has been promised and is long overdue.**
- **new ‘village’ architecture (gates, signage, safe crossing points, etc.) through Coldwaltham and Watersfield. A CIL grant has been applied for to support the acquisition of new SIDs and village gates for the Parish.**
- **create/re-establish shared cycleways/footpaths between villages to create viable active transport routes giving access to services and amenities and transport hubs (e.g. train stations), supporting net zero aspirations. SDNP Strategic Policies 19 and 20, concerning the integration of walking, cycling and equestrian routes to create connections, are relevant.**
- **re-introduce affordable, frequent, reliable and low carbon footprint bus services to give better access to services between the villages and to Pulborough, Amberley, Arundel, and beyond.**

### **2. Sustainable planning decisions and land management:**

**Support sensitive and appropriate affordable and environmentally-sound development and green energy systems – this would help to ensure the continued viability of St James Primary School; maintain and protect ‘wild’ locations (e.g. SSSIs); support tree planting in agreed locations; protect, maintain and improve public open spaces and amenities, such as Alban Head playing fields and children’s playgrounds, enabling community events.**

### **3. Environmental protection and management:**

**Safeguard/protect catchment water quality; protect local wildlife habitats; combat fly-tipping, roadside litter, dog waste and other anti-social behaviour; promote and**

maintain the SDNP dark skies policy. (Local support, Southern Water, WSCC/HDC/CDC, SDNPA plus local police support all needed for this).

Timescales for these actions to improve and encourage village life, participation and inclusion – present, through to 15 years.

## Development and management of land

Information required	Response
<p><b>What type and level of development would you like to see in the parish?</b></p>	<p>The three villages have some sites that could be suitable for properly-considered small-scale development; any development should be high-quality, low-impact, environmentally sound and sensitive to its surroundings.</p> <p>The average price of a house within SDNP boundaries is now estimated at approx. £550K.</p> <p>It is important that any development does not increase risk from traffic on/off the A29.</p> <p>The villages in our Parish, and Bury, are already suffering from the loss of our Sub-Post Office. This facility is particularly important for our elderly and vulnerable residents.</p>
<p><b>Are there any areas of the Parish you would like to see developed?</b></p>	<p>The Parish Council is wary of encouraging development in areas that are essentially embedded in countryside. Our preference is towards using any available “brownfield” sites for low density, affordable/social housing.</p> <p>Lodge Hill (at “mass.showering.tanks” – what3words) has already gained outline planning permission and has sold land for a small development of four to five houses. This is the size limit of what might be acceptable.</p>
<p><b>Are there any specific areas you want protected for other uses?</b></p>	<p>Alban Head Playing fields in Watersfield is managed for “Fields in Trust” – this must be protected.</p> <p>We are anxious about development that might be proposed by a significant local landowner next to Brookland Way (“librarian-dragging-afraid” - what3words). We might welcome some development of affordable/social housing (as noted above) but it is difficult to gauge how much might be proposed.</p> <p>The site of the Village Hall, its car park and surrounding land must be protected.</p> <p>There are important areas of open land within the Parish that are part of local SSSIs – managed and controlled by private landowners or Sussex Wildlife Trust – these are impacted by issues mentioned above such as water quality and traffic volumes with associated noise and pollution.</p>

## Homes

Information required	Response
<b>What type of homes would you like to see in your local community?</b>	Affordable/social housing. It is particularly important that we encourage “net zero” passive homes sympathetic to the parish’s look and feel. Shackleton Close in Coldwaltham is a good example – this might be replicated elsewhere.
<b>What size of home is needed locally?</b>	Two/three bedroom affordable, social housing; we would welcome a small number of such houses, which should be ‘energy neutral’ as far as possible.
<b>Any other requirements?</b>	Any increase in the number of homes in the parish will inevitably increase traffic volumes – in part due to their being no viable alternative transport options. The impact on the A29 and connecting roads must be properly considered.

## Design

Information Required	Response
<b>Are there any areas of local character which are particularly important to the local community?</b>	The Parish borders two key areas of wildlife habitat - Waltham Brooks and Pulborough Brooks (the latter being a SSSI), as is most of the Arun valley.
<b>Particular features of buildings of local character</b>	The four main churches and Hardham Priory have long histories; Hardham Church is mid-11 <sup>th</sup> century with a priceless group of wall paintings.

