

# SOUTH DOWNS PLANNING NEWS

UPDATES FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## Approval for almost 700 homes in town

**Plans for a new community of 685 homes and cultural, business and flexible workspace in Lewes have been approved, subject to planning conditions.**

The National Park's Planning Committee met at County Hall, Lewes, and voted to give the go-ahead to the plans, subject to a series of conditions. These include the resolution of highway concerns, raised by National Highways and East Sussex County Council, as well as a Section 106 legal agreement that requires 30 per cent affordable housing, including for local people.

The plans, submitted by Human Nature (Lewes) Ltd, are for the redevelopment of the North Street Industrial Estate and Springman House, in North Street, Lewes.

The proposals are phased, including planning permission to demolish existing buildings, construct flood defences, and highways improvements, all which will help the town, as well as serve the development.

Further phases include buildings of up to six storeys comprising 656 dwellings, as well as up to 3,279m<sup>2</sup> business, employment and flexible workspace.

The plans propose new parking provisions focusing on a mobility hub off The Causeway, highway improvements, including a realignment of North Street and Phoenix Place, a recycling and re-use centre, and construction of a new footbridge over the River Ouse and a riverside pedestrian walkway.



A decision on the plans was deferred last October due to issues around design, air quality and flood risk, which have all now been addressed. Some highway issues are still to be fully resolved, including trip rates, transport modelling for Lewes and the A27, and traffic mitigation measures.

If those highway matters are satisfactorily addressed within six months, full planning permission can be granted by the National Park Authority.

Tim Slaney, Chief Executive (Interim), said: "This is a hugely important and strategic site in Lewes, that is crying out for redevelopment and bringing a new vitality to the area. We're pleased to have reached a positive outcome on this groundbreaking and complex planning application, working with the owners of the site and many partners.

"The plans will breathe new life into a town centre brownfield site and bring a number of benefits, including a significant number of affordable homes, sustainability measures, employment and much-needed flood defences, serving the wider town as well as the development itself."

## Go-ahead for cultural hub



**Plans for a new culture, arts and education hub that will provide a downland visitor gateway have been approved.**

Members of the South Downs National Park Authority's Planning Committee voted to grant permission, subject to conditions, to plans for Black Robin Farm, off Beachy Head Road, Eastbourne, at a meeting held at County Hall, Lewes.

The planning approval is subject to conditions, including a Section 106 legal agreement to secure an expanded bus service, a new public footpath and further consideration of the location of the proposed bus stop to reduce impact on the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The plans, put forward by Eastbourne Borough Council, include a change of use of the farmstead site to include a cultural and education centre with business studios, refectory and event space, as well as the construction of a new gallery building. The development will include new pedestrian access and works to the existing vehicle access, vehicle parking, and landscaping.

The hub will be operated by Towner Eastbourne.

The scheme includes areas for chalk grassland restoration, and the restoration of two dew ponds, both of which are objectives of the Eastbourne Downland Estate Whole Estate Plan (WEP). There will also be new hedgerow planting for wildlife.

It's estimated the cultural centre will attract up to 100,000 visitors per year and the proposals include sustainable travel measures, such as improved local public bus services.

Mike Hughes, Director of Planning (Interim), said: "This new hub will provide the public with extensive opportunities to connect with the culture, history, geography, ecology and land management practices of the area.

"Cultural heritage and providing opportunities for people to enjoy the National Park are the Authority's two key purposes and these proposals enhance both."

## Homes approved for village site



**Seven homes are to be built on the edge of a historic village as a disused farmstead is redeveloped.**

The National Park Authority's Planning Committee voted to approve plans for a residential development in King's Ride, Alfriston.

The site is located at the western end of the East Sussex village and directly abuts the South Downs Way.

The supporting structure of a former grain store building is being retained and renovated to create six new homes over two floors. A seventh two-storey detached house is being built towards the southern boundary of the site, while 11 car parking spaces will be provided within two new single-storey buildings.

The development will include two new affordable homes, as well as a number of climate-friendly features, including a 56 per cent improvement on Dwelling Emission Rate and a number of Passivhaus principles, including improved thermal bridges and triple glazing. The development will include the creation of new hedgerow habitat.



