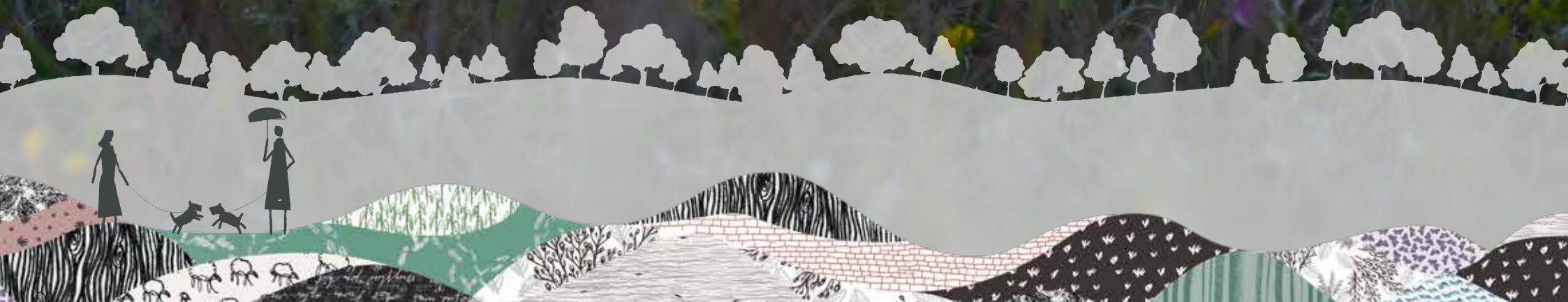


SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22



WELCOME



WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Coming out of a two-year pandemic, this year felt like a new dawn, not just for society but also for nature. I was struck not only by the challenges that face us but also the opportunities. Whilst nature is still declining, I have never been more optimistic about halting and subsequently reversing the decline.

This optimism has also been influenced by the increasing impact of our own work. This year we have planted a further 11,000 trees, meaning we are roughly 25% of the way towards our "Trees for the Downs" target. We were also able to launch a new Beelines appeal, building on those projects supported in the previous year. Furthermore, through our new Hedgerows project, we have restored 13km of hedgerow and in partnership with the National Park Authority, launched a significant ReNature campaign, which received over 77 expressions of interest, representing several thousand hectares that could be "turned over" for nature. Responding to this great interest in ReNature, our efforts now shift to making this change happen and there are already green shoots, with our first whole farm pilot started this year, seeking to use philanthropic funding to leverage in private finance, restoring nature at scale.

This optimism is also shared across our education work, which was at last able to go ahead unhampered by Covid-19. I was delighted to see our long-delayed pilot project with the Garden Classroom go forward. This saw us trial a South Downs residential for school children in Hackney, the borough with one of the lowest levels of green space in the country. In addition, our Travel Grant once again was in huge demand, seeing several thousand local children funded to engage in outdoor learning.

Finally, I am pleased to be able report the opening of our community grants scheme which we added to through the Community Pitch, linked to our Ouse Valley Climate Action project. The latter has kept us busy right up to the final months of this year, with a substantial bid being worked up for the lottery. I

hope to be able to continue the good news here through next year's report.

This work has been masterfully steered by our outgoing Chair Julie Fawcett, who has been with the Trust since its establishment. Our thanks go to Julie who has overseen the South Downs Trust to its current role as a key player and delivery partner in the restoration of nature within the South Downs. We will be forever in her debt.

As ever, thank you to our staff, partners and funders, without you, this wouldn't be possible. I will sign off with a quote from one of our residential school children participants which struck me as summarising the South Downs experience

"This is a dream come true, to walk up a hill like this. A dream come true"

**Dean Orgill,
Chair of South Downs
National Park Trust**



WHAT WE DO

We are the official charity of the South Downs National Park. We are small but have big ambitions.

We want to see more land managed for wildlife, more rare habitats protected, more local communities thriving and more people able to access and enjoy their National Park.

This requires more investment and we want to secure and direct the substantial goodwill that exists for the South Downs to places where it can make a real difference.



ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2018

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK TRUST



Over
£2 million

raised for projects in the National Park



Our Community endowed Fund has allocated

£137k

in grants to 45 projects



48

school mini-grants enabling, bird boxes, nature spaces, bug hotels and micro meadows



2

NEW Digital walking tours funded



2

NEW Forestry Apprentices employed



enabled

10,098

children to visit the National Park



18

youth led projects supported

16

sites supported to restore habitat for pollinators



2

historic dew ponds restoration funding secured



2

new cycle routes funded



13km

of hedgerow restored

1

residential for young Londoners

living in one of the least green boroughs in the country



£3m

in applications pending



35

stiles replaced with swing gates



38k

trees planted

OUR PRIORITIES

CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

We want to improve and increase our habitats in grassland, heaths, woods, rivers and on the coast. They are home to millions of plants, bees, butterflies including many rare and threatened species. We also want to conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the National Park.



© SDNPA/Tim Squire

INCREASE LEARNING TIME OUTSIDE IN THE NATIONAL PARK

Children today spend half as much time playing outside as their parents did. We want to change that, increasing the time spent learning outdoors in the National Park.



© SDNPA/Sam Moore

IMPROVING WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

We want to increase the network of family-friendly walking and cycling routes and encourage more disadvantaged people to visit, who live near the Park but rarely experience the many benefits it has to offer.



© SDNPA

HELP FOR COMMUNITIES
VOLUNTEERING TO SUPPORT
THEIR NATIONAL PARK

We support the grassroots groups already working to care for the National Park. We work with a number of supportive partners and donors to fund their work.

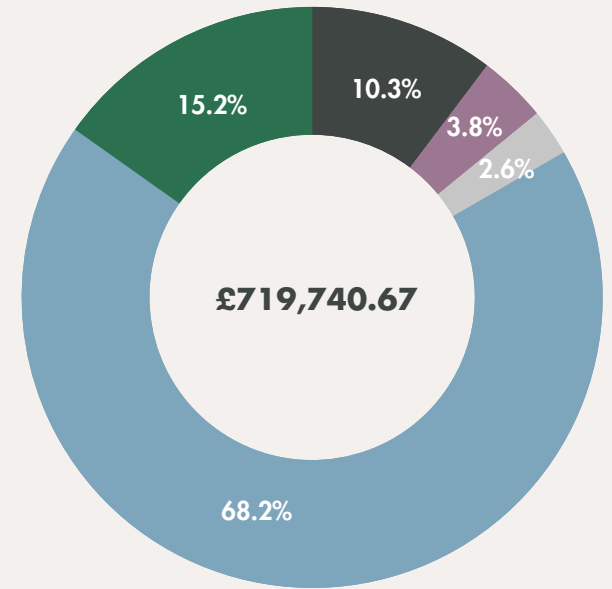


© Wild Heart Hill

FUNDING ALLOCATION

We are very grateful to the South Downs National Park Authority who have committed to cover our core operating costs (salaries and overheads) until 2024. This commitment allows us to focus on maximising funds to deliver projects within the South Downs National Park.

Despite another challenging year, the Trust has increased investment in the South Downs National Park for the fourth year running, raising over £719,740.67 across the following areas:



- Unrestricted Funds
- Increasing learning time outside
- Improving and increasing walking and cycling routes
- Improving our woodland, heathland, grassland, rivers and coast
- Supporting Volunteering



STAFF AND TRUSTEES

TRUSTEES

Our work is bolstered by a strong experienced staff and board of trustees



Dean Orgill, Chair of Trustees – Horsham, West Sussex. Dean Orgill is Chief Executive Partner of Mayo Wynne Baxter and an Executive Board Member of Ampa Legal and Professional Services Group.



Josephine Carr, Trustee – Jevington, East Sussex. Jo farms 160 acres at her family farm in Jevington.



Dan Montagnani, Trustee – Lyminster, West Sussex. Dan is a Fellow of the Royal Geological Society and Managing Director of Groundsure, an environmental land use data due diligence business.



Greg Mahon, Treasurer – East Dean, West Sussex. Greg is branch Principle of the Raymond James officer in Chichester.



Janet Duncton, Trustee – Petworth, West Sussex. Janet is Chair of West Sussex County Council and her family are farmers of the Leconsfield Estate.



Vance Russell, Trustee – Lymington, Hampshire. Vance Russell is a conservation consultant and owner of VR Conservation Collective. He is the former chair of the nonprofit Groundswell International.





