

Working on behalf of Natural England, the local councils and communities across the South Downs

Welcome to 'South Downs Focus' which updates you on the varied work carried out by the South Downs Joint Committee in conjunction with relevant partners.

It is sub-divided into two parts: the strategic centre (focused on HQ) and the integrated Countryside Management Service, operating throughout the former two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Joint Committee will continue to work in the former AONB areas until 31st March 2011, after which the South Downs National Park Authority (NPA) will take on responsibility for managing the newly designated area. During the transition year the NPA will agree its policies and develop its structures. The SDJC will continue to carry out practical work until such times as the the NPA takes on its full responsibilities in 2011.



Some of the work of the SDJC is supported by the European Union Interreg IVb programme



HQ - Communications, Planning and Strategic teams

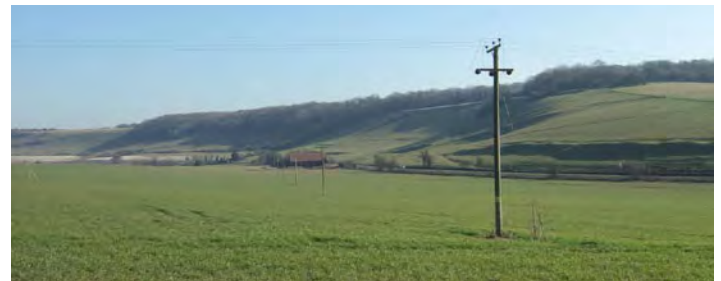
Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Planning

The National Park Authority has taken over the SDJC's role in commenting on planning applications during its interim year.

Tranquillity

The quarter saw the completion of three 'undergrounding' projects at Bullock Down Farm (Beachy Head), Butser Ancient Farm in Hampshire, and Longfurlong near Clapham. Discussions also took place with landowners and other interested parties regarding potential projects for the 2010-2015 period.



The site at Longfurlong prior to undergrounding

Sustainable Land Management, Rural Economy (Management Plan Ambition 6 & 7)

Rural Economy

Following the decision by the National Park Authority (NPA) to take on COLLABOR8, two 'Sense of Place' workshops were held with businesses to identify what they felt was special about the area and how that might be fed into the NPA branding work.

Discussions have also been held with Tourism South East (TSE) and Green Tourism Business Scheme as to how COLLABOR8 could help provide training and assistance for businesses within



Colin Wilsdon (Hassocks Community Cycle Project), James Douglas (M Cycles), Maria Robinson (Owner, M Cycles), Peter Simpson (LEADER, West Sussex)

the South Downs to become more environmentally aware and reduce their carbon footprint. This is to be taken forward by a new 'Go Green' group. Plans are well underway for a Sustainable Tourism evening to be held at Goodwood Racecourse on the evening of 11th November. For more details contact spape@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk.

Work with the clusters has continued: in Hassocks the new cycle hire facilities have been launched (see picture left); in Petersfield new maps have been placed

Sustainable Land Management, Rural economy (Management Plan Ambition 6 & 7)

in the car parks; and in Steyning a touch screen has been placed in the post office to provide visitor information. Attractions in the Arun valley have been working with Butlins to provide a bus service for their guests. Over 600 passengers took advantage of the bus which ran two days per week over a period of 10 weeks during the summer months. Arundel's first Food Festival took place between 15th & 24th October and Plumpton's walks leaflets are now ready



Launching the series of Plumpton walk leaflets, COLLABOR8 Project Manager Kat Hale (left) with members of the Plumpton Village Action Group

for publication and due to be launched in early October. Over 70 businesses have now been accredited for the 'Sussex Breakfast'. Taste of Sussex are now looking at Sussex menus more generally and working with Hampshire Fare on other ideas such as a food & wine trail.

Staff have been involved in early discussion with the NPA, destination managers and TSE as to the future role of the NPA.

People (Management Plan Ambition 8, 9 & 10)

Recreation and Access

South Downs Way (SDW)

Contracts for both Andy Gattiker, National Trail Officer and Lisa Trownson, National Trail Assistant, were extended from the end of July until August 2011 with Hampshire County Council. The SDW team welcomed Sophia Pape, a Tourism Management student who is on a year exchange at University of Brighton from the International University of Applied Sciences in Bonn, Germany. Sophia will be working jointly with SDW team and the COLLABOR8 project during her five month internship. Sophia is working on the development of budget camping barn provision along the SDW.