Philippa Smyth, Principal Planning Officer, said: "These plans make good use of a disused site that's allocated for housing in the South Downs Local Plan and within the defined settlement policy boundary of Alfriston.

"We've worked very closely with the developers from an early stage to ensure the final plans are landscaped and have a strong emphasis on design.

"The development embraces the site's character through reusing structures and simple, well-suited material choices. With simple spatial design of soft and hard landscaping, the site has not been hidden away and its past is clearly understood through the design.

"The redeveloped site will provide an appropriate junction between the village and the open countryside."



## Hotel plans are refused



An indicative layout of the proposal

### **Plans for a hotel complex close to the A3 have been refused because of harm to the landscape.**

An outline application went before the National Park's Planning Committee for a hotel, cycle centre and cafe on a 2.5 hectare greenfield site near Buriton, Hampshire.

Petersfield Town Council objected to the plan, arguing that the "development would severely impact the strategic gap between Petersfield and Buriton and raise the real risk of the creation in the future of a linear development between the two communities".

Objections were also submitted by Buriton Parish Council, the National Park's Design Officer, together with holding objections from the local flood authority and highways authority.

The County Landscape Officer for Hampshire said that "any coalescence of built form in this location should be resisted in this gateway location, if the quality of the National Park's 'breathtaking views' are to be conserved".

Members voted against the plans, saying it was unacceptable development on a greenfield site that would not conserve or enhance the landscape.

Mike Hughes, Director of Planning (Interim) at the National Park Authority, said: "We want to showcase planning approvals, but I think it's also important to talk about those applications we refuse because of the harm to this precious landscape, which was designated for the entire nation for its natural beauty.

"These proposals were assessed against the Development Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, the NPPF, the purposes of the National Park and its duty, as well as the other material considerations, and the conclusion was this development would harm, significantly, the existing rural landscape character of the site."

## Appeal is dismissed



A view of Fulking village

### **An appeal against enforcement action by the Authority over two mobile homes was dismissed by a Government Planning Inspector.**

The National Park's enforcement team was made aware in the summer of 2022 that an agricultural field to the southeast of Clappers Lane, Fulking, had been partly covered in hardstanding and two mobile homes placed on site for residential use.

A Temporary Stop Notice was issued to prevent any further development at the site, which is next to two approved gypsy traveller sites.

A subsequent planning application was refused by the National Park Authority's Planning Committee in November 2022.

An Enforcement Notice was then issued to remove the caravans and the hardstanding, giving the occupiers six months to comply.

The owners exercised their right of appeal against the notice, and the Planning Inspectorate agreed to a public hearing at the South Downs offices in Midhurst.

Planning Inspector Hilary Orr acknowledged that the two pitches would make "a positive contribution" to the provision of pitches in the Mid-Sussex area and the National Park as a whole.

However, she said that the National Park "attracts the highest status of protection".

"Overall, in my judgement, the combination of factors in favour of the development are not sufficient to clearly outweigh the significant harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the South Downs National Park and the settled community," she said.

The Inspector held that the compliance time of six months was too short and extended it to 12 months.

The site must be cleared by April 2025.

# Why planning is the beating heart of National Parks



**Think of “National Parks” and I doubt planning is the first thing that springs to most people’s minds. Beautiful views, wildlife, access trails, country pubs and castles, perhaps.**

Yet planning lies at the very heart of everything a National Park is. In my opinion, it’s the glue that holds everything together, providing the framework for us to be able to deliver our purposes and duty.

Planning powers are a core element of the conservation and enhancement of these treasured landscapes, as well as the bedrock for creating more opportunities for people to enjoy its special qualities.

They’re particularly important in countries like England where National Parks, contrary to what some may believe, are far from being “nature’s last wildernesses” like some of the American National Parks. They’re a place where people and nature come together and that’s particularly true in a place like the South Downs, which is full of vibrant, thriving market towns and villages, covers three busy counties and is home to around 115,000 people – the highest population of any National Park in the UK. Planning powers are part of the support system to ensure rural economies can grow sustainably, jobs are created, and there’s a high-quality built environment that supports people’s health and wellbeing and, furthermore, finds space for nature. Ultimately, when you boil it down to the basics, we principally want to help create prosperous places where people are happy and want to live, work and visit.

