

SOUTH DOWNS PLANNING NEWS

UPDATES FROM YOUR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

First opportunity to input into Local Plan Review

Over 600 comments have been received so far to an initial consultation on the South Downs Local Plan Review.

Last month the National Park Authority launched a survey inviting feedback on the **Local Plan Review** and how people would like to be involved in it.

The adopted South Downs Local Plan, which says how and where development should take place in the National Park, is being reviewed to make sure it's up to date and addresses important issues, including nature recovery, climate change and supporting local communities to thrive.

The current consultation on the scope of the plan and how people want to be involved closes on 16 September. There will be a further consultation on the first draft of the plan early next year.

As well as online, the National Park's planning policy team have been promoting the survey at summer engagement events.



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NATIONAL PARK
LOCAL PLAN**

Claire Tester, Planning Policy Manager, said:

"We've launched this initial survey to help us prepare for a consultation on a first draft of the Plan early next year and get an idea of what people would like us to focus on. I'd like to thank everybody who has contributed so far and would encourage people to get involved before the survey closes in September."



"Among the respondents' priorities so far have been biodiversity, cleaner rivers, landscape protection and tranquility."

And Claire added: "There's much of our existing and award-winning Local Plan that we propose to keep, such as the landscape-led approach, ecosystem services that protect vital resources such as the aquifer that supplies drinking water to 1.2m people, as well as the strategy of a medium level of development dispersed across the National Park. The review will give us the opportunity to address issues, such as climate change and nature recovery, review development needs and provision figures, and allow us to address changes in national policy."



Young people aged 13 to 25 are being invited to take part in the survey, with the chance to enter a prize draw for a £50 gift voucher.

[Take part here.](#)

Holidays lodges get green light



Twenty-two lodges have been given the go-ahead in a boost for the National Park's tourism offer.

The self-contained units on a three-hectare site at Garrison Hill, Droxford, were approved by the Authority's Planning Committee, subject to a legal agreement.

The site was formerly occupied by the Upland Park Hotel, which closed in 2012 and derelict 1930s buildings have since been demolished.

As well as a range of lodges, the plans include a spa building, a manager's lodge, parking, as well as extensive landscaping, drainage and ecological improvements. The site borders the River Meon and broad-leaved native trees will be planted to replace existing non-native conifers. A 10m-wide river bank corridor will be managed as dappled shade to enhance habitat for water voles, while the existing grassland and meadows will be managed to improve species diversity. The spa building will also include a flat green roof.

The site previously had permission for a similar holiday lodge development, but the plans were refined to improve the landscaping, visual impact, drainage and provide greater accessibility options for people with disabilities. The new scheme includes less hardstanding, less light spill and the buildings are lower in height. Because the site is in a critical water supply area for Portsmouth Water, first-class sustainable drainage measures are being employed.

Richard Ferguson, Development Management Lead, said: "This is a carefully thought-out proposal that will bring a boost to the tourism sector following the closure of the hotel. It makes good use of a derelict site. The holiday lodges are close to the Meon Valley Trail and I think will be very popular with both walkers and cyclists looking to explore the National Park."



New affordable homes for town



Much-needed affordable homes are set to be built in the National Park after a development was given planning approval.

Thakeham Homes has been granted permission to build 54 homes on land to the west of The Causeway, in Petersfield, subject to the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement.

A total of 27 affordable homes will be provided – 50 per cent of the development – as well as habitat creation and off-site biodiversity net gain.

The site is allocated for housing in the made Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2028.

It follows a previously withdrawn application amid concerns over the density of the development.

Philippa Smyth, Principal Development Management Officer, said: "The site has been subject to extensive pre-application discussions with both planning officers and the National Park's Design Review Panel.

"The developer has also worked proactively with the Environment Agency and the Highway Authority to solve and address technical matters.

"The result is a much-improved application with a reduced number of dwellings, allowing more green infrastructure to be retained and much less dense development on the south-western countryside edge.



