

# SOUTH DOWNS PLANNING

NEWS FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY



Welcome to the planning newsletter for the South Downs National Park Authority  
Send your comments to us at [planningnewsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:planningnewsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

## Big funding boost of £1.5m for community

**New walking routes for families and people with disabilities, cycle hubs, play facilities, and a refurbished pavilion are among the projects to benefit from a major funding boost from the South Downs National Park Authority.**

More than £1.37m will benefit almost 30 community schemes across Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex.

The investment comes from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is administered by the Authority and paid by developers to support new local infrastructure.

As well as the £1.37m, 22 parish or town councils across the National Park will be taking a share of just over £256,000 to support grassroots projects in their area.

Among the inspiring projects will be a mix of initiatives to help better connect urban areas to the countryside, including new Miles Without Stiles routes in Hampshire. Over 130 miles of stile-free routes will be created around Winchester and from Hambledon to Rowlands Castle.

In West Sussex, funding will help to create the first phase of a shared-use traffic-free path connecting the south of Midhurst to the town centre.

In East Sussex, a cash injection will help pay for Phase 6 of Egrets Way, connecting Rise Farm to Rodmell in the beautiful Ouse Valley. The people of Fernhurst will also benefit from a modernised and



expanded sports pavilion, while new play equipment will be installed at Lavant and Liss.

Substantial funding will go towards expanding facilities and services at the Sustainability Centre, near Clanfield, while nearby at Queen Elizabeth Country Park, a new cycle hub is being created with new trails for children and adults, bike repair facilities and battery charging.

On the East Sussex coast, funding will improve facilities for chaplains, coastguards and the police at Beachy Head chaplaincy. Buzz Active, in the Cuckmere Valley, will be receiving funding to improve access for paddle sport enthusiasts.

Tim Slaney, Director of Planning at the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "As 2021 draws to a close, we're delighted to announce this significant funding of over £1.5m to help local communities across the region.

"Having access to green spaces has never been more important and a large proportion of this

funding will help people walk or cycle right into the heart of some of the South East's most beautiful countryside.

"It's wonderful to see such a varied range of projects, whether it be a village play area, new walking trails, tree planting or a new drama facility for a school, benefitting local communities and visitors.

"This substantial funding underlines the tremendous value of good planning and showcases the benefits that flow from high-quality development in a protected landscape such as the South Downs."

### East Sussex

#### **Wallands Primary School SuDs Project in Lewes**

– to provide an exemplar sustainable drainage scheme providing many benefits, including reduced flood risk, learning opportunities, improved outdoor space, and more spaces for nature. £150,000

**Egrets Way Phase 6** – to develop a shared-use path from Rise Farm to Rodmell (3.1km). £131,250

**Beachy Head Chaplaincy** – improvements to existing facilities for chaplains, coastguard and police. £42,500

**Seven Sisters Country Park** – to improve facilities and services. £80,000.

**Buzz Active** – improving access for paddle sport users in the Cuckmere Valley. £30,000.

#### **Beacon Parishes Traffic Group**

– extension of Jubilee Pathway at Spatham Lane. £15,000



### West Sussex

**Pavilion 2022, Fernhurst** – to modernise and expand the sports pavilion to serve Fernhurst. £200,000.

**Midhurst** – to help West Sussex County Council fund the first section of the Midhurst Greenway initiative, creating a new crossing on the A286 and a shared-use, widened route for cyclists and walkers along Jubilee Path, part of a long-term vision for a traffic-free route from south Midhurst connecting with the town centre and Easebourne.

**Midhurst Common** – access improvement and nature recovery works to create new walking and cycling routes along the old Petersfield to Midhurst railway line. £61,000

**Lavant** – replace or refurbish equipment at children's playground. £50,000

**Amberley** – creation of a new community car park at School Road. £35,000.

**Funtington** – refurbishing village hall. £30,000.

**Petworth** – improvements to Leconfield Hall. £20,000.

**Levin Down, near Singleton** – access improvement works and new walking routes. £16,400.

**Bury School** – refurbishing toilets. £15,000.

**Stedham and Iping Recreation Ground** – replacing or refurbishing play equipment. £12,525.

**Fittleworth** – heathland restoration at Hesworth Common. £9,000.

**Fittleworth** – tree planting at Birchwalk Woods. £1,500.

### Hampshire

**Sustainability Centre, near Clanfield** – expand facilities and services related to sustainable education, eco-tourism and residential courses. £100,000.

