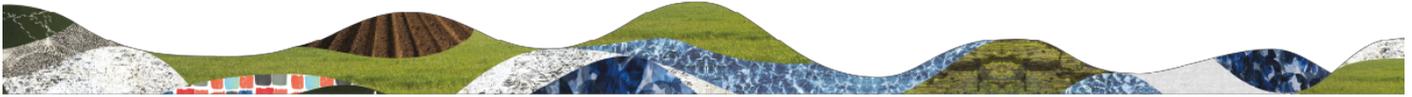


**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**  
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

## SOUTH DOWNS NEWS



### WORK AND PLAY IN YOUR NATIONAL PARK

This month:

- **Explore your local heath** Find out about the new Heathlands Sculpture Trail and download a walk leaflet to enjoy the family educational trail this autumn.
- **Capture the beauty of September** As the clock counts down to the deadline for our annual photography competition, get out and discover an amazing kaleidoscope of autumnal colours.
- **Take the lead** Learn more about the therapeutic benefits of dog walking in the National Park.
- **Get involved** Find out about a National Park volunteering role of a very different kind!

As always please send your comments and ideas to us at [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk)

## Inspiring sculpture trail brings stories of our heaths to life

**Intricate pieces of art that tell the story of the history, wildlife and people of heathlands have been unveiled and are now ready to be explored.**

Inspired by stories from communities and drawing upon sources as diverse as the poet Tennyson and a 391-year-old local map, the educational trail links seven precious heathland sites in the National Park.

The Heathlands Sculpture Trail aims to encourage people to visit their local heathland and learn more about them – as well as to explore other heaths in the area.

The beautiful sandstone carvings tell the story of why heaths are so important – as commonland enjoyed by local people throughout the centuries and as a rich haven for biodiversity, including rare insects, birds, as well as native reptiles and amphibians.

The trail, which includes a **downloadable leaflet** for walkers, links up heaths at Wiggonholt, Stedham Common, Lavington Plantation, Shortheath Common, Graffham Common, Black Down and Woolbeding.

The project has been spearheaded by the lottery-funded Heathlands Reunited Team, working alongside the RSPB, National Trust, Hampshire County Council and Sussex Wildlife Trust. The tactile artwork has been inspired by information and materials gathered from site owners and



Heathlands Reunited volunteer Janet Goring with one of the carvings

managers, local communities, school workshops and volunteers conducting oral history interviews and researching archived material.

Each sculpture has a coded plaque that can be used to watch a fascinating video about each heath on people's mobile phones.

One of the carving designs, named the "Sheeppig", is inspired by a map of the Graffham area that was drawn in 1629, during the reign of Charles 1, showing the heath as commonland. The beautiful map, introduced to award-winning sculptor Graeme Mitcheson by a Sussex Wildlife Trust reserve manager during a tour of the area, features tiny drawings of animals appearing to be standing on top of one another. A volunteer from the project then found the original archive copy of the map in the West Sussex

Records office and Graeme spent many hours creating the artwork.

Katy Sherman, Activities and Engagement Officer for Heathlands Reunited, said: "We're very excited to have all the carvings in place and have already had some great feedback – many people wanting to pose with the artwork for photographs!

"The whole ethos behind this trail is to encourage people to learn more about their local heathland and how they are all linked as one habitat. Historically these sites were more joined up and we hope this trail helps people see this incredible landscape as a whole – and why it's worth saving! Although often just a stone's throw from urban areas, these heaths are actually a habitat as rare as the rainforest and now cover just 1 per cent of the National Park. Within that 1 per cent, however, is some of the richest and rarest biodiversity you'll find anywhere in Britain, with species such as the sand lizard, natterjack toad, field cricket and Dartford warbler."

The carvings vary between 2ft and 4ft in height, and the sandstone has been chosen to blend visually with other stone and sand on the heathlands:

Katy added: "Heathlands only exist today because of human intervention over thousands of years. This means that if heathlands aren't actively managed by people – by local communities, conservation groups, the National Park Authority or others – they will be lost alongside the rare and endangered species that live there.

