

# Changing Chalk

## From Vision to Legacy

End of Project Report | 2026



**Changing Chalk**  
*connecting nature, people and heritage*

# Changing Chalk | Connecting nature, people and heritage

## Four years. Thirteen partners. One vision.

The Changing Chalk partnership was born from a shared vision: to secure a sustainable future for the South Downs – its nature, people and heritage.

Led by the National Trust and powered by 13 partner organisations, the collaboration set out to restore the richly biodiverse yet vulnerable chalk grassland of the eastern South Downs, tackle inequalities around access to nature and heritage, and reconnect urban communities with the internationally-significant landscape on their doorstep.

Shaped by a post-pandemic recognition of nature’s profound role in wellbeing, and a renewed commitment to making green spaces accessible to everyone, the partnership worked from 2022 to 2026 to foster a deep sense of belonging, ownership and stewardship among local communities. This collective effort became a powerful call to action to help protect the South Downs’ rich natural and cultural heritage, now and for generations to come.

### Connect, inspire, restore

Shaped by thousands of years of human history, the South Downs is a landscape for everyone. Rich in cultural heritage, hidden stories, sweeping views and extraordinary biodiversity, it offers far-reaching wellbeing benefits for the communities who live on its doorstep. Yet precious chalk grassland has long been under pressure and this once extensive habitat is reduced to rare fragments of its former range.

Supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, partner contributions and generous support from other

fundors, we’ve invested £4.27m over four years to connect nature, people and heritage and secure a resilient, sustainable future for this extraordinary landscape and the people who live here.

Across three themes and 21 interconnected projects, the Changing Chalk partnership set out to:

**Widen participation and tackle barriers to access** - ensuring more people experience, benefit from and learn about the nature and heritage of the South Downs, and enjoy the wellbeing that connection with nature brings.

**Reverse the ecological decline of the chalk grassland** - restoring and linking fragmented habitats, boosting species diversity and connectivity, and working with farmers and landowners to champion its long-term sustainable management.

**Celebrate the rich and diverse cultural heritage of the South Downs** - with local communities as active participants in its discovery and interpretation.

Above all, Changing Chalk sought to deepen people’s bond with the landscape, inspiring a collaborative commitment to action, ideas and shared stewardship for generations to come.