A programme of maintenance and significant repairs is underway through the SDJC Area teams and Hampshire Rights of Way team including major resurfacing on a Restricted Byway at Cocking (see Western Area report for pictures) and the replacement of stiles with kiss gates in Hampshire.

The National Trail Officer attended the annual National Trail Officers Forum which was hosted by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Trail. The forum was dominated by the expected funding cuts, but was optimistic about new initiatives.

Planning permission has been formally granted to make improvements to a bridleway crossing on the A259 to

facilitate the proposed new SDW bridleway extension at the Eastbourne end of the National Trail. To date, there is no news as to the long-term future management of the SDW, pending decisions by Natural England, local highway authorities and the National Park Authority.



Attendees of the National Trail Officers Forum held in Pembrokeshire

Sustainable Communities

The theme for this year's Action in Rural Sussex Conference attended by the Countryside Manager (Strategic) was 'Rural futures in changing times'. Sylvia Brown, Chief Executive of Action with Rural Communities in England and co-author of the Rural Coalition's report 'The Rural Challenge' provided the keynote speech. Responses were provided by East & West Sussex County Councils, Action in rural Sussex and the

South Downs National Park Authority.

At the West Sussex Rural Partnership meeting implications of the Rural Coalition Report – The Rural Challenge were discussed. A presentation was made on the research findings into Skills & Enterprise within West Sussex and members of the group were updated on Rural Broadband and various delivery and funding streams.

Communications

An extra 10,000 copies of SDJC's flagship newspaper, 'South Downs View' were printed to cope with demand. The content for the SDJC Annual Review for 2009/10 is in the final proofing stages and will be published in November. The review is to be incorporated into a publication which celebrates the achievements of the SDJC, the Sussex Downs Conservation Board and the East Hampshire Joint Advisory Committee over the last 18 years. The SDJC website (www.southdownsonline.org) continues to be updated as necessary. Discussions are underway as to how the transfer of content to the National Park website will take place. The Communications Team helped produce the Local Landscape Character Assessment Toolkit. The Communications Team have also continued to assist the National Park Authority Interim team on a wide range of enquiries.

Management and Support

South Downs Management Plan

Ambition co-ordinators have had a mixed response from partners regarding feedback on delivery of the South Downs Partnership Action Plan.

South Downs Advisory Forum

Members of the Executive Panel have continued to follow closely developments in setting up the National Park Authority (NPA). Members of the Advisory Forum have expressed concern that there should not be a policy 'vacuum' following the NPA Members' decision not to adopt the existing South Downs Management Plan. They were keen to be included in any consultation process set up to help develop the new Management Plan. Members also looked at the likely impact of Planning Reforms.

Sustainable Development Fund

A further eight applications have been approved by the Grant Advisory Panel. All funding for the current year has now been committed. A total of 28 projects have been awarded funding. The highest in terms of grants have been those relating to sustainable technology – three projects (£49,000); the highest in terms of numbers, eleven, were projects that involved the protection and enhancement of special features (£32,372); a further five projects fell into the rural economy category (£12,524); four sustainable access projects (£7,315); two environmental education projects (£5,469); two projects involving volunteers (£1,600); and one community project (£3,000).

Staff Update

There have been a number of staff leaving

us this quarter. John Johnson, Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Field Officer and Alex Stephens Eastern Area Ranger have both resigned. Tim Burden has taken over as Trainee Ranger in the Eastern area on a three month contract. Mary Parker, another DED Field Officer, has retired after 13 years service. Ian McConnell from the Western Area team, has been promoted to Senior Ranger to reflect additional duties. Cat Robinson has been seconded from the Hampshire Wildlife Trust on a part time basis to cover for Hampshire Area Ranger Jonathan Bills who has taken a sabbatical in order to travel to New Zealand for six months and Sophia Pape, a Tourism Management student from Germany has been working with the South Downs Way team and the COLLABOR8 project for her work experience.