"The development will improve the public rights of way network and provide greater connectivity through the site with additional connections to the network.

"Affordable housing is one of our priorities in the South Downs Local Plan and it's great to see new homes being built for both rent and ownership."

The housing complements an adjoining new development that is part of a joint allocation for land south of Larcombe Road.

Busy summer for enforcement



Storing shipping containers, vehicles and building fences without planning permission are among the enforcement issues currently being dealt with by the Authority's dedicated team.

An enforcement notice has been issued in Pyecombe to stop using a piece of land for the storage of personal vehicles, as well as remove two large shipping containers from the site. Fencing has also been ordered to be removed.

The changes to the site are not within the current planning permission which covers business use as a café. The notice came into effect on 14 June and the owners now have six months to comply. The owners have applied to the Planning Inspectorate for an appeal.

Meanwhile, a formal caution has been issued against an individual who carried out unauthorised works in woodland area near Hassocks that includes several tree preservation orders.

Robert Campbell, Senior Planning Enforcement Officer, explained: "There was evidence to prosecute the individual, as they had previously been warned that these trees were protected.

"The age and circumstances of the individual concerned led the Authority to issue a formal caution, which has now been accepted. This will be used in evidence if any future offences are committed at this location by this person and would lead to a prosecution."

At Fulking, an enforcement notice has been served against the erection of a single-storey utility building. This is the same site referred to in the last newsletter where an appeal against an enforcement notice for the removal of caravans was dismissed. The owners have launched an appeal against the latest notice.

Robert added: "The South Downs is a nationally-designated landscape and the Authority takes our enforcement function very seriously to prevent unauthorised development that is harmful to the National Park's natural beauty, biodiversity and heritage."

National Park wins gold!



The National Park's dedication and commitment to design excellence has been recognised with a glittering award from the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

The RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence South East were held at The Crowne Plaza, Reading, with the Authority winning "Best Plan".

The accolade recognises the outstanding contribution made to the National Park's planning framework by the **Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document**.

The comprehensive guide covers all aspects of design, providing useful and practical information for applicants and agents to deliver well-designed developments within a landscape-led planning system.

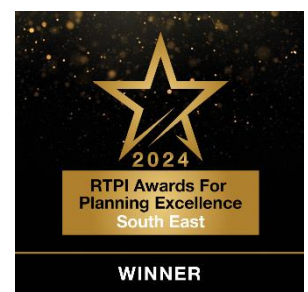
The award was collected by Mike Hughes, Planning Director (Interim), Claire Tester, Planning Policy Manager and Mark Waller-Gutierrez, Specialist Lead who was instrumental in creating the guide.

Our submission will now be judged in the national awards, with the shortlist being announced in October ahead of an awards ceremony in November.

Mark said: "The adoption of the document was the culmination of collaborative working and consultation between SDNPA members, planning officers and design, landscape and built heritage planning specialists, as well as extensive public engagement.

"The document lays out, for the first time, a process for landscape-led design within the National Park setting and offers accessible guidance through Key Design Principles, Landscape-led Hints, case studies and contextual diagrams and illustrations to support the more detailed text.

"It's wonderful to get this kind of recognition and fingers are now firmly crossed for the prospect of a national award."



Roman Goddess gets new lease of life as temple is approved



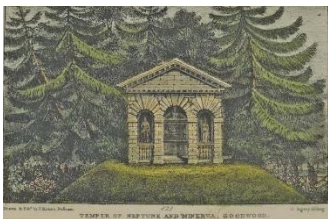
The temple in 1895 before it was dismantled

A beautiful temple dedicated to the Roman Goddess Minerva is to be rebuilt on the Goodwood Estate.

Planning Officers at Chichester District Council, working on behalf of the National Park Authority, have been working with the Goodwood Estate on the reconstruction of the Temple of Minerva.

The temple was constructed to house an important Roman artefact, called the “Cogidubnus Stone” or the Neptune and Minerva Stone, which was unearthed in Chichester by workmen digging a cellar under a house on St Martin’s Lane in 1723.

