

South Downs Network AGM 27th July 2023

Meeting notes

Present: Tony Whitbread (chair), Malcolm Smith, Grahame Joseph, Sarah Abercromby, Dan Osbourne, Chris Todd, Emma Tristram, Martin Small, Nigel Brown, Graham Elvey, David Burnet,

	Topic	Points discussed	Action
2	Apologies	Christopher Napier, Vic lent, Margaret Paren, Owen Plunket, Phil Belden	
	Minutes	Noted	
	Matters arising	It was noted that the AGM agreed that all SDN members should be invited to SDN Executive Committee meetings.	Invite all members to committee meetings. AW
2	SDN googlegroup	The SDN googlegroup has been re-established and members are encouraged to use it. It could be a valuable method for members to be able to network each other sharing information / issues / concerns.	All
6	Membership and finance	We have 43 members on the books of which 21 have paid their subscriptions so far. We have moved to a system of invoicing, which helps, but we still spend some admin time chasing subs. At present we have £842.15 in the bank. Recent outgoings SmartPA & CNP Membership, Recent income: membership fees. No recent donations.	
7	Transport issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report given by M Smith on the TfSE Transport forum. This is being reviewed with a preferred option likely to be proposed in October. The SDN view was that, rather than setting up disparate advisory groups the forum should instead have a wider review aiming to encourage more strategic discussion and advice. Exceat Bridge is controversial. Whilst ESCC claimed the new bridge would not lead to any significant increase in traffic, in the A259 proposals a bigger capacity junction at Seaford is being justified on the basis that it would. This is concerning and suggests the information given to SDNPA was at best misleading. The cycleway improvement along the A27 east of Lewes was praised. There are issues, and the link to Berwick station is too narrow, but overall a good improvement. CT has been asked to sit on the Steering Group for TfSE's Regional Active Travel Strategy 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SDNPA has put in a strong response to the M3 Junction 9 proposal. It claims that the proposal does not meet the “exceptional needs” test to justify major development within a Park. • The crossing of the A259 by pedestrians at Seven Sisters Country Park was raised as an issue. A long-standing issue but proposals may come up as part of the A259 improvements. Our view should be that traffic calming methods and speed limit reductions should form part of a solution. • The Gatwick airport second runway is a major issue. This will result in more flights, increases in freight, and changed flight paths which are bound to affect the National Park. CPRE Sx with CAGNE and aim to fund a barrister. CPRE Kent are engaging separately. DO asked for links and support from other organisations. CT offered to link up and discuss what he has learned about the DCO process. 	CT and DO to meet
8	National Park manifesto	<p>One outcome of the meeting with the SDNPA was to prepare a manifesto for the SDNP as a menu of asks in advance of a general election next year. Andrew Lee has prepared a draft with Phil Belden and TW and this rough draft could be circulated to members for thoughts.</p> <p>DO recommended discussion with other members as, for eg, CPRE nationally are working with CNP on a manifesto approach.</p>	Circulate rough draft. AW
9	Member reports	<p>M Smith. The Missing Link project has faltered probably because of the loss of SDNPA staff with the cuts. Higher level contact with the Park is suggested to see if this can be picked up.</p> <p>We could also raise the idea of a general 40mph speed limit within the NP, as part of encouraging calmer traffic.</p> <p>JS. A project is underway on the Manhood peninsula for hedges and trees, and there has also been work done on waterways through the peninsula. It seems that water courses on the Manhood suffer high nutrient input but the source of this is agriculture within the Park (on the chalk), making it an issue that should be addressed by the SDNPA.</p> <p>GE. A recording form is being developed for the simple recording of the condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. This may be of interest to several other SDN members so GE may put information on the googlegroup at an appropriate time.</p> <p>NB. The Friends of the South Downs (FSD) are meeting with the SDNPA about the development of their next Local Plan. Discussions are also happening with Chichester DC following the change of political balance there. FSD are also concerned about the delay in the construction of the Havant reservoir and the implications to the water environment with over abstraction.</p>	GE

		<p>SA. The regional SWT group is undertaking many projects relevant to the Downs; swift nest boxes in local villages and increasing interaction with Parishes at the foot of the Downs were two raised in particular.</p> <p>M Small. David Coldwell has stood down as chair of their planning committee, replaced by David Green. FSD are celebrating their centenary and part of this was a House of Lords reception. Increased funding for NPs was their key message to the Lords.</p> <p>DO. Paul Stedman is the new Director of CPRE Sx and he is making links with other organisations. Other SDN members may well hear from him. CPRE is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a countryside day event at Knepp on 2nd September. As a specific issue, CPRE Sx are interested in the evolution of the Cuckmere valley as sediment budgeting, erosion and sea level change exert influence on the valley.</p>	
10	Dates of next meetings	<p>20th September 2023 29th November 2023 All meetings will be held between 10am and 11.30 am unless otherwise stated.</p>	