**New Miles Without Stiles routes, led by Hampshire County Council** – creating a stile-free route covering the parishes Twyford, Itchen Valley, Chilcomb and Itchen Stoke and Ovington, as well as a "southern gateway" to the



National Park covering the parishes of Soberton, Hambledon, Horndean, and Rowlands Castle. Routes are ideal for families, mobility scooters and walkers with limited mobility. £53,008

**West Liss Recreation Ground, Liss** – to expand and renew the play area, MUGA and fitness area. £50,000.00

**Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Bike Base** – Cycle hubs, new trails for children and adults, bike repair facilities, battery charging, and bike washing facilities. £50,000

**Petersfield School** – funding for Drama Break Out Area and outdoor facilities. £40,000.

**Droxford Junior School** – new play and outdoor education facilities. £37,563.85.

**Selborne** – funding towards Village Highway Improvement Scheme. £15,000.

**Steep** – funding towards Village Highway Improvement Scheme £10,000.

**Froxfield and Privett** – funding towards Village Highway Improvement Scheme £10,000

**Greatham** – funding towards Village Highway Improvement Scheme £10,000



## Holiday lodges are given the go-ahead



**Forty new holiday lodges delivering biodiversity net gain and sustainable tourism opportunities have been approved for the National Park.**

The Authority's Planning Committee voted to approve plans for 40 units set in a new wooded landscape scheme in the grounds of Marwell Activity Centre, near Owslebury, Hampshire.

The consent followed extensive remodelling of the original application, which was for 52 lodges.

Officers worked closely with the applicant to help deliver a proposal with a scale and design that was more in keeping with the surrounding landscape.

Marwell Activity Centre, which has been operating for four decades, offers a range of outdoor and indoor activities, courses for schools, colleges, youth groups, and corporate/team building days. The lodges will be available for couples and families and diversify the activity centre's current income stream.

The lodges will be set within a new comprehensive landscape scheme of native trees, understorey planting and scrub areas to create a new wooded environment.

Eight lodges are proposed to have green roofs and many will have bird boxes. Four electric vehicle charging points will be installed in the new car park.

The scheme exceeds the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain that national legislation is anticipated to include.

Richard Ferguson, Development Management Lead for the West of the National Park, said: "We've worked collaboratively with the applicant to amend the original proposals with a high-quality scheme that delivers on design, landscape and sustainability.

"The staycation market has boomed since the start of the pandemic and businesses are having to adapt and seize the opportunities to diversify their income. This scheme clearly offers opportunities to increase visitors' access to this treasured landscape and expand the National Park's sustainable tourism offer."

## New lease of life for Repair Shop show



**It's an award-winning show bringing one of the National Park's most historic settings to the lounges of millions of viewers around the UK.**

Now the future of the hit BBC show *The Repair Shop* is more secure after planning consent was granted for temporary production facilities for a period of up to five years.

The show has been filmed in Court Barn at the Weald and Downland Living Museum, near Chichester, since 2017.

There is currently a group of modular units to the west of the barn used by the production crew that do not benefit from consent and their modern appearance results in a visual impact on the landscape.

The museum is set in the northeastern corner of the West Dean Park and Garden – a site dating back to 1622 when the original manor house was built by James Lewkenor.

The applicant's report read: "The museum would like to provide more suitable facilities for the production team who are looking to continue with filming over the next five years and are keen to ensure that the facilities are economical, functional, but equally well designed and located so as to have the least impact on the protected landscape possible."

The new units will be placed in a similar location to the existing temporary units, but will be arranged around a courtyard designed more sympathetically to the traditional character of the museum and listed park and garden.

Case Officer Sabrina Robinson said: "The site falls within the Whole Estate Plan for West Dean, and it's considered that this development is in line with the Whole Estate Plan as it is continuing to provide financial stability to the Weald and Downland Living Museum. This in turn provides significant employment opportunities within the Whole Estate Plan area."

The planning permission lasts for five years or until the production of *The Repair Shop* ends.

