

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Annual Report 2022-23





Autumn leaves at Alice Holt Forest © SDNPA/Sam Moore

Welcome from the Chair

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK TRUST

In a fantastic year for the South Downs Trust we have doubled our income with expenditure close behind, increasing by a third.

We have launched new funds, such as Pounds for Ponds, delivered a third round of Bee Lines, funded a record number of educational trips and seed funded two large landscape-scale programmes which have gone on to secure significant investment, putting us on a solid path to deliver our ReNature targets.

In addition, I am pleased to report significant success with our Lottery Fund applications. The £2 million Ouse Valley Climate Action bid to the National Lotteries Community Fund project has been successful. This is a partnership of nine organisations and the funding will support nearly 50 community groups. This work will support the wider community in increasing green space and reducing their carbon footprint. It will also have the associated benefit of reducing household bills, during a cost of living crisis.

Downs to the Sea, our Heritage Lottery Fund bid was also successful in securing Development funding, meaning we will now work towards securing and delivering a £1.5 million investment into improving our local wetland habitats.

During the year we reviewed our key purpose by developing a Theory of Change (see page 22). This was an affirming process and highlighted the important role the South Downs Trust plays, raising vital funds to enable the restoration aspirations of farmers, landowners and community groups within the National Park. With this key role confirmed, we now work towards embedding this year's success, leading the charge for reversing biodiversity loss within the South Downs.

Thank you to my fellow Trustees, our staff and most importantly our donors for continuing to drive this work forward.

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



Key Achievements

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK TRUST



4

Community ReNature
Projects Funded

59,976^{sqm}

of pollinator habitat
created



2

Green Finance pilots
supporting the securing
of 324ha for Nature



£2^m

secured to tackle climate
change in the Ouse Valley



8,190

outdoor learning
experiences funded



10

pond restorations
funded



£51^k

donated to 8
community projects
through the Sustainable
Communities Fund



22

school conservation
mini-grants



8.36^{km}

of hedgerow
restored



5

Initiatives to
support youth
volunteering



2

Woodland
Apprentices
employed

53

Young
Londoners...

...from schools with
little access to green
space, benefited
from South Downs
residential



31^k trees planted

16K Trees for the
Downs and 17K
Hampshire
Hedgerows



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/Jeff Travis

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.

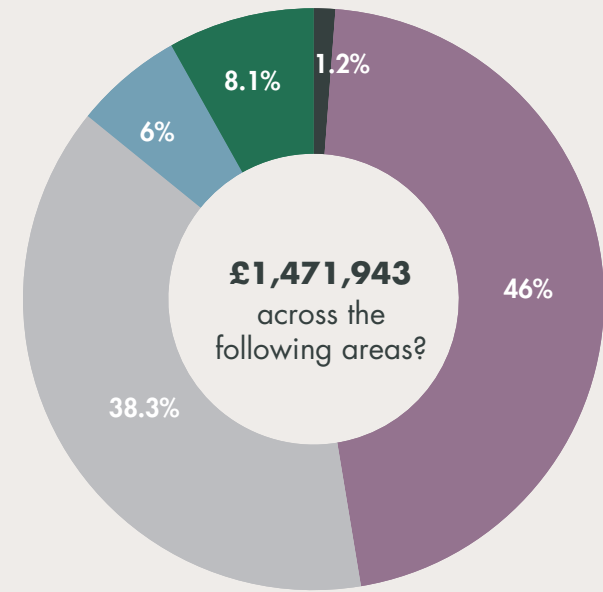


© SDNPA

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 2026. This commitment allows us to focus on maximising funds to deliver projects within the South Downs National Park.

This year, the Trust has increased investment in the South Downs National Park for the fifth year running, raising £1,471,943 across the following areas:



- Access
- Communities
- Conservation
- Education
- Unrestricted

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.



Dan Montagnani, Vice Chair of Trustees – 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.



