

The News

South Downs National Park

July 2010

Welcome to South Downs National Park News

We hope this newsletter keeps you up to date with the new South Downs National Park and the establishment of the National Park Authority. If there are any topics you would like us to cover in the newsletter please let us know by emailing: info@southdowns.gov.uk

Chair of Planning Committee elected



Left to right:

*Neville Harrison,
Deputy Chair &
Andrew Shaxson,
Chair of the Planning
Committee*

Andrew Shaxson was elected Chair of the Planning Committee for the South Downs National Park Authority at a meeting held on 15 June in Arundel Town Hall. Neville Harrison was also elected as Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee.

Until April 2011, during the National Park Authority's shadow year, the role of the Planning Committee will be to establish efficient Planning procedures and policies. This is in preparation for when the South Downs National Park Authority becomes the sole local planning authority for the National Park area from April 2011 onwards.

Speaking of his new role, Andrew Shaxson commented, 'Planning in National Parks is a careful balancing act. We have to meet the needs of those who live, visit and work in the National Park now while also protecting those areas for the future'.

Read more about Andrew's approach to his new role, overleaf..

South Downs National Park Authority Takes Important First Decisions

At the third, full Authority Meeting, held in public at Arundel Town Hall on Tuesday 15 June, the Members of the South Downs National Park Authority made their first important decisions about how the Authority will operate.

- Read overleaf for decisions made..

South Downs National Park Anticipated Timeline

~31 March 2010

The South Downs National Park designation takes effect. The two AONB designations are revoked.

~April 2010

The South Downs National Park Authority meets for the first time. The Chair of the Authority, Margaret Paren, is elected by the Members.

The Authority begins to make strategic decisions as it prepares to become fully operational in 2011.

~ May 2010

Chair of Resource & Performance Committee, Deborah Urquhart, is elected

~ June 2010

Chair of Planning Committee, Andrew Shaxson, is elected

Authority takes outline decisions on how it will operate (15th June Authority meeting)

~ July 2010

National Park Authority meeting 6 July – approach to Corporate services and Premises to be agreed

~ October 2010

Work begins with partners on developing the South Downs National Park Management Plan.

~April 2011

The South Downs National Park Authority takes on its statutory planning responsibilities and becomes fully operational.

Decisions made at National Park Authority meeting – 15 June

The Members agreed to the following:

- To work with the existing Local Authorities to deliver the Planning Service for the National Park Area.
- To provide an ‘on-the-ground’ National Park Delivery Service to engage directly with local people, land owners, farmers and visitors about the South Downs National Park.
- To develop a partnership with the four local Highways Authorities to determine how best to ensure a high standard of access and rights of way across the South Downs National Park.

More information on these decisions can be found in the News section of our website www.southdowns.gov.uk

South Downs National Park Your Questions Answered

If you have a question about the National Park, please email: info@southdowns.gov.uk and we will try to publish the answer here.

Does the Authority offer ‘public participation’ at Authority meetings?

Members of the public can ask questions, make statements or present a petition on any matter on the agenda for an Authority meeting or for a meeting of the Audit, Standards or Resources & Performance Committee. Any member of the public who wishes to address any of these meetings should contact our Member Services Team (please call 0300 303 1053) no less than 24 hours before the start of the meeting. You will need to tell us in what capacity you would like to speak and provide us with your telephone number.

We are developing our approach to public participation in the Authority’s Planning Committee meetings. This will be decided at the next Planning Committee meeting on 12 July and we will provide an update on our website and in the next edition of The News.

What kind of expenses do the National Park Authority Members receive?

An Independent Review was recently commissioned and a schedule of Member allowances has been determined for the National Park Authority’s shadow year to April 2011. Details of Member allowances can be found in the Governance section of our website at www.southdowns.gov.uk

Forthcoming Authority Meetings

- 6 July** National Park Authority Member meeting at East Hants District Council offices, Petersfield at 2pm
- 12 July** Planning Committee meeting at South Downs Joint Committee office, Ford, near Arundel at 2pm
- 9 Aug** Planning Committee meeting at Lewes Town Hall at 10.30am

All meetings are open to the public.

Chair of Planning Committee – Andrew Shaxson



Andrew Shaxson was elected Chair by the ten Members of the Planning Committee on 15 June. Andrew has been the District Councillor for Harting Ward, near

Chichester for the last 11 years, and has lived near Midhurst all his life. He has been on the South Downs Conservation Board and South Downs Joint Committee for 8 years, and a parish councillor for 20 years, bringing a wide experience of local issues. We took the opportunity to ask Andrew a few questions about his role.

Why is the National Park so important to you?

Having spent all my life in this area it is very important to me, both as landscape and socially. That is the reason why I have long been a Parish and District Councillor, to represent my home community and the wider area. I have farmed, and it was traditionally said of farmers that they should leave their farm in better heart than they found it. My personal philosophy is that should also be true of the National Park.

You have many skills gained during your career. Which do you think are going to be the most important as Chair of the Planning Committee?

To provide leadership without making it too obvious. To ensure that awkward questions are asked - and answered - if it proves necessary, and to be approachable by all parties whilst carefully retaining independence and not taking sides in an issue.

What do you feel are going to be the challenges in the role?

Challenges could arise from dealing with inevitable issues such as contentious planning applications, satisfying people’s aspirations for improvements in dealing with Enforcement issues, and ensuring that people understand why an individual decision was made, even if it contrary to their wishes.

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