

## Growing Connections

### The West Weald Landscape Partnership Newsletter

We've reached a milestone – the West Weald Landscape Project is halfway through its five years of funding from The Tubney Charitable Trust. So a time to reflect and review, and this is exactly what we did at our recent Partnership meeting.

The outcome of this review? I'm pleased to say that we have made healthy progress against most of our project targets. We have visited around 90 landowners, offering recommendations for land management, and advised on 18 Environmental Stewardship applications.

At least half of the holdings, covering nearly 5000 hectares, or 20% of our project area, have had tangible nature conservation outcomes such as habitat creation works. We have carried out many, varied research projects; surveying the condition of meadows, hedgerows and traditional orchards, and would like to say a big thank you to our enthusiastic volunteer surveyors for all their hard work. We've also commissioned some very specialist surveys. The initial findings of a survey on deadwood invertebrates at Cowdray Park put Cowdray at fifth place in the UK league tables for this fascinating and important group. All these surveys are giving us invaluable baseline data on the West Weald.

One area we'd like to do more on is woodland work. We have a challenging target for facilitating entry into England Woodland Grant Schemes (EWGS) and would love to hear from any woodland owners who would like advice on this.

**Petra Billings,**  
Landscape Project Officer, Sussex Wildlife Trust



photo © Miles Davies

As time goes on, I hope that this management will allow the wildlife on the farm to flourish and would certainly encourage others to look into the options available to them. I am very grateful to the West Weald Landscape Project for their help and advice, and for a delicious lunch too!

**Ian Davies**  
Farmer, Wisborough Green



photo © Paul Harmer

#### How is the South Downs National Park Authority getting on?

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) works on a wide range of activities. One of our key areas at present is developing a Management Plan for the South Downs. The Management Plan is for everyone who lives in, works in, and visits the Park. We are inviting people to share their views in a range of ways; through meetings, events, and a new online Forum at <http://southdownsforum.ning.com/main>; please join to share your views on what the priorities for the Park should be! We are also running a series of workshops to gather peoples' views on issues and potential objectives for the Park - see the Forum for details.

In addition, the SDNPA is actively supporting and helping to develop landscape-scale projects across the Park, which help deliver National Park purposes and duty. This includes the West Weald Landscape Partnership, the South Downs Heathland Partnership and the Arun and Rother Connections Project. Finally, the SDNPA continues to provide financial support for a wide range of environmental and community projects through its Sustainable Communities Fund - further details on the website at [www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk).

**Emily Brennan, Biodiversity Strategy Lead**  
South Downs National Park Authority

#### Feedback from a West Weald farmer

I run a small 120 acre beef and arable farm in Wisborough Green. My first introduction to the West Weald Landscape Project was through a landowners' workshop held in the village. It was the invitation to lunch that made attendance much more appealing; and contrary to my initial thoughts, the meeting was both interesting and informative!

As a farmer, I often groan at the thought of new initiatives and the paperwork that this entails, but with the encouragement of Petra Billings, I have now entered into the Entry Level Scheme. Petra enthusiastically helped with the form filling and made the whole process totally pain free. I now receive a small financial incentive to cut hedgerows biannually to provide more fruits for wildlife, and some grazing fields have been categorised as low input restricting the use of fertilizers and chemical sprays. A group of volunteers also re-planted small sections of hedgerows to create wildlife corridors and on one of the coldest days last winter too!

#### Events

Community Orchard Planting  
Event at Fulling Mill Cottage,  
Fittleworth on Sunday 11th  
December at 1pm



photo © Dave Kilbey

## Wildlife Surveys

We're already thinking ahead to next year, when we're planning surveys of ponds, woodlands and farm birds, not to mention a big 'dormouse nut hunt' in the autumn.

### Hunting for Dormice



photo © Alan Price

Dormice have a very individual way of eating hazelnuts, which leaves nibble-marks different from those of any other animals, making it a great way of finding out if you've got dormice in your woods. There's still time **this** autumn for some nut-hunting and we'd love to hear from anyone who'd like to have a go.

### Farmers, would you be interested in finding out more about the birds on your farm?

We're looking for farmers to take part in a project called the Volunteer and Farmer Alliance. Surveys can cover up to 80 hectares of farmland, and are undertaken by local bird watching volunteers. Following an initial visit with the farmer, the volunteer conducts at least three early morning surveys between April and June. Results are then used to create a breeding bird map of the area and sent on to the farmer with any useful species or habitat information.

## Wetland Workshop

In October we ran a successful workshop for landowners on Ponds, Scrapes and River Management in the West Weald. Lord Egremont kindly gave permission for a farm walk on the Leconfield Estate so we could look at some of his inspirational river restoration work. We also visited neighbouring Langmead Farms to see silt traps and field buffer strips and discuss stewardship measures in place for good land management.



photo © Petra Billings

A sad farewell  
In September we bid farewell to Rich Howorth, Project Manager of the West Weald Landscape Project. Rich has done a tremendous amount for the project, and led it from strength to strength. He has taken on an exciting new challenge as Biosphere Reserve Officer at Brighton and Hove City Council and we wish him every success. Petra Billings, previously Landowner Advisor with the project, succeeds Rich in taking on its management.

### New wildlife habitats

Habitat creation plays a key part in our mission for a more 'joined-up' countryside. With this in mind, we have already made plans this winter to plant several kilometres of new hedgerows, restore two traditional orchards and create several wetland scrapes to provide feeding grounds for wintering birds. We'd like to hear from any landowners who are interested in our support in creating more new habitats.

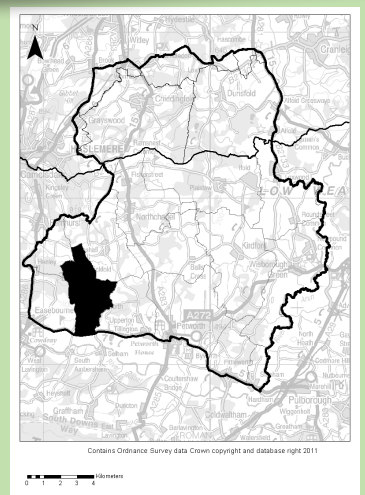
### Funding for Planting New Woods

The Woodland Trust is interested to hear from landowners who would like to create a jubilee or Diamond Wood and also has MOREwoods to support smaller planting schemes. Woodland Creation Adviser, Luke Everitt, offers site visits and advice to landowners and, for larger schemes, can help with applications for Forestry Commission funding. Visit the website for further information <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

## Parish focus - Lodsworth

The ancient village of Lodsworth sits on the southeast slope of Bexley Hill overlooking the Lod Valley between Midhurst and Petworth. Much of the village is designated a conservation area and the whole valley is inside the South Downs National Park. The oldest part of the village is at its lowest point centred around the church. From here the village spreads northward along The Street running up the valley towards Lickfold. The Hollist Arms is prominently located in the centre of the village.

Lodsworth is not just a beautiful and friendly village but a vibrant one. In 2000, the villagers built a brand-new village hall which acts as a focal point for the flourishing cricket and football teams, the annual fête, and many other activities. Then in 2009, with Ben Law, they built a multi-award winning, eco-friendly new village shop, Lodsworth Larder, specialising in local produce. The shop is located in the car park of the Hollist Arms and has become a thriving community hub. Due to its success, a number of small related businesses have opened up locally and Lodsworth even has its own micro-brewery, Langhams.



## West Weald Landscape Project

A Sussex Wildlife Trust project in partnership with other organisations and supported by the Tubney Charitable Trust

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