Planning powers have been a feature of National Park Authorities ever since National Parks were created in the 1940s, with the 1945 Dower Report laying the foundations. The “crucial importance” of the planning function of National Park Authorities was recognised in

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

a significant review of National Parks in 1991. Consequently, the Environment Act 1995 was clear that independent National Park Authorities should be the sole local planning authority for their areas, with full planning powers.

Our planning functions are particularly important to recognise this year as we mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary since National Parks were created. Indeed, they’re actually one of the few statutory powers we have and are arguably more needed than ever as land use and land management become more closely aligned.

We are one of the largest Local Planning Authorities in the UK, determining more applications than most London boroughs. Our planning powers are not about stopping development. Far from it. In fact, 90 per cent of the applications we receive are approved. Our function revolves around the right development, in the right place, fostering a landscape-led approach and that’s why the South Downs Local Plan is so vital.

Moving on from why planning powers are important, what’s been achieved in the South Downs National Park? There are numerous highlights over the past 14 years for a comparatively young National Park, so I’ll just touch on a few of the most eminent ones.



We have an award-winning South Downs Local Plan that led on items such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Ecosystems Services years before they were rolled out in national policy. This early innovation is now paying dividends as mandatory BNG has come into play. The landmark legal agreement last year at Iford Estate, signing over 31 hectares of land to nature recovery, is the first of many parcels of land that will be dedicated for BNG provision. As well as larger-scale nature recovery, there are multiple examples in recent years of development improving both the size and quality of wildlife habitats. Good planning at a local and regional scale will be absolutely vital if the country wants to achieve its biodiversity and climate targets.

It’s fundamental to note that our planning function doesn’t happen in isolation. It’s a collaboration, with people and communities sitting at the heart of the process. I’m proud that 44 Neighbourhood



## Last few days to nominate for Design Awards!

**Planning agents, developers, builders, landowners and community groups are being urged to get their nominations in as the clock counts down to the deadline for the South Downs Design Awards.**



After a five-year break, the prestigious South Downs Designs Awards are back for 2024 with an extended line-up of categories.

The awards celebrate high standards of urban, architectural and landscape design, as well as promote creativity and understanding of the National Park through design.

Mike Hughes, Director of Planning (Interim) at the South Downs National Park, said: "These awards are about celebrating exceptional projects past and present, as well as looking ahead to the future and investigating new ideas for development in the National Park. The competition is wide open and we're looking forward to seeing the breadth of nominations. It's a great opportunity to raise the profile of your project."

The categories are:

**Residential** – includes completed extensions, single buildings, small and large housing developments, and visitor accommodation.

**Non-residential** – includes completed commercial, industrial, farming, infrastructure, recreation, and leisure developments.

**Conservation** – includes completed historic parks and gardens, historic buildings, monuments, as well as excellent craftsmanship.

**Future projects** – includes projects that celebrate distinction in unbuilt projects on paper and the potential for positive contribution to the National Park, its communities and the planet.

Winners will receive a specially designed trophy, beautifully hand-carved in South Downs oak by acclaimed West Sussex-based sculptor, Alison Crowther.

**Nominations close on 30 April.** The shortlist will be announced in the summer, with a glittering awards ceremony taking place in the autumn.

Nominate by visiting

**[www.southdowns.gov.uk/designawards](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/designawards)**

Development Plans have now been "made" – each one led by the community, for the community.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is one my favourite – and most rewarding – aspects of planning here in the South Downs National Park. We are the only National Park to have it and it's a key delivery mechanism with massive public benefit. Since 2017 we have raised more than £12m – every penny spent on doing good in the National Park. Hundreds of projects have reaped the rewards, from new access paths, pedestrian crossings, sports pavilions, and community gardens, to wildlife havens and school facilities. Long may it continue. You can find out about the impact of CIL by reading some of the case studies on our [website](#).

In terms of achievements I am also pleased that our planning expertise has been recognised elsewhere with SDNPA being commissioned to provide planning expertise to other protected landscapes.

