

SOUTH DOWNS NEWS

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NATIONAL PARK

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This month:

- **Landmark moment** Find out about the groundbreaking agreement with a large farm in the National Park that will help drive forward nature recovery.
- **Embrace the darkness** As the nights draw in, enjoy the stunning views of the stars in the South Downs and enter our astrophotography competition for the chance to win £100.
- **South Downs quiz!** Sign up to our fun Advent Calendar for the chance to win a luxury hamper!
- **Competition!** Win a pair of tickets to Charleston and its fantastic exhibitions.

As always, please send your comments and ideas to us at newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk

Groundbreaking scheme brings boost for nature

A landmark agreement has been signed that marks the first step towards creating large new areas of habitat for wildlife in the South Downs National Park.

Thirty one hectares of land – almost 100 football pitches – at Iford Estate, in East Sussex, have been signed over for nature recovery.

The large swathe of downland is the first to appear on the National Park Authority's register of land that is formally dedicated for "Biodiversity Net Gain" (BNG) provision.

It comes as new planning reforms will make BNG a legal requirement.

From January next year developers in England will be required to deliver 10% "Biodiversity Net Gain" when building new housing, industrial or commercial developments. This means by law they must deliver a net positive for the local environment, for example by creating new habitats and green spaces.

The nature restoration can happen on-site or off-site at locations such as the Iford Estate, or other potential areas that could be earmarked in the National Park in the future.

The 31 hectares is just the start for the Iford estate. The 1,200ha estate, near Lewes, has an ambitious 30-year landscape-scale vision with nature recovery at its heart,



Estate Manager Ben Taylor with Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority

using BNG as the main vehicle for securing the necessary investment.

The 'Iford Biodiversity Project' will ultimately see about 800ha of land permanently dedicated to nature recovery, involving the generation of about 3,000 biodiversity units.

The plan involves the creation of floodplain grazing marsh to provide habitat for breeding and overwintering waders, species-rich grassland for rare plants, insects and

Do you have a favourite tree in the National Park?

mammals, as well as tree planting on parts of the farm to link up with existing woodland.

The National Park Authority hopes that other major landowners may follow suit and dedicate areas for BNG.

Developers can also now get in touch with the National Park Authority to purchase biodiversity units.



Nick Heasman, Countryside and Policy Manager at the National Park, said: "This is a major step forward for the National Park's ReNature initiative, which is looking to create 13,000 hectares of new habitat to help wildlife flourish."

"Biodiversity loss and climate change are two of the biggest long-term issues facing our country and this innovative scheme at Iford will kickstart a regional recovery that will benefit both nature and local communities."

The National Park's brokerage service, officially called "ReNature Credits", hopes to connect landowners and developers to create areas of land for nature recovery.

Nick added: "As a National Park covering 1,600km² and with over 1,000 different landowners, we can identify the very best areas for biodiversity restoration and ensure habitat connectivity."

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park Authority, said: "The recent State of Nature report showed just how much biodiversity needs our help to bounce back."

"This groundbreaking scheme offers a long-term solution to creating the bigger and better habitats that nature so badly needs."

The partnership with the Iford Estate is in the form of a Section 106 Agreement – a recognised legal arrangement in planning where developers contribute towards community or environmental benefits.

Iford Estate Manager Ben Taylor said: "Our scheme draws on the extensive habitat and species surveys conducted over the past few years, as well as historical mapping to determine land use patterns, soil sampling and hydrological assessments."

"This is already a diverse and inspirational landscape, with recent surveys showing over 1,300 species present on the Estate, many with conservation status, including 155 species of birds of which 87 are of conservation concern."

"We will increase the diversity of species over the whole estate, whilst still retaining food production as the principal land use on the most fertile land."

To acquire credits or to get in touch with the National Park's team delivering ReNature Credits, visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/renature-credits/

To see a detailed FAQ explaining the scheme, visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/renature-credits/faqs/



A picture of a tree at Cissbury Ring, taken by Joe James

Trees hold a special place for many of us, with memories of loved ones, experiences and moments.

We can see in the outpouring of emotion for the felled tree at Sycamore Gap in Northumberland National Park, how these icons shape and affect us. And the impact we feel when these trees are lost from the landscape.

