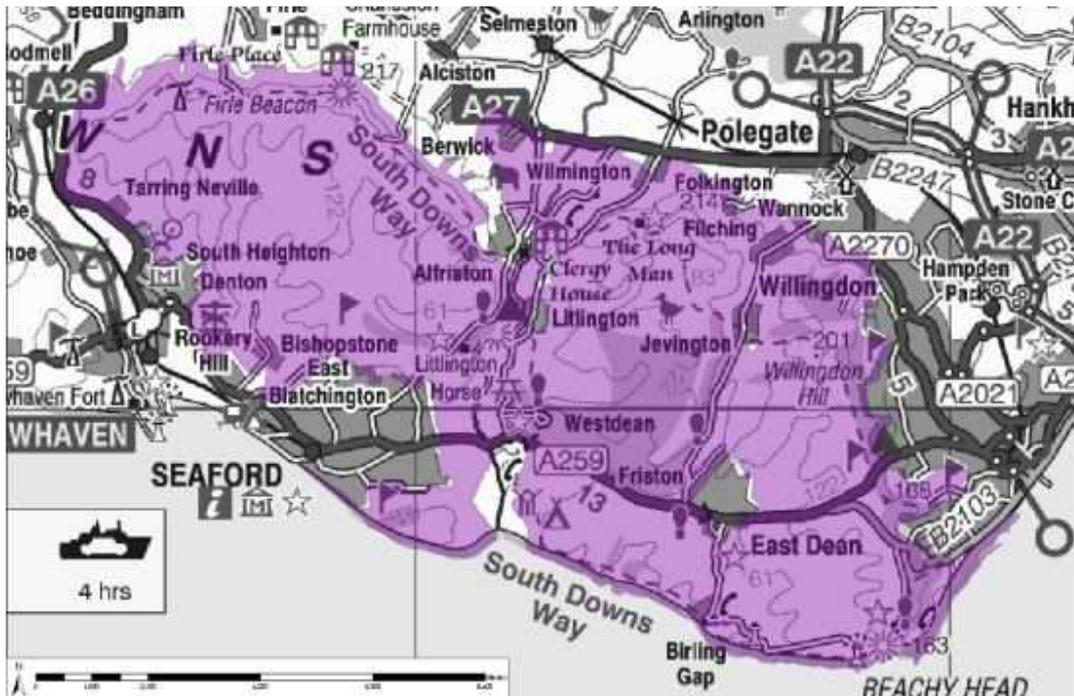


## Seaford to Eastbourne downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area

### Joint Character Area South Downs

**Geology** Seaford to Eastbourne downs Biodiversity Opportunity Area lies on chalk (Seaford Newhaven, Holywell, zigzag, Lewes).



The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) are the regional priority areas of opportunity for restoration and creation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats. They are a spatial representation of BAP targets and are areas of opportunity, not constraint. The BOAs are the property of the South East England Biodiversity Forum [www.sebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.sebiodiversity.org.uk). Contains Ordnance Survey data Crown copyright and database right 2010

Seaford to Eastbourne downs has been recognised as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) as it represents a priority area for the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets. It is one of 75 such areas across Sussex. The BOA covers approximately 9954 hectares.

This area is an important and iconic coastal site with its chalk platform, chalk cliffs, vegetated shingle, saline lagoons and saltmarsh (all at Seven Sisters Country Park). The downland on either side of the River Cuckmere has lowland calcareous grassland scattered through it and is bounded to the west by the River Ouse and to the east by Eastbourne. The chalk geology dictates the northern boundary of this site.

This area contains the Friston Forest Project area, a site managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust. Low level grazing over several years is expected to thin the woodland structure of the area, whilst improving the biodiversity value of the rides. This BOA also contains areas of the rare chalk heath habitat.

## BAP Habitat

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh

Coastal saltmarsh

Coastal vegetated shingle

Lowland calcareous grassland

Lowland meadows

Maritime cliff and slope

Traditional orchards

Reedbeds

Saline lagoons

Wood-pasture and Parkland

Woodland

BAP Species 150 species recorded, with the following in the last ten years:

| <b>Species</b>                                       | <b>Habitat Requirements</b>   |
|--|---|
| Knot Grass <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>                  | Meadows, gardens and hedgerows, larvae feed on a range of herbs   |
| Forester <i>Adscita statices</i>                     | Chalk grassland, lowland meadow, heathland, woodland rides, larvae feed on Sheep's Sorrel and Common Sorrel         |
| Beaded Chestnut <i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>           | Woodland rides, scrub, hedgerows and open country   |
| Green-brindled Crescent <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i> | Woodlands, hedgerows and gardens, larvae feed on a number of trees and bushes including Hawthorn and Blackthorn     |
| Mouse Moth <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>             | Grassland, heathland, wetland, hedgerows and some woodland  |
| European Eel <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>                | Sea, freshwater rivers, eutrophic standing waters, moderate water quality   |
| Potter Flower Bee <i>Anthophora retusa</i>           | Cliffs and slopes rich in flowers, with dry sheltered areas of bare ground  |
| Tree Pipit <i>Anthus trivialis</i>                   | Newly planted conifers or open heath, mixed deciduous woodland  |
| Dusky Brocade <i>Apamea remissa</i>                  | Woodland, marsh, chalk and other grassland  |
| Deep-brown Dart <i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>          | Chalk grassland and moorland  |
| Garden Tiger <i>Arctia caja</i>                      | River valleys, gardens and parks  |
| European Water Vole <i>Arvicola terrestris</i>       | Rivers, ponds, canals and drainage ditches, reedbeds, fens, grazing marsh, banks, slow-flowing waters               |
| Hornet Robberfly <i>Asilus crabroniformis</i>        | Heathland, chalk and other grassland on well-drained soils, usually associated with grazing mammals, areas of scrub |
| Centre-barred Sallow <i>Atethmia centrago</i>        | Woodland and hedgerows, larvae feed on Ash and Sallow   |
| Scaup <i>Aythya marila</i>                           | Lakes, bogs and rivers, estuaries   |
| Moss Carder Bee <i>Bombus muscorum</i>               | Tussocky areas, flower-rich grassland with tall sward, nests on or near surface often in sunny spots                |
| Red-tailed Carder Bee <i>Bombus ruderarius</i>       | Flower-rich tall grasslands with areas of scrub and tussocks for nesting  |
| Bittern <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>                    | Wet reedbed and marshland   |
| Slender Hare's-ear <i>Bupleurum tenuissimum</i>      | Upper saltmarsh, brackish grazing marsh, areas of disturbed ground  |

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|---|---|
| Stone-curlew <i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>           | Spring-sown crops, heathland, chalk or acid grassland with areas of bare stoney ground, short sward or bare ground with good invertebrate levels - linked with animal dung, low disturbance |
| Nightjar <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>             | Heathland, moorland, open woodland, recently felled conifer plantations, mosaic of bare ground, low vegetation, scrub and trees   |
| Mottled Rustic <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>          | Suburban areas, hedgerows, Nettle and Dandelion   |
| Lesser Redpoll <i>Carduelis cabaret</i>           | Birch and Alder woods, most common in the north in the summer   |
| Divided Sedge <i>Carex divisa</i>                 | Vegetated shingle, grazing marsh, ditches, tidal rivers, brackish, no tidal inundation  |
| True Fox-sedge <i>Carex vulpina</i>               | River banks, ditch sides and damp meadows on heavy clay soils, standing water, open conditions are required   |
| White Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i> | Woodlands, particularly Beech on chalk or limestone soils, low ground cover, shaded habitat   |
| Latticed Heath <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>          | Chalk grassland, gardens, fens, open woodland, heathland and moorland, larvae feed on clover, trefoil and Lucerne   |
| Basil Thyme <i>Clinopodium acinos</i>             | Hedgerows, scrub, dry grassland, chalk grassland  |
| Hawfinch <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>     | Woodland, good supplies of fruit, seeds and keys, drinking pools  |
| Small Heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>          | Dry grassland, heathlands, short turf, parks and gardens  |
| a mining bee <i>Colletes halophilus</i>           | Saltmarshes, saline lagoons, stands of Sea Aster, bare sand, sheltered location   |
| Corn Crane <i>Crex crex</i>                       | Large areas of unintensified grassland with tall vegetation to provide early spring cover, timing of cutting very important   |
| Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>                     | Woodland, scrub, marshes, heathland, reedbed  |
| Small Blue <i>Cupido minimus</i>                  | Chalk grassland, chalk cliffs, Kidney Vetch, sheltered conditions, mosaic of short and tall vegetation with scrub   |
| Oak Lutestring <i>Cymatophorima diluta</i>        | Mature oak woodland, larvae feed on Oak   |
| Deptford Pink <i>Dianthus armeria</i>             | Unimproved grassland with short swards and dry ground, often found around disturbed areas and bare ground   |
| Small Square-Spot <i>Diarsia rubi</i>             | Prefers damp and marshy places, hedgerows   |
| Phantom Hoverfly <i>Doros profuges</i>            | Scrubby habitats, woodland edges, species-rich, usually calcareous grassland, sheltered or south-facing areas, association with the Jet Ant <i>Lasius fuliginosus</i>                       |
| Small Phoenix <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>        | Woodland, open habitats including commons and gardens, willowherbs  |
| Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>           | Open countryside, scrubby areas, woodland edges, hedgerows, insect-rich grassland, seed-rich areas  |
| Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>          | Wetlands including reedbeds, tall rushes and wet grassland with good vegetation cover, gardens, farmland, hedgerows, ditches  |
| Dusky Thorn <i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>            | Woodland, parkland, Ash   |
| August Thorn <i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>           | Woodland, hedgerows, parkland, gardens, Oak, Beech  |
| Galium Carpet <i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>             | Coastal habitats such as vegetated shingle and cliffs, chalk downland, grassy heathland, hedgerows, larvae feed on bedstraws  |
| Dingy Skipper <i>Erynnis tages</i>                | Chalk grassland, woodland rides, cliffs and embankments, mosaic of  |

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|   | bare ground, shorter sward and sheltered areas, Bird's-foot Trefoil   |
| Autumnal Rustic <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>      | Woodland edges, moorland, hedgerows   |
| Black-throated Diver <i>Gavia arctica</i>       | Breeds on freshwater, winters around sheltered coasts and occasionally at inland freshwater   |
| Field Gentian <i>Gentianella campestris</i>     | Acidic and neutral soils, unimproved open grasslands  |
| Ghost Moth <i>Hepialus humuli</i>               | Grassy areas, hillsides, waste ground   |
| Grayling <i>Hipparchia semele</i>               | Dry grassland, heathland, sand dunes, cliff tops, bare ground, sunny, sheltered locations   |
| Rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>                 | Gardens, grassland and heathland, docks, plantains, hedgerows   |
| Rosy Rustic <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>            | Marshy areas, waste ground  |
| Wryneck <i>Jynx torquilla</i>                   | Mainly on the ground in open woodland, farmland, occasionally seen in gardens   |
| Red-backed Shrike <i>Lanius collurio</i>        | South and east coasts of the UK, perch prominently on bushes, hedgerows, fence posts, lowland heathland, lowland meadow                   |
| Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>            | Nests on cliff tops, saltmarsh, shingle, coastal grassland, urban roofs, winters on pasture, arable and urban recreational grassland      |
| Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>                   | Short, open grassland, gardens, sand dunes, vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores  |
| Brown Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>               | Open farmland and grassland, habitat mosaic   |
| White Admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i>          | Woodlands, sunny glades, Bramble, Honeysuckle, partially-shaded locations   |
| Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i>    | Scrub, thick grassland, reedbeds, forestry and gravel pits  |
| Wood Lark <i>Lullula arborea</i>                | Heathland, woodland, mosaic of scattered trees, bare ground, short vegetation and taller vegetation, open seed-rich areas                 |
| Brindled Beauty <i>Lycia hirtaria</i>           | Woodland, hedgerows, parkland, gardens  |
| Lackey <i>Malacosoma neustria</i>               | Gardens, hedgerows, Hawthorn, Blackthorn  |
| Dot Moth <i>Melanchra persicariae</i>           | Gardens, verges, waste ground, hedgerows  |
| Broom Moth <i>Melanchra pisi</i>                | Open woodland, shrub, heathland, Broom, Bracken   |
| Pretty Chalk Carpet <i>Melanthia procellata</i> | Hedgerows, scrub, woodland edges, Traveller's-joy   |
| Rosy Minor <i>Mesoligia literosa</i>            | Grasslands particularly in coastal areas, larvae feed on a range of grasses   |
| Yellow Bird's-nest <i>Monotropa hypopitys</i>   | Shaded woodland floor in leaf litter, humidity, often calcareous ground, also found under Creeping Willow on dune slacks                  |
| Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i>     | Open woodland and woodland edges, parks and gardens   |
| Shoulder-striped Wainscot <i>Mythimna comma</i> | Gardens, damp habitats, marshes and fens, Cock's-foot.  |
| Grass Snake <i>Natrix natrix</i>                | Water, reedbed, ponds, heathland, grazing marsh, gardens, fish, amphibians  |
| Curlew <i>Numenius arquata</i>                  | Reedbeds, estuaries, damp grassland, heathland, mosaic of tall vegetation for nesting with short vegetation and open habitats for feeding |
| Burnt Orchid <i>Orchis ustulata</i>             | A plant of unimproved calcareous grasslands it requires warm and dry conditions and is often found on south-facing slopes                 |
| House Sparrow <i>Passer</i>                     | Urban areas, farmland, hedgerows  |

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| <i>domesticus</i>                                    |  |
| Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i>                  | Farmland, woodland edges, hedgerows with mature trees, wetland edges   |
| Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i>                  | Farmland, rush pastures, moors, mosaics of bare ground and cover, hedgerows, uncultivated margins  |
| Wood Warbler <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>          | Mixed deciduous woodland, even age-canopy, little understorey, patchy ground cover   |
| Brown Long-eared Bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>         | A widespread bat of open woodlands, hedgerows, parks and gardens, it roosts in old buildings and trees in the summer, moving to caves and underground sites in the winter.                     |
| Balearic Shearwater <i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>     | Breeds on cliffs, headlands and coastal inlets, often returning to the same colony each year   |
| Grizzled Skipper <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>                | Grassland, quarries, embankments, woodland rides, larvae feed on Agrimony and <i>Potentilla</i> species, requires warmth and shelter   |
| Large Wainscot <i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>                | Frequenting reedbeds and riversides, the larvae feed in the bases of stems and the roots of Common Reed  |
| White-letter Hairstreak <i>Satyrrium w-album</i>     | A butterfly found most commonly in association with Elm, both mature trees and young suckers in hedgerows. Larvae feed on Elm particularly the flowers. Colonisation of new sites can be slow. |
| Mullein Wave <i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>          | A moth of gardens, hedgerows and bushes mainly in coastal areas, the larvae feed on Yarrow and Mugwort   |
| Shaded Broad-bar <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>     | Chalk grassland and a range of open habitats, larvae feed on vetch and clover  |
| White Ermine <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>            | Gardens and hedgerows  |
| Buff Ermine <i>Spilosoma luteum</i>                  | Woodland, parks and gardens  |
| Roseate Tern <i>Sterna dougallii</i>                 | Nest areas sheltered by overhanging rock or tall vegetation, often on offshore islands   |
| Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>               | Woodland edges, hedgerows and open land with scattered bushes  |
| Field Fleawort <i>Tephrosia integrifolia</i>         | A plant of unimproved calcareous grassland, favouring warm, dry sites with a short, open sward.  |
| Hedge Rustic <i>Tholera cespitis</i>                 | A moth of open grassland, larvae feed on grasses including Mat-grass and hair-grasses.   |
| Feathered Gothic <i>Tholera decimalis</i>            | Rough grassland and downland, larvae feed on grass blades  |
| Blood-Vein <i>Timandra comae</i>                     | Gardens, fields and waste ground   |
| Barred Tooth-striped <i>Trichopteryx polycommata</i> | Woodland, chalk downland and scrubby areas, larvae feed on Wild Privet and Ash   |
| Olive Crescent <i>Trisateles emortualis</i>          | Deciduous woodland and sheltered edges, larvae feed on Oak and Beech   |
| Ring Ouzel <i>Turdus torquatus</i>                   | Short grassy areas   |
| Cinnabar <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>                      | Meadows, wasteland, road verges and downland   |
| Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>                     | Farmland, grazing marsh, wet meadows, seeds and insects  |
| Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>                            | Open heathland, woodland and moors, fens, cliff  |
| Oak Hook-tip <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>               | Oak woodland and parkland, larvae feed on oak  |
| Curly Beardless-moss <i>Weissia condensa</i>         | Warm calcareous grassland  |
| Sterile Beardless-moss <i>Weissia sterilis</i>       | Lowland calcareous grassland and wheat stubbles in short swards or bare areas  |

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| Dusky-Lemon Sallow <i>Xanthia gilvago</i> | Broadleaf woodland, hedgerows and parkland, larvae feed on English Elm and Wych Elm    |
| Sallow <i>Xanthia ictertia</i>            | A moth of damp woodland, hedgerows, heathland and marshy places, larvae feed on willow |
| Common Lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>     | Open woodland, moorland, heathland, fens, sand dunes, rocks, gardens and cliffs        |

**Invasive Non-native Species** 18 species recorded with the following in the last ten years:

Three-cornered Leek *Allium triquetrum*  
Water Fern *Azolla filiculoides*  
Horse Chestnut Leafminer *Cameraria ohridella*  
Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*  
Wall Cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*  
New Zealand Pigmyweed *Crassula helmsii*  
Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*  
Nuttall's Waterweed *Elodea nuttallii*  
Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica*  
Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis*  
Hybrid Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta x hispanica = H. x massartiana*  
Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*  
Curly Waterweed *Lagarosiphon major*  
American Mink *Mustela vison*  
Parrot's-feather *Myriophyllum aquaticum*  
Winter Heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*  
Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*

## Designated Sites

Lullington Heath NNR contains chalk grassland and chalk heath with a diverse flora. Areas of scrub are valuable for breeding birds including Nightingale, and the grassland supports butterflies such as Silver-spotted Skipper. There are also two dew ponds which increase the habitat diversity.

Firle Escarpment SSSI an extensive stretch of chalk grassland which includes several rare species such as Autumn Gentian, Clove Pink and Early Spider Orchid.

Folkington Reservoir SSSI a covered reservoir whose banks support a rich chalk grassland flora with abundant orchids and the only known locality in the county for Hairy Mallow.

Seaford to Beachy Head SSSI supports chalk grassland, chalk heath, chalk cliffs and Greensand reef (which also has geological interest). The site has large areas of chalk foreshore with interesting algal and invertebrate communities, and the lagoon system created by the Greensand reef contains several species rare for the region.

Wilmington Down SSSI an area of species-rich chalk grassland on steep slopes. There is a good representative flora including Round-headed Rampion and Burnt Orchid.

Wilmington Downs SSSI species-rich chalk grassland with species such as Salad Burnet, Chalk Milkwort and Round-headed Rampion. The site contains several rare and notable invertebrates, and a significant number of lichens and mosses.

Seaford Head LNR includes unimproved chalk grassland, scrub, maritime cliff slope, vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, a pond and a wave-cut platform.

Beddingham Hill SNCI the upper part of a small coombe containing species rich chalk grassland, and the rare moss *Cryphaea heteromalla* is reported on site.

Bishopstone Downs SNCI consists of two blocks of chalk grassland, with a neutral influence in places. The site is known to support the nationally notable Large Robber Fly.

Blackcap Farm SNCI consists of several areas of unimproved grassland, and several scarce Coleoptera have been recorded on site.

Blackstone Down SNCI an extensive escarpment, and whilst there is much dense scrub and Tor Grass, areas of species-rich chalk grassland and chalk heath persist.

Blatchington Reservoir SNCI species-rich calcareous grassland around the sides and top of the reservoir, including a variety of grasses, Common Centaury and Bee Orchid.

Cranedown and Middle Brow SNCI adjoins Wilmington Downs SSSI with notable species including Chalk Milkwort, Autumn Lady's Tresses and Bastard Toadflax.

Denton Hill Downs SNCI three north-facing downs with a calcareous and neutral sward. Species of interest include Autumn Lady's Tresses, Chalk Milkwort and Horseshoe Vetch.

France and Short Bottom SNCI three areas of grassland currently dominated by Tor Grass. Much of the area is species-poor, however there are patches of species such as Common Rock-rose and Round-headed Rampion.

Friston Forest SNCI is a large Beech and Pine plantation, which contains some important plants, including Yellow Bird's-nest and Pheasant's-eye. Woodland rides provide habitat for many Lepidoptera including Clouded Magpie, and the site is significant for beetles.

Highwood Meadows SNCI two small unimproved fields of a calcareous and neutral nature. Adders have been recorded on the site and a dead Grey Long-eared bat was found outside the house adjacent to these fields in 1996.

Red Lion Down SNCI herb-rich grassland adjacent to Firle Escarpment SSSI, with a range of chalk and neutral flora including Fairy Flax and Lady's Bedstraw.

Seaford Head SNCI on the western side of Beachy Head, consists of unimproved chalk grassland with some ranker areas. Species of interest include Early Dog-violet and Clustered Bell-flower.

Tarring Neville Downs SNCI an extensive area of downland of variable quality. Species of note include Bastard Toadflax and Autumn Lady's Tresses.

Tilton Down SNCI a small, west-facing down, south of Firle Beacon with small amounts of Clustered Bellflower, Betony and Large Thyme.

Well Bottom SNCI a shallow coombe of calcareous and neutral grassland, with the nationally scarce Chalk Hill Eyebright believed to occur on the site.

Wilingdon and Home Bottom SNCI two areas of chalk grassland of variable quality. Species found include Clustered Bellflower, Mouse-ear Hawkweed and Common Milkwort.

Wilmington Down, Deep Dean and Ewe Dean fragments SNCI three, varied areas of chalk grassland, separated by and adjacent to Wilmington Downs SSSI.

## Opportunities Identified

- Ecological networks
- Chalk heath management, restoration and creation
- Chalk grassland management, restoration and creation
- Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation
- Woodland management and diversification
- Education and community engagement
- Botanical interest
- Farmland bird interest
- Chalk grassland butterfly interest
- Landowner advisory and agri-environment schemes
- Floodplain restoration and reconnection
- Policy integration
- Grazing management

**Sussex Biodiversity Partnership**

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