National Park Update

The big achievement of the last few months is getting all the 15 local authorities to sign up for planning delegation. This is only the beginning really - effectively it is an 'agreement to agree', and they now the NPA has to negotiate individual agreements with them all. Nevertheless, it is an excellent start, and a real sign of early partnership and commitment from the local authorities.

The NPA has continued to recruit interim staff to ensure that it is ready to operate from 1st April 2011. Vicky Lamburn has recently joined with the task of preparing the Authority's website. This will include taking stock of the content currently available on a variety of websites managed by SDJC. Other communication and engagement work has been focussed on workshops and events, including

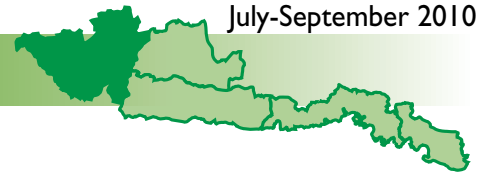
two highly successful 'Sense of Place' workshops with the tourism sector, run in partnership with COLLABOR8. The results of this and feedback from the workshops will be available soon and we are using this to inform a whole host of future projects, including the National Park Management Plan.

In September NPA Members agreed to start work on a new Management Plan, based initially around seven themes: Landscape; Biodiversity; Cultural Heritage; Awareness and Understanding of the South Downs; Access and Recreation; Rural Economy; and Local Communities. Strategy Leads to take forward these themes are currently being appointed along with a number of other roles. Work also continues on finalising a list of staff who will transfer from the SDJC, following

the decisions made at the end of July. One to one discussions have been held with a large number of Joint Committee staff over the summer. It is anticipated that approximately two thirds of staff will transfer to the NPA.

The South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service voted a resounding 'Yes' to joining the National Park Authority in the task of looking after the South Downs landscape in the future.

At their meeting in September, NPA Members agreed to enter into contract negotiations to buy Capron House in Midhurst, West Sussex, as their head quarters, subject to planning permission. A further report to decide on interim offices and requirements for area offices will be discussed at NPA meetings in the autumn.



Hampshire Area team - Quarterly Summary

Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Managing grassland for horses

The Hampshire Area team funded and organised a Meon Valley Partnership event, 'Managing grassland for horses'. Over 50 people attended this free event. Frances Clayton (Kent Downs AONB) and Julian Ridge (Downs and Harbours Clean Water Partnership) gave informative talks regarding best practice land management



Traditional livestock grazing in the Meon Valley

for horses and the wider countryside.

The key points discussed were: field size and optimum number of horses per acre; grass/flower species mix to benefit horse health; landscape impact of different fence types; potential planning issues with field shelters and impact of muck heaps on drinking water supplies. The event has been followed up by a number of visits to landowners to discuss specific site management.

Hampshire Wood Fair

The Hampshire Wood Fair was hosted for the first time at Queen Elizabeth Country Park near Horndean in July. Warm weather ensured a good crowd of over 2,000 people at this event which showcased the many facets of wood and woodlands. A whole host of activities took place during the day including

talks, shows, demonstrations, stalls and re-enactment groups. The event was supported and sponsored by Hampshire County Council, Forestry Commission and the South Downs Joint Committee.



Horse logging at Hampshire Wood Fair

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Woodland classroom

Over 120 people attended the launch of the woodland classroom at the Sustainability Centre which nestles into its woodland setting. The unique, innovative building, with a sweeping shingled roof, is a beautiful and much-needed space for adults, children and school groups to learn at the Sustainability Centre as well as an important resource for the local community. The Hampshire Area team were involved in the project management

and the building was designed and constructed by nationally renowned timber framer, Ben Law. It is a working example of a low impact structure, both environmentally and in terms of cost. The method of construction is relatively quick and uses locally-sourced, natural materials. The project was awarded funding by the 'Fieldfare' Leader Local Action Group under the Rural Development Plan England grant programme and the Mamie Mollan Trust.