## Home adaptations are a ‘dream come true’



*Oak tree in frost at East Worldham by John Denyer*

### **Alterations made to a family home have made a life-changing difference to one five-year-old boy.**

Oliver Bailey-Hill has a rare genetic condition and needs round-the-clock care.

His parents, Lauren Hill and Darren Bailey, could not find a home suitable for his needs that allowed him stay near his hometown of Alton, Hampshire.

So instead, a partnership of organisations have helped to radically transform a house in Chawton to give him the space, facilities and access he needs to live a comfortable and fulfilling life.

Their new home has been extended with a purpose-built, ground floor bedroom for Oliver, along with a wet room and his own front door.

The £77,576 work took 18 months to complete and was funded by a partnership of East Hampshire District Council, National Park Authority, NHS Solent, Hampshire County Council and Clarion Housing Association.

Oliver has been diagnosed with the genetic condition TITN Gene Myopathy. Lauren and Darren have described the scheme and its effect on their son’s life as a ‘dream come true’.

“The extension has made a vast difference to the quality of Oliver’s life and ours,” they said.

“We would also like to thank South Downs National Park for their financial contribution to make this dream come true.”

Gill Welsman, who oversees Section 106 Funding for the Authority, said: “It’s been a privilege to be part of this project and positively impact the quality of life of a family who live in the South Downs National Park.

“We wish the family a happy and prosperous future in their new home. These kinds of projects underline the amazing impact that Section 106 funding can have on our communities.”

## Natterjacks return! Funding supports nature recovery



### **Funding of almost £40,000 from the National Park Authority will help support the re-introduction of the natterjack toad.**

The iconic amphibian species was found at Blackmoor until the 1970s when it died out due to neglect of the heathland habitat.

But now, five years since the launch of the Heathlands Reunited conservation project, the re-introduction of the natterjack is finally possible.

The site is part of the Woolmer Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest and much of the heath has been restored in recent years after careful management by the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust.

Section 106 funding in 2020 allowed the Trust to buy 20 hectares of Blackmoor in 2020 and the new funding this year will support the complex ecological work needed to re-introduce the species.

Funding will also pay for new stock fencing – replacing the the current barbed wire fencing – along the A325 to enable grazing of English Longhorn cattle over an additional 4.5 hectares of land.

This grazing of the vegetation will improve the habitat, encouraging the natterjacks to thrive.



Gill Welsman, who oversees S106 funding, said: “This is nature recovery in action and it’s wonderful that our role as a Planning Authority can have this kind of impact on biodiversity.”

The Heathlands Reunited project, led by the National Park Authority, has successfully conserved and enhanced 23,825 hectares – or 18,000 football pitches – of lowland heath across the South Downs over the past five years. An independent scientific assessment has revealed that the initiative has been “significant” in restoring the ecological condition of the habitat.



# Calling for sites to help create new wildlife hubs



## A major search has begun to find new spaces for nature in the South Downs National Park.

The Authority is launching a call-out for potential sites for nature as part of our ambitious 10-year campaign to ReNature the South Downs.

The appeal is inviting farmers, land managers, communities and conservation groups across the National Park to put forward possible sites where new wildlife habitat could be created.

Proposals of any size or scale will be considered and could include, for example, creating wildflower meadows, new hedgerows, more natural rivers, planting trees, creating heathland or installing dew ponds. Village greens, road verges and allotments may also have potential.

#ReNature is a campaign that aims to raise £100m over the next 10 years to create an extra 13,000 hectares of habitat where plants and animals can thrive.

Several expressions of interest have been received since the appeal was launched in early November.

Andrew Lee, Director of Countryside Policy and Management, said: "Many people may be familiar with the "Call for Sites" process in planning – which is to find potential sites for housing development. We're following a similar process, only our search is a little different – we want to find new spaces for nature."

The National Park Authority is not looking to acquire land as part of this process.

The South Downs National Park currently has 25 per cent of the land managed for nature, such as nature reserves, woods, heaths, ponds and flower-rich road verges. The additional 13,000 hectares would bring this to 33 per cent of land managed for nature – going beyond current UN-backed conservation targets of "30 per cent by 2030" (30 for 30).