Here in the South Downs, our treescape is changing with the continuing impacts of Ash Dieback and Elm Disease.

That's why it's so important that lost trees are replaced and our Trees for the Downs initiative is helping to reverse those losses.

We're planting 100,000 new trees across the National Park, with native species such as black poplar, yew, oak, and whitebeam, as well as specially-bred disease resistant cultivars of elm.

This November, we're inviting individuals and communities across the South Downs National Park to nominate their favourite tree.

The entries will then be shortlisted before going to a public vote, where the winning community will receive 10 trees of their own to plant, leaving a legacy for future generations to admire these icons.

Jan Knowlson, Biodiversity Officer, said: "National Tree Week takes place every November, so what better time to celebrate our favourite trees!"

"Whether it's a tree on your village green, in your local churchyard, or a tree you see on your daily dog walk, we want to hear from you. This is a wonderful opportunity to win some new trees for your community that can grow and hopefully create new cherished memories for people."

Simply submit a picture of your favourite tree and tell us why you love it.

Head to www.southdowns.gov.uk/spectacular-south-downs-trees-nominate-your-favourite/

The deadline for entries is midnight on 30 November.

Win £100 by capturing a dazzling photograph of the night sky!



Last year's winner, "Cowdray Cosmos", by Richard Murray

The National Park's popular astrophotography competition returns for its fourth year and is challenging people to capture a dazzling view of the night sky.

As the clocks go back, days are shorter for exploring the National Park, but the night-time offers its own celestial charms.

Look up on a clear night and you'll be treated to one of the best views of the stars anywhere in England. The South Downs National Park is one of only 21 International Dark Sky Reserves in the world because of its particularly "dark" spots away from light pollution, with other reserves including Idaho, USA, and the River Murray in Australia.

This year photographers have the chance of winning up to £100 for a breathtaking image in one of the following three categories:

South Downs Starry Skyscapes – Can you capture a dramatic star-studded photograph of the landscape showing the cosmos above it?

Nature At Night – Can you capture an amazing shot of living things in the National Park? This could include wildlife, people, trees, plants or fungi!

Magnificent Moon – Can you capture an amazing image of the moon above the South Downs landscape? Images of the moon should be alongside the landscape, buildings, towns, villages, cultural heritage or people in the South Downs.

The runner-up prize in each category will be £50 and all submitted images must be taken within the South Downs National Park.

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A selection of photos submitted in the contest will be shared throughout the National Park's Dark Skies Festival, which will take place from 10 to 18 February. The theme of the festival this year will be about protecting our precious dark skies and an exciting line-up of events and activities will be announced in the New Year.

Judging the contest will be "Dark Skies" Dan Oakley, an expert on the South Downs International Dark Sky Reserve, astrophysicist and the National Park's Events Coordinator Elinor Newman, and Steve Broadbent, Chairman of Hampshire Astronomical Group.



Dan said: "The autumn and winter are the perfect time to go out and stargaze in the South Downs National Park – just make sure you pack something warm to wear and a hot drink! It's always worth checking the weather forecast as you'll see the most when cloud cover is minimal.

"To many people's surprise, the South Downs is actually one of the best places to stargaze in the world and it's quite amazing when you consider how close we are to busy light-filled urban locations such as London, Brighton, Portsmouth, Southampton and Farnham.

"We have 10 Dark Sky Discovery sites in the National Park and they are the perfect spots for stargazing, whether you're a seasoned astrophotographer or trying it out for the first time. You'll be amazed at just how much you can see with just the naked eye!"

Jan Knowlson, Biodiversity Officer for the National Park, added: "While humans are diurnal, so many animals are nocturnal and live on a completely different time cycle.



Around two thirds of all wildlife is most active at night, so having those dark skies with low light pollution and a clear shift from day into night is very important. In the South Downs countryside and gardens you may be lucky enough to spot foxes, owls, bats, hedgehogs, and moths.

"We've even had a crab submitted to our Nature at Night category!"