One thing I know about planning is that it never sits still. With a big election coming up, it's fair to say further change is likely. Planning continues to be under pressure in England and I think we can all acknowledge it can be a complex system. But in a small, densely-developed country we are always going to need an effective planning system. Key for Local Planning Authorities is to have a clear, robust plan for where you want to get to – and our South Downs Local Plan is just that.



Stanmer Park has benefitted from CIL

I hope you enjoy reading the spring planning newsletter and finding out more about our team's work. Spring really is one of my favourite times of the year and,

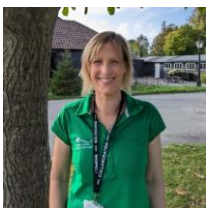
with longer days and (hopefully) more sunlight, there's a real buzz around towns and villages of the National Park. The landscape really comes to life and you can see why the Downs are sometimes called "England's Mountains Green".

I enjoy discovering new places this time of the year and this expansive National Park offers such a treasure trove of hidden gems. Do get out and explore! Our [walking hub](#) is a good place to start.

**Mike Hughes,**  
**Planning Director (Interim)**



## Useful updates on BNG



**Dr Lynsey Robinson, Ecology Planning Lead, gives her latest lowdown on Biodiversity Net Gain and how to navigate the changes.**

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact on biodiversity.

BNG is broadly trying to achieve four things:

1. change *how* development happens
2. change *where* development happens
3. create a high integrity market for nature-based solutions
4. contribute to nature recovery

The concept of development delivering a net gain for biodiversity has been part of national discussions for a long time and has been a SDNPA policy requirement since the adoption of our landscape-led Local Plan in 2019.

Following the Environment Act 2021 and subsequent secondary legislation, there is now a world-leading, national **mandatory** requirement for BNG which has applied to major developments since 12 February this year, and to small sites from 2 April. You can read here the **full definition of a small development** but for residential development, it means a development with nine houses or fewer, on less than 1 hectare of land.

### Extra guidance from National Park

There are very specific technical and procedural requirements associated with mandatory BNG. To help developers, landowners and planning agents, the National Park has therefore produced a **BNG Technical Advice Note** to provide interim guidance for applicants and decision makers on how BNG is to be achieved in the South Downs National Park in

accordance with existing South Downs Local Plan policy.

Importantly, the TAN sets out how BNG is expected to make a meaningful contribution to nature recovery.

The guidance covers five broad areas: scope of BNG requirements and exemptions; overarching principles; major applications; small sites; and securing and monitoring BNG.

The TAN will be subject to review over the coming months and will be updated as new national policy and guidance is available and through ongoing industry learning on key aspects of implementing BNG at national and local level. **The latest version of the TAN should always be used and this can be sourced from our website.**

We have also updated our local planning application requirements relating to BNG, and these are set out in our **Local Validation List**

The market for offsite biodiversity unit sites – which are locations for biodiversity gain outside of the development, if it's not possible to deliver on-site – is developing. Sites are beginning to be made available on the Natural England register, meaning that they have all the necessary legal agreements in place to sell offsite units directly to developers or through online marketplaces. You can read more about SDNPA's statutory planning role and our wider services in this area **here**

More government guidance about biodiversity net gain is available **here** and you can also learn how to calculate **biodiversity value**.

## Update on Rampion 2



**The National Park Authority is a statutory consultee on plans to extend the Rampion offshore wind farm. Vicki Colwell, Principal Planning Officer, shares an update.**

The location of the South Downs National Park means that as well as serving a much larger wider population, it also plays host to and is impacted by large-scale infrastructure. This includes road, rail, offshore wind and associated onshore cable corridors.

Given the scale of these nationally-significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs), they are not dealt with by us but through the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) with the final decision being made by the Secretary of



## Country park benefits from CIL funding



### People and nature are benefitting from £100,000 of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding at Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

Hampshire County Council were awarded £50,000 for the restoration of an existing pond and the creation of a fully-accessible facility that the education team can use to provide nature activities for school groups.

The works included the replacement of the pond liner, installation of fencing, a new dipping platform and the removal of invasive plants.

Nikki Allen, CIL Planning Officer for the National Park, said: "The new interpretation provides lots of information for visitors on the importance of ponds and the different wildlife that inhabit them. As wildlife returns to the pond and the new planting becomes more established the benefits to the surrounding environment will only increase."

