

The News

South Downs National Park



Welcome to the first edition of South Downs National Park News

We hope this regular newsletter will keep you up to date with the latest news on the new South Downs National Park and the establishment of the National Park Authority.

We are keen to hear from you. If there are any topics you would like us to cover in the newsletter then please let us know by contacting the Establishment Team.

Email: jane.schiller@defra.qsi.gov.uk

Tel: 01730 817285

Who we are....



The team (left-right):

*Liz Ballard,
Jim Redwood,
Richard Shaw,
Huw Davies,
Fiona Mettam and
Jane Schiller*

We are the Establishment Team. Our task is to establish the new South Downs National Park Authority - an exciting project and a really important one to get right, for the people that live and work here and for those that enjoy the area.

Our interim Chief Executive is Richard Shaw and there are five other team members covering organisational set-up, project management, communications and planning as well as running our small office in Midhurst.

South Downs National Park Authority's purposes:

The South Downs has been nationally recognised for its natural beauty and the opportunities it offers for open-air recreation. This is why it has been made into a National Park.

The National Park Authority has a role to pursue the purposes of the South Downs National Park which are:

- ~ To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
 - ~ To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public
- In carrying out its role, the Authority has a duty to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of the communities living within the National Park.

The Authority is centrally-funded by Government and is a public body run by a Board of Members.

South Downs National Park Anticipated Timeline

~31st March 2009

Hilary Benn MP announced his decision to create the South Downs National Park

~6th October 2009

Closing date for applications to Defra* to become a 'national' Member of the new South Downs National Park Authority

~9th October 2009

End of Defra consultation on the number of Local Authority, national and Parish Council Members for the new Authority

~November/December 2009

Boundary confirmation leading to the creation of the South Downs National Park
Size of Membership for the new National Park Authority announced

~February 2010

Members of the new South Downs National Park Authority announced

~April 2010

South Downs National Park Authority meets for the first time. It will be able to decide on key policies and recruit the staff needed to help carry out its purposes.

~April 2011

South Downs National Park Authority takes on full statutory powers and functions. It will be able to deliver programmes and take decisions as the local planning authority.

*Dept. for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

South Downs National Park – Landscape of Opportunity?

For the first time, one permanent organisation, the South Downs National Park Authority, will take lead responsibility for keeping the South Downs National Park a special place.

The Authority will be able to make planning decisions and develop new partnership programmes that promote the National Park purposes (see overleaf).

But how will it do this? For example:

- Should the Authority deliver environmental education programmes, manage rights of way and visitor centres, or just help others to?
- How can the Authority best support local residents to deliver National Park purposes in their own communities?

Over the coming year we will try to find some answers to these and other questions. But we would like to hear your views and will be using this newsletter to let you know about opportunities to **have your say**.

Other National Parks have some great examples of partnership projects that have attracted additional funding to deliver National Park purposes. Why not take a look at one in the Peak District National Park: www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/mftf/main/Home.htm

South Downs Joint Committee News

Staff and Members of the South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) continue to work hard for the South Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and have been helping the Establishment Team make contacts and understand the area.

We are working together to ensure a smooth transition from AONB to National Park designation. As the National Park comes into effect the AONB status will be revoked. SDJC will wind up as the Authority assumes its statutory functions in early 2011.

To catch up with all the work of the SDJC visit them online at:

www.southdownsonline.org

So who will be on the National Park Authority?

The government has been seeking views on the size of the new National Park Authority Membership. Once this has been decided the Secretary of State will appoint the national Members and those chosen by the Parish Councils. The Local Authorities will also name their Member representatives.

For more information go to:

www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/south-downs-membership/index.htm

Contact us at:

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South Downs National Park Did you know?

~The South Downs National Park (SDNP) is estimated to have some 120,000 people living in it. This is the biggest population living in a British National Park, the closest being the Lake District with an estimated population of 42,200 whilst Northumberland has only 2,200.

~ The SDNP joins a group of over 113,000 protected landscapes worldwide, recognised for their natural beauty.

Source: ANPA website

Your questions answered

If you have a question about the National Park that you would like us to find the answer to then email:

jane.schiller@defra.qsi.gov.uk and we will try to publish the answer here.

When can we call the South Downs a National Park 'officially'?

Once final confirmation of the National Park boundary has been announced a date will be set for the National Park designation to take effect.

Confirmation is expected towards the end of this year once the final boundary details have been decided.

For more information on the boundary go to: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/national-parks/south-downs/additions.htm

Where can we walk now?

On the same paths and rights of way as before. National Parks are for the Nation but not owned by the Nation. This means that the countryside remains in its current ownership. Private land is still private and can only be accessed using the existing Rights of Way network and Open Access land (marked on recent OS maps). Designation of the South Downs National Park will mean improvements to recreational opportunities and access. But it does not mean that we can now walk anywhere in the countryside.