STAFF



Toni Shaw, Trustee – Basingstoke, Hampshire. Toni is a consultant to the Third Sector having previously spent 10 years as the CEO at the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation.



James Winkworth, Head of Charity – starting out in commercial sponsorship, James has worked in the charitable sector for over 10 years, at charities including Amnesty International and Samaritans. James has lived in Hampshire for over 30 years.



Miriam Swan, Grants Manager – Having lived in the Lewes district and Winchester, Miriam is now settled in West Sussex. She has previous experience of managing grants for historic building repairs and non-profit heritage organisations.



Richard Waring, Trustee – Lewes, East Sussex. Richard has recently retired from teaching to return to his previous profession as an actor and writer. He is also a Volunteer Ranger for the SDNP, has an honours degree in Zoology and is an award-winning children's book writer.



Sophie Ritson, Fundraising Development Manager – Sophie who lives in Emsworth has over 20 years fundraising experience with national charities such as the PDSA, Campaign for National Parks and regional causes such as St Wilfrid's.



PROJECTS



CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

	£490.6k	raised for improving habitats
	11,000	trees planted across the National Park
	10	sites supported to restore habitat for pollinators
	2	historic dew ponds – restoration funding secured
	13km	of hedgerow restored

Hampshire Hedgerows – This ambitious project focuses on delivering hedgerow restoration at scale – through coppicing, gapping up, planting and laying – at various sites within the Selborne Landscape Partnership and Winchester Downs Farm Cluster areas.

This year, we have conducted over 8.5km of hedge work restoring 13.3km of hedgerow, including planting over 16,000 whips and 8 standard oak trees. We used a mix of locally-sourced species, including hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, field maple, spindle, dog rose, crab apple, dogwood and guelder rose.



Hampshire Hedgerows
© SDNPA/James Winkworth

We were also able to engage just under 100 volunteers with a number of young people learning Sussex Hedgelaying Techniques for the first time..

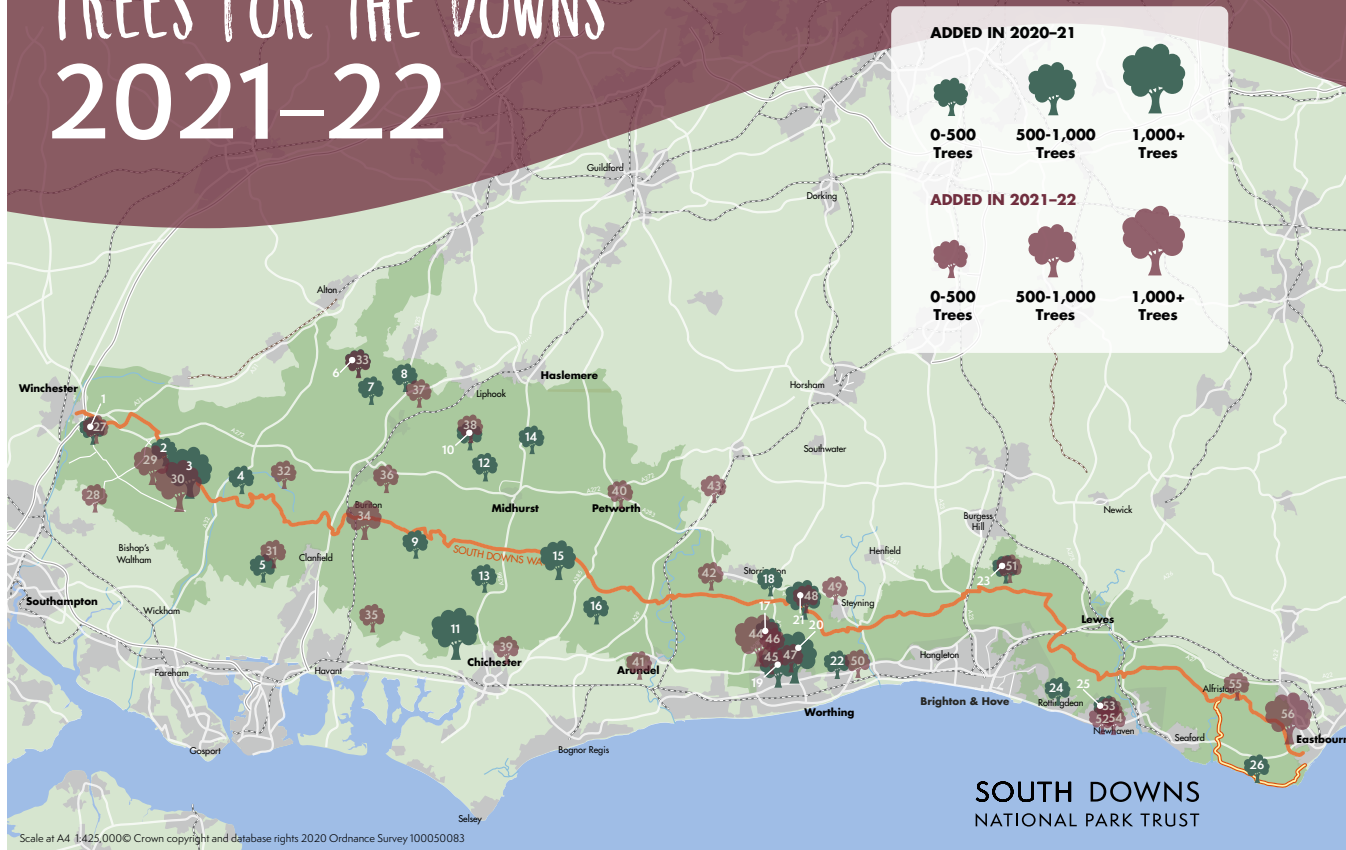
Trees for the Downs – With more woodland than any other National Park in England or Wales, trees form a vital part of our precious South Downs landscape. After a tremendous response to our initial 2019 appeal, Trees for the Downs will now look to plant 100,000 trees over the next five years, in community spaces, along roads and popular walking routes.