#ReNature is being spearheaded by the South Downs National Park Authority and the South Downs National Park Trust, the official independent

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charity of the National Park, working with a range of partners.

People can find out more about the Call for Nature Sites and download a form to make an expression of interest by visiting

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

**The deadline for expressions of interest is 17 January, 2022.**



**Katharine Stuart, Planning Policy Lead, answers some commonly asked questions....**

**What type of land will be considered?**

It could be urban, semi-urban or rural land in the South

Downs National Park where managing for nature/biodiversity is not the current primary objective of the land.

Over 70 per cent of the National Park is farmland, so we would envisage a number of expressions of interest may come from farmers.

Proposals of any size or scale will be considered and could include, for example, creating wildflower meadows, heathland, installing dewponds.

It could include land that is significant in joining up the landscape and strengthening the ecosystem, such as hedgerows, verges, field margins and watercourses, as well as recreation and amenity spaces.

A site being "renatured" would mean that managing for biodiversity becomes the primary objective of that land.

### **How will expressions of interest be evaluated?**

Each submitted site will be evaluated to determine how the SDNPA may be able to advise on the potential for the site to contribute to nature recovery. Examples of considerations include:

- Does the site meet the initial criteria for evaluation (i.e. is it an excluded site)?
- Suitability of the site to contribute to nature recovery to support the principles of bigger, better and more joined up nature. For example will the site buffer or expand existing habitat or create new habitat that is characteristic of the area?
- The timing for which the site is available.
- Are the opportunities for the site achievable, for example what are the suitable funding mechanisms that are available or emerging that we may be able to match to the project.

Katharine answers more questions [here](#).

## The power of geography



### I'm unashamedly a geographer.

Ever since I can remember, I have always enjoyed visiting places, wanting to know what makes it tick, why some are more successful than others, and the ability of some buildings and events to inspire. Driving friends and family mad by diving down side streets and missing the main 'drag' has always been illuminating.

This "third rock from the sun" has a staggering vastness and variation that constantly makes you want to discover more.

It was no surprise, therefore, that my first university degree was in geography. Field trips, in all sorts of odd places were aplenty. Assessing Tourism in the south of Spain in the winter made a nice change from the usual windswept trips!

World Geography Awareness Week took place recently and some of the facts coming out fascinated me. Did you know that Great Britain consists of more than 500 million geographic features? Or that 90 per cent of the world's population lives in the northern hemisphere? Closer to home and depending on exactly what you include around 94% of the England is not formally built upon, but 16% of the population live in rural areas, defined as in towns of 10,000 or less.

Put simply, geography is the study of places and the relationships between people and their environments. Geography seeks to understand where things are found, why they are there, and how they develop and change over time. The parallels with the field of planning are obvious. It's hardly surprising therefore that many planners have studied the intricacies of meanders, oxbow lakes and glacial erosion at a formal level!

This focus on this vital subject brings me to one of my favourite reads in recent times, *Prisoners of Geography*, by Tim Marshall.

The author cleverly analyses 10 maps of world regions, explaining how weather, seas, mountains, rivers, deserts and borders, affect each country's

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strengths and vulnerabilities and the decisions made by their leaders.

One look at a map of America, for instance, gives a big clue about why a fledgling United States was able to grow so quickly and become an industrial superpower. Huge rivers fan out across the country from north to south, providing a navigable route for roaring trade.

Moving on from the book (which I do recommend) and shining the spotlight closer to home, the seven rivers of the South Downs are also intertwined with the story of this region, from the iron industry, to commercial trading, to being life-giving arteries that fuel some of our most interesting ecosystems in the National Park (chalk streams, for instance).

The South Downs has lots of natural capital, something the Romans quickly spotted. Clean, chalk-filtered water from the aquifers has



been an invaluable asset to millions of people on the south coast for hundreds of years. Long may this continue and that is why ecosystem services are such a big part of our Local Plan.

Geography weaves its way through everything we do as a Planning Authority. Our landscape-led approach to planning is embedded in the very principles of place and space. The sloping chalk grasslands, river valleys, greensands, clays, forests and ancient woods – they all underpin what makes this landscape so special and, ultimately, shape the built environment, past, present and future.

And, if we want to be more sustainable, an understanding of geography will be more important than ever.