"We hope these beautiful carvings provide local communities with a sense of ownership and encourage people to care for them for future generations to enjoy.

"The sculpture trail is certainly inspiration for some lovely family walks this autumn and we're sure children will enjoy the artwork!"

### The walk leaflets are also available from the South Downs Centre in Midhurst.

The seven pieces of art are:



#### Black Down – Tennyson Quote

Probably the most famous admirer of the common and nearby former resident was poet Alfred Lord Tennyson.

This carving is inspired by some of his words.

#### Graffham – Sheeppig

This sculpture reflects the former use of the site as grazing land but also refers to the rare map of the vicinity. The piece stands around 4ft high and is carved from sandstone.



#### Lavington – Lizard



Inspired by the oral histories detailing the abundance of snake and lizard species that thrive on the common. The low-lying carving will be quite subtle in the summer months with longer grass, but

will become more apparent in the winter as grass die away. The sculpture can also function as a seat for people as they end their walk.

#### Stedham – Dragonflies Rest

Paying homage to the importance of insects to the commons at Stedham, the design is a



sculptural seat inspired by insect wings. The simple but elegant carved stone bench rises and twists at either side in a manner similar to dragonfly wings.



#### Woolbeding – Resting Reptiles

Inspired by stories of grass snakes, adders and slow worms on the heathlands, as well as the many Oak and Birch trees

not found at other heathland sites. Located in a wooded area and adjacent to the Serpent Trail, the two sculptures contain a different type of snake curled up on a bed of oak or birch leaves.

#### Shortheath – Cranberry on the mire



Inspired by the diverse range of flora and fauna at the common, including the thriving wild cranberry and flowering water crowfoot.

#### Wiggonholt – Cricket

Works to reintroduce the field cricket and encourage the regeneration of heather inspired this piece. The field cricket is an extremely rare, declining and threatened insect in the UK which depends on heathland habitat.



## Capture the enchanting beauty of autumn



**Golden caramel fields, rusty red leaves, purple heathers and gorgeous pink sunsets – all the spectacular colours that make autumn special.**

As the South Downs National Park prepares to put on its annual dazzling display, why not take the chance to capture a winning image for our annual South Downs Photo Competition?

To remind everyone, this year's theme is "My Tranquil Haven" and the closing date is 23 October. The contest is offering a first prize of £250 on offer to the amateur or professional photographer who best captures this year's theme.

The top prize for the adult category will be £250, with a runner-up prize of £150 and third prize of £50.

There will also be a wildlife sub-category, with judges looking for images capturing the amazing wildlife of the South Downs and the winner in the adult category will receive £100.

Meanwhile, there will be two further categories for budding young photographers – 10 years and under and 11 to 17. There will be a winner for the main theme of 'My Tranquil Haven', as well as best wildlife image, and the winner of each of these categories will receive a Colombia outdoors rucksack and a Colombia beanie.

Award-winning photographers Rachael Talibart and Finn Hopson are returning once again to judge the 2020 competition and the panel welcomes acclaimed Lewes-based photographer Carlotta Luke.

Carlotta said: "I am so pleased to be part of the judging panel this year. I love the South Downs and am looking forward to seeing photos that celebrate the feeling of tranquillity our National Park can give us. As well as beautiful photos of the landscape and wildlife, I would love submissions showing people engaging with and enjoying the park."

Find out more and download the entry form at [www.southdowns.gov.uk/enter-the-south-downs-photo-competition/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enter-the-south-downs-photo-competition/)

Pic: Lord's Piece by Jamie Fielding.

## Fun game encourages exploring the outdoors



**People are being invited to take part in an exciting physical activity game launching this month.**

Beat the Street Eastbourne will take place from 16 September to 4 November, coinciding with the launch of Eastbourne Walking Festival that starts on 18 September. (Please note at the time of going to press, Beat the Street is going ahead but please check the Walking Festival website closer to the date to ensure that it's still going ahead due to the updated guidelines.)