We have raised around £215,000 of approximately £260,000 necessary and will continue to raise the remaining amounts over the next five years.

In 2021 we planted just over 11,000 trees across 30 sites, bringing our “Trees for the Downs” planting total to 22,000, nearly 25% of our target.

TREES FOR THE DOWNS 2021-22



Both © Wild Heart Hill

Beelines – Launched in 2019, our initial round of projects have started seeing results. This includes the transformation of a former arable field on Sompting Estate, which this year has started to show fantastic results. It also includes Prince’s Mead School, whose wildflower strips have provided food for the bees and food for thought, for the students!

As part of its initial launch, we partnered with education provider Learning Through Landscapes who delivered pollinator-focused school workshops. Classes were supported to design and submit their ideas for pollinator gardens to our competition, with three winning schools having their projects funded by the Trust.




We were also able to re-open the fund for a second round of applications and are now working with **Plantlife** and South Downs National Park rangers to work up a further 11 projects.



Bee friendly planting
© Prince’s Mead School



ACTING AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

	156	stakeholder groups engaged
	13	public events supported
	£2m	bid for Lottery funding

Ouse Valley Climate Action – Ouse Valley Climate Action (previously Ouse Valley Cares) has continued at pace. Though in development, the project has a real sense of momentum bringing together groups and individuals from across the project area to share ideas and develop work streams to deliver community climate action.

This year we have engaged 156 stakeholder groups, delivered 14 ‘design & testing’ activities (e.g., rewilding projects, climate change cafes, dedicated forest school support and sustainable energy webinars), supported 13 public events (e.g. Eco fairs, seed swap), been interviewed on radio

and Facebook Live, joined COP26 events, and spoken to c3500 people.

Most of the development work has been targeted in the Havens (Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford), where we know deprivation is high. This has all fed into a £2 million bid for Lottery funding.



SUPPORTING SEVEN SISTERS



Centre improvements: air source heat pump and wood burner



'Grab-and-go' refreshment facility added



Centre now fully accessible

The Visitor Centre at Seven Sisters Country Park

is housed in a barn that has now been fully re-furbished creating a bright, airy and interactive space to learn more about the country park and its coastal setting in the National Park.

The centre also provides a retail space showcasing local produce and crafts. New and accessible toilet facilities, including a Changing Places toilet, have opened.