The deadline for entries to the competition is **midnight on Friday, 12 January, 2024.**

Details of the Dark Sky Discovery Sites can be found [here](#)

For entry details and to download an application form visit www.southdowns.gov.uk/AstroPhotoComp

“There’s so much green!” Young people get outside



Pond dipping, storytelling, guided nature walks, creating new wildlife habitats and beachcombing are among the exciting activities children have enjoyed as part of a new outdoor initiative.

More than 650 children and young people from across Sussex and Hampshire enjoyed a visit to the National Park for “Explorers of the South Downs”.

Thanks to a donation of £10,000 from Friends of the South Downs, 20 activity days were delivered by Schools Without Walls (So Sussex), an outdoor education organisation, with the support of the South Downs National Park Authority and Forestry England.

The participants were all from schools with high levels of pupil premium funding and/or special educational needs.

The Friends of the South Downs is the only membership charity dedicated to protecting the South Downs. The Friends were able to make the donation from a recent generous legacy.

Among the beautiful locations for the activities were Truleigh Hill, Tide Mills Beach, Stanmer Park, Friston Forest, Seven Sisters Country Park, Kingley Vale, and Queen Elizabeth Country Park. One of the key activities was an introduction to the South Downs National Park, and the importance of protected landscapes.

One of the comments from the young people was: “I’ve never been anywhere where there’s so much green!”

Gemma Dhol, from College Central in Brighton, said: “They all enjoyed the pond dipping as it’s something that they rarely have the opportunity to do.

“They learn about great crested newts and why they are important to protect. Everyone enjoyed a marshmallow treat too. They also really enjoyed the space and asked if they could return.”

Adam Marshall, from Milton Park Primary School in Portsmouth, said: “The trip was an excellent opportunity for children to contextualise project learning we are currently exploring at school about the diversity of habitats, food chains and predators.”

Plans submitted for cultural and education centre



The consultation period for a major plan to turn a former dairy farm into a culture, arts and education hub is now open.

Plans have been submitted to the South Downs National Park Authority for Black Robin Farm, off Beachy Head Road, Eastbourne.

The applicant, Eastbourne Borough Council, has applied for a change of use of the site to include a cultural and education centre with business studios, refectory and event space, as well as the construction of a new gallery building. The proposals include new pedestrian access and works to the existing vehicle access, associated infrastructure, vehicle parking, and landscaping.

The proposed hub (*artist’s impression above*) would be operated by Towner Eastbourne.

People now have until midnight on Tuesday, 21 November to submit comments via the National Park Authority’s Public Access System.

Naomi Langford, Major Projects Officer, said: “This is a significant and innovative proposal in the landscape.

“This formal consultation period is a chance for people to have their say on the proposals.

“It’s really important that people comment on the application via the National Park Authority’s public access system, rather than via online petitions, other websites or comments on social media otherwise there’s no guarantee we will receive their comments.”

Visit the public access system at

<https://planningpublicaccess.southdowns.gov.uk/online-applications/> and

search for reference number SDNP/23/04238/FUL

It is hoped a decision will be made on the proposals by spring next year.



History special: Uncovering the lost village of Exceat



Perched on a blustery hill overlooking Cuckmere Haven was a village said to be a strategic naval base for King Alfred The Great, who is widely recognised as the first king of England.

With a commanding view of the English Channel, such was its importance that King Edward I visited Exceat in 1305 while touring the Lewes area.

But, by the mid-1400s, this once bustling village was abandoned – the remains of its buildings and church disintegrated and entombed in the landscape for hundreds of years until a local boy observed the outline of a building in a dry field, leading to archaeological excavation in 1913 that revealed the foundations of Exceat Church.

What did happen to the lost village of Exceat? Anooška Rawden, Cultural Heritage Lead for the National Park, has been looking at the rise and fall of the settlement that arguably had one of the most beautiful views in England.



Exceat was a fishing village founded in Saxon times and the name may have come from “æc-sceat”, an oak grove, or from the Old English for “the place of the Aese”, who were the first kings of Kent. King Alfred the Great (b: 849 d: 899) was thought to have had a palace at nearby West Dean, and some historians have suggested that Exceat may have served as one of his main naval bases in his wars against the Danish.