Meanwhile, a further £50,000 was awarded to help make QECP a key cycling destination in the National Park.

A series of fun trails and ramps for mountain biking have been created, as well as a coaching area and improvements to a former work depot to provide a base for an e-bike hire business.

Nikki added: "The facility opened just under a year ago and it's wonderful to see it being enjoyed by people of all ages.

"The project has built on the country park's growing reputation for mountain biking and as a stopping point along the South Downs Way for cyclists."



State. However, as a local planning authority, we still take an active role in the process. One of the biggest schemes we are currently involved in is for the Rampion 2 Offshore Wind Project. Up to 90 turbines are proposed to be located in an area (approximately 24km at its nearest point) south of the National Park, with an onshore cable corridor connecting the proposed array to the National Grid at Bolney running through the National Park. The underground cable corridor would enter at Hammerpot/Patching and exit at Wiston.

The National Park Authority has made representations which state that whilst we support the principle of offshore wind and the need to bring forward renewable energy projects, the proposal would cause significant harm to seascape, landscape, important habitats and cultural heritage.

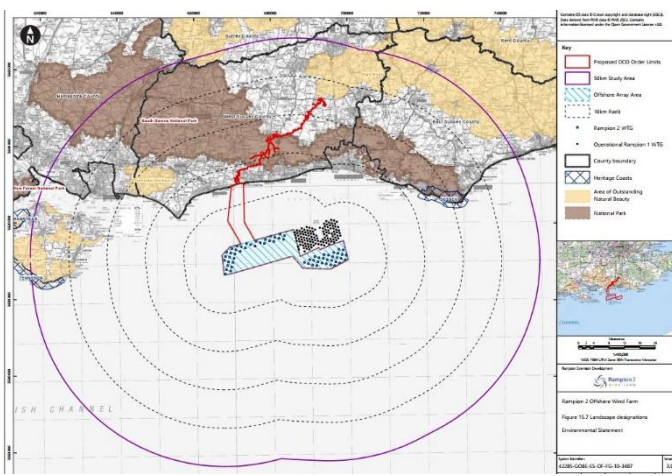
This harm is of a scale that has impacts wider than just the National Park – for example habitat connectivity and landscape-scale green infrastructure delivery.

We consider that further steps need to be taken to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation is being put in place to overcome these concerns, and where the harm cannot be overcome within the project boundaries, compensatory measures are provided.

The project is currently in the Examination period, which includes multiple written submissions from all the parties involved as well as a series of Issue Specific Hearings, the next round of which will take place later in May 2024. Officers have been engaging with the applicant throughout this period and will continue to do so, to identify appropriate mitigation options or projects that could help overcome some of our concerns.

The Examination period will end in August 2024, after which PINS will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will then make the final decision.

Further details can be found [here](#)



A map of the proposed extension to the existing wind farm

## Chaplaincy gets much-needed refurbishment



**A critical site for helping vulnerable people has been improved after £92,000 of CIL funding.**

The Beachy Head Chaplaincy has been significantly modernised and given a makeover, giving the police, chaplaincy and coastguard a much-improved base to carry out their work.

Electric vehicle charging points for partner agency vehicles have also been installed to reduce the building's carbon footprint.

Nikki Allen, CIL Planning Officer, said: "The Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team have responded to over 15,000 incidents in the past 20 years and it's important they have a base that's fit for purpose.

"This has been such a worthwhile use of CIL funding for this dedicated, hard-working team that help save many lives."



## New affordable homes for West Sussex village

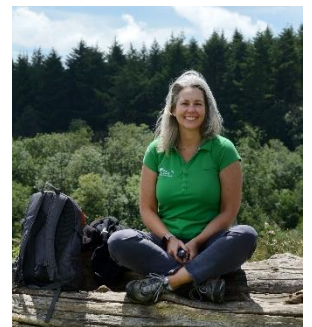


**Twelve new affordable homes are being built thanks to £100,000 of Section 106 funding from the National Park Authority.**

The cash injection was awarded to Westbourne Community Trust through the Affordable Housing Grant scheme towards a 100% affordable housing development. The homes will be held as affordable in perpetuity.