Woodland classroom at the Sustainability Centre

Communities (Management Plan Ambition 9)

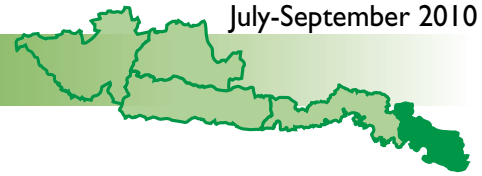
Volunteers

The volunteers have been busy during the summer with a programme based around Rights of Way, the South Downs Way and surveying. They started a new project that involves surveying parish churches within the Hampshire area. Volunteers initially piloted this project at Steep church, but have expanded it out to others including Stroud, Froxfield, Farringdon and the Nickelson estate tall spire church in Privett. The aim is to record the unique characteristics of each church and make the information available to visitors. The volunteers have also started to work with Hampshire County Council on a number of their sites, Wheatham Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Shortheath Common SSSI. A final visit to Fishers Copse was organised which was combined with the annual volunteer summer barbeque.

Facts and figures

- Organised and facilitated South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service AGM, East Meon
- Talks given to Rotherlands Conservation Group, West Sussex Woodland Forum
- 5 Environmental Stewardship Advisory Visits
- 22 Land management advisory visits
- Assisted in organisation of 'Flexible forestry' climate change seminar with Forest Research
- Attended Royal Forestry Society mtg.
- Meon Valley Partnership talk to the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership seminar
- Attended South Downs 'Sense of Place' workshop
- 30 participants of Petersfield Walking to Health group at Old Winchester Hill

Contact: Hampshire Area Office, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Waterlooville, Hampshire, PO8 0QE
Telephone: 02392 571381 **Email:** hampshire@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk **Web:** www.southdownsonline.org



Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Dutch Elm Disease (DED)

The departure of a DED Officer and a Ranger in the Eastern Area coupled with high beetle activity has meant this has been a very difficult season for those involved in the DED control programme.

Despite the season being officially finished, remaining staff are still identifying, marking and recording all diseased trees and will shortly be in a position to let contracts and seek additional resources to ensure that the DED programme is handed over to East Sussex County Council in good shape.

Special mention and thanks should also be given to Mary Parker who retired at the end of September. Mary was dedicated to ensuring the survival and protection



DED Officer, Mary Parker in action



Volunteers preparing to undertake a beach clean at Cuckmere Haven

of the elms over many years. We look forward to receiving her reports of diseased elms in the future.

Seven Sisters Country Park

Staff have continued to manage the water levels of the meanders and salt lagoons on the park. Several volunteer days were spent replacing stock fencing on the park and post and rail fencing by the entrances.

Two new benches were also installed.

A beach clean and litter survey event was held on the park. Staff and 13 volunteers spent a morning clearing litter and recorded what was retrieved. Results from this survey were then sent to the Marine Conservation Society as part of the national 'Beach Watch' initiative.

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Rights of Way

Despite being a Ranger down for all of this quarter and no replacement in place, Rights of Way (RoW) work has continued in the Eastern Area. Projects have involved a variety of contractors, staff and the invaluable South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service.

Volunteer groups

Work done by volunteer groups include clearance at Alfriston, waymark replacements in Alfriston, and hunt gate replacements on the South Downs Way & near Bo Peep. A temporary Trainee Ranger Tim Burden started in September, which has meant that existing staff now have the capacity (at least for the three months of his contract) to undertake further work on the RoW network.

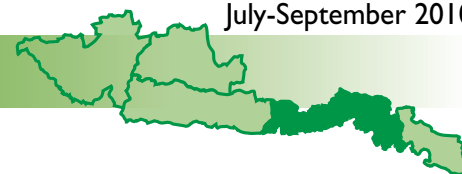


Out with the old, and in with the new, RoW tasks continue apace

Facts and figures

- 14 Rights of Way complaints received
- 10 satisfactorily resolved
- 19250 people through the Visitor Centre
- 12 school groups with 501 children

Central Area team - Quarterly Summary



Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Management advice

Staff have been working with two golf courses on the edge of Brighton, at Hollingbury and Waterhall, to develop environmental management plans; this will include scrub management, management



Hollingbury Golf Course

of the historic hill fort and the introduction of grazing to important areas of chalk grassland. Advice was also given to Natural England on the restoration of dew ponds at Kingley Vale.