Charles Lennox, the 2nd Duke of Richmond and a Fellow of the Royal Society, was a keen supporter of antiquarian investigations and was entrusted custody of the stone.



The Duke subsequently arranged for the construction of a pedimented temple that was to house the stone and included a statue of

Neptune, Roman god of the sea, and Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, trade, medicine and the arts.

Situated in the High Wood, an enclosed space to the north of the house, the temple was built on an artificial mound and is visible in paintings from the mid-1700s.

The temple stood for more than a century and a half and the reasons for its destruction are unknown, although it’s said that the Duke had the temple demolished following a complaint from King Edward VII that the temple spoilt the view.

In 1907, the Neptune and Minerva Stone was presented to the City of Chichester by the 7th Duke of Richmond, where it was and still is, set into the wall of

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the portico of the Council House (Assembly Rooms) in Chichester.



When the temple was taken down the statues of Neptune and Minerva were sold, but were bought back for the Goodwood Estate in 2004.

The proposal to resurrect the temple, using much of the original fabric of the structure, has been promoted by the present Duchess of Richmond.

The original siting was discounted because subsequent additions to Goodwood House have meant the historic objective and legibility of it being placed in its former position has been greatly diminished. The site chosen for the re-erection of the temple is at the convergence of several rides within the wider historic parkland.

The focal point of the clearing is a Grade II-listed Lioness Statue, which commemorates a deceased lioness, a favourite animal in the 2nd Duke of Richmond’s renowned menagerie, which was located close to this statue.

John Saunders, Development Manager (National Park) at Chichester District Council, said: “Considerable care has been taken as part of the



planning submission to ensure that the setting of the Lioness is complemented by the re-erection of the Temple of Minerva, being set some distance away from the statue, so that it forms a framed backdrop to the statue itself.

“The proposal was subject to detailed consultation with Historic England, who were supportive of the proposals. The re-erection of the Temple of Minerva would restore some of the historic legacy of the 2nd Duke and continue the Estate’s tradition of feature buildings and structures found elsewhere in the historic park.”

And John added: “The proposals were initially the subject of an application for pre-application planning advice where any issues likely to arise through the planning process could be resolved. This was followed by the formal planning application for the reconstruction of the temple which was subsequently approved. This a good example of collaborative working and highlights the benefits of the SDNPA’s pre-application planning advice scheme.”

With thanks to source material and research by Timothy J. McCann, James Rouse, as well as the Goodwood Estate and Trustees of the Goodwood Collection.

New green finance scheme launched for business sector



The fight against biodiversity loss took a step forward as the South Downs National Park announced a new nature recovery scheme for businesses of all sizes.

The South Downs has become **the first National Park in the UK** to open up a formal scheme for voluntary biodiversity gain to the private sector – meaning that firms of any size across England can invest in high-ethic, effective nature recovery.

The announcement was made as delegates from across the sector gathered at the National Park's headquarters for a summit on ways to accelerate nature recovery through green finance.

The Voluntary Biodiversity Credits scheme is the latest among a growing package of green finance measures being offered by the South Downs National Park Authority. **Over 500 hectares – equivalent to more than 800 football pitches** – of land on farms and country estates across Hampshire and Sussex have already been earmarked for biodiversity restoration through future green finance investment.

Tim Slaney, Chief Executive (Interim) at the South Downs National Park, said: “This is a first for UK National Parks and underlines our commitment to tackling the biodiversity crisis through innovation.

“With National Parks covering almost 10 per cent of England’s land mass, places like the South Downs National Park can, and should be, the driving force behind nature recovery. In the UK, 41 per cent of species have declined in abundance over the past 40 years, so we’re at a pivotal moment.



“There is now a real appetite across the corporate sector to demonstrate first-class environmental integrity, meet national targets and invest in the planet for future generations and that’s exactly what Voluntary Biodiversity Credits can deliver.”