The settlement was listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Essete, in Sussex. Rectors for its church dated from 1255 when a pipe-roll mentions “Richard, the Parson at Excete” (A pipe-roll is a record of the annual audit by the Exchequer).

After several centuries as an important village in a prominent coastal location, all was to change by the

1300s. A series of major catastrophic events, most notably the Black Death, were to wreak havoc on its small rural population.

The Black Death came to England in around 1347/1348. The term ‘Black Death’ is not actually medieval, but a 17th century title for what was the most severe pandemics in our history – bubonic plague. It created fear and recrimination, and led to significant social and economic upheaval. It spread across modern day Europe, Asia, North African and the Middle East, a global catastrophe felt by every family, every community.

Estimates have suggested that between 40% and 60% of England’s population died. Another wave of the plague came back in the 1460s, killing off an estimated additional 20% of the population. Plague continued to break out in England throughout the medieval period and into the 18th century.

One crucial thing to remember is how chaotic the 14th century would have been for people living in and around Exceat – it was a century of crisis. The plague was one of a number of impacts to the population, which included a so-called “Little Ice Age” that hit agricultural communities hard and contributed to the Great Famine of 1315-1317; a cattle disease killed livestock across England between around 1319-1321, followed by war between England and France from 1337 – the so-called Hundred Years War that saw raids across coastal England.



So, before the Black Death, life was already tough, despite the century beginning with an agricultural boom. It’s no wonder by the time plague came, people equated it to the end of days – suddenly a people who lived with the harshest realities of death far more closely than we do today were living in absolute fear of it, as the plague killed so indiscriminately and quickly.

The village may also have fallen victim to the Hundred Years War with France. Numerous French and Castilian raids were made along the Sussex coast in the 1370s and 1380s and Exceat’s location left it vulnerable. Depopulation and decline had irreversibly set in, and by 1460 only two parishioners are recorded as still living at Exceat: Richard Raye and John Algar.

They petitioned the Bishop of Chichester to join the congregation of West Dean and, in 1528, the parish of Exceat merged with West Dean.

Fast forward to a hot summer’s day in 1913, just a year before the outbreak of the First World War. A teenager walking on the hills spotted some indentations in the fields above the Cuckmere River.

Maurice Theodore Lawrance, the 15-year-old son of the rector of West Dean Church, told his father, The Reverend George William Lawrance, and, with the help a local

ReNature grants are launched



Grants of up to £25,000 can be applied for as part of a new funding initiative to help kickstart habitat creation for wildlife.

ReNature Grants will help projects that showcase positive management for nature in the community. Projects could be creating wildflower meadows, heathland, hedgerow, areas managed as chalk grassland, more natural rivers or dewponds.

The grants can also be used to improve existing habitat, such as improving rivers and streams.

Funding of between £2,000 and £25,000 can be applied for from the South Downs Trust, the official independent charity for the National Park.

Sites must be within the National Park boundary and not managed for nature, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Local Authorities, parish councils, community-interest companies, charities, and constituted voluntary groups are invited to apply.

The scheme is part of the National Park's ReNature campaign, which is seeking to create 13,000 hectares of new habitat – an area over three times the size of Portsmouth – by 2030 to help tackle biodiversity loss in the UK.



Victoria Crespi, Grants Officer for the National Park, said: "We're really excited to be launching this new grants initiative to bring a boost for wildlife conservation.

"There are lots of organisations out there that might be interested in getting involved in the ReNature campaign and have land that could become a haven for nature. A grant could be the stepping stone to putting those ideas into action and making a real difference. Applications will be judged on their proposed outcomes for biodiversity, value for money and ongoing management of the site, as well as community outcomes. A grant panel will decide on applications over £5,000."

Applications close at midnight on Friday, 15 December 2023. Find out more and apply [here](#).

antiquarian Mr RH Verrall, some stone foundations were discovered. Permission was later granted for Sussex Archaeological Society to excavate the site and the building they eventually found was Exceat Church. The excavations revealed a tiny church, probably among the smallest in Sussex with a nave only 31 feet. In the centre of the nave was a single burial and this was probably the grave of a former rector.

If you visit Seven Sisters Country Park today, in amongst the chalk grassland, you'll find a large Portland stone block with the graving "Here formerly stood the Parish Church of Excete".