Central Area staff assisted the Sussex Wildlife Trust with tours of Ditchling Beacon National Nature Reserve for key benefactors. They also helped Brighton & Hove City Council with a visit and tour from a team from UNESCO looking at a potential biosphere reserve around the city.

Wildlife and Habitat surveys

The erection of 23 dormouse boxes built by volunteers in Church Copse, Clapham has proved a great success. Monitoring

of the boxes has so far found regular use including one box which contained no less than seven Dormice.

A member of the Area team also assisted national bee expert, Mike Edwards with a survey of solitary bees at Seaford Head and other sites on the Downs.



Dormouse Surveying in Church Copse

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Open Access land

Central Area staff have been working with landowners and Brighton & Hove City Council to improve access to two areas of open access land, at High Hill, Balsdean and Breaky Bottom, Rodmell. This work has involved installing stiles and gates, new signs and the creation of a permissive path.



Open access at Breaky Bottom

Pathwatch

As part of the project to tackle illegal use of Rights of Way by vehicles, Area staff have set up vehicle monitoring equipment on Southwick Hill, this equipment detects

vehicle noise and shape and can be used to inform local police of the number of motorcycles or other vehicles using Rights of Way over fixed periods. This

will hopefully then help police to target enforcement patrols at the busiest periods.

Understanding

Area staff ran a bushcraft day for 25 children as part of the Steyning Downland Project. Skills taught included: fire-lighting and safety; shelter building; safe use of knives; using maps and compass; and making badges and pencils from wood and charcoal. Area staff also provided display materials and information leaflets for a school environmental event at the Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton.

Communities (Management Plan Ambition 9)

Parishes

Area staff worked with the parish council to run an event attended by 50 people to look at tree identification around the village of Iford. Staff also attended an open day in Kingston Parish marking the opening of a new village pavilion, to promote parish mapping and answered questions regarding wildlife sightings in the parish.

Events

Staff worked with members of the Steyning Downland Group to run 'The Big Picnic', an event attended by



Enjoying the Big Picnic at Steyning Downland approximately 350 local people. Aside from the picnic, visitors were able to enjoy guided walks, woodland craft workshops, an arts tent and games. Other

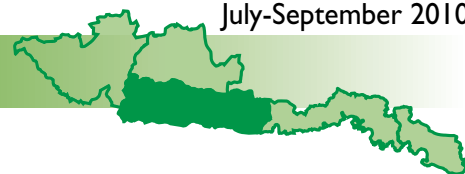
events this quarter included three visits to Brighton seafront with the display caravan and guided walks to look at Brown Hairstreak butterflies and the wildlife of Mill Hill Local Nature Reserve.

Facts and figures

- 16 ROW complaints received - all satisfactorily resolved
- 23 Volunteer tasks led by area staff
- 7 talks/walks undertaken
- 6 HLS meetings held

Contact: Central Area Office, Stanmer Park, Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 9SE
Telephone: 01273 625242 **Email:** central@southdowns-aonb.gov.uk **Web:** www.southdownsonline.org

Western Area team - Quarterly Summary



Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Conservation

Sheep grazing is currently taking place on Elsted Down (part of Rookcliff Site of National Conservation Interest). Lying adjacent to the South Downs Way (SDW), this is an important area of chalk grassland and forms part of the Western Area's Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme.

Archaeology

On the SDW corridor between Cocking and Upwaltham there is a wealth of archaeological features. In order to maintain their prominence within the landscape, it is essential to keep them clear of excessive vegetation. Western Area officers and volunteers have cleared the growing summer vegetation from three bowl barrows and three cross-dykes, all of which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.



Bowl Barrow at Graffham Down – Before and after clearance

Highway Clutter

Working in partnership with West Sussex County Council, a small programme has commenced, removing redundant or unnecessary highway signage. It is considered that this is an excellent start to what is a very emotive issue, but is subject to the availability of resources.