Food for thought and Merry Christmas to you all and hope you stay safe.

**Tim Slaney,**

**Director of Planning, South Downs National Park Authority**





## Update on Water Neutrality



We've published a detailed summary on our website that explains our response to Natural England's position statement for applications in the Sussex North Water Supply Zone.

The issue is affecting planning applications within the zone (parts of Chichester, Horsham and Arun Districts in the National Park area) and we're working closely with other planning authorities that are affected.

Certain development proposals, such as new-build housing within the zone, will need to address the issue of water neutrality.

This means not using more water than the current water usage of the site.

Other applications will be excluded from the requirement to demonstrate water neutrality and a full schedule is available [here](#).

Most householder applications, such as extensions, are excluded from requirement to demonstrate water neutrality and development management officers will work with applicants to secure maximum water efficiency measures possible



Lucy Howard, Planning Policy Manager, said: "Relevant applications will need to demonstrate water neutrality through a mix of water efficiency, water recycling, and offsetting.

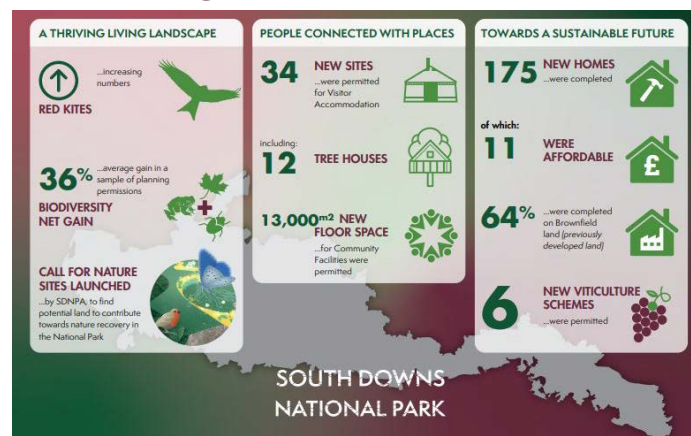
"This is expected to be set out in a 'water budget' in the application.

"We need to stress that water neutrality is a rapidly-changing area of concern and the Authority's current guidance is a working model that may be subject to change.

"All rights are reserved as the local planning authority and as the competent authority to consider this matter on a case-by-case basis.

"In the longer-term, we're working jointly with the other affected planning authorities on a study and a strategy to produce a strategic solution for development on this matter across the zone."

## Positive gains in annual report



New homes and community facilities, provision of visitor accommodation and a continued increase in Red Kite numbers are among the headlines in the latest report presenting the work of the Authority.

The 2021 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) has been published – our seventh AMR and the second to be produced since the adoption of the South Downs Local Plan in July 2019.

The AMR shows the progress on a number of planning documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme.

The AMR reports on the financial year 2020-21, where the Authority was able to achieve considerable positive impact at a local and regional level despite the challenges of the pandemic.

Among the highlights are:

### A Thriving, Living Landscape

- Clear upward trend in the numbers of Red Kites
- A sample of planning applications reviewed for this AMR revealed a mean average of 36% Biodiversity Net Gain being achieved on site – significantly above the 10% mandated in the newly-enacted Environment Act

### People Connected with Places

- Planning permissions were granted for visitor accommodation facilities on 34 sites, including 12 treehouses in Cowdray Park
- A net total of 13,001 m<sup>2</sup> of new community facilities was granted planning permission

### Towards a Sustainable Future

- A net total of 175 new homes were completed in the National Park.
- Of these new homes, 11 were affordable
- We have a 6.61 year supply of deliverable housing sites
- A net total of 1,954 m<sup>2</sup> of new employment floorspace was completed
- Six new viticulture schemes were permitted

## The lowdown on enforcement



**Enforcement is a key role of the National Park Authority, helping to conserve and enhance both the natural and built environment. But how does it all work? We caught up with Heather Lealan, who is at the helm of the enforcement team.**



**Hi Heather. So what's planning enforcement?**

Simply put our role is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the South Downs National Park.

We're committed to ensuring that planning legislation is enforced and where planning permission is granted, approved plans and conditions are followed.