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



Chris Knell, Treasurer – Brighton & Hove – Chris serves as Finance Director for the Plumpton College Group, and the Managing Director of the award winning One Garden Brighton.



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.



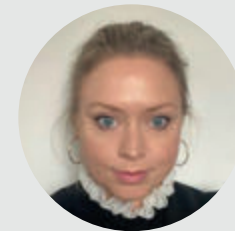
Janet Duncton, Trustee – Petworth, West Sussex. Janet is a West Sussex County Councillor, a Member of the National Park Authority, and her family are farmers of the Leconfield Estate.



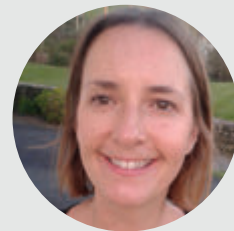
Richard Sandiford, Company Secretary – Midhurst, West Sussex. Richard is the Head of Governance at the National Park Authority. Before that, he worked in the higher education sector.



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.



Victoria Crespi, Grants Officer (Maternity Cover) – Victoria has always lived in and around the South Downs. She previously worked for the Sussex Heritage Trust, managing their bursary programme for West Dean College and the Weald & Downland Living Museum.



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.








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.

STAFF

Projects

CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE

	£564k	raised for improving habitats
	16,000	trees planted across the National Park
	60km²	of pollinator habitat created
	10	historic dew ponds – restoration funding secured
	8.36km	of hedgerow restored with 17K hedgerow trees planted

▼ **Hampshire Hedgerows** – The second winter season of hedgerow work restored 33 hedgerows through new planting, gapping up, coppicing and hedge laying across 14 holdings in the Selborne and Winchester Downs farm cluster areas. The total length of hedgerow restored is now over our original 20km target, with a third year of funding still to go. Farmers in the Selborne Landscape Partnership are already reporting dormice using hedgerows restored in Year 1 and the project will benefit species such as brown hairstreak, yellowhammer, harvest mouse and corn bunting, plus foraging bats.