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Public Rights of Way (RoW)

Over the summer, a great deal of surfacing work has been undertaken, taking advantage of the relatively dry weather. This has included: surfacing improvements on Patching bridleway 2174, well used by local horseriders; revetment and repair work on South Stoke footpath 2266; and substantial resurfacing/grading on the SDW in Cocking Parish above Hill Barn Farm on restricted byway 952 (see before and after photos



The South Downs Way at Cocking - Before & after surfacing improvement works

below). The annual summer vegetation clearance contract was completed at the end of August, with a total of 118 kms of RoW having been cleared over the summer. Additionally, furniture maintenance work continues apace (see facts and figures below).

Health

The Western Area's summer programme of health walks in partnership with both Arun and Chichester Districts have been well attended. This included an evening walk on the Downs above Cocking, where the attendance of the local farmer gave walkers the opportunity to hear about and discuss topical farming issues.



Health walk in Chichester District

Communities (Management Plan Ambition 9)

Contributions have been made to Singleton Parochial Church Council towards the restoration of the flint wall around the churchyard and to East Dean Parish Council towards the replacement of the single post and rail fence around the village pond and green (see photo right). Working in partnership with Slindon Parish Council, Slindon Life (a parish community/action group) and the National Trust, the street design and traffic movement consultancy Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd have been commissioned to undertake a traffic and public space study for Slindon Village and Common. To date, this has involved:

all partners looking at key streets and spaces in Slindon to consider issues of streetscape; safety; accessibility; the quality of public spaces and the connectivity between Village and Common; liaison with the village primary school; and the holding of a parish meeting.

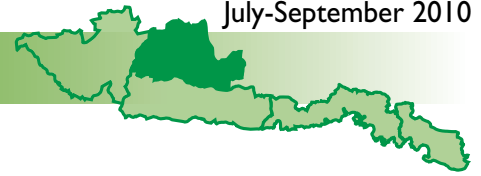


New single post and rail fencing around East Dean Pond and Green

Facts and figures

- 24 finger posts, 7 stiles, 2 hunt gates and 1 pedestrian gate replaced; 7 stiles repaired and 11 removed
- 26 public Rights of Way complaints received - all responded and 21 have been satisfactorily resolved
- 4 meetings with farmers/landowners regarding landscape/conservation/agri-environment issues were undertaken and commented on
- 4 Environmental Stewardship Higher Level Scheme applications were provided to Natural England

Northern Area team - Quarterly Summary



Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Spraying

Bracken has been sprayed on six heathland sites over the quarter. Rhododendron and birch has also been sprayed on a number of sites.

Barn Owls

The yearly monitoring of Barn Owl populations across the area has been completed for this year. Undertaken in partnership with West Sussex County Council, results show numbers are down from recent years, nevertheless some chicks did fledge.



September Heathland Forum on Stanley Common

Grayling Butterfly

Unfortunately, in a recent survey at Chapel Common and Weavers Down, no Grayling butterflies were recorded. It was thought that this was partly due

to the dry spell of weather earlier in the year and it is hoped, with continued management of these sites, that these very rare butterflies will return.

Heath Forum

During September, the Northern Area team organised the Heathland Forum, which was held at Liphook. The Forum was followed by an informative tour of Stanley Common, led by the Lynchmere Society. The event was well attended and feedback indicated that the event was enjoyed by all participants.

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Vegetation clearance

Vegetation clearance was undertaken on various public Rights of Way and a number of waymarkers, signs and stiles have been replaced or repaired. Working in partnership with West Sussex County Council, a key bridleway in the parish of Sutton has been ditched and re-surfaced as appropriate.

Reptile Safari

In August, a Reptile Safari was held on Iping Common and, despite the wet weather, attendance was surprisingly



Northern Area Manager talking to Students from Bishop Luffa School about surveying heathland

high. One of the informative walks arranged as part of the day was led by renowned ethnobotanist, Chris Howkins, who explained about the many uses of heathlands throughout the ages

Students visit Iping Common

The Northern Area Manager led a group of students from Bishop Luffa School in Chichester around Iping Common. The importance of the heathland habitat was discussed and survey and monitoring techniques using quadrats and fixed point photography explained.

Communities (Management Plan Ambition 9)

Events

The Northern Area team attended the Pulborough Harvest Fair in September. This event was well attended and a significant number of questions were asked about the South Downs National Park. The Area team also assisted at the Fernhurst



Fernhurst Furnace Open Days Event

Furnace Open Days with the able help of the South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service. This year, the event attracted over 1000 people making it the most successful Open Days' event held to date.