The development will also deliver benefits for existing local residents, including parking and storage facilities for allotments, off-street parking for existing dwellings and additional public open space provision.

Gill Welsman, the National Park's Planning Project Management Officer who promotes and facilitates the Affordable Housing Grant scheme, said: "It's great that we can support the delivery of affordable housing for those who live and work in and around the



National Park. Community Trusts such as Westbourne are non-profit organisations run by volunteers and as such rely on grant funding initiatives, such as the SDNPA's, to deliver projects that enable their communities to remain sustainable and thriving places for future generations to live and work.'

Further information on the work of Westbourne Community Trust is available on their [website](#).

If you would like to enquire about an SDNPA Affordable Housing Grant please email [affordablehousing@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:affordablehousing@southdowns.gov.uk) or visit our grants webpage Affordable Housing Grant Scheme - South Downs National Park Authority.



In other planning policy news:

- We have received a positive Inspectors' report on the East Sussex Minerals and Waste Local Plan Partial Review, and the National Park Authority along with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, will be considering reports recommending the adoption of this Plan over the next few months. This is the last stage of a process which started in 2017, involved a number of public consultations and a robust examination of the Local Plan by the Planning Inspectorate.
- The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Partial Review: pre-examination consultation took place between 9 January and 5 March 2024. Representations are currently being processed prior to submitting them and the Plan and supporting documents to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.
- The Rottingdean Neighbourhood Development Plan passed its examination and referendum and was formally 'made' (adopted) by the National Park Authority in March 2024.
- Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan has been submitted for examination and a pre-examination consultation was carried out between 11th March and 23rd April 2024.
- The Selbourne Village Design Statement was consulted on between 1st February and 15th March 2024 and was adopted at Planning Committee in April as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- A revised version of the Technical Advice Note on Extensions and Replacement Dwellings has been published [here](#). This takes account of legal advice to ensure that it is consistent with the wording of policies SD30 and SD31.

## The latest on policy...



The view from Butser Hill



### Claire Tester, Planning Policy Manager, gives an update on key developments in policy.

In the last newsletter we announced the publication of our Housing and Economic Development Needs

Assessment which can be viewed [here](#).

Since then the team has been working hard to finalise the Land Availability Assessment, which assesses over 800 sites across the National Park for their suitability to meet these housing and other development needs. This work is progressing well and we hope to publish our findings in June.

If you would like to receive notifications and updates on the progress of the Local Plan Review and other planning policy matters, please email [planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southdowns.gov.uk) with your full name and contact information and we will add you to our consultation database. Further details about the Local Plan Review can be found [here](#).

We are also planning some public engagement in June/July so people can have early input into:

- the scope and timetable for the Local Plan Review and the key issues for it to address;
- how the Local Plan Review can contribute to delivering the vision for the National Park and its corporate priorities of climate action, nature recovery and a National Park for all;
- how they want to be engaged in subsequent stages of the process including consulting on a revised Statement of Community Involvement.

Further details of this engagement and the documents to be consulted on are available in [this report](#) under item 8.



## Boost for LPAs around water neutrality



**Katharine Stuart, Planning Policy Lead, gives an update on a funding boost that will ease current burdens in areas affected by water neutrality rules.**

We're working with other Local Planning Authorities on a local authority-led water offsetting scheme for the areas affected by Natural England's water neutrality position statement within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone.

This scheme is called the Sussex North Offsetting Water Scheme, or SNOWS. The scheme will support developers in obtaining water offset 'credits' to enable local plan supported development to come forward, helping to ease the current burdens in place.

To help support this work, led by Horsham District Councils, the LPAs for the affected area submitted a bid to the DLUHC's Planning Skills Delivery Fund.

This is a £29m fund intended to provide support to local authorities to help clear backlogs of planning applications and address skills gaps.

In December, the authorities were pleased to be advised that we had been successful with our bid.

We were awarded £250,000 of 'skills gap' funding to support the delivery of the SNOWS scheme through the next 12-18 months, after which the scheme should be self-financing. This funding is very welcome, and the authorities are grateful to DLUHC and Defra colleagues for their support with our bid. The National Park Authority would like to thank Clark Gordon, the Water Neutrality Project Manager and colleagues at Horsham District Council, for leading this bid.