### **Who deals with enforcement enquiries for the National Park?**

Our own enforcement officers deal with all planning-related matters in the following areas: Arun, Adur & Worthing, Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne, Mid-Sussex and Wealden. Other areas deliver enforcement on our behalf through our host authority arrangements (such as East Hampshire), but we do work closely with those teams.

Additionally, we deliver enforcement for minerals and waste planning issues across the whole of the National Park.

It's a big remit, so it's safe to say no two days are the same! As it's such a large and complex area, we also work closely with other organisations, such as the Environment Agency, police, parish councils, county councils and the Forestry Commission.

### **What constitutes a breach of planning control?**

Well, here's a summary:

- Development not in accordance with the approved plans of a planning permission
- Material change of use of building or land business

- Failure to comply with the conditions attached to a planning permission

- Unauthorised works to trees protected by a tree preservation order or in a conservation area
- Works to a listed building without listed building consent
- Unauthorised demolition in a conservation area
- Displaying a sign or advertisement without advertisement consent

### **How do you resolve a planning breach?**

Our first port of call is negotiation – where that's possible of course! The aim of the negotiation is to cease the unauthorised use, remove any unauthorised development or to persuade people to comply with conditions on a permitted development. We can also negotiate with people to apply for retrospective planning permission where necessary. When negotiation does not work, we obviously have legal powers we're able to enforce.

### **What different types of enforcement are there?**

There are several. Probably the most common actions are Enforcement Notice, Listed Building Enforcement Notice, Breach of Condition Notice and Full and Temporary Stop Notices. We also have the power to impose Section 215 Untidy Land Notices, injunctions and pursue prosecutions through the courts.

### **What are the possible outcomes of an enforcement investigation?**

Once we've done an investigation I would say there are five main possibilities:

- No breach of planning control
- There is a breach of planning control but it is not expedient to pursue
- Unauthorised development can be made acceptable by the imposition of conditions on a retrospective permission
- Unauthorised development is unacceptable and immediate remedial action is required
- Immunity from enforcement action due to the length of time that a breach has occurred for.

### **How many enforcement cases are there every year?**

In an average year, there are well over 1,000 across the National Park, so it's always busy. In 2019/2020, 650 new enforcement cases were received in the financial year while 740 cases were closed. If you'd like to find out more please do take a look at our

**[Enforcement Guide](#)**.



## Appeal to turn monument into home is dismissed



**A Government planning inspector has upheld the Authority's decision to refuse the conversion of a ruined 240-year-old tower into a private home.**

Plans were submitted to the Authority for listed building consent to convert and alter Racton Monument, at Stoughton, near Chichester. The applicant proposed creating a private home with integral garaging, as well as extensions to the ruin, substantial reconstruction of the tower and extensions at ground level and underground. Hard and soft landscaping was proposed, including a new vehicular access from Monument Lane.

The folly was built in 1772 and listed in 1958 as a ruin.

The tower is highly visible from many public vantage points in the area, including from the road network and public bridleways.

The Authority refused the application under delegated powers, stating that the scale, design and appearance of the proposals represented an unsympathetic form of development that would not preserve or enhance the heritage significance of the listed building and its setting.

Dismissing the appeal, Inspector S Edwards said the proposed works would lead to "domestication" of the site.

Given the scale and the building and the absence of a detailed visual impact assessment, she could not be sure the scheme would conserve the natural beauty of the National Park.

## Dunford House appeal is rejected by Inspector

**John Saunders, Development Manager at Chichester District Council, gives an update on appeals against the refusal of planning permission and listed building consent for the change of use and alteration of the former YMCA Conference Centre, at Dunford House, West Lavington, to a single dwelling.**

Dunford House was built around 1852 for Sir Richard Cobden who was involved in several national political campaigns, organisations and associations, most notably working against the Corn Laws and for international peace, which included an important trade mission to France. Dunford House was constructed from public subscription as a mark of the esteem Cobden was held in at the time.

It was also occupied by his children Ellen, Anne and Jane who became notable figures in the suffragist and suffragette movement. The key issues with the appeal were the impact of the proposal on the historical significance of Dunford House and the loss of the building as a community facility and its use by the public for training and educational purposes resulting from the Cobden legacy.