And Tim added: “Our aim is to work with landowners to support them in their aspirations to deliver high-quality, nature-friendly food production on their best farming land and devote their more marginal land to nature where the costs associated with it are prohibitive.”

The Voluntary Biodiversity Credits scheme is the latest step in that ambitious journey and is being launched in partnership with **Earthly**, a leading UK NatureTech company whose team of experts seek to drive investment in high-integrity nature projects around the world. A bespoke Section 106 legal agreement will secure land use change – from agriculture to nature recovery – through an agreement between the landowner and the National Park Authority as Local Planning Authority (LPA). This secures land for ReNature over the long-term and ensures the landowner can sell nature recovery credits to businesses, and developers without additional workload or cost. Once secured, Earthly will take on the crucial role of authoriser, ensuring avoidance of green washing, double counting or duplications in sales, while the SDNPA will be responsible for compliance monitoring.

EARTHLY
Invest in Nature

The voluntary scheme builds on the expanding role of the National Park Authority following the introduction of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) into the planning system earlier this year. A number of industry-leading projects are being progressed around compliance BNG, as well as offsetting and habitat creation, through green finance including:

- The National Park Authority is working with other Local Planning Authorities to ensure they are ready for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- The National Park is working with local government partners to co-ordinate approaches to BNG. The goal is to build an understanding and agreement with all the 15 councils that share the National Park boundary to demonstrate how a joined-up approach to nature recovery can also support thriving prosperous communities.
- The National Park Authority secured successful nutrient mitigation schemes through s106 legal agreements on large estates at Warnford Park, near Winchester, and Droke Farm, near Chichester, to deliver nitrate offsetting.
- To help developers, landowners and planning agents, the National Park has produced a **BNG Technical Advice Note** to provide guidance on how BNG can be achieved in the South Downs National Park.

For more information visit our [web hub](#).

Looking to invest in nature? How to navigate those tax hurdles

More and more landowners, developers and businesses want to invest in nature recovery, but navigating the tax system can feel like a minefield. We caught up with an expert, Jo White, to find out how best to reduce the tax burden when investing in nature and the environment.



Can you tell us a little bit more about you Jo and what you do?

I'm Jo White, a partner at the Sussex accountants and wealth advisers **Kreston Reeves**, specialising in property taxes.

I work with landowners and agricultural businesses helping them navigate an increasingly complicated tax landscape whilst all the time balancing the support family members need and preserving assets for future generations.

More recently, I have spent time helping our clients understand the new environmental schemes, such as the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regime, and how they can benefit from them. It's important that agricultural businesses do not let these schemes penalise existing tax positions that have been built often over many generations.

Are you seeing more businesses and landowners looking to invest in nature recovery?

In short, yes. Landowners have long been encouraged to diversify and nature recovery has been widely welcomed as another option available to them.

Residential developers are now approaching landowners keen to explore the new BNG regime, and proactive landowners are also actively exploring the opportunities it offers for future generations to profit.

Why is the private sector seeking to invest in biodiversity?

Landowners, particularly in the national park, have long had an eye on protecting and improving the biodiversity of the land they hold. It is good business.

Now, however, there is an added financial incentive. Landowners who choose not to invest in biodiversity risk future generations missing out on a valuable revenue stream. But there is often more to it than that – landowners have a genuine desire to leave the land

they manage in a better position for their children and grandchildren.

What are the tax hurdles for landowners looking to set aside land for nature?

The single biggest issue is the lack of clarity and certainty surrounding the tax treatment of the various options open to landowners. Schemes, such as the BNG regime, are being put in place but the technical guidance that allows landowners to plan for future generations is just not there. From a practical level, this means landowners have to be as flexible as possible to ensure when specific rules are put in place, any reorganisation is kept to a minimum.

Landowners need, for example, to understand the tax treatment of income from nature recovery schemes. Depending on whether it is seen by HMRC as capital or revenue can mean a 35% difference in tax rates. Additionally, clarity is also needed around inheritance tax and whether the treatment of land will have a detrimental effect. Although we have now seen some on this aspect, more guidance is still needed.