It's a free interactive game that encourages people of all ages to move more and to get active.

Beeping and flashing sensors called 'Beat Boxes' will be placed on lampposts around the town for the duration of the game to help participants explore the local area and all it has to offer and develop the habit of regular exercise.

Primary school pupils will be provided with fobs while parents and teachers will receive a card from the school so they can accompany children, or take part on their own. The wider community can pick up a contactless card from one of the distribution points which are listed on the website at [www.beatthestreet.me/eastbourne](http://www.beatthestreet.me/eastbourne)

Players then walk, roll, scoot, cycle or run between the 80 Beat Boxes which are spaced half a mile apart – hovering their fobs or cards over the Beat Boxes to score points. The further players travel, the more points they score for their community or school team. The first Beat Box you hover your card over marks the start of your journey. Walk, cycle, roll, run or scoot to the next one and you score 10 points for each subsequent Beat Box.

Beat the Street is being delivered by Intelligent Health and is funded by the National Lottery on behalf of Sport England, Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council Public Health, South Downs National Park and eDEAL.

Kate Drake, Health and Wellbeing Lead at South Downs National Park added: "As we mark the tenth anniversary of becoming a national park, we're delighted to see Beat the Street return to the area as it supports our vision of ensuring that this beautiful area is available for everyone to enjoy."

# The wonderful benefits of responsible dog walking in the South Downs



Alfie, the maltichon, enjoying the views from Butser Hill

**Pet owners have spoken of the therapeutic benefits of dog walking in the National Park during the COVID-19 pandemic – and are now urging others to make the most of the countryside this autumn while keeping their furry friend on a lead.**

As the world marked International Dog Day last month, the National Park Authority offered top tips for a great dog walk and shared some of its cutest countryside canine pictures.

It comes as research studies have shown that dog owners are four times more likely to meet the national recommended amount of weekly physical activity than people without dogs.

The stunning scenery of the National Park and its 3,300km of public rights of way have been a lifeline for dog-walkers across the region during the past six months, including Alison Berrisford.



Alison said dog walking in the South Downs is a cathartic experience for her and her two Siberian cross German Shepherds, Badger and Laika.

Alison, from Bordon in Hampshire, explained: "Dog walking helps me relax, especially with the current pandemic.

Sometimes we're so busy in "normal" life that we forget to take time to ourselves. Dog walking has improved my life by allowing me to take my time and breathe in the nature around me. Even just half an hour a day has a tremendous benefit on my mental health and allows me to focus on being in the moment with my best friends – that's what I really love about dog walking.

Alison is currently a dog ambassador for the Heathlands Reunited project, which is working to protect and enhance the precious, but vulnerable, lowland heaths of the National Park. The project was able to pilot this

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

pioneering volunteer role thanks to generous National Lottery Heritage funding.

Alison added: "We are so lucky to have the beautiful South Downs countryside to explore, but we need to be mindful that we play our part in helping to look after it. I always pick up my dog's poo to ensure it doesn't ruin someone else's walk and more importantly so no germs get into the soil – poo bags are inexpensive and there's some great corn-starch compostable versions available now so you can protect the countryside and not worry about adding to landfill."



Lennie at Black Down

As farmers are in the thick of harvest season at this time of year, dog walkers have an important role to play in helping to look after the South Downs.

Farmer Caroline Harriott, whose family farm tenanted land near Sompting, explained: "As a farming family fortunate enough to farm on the beautiful South Downs, we take great pride in being custodians of the countryside and at the same time producing quality local produce for the general public.

"However, like lots of other farmed areas on the Downs, our farm is a busy, professional workplace, so there are a few simple things that visitors, especially dog walkers, can do to help ensure we can go about our daily work and continue to provide delicious produce.

"Please park sensibly, allowing space for tractors and access to field gates at all times, take your litter, and dog poo home and please stick to the many footpaths to help protect precious crops and ensure ground nesting birds can flourish. It is also vital to keep your dogs on a lead around wildlife and livestock to ensure farmer's livestock can graze safely and for you and your own dog's safety. A pregnant ewe can easily abort her young if she is chased and the devastation that can result from a dog attack is extremely upsetting and also costly to our family business."