## The natural environment

Information Required	Response
<p><b>Opportunities to make nature bigger, better and more joined up</b></p>	<p>The authorities (HDC/WSCC/SDNP) have neglected many local footpaths; roadside footpaths are too narrow to use safely and are not continuous; the roads in our parish are unsafe for walking and cycling due to excessive vehicle speeds, high volumes of large vehicles (especially HGVs), narrow road widths and the lack of alternative pathways – shared use or otherwise. Cycling in the Parish is dangerous, especially for family groups.</p> <p>Coldwaltham PC does not have the funds or resources to cut and maintain the rural paths.</p>

## Jobs

Information Required	Response
<p><b>Information about business you would like to protect and business opportunities that should be provided</b></p>	<p>The Post Office has recently closed the Sub-Post office operating from the Village Hall, without any consultation with the local community. St James School, Lodge Hill and Champs Hill are the main local employers, along with the Southern Water facilities, and the small Hardham Business Park.</p> <p>Our public house (The Labouring Man) is an essential hub for village communication and support.</p> <p>The small business park at Hardham and waterworks need protecting, but not necessarily expanding.</p> <p>There are some planning pressures for 'holiday lodges' and camping grounds in the Parish but applications are often made without due regard for the traffic/road safety implications, local environment, existing infrastructure and the dark skies policy (see above).</p> <p>The Parish is well suited to work-from-home roles and small businesses – notwithstanding the instability of the local power network, mediocre local broadband, poor mobile phone signals, and the high cost of off-grid home heating. Universal fibre-optic broadband seems some way off yet but will be increasingly important.</p>

## Public spaces

Information Required	Response
<p><i>Public Open Space, Public realm, Pocket Parks</i></p>	<p>There are two children’s playgrounds in the Parish, both of which are supported by local fundraising. It is most important to keep them in a safe condition.</p> <p>Alban Head fields, noted above, is an essential village open space for formal sports, informal training and other local events.</p>

## Infrastructure

Information Required	Response
<p><i>Active travel priorities, roads / parking, community buildings needs, waste / water infrastructure, broadband, renewable energy</i></p>	<p>Please see previous comments regarding the state of roads and footpaths and the lack of cycleways in the parish.</p> <p>Transport is almost exclusively by using private cars. Public transport services are so limited (serving Pulborough/Worthing/Chichester twice weekly, allowing very limited time in those destinations before the return journey) they are simply not a viable option for most needs for most people. A (minimum) daily bus service to these places – twice daily to and from Pulborough - is required.</p> <p>A local volunteer-led community transport scheme supports a minimum of travel, on a pre-order basis, but is not a true substitute for public transport.</p> <p>See previous comments on the closure of the Post Office.</p> <p>The Village Hall is maintained by local fundraising and small rental income, for both hall and parking space. It’s a vital asset that must continue in operation.</p> <p>A recent application for “Charging facilities” was turned down, citing lack of security lighting, driven by the Dark Skies policy. There should be some technical/engineering solution!</p> <p>There seems to be little incentive to encourage a universal switch to HVO for heating, which could be a much more environmentally sound alternative to kerosene heating oil (and would not necessitate costly boiler replacement in most cases – this is very important given that the majority of parish residents rely on oil for heating and hot water. A switch to HVO could reduce pollution significantly at a local level.</p> <p>High-speed broadband is vital – the parish does not yet have full fibre services.</p>

## FINALISING YOUR SUBMISSION

As a reminder, before finalising your submission, please check you have addressed the following:

- **You have completed the details in section I, including details of public engagement events and consultation activities which have informed the statement. Where possible please identify the percentage of the community that have engaged in the preparation of the PPS.**
- **Please try to summarise the community's views and aspirations as much as possible, do not provide details of individuals who have commented, and bullet points for key priorities where possible.**
- **If you have supporting evidence or information please use a hyperlink to the data where available, and summarise the information as much as possible in the PPS.**

## DISCLAIMER

The assessment process and outputs will feed into the Local Plan review process but we cannot guarantee the delivery of specific community aspirations in the South Downs Local Plan policies, allocations or designations.

## DATA PROTECTION STATEMENT

The information collected in this response form will be used by the National Park Authority, as part of its public task, to inform the local plan-making processes and other relevant Authority documents or processes. This information will then be retained until it is superseded. By responding you are accepting the information within your response, may be made available to the public. Any personal information provided (names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or other contact details) will not be made public. Please let us know if you do not wish for your information to be shared in this way.

All information held by the South Downs National Park Authority may be subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act. If any information included is sensitive and you would like to have the opportunity to object to its release in the event of a Freedom of Information request, please contact us.

Further details on how we manage your information, including your rights under the GDPR, are available in our Privacy Notice <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/transparency/privacy-statement-2/>

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Please tick here to confirm you have read and agree to submit your information in accordance with the disclaimer and data protection statement.
Information required	Response
Print Name	██
Date	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

**We ask that forms are returned by email to [planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk)**

If you are unable to return the form by email please post to:  
Planning Policy Team, South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Centre, North Street  
Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9DH