A number of improvements have been made to the building's energy efficiency, including new double-

glazed doors, air source heat pump and wood burner (with timber sourced locally from Friston Forest). The outdoor courtyard has been levelled and a 'grab-and-go' refreshment facility and new furniture has been introduced. The visitor centre and facilities are now fully accessible, with a false floor (using a sustainable product) overcoming the previous split level access issues. Overall, the Seven Sisters visitor experience has been greatly improved, including pathways and signage.



The new Seven Sisters visitor centre with the doors open revealing the view of the Country Park beyond
© SDNPA/Laura Clapham

EDUCATION

	£27.4k	raised for projects this year
	3,000	outdoor education for over 3,000 children
	48	school mini grants
	1	residential for young Londoners with little access to green space
	18	Youth led projects supported

Apprentices – Building on our Countryside Apprentice programme, this year we employed two new Forestry Apprentices. These posts are important to ensure the skills needed to create and manage our precious woodland are passed to the next generation.



© SDNPA

Travel Grant – Last year a further 54 schools benefited.

- 28 schools had fully facilitated trips including travel and outdoor education provider to 1,541 children
- 16 schools benefited from travel costs for 1,022 children
- 10 schools benefited from in-school outdoor education provision and teacher training, benefiting 1,290 children



School children from an East Sussex school
© SDNPA/Sam Moore

Garden Classroom – A pilot three day residential stay took place in November 2021 at Southease YHA in the South Downs near to Lewes for 60 Year 6 pupils (age 11–12) from Nightingale school in Hackney, London. Nightingale is a London state primary school who are on the Defra 25 Year Environment Plan ‘Nature Friendly Schools’ priority list (based on highest proportion of disadvantaged children in England).



Winter residential pilot at Southease YHA
© TGC – The Garden Classroom

Youth Volunteering – A total of 20 volunteering days took place, engaging 248 young people. On top of this, capacity was built and training provided to a number of partner organisations.






Seven Sisters Country Park – beach litter picking
© SDNPA



Hedge laying volunteers © SDNPA

WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

	£18.5k	raised for projects
	35	stiles replaced with swing gates
	2	Funding secured for 2 major cycle routes

Meet the Farmer – This project has created a number of short video clips which can be accessed via mobile phones at key points on trails in the South Downs. The video messages enable farmers to communicate better with the public while they enjoy accessing the farmland for recreation. This year the project extended its reach with six new farmers taking part in the ‘Meet the Farmer’ initiative helping the public to get a better understanding and experience of the farmland.



Meet the Farmer video clip
© SDNPA

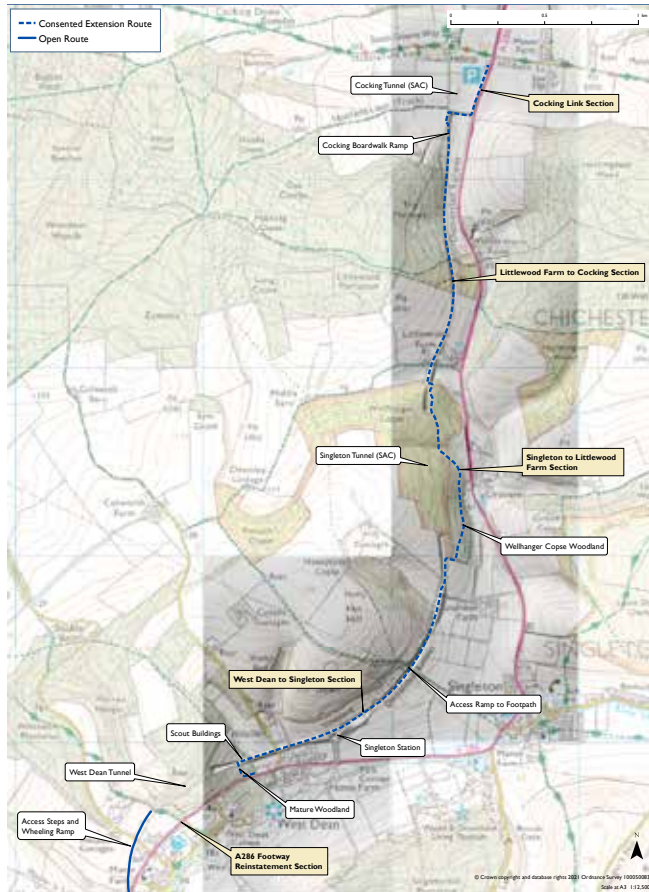
Egrets Way – Funding for the riverside route between Lewes and Newhaven has now been secured with Section 5 due to complete by the end of 2022. Section 6 will commence in summer 2022 for completion by spring 2023.