Alison Thorpe, Access and Recreation Lead for the National Park, added: "We know many people have rediscovered the joys of the countryside during the COVID-19 pandemic and we expect this to continue as we move from the summer months and into the autumn. It's fantastic that dog-walkers are enjoying the mental and physical benefits of the great outdoors and long may this continue."

### TAKE THE LEAD 😊

**As part of the Take the Lead initiative, here are four steps to being a good pooch this autumn:**

- **Keep dogs on a lead near livestock**
- **Bag and bin your poo, any public bin will do**
- **Respect farmland and stick to the paths**
- **Do not enter military training areas when the red flags are flying**

**For more details see**

**[www.southdowns.gov.uk/take-the-lead/](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/take-the-lead/)**

## Bee part of nature recovery



**Grants of up to £5,000 will be available to help create vital new wildflower havens for bees and other pollinators.**

The South Downs National Park Trust is embarking on one of the biggest charitable wildflower planting initiatives the South East has ever seen as part of the Bee Lines project.

It comes after the community rallied round to raise £75,000 to create a new network of wildflower corridors to help support bees and other pollinators, which have been on a steep decline across the UK for several decades and are now under threat from climate change. New wildflower planting will effectively create a "road system" for pollinating insects, allowing them to move through the landscape more easily and over time become more resilient to changes in the environment.

The Expressions of Interest process is now open and submissions will be taken until **midnight on 30 September**.

The South Downs National Park Trust, the official independent charity for the National Park, is looking to hear from farmers, private landowners, parish councils and local authorities with land that may be available for wildflower planting.

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VISIT • GIVE • PROTECT

Nick Heasman, Countryside and Policy Manager for the South Downs National Park and who is leading the project, said: "This a wonderful opportunity to be part of nature recovery, making a difference to the health of our habitats and helping conserve our precious environment for future generations."

Grants of up to £5,000 will be available, subject to match funding from the applicant and a commitment to help maintain the wildflowers in future years. Applicants could use the funding for improving existing land to benefit pollinators, for instance, through cultivation and seed mixes. Eligible projects for Bee Lines should sit within the South Downs National Park and applications will be assessed against criteria, including habitat improvement, connectivity with other "Bee Lines" and community impact.

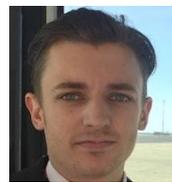
For more detail and guidance on making an Expression of Interest please visit

[www.southdownstrust.org.uk/beelines/](http://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/beelines/)

## Why hedges can be havens for nature



**Ollie Seal, Assistant Ranger for the Central Downs team, explains the art of hedgelaying...and how it can give a big boost to nature.**



Is there any better use of a hedge than to lay it? Maybe. But the benefits of doing so are phenomenal. Hedgelaying is a practice that the National Hedgelaying Society describe as 'sympathetic management'. Certainly this traditional skill is time consuming and labour intensive but the results pay off.

In its simplest form, the craft of hedgelaying requires laying each stem of the hedge horizontally, after using a billhook to cut into the lower section of the stem to create a 'pleach'. These can then be kept in place using stakes and binders, making for a robust, stock and weather proof hedge. There are various regional styles ranging from a low and dense Devon style which sits atop exposed banks to the squarer Lancs style, with alternating stakes. The method that we are trained to use in the South Downs National Park is the South of England style. This requires a double layer planting which are then alternately laid, with stakes driven in 18 inches apart and then bound by lengths of flexible hazel binders. Both sides are then trimmed, creating a very neat and attractive hedge.

The secret is the creation of an excellent habitat. Where the stem has been cut, but not severed, new growth is encouraged. New stems shoot out, thickening the hedge low to the ground and creating shelter and cover for a range of wildlife from small mammals to nesting birds. This shelter not only creates a stable environment that is protected from the elements, but also from predators looking for their next meal.

These hedges can then be connected. Not only can they connect to other hedges but they can also connect to woodlands. They are "roads", allowing wildlife to move freely and safely from one area to another. So, next time you're out on a walk, take a look at the hedgerows around you. For sure you will see some that could benefit from being laid. But perhaps you might even see one or two that already have been – and are now oases for nature.

## Equine rangers relaunched



**A dedicated team of equine rangers have been relaunched by Sussex Police and partners to help tackle a rise in rural crime.**

The Sussex Equine Rangers now have 14 volunteers who will be tackling rural crime and anti-social behaviour in collaboration with Sussex Police's newly-formed Rural Crime Team.

The team of specially trained horse riders have swung back into action to help combat the rise in rural crime during lockdown and beyond. The team was originally launched in 2015 as a pilot project.

Rural crime has risen in the last six months by 20 per cent, increasing from 429 incidents recorded in January 2020 to 533 in June. Burglary, theft of equipment and fly tipping are some of the offences affecting communities.

A new rural crime team made up of two sergeants, eight constables and six police community support officers (PCSOs) was launched in June. In two months, they patrolled over 10,000 miles of rural roads in Sussex and made 181 intelligence logs. They have also successfully executed several warrants including the recovery of stolen, culturally significant historic items.

However, there are areas that cannot currently be easily accessed by these police officers on foot or in 4x4 vehicles. The new team of Equine Rangers will support the police by reaching areas like the South Downs National Park and increase vigilance by being able to see over hedges, into gardens, ride along bridleways and through wooded and more remote areas. The riders will patrol on their own horses over various areas, acting as eyes and ears for the police. Every volunteer has been supplied with an application on their phones to facilitate quick reporting and information sharing.

Katy Bourne, Sussex Police Crime Commissioner, said: "I'm delighted to be able to help fund this innovative crime prevention scheme in Sussex.

"Since the Covid-19 lockdown, there have been many disturbing reports of fly-tipping and expensive equipment theft as well as other crimes affecting the countryside such as hare coursing and poaching. I want to reassure our rural residents that these crimes will not be ignored, and we are investing in better protecting them and their livelihoods."

## Major lottery boost for cultural heritage sites



The alluring Cowdray Ruins in Midhurst

**Much-loved heritage sites in the South Downs have received a welcome boost after winning lottery funding.**

The historic Cowdray Ruins, which are set in the heart of the National Park and opposite the South Downs Centre, will benefit from £45,200 in lottery funding.

Due to the need for urgent repair works the magnificent ruins, both a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I listed building, had to limit access to visitors. The ruins are an evocative reminder of one of the country's most important Tudor houses with historical, social and political significance – having hosted visits by Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

The project will enable the Cowdray Heritage Trust to carry out an options and feasibility study to secure the long-term planning for the future of the site.

Meanwhile, Sussex Archaeological Society, which runs Lewes Castle and other important venues near the National Park such as Fishbourne Roman Palace, has received vital support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund following a successful application to their Covid-19 Emergency Fund.

The registered charity has received the maximum £250,000 grant to help cover immediate costs and urgent conservation works required at their properties.

Amanda Jones, Chair of Trustees for the Sussex Archaeological Society, said: "The award of the maximum amount available is a real validation of the importance of our much-loved society at national level. We are committed to ensuring the society, its wonderful archaeological and heritage collections and the amazing properties in its care will survive to play a central role in our region's social and economic recovery."

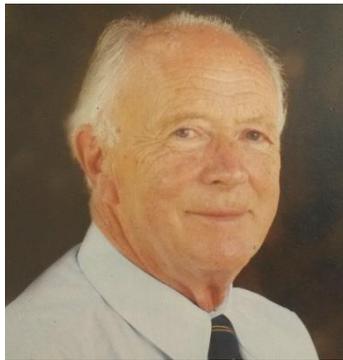
Commenting on the award for the Cowdray Ruins, Sally Guile, Operations Manager, said: "We are thrilled to have received this support thanks to National Lottery players and are confident the project will be the start of an exciting journey to once again reopen, reimagine and share stories of the nationally important Cowdray Ruins."