What are the tax hurdles for businesses looking to invest in nature recovery on other people's land?

Again, it is the uncertainty surrounding the tax treatment that is the primary concern. Whilst not a tax concern, businesses are being asked to work in different ways, often a fundamental shift from what they have known, particularly as some schemes require them to commit for a very long period of time.

How can businesses/landowners reduce the tax burden?

It is all in the planning. Getting good advice ahead of time gives businesses and landowners more options. Those options may have a limited impact on the business today but can have significant benefits for future generations. A lot of that planning will revolve around maximising tax reliefs, addressing any potential changes to the business, such as succession, and future potential uses of the land.

What are the benefits of reducing the tax burden?

Put simply, any money saved means more is available to reinvest in the business or to support day-to-day living. This is true of both tax on income, inheritance tax and considering future generations. Having to sell property to meet inheritance tax can have a devastating impact on farming businesses.

What would be your number one tip around tax and nature recovery?

Get advice! Build a strong team of specialist advisers to support you and your businesses now and in the future.

New partnership to drive forward affordable housing



New affordable homes in Midhurst

Key stakeholders are putting their heads together to bring forward more affordable homes in rural communities.

A new partnership of key stakeholders, called Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Partnership (SRAHP), has been formed to support the objectives of the enabling work already being carried out by Action in Rural Sussex.

The South Downs National Park Authority, Wealden, Rother, Chichester, Horsham, Lewes, Mid Sussex and Arun Local Authorities, Homes England, East Sussex Association of Local Councils, West Sussex Association of Local Councils and Registered Providers are all represented.

Louise Halpern, Rural Housing Enable at Action in Rural Sussex, said: "SRAHP will be instrumental in developing strong partnerships and will act as a forum for the discussion of key rural housing issues, sharing good practice and innovation and delving into the specific local issues and the broader themes affecting the delivery of rural affordable housing in Sussex.

"If you are aware of a need for locally affordable housing where you live, contact us today to discuss how we can help."

Contact Louise at louise.halpern@ruralsussex.org.uk or call 07514 648057.

Since the National Park Authority was created in 2011, 370 affordable homes have been built, as well as permission for hundreds more.

The Authority has supported a number of community-led schemes that prioritise affordable housing for local people.

New support network is launched for women planners



A new group has been formed to support women working in planning and a 30-strong launch event was recently held at the South Downs Centre.

Sussex Women Planners met up to share ideas, experiences, best practice, and challenges for the inaugural event in Midhurst.

Claire Tester, Planning Policy Manager, said: "The group started when several of us noticed that there are 'Women in Planning' groups for Kent and the Solent, but nothing in between. This means that women planners based in Sussex have to travel long distances to access networking and other support specifically designed for us.

"Whilst the sector has definitely become more welcoming to women over the last 30 plus years I have worked in it, there are still challenges that many women face, including holding our own in male dominated meetings, negotiating flexible working to fit around caring responsibilities and over-coming imposter syndrome."

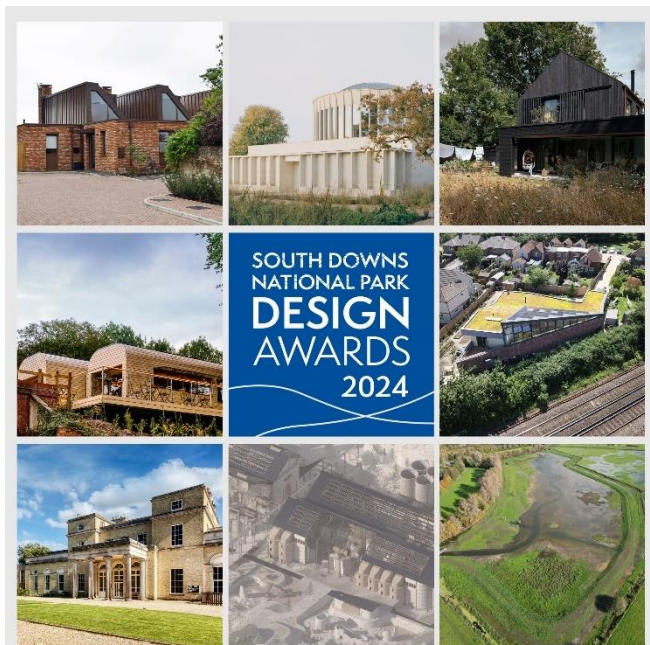
The launch event included a talk from Leanne Buckley-Thomson, a barrister from No5 Chambers, about the changes to the planning system introduced through the National Planning Policy Framework last December and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA).