Dunford House has not been a dwelling for a long time and since around 1920 the building has been used for educational purposes to advance the ideals of Cobden. To this end, it has hosted a series of international conferences and lectures relating to Cobden's political interests. The endurance and historic significance of this use, which has included tenures by the London School of Economics and the YMCA, provides the building with historic, associative, and communal value as a record and narrative linked to the Cobden legacy. The Planning Inspector deciding the case agreed with the view put forward that Dunford House was of historic and associative value and significance as an artefact linked to the lives of Sir Richard Cobden and his family.

The YMCA was given the building because it was a charity that offered public education and training. The Inspector considered that, public education and training had continued during the YMCA's tenure and that the continuity of public access for training and education resulting from the Cobden legacy is an historic attribute of the building that adds to its historic significance.

The appeal decisions have now been received and while the Planning Inspector considered the alterations to the building to be acceptable, the change of use of the building to a single dwelling and, as a result, the loss of the use of the site as a community facility was not. The appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the change of use of the building was dismissed.

## Protecting landscape in digital age



**Key digital infrastructure will be improved in the National Park while minimising impact on the landscape.**

Planning officers at the Authority have worked extensively with BT/EE to help upgrade internet coverage on the busy South Western Trains line between London and Portsmouth and Southampton as part of a wider government-supported project. Gaps in coverage meant that commuters could not access onboard WiFi at certain locations.

A collaborative, landscape-led approach has resulted in, as of mid-November, the approval of five of new masts, with three more still to be considered. The masts will also bring improved 4G coverage to those living and working near the masts.

Stella New, Senior Development Management Officer, said: "After a number of refused applications, the applicant sought to work collaboratively with officers, providing evidence to demonstrate in each case that the new sites chosen were the least harmful in landscape terms, and that any harmful impacts could be appropriately mitigated. Mitigation measures secured have included the planting of locally native trees, scrub, and wildflower meadow to improve habitat and filter views. Smaller 'alpha' poles have also been utilised to secure coverage in the more sensitive locations.

"The approach taken demonstrates that even proposals for utilitarian forms of development, such as telecoms masts, can harness a landscape-led approach to successfully gain planning consent in many cases."

Norman Gillan, who acted as planning consultant for the applicant, said: "BT/EE deploy infrastructure and work across the UK and while the landscape bar may be set higher in the National Park than in other locations, we have been able to overcome this through excellent communication and cooperation with the Park's planning officers.

"The certainty that this approach provides developers who often have a lot of speculative costs up front is invaluable. Passengers will soon notice the improvement to their W-Fi experience."

## Award success for new housing



**Excellent design, architecture and craftsmanship were the winners at the 2021 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards.**

Thirty award-winning projects were announced at the 2021 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards, held at Pangdean Old Barn, Pyecombe, near Brighton.

The Awards saw the inaugural announcement of the South Downs Design Award, which was sponsored by the South Downs National Park Authority.

New housing at Belloc Close, in Midhurst (*pictured above*), won the award. King and Drury worked closely with MH Architects to create four new homes on the site of a former ambulance station. The judges noted: "A very exciting and well-thought-out development on a difficult brownfield site, it clearly had care and attention to details high on its list of priorities."

The award was presented by Ian Phillips, Chair of the National Park Authority.



Highly-commended was Landour at Telscombe, submitted by MortonScarr Architects – a flint-clad house located on the top of the South Downs, replacing a previous 1930s chalet bungalow in poor condition.

The new Goodwood Education Centre, submitted by SMD Construction Consultancy, was also highly-commended.

The single-storey building comprises a timber frame with cedar roof shingles and larch wood panelling. All external timber was sourced from and milled on the Goodwood Estate.



For a full list of all award winners and highly-commended projects go to [www.sussexheritagetrust.org.uk](http://www.sussexheritagetrust.org.uk)



## Protecting historic charm of village



**Efforts to protect the heritage and character of a downland village have been strengthened by the adoption of a new conservation plan.**

Following an eight-week public consultation, the Kingston Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was adopted by the Authority's Planning Committee.

Kingston-near-Lewes is an attractive village about two miles south of Lewes in the Ouse Valley and at the edge of the South Downs chalk ridge.

The Kingston Conservation Area derives its significance from its survival as a typical downland village, including 23 listed buildings, many comprising a materials palette typical of the South Downs.

