

“To restore a proper balance between city and rural life is perhaps the greatest task in front of modern man.”

*E F Schumacher:  
Small is Beautiful - 1974*

In November 2015 the South Downs National Park engaged estates within its boundary to embark on articulating a Whole Estate Plan (WEP). Over the past year we have been working on this and used it as a catalyst to think about what the future could be like for the Wiston Estate.

We want to use this plan to offer transparency and to ensure that we work with a range of partners to manage the estate in a way that generates the widest range of benefits from our natural and built assets and that delivers a truly

sustainable future for the business, the family, the estate team, those that live and work from estate property, and for local communities and visitors.

Wiston Estate is a place that, as a result of both nature and nurture, hosts a wide variety of life and activity. We are passionate about the land and all that lives on it. We want the estate to be a place where those willing to engage can achieve their potential and will support their neighbours in the same outcome of living life to the full.



## Our Vision

*To see the Estate flourish; for it to be an inspiration for excellent engagement with a living landscape.*

## And that by 2030 Wiston will be:

### A PLACE FOR PEOPLE

with housing and facilities that meet the needs of those of all ages and backgrounds, where all can enjoy and develop relationships with each other, their neighbours, their community and the land on which they live.

### A PLACE FOR NATURE

where careful stewardship enables and enhances networks of habitat set within valued landscape and heritage.

### A PLACE FOR PRODUCTIVITY, CRAFTSMANSHIP AND BUSINESS

where people can come together to add value, create the products and services that people want and generate the income required to support a good quality of life for themselves and their families.

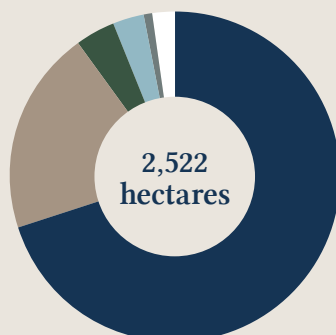
### A PLACE WITHOUT WASTE

where everything matters and the potential of people, the land and our built environment is optimised.

### A PLACE FOR LEARNING AND EXPLORATION

where people benefit from time to think, to develop and exchange ideas and learn from each other, their shared experiences, history and the (built and natural) world around them.

## Composition of the Estate



- Farmland 70% (1,765ha)
- Woodland 20% (495ha)
- Parkland 4% (100ha)
- Quarries 3% (70ha)
- Ponds & Wetland 1% (24ha)
- Residential, commercial and amenity areas 4% (100ha)

It hosts

-  106 households
-  11 farms
-  22 businesses
-  employs 26 people directly

in the woods, on the farm, at the gardens of Wiston House, in the winery and in maintaining estate properties and in the estate office.

It partners with two charities based on the estate, the Steyning Downland Scheme and Roots to Growth.







There are 4 SNCI's (Sites of Nature Conservation Importance) and 1 SSSI (site of Special Scientific Interest) on the estate.



The estate is steward of a wide range of environmental and heritage assets. In all the estate includes 38 listed buildings, including the Grade 1 Wiston House.

There are

-  35km of Bridleway
-  22.8km of footpaths
-  63ha of open access by permission
-  17ha of statutory open access

## What we like about the estate and where we can improve

### Social

#### LIKES:

- When compared to the surrounding area, the demographic of Wiston estate residents is more diverse and has a higher proportion of children and young families
- 12% of those living on the estate are involved in local agriculture and forestry compared to 1.7% in the surrounding area
- There is a mix of different rental levels across the estate properties (59% of all housing stock is rented below open market)
- In recent feedback from tenants it is clear that there is deep appreciation for the local landscape:

“Protect the environment and nature – it is loved but under a lot of pressure.”

“The Estate uses a modern approach to encourage traditional values in a timeless landscape”

And for continuity:

“Having first had a job as ‘General Farm Worker’ on Daylands farm with Hubert Wadman in 1956, I married Tony his son. We lived at Frenchlands Cottage (for 10 years without electricity) and had 2 children. Now, 60 years later, I am still here. Thank you.”

#### IMPROVEMENTS:

- The estate wants to do more around housing and community facilities. We want to provide new housing that is suitable and affordable and which allows people to both join and remain in the local area, to live close to where they work and to live with and alongside colleagues, past and present
- The estate wants to do more to engage people of all kinds to make connections with, enhance understanding of and to enjoy spending time in the local area. To that end we plan to identify and bring forward opportunities for environmentally sensitive and small scale projects to create new glamping and holiday accommodation in different parts of the estate with access to PROW
- Where possible we want to open the gardens of Wiston House to the public more

### Economic

#### LIKES:

- A diverse mix of businesses across the estate making use of raw materials and assets to add value and create an enterprising local economy
- Wilton Park, executive agency of the FCO and tenant of Wiston House employs 80 people locally and provides work for many local businesses
- The Winery is a growing business; based at North Farm. It sells to many of the UK's best restaurants and has recently begun to export to the US, Australia, Norway and Ireland. It was poured at the BAFTA tea party in Los Angeles. Her Majesty the Queen launched P&O Cruise's largest ship Britannia with a Nebuchadnezzar of Wiston NV and the interest in winery and vineyard tours continues to grow
- A sustainable forestry enterprise on the estate and hosting a growing number of local wood product enterprises
- A shooting and conservation enterprise

#### IMPROVEMENTS:

- We want to leverage the estate's strategic location and excellent accessibility (especially at North Farm) to create an exemplar National Park enterprise site comprising production, office and visitor facilities all set within a high-quality context.
- Reuse and restoration of Great Barn, we are supporting the St Columba Community in their ambition to create a monastic retreat and ‘travellers rest’ available to those walking the South Downs Way.
- We aim to sensitively restore redundant agricultural barns for the use of holiday accommodation (see above) and where suitable for small local businesses and work spaces.

### Environmental

#### LIKES:

- 9 of the farms on the estate are in agri-environment schemes (1 organic)
- 22% of the estate is made up of woodland, of which 40% is classed as ancient woodland. An application is in progress for Higher Tier Countryside Stewardship across the Wealden woodlands.
- The estate is an active and enthusiastic member of the Arun to Adur Farmers Group, which supports a landscape scale approach to conservation management
- The estate has supported and partnered the Steyning Downland Scheme since its inception in 2007, which is seen as one of the best locally engaged conservation charities in the national park
- The farm is involved in one of the longest running data surveys in the world with the GWCT (Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust)

#### IMPROVEMENTS:

- Restoration of Rock Common Quarry and to regenerate it as a vibrant environmentally engaged tourism site offering a base for people to explore the National Park
- We want to communicate our management practices used on the downland areas, which we intend to do with better signage and more of an online presence.
- The woodlands are a key aspect of our biodiversity. The estate is exploring new management options to enable natural regrowth, rewilding and native restocking in place of some of the larger softwood plantations.
- Better monitoring of water quality and species across the estate and engagement with experienced and pragmatic conservationists in how best to develop our management of habitats in response to this data over time



## Challenges Ahead

We face some new and large scale challenges in the years ahead:

- Climate Change
- Rural business adaptation post subsidies
- Development pressures
- Threatened habitats and heritage
- Water resources
- Changing values, behaviours and lifestyles
- Visitor pressure



## The way forward

To deal with these challenges we will be working with the wider team, with partners and tenants to generate the operational surplus that we need to support investment in stewardship and key capital projects. With this financial viability in place:

- 1 We will continue our commitment to farming diversity by supporting our tenant farmers and managing the land that we farm in hand in an efficient and environmentally sensitive way. We will maintain our investment in the estate's woodlands, its parkland and areas of amenity to generate a wide range of ecosystem services and benefits.
- 2 We will be enthusiastic and effective partners in the Adur to Arun Farmers group and in the Grey Partridge project. We will continue to look for opportunities to promote and engage in landscape scale environmentally positive management and to provide the best possible conditions for a wide range of bio-diversity including the priority species that the estate already hosts.
- 3 We will look to engage users of the estate and inspire them through education and good communication about how to positively impact the flora and fauna of the estate.
- 4 We will maintain our houses, cottages and other buildings in the best condition that we can, investing to improve them where appropriate and ensuring that they continue to provide homes for people and families of all ages, backgrounds and interests. We will build new homes and community facilities in support of local and neighbourhood plans as the opportunities arise.
- 5 We will work with Wilton Park to ensure that Wiston House and its gardens continue to be used in a way that brings leaders together and enables them to invest in the prosperity, wellbeing and security of people and communities across all parts of the world.
- 6 We will continue to develop our wine making and farming businesses and provide suitable sites and premises for others to engage in their own enterprise and business activity. We will invest in new and improved infrastructure to support business of all types and in new visitor facilities and accommodation to enhance the visitor economy of this part of the South Downs National Park.
- 7 We will maintain our partnership and investment in the Steyning Downland Scheme and continue to work with charities like Roots to Growth that use the estate for the benefit of vulnerable adults and those with special needs to enable fullness of life.
- 8 We will continue to support and work with the local church as they minister to the local community.
- 9 We will also be working in partnership with the SDNPA to look to achieve the mutual goals of a sustainable future for the park and its surrounding area. This requires positive growth for people, for profit and for the planet.



## A note on Eco System Services

In order to recognise the vital (and fundamentally obvious) part the planet plays in our future, the SDNPA have shaped some of their guiding principles around "Eco-System Services". This is in order to rebalance the narrow focus on economic growth at the cost of all else and an inability to see the inherent value in the complex ecological networks that enable life to continue. You will see in the projects that have come out of the Whole Estate Plan there is reference to both Eco-System Services and to how these projects will help support the Outcomes envisioned in the *National Park's Partnership Management Plan*.



ECOLOGY



VISITOR  
ECONOMY



ECONOMY

# Rock Common Quarry



A new ecology focused visitor destination incorporating an eco-lodge development set within the restored sand quarry.

## Vision

An integrated ecological resource and National Park visitor destination co-located with eco-tourism accommodation forming a gateway to explore woodland and downland centred experiences.

## Objective

To secure the positive re-use of the worked-out sand quarry; add to the stock of visitor accommodation available in the local area and create a visitor hub for the National Park.

- A place for nature; a place without waste, a place for learning and exploration

## Outputs

- Fully restored former sand quarry with new habitat and enhanced biodiversity
- New National Park visitor destination and educational resource
- An access point to a network of neighbouring estate experiences across the National Park
- New visitor accommodation and recreational infrastructure
- Jobs and local spending

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Six; widespread understanding of special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

Eight; more responsibility and action by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more widely.

Ten; a diverse and sustainable economy which provides a range of business and employment opportunities, many of which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

One & Two; increased capacity within the landscape for habitats and species.

Three; better connected networks and an increased population and distribution of priority species.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Supporting; the creation of new habitat to enable biodiversity, soil formation

Provisioning; clean water, energy

Regulating; erosion, pollination

Cultural; tranquillity, inspiration, recreation and tourism services.







PRODUCT



VISITOR  
ECONOMY



ECONOMIC

# North Farm



A rural business park, anchored by the Wiston Estate Winery that also hosts an integrated blend of production, services, direct sales, visitor and event facilities.

## Vision

An exemplar rural employment and tourism site, set in a backdrop of vineyards, that hosts and showcases skills, innovation, local products, culture and custom.

## Objective

The restoration of a once thriving rural employment site to; increase the availability of fit for purpose workspace; to attract businesses that leverage the sense of place provided by the South Downs; to provide an opportunity for visitors and residents to access, experience and enjoy local products and services from the South Downs.

- A place for productivity

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Ten; contributing to a diverse and sustainable economy by hosting businesses and creating employment opportunities, many of which are linked to the special qualities of the National Park.

Eleven; increasing access to skilled employment and training opportunities for local people.

### ALSO, CONTRIBUTES TO:

Five; outstanding visitor experiences underpinned by high quality access and sustainable transport network

Six; understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits they provide.

Eight; responsibility and actions taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities.



## Outputs

- Improvements and enhancements to Wiston Winery including expanded storage, introduction of direct sales facilities and the addition of a function venue
- The creation of new employment space [production and office] together with ancillary infrastructure and car parking

- The creation of up to 10 hectares of new Vineyard
- The creation of new event and function [wedding] venue together with visitor facilities [including overnight accommodation] for wine tourism
- Links to the public right of way network including the South Downs Way

## ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Provisioning services; creating food and foodstuffs, making use of water, timber and energy.

Cultural services; making use of sense of place, tranquillity; linking to visitors and connecting with recreation and tourism services.



COMMUNITY



VISITOR  
ECONOMY



FARMING

# Great Barn



Conversion of existing listed barns and upgrading of modern farm buildings to create new retreat accommodation, refectory, chapel, market garden and 'trailside' café and to improve the facilities of this rare breed organic beef Farm.

## Vision

A spiritual retreat and hub for the Community of St Columba incorporating spaces for prayer, contemplation, working with the land, shelter and refreshment.

To equip a heritage organic farm for the future.

## Objective

To create a viable future for the heritage buildings; to provide a home and heart for the Community of St Columba; to enable a mutually beneficial partnership between the Estate and the Community and to add to the facilities available to visitors along the South Downs Way.

To enable a vibrant future for the Great Barn Sussex beef herd [one of the few pure Sussex cattle bloodlines remaining in the county].

- A place for people; a place for learning and exploration; a place without waste

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

One; local distinctiveness conserved by effectively managing land

Four; condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their setting is significantly enhanced and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Five; outstanding visitor experiences

Seven; range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

Ten; a diverse and sustainable economy which provides for employment opportunities which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Provisioning; food and foodstuffs, genetic heritage, water, energy and timber as resources.

Regulating; soil quality

Cultural; landscape as spiritual setting; tranquillity and contemplation; recreation and learning



## Outputs

- Restoration and secured future use for Grade 2 listed barn and related buildings
- Significant enhancement of the setting of the heritage asset

- Creation of new spiritual facility
- Creation of new visitor accommodation and related facilities
- Creation of new livestock handling facilities, storage for fodder and accommodation





COMMUNITY



VISITOR  
ECONOMY



ECONOMY

# Viab! Future for Redundant Barns



A programme to secure the viable future use and maintenance of redundant barns across the estate.

## Vision

To maintain historic and heritage built environment assets by securing financially viable future uses that respect and link to the special qualities of the National Park.

## Objective

To retain the fabric and setting of these historic agricultural buildings; to provide new visitor accommodation, workspace and associated facilities.

- A place for people; a place without waste

## Outputs

- Restoration and secured future use for historic and heritage buildings
- Creation of new visitor accommodation and related facilities
- Creation of new workspace and related facilities

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Four; condition and status of cultural heritage assets and their setting is significantly enhanced and they contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Ten; a diverse and sustainable economy which provides for employment opportunities which are positively linked to the special qualities of the National Park.

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

Seven; range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Cultural; cultural heritage values, recreation and tourism services.





# Local Housing Needs



Working alongside local Neighbourhood Planning groups to enable future housing for the future sustainability of a diverse community.

## Vision

Creating high quality homes for estate workers [former, current and new], local people and those wishing to join the community with a strong sense of place supported by the provision and shared maintenance of community buildings and open space.

## Objective

To increase the availability of housing suitable for those engaged in stewardship, landscape and estate management; to add to the stock of affordable housing available locally and to provide new homes for 'down-sizers' and young families to enable the sustainable growth of this important local service centre.

- A place for people; a place for learning and exploration

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Nine; communities are more sustainable with provision of housing to meet local needs and to improve access to essential services and facilities.

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

Six; widespread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

Seven; the range and diversity of traditional culture and skills have been protected.

Eight; more responsibility and action is taken by residents to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.

Eleven; local people have access to training opportunities.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Regulating; water flow and flood.

Provisioning; energy.

Cultural; cultural heritage values.

Supporting; biodiversity.

- Recommended by the neighbourhood plans
- Not currently recommended by the neighbourhood plans



## Outputs

### NEW HOMES INCLUDING:

- The creation of a new and dedicated land & estate worker 'neighbourhood' where former and new / current young members of staff can live side by side
- New affordable housing for local people
- New homes for 'down-sizers' and young families

### NEW COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING:

- A new community building incorporating an office space for the Steyning Downland Scheme and National Park ranger[s]
- Shared public spaces and green areas / orchards which can be managed collaboratively and as part of / alongside the Steyning Downland Scheme
- Resolving local issues by releasing capital for design and engineering works



# Water Quality Strategy



A landscape scale investigation into the condition and quality of water bodies across the estate leading to a strategy for improvement.

## Vision

An evidence based study that can be used as a prompt for wider collaborative action with partners such as the Adur to Arun Farmer's Group, neighbouring estates, the EA, Southern Water and Brighton University to monitor and improve water quality in the catchment.

## Objective

Shared understanding and commitment to water quality at landscape scale; greater awareness of the full benefits of water quality including a link to water based products [e.g. beer, food etc.] and promotional opportunities in the visitor economy.

- A place for nature; a place for learning and exploration; a place without waste

## Outputs

- Knowledge and evidence on water quality and influences on water quality across the estate particularly in relation to land management
- A plan to monitor and improve water quality over time
- Enhanced understanding of the full benefits that can arise from clean water
- A shared commitment to water quality on a landscape scale

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Two; increased capacity within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

Three; well managed and better connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species.

Six; wide spread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

Eight; more responsibility and action is taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more wisely.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Supporting; water cycling, nutrient cycling, biodiversity.

Provisioning; water supply,

Cultural; recreation and tourism services.

Regulating; water flow and flood, water quality, disease and pest.





# Environment Bank



A programme to attract investment arising from development [on and beyond the estate] and to offset its environmental impact through the creation of additional habitat and positive environmental management of designated areas of estate land to improve the conditions for bio-diversity with a focus on specific priority species.

## Vision

The establishment of a long-term investment programme for habitat improvement and maintenance on Wiston Estate funded by development activity [internal and external].

## Objective

To enhance bio-diversity and the conditions for priority species on the Estate and provide a means to offset the environmental impacts of important developments in the south-east region.

- A place for nature; a place for learning and exploration; a place without waste

## Outputs

- A net enhancement in the extent and quality of habitat suitable for priority species on the estate [measured against the WEP baseline]
- An increase in net inward investment into the estate for positive environmental land management [over and above the monies paid via CAP [up to 2020]]
- Enhanced understanding of the opportunities available from bio-diversity off-set amongst land managers and farmers

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Two; increased capacity within the landscape for its natural resources, habitats and species to adapt to the impacts of climate change and other pressures.

Three; a well-managed and better connected network of habitats and increased population and distribution of priority species.

### ADDITIONAL / ANCILLARY:

Seven; range and diversity of traditional culture and skills has been protected.

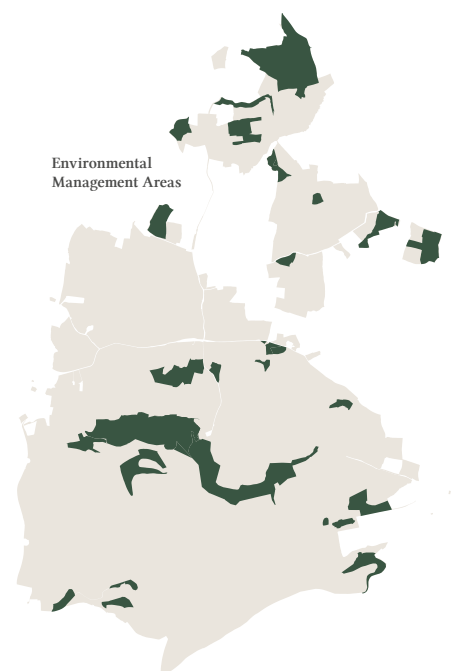
### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Supporting; biodiversity, water cycling.

Provisioning; genetic diversity,

Cultural; tranquillity

Regulating; pollination, disease and pest regulation, erosion, soil quality, water flow and flood.







FARMING



ECOLOGY



LANDSCAPE



COMMUNITY

# Access and Interpretation



A programme to deliver enhanced access to the estate by connecting existing parts of the PROW network; and improving car park infrastructure; a programme to improve understanding of the natural environment, the management and stewardship of land.

## Vision

An enhanced network of permissive and public paths which provides an opportunity for people to enjoy and better understand the natural environment and the impacts that we can have upon it.

## Objective

To improve access to the estate; to inspire visitors with a greater sense of understanding of our environment, our responsibility towards it and why some areas should be for wildlife only.

- A place for nature; a place for learning and exploration; a place for people

## National Park Outcomes

### CORE / MAIN:

Five; outstanding visitor experiences are underpinned by a high-quality access and sustainable transport network providing benefits such as health and well-being.

Six; a wide spread understanding of the special qualities of the National Park and the benefits it provides.

Eight; more responsibility and action is taken by visitors, residents and businesses to conserve and enhance the special qualities and use resources more widely.

### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES:

Cultural; inspiration values; recreation and tourism.

## Outputs

- New permissive paths connecting Steyning to Washington
- New permissive paths connecting North Farm to Washington and to the South Downs Way
- New interpretation boards

- Improving and safeguarding car parking facilities and their ongoing maintenance
- Continued partnership with the Steyning Downland Scheme to enable the objectives of the charity in engaging the local community (and young people in particular) with the neighbouring landscape

