

**SOUTH DOWNS SOCIETY**



# South Downs Society

*Protecting the Beauty of the Downs*

SOUTH DOWNS SOCIETY  
REPORT AND FINANCIAL  
STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR  
ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2021

Charity Registration Number 230329  
Company Number 319437

## Annual Report 2021

**Registered Office: 5 Swan Court, Station Road, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1RL**

**Telephone: 01798 875073 Email: enquiries@friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk**  
**Website: www.friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk**  
**President: Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

**Vice-Presidents Peter Harris, Lord Lloyd of Berwick PC, Richard Reed, and Gerard Ryan QC.**

**Patrons Lord Sawyer of Darlington, Lord Leconfield and Egremont**

**Corporate Sponsors Albourne Estate & Nyetimber Vineyard , Landmark Systems, Langhams Brewery**

**Members of Council during 2021 (The Charity Trustees and Directors of the Company) \***

David Sawyer	Chairman		3/3
Patrick Haworth			2/3
David Coldwell			2/3
Glynn Jones			3/3
Andrew Lovett	Treasurer		3/3
Nick Isaac			2/3
Caroline Brown			3/3
Richard Reed			3/3
Chris Steibelt			3/3
David Green			3/3
Jon Templeton			2/3
Paul Wilkinson			3/3

**\* Indicates actual and possible number of Council meetings**

**attended.**

**Staff at 31st December 2021:**

**Policy Officer**  
**Office Manager**  
**Marketing Manager**  
**Social Media Coordinator**

**Emma Amies**  
**Alison Jones**  
**Gill Linturn**  
**Laura Libricz**

**Bankers**

**CAF Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Mailing, Kent ME19 4JQ PO Box 358**  
**Barclays Bank plc, North Street, Brighton BN1 1SF**

**Independent Examiner of the accounts**

**Cheeld Wheeler & Co, Goodman House, 13a West Street, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9BL**

**Investment Managers: Cazenove Capital Management, 12 Moorgate, London EC2R 6DA**

**Representatives on significant external bodies as at 31 December 2021**

<b>Campaign for National Parks:</b>	<b>Richard Reed</b>
<b>South Downs Network:</b>	<b>David Coldwell</b>

## **Structure, Governance and management**

**The South Downs Society is a company limited by guarantee under the Companies Acts (number 319437) and a registered charity (number 230329). The Articles of Association were revised at the Annual General Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020.**

**Membership of the Society is open to all. In 2021 membership was 1572. The Society's Council is responsible for the management of the Society and for setting its strategic direction. Its membership consists of the Treasurer and up to 12 ordinary members who are elected at an AGM.**

**The Treasurer is elected annually but may be re-elected whilst ordinary members are elected for three years after which they may be re-elected. The names of members of the Council serving in 2021 are shown on page 2. New members of Council are provided with relevant Charity Commission publications and offered a one-to-one briefing.**

**The Society now has three committees which are appointed annually. These are the Planning and Conservation Committee which co-ordinates the work of the Society's District Officers in advising on developments in their area; the Access and Rights of Way Committee which provides guidance to the team of Area Access Officers in considering access and rights of way issues currently in the process of reinstatement; and the Membership and Marketing Committee which aims to increase the membership of the Society and is responsible for fund raising and member events.**

**A large team of volunteers perform a variety of tasks including being committee members, District Officers, Area Access Officers, walks leaders and providing administrative support.**

## **Objectives and Activities**

**The Society's objective is to conserve and enhance for the public benefit the beauty and amenities of the South Downs in and within the vicinity of the South Downs national park. We work hard to improve access to the park and take an informed interest in planning policy and planning applications.**

**As well as providing a comprehensive programme of walks and strolls we take a special interest in access, rights of way and other park initiatives both in the park and in the immediate area. We are continuing a series of talks on Park subjects, held throughout the National Park area. Contracts are in place with the NPA to replace stiles with gates which the Society has part**

funded, 33 of which have been completed, and to provide seats along the South Downs Way.

