

The News

South Downs National Park

August 2010

Welcome to South Downs National Park News

We hope this newsletter keeps you up to date with the new South Downs National Park and the establishment of the National Park Authority. If there are any topics you would like us to cover in the newsletter please let us know by emailing: info@southdowns.gov.uk

Introduction from Richard Shaw, Interim Chief Executive, South Downs National Park Authority



Welcome to the latest issue of The News.

Work on establishing a fully operational South Downs National Park Authority has moved on significantly in the last month, with a particular focus on three areas:

We have issued a formal invitation to the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service to join with South Downs National Park

and work with us to conserve and protect the South Downs landscape. Based on early discussions and feedback from individual members, we are anticipating a positive response from the VRS in working with the National Park Authority in the future.

We have invited the fifteen local authorities in the South Downs to work in partnership with the National Park Authority on planning. All have signed an agreement committing to do so. This paves the way for a continuing local authority role in handling most planning applications. More detailed agreements will be confirmed later this year.

We have now been able to confirm to the staff of the South Downs Joint Committee that a majority of them will transfer to the new National Park Authority in April 2011. Transfers of staff will include the Countryside Rangers and Area Managers. While we are aware that it has been a difficult and uncertain time for those working at the Joint Committee, we now look forward to bringing their experience and skills into the Authority.

Moving into the autumn we will be reaching out again to the many people who have an abiding commitment to South Downs National Park to help shape our shared priorities as we develop the National Park's Management Plan.

In the meantime, I hope that you get an opportunity to enjoy this wonderful part of the country during the summer months.

Richard Shaw, Interim Chief Executive

Public participation at Planning Committee meetings

A pilot protocol for public participation at Planning Committee meetings has been agreed. If you would like to speak at a forthcoming Planning Committee meeting regarding a planning application or consultation listed on the agenda, then please visit the Planning Committee page on our website, www.southdowns.gov.uk for details of meetings, planning applications to be discussed and how to take part. The role of this Committee is to establish efficient Planning procedures and policies, in preparation for when the National Park Authority become the sole local planning authority from April 2011.

South Downs National Park Anticipated Timeline

~31 March 2010

The South Downs National Park designation takes effect. The two AONB designations are revoked.

~April 2010

The South Downs National Park Authority meets for the first time. The Chair of the Authority, Margaret Paren, is elected by the Members.

The Authority begins to make strategic decisions as it prepares to become fully operational in 2011.

~ May 2010

Chair of Resources & Performance Committee, Deborah Urquhart, is elected.

Adoption of Guiding Principles reflecting views of partners and communities.

~ June 2010

Chair of Planning Committee, Andrew Shaxson, is elected.

Authority takes outline decisions on how it will operate (15th June Authority meeting).

~ July 2010

National Park Authority meeting 6 July – approach to Corporate services and Premises agreed.

Staff transfers from South Downs Joint Committee confirmed.

~ September 2010

Work begins with partners on developing the South Downs National Park Management Plan.

~April 2011

The South Downs National Park Authority takes on its statutory planning responsibilities and becomes fully operational.

National Park Delivery Service – what does this mean?

At a meeting of the National Park Authority on 15 June, The Members agreed to provide an 'on-the-ground' National Park Delivery Service to engage directly with local people, land owners, farmers and visitors about the South Downs National Park.

What does this mean?

The South Downs National Park has by far the largest population living within its boundary (over 108,000) and is more intensively farmed compared to the other UK National Parks. Many local people, including land owners, farmers and interest groups have emphasised to the Authority the importance of direct contact, support and advice.

Members agreed to develop an on-the-ground service to be a visible and responsive first point of contact. It will support local communities on Parish Plans and local projects, helping them to achieve their local aspirations for the South Downs. It will also provide advice, support and grant information to land managers, farmers and businesses, while engaging with visitors and working with volunteers. Most of the South Downs Joint Committee Rangers and Area Managers will transfer to roles within this Delivery Service, ensuring their local knowledge of the area is retained.

The National Park Authority also decided to invite the existing South Downs Volunteer Ranger service to work with us for the benefit of the South Downs. Volunteers are currently responding to a ballot.

Margaret Paren, Chair of South Downs National Park Authority explained, 'Farmers, local communities, local voluntary groups and others have all asked us to provide a service on the ground that can work with them to help make the most of South Downs National Park. The Delivery Service will be the National Park Authority's main day-to-day point of contact and support for them'.

News on the progress of the National Park Delivery Service will be available on our website www.southdowns.gov.uk in due course.

Meet the Team

Many of you will have met Huw Davies, Interim Head of Programme Management at South Downs National Park Authority.



Huw joined us on secondment from Natural England in Summer 2009. With considerable experience gained at Natural England, Countryside Agency and as a member of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, Huw has played an important role in helping establish the National Park Authority.

Huw is due to return to his work with Natural England at the end of August. We wish him well and would like to thank him for his valuable contribution to establishing the National Park Authority.

Contact us at:

South Downs National Park Authority
Rosemary's Parlour
North Street
Midhurst
West Sussex, GU29 9SB

Email: info@southdowns.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 303 1053

South Downs National Park Your Questions Answered

If you have a question about the National Park, please email: info@southdowns.gov.uk and we will try to publish the answer here.

Where can I meet Members and staff of South Downs National Park Authority?

Members and staff of the Authority will be present at various events over the summer, exhibiting in the South Downs National Park Authority branded marquee. Authority representatives are also presenting at public talks across the National Park. Information on events and talks can be found on our website www.southdowns.gov.uk in our Events section. Forthcoming events and talks include:

5 August – presentation on setting up the National Park Authority by Liz Ballard, Interim Head of Strategy & Partnerships at South Downs National Park Authority at 7.30pm at St Mary's Church, Church St, Shoreham-by-Sea, BN43 5DQ.

12-15 August - Eastbourne Airbourne – South Downs National Park Authority will be exhibiting for the first three days of Airbourne, (the biggest seafront airshow in the world).

How do I find out about things such as walks and public transport across South Downs National Park?

We are planning a series of leaflets and publications about South Downs National Park in early 2011. In the meantime, you can discover more about walks, public transport and where to stay by visiting the website of South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) at www.visitsouthdowns.com. Leaflets can be downloaded or alternatively you can contact SDJC on 01243 558700 and they can send you a copy.

Forthcoming Authority Meetings

9 Aug Planning Committee meeting at Lewes Town Hall at 10.30am

13 Sept Planning Committee meeting at Capron House, Midhurst at 2pm

28 Sept National Park Authority meeting at Eastbourne Town Hall (Council Chamber) at 12.45pm

All meetings are open to the public.