If you would like to stay up to date on the development of SNOWS, you can subscribe to the SNOWS newsletter via the following [link](#).

## Latest planning stats

Query	Jan to Mar 24	March 23 - April 2024
Appeals submitted to the Planning Inspectorate	17	92
Appeals started	25	91
Appeals determined	29	68
Appeals successfully defended	17	38
Statutory submissions received	969	3,956
Statutory submissions received via the Planning Portal	822	3,359
Statutory submissions determined	1,004	4,049
Neighbours notified	4,773	20,502
Representations received	1,673	7,242
Consultations issued	2,668	10,986
Conditions imposed	3,186	13,161
Enquiries for planning advice	275	1,028
Enforcement complaints received	173	671
Enforcement cases opened	132	574
Enforcement related site inspections	96	379
Enforcement notices served	2	28
Enforcement cases closed	141	591

## Awards celebrate great craftsmanship

**The very best buildings showcasing architecture, high-quality craftsmanship and conservation techniques will be celebrated once again this year in the Sussex Heritage Trust awards.**

The charity, which was created in 1977 to preserve, improve and encourage the appreciation of the architectural and natural landscape of Sussex, is calling for nominations for the prestigious awards.

There are 11 categories to enter from small scale residential, public and community, to building crafts.

The awards have special categories with The Eco Award and **The South Downs Award**, which is sponsored by the South Downs National Park Authority



Last year's South Downs winner was The Woodcarvers Studio, at Nyewood, which is a sustainable studio space for professional artist and wood sculptor, Alison Crowther.

Highly-commended in the category was Littlewood Lookout, a woodland regeneration project in the centre of the National Trust's Slindon Estate (pictured above).

The Awards ceremony will take place at Lancing College Chapel on 10 July.



## Meet the team...



**For this edition, we catch up with Conservation Officer Lucie Tushingham.**

**Three words that sum up your job in planning?**

Interesting, involved, ever-changing.

**Okay, so what's your role at the National Park?**

I'm a Conservation Officer for the West side of the Park, dealing with the built heritage. The post is based in the Specialists Team, within the Planning Department and works closely with the Policy Team.

**What appealed to you about working in planning?**

I wanted a job that would be purposeful and interesting, indoors and outdoors. From studying at Portsmouth for a geography degree, my interest in planning, conservation and the landscape developed. I initially worked as a journalist on a design magazine and left to study for my diploma and MSc at Oxford Brookes, then later studied at Wisley and the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh for a RHS Level 2.

**Can you describe your typical day?**

Application responses, projects, with updates to and from colleagues. It can vary from discussions with the

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

team, writing up comments and on site with officers, with the occasional grape rolling across the desk.

**Best thing about working in planning for a National Park?**

Planning, conservation and design are all linked by context and what better place than a National Park to work in, with the best context and landscape.

**What do you love about the South Downs National Park?**

The team I work in, people make the job, as does working in the lovely Midhurst offices opposite the stunning Cowdray ruins. The close team of people I work with are all highly skilled specialists at their jobs, funny, intelligent and have been so welcoming to me as a newbie.

**Currently reading/watching?**

Currently reading Blink by Malcolm Gladwell and Botany For Gardens by Brian Capon and watching Death in Paradise, which takes you to the sunny island of Saint Marie.

**Dream holiday destination and why?**

Well, it has to be Guadeloupe, which is where the fictional Saint Marie is filmed...or Iceland (pictured right), trekking up and round the volcanoes; preferably when not erupting!



**Describe your perfect day (when not working, of course!)**

I do love pottering in the garden and going for a walk with friends, that ends in a pub 😊

## Planning Committees

The next Planning Committee meetings will be held on 13 June and 11 July.

You can watch the meetings on-demand for up to six months after the meeting through our [webcasting portal](#).

You can look at previous and upcoming agendas on the website [here](#).

[Pic credits](#)

P1 Human Nature; P3 right Sam Moore; P4 left (Stedham) Sam Moore; P4 right (Lewes) Anne Purkiss; P6 left Adam Huttly; P11 (Iceland) Pexels