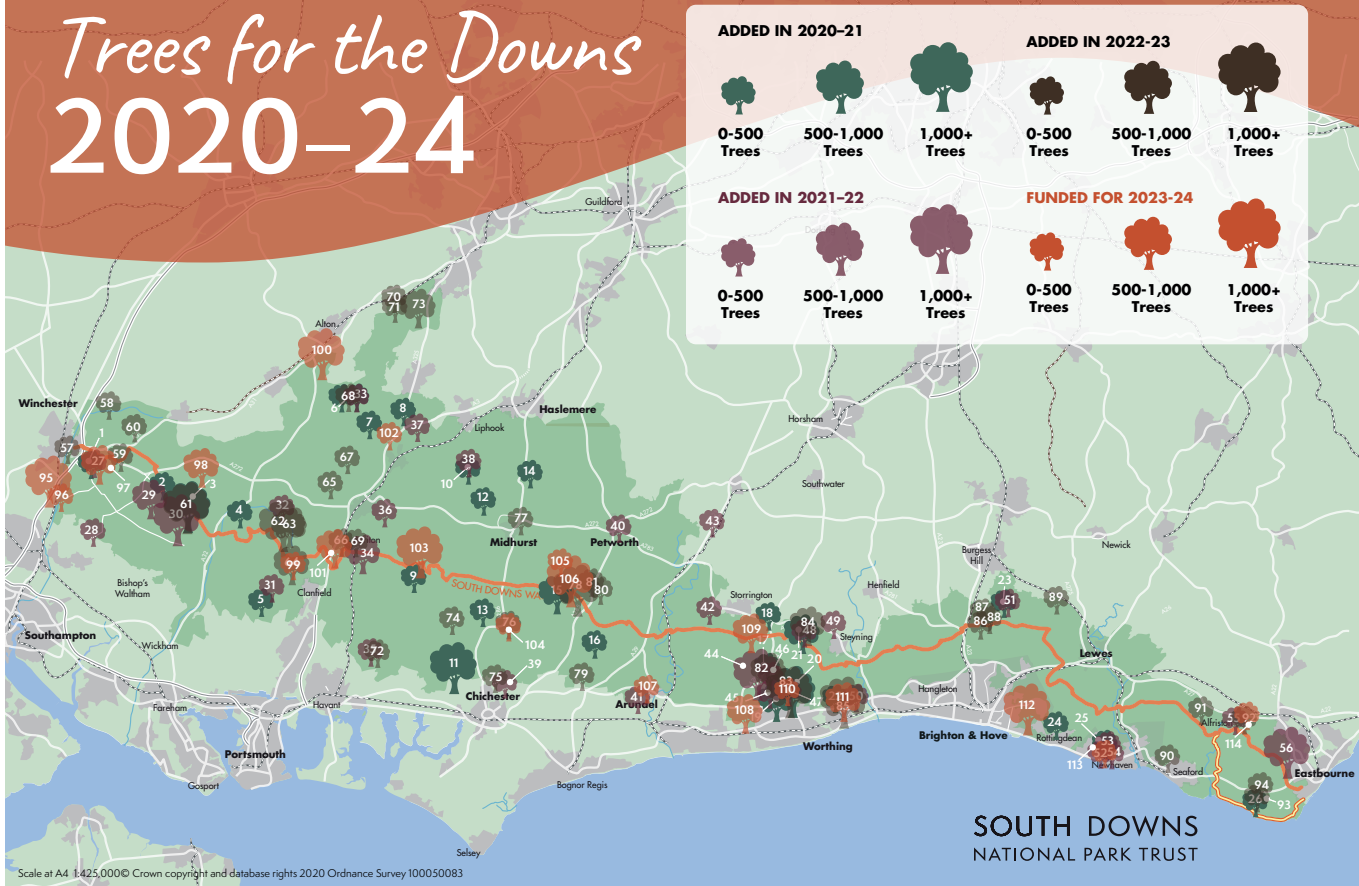
Hedge-laying at Selborne
© SDNPA

▼ **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 look to plant 100,000 trees over the next 5 years. In 2022 we planted 16,000 trees across 30 sites, bringing our “Trees for the Downs” planting total to 38,000. This year’s grant round has just closed with over 20 projects submitted for 2023.



Tree planting at Wild Heart Hill near Worthing
© Wild Heart Hill

Trees for the Downs 2020-24

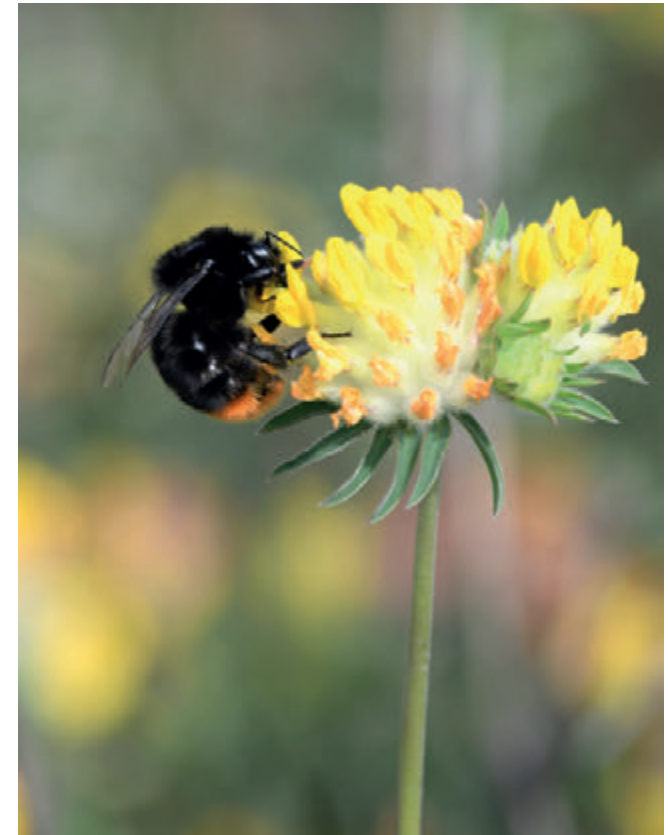


© Wild Heart Hill

▼ **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. Two further rounds have subsequently

run with eight projects currently in delivery and a further nine being worked up by the meadows expert at Plantlife.