Habitat mapping

Area staff have also assisted the South Pond Action Conservation Endeavour Group, helping to plant the margins around South Pond in Midhurst. The work was undertaken in partnership with Chichester District Council and local people. The Sustainable Development Fund helped pay for a proportion of the planting.

Facts and figures

- 17 Rights of Way complaints received - 15 satisfactorily resolved
- 34 Volunteer tasks
- 2 talks given by Area staff
- 5 walks led by Area staff
- Attended 3 events within the Area

Contact: Northern Area Office, Bepton Road, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 9QX
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Volunteering - Quarterly Summary

Landscape Conservation (Management Plan Ambitions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Dutch Elm Disease Control

The Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Control Programme has had a busy season this summer, with higher than normal levels of infection. Volunteers from the Eastern Area have, as usual, undertaken some of the disease control work. To help cope with the extra work, they have also had help from staff and Volunteer Rangers from the Central Area. In all, 17 task days



Volunteer Rangers at Adhurst Wood near Petersfield in Hampshire with the Chair and Interim Chief Executive of the South Downs NPA

of DED management were held. The Elm work, together with a day on Lullington Heath hosted by Natural England, has also provided an opportunity for Central and Eastern Area Volunteer Rangers to work together.

Stone faced banking

The Northern Area led four days of stone faced banking restoration on the National Trust site at Woolbeding Common.

Access, Enjoyment and Understanding (Management Plan Ambitions 8 & 10)

Rights of Way

July and August were busy months for Volunteer Rangers on Rights of Way, particularly in Sussex, but increasingly in Hampshire too, with 47 task days in all spent maintaining Rights of Way and carrying out other access improvement.

Volunteer Parish Path Rangers

A planned training and feedback day for Volunteer Parish Path Rangers in the Northern and Western Areas has been delayed until more is known about the likely future role they will be able to play in the National Park.

Training for Volunteer Rangers

With the support of the Volunteer Ranger Service (VRS) team and Northern Area staff, a scything training day for six Volunteer Rangers was organised and funded by the VRS. Seven Volunteer Rangers have received driver training and/or First Aid training.

VRS Annual General Meeting

Hampshire hosted this year's annual get together for Volunteer Rangers, which was addressed by the Chair and the Interim Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority. In August, the

VRS voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with the National Park Authority from April next year and to work together for the South Downs.



Volunteer Rangers listen to local farmer George Atkinson, talking about farming in the South Downs, at this year's VRS Annual Meeting

Communities (Management Plan Ambition 9)



Lloyds Bank employees and Volunteer Rangers work together at Mill Hill Local Nature Reserve, near Shoreham

Open Day at Fernhurst Furnace

The big community oriented day for Volunteer Rangers during the summer is the annual event in September at Fernhurst, on the site of the 16th to 18th century iron smelting furnace. Volunteers contributed 24 days of their time in setting up and working at the event.

Mill Hill clearance

Employees from Lloyds Bank joined with Central Area Volunteer Rangers to clear scrub on Mill Hill Local Nature Reserve which overlooks the River Adur north of Shoreham-by-Sea.

Facts and figures

Total volunteer effort
1581 days

182 practical, training and promotional VR tasks took place, with **123** led by SDJC/SDVRS

Practical work by District (person days):

East Hampshire 105
Winchester 48
Adur 24
Arun 16
Chichester 273
Horsham 8
Mid-Sussex 27
Worthing 6
Brighton and Hove 51
Lewes 129
Wealden 361

Practical tasks were led by SDJC, SDVRS and the following partners:

Natural England; National Trust; South-East Water; Lewes District Council; Stanmer Orchard Group; Hampshire County Council; Forestry Commission; Amphibian and Reptile Conservation; Brighton & Hove City Council.

Practical tasks during the 2nd quarter:

45 in the Central Area
53 in the Eastern Area
35 in the Northern Area
26 in the Hampshire Area
22 in the Western Area

Contact: South Downs Volunteer Ranger Service, Stanmer Park, Lewes Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 9SE
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