The Society's Council believe that all these activities ensure that we fulfil our duty in section 4 of the 2006 Charities Act to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

## **Achievements and Performance**

We can report a successful and active year, with staff and volunteers making a real difference in and around the national park. Early in the year we welcomed a new Policy Officer, Emma Amies. XXXXX

During the year we once again

- Responded to planning, transport and access issues (see below)
- Maintained the walks and strolls programme. This programme continues to be well supported by members, encouraging many onto and around the Downs on walks and strolls that provide a warm welcome to newcomers and regulars alike.

Our project to replace stiles on paths within the park with kissing gates in association with the national park authority has concluded. This project enables very many less mobile walkers to use popular paths that have been impossible for them to use because they cannot climb over stiles. The park authority is no longer able to support this project financially, and we expect to make arrangements with local groups to continue the project.

- Progress continues with the provision of oak seats on popular paths and in particular on the South Downs Way. One seat has been fitted and 5 more have been manufactured

Our staff have continued to provide support to Trustees and members. All four current members of staff work part time, giving a full time equivalent staff level of 1.5.

Our office manager Alison Jones with her team Gill Linturn and Laura Libricz managed all finances, membership records, attendance at local shows etc. In particular we have significantly increased our presence on social media thanks to the expertise of two of our staff.

## **Planning and Land Management**

**It has been another active year for the Planning and Conservation Committee responding to planning applications, commenting on local plans, and identifying issues which impact on the South Downs National Park. In 2020 we submitted responses on a wide range of planning applications, from major developments called in by the National Park Authority (NPA) to individual small developments handled by local authorities within or adjacent to the National Park, where there appeared to be potential issues of location, design, impact or precedent.**

**The Planning & Conservation Committee continued their series of meetings throughout 2020 via Zoom.**

### **Access and Rights of Way**

**The Society is fortunate in having nearly 30 volunteer Area Access Officers who each take responsibility for rights of way and other paths within a specific area. The NPA is much appreciative of the work done by AAOs who regularly walk paths in their areas and report any that are blocked or otherwise available.**

### **Walks and Strolls**

**Walks coordinator Ian Lancaster and Strolls Coordinator Mick Heywood have once again produced a very impressive programme of walks and strolls, assisted by a large number of members volunteering to be leaders. Both walks and strolls are well supported by members in the centre of the Park area, but we are concerned about attendance in Hampshire and East Sussex. Recruitment efforts will be carried out in these areas.**

**Several walks and strolls this year have been successfully advertised externally to encourage non members to join the walk or stroll and hopefully the Society.**

### **Education and Understanding**

The Society considers that one of the best ways in which it can achieve its objective is by encouraging the interest of children in the South Downs. We have two projects largely funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund with that aim in mind.

The year 2021 saw the completion of the *South Downs Generations* project aimed at helping school children in particular to learn about how earlier generations lived and worked on the South Downs.

The project started in January 2020 and was based at four primary schools in Bury, Shipley, Findon and Chesswood in Worthing. The arrival of Covid seriously limited our ability to complete the main activity of the project, which was to encourage children to interview older people about their memories of the Downs. Some interviews did take place and together with all the other strands of the project ensured that it was a success.

The dedicated project website [southdownsgenerations.org.uk](http://southdownsgenerations.org.uk) carries all the exciting work that was done, including interviews with older local people, “then and now” photograph collections, people’s memoirs, items of local folklore, summaries of schools log books from Victorian times and early videos of people in the Downs.

During 2021 we gained agreement from the National lottery Heritage Fund to grant aid a second project, *South Downs for All*. This project focuses particularly on schools with children from less well-off and ethnic minority backgrounds. The recent Glover report on national parks identified these as groups which did not frequently visit national parks.

This project will continue into 2023 and will be a key component of our centenary year’s activities. With the schools we will organise workshops and field trips about the Downs and encourage the children to take photographs to be selected for inclusion in a book to be published in 2023 to celebrate the Downs and the Society’s centenary.