Today Exceat is one of a number of "ghost villages" (known as Deserted Medieval Villages) in Britain and, while we can make educated explanations about its fate, one feels there's still so much to be learnt about this fascinating windswept site high up on the hilltop.

It also stands as a testament to an observant local boy, who discovered the stories of a community lost to time – three years after his discovery, Maurice Theodore Lawrance tragically died aged 18, having been killed in action in France during the First World War.

He has no known grave. Like many Sussex men who never came home from this conflict, communities remember – he is commemorated at All Saints Church, West Dean. Find the site of the village on the Country Park Trail route on this [map of Seven Sisters Country Park](#).



Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the National Park Authority, next to the stone that commemorates the site of Exceat Church and its excavation

Community garden tells the story of climate change



An inspiring plan to create a new community garden that helps raise awareness about climate change and local biodiversity has been given the green light.

The Cliff Gardens project, in Seaford, will see a bumpy unmade road transformed into an attractive coastal garden, complete with new raised beds showcasing different habitats and plants, as well as new seating, three coastal-themed sculptures and education boards to raise awareness about the impacts of climate change.

Lewes District Council's Planning Committee unanimously voted to approve the plan following broad community support.

Developed by Seaford Community Partnership (SCP), the project is being part-funded and supported by Ouse Valley Climate Action (OVCA), an exciting National Lottery-backed scheme of which the South Downs National Park is a partner. Funding is also being provided by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund following a successful bid by SCP.



The wider project includes an aspiration to improve the biodiversity of the adjacent Pump Field, eventually providing a wildlife-rich meadow where local schoolchildren can observe and identify plant and animal species.

The work at Cliff Close will also repair the cycle path, using funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Hilary Miflin, from SCP, said: "After over three years of planning, research and discussion, our diverse team within Seaford Community Partnership are delighted with the very positive outcome from the Lewes District Council planning meeting.

"We're very grateful for the interest and support we have received from schools, environmentalists, Seaford residents and of course our funding agencies. Already volunteers are coming forward offering their services in this exciting next phase of the project."

Steph Mills, Project Manager for OVCA, said: "This is an exciting project developed by the community, for the community, and will really enhance this seafront location."

OVCA is supporting a large range of community-led initiatives, including youth citizen science, cycling skills for young people, community orchards, river monitoring, local tree planting, and installation of boxes to help protect swifts. Learn more [here](#).

Reconstructed Roman garden opens at museum



A beautiful formal Roman Garden next to a reconstructed villa has been opened at an open-air museum in Hampshire.

The Duke of Gloucester officially opened the immaculate garden at Butser Ancient Farm, near Waterlooville.

The Royal visit coincided with the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the construction of Butser's villa, based on the archaeology of Sparsholt Roman Villa, near Winchester.

The garden was generously funded as a legacy and in memory of long-term Butser volunteer Joan Rundle, whose special interest was Roman gardens.

The new garden includes sweet chestnut pergolas, stone benches, urns, raised flower beds and opus signinum paths, all elements known to have featured in Roman gardens.

The design was created with access in mind and is fully wheelchair accessible with the raised beds allowing easier access for both visitors and volunteers.

Kathryn Bingham, a Butser volunteer, said: "It's been fascinating to research and explore the types of plants the Romans used and brought to this country almost 2,000 years ago – many of which we still use for the same purpose today. One of my favourite features in the garden is the rosemary hedging, not only does it smell beautiful and attracts the bees and butterflies, but it was also an important herb in Roman times, known as the herb of memory and the renewal of energy. Washing with rosemary was said to be a natural method of keeping one's youthful looks."

The centrepiece of the garden is a stunning 6m diameter circular mosaic floor, created by a team of volunteers using genuine Roman tesserae. These tesserae were originally part of a villa complex that happened to be in the path of the construction of the M4 motorway, near Swindon, in the 1970's. They were rescued from the bulldozers by a team of archaeologists and, last year, were donated to Butser Ancient farm to use in their experimental reconstructions.

Community orchard to be created at Downs gateway



A new community orchard is to be created at the foot of Cissbury Ring, Worthing, as part of a shared plan to nurture the space into a thriving environment for wildlife and visitors.

Thirty five local variety apple and pear trees will be planted at Cissbury Fields to create an orchard where locals can pick free fruit and connect with nature.

It comes after a grant was awarded to Worthing Borough Council by the South Downs Trust.

The introduction of a community orchard forms part of the council's management plan to renature the site, which has been designed in close partnership with the local community, ecologists and nature groups.

The fields were previously farmed by a tenant, but were reclaimed by the council in 2021 in a mission to support the environment by restoring its chalk grassland – an ecosystem described as Europe's equivalent of the tropical rainforest.

It's hoped the community orchard will have a large fenced-off zone with glade-style tree planting, mown and wild areas, as well as natural seating logs to create a secluded picnic area at the entrance to the South Downs.



Wide pathways will remain on the margins of the field to help to ensure walkers can continue accessing the site. Handmade wooden signage will also be created for the orchard entrance and to label each tree species.

Lance Allen, Chair of Findon Valley Residents' Association, said: "The successful funding for trees is great news and moves the community orchard closer to fruition. The Residents' Association will be encouraging our local community to become actively involved, for tree planting and into the future."

There will be plenty of opportunities for locals to get involved with the community orchard, including planting, maintenance and other trained roles to help support the management of the site.

WIN tickets to visit a house that lives and breathes art



Experience rarely-seen early drawings by one of the most popular and recognisable artists of our time, David Hockney.

From a box of matches on a table to bunches of spring onions and leeks, David Hockney's works exemplify his ability to find beauty in the more intimate and seemingly ordinary aspects of life, encapsulating Hockney's love for life and his profound connection with the world around him.

The thought-provoking exhibition is currently on at Charleston, Firle, East Sussex until 10 March.

Charleston was a gathering point for some of the 20th century's most radical artists, writers and thinkers, known collectively as the Bloomsbury group. The house features the artwork of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, who transformed their home into a living, breathing work of art.

The National Park has teamed up with Charleston to offer two free combined tickets for the house and exhibitions.

People signing up to the newsletter during November will be automatically entered into the draw.

Those who are already signed up can email "Iceland Poppies" to newsletter@southdowns.gov.uk before midnight on 30 November.

Sign up to the newsletter [here](#) and see competition T&Cs [here](#).

WIN a South Downs hamper!



How well do you know the South Downs, its history, geography and wildlife?

Take part in our fun Advent Calendar quiz for the chance to win a luxury South Downs hamper worth £100.

Simply answer a question every day from 1 December until Christmas Eve. The winner will be announced in January. Sign up to take part in the quiz here:

<https://southdownsnationalpark.adventcalendar.com>

How a town is taking action for nature and climate



We chat to Katrina Murray (pictured above right), Chair of Greening Arundel, to find out more about how the community is coming together to help their local environment.

Why have you formed Greening Arundel?

Greening Arundel is an alliance of like-minded organisations that came together in 2023 to share knowledge, experience, resources, networks, ideas and workloads. It was inspired by our shared concern about the impact of climate change in our community. The idea behind the alliance was that, by working together, we could move faster and more sustainably towards our common goal of making Arundel “greener”.

One of our first and most important steps was to form the Green Team – a band of community volunteers. Thirty locals answered the call and devoted an average of 100 hours per month to greening projects between April and August.

What’s the long-term vision?

During the summer, the members of Greening Arundel developed a strategy and action plan to guide our activities over the next few years. We’ll focus on three pillars: protect and nurture the environment; mobilise residents and the business community; and strive for sustainability in all that we do.

In order to improve the environmental value of Arundel’s green spaces, we want to increase biodiversity and bio-abundance; help make Arundel a haven for wildlife; while reducing environmental harm. We recognise that broad-based public buy-in will be critical to our success and we are determined to become as sustainable as possible.

What have you achieved so far?

Greening Arundel has now grown to a membership of 15. As a group, we have successfully applied for funding from

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Arundel Town Council, the Royal Horticultural Society and the South Downs Trust. That funding has enabled us to obtain an allotment and greenhouse, where we can propagate and grow our own plants and trees.

However, the most visible achievements have resulted from the work of the Green Team. Both sides of the 120m pathway from the train station have been transformed with native hedgerow plants and wildflowers. The Pollinator Garden has been lovingly tended, while herbs and edible flowers have been planted in the Quayside bed and in a series of upcycled troughs, which are tended by neighbouring businesses and residents.

What is Greening Arundel planning to do?

We have just launched a *Bring Back Our Birds* campaign to engage the community in helping restore local populations of swifts, swallows and house martins by sponsoring nest boxes and cups. We will also install a house martin tower in the Community Orchard before turning our attention to hedgehogs and bats.

We will expand the pollinator corridor by planting 12 more upcycled troughs, as well as transforming the area in front of the train station. We’re working with Arun District Council to redesign the Memorial beds and Jubilee Gardens and we’re advising Arundel Town Council on developing plans for roundabouts and verges.

We also hope to pilot a food waste composting scheme and to move towards a significant reduction in the use of harmful chemical pesticides and herbicides.

How do people get involved?

We are keen to mobilise as many residents and business owners as possible. Of course we’re always seeking volunteers for the Green Team. Beyond that, we plan to do more work with schools and youth groups; to support local businesses in achieving Green Tourism Certification; and to expand our partnership with charities, such as the Aldingbourne Trust and Brent Lodge Bird and Wildlife Trust. For more information or to get involved, contact: greenteam.arundel@gmail.com

Have you picked up your 2024 Calendar yet?

If you’re looking for a lovely Christmas gift under a tenner, look no further!

The South Downs National Park’s 2024 Calendar is now available to buy from the South Downs Centre, in Midhurst, and at Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre.

You can also buy the beautiful calendar and get it delivered [here](#).



Things to do in the South Downs this November

Please follow the links as booking may be necessary. Find these and more events across the National Park and submit your own events at southdowns.gov.uk/events/



Helen Weeks, a visitor services officer at Seven Sisters Country Park, which will be hosting a fabulous Christmas fair in December. Not to be missed! 🍷

- Learn how to make beautiful rush [decorations for the festive season](#) with Louise Arthur, from Rough Around the Hedges. The session at Gilbert White's House on 12 November is suitable for complete beginners through to improvers and intermediates. Louise will show you how to create folded reindeer with bells and angels with halos from soft, supple rushes. Tickets are £45 per person, tea, coffee and cake included.
- Enjoy a fascinating talk by conservator Ying Yang about restoring one of Goodwood House's most significant portraits, with a Christmas Champagne and canapé reception in the State Apartments of [Goodwood House](#) on Tuesday 28 November at 6.30pm. Ying made some exciting discoveries whilst working on Sir Godfrey Kneller's painting of Louise de Keroualle (c.1680), mother of the 1st Duke of Richmond and mistress of King Charles II. Ying realised the painting was not as it appeared at first glance, and employing ultraviolet photography, decades of expertise and historical detection, unearthed finds that are changing the way the artwork is understood. The evening is an opportunity to hear first hand about Ying's discoveries, and enjoy some festive cheer in the splendour of the State Apartments!
- Enjoy a delicious [Christmas Afternoon Tea](#) at The Walled Garden on Wednesday, 29 November. The Walled Garden is a historic and charming setting, located alongside the historic landmark known as Cowdray Ruins, which was once visited by Queen Elizabeth I and Henry VIII. It is a magnificent location to enjoy a sumptuous Christmas Afternoon Tea.
- Looking ahead to next month, the magic of Christmas will be coming to [Seven Sisters Country Park](#) over the weekend of 9 and 10 December from 10am to 4pm. Entry is free into the historic pump barn and visitor centre, where there will be a Christmas market with a great range of local produce and gifts. Visitors will be able to enjoy mulled wine, festive food, choral singing and activities include pre-bookable wreath making and children's Christmas bauble decorating. Dogs will be welcome on leads.

Pic credits

P2 Joe James; P3 Valley of Stars by Michael Harris; P3 Starry Crab by Anthony Whitbourn; P4 left Rich Howorth; P5 Alex Bamforth; P6 right Steve Adams; P7 right Rachel Bingham; P8 right Maya Ness