Claire spoke about the changes to Local Plan-making being introduced through the LURA, some of which are being trialled by the National Park. This includes the current consultation on the Local Plan Review.

For more information email sussexwomenplanners@gmail.com or follow on LinkedIn.

An RTPI Research Paper in 2020 identified that while "gender equality is crucial to all parts of society, it is particularly essential to planning because the lack of gender diversity affects not only the way we design and plan, but also who we design and plan for. Hence, the benefits of having women in planning go far beyond fulfilling the industry's immediate skills needs".

Public vote opens for National Park's Design Awards



A public park makeover, café, eco-home, temple, and the restoration of a 570-year-old timber house are among the exciting mix of projects shortlisted for a prestigious South Downs Design Award.

More than 60 nominations were received across Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex for the National Park's award scheme that celebrates outstanding design, architecture and innovation.

Sixteen unique projects have been shortlisted by judges and are now in with a chance of winning a stunning trophy, beautifully hand-carved in South Downs oak by acclaimed West Sussex-based sculptor, Alison Crowther.

Among those shortlisted are the restoration of a river, a glasshouse, a school extension and many more.

A judging panel, which includes members of the National Park's Design Review Panel, will visit each shortlisted site and decide the winner in each category: Residential; Non-residential, Landscape and Conservation.

The public can also vote for their favourite out of the 16 for an overall **"People's Choice" award, with voting now open.**

All the winners will be revealed at a glittering awards ceremony, to be held at the South Downs Centre – itself a converted Victorian school – in Midhurst on 2 October.

Mike Hughes, Planning Director (Interim) for the National Park Authority, said: "I want to thank everyone who nominated and it's been a really difficult task to shortlist as the calibre was so high.

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"We've got an incredible mix of projects that show how diverse the built environment is in the South Downs.

"I'm looking forward to finding out the public's favourite and I would invite everyone to find out more about each project."

The shortlisted projects for 2024 are:

Residential category

Black Timber House, Rodmell, East Sussex

Hocking House, Petersfield, Hampshire

Lannings Way, Midhurst, West Sussex

The Mile House, Amberley, West Sussex

Non-residential category

Handlebar Café, Winchester, Hampshire

New Temple Complex, Liss, Hampshire

Prince's Mead School Extension, Winchester, Hampshire

Landscape Category

Cockshut Stream Restoration, Lewes, East Sussex.

Wallands Community Primary School Raingarden, Lewes, East Sussex

Woolbeding Glasshouse, Woolbeding, West Sussex

Wild Park, Brighton, East Sussex

Conservation category

The Dower House, Chawton, Hampshire

The Restoration of Stanmer Park, Falmer, East Sussex

Tote Hill Barn, Stedham, West Sussex

Wiston Estate Winery, Washington, West Sussex

Chalk-based Renovation, Remediation and Regeneration (Shoreham Cement Works), West Sussex

Vote in "The People's Choice" here.

Voting will close at midnight on 6 September.



Improved accessibility for town



A new 'Changing Places' toilet has been provided in the centre of Petersfield, supported by contributions from both CIL and S106 developer funds.

With around 250,000 people in the country unable to use standard accessible toilets, the new facility provides access for those people with disabilities whose needs are not currently met.

Changing Places toilets are part of a £30m government-backed scheme, run in partnership with the charity Muscular Dystrophy UK. They include a hoist, changing bench and offer enough space for up to two carers.