beelines 
 SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK
 PROTECT OUR POLLINATORS



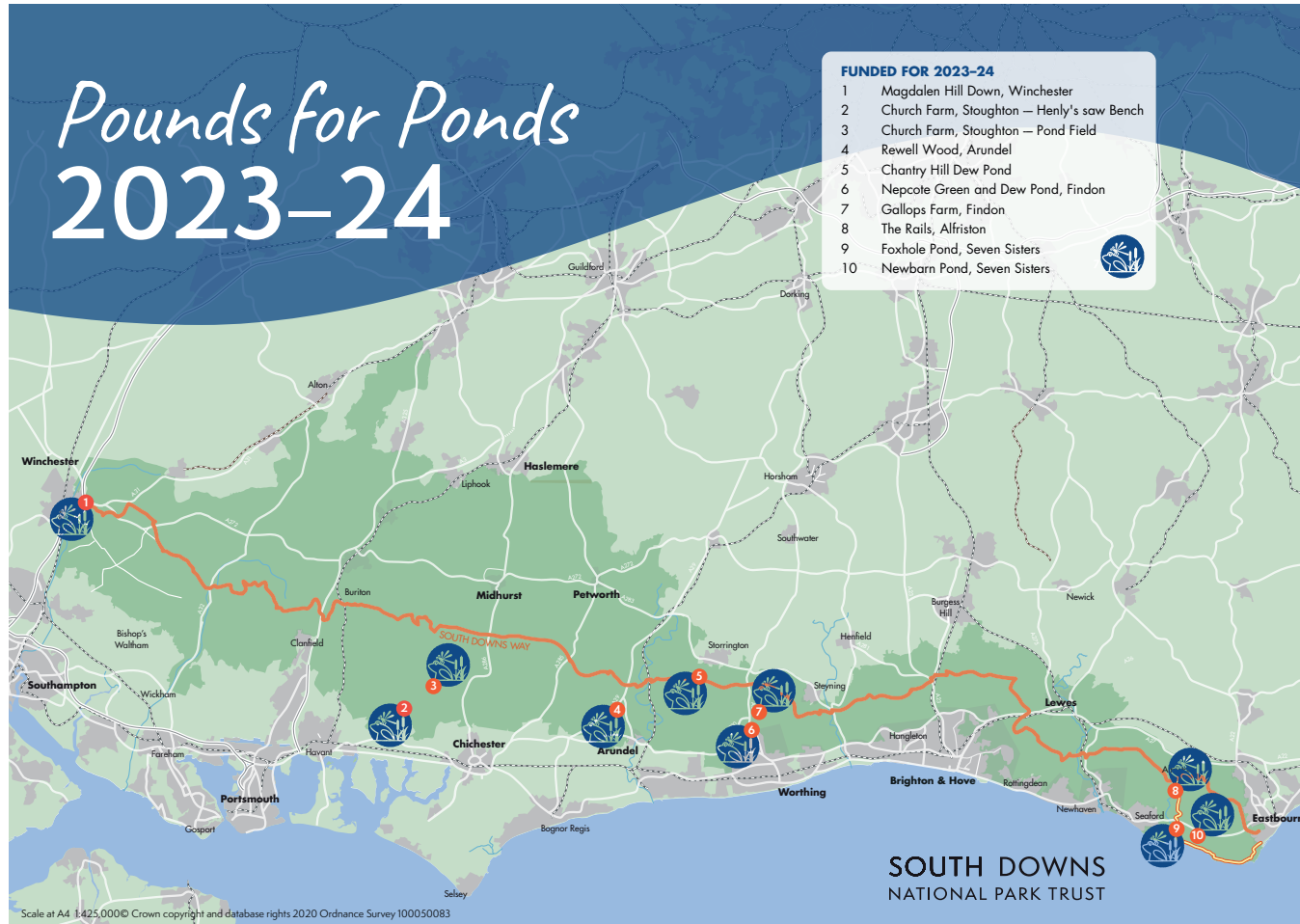
Red-tailed bumblebee on Kidney Vetch
 © Tim Squire

