

The South Downs Network

working for the best possible National Park

Terms of Reference

1. A group is to be set up that brings together, as members, all those voluntary and community organisations that support the two statutory purposes of the national park i.e.:
 - a. the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty, cultural heritage and wildlife of the national park area
 - b. promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the national park area
2. The aim of the Group will be to further and promote the two statutory purposes of the national park by sharing of relevant information, and by seeking to influence the relevant authorities
3. The Group will have an Executive Committee (EC), of no more than 12 members. Seven places will be allocated to the major park organisations, i.e. the Campaign to Protect Rural England Hampshire, the Campaign to Protect Rural England Sussex, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, the South Downs Society, the National Trust, Ramblers Sussex and Ramblers Hampshire. The remaining five places will be elected by network organizations. All member organizations may attend committee meetings as observers. The Executive Committee meeting frequency will vary depending on issues arising.
4. The Executive Committee will consider all applications for membership.
5. One of the member organisations will provide a secretariat. The South Downs Society will initially provide this function.
6. The group will have a constitution/terms of reference, but will not be a formal legal entity.
7. The letterhead of the group will be used to write, following agreement of the Executive Committee, to statutory bodies. All letters will be dispatched by the

secretariat using the group letterhead, having obtained agreement from the Executive Committee, signed off by the group chair.

8. The Secretariat will coordinate the group, charging an agreed fee to members. This will pay for the secretary, room hire, tea and biscuits, email updates etc. The payments will be made to the secretariat who will report briefly on expenditure at meetings. There will be three categories of member: Large, paying £100 pa, medium paying £25 and the smallest groups paying £10. Member organizations will decide for themselves to which category they belong.
9. An annual meeting for all member organizations will be held, at which the Chair and other Executive Committee members will be elected for a one year term.
10. The group acknowledges that member organizations may not always take the same view as the group, and recognises that it cannot prevent any of its members pursuing their own campaigns.
11. Members may do their own work on issues of joint concern without first raising the matter with the Network. However, members are encouraged to inform and liaise with other members of the Network as soon as possible.
12. Most communication to be by email.
13. The Chair needs to have “quiet authority” but should not be a high profile leader of the group. The Chair will be found from among the members of the Executive Committee