The new facility will make the centre of Petersfield a more accessible place for those with limited mobility.

The addition was welcomed by Treloars College, Alton, which is currently working with local authorities through its 'Let Me In' project to make local communities more accessible.

For more information visit the [Changing Places](#) scheme and [Treloars Let Me In project](#).

Children connect with nature



An outdoor education centre has been created at Meonstoke CE Infant School following £18,000 of CIL funding.

Nikki Allen, CIL Planning Officer, said: "This wonderful project aims to provide year-round access to outside play, exercise and learning.

"It's providing a new covered outside learning area, improved wooded pathways around the edge of the site, wellie boot storage, a bird watching station and a bug house. Great to see!"

A few quick updates...



Lewis Ford, Senior Planning Policy Officer, shares some of the latest news around policy.

- **The East Sussex Minerals and Waste Local Plan Partial Review** has

been adopted by the National Park Authority and East Sussex County Council. Brighton & Hove City Council will be considering the adoption of this Plan in October.

- **The Hampshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Partial Review** has been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination (hearings anticipated in 2025).

- **The West Sussex Waste Local Plan** has been reviewed and agreed as still fit for purpose by the National Park Authority and West Sussex County Council.

- **The Bramshott & Liphook Neighbourhood Development Plan** has passed its examination and a referendum will be carried out in the Autumn.

- **The Peacehaven & Telscombe Neighbourhood Development Plan** is currently at examination.

- **The draft Upham Village Design Statement** first consultation concluded in July.

- **West Saltdean Neighbourhood Development Plan** carried out its Regulation 14 consultation in May/June.

- **Coldean Neighbourhood Development Plan** carried out its Regulation 14 consultation in June/July.

Latest parish CIL payments

Parish / Town Council	Amount paid in April 2024
Amberley Parish Council	£4,379.09
Binsted Parish Council	£10,882.35
Bishops Waltham Parish Council	£661.36
Cheriton Parish Council	£900.00
Cocking Parish Council	£5,158.01
Easebourne Parish Council	£58,091.96
East Dean and Friston Parish Council	£767.21
Fulking Parish Council	£450.00
Funtington Parish Council	£26,222.22
Glynde & Beddingham Parish Council	£2,155.11
Greatham Parish Council	£300.00
Langrish Parish Council	£2,107.32
Lewes Town Council	£17,364.66
Midhurst Town Council	£70,684.78
Petworth Town Council	£1,208.62
Selborne Parish Council	£4,230.31
Soberton Parish Council	£120.00
Upham Parish Council	£434.64
West Dean Parish Council	£1,612.98
Total	£207,730.62

Sustainability and heritage go hand in hand at awards



A stunning house that puts sustainability at its heart has won “The South Downs Award” as part of a prestigious heritage scheme.

Vanessa Rowlands (*pictured above*), Chair of the National Park Authority, presented the trophy to the team behind The Mile House, which is situated near Amberley.

It comes as projects across Sussex were recognised for exceptional design, architecture and conservation at the Sussex Heritage Trust Awards. The ceremony took place at Lancing College Chapel, with the Park Authority sponsoring The South Downs Award category that recognises excellence in sustainability, biodiversity and energy efficiency.

The Mile House is Passivhaus-certified and achieves net zero carbon across the year due to its low energy demand and renewable energy technologies.



It far surpasses the current Authority sustainability policy requirement and illustrates what homes of the future can achieve.

The National Park’s judging team praised architect Charles Meloy, from Meloy Architecture, for his “innovative approach with the design massing and detailing of the building sitting comfortably in the landscape.”

The Woolbeding Glass House, at the National Trust’s Woolbeding Gardens, was highly commended in the category.

Sponsored by Irwin Mitchell, this year marks a record-breaking milestone for the awards, with 94 entries all visited by the Sussex Heritage Trust judging teams, resulting in 37 award plaques and 31 highly-commended certificates.