▼ **Pounds for Ponds** – Following Trees for the Downs and Beelines, this year we launched a fund specifically supporting nature and dew ponds. This initiative is supported by the charity Froglife, who are experts in this field. The initial round supported 10 ponds, with the capital works well under way and a further round planned for 2024.

Already restored is the Pond at Rewell Wood which has been in the planning for over 3 years, with observed populations of toads, smooth newts alongside the red listed hawfinch.



Pond at Rewell Wood; Before (top) and After (bottom)
© Mark Aldridge



HELP US TO #RENATURE

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

▲ **Our ReNature Campaign** – We are making good progress on our target to increase the space managed for nature in the National Park by 33%, resulting in 13,000 hectares for wildlife.

The ReNature Fund – £57k in grants have been given to four initial ReNature projects including chalk grassland improvements on a golf course, reversion of recreational spaces to wildflower meadows and supporting the transition of an old arable field to grassland.

Green Finance / Revere Projects – The two initial private finance projects have now completed and enabled the securing of 97.5 ha for nature, made possible through Ecosystem Service payments. Since then, four further sites have undergone a desk-based assessment to estimate their potential income from the sale of ecosystem services. This work continues to inform the development of the National Park Authority who have now launched a ReNature Credits Brokerage service. This is a highly innovative initiative and the first of its kind within Protected Landscapes.








▲ **Ouse Valley Climate Action** (previously Ouse Valley Cares) – In November this year we secured £2m to help make the region a national pioneer in tackling the climate change emergency. The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK, awarded the significant sum to Ouse Valley Climate Action (OVCA), which successfully bid for the funding among over 600 applicants. The East Sussex partnership, which covers 10 organisations, including the South Downs National Park Authority and Lewes District Council, has an ambitious goal of empowering local people to help create one of the first communities in England to fully embrace climate action. Importantly, this project will provide funding and support to nearly 50 grass roots community groups.

Downs to the Sea – £130,000 has been awarded in development funding as part of an ambitious bid to help restore wetland habitats. The funding has been awarded from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The initial development funding for "Downs to the Sea" will help the South Downs National Park and its partners work up a major bid for funding of over £1.5m. The project partners are South Downs National Park Authority, South Downs Trust, RSPB, Arun and Rother Rivers Trust (ARRT), Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) and Writing Our Legacy. Although still in its earliest stages, the project aims to bring together environmental organisations, farmers and communities to create and restore priority wetland habitats in the National Park and beyond, including around 15 Downland dew ponds, as well as farm and village ponds.



RSPB Pulborough Brooks
© SDNPA

EDUCATION

 £87.8k	raised for projects this year
 8,190	children supported for outdoor education from 134 schools
 22	school mini grants for conservation
 1	residential for 53 young Londoners with little access to green space
 5	Initiatives to support youth volunteering

Apprentices – In 2021 we employed two new Forestry Apprentices. These posts are much needed to ensure the skills and expertise required to create and manage our precious woodland are passed on to the next generation. The current cohort have now graduated, both finding work with members of the Park Authority's Woodland Champions Group, with two further apprentices starting in April 2023.

▼ **Outdoor Travel Grant** – Last year a further 134 schools in areas of deprivation in or close to the National Park benefited supporting 8,190 children to access outdoor learning in the South Downs National Park. All the feedback from these schools tell us how important these experiences are to children's development and wellbeing.