In addition to our work with children we organised a series of talks on issues relating to the South Downs all held on Zoom. These talks were given by Charles Burrell on the rewilding project at Knepp Castle, Chris Hare on Jack Upperton the highwayman and James Russell on the artist Eric Ravilious. All proved remarkably successful, with attendances of more than 100 on each occasion.

Alison to add

And all proved remarkably successful, with attendances of more than 100 on each occasion.

A notable feature in 2020 was the extension of our program of talks. 3 talks were arranged all with excellent speakers. All of our talks had to be carried out on Zoom however this turned out to be an excellent medium to deliver talks enabling people from across the country to attend and swelling our numbers on some talks to as many as 364.

~~During 2021 we continued our project to help school children talk to older people and record their reminiscences about life on the South Downs. Despite the difficulties of fulfilling this project we managed to achieve an excellent conclusion to the project at the end of the year fulfilling all of the project aims.~~

~~The project is largely financed by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and started in January 2020. It was based at four primary schools in Bury, Shipley, Findon and Chesswood in Worthing. Teachers were trained in oral history skills which they will then pass on to pupils in years 5 and 6. Some of the schools have log books recording daily events going back to Victorian times. These books were a rich source of information about daily events in those times.~~

~~In addition we will use existing oral history records at County Record offices to get more information about life in times gone by.~~

~~What we found was brought together and published on a website so that it's available for everyone.~~

## **Services for members**

**The Downsman magazine and the monthly E-News keep members informed of the Society's activities and concerns. 2021 saw us further increase our social media presence with a greater use of Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.**

**Our team of staff are assisted by many volunteers who ensure the smooth running of the society.**

## **Financial review and reserves policy**

The Society uses its financial resources to help achieve its charitable objective of conserving and enhancing for the public benefit the beauty and amenities of the South Downs in and around the South Downs National Park.

During 2021 the Society's expenditure exceeded its income by £17,134. The market value of our investments rose by £68,883, resulting in an overall increase in funds of £51,749. During the year the Society withdrew £30,000 from investments to help finance day to day expenditure. At the year end the Society's total funds stood at £803,571.

The Society maintains its funds at a level to provide income to support activities which would not otherwise be affordable and to fund projects which are consistent with the Society's objectives.



~~The Society uses its financial resources to help achieve its charitable objective of protecting the beauty of the South Downs. During 2019 the Society's income exceeded its expenditure by £3,796. Income was boosted by the receipt of legacies of £27,791. The market value of our investments rose by £54,388, resulting in an overall increase in funds of £58,184. At the year end the Society's total funds stood at £740,678, including investments of £712,132. At 10 March 2020, the date of completing this report, the Society's investments stood at £640,970, a fall in value of £71,162 or 10% since the year end.~~

~~The Society maintains its funds at a level to provide income to support activities which would not otherwise be affordable, to provide grants for projects which are consistent with the Society's objectives and to allow for the cost of winding up the Society, if that ever became necessary.~~

## **Conclusion**

**The Society is the third largest National Park Society and compares well with those in other National Parks in its contribution to current policy issues and by what it provides for its members. Our professional approach in responses to issues continues to achieve a good relationship with the National Park Authority, the Campaign for National Parks and other public bodies.**

## **Statement of Member's Responsibilities**

**The members of Council are required to prepare financial statements for each financial period which give a true and fair view of the state of the Society's affairs at the end of the financial year and of the Society's net incoming resources for the financial year. In preparing those financial statements, the members of Council are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently; and make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.**

**The members of Council are responsible for:-**

- a) keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time financial position of the Society and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the relevant statute;**
- b) Safeguarding the assets of the Society and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities; and**
- c) Preparing the financial statements on a going-concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Society will continue to operate**

**Approved by the Society's Council onxxxxxxxxx and signed on their behalf by**

**David Sawyer - Chairman**