# Tribute to a dedicated advocate for the Downs



**Looking back at the illustrious life of Lord Renton is Phil Belden, who was Countryside Manager/Deputy Chief Officer under Lord Renton's Chairmanship of the South Downs Joint Committee (with thanks to Martin Beaton, ex-CEO of the South Downs Joint Committee, for his reflections)**

Lord Renton was the independent Chairman of the forerunner to the South Downs National Park, Sussex Downs Conservation Board (SDCB), then South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC), from 1998 to 2008, the critical period when the National Park debate took centre



stage. He took over the helm at the end of a six year "national experiment in Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty management", when no-one knew what the fate of the South Downs was likely to be, for no studies or decisions had been made as that government-sponsored experiment drew to a close. It was to be another decade before a resolution. In the interim, Lord Renton masterfully steered the management of the area through the choppy waters of uncertain and shaky short-term agreements and annual budget bids.

Lord Renton proved a loyal South Downs advocate. Government prevarication over the AONB experiment was met by Lord Renton tabling a Private Member's Bill, for an enhanced Conservation Board model, with stronger powers, permanent status and funding (but not planning).

When West Sussex County Council submitted a planning application to itself, for a large permanent waste facility in the South Downs, the ensuing debate in the advisory SDCB highlighted the lack of teeth of the AONB without planning powers, in the control of local authorities. A vote was taken and tied, but the chairman's casting vote carried a motion to defer, which would have been too late, after the WSCC decision. Lord Renton never fell into that position again. The Bill was superseded by the

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY** proposal for a South Downs National Park. Once that took root, Lord Renton turned his energies to seeking a definitive conclusion to this desire.

He was an excellent Chairman, who managed with great skill 36 members of the SDCB and then, even more cumbersome, 46 members of the SDJC, which succeeded the SDCB in 2005, as a transition to a Downs-wide management solution. His success was such that in his 10 years in charge there was hardly ever the need for a vote, the debate being steered smoothly to an agreed, unanimous conclusion. Though, at times, he kept members from their lunch, until he gained that all-important decision. He ensured strategic decision-making, sternly reprimanding any member who demonstrated bias, arguing in favour of their local patch, reminding them that they were there to represent the South Downs, not their council / area (his Chief Whip skills coming to the fore). He was highly supportive of the staff, so highly regarded that he was invited to and attended the staff Christmas lunches.

In his early days as Chairman, with the uncertainty of the future management of the South Downs, he engaged with the responsible Minister (Labour's Michael Meacher), to seek assurances and security. Later, he challenged the government's responses of "soon" or "very soon" to when a decision would be made, asking what this timescale really meant. The reply he received was that "very soon was sooner than soon"! When one or two recalcitrant councils resisted paying their annual fee, he moved in with quiet, but firm diplomacy, successfully coming back with the cheque.

The fact that it was the Labour Party that had called for a South Downs National Park could have made things very tricky with a Tory Chairman, but Lord Renton handled the politics with an adroit hand. He did enough to at least neutralise the opposition, to aid a smoother run-in to the eventual National Park confirmation, liaising with Labour government ministers, always with the best interests of the South Downs at heart. He often spoke up for the South Downs and related issues in Westminster, asking for briefing sheets on one side of A4 – that was always a challenge, but a great discipline.

Lord Renton stepped down from his post in 2008, after the decision had been ratified to confer National Park status, but before the South Downs National Park Authority came into being. He quietly confided in me that he'd agreed to become Chairman due to his love of the Downs and that it would be an enjoyable task, which it had been; but it was no longer fun. Tim Renton has been described as a liberal, urbane and moderate Tory. He was a true genial gentleman in his chairing of the South Downs and thanks to him the passage from uncertain AONB status to assured National Park designation was considerably eased and finally realised. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude for guiding this precious landscape through troubled times to a successful outcome.