Visit here for the full list of [winners](#)

Latest planning statistics

Query	April to June 24
Appeals submitted to the Planning Inspectorate	18
Appeals started	28
Appeals determined	17
Appeals successfully defended	16
Statutory submissions received	968
Statutory submissions received via the Planning Portal	844
Statutory submissions determined	1,010
Neighbours notified	4,211
Representations received	1,417
Consultations issued	2,648
Conditions imposed	3,223
Enquiries for planning advice	243
Enforcement complaints received	149
Enforcement cases opened	109
Enforcement related site inspections	134
Enforcement notices served	7
Enforcement cases closed	115

Planning Committees

The next meetings will be held on 12 September, 10 October, 14 November and 12 December.

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](#).

Meet the planner...



We catch up with Sarah Round, Principal Development Management Officer, and find about her job, as well as her love of coffee and nature.

Three words that sum up your job in planning?
Spot. The. Difference!

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

The above is what I tell my friends when they ask what my job is. Actually, it's much more than that. My role as a principal planner is to assess pre application enquiries and planning applications relating to medium or large(ish)/complex sites and to provide a response to landowners and/or developers. This means I evaluate the drawings, as well as all the other supporting information that gets sent to us, as the Planning Authority. It's like putting together a big jigsaw puzzle, if you stare at it long enough you can normally find the right pieces! And if I can't find them then I will look for them, which means consulting with a wide range of colleagues and external consultees and sometimes requesting more information. I see my role as trying to get the best out of a site, whether that be maximising affordable housing provision, seeking the best design, increasing the level of biodiversity on site etc. Planning is basically a process of negotiation, and I prefer it when everyone involved comes out feeling satisfied

What appealed to you about working in planning?

The variety. Jack of all trades, master of none, is another way I'd describe my job! But it does mean I get to learn a little about all the things that are needed to make a successful development, for example, understanding the landscape, looking at the existing ecology, evaluating the design of the scheme etc. We also have to consider whether the scheme works in terms of practicalities, drainage, car parking, play space, bin collection etc. I like working with people and I am interested in buildings and their surroundings and how these all fit together to get the best scheme for

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everyone involved, be that the dormouse or the family with five kids. There is a huge variety in planning work and policy, guidance and legislation are always changing. There's a lot to keep up with, but it's never dull!

Can you describe your typical day?

Coffee. More coffee. Emails, looking at comments from those we consult. Sometimes I'll go out on site or have a meeting in the office with applicants and sometimes I'm writing up reports or preparing to present a case to our planning committee members. There isn't really a 'typical day' and that's one of the things I like about the job. Usually, I will address those things most urgent on my 'to do' list and then plan out my day accordingly.



Best thing about working in planning for a National Park?

This is the first time I've worked in a protected landscape. I love the passion people have for looking after the environment and nature and their positivity in trying to find ways to address nature recovery and climate control. I also love the wildness and freedom that the national parks represent, so being part of one is just really cool!

What do you love about the South Downs National Park?

I grew up here, went away to two big cities, Liverpool and London, and now I'm lucky enough to be back living here and working here.

I have really enjoyed being back home, and I have always thought of the Downs as 'home' despite almost 25 years away from them. I love the fresh air, the hills and the views and the hidden dells and woodlands. I love going for a walk and seeing rural life unfold. I have three boys and a combine harvester in the field or a bunch of lambs can hold their attention for ages, as can paddling in a stream catching shrimps. Watching them engage with the nature all around them is part of what is great about the Park. I'm also passionate about our big dark skies; I cannot name many constellations, but I could gaze up at them for hours.

Currently reading/watching? Reading Achillies. Watching Clarkson's Farm (no spoilers please - I've only just started it!)

Dream holiday destination and why? Costa Rica - because everyone who's been there says it's fantastic.

Describe your perfect day (when not working, of course!) Breakfast outside. I love early summer mornings. Then either a long walk with the family, which should ideally involve a river and a pub! Or a trip to the beach. And then home for dinner that someone else has cooked. And served!