Outdoor Travel Grant recipients at Seven Sisters Country Park
© SDNPA

▼ **Residential Stay for London's most urban children** – Building on the success of a pilot project in 2021, 53 more Year 6 children from Islington and Hackney schools, both on the nature Friendly Schools' priority list (based on highest proportion of disadvantaged children in England), visited the National Park for a three night residential stay in November 2022. This year they stayed at the Truleigh Hill YHA and were treated to star filled night skies and a variety of adventures.



© The Garden Classroom

Wriggle Room – Wriggle Room is a project working to engage disadvantaged families with young pre-school children with creative making sessions. This project, in partnership with the Towner Art Gallery, supports families from Eastbourne's most deprived area of housing - Hampden Park. Sessions take place in the local Community Centre, Towner Art Gallery and outdoors in the South Downs, and the hope is that in time, greater community resilience will be built across geographic and social areas.

▶ **Youth Volunteering** – A total of 11 projects were supported through the Youth Action Fund (YAF), aimed at young people between the ages of 12-25. Projects ranged from mountain-biking and bushcraft sessions to film-making and conservation work.

▶ **Steyning Downland Scheme** – Every year, 400 students aged 12-13 years old from Steyning Grammar School undertake conservation work across Steyning Downland Scheme (SDS) land – including woodland, chalk grassland and pond habitats.



'Downland Task force' with their new tools funded by the YAF
© Steyning Downland Scheme

WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES



£17.5k

raised for projects

Egrets Way – The Egrets Way is a mixed use path which can be enjoyed by walkers, cyclists, mobility vehicle users and families with young children and prams. The aim, once completed, is for it to connect Lewes, Newhaven and the villages in between. Much of it runs alongside the River Ouse in its wonderful downland setting. Five of its seven planned phases have been completed and opened with the benefit of funding from the South Downs Trust and the National Park Authority. Phase 6, running from Lewes to Rodmell is currently under construction.

▼ **Centurion Way** – The Centurion Way project is another example of the Trust's work to improve the rights of way network in the South Downs by developing new pedestrian and cycle pathways and bridleways.



West Dean Tunnel, Centurion Way © SDNPA

The Centurion Way is a 9km shared use path that runs between Chichester, Lavant and West Dean following the old Chichester to Midhurst railway line. In the last year amazing progress has been made towards the new extension of this route which will eventually add a further 6km to reach the South Downs Way at Cocking. A new section of this extension, reaching beyond Singleton, will open in Winter 2023.

This all forms a part of the ambitious plan of a park-wide active travel network of safe, largely traffic-free routes, linking public transport, rural business, visitor attractions and accommodation providers that is usable year-round.

Access Improvements – This year we supported a number of projects which included a series of stile replacements on the South Downs Way close to Amberley, alongside a significant contribution to maintaining the South Downs Way, keeping it clear of vegetation and renewing redundant finger posts.

Butser Hill Improvements – We are supporting works on Butser Hill National Nature Reserve as part of a National Grid Project, delivered in partnership with Hampshire County Council and the National Park Authority. This project will enhance the landscape and biodiversity, open up a new walking route and enhance close-up wildlife interest for visitors.

HELP FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS WHICH CARE FOR THEIR NATIONAL PARK



£331k

endowment established



£683.4k

funds allocated to 8 community projects

▼ **Farringdon Yew Project** – The Trust and the local community worked together to raise money to save an exceptional yew tree, which is considered to be one of the 10 most important trees in the UK. The ancient yew tree is 3,500 years old and lives in the grounds of All Saints Church in Farringdon, Hampshire.

Several sections of the tree, including a major bough, had collapsed and parts of the tree were in an extremely fragile condition. Money raised paid for an expert team to create and install a long-term solution for an external artificial support and cradle, for the tree. There are now plenty of signs of healthy growth and renewal and we are extremely hopeful that this tree can live on and be enjoyed by future generations.