***Lord Renton of Mount Harry (28 May 1932 – 25 August 2020)***

# Major volunteering opportunity – of a different kind!



**An exciting opportunity has come up to help shape the future of the National Park and make it an even better place for everyone.**

The National Park Authority is launching a major recruitment drive for volunteers to join the Citizens Panel – an important community-based panel made up of people living in or near the National Park.

Since 2017, hundreds of people have joined the panel and work with the National Park Authority on key issues around activities, events, volunteering, campaigns and community work. The panel helps to determine what issues are important to residents and what the authority and partners can do to improve people's health and well-being.



Tanya Hibberd, Performance and Research Lead for the South Downs National Park, said: "This is a volunteering opportunity of a different kind for the National Park – and one that is a great chance to have a big impact

for just a small commitment!

"We're really keen to hear from people who want to help make a difference and have their say on a range of issues affecting the National Park. We've seen the importance of the National Park as a green asset and the region's "breathing space" increase during the pandemic and that means the work of the panel is more vital than ever."

The commitment from panel members is small – simply take part in two online surveys a year and they may also be invited to take part in one-off smaller surveys or focus groups. There is a prize draw entry to win £50 for each survey completed. Panel members also receive a newsletter with updates about the National Park twice a year.

People are now being invited to sign up to the panel (please note panel members must live in postcodes BN, GU, PO, RH or SO) by the **deadline of 30 September**.

Tanya added: "The Citizens Panel is a really important touchstone for our work and will help to steer our

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY priorities moving forward. We've had great feedback from existing panel members who find it a very rewarding volunteering role and one they can do from the comfort of their home."

As it's the 10th anniversary of the National Park, Tanya is sharing her 10 good reasons for joining the panel:

## **1. Help care for your National Park**

For your National Park to thrive we need local custodians – people who care. The future is in your hands!

## **2. Share important messages with friends and family**

The more people who are aware of the issues facing the National Park, the better. Getting important messages out to the community can help to change behaviour for the greater good.

## **3. Become part of a local community**

Belong to a like-minded community who care about the local environment and issues of local importance.

## **4. Volunteering is good for the soul**

Volunteering is not only good for the National Park and its people, it's also good for you! Helping others is known to benefit your mental health – reducing stress, combatting depression, keeping you mentally stimulated, and providing a sense of purpose.

## **5. It's motivating!**

Learning about the special qualities of the National Park and what it has to offer will inspire you to get exploring and discovering.

## **6. Shape our strategic direction**

The results of our Citizens Panel surveys help to shape our work strategies by helping us find out what's important to local people and how we can make it a National Park for all.

## **7. Keep abreast of latest news**

Our surveys and e-newsletters focus on our latest work and our thoughts about future work – take a sneak peek at what we're up to.

## **8. Prize draw**

For each survey you complete, you could have a chance of winning a £50 prize or donation to the charity of your choice.

## **9. Volunteering is good for your CV**

Being able to demonstrate how you have helped and supported others is a useful string to your bow when it comes to job applications.

## **10. Improve your local knowledge**

Freshen up on your facts about the National Park and you'll be a fountain of all South Downs knowledge"

### **SIGN UP TODAY**

Simply go to the sign up page at <https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=159523627865> to complete a short registration form. If you would like to find out more before committing to joining the panel please email [CitizensPanel@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:CitizensPanel@southdowns.gov.uk)

## Trust helps launch fun arts initiative for children



### **A new environmental art competition has opened for children and young people.**

Sussex Green Living and the South Downs National Park Trust have joined forces for “Clean Up & Create”, a competition for five to 16 year olds in Sussex and Hampshire.

The initiative has been made possible thanks to a grant from The Boltini Trust.

Julie Fawcett, Chair of the South Downs National Park Trust, said: “Young people are the future custodians of national gems such as the South Downs and this is a fantastic way to inspire them.”

The aim is to encourage young people to design some artwork with a powerful message to raise awareness of the environment and represent the theme of a bright new future they want for the world.

There are two categories to choose from in each age group:

- An eco-art sculpture - using litter, recycling and unwanted items, the focus of the creation and thought-provoking message is the children’s choice. There is no size limit.
- A poster – youngsters can use litter if they wish but not compulsory. Once again, the focus of the poster and message are up to the children but it must portray either challenges to the environment and/or solutions. There is no size limit.

There are 16 prizes of £150 to be won and the deadline for entries is noon on 30 October.

Carrie Cort, from Sussex Green Living, said: “The pause in our lives has given everyone the opportunity to reflect and learn how quickly nature recovers when there’s less human activity. We hope this competition will encourage young people to use their imaginations to engage with nature and the environment.”

For more information and to enter visit [www.southdownstrust.org.uk/clean-up/](http://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/clean-up/)

## SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY Can you help with research?



### **People living in East Sussex are being invited to take part in a research study to give their thoughts on how Covid-19 has changed their relationship with the South Downs.**

The study is being led by the National Trust, South Downs National Park Authority and partners as part of the lottery-funded Changing Chalk project – a new inspiring initiative aiming to reverse the decline in chalk grassland and help connect people with this special landscape.

As well as its natural beauty, the South Downs’ chalk grassland – often likened to “Europe’s rainforest in miniature” – is known for its incredible abundance of rare wildlife and was a key reason for the designation of the National Park 10 years ago.

The Changing Chalk project is focused on the eastern range of the Downs, north of Brighton and Hove to Eastbourne. The National Lottery Heritage Fund grant provides funding for a wider range of activities to connect people with the chalk landscape, such as guided walks/workshops, organised events and volunteering. The partners are currently thinking about what these might be, and who would be interested in taking part. By participating in the study you can help shape these.

The partners are particularly interested in how people’s relationship with the Sussex Downs has changed since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic – and whether this brings new opportunities for people to enjoy the Downs that the Changing Chalk project could support.

They are looking for 500 people to contribute to the research project by filling in a 10-minute digital survey. Everyone who participates will be entered into a prize draw to win £100 of Amazon vouchers.

The survey will run to the end of September.

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: “We know the COVID-19 pandemic has sparked renewed interest in connecting with local green spaces and, particularly in our case, the South Downs. This important research will help us to unpack this general trend in greater detail – looking at the relationship people have with the Downs during and since lockdown and what we can do to create more opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and care for this incredibly special chalk grassland landscape.”

Take part in the survey by visiting <https://s.surveyplanet.com/k3YoOydJ3z>

# Things to do in the South Downs this September

Please check with the venue on availability and remember that prebooking may be required 😊



- Launching for this month's **Heritage Open Days**, enjoy a new self-guided walk from Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft around the village in the footsteps of the celebrated artists and craftspeople who lived and worked here from the early 20th Century on.
- Enjoy a fascinating walk around Lewes! Instead of the traditional programme of open buildings and conducted tours, this year the Lewes Heritage Open Days Team has put together **three self-guided walks** that explore local history and nature.
- Discover the story of Arundel, the Town, the Castle, the River and its People on 12 September. Come and enjoy seeing **Arundel Museum** for free as part of Heritage open Day celebrations.
- Visit **Burton Mill** in Petworth to go behind the scenes of a working watermill producing stoneflour. The mill's Heritage Open Days take place on 19 and 20 September.
- Step into Jane Austen's House at Chawton and view treasures from the museum's collection in this fascinating **online event**.
- Enjoy a **virtual walking tour** led by Dr Cindy Wood to explore medieval Winchester - looking at who lived in properties at different times and , the churches in the city now lost.

## YOU SAY:

Do you have a story you want to tell about the National Park? A burning issue that you think needs to be addressed? Please let us know!



To submit a comment for our newsletter please email [newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk). For a fast and direct response to your questions please email [info@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:info@southdowns.gov.uk)

Please note that only contributors who submit their full name and address can be considered for publication though we will not publish your full address. Please make it clear whether you are speaking on your own behalf or that of an organisation you represent. We reserve the right to shorten comments and edit where necessary.

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