Egrets Way Stage 5
© SDNPA/Alister Linton-Crook

Centurion Way – The Centurion Way is a shared use path suitable for walkers, cyclists, families with buggies and wheelchair users, which runs along the old Chichester to Midhurst railway line. It has been developed in phases and currently runs from Chichester to West Dean. This year, through the generous grant of the F.G. Woodger Trust, considerable work has taken place to extend the route. The focus of this next phase is the area around the old Singleton Station. Enabling works including tree surveys, habitat surveys, vegetation and tree clearance have already taken place.

Path construction and the building of a ramp connection from the Centurion Way to the Public Right of Way footpath that connects users to Singleton village will be underway later in summer 2022. In time the route will extend to Cocking and eventually to Midhurst.



Centurion Way – Phase 2 Extension

Access Improvements – This year we supported a number of projects including new walking route between Singleton and Hat Hill, this will join with the Centurion Way once completed and includes a bridge over a winterbourne stream (a stream that only appears in winter months). We also funded a number of path improvements at Kingley Vale Nature Reserve, where sections had become very muddy causing difficulties for walkers and cyclists.



Apprentices on Drovers Estate near Singleton
© SDNPA

In Their Footsteps – in partnership with the National Park Authority, Gilbert White Museum and Pallant House Gallery we have funded two new digital walking routes. The routes use the free to download 'In Their Footsteps' app adding to existing content and allowing visitors to walk in the footsteps of the naturalist Gilbert White and South Downs artist Ivon Hitchens to visit the the landscapes that inspired them.



Gilbert White's House and the Oates Collection in Selborne
© SDNPA/A.K.Purkiss

HELP FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS WHICH CARE FOR THEIR NATIONAL PARK



£331k

endowment established



£137k

funds allocated to 45 community projects

Despite the impacts of economic uncertainty, our endowment remains strong. This has allowed us to support 45 community projects, including the Sustainable Communities Fund (SCF), School Mini Grants and the Volunteer Conservation (VCF) Fund.

Sustainable Communities Fund – This year the SCF supported six new community led projects across the National Park and the surrounding boundary.

PROJECT CASE-STUDY – SAMPHIRE CIC

Samphire CIC received £9,704 for Roots to Resilience (**RtoR**) helping with the costs of a new polytunnel housing a stock nursery for organic flowers for customers to pick their own rather than buy imported. Up to 16 sessions will be delivered with groups adversely impacted by Covid-19 and low access to outdoors. These will promote organic flower growing, awareness of South Downs wild flowers and include instructor-led walks within the National Park.