Sustainable Communities and Volunteer Conservation Fund – In 2022/23, we supported eight new community led projects across the National Park and the surrounding boundary, allocating £51,402.

▼ **PROJECT CASE STUDY** – Gilbert White and the Oates Collections received £2,000 to create a Tap Room at the disused Queen’s pub in Selborne, Hampshire. The aim was to create a community hub, encourage new volunteers as well as showcase local produce and attractions. The beer, brewed by volunteers, is supplied by the Gilbert White Brewery, with income generated invested back into the charitable purposes of the Gilbert White and Oates Collections.



Jubilee Tap Room
© Gilbert White’s House and Gardens

▼ **PROJECT CASE STUDY** – Botany Bay Conservancy Community Interest Group (CIG) received £2,660 to help with the ecological restoration of the site with funding put towards meadow and tree planting projects. A portion of the funds financed the purchase of a used ride-on mower to maintain a buffer zone around the existing wildflower meadow in order to decrease the nutrient level of the soil and reduce intrusion of coarse grass seeds and invasive species.



© Botany Bay CIG

Thank you

PRESIDENTS AND PATRONS



The Duke of Richmond and Gordon

Chairman of the Development Board



Lady Emma Barnard,
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 for South Downs
National Park Trust

CORE FUNDER

A BIG thank you to the South Downs National Park Authority. Their core support means that we can focus our funding 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
- Badr Jafar and Razan Al Mubarak
- Simon and Harriett Patterson
- Franck R Petitgas
- James and Bianca Pitt
- Charles and Jans Rolls
- Gordon and Jennifer Singer
- James Tuttiett Charitable Trust

DONORS

- The American Express Foundation
- Aspinal of London
- Banister Charitable Trust
- The Big Give
- BMW
- The Boltini Trust
- Chalk Cliff Trust
- John Coates Charitable Trust
- The Fonthill Foundation
- Gareth Neame OBE
- Golden Bottle Trust
- Green Family
- Groundwork
- Henocq Law Trust
- Higgidy Pies
- Jo Camp Trust
- Joan Cullen Charitable Trust
- Jo Holden Charitable Trust
- Jude's Carbon Cutting Ice Cream
- National Lottery Communities Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Gerald Micklem Charitable Trust

DONORS (cont.)

- Nadim and Andrea Khattar
- Nyetimber
- Ouse Valley Climate Action
- Penfolds Woodland Management
- Players of the South Downs Lottery
- Portsmouth Water
- Powell Forestry
- Shanly Foundation
- Southern Co-op
- Sussex Community Foundation
- Syder Foundation
- The Tallulah Lewis Trust
- Wilmott Dixon
- The Woolbeding Charity

VISITOR GIVING PARTNERS

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

PARTNERS

Thanks to all our delivery Partners in the South Downs who make our work possible.

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

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



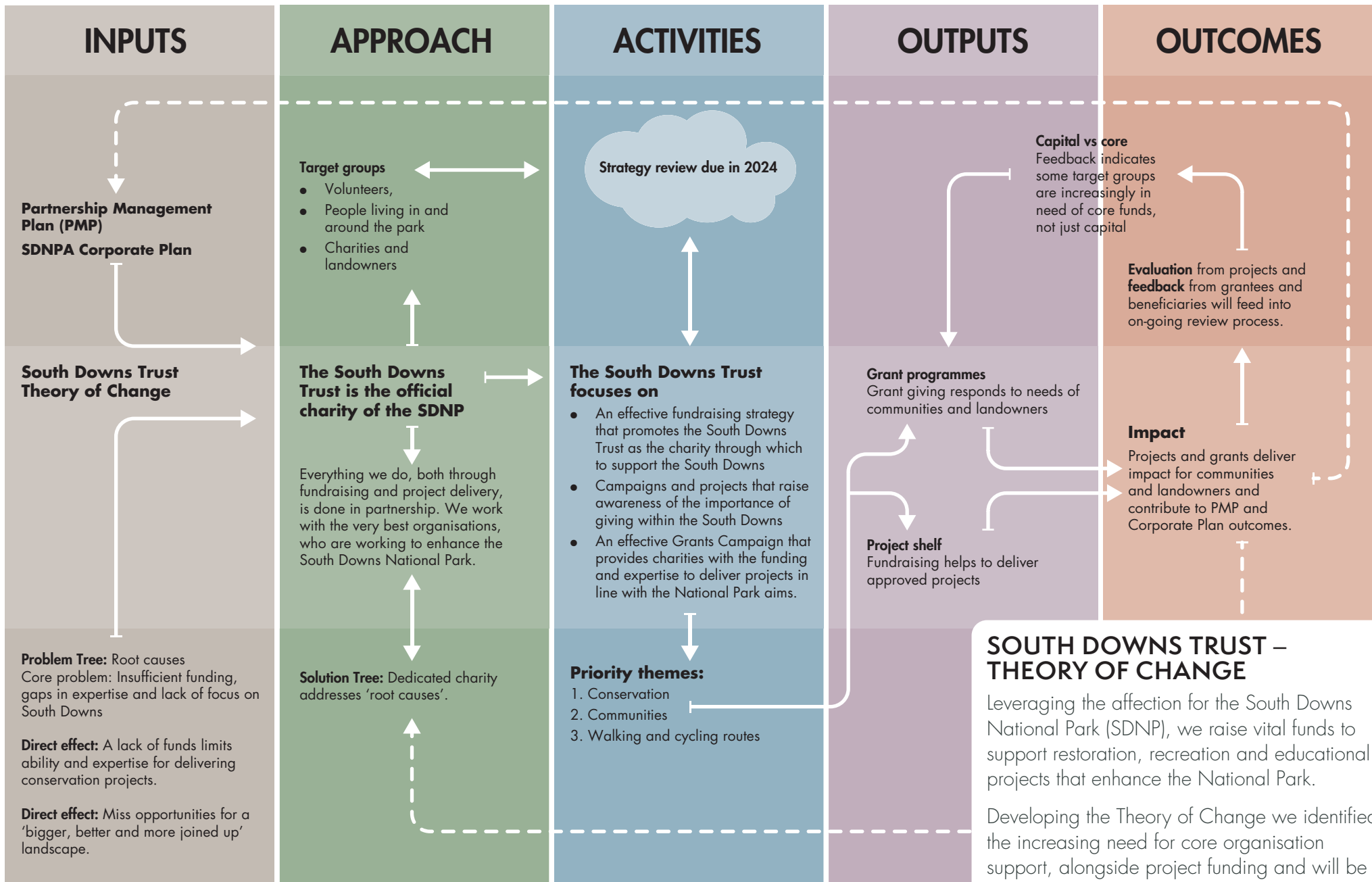
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023*



	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2023	Total Funds 2022
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and legacies	119,050	1,386,439	1,505,490	724,697
Charitable activities	143,580	375	143,955	148,711
Total income	262,630	1,386,814	1,649,444	873,408
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	87,228	4,008	91,236	131,047
Charitable activities	118,094	833,831	951,925	630,088
Total expenditure	205,322	837,839	1,043,161	761,135
Net income/(expenditure)	57,308	548,975	606,283	112,273
Other recognised gains/losses:				
Gains/(losses) on investment assets	0	(26,936)	(26,936)	20,438
Net movement in funds	57,308	522,039	579,347	132,711
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	149,320	965,895	1,115,215	982,504
Transfers between funds	(82,149)	82,149	0	0
Total funds carried forward	124,479	1,570,083	1,694,562	1,115,215

*Unaudited figures





SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK TRUST

Registered Charity 1174975

CONTACT US

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Cover image: © Wild Heart Hill near Findon © Sam Moore