The report notes that there has been some erosion of the historic layout of the village since the 1960s due to modern development. Rural character has also been affected, including the loss of flint walls.

The adopted **Management Plan** seeks an improvement in the quality of new development and protection of the Conservation Area from further infilling development. It also seeks to improve management of trees and greater focus on biodiversity in the Conservation Area.

There is a long-term aim for enhancements, including works at the junction of The Street and Ashcombe Lane to create an entry point to the Conservation Area that is visually attractive and which reduces traffic speeds and improves pedestrian safety.

Conservation Officer David Boyson said: "Kingston was first designated as a Conservation Area by Lewes District Council in 1972 and this appraisal has been an extremely worthwhile process to appraise the current built environment and what more needs to be done to conserve its special character going forward. I'd like to thank everyone that contributed to this management plan. It really is a blueprint for all parties who undertake any works that might affect the character of this very charming Conservation Area."

## Key stats at a glance

- appeals submitted to Inspectorate **25**
- appeals started **18**
- appeals determined **10**
- appeals successfully defended **7**
- statutory submissions received **1,151**
- statutory submissions determined **1,098**
- neighbours notified **5,276**
- representations received **1,628**
- consultations issued **3,269**
- conditions imposed **3,623**
- enquiries for planning advice **283**
- enforcement complaints received **200**
- enforcement cases opened **155**
- enforcement related site inspections **243**
- enforcement notices served **8**
- enforcement cases closed **144**

*(Stats from Quarter 2 - 1 July to 30 September 2021)*

## Agents forum update

**A well-attended virtual Agents' Forum was held on 18 October.**

The focus for the event was nature recovery with presentations on our Call for Nature Sites and Biodiversity Net Gain.

If you are an agent who regularly submits planning applications in the National Park please come along to our next meeting which will be in March.

Email us on [agentsforum@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:agentsforum@southdowns.gov.uk)

## Planning Committee Meetings

The next Planning Committee meetings will be held on 20 January, 10 February, 10 March, 14 April and 12 May.

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 Emma Stanbury; P4 right Benjamin Bruce; P5 left Lewis Watt; P8 John Richardson; P10 left Sam Moore; P11 Scott Hortop.*

## 10 questions with...Chris



**This edition we catch up with Chris Paterson, Communities Lead for our planning team.**

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

Busy, random and rewarding.

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

My main role is to support our local communities to conserve and enhance the National Park. The South Downs is home to more people than any other National Park (around 117,000) and the communities that live here have a dramatic effect on the park, positively and occasionally negatively. My role is to help them tap into the support, expertise and dedication of National Park staff to make these communities better places to live and ultimately the National Park a better place for everyone

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

I studied planning as part of my degree. I think the seed was sown when I was a child actually when I spent many an hour playing games like *Sims* or *Sim City*. I suppose I enjoyed planning how places can work, develop and change.

### **Can you describe your typical day?**

There's no typical day in my job, every day is different! The most typical thing in my job is giving people advice and helping them to understand how lucky they are to live in a National Park!

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

In National Parks the environment and landscape are key. We start with the landscape and our surroundings, and try to grow and develop without

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

harming what makes this place special. We rely on the landscape, nature and the wider environment and we respect that, it's at the core of everything we do....and my drive to work is pretty special as well!

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

The downhill bits on the way back from a bike ride or visit to a local pub, explaining to my six year old why they're called Downs and the green polo shirts. Last but not least, the people that live here. We're full of people from all walks of life.

### **Currently reading/watching?**

Reading - Matilda (six year old) and Saving Gracie – The story of Cow 812 (one year old)

Watching – not much, I try to go to bed early to cope with the multiple waking and 5am starts!

### **If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?**

Pickled onion Monster Munch.

### **Who inspires you?**

Are they allowed to be fictional? If so, Andy Dufresne. Hope is a good thing, may be the best of the things. And good things never die.

If it has to be someone in the real world it would be my best mate Simon, who unfortunately passed away a few years ago. He lived with Muscular Dystrophy, but was always positive and lived every day like it was his last.

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

Getting up after 5am, eating breakfast in peace, a shower without interruption. Outdoor swimming would feature in my perfect day and spending time with my kids – in daylight hours ☺