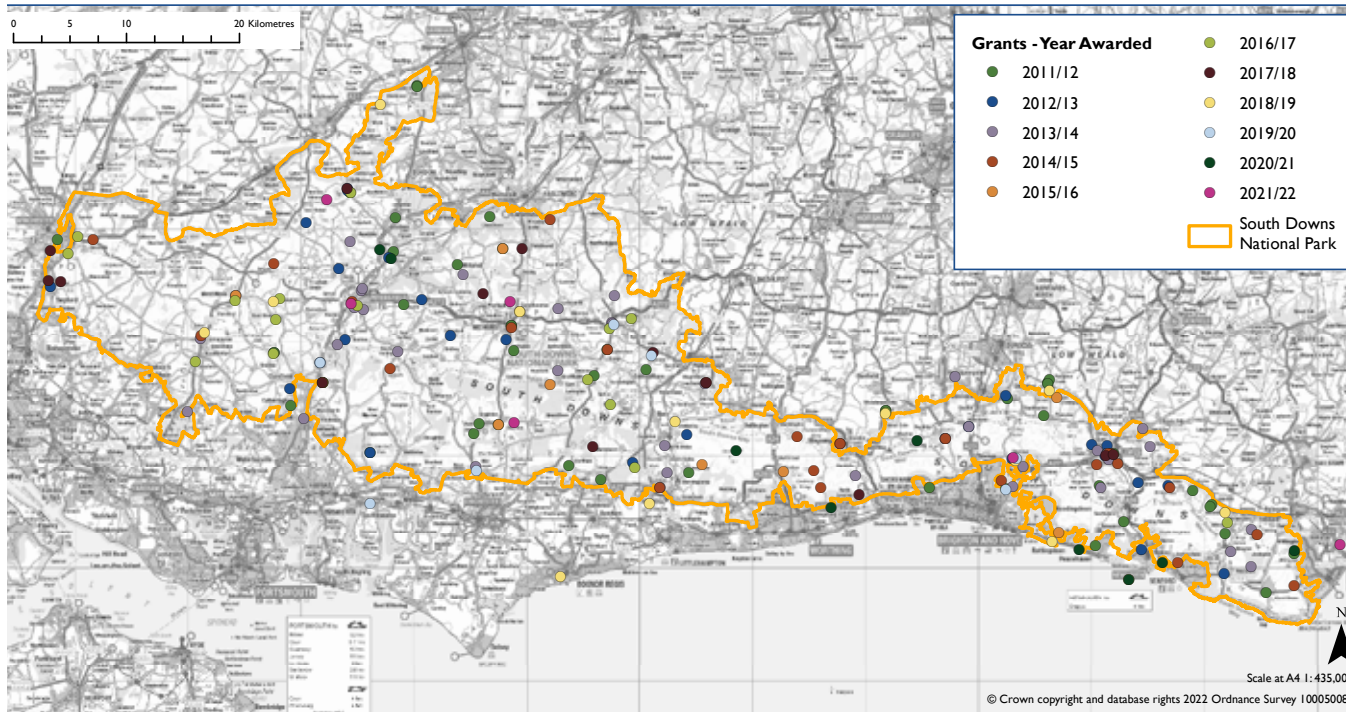
RtoR NIW Talk – SCF © Samphire CIC, Network of International Women

PROJECT CASE-STUDY – FRIENDS OF EASEBOURNE PARISH

Friends of Easebourne Parish were successful in their application for a £2,997 grant to purchase power tools to aid their work enhancing local footpaths and other public spaces.



Friends of Easebourne Parish © SDNPA



Sustainable Communities Fund – All Grants Map

School Mini Grants – ReNature grants of £150 encouraged pupils to create spaces for wildlife in their school grounds by installing insect hotels, bird houses, planting wild flowers and more. Within and around the National Park boundary, 48 schools have been supported including a grant to Brighton and Hove Environmental Education (BHee) to deliver mini and micro meadows across over 20 schools as part of the City of Meadows project.



© SDNPA/Alex Bamford

THANK YOU

PRESIDENTS AND PATRONS



The Duke of Richmond and Gordon
Chairman of the Development Board



Mrs Susan Pyper,
Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex
President of the South Downs
National Park Trust



Mr Tom Floyd,
Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire
Vice President of South Downs
National Park Trust



Mr Michael Rudman,
Deputy Lieutenant of East Sussex
Patron of South Downs National Park
Trust



Mr Hugh Bonneville
Ambassador of South Downs
National Park Trust

CORE FUNDER

A BIG thank you to the South Downs National Park Authority. Their core support means that 100% of public donations go towards vital projects in the South Downs.



FOUNDING PATRONS

We are sincerely grateful to our founding patrons who have provided us with necessary and long term support, which has helped to establish the Trust and our programmes.

- Oliver Haarmann
- Simon and Harriett Patterson
- Franck Petitgas
- James and Bianca Pitt
- Charles and Jans Rolls
- Gordon and Jenny Singer
- James Tuttiett Charitable Trust

DONORS

- American Express
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- Cinven Foundation
- Donations in Memory of Mr Gordon Victor Mackay
- Donors to the Big Green Give
- Ernest Cook Trust
- Foyle Foundation
- Friends of the South Downs
- Gareth Neame OBE
- Gavin Williams
- Green Recovery Challenge Fund delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency
- HCD Education Charitable Trust
- Henocq Law Trust
- Ian Askew Charitable Trust Conservation Fund
- Jo Holden Charitable Trust
- Joan Cullen Charitable Trust
- John Coates Charitable Trust

DONORS (cont.)

- Jude's Ice Cream
- Nadim Khattar & Andrea Kowalski
- National Lottery Community Fund
- Michael and Maureen Chowen
- M J Camp Foundation
- Nineveh Charitable Trust
- Nyetimber
- Players of the South Downs Lottery
- Portsmouth Water
- South East Water
- Southern Co-op
- Southern Water
- Spencer Wills Trust
- Swire Charitable Trust
- The Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust
- The Golden Bottle Trust
- The Worshipful Company of Grocers
- The SLP Project
- The Sussex Community Foundation

- The Woolbeding Charity
- Susie and John Wells
- Ultra X
- Waitrose Eastbourne

VISITOR GIVING PARTNERS

- Best of Brighton
- Deans Place Hotel
- Fizz on Foot
- Hydro Hotel
- The Village Inn Buriton

PARTNERS

Thanks to all our Partners

SOUTH DOWNS
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Help Nature to ReNature



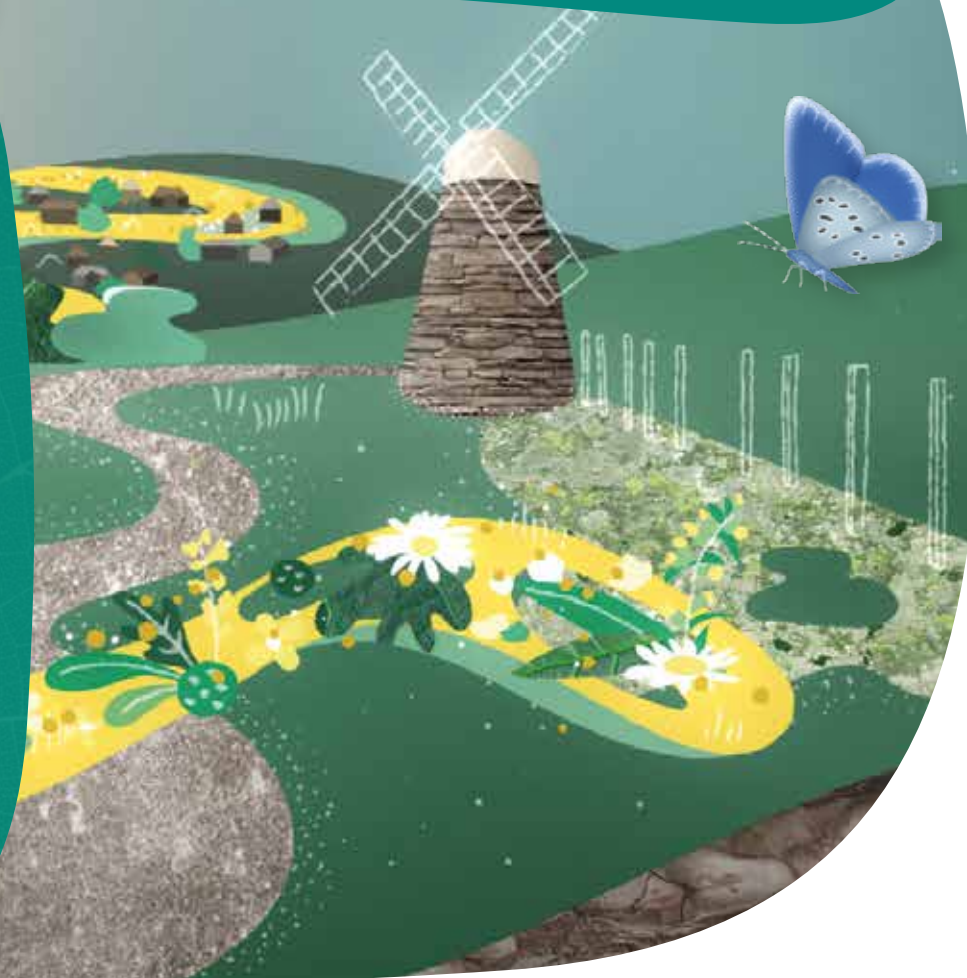
SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK



At the moment 25%
of the South Downs
National Park is
managed for nature.
Our goal is to increase
that to 33% by 2030.

Join us to help nature
#ReNature

southdowns.gov.uk/renature



SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Registered Charity 1174975

CONTACT US

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Cover image: © Shelley Cornes

