

SDNP Link Councillor Report – Feb 2021

Report by Michael Tu and John Bradley - 26 Feb 21

West Sussex Parish Workshop on 2 Dec 20

John Bradley and I attended this interesting well managed online event.

This is link to presentation. <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/national-park-authority/committees-meetings/towns-parish-workshops/>

176 Town and parishes within the park and the SDNP itself has limited resource (around 100 employees). The most effective way to work with SDNP, appears to be, is to find well defined projects which align with SDNP's aims and objectives. This also increases the potential for accessing funding streams.

Another attendee questioned the status of parishes that straddle the park border, like Arundel. They were advised that the border is important to determine which authority deals with planning applications. When it comes to other matters, for example tourism initiatives and grants, the border is not a significant factor.

Meeting with Chris Paterson, Communities Lead SDNP 21 Jan 21

Attended on behalf of ATC by: Michael Tu, John Bradley, apologies from the Mayor and Town Clerk

Key points

- Significant area to cover - 176 parishes and Towns across three counties
- SDNP help with projects. Easebourne play area example, enhanced to relate to SDNP
- Aim is to share best practice with other Parishes, and SDNP are keen to partner with groups to do this
- SDNP keys aims are to protect landscape and heritage. Promote enjoyment of the park.
- In comparison, Arun District Council's aims are focused on social and economic well-being.
- SDNP takes a light touch approach. 100 staff in total. The park is 100 miles long, Arundel centrally placed 50 miles from each end.
- South Downs Charitable Trust - <https://www.southdownstrust.org.uk/about-south-downs/>
- Sustainable Transport Routes – walk, cycling and water (Wey –Arun canal). Policy SD20
- In January 2019 the Arun Valley Vision Group <https://www.avvg.co.uk/>, led by Arundel residents Gill Farquharson and Dr John Godfrey, published an excellent report on the future of the Arun Valley. SDNP will play a lead role in implementing the recommendations. We requested an update on progress?
- The structure was explained and a list of key contacts relevant to Arundel was sent after meeting.

Meeting 23/2/21 re: Relationship with SDNP with Ash Kent – Visit Arundel and Sharon Blaikie – Chamber of Commerce

We were updated on marketing plans that included promotion of Arundel's links to the park including a webpage <https://www.visitarundel.co.uk/south-downs-national-park/>. SDNP are planning to create an Arundel focused page on their website. They also touched on some other aspects of their marketing plans and said they are keen to get Town Council support. We said they would need to engage all councillors on this.

SDNP Boundary Signs – Phase 2

We have been advised that the installation of phase 2 (32 locations including Arundel) of SDNP Boundary signs has been delayed. They hope signs will be installed by the end of the year.

Meeting with Simon Mockford – SDNP Local Ranger 26 Feb 21

The Mayor, John and I held a Teams call with Simon Mockford to gain an understanding of his role. He went through a number of projects in the Arundel Area. He considers the Bee Projects a great example of a community led scheme. We agreed that we would remain in contact to ensure we work closely on similar projects of mutual benefit.

Summary

The South Downs National Park should be considered as a key authority, in the same way as West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council. Arundel is one of the gateway towns to the National Park. The opportunities to build on this status should be carefully explored. Encouraging visitors to use Arundel as their access point to the park could bring significant economic benefit to the Town. We are likely to get the most benefit from our relationship with SDNP if we have a small number of clear objectives, and align those with theirs where possible.

When we speak of Arundel as a 'gateway' to the National Park, sometimes it is taken to mean that you pass through Arundel to the National Park. But in fact when you arrive at Arundel station or drive into Arundel you are entering the National Park, because Arundel lies within the National Park.