## Chalk Grassland: Britain’s biodiversity powerhouse

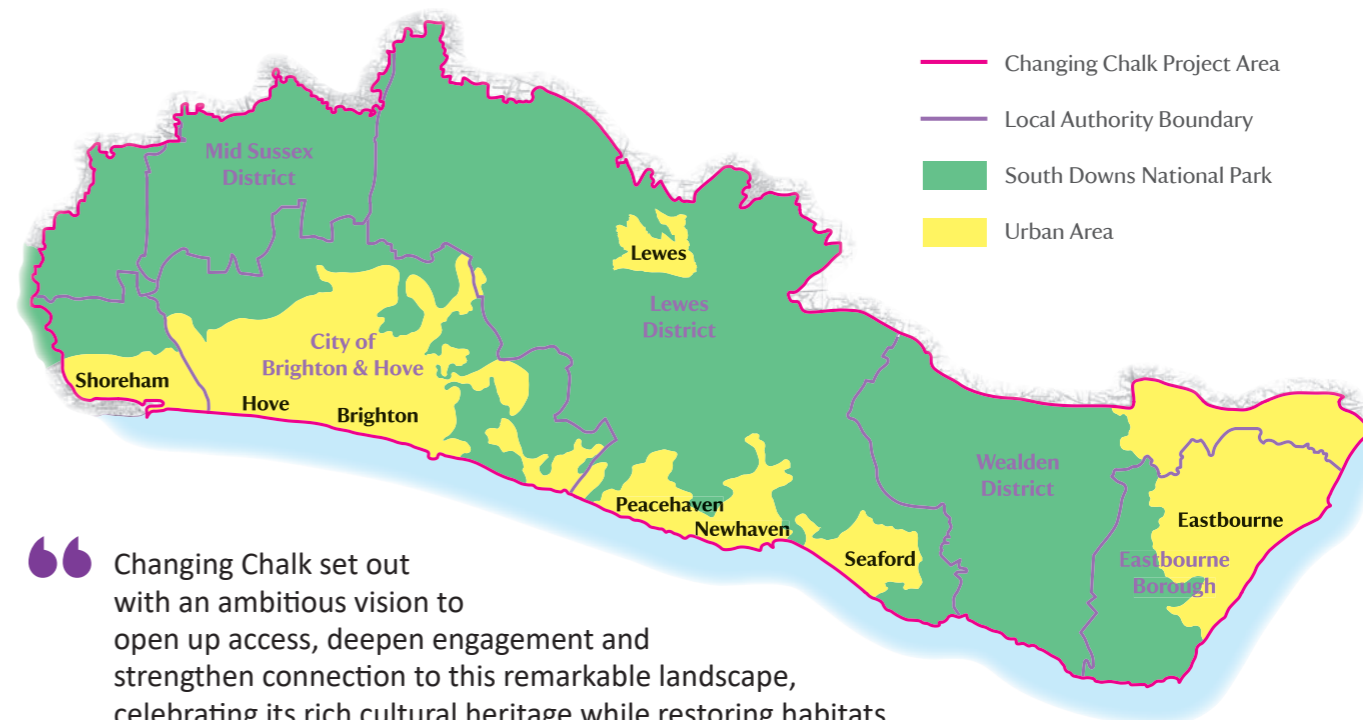
Often referred to as Europe’s ‘tropical rainforest’ for its astonishing biodiversity, chalk grassland is one of the world’s richest habitats with up to 40 plant species per square metre and teeming with rare orchids,

wildflowers, butterflies, birds, reptiles and countless insects. It is also one of the world’s rarest habitats. In the UK, over the past 80 years, we have lost around 90%, and on the South Downs only small fragments remain, many degraded. As climate change

intensifies, this vulnerable habitat - and the wildlife that depends on it - face even greater pressures. The window to restore the chalk grassland and safeguard its future is now.



## The Changing Chalk Project Area



“ Changing Chalk set out with an ambitious vision to open up access, deepen engagement and strengthen connection to this remarkable landscape, celebrating its rich cultural heritage while restoring habitats for nature to flourish. After years of dedicated partnership work, we now proudly see this vision brought to life. ”

Richard Henderson | Chair of Project Board, National Trust

### A landscape for all

We want a landscape where everyone feels safe and welcome, where local communities feel the South Downs are theirs to enjoy and care for.

We set out to engage new audiences with the Downs, particularly those under-served or under-represented in the landscape, and to deepen the connection of existing audiences. Using a ‘stepping stones’ approach, we offered opportunities from first encounters with the Downs to build confidence in the landscape, to long-term involvement through learning, volunteering and careers in heritage and nature conservation. Adopting an asset-based approach to engage authentically with communities, we co-developed projects and activities, and supported grassroots community-led delivery through our Community Grants Scheme.





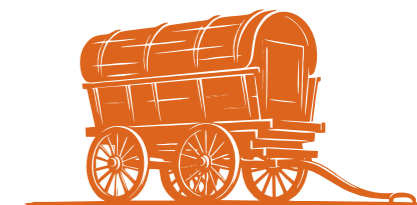
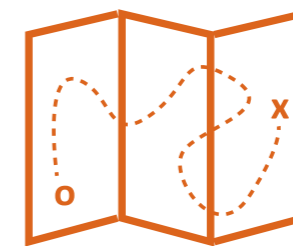
**8km**  
waymarked paths created at Wilding Waterhall

**13 partners**  
**3 themes**  
**1 vision**

**75** Scheduled Monuments with management plans  
& **40** adopted by volunteers



**32**  
**Wart-biter Bush-crickets** translocated to establish a new population



**15 events** celebrated Gypsy and Traveller history in the South Downs



**28**  
creative workshops by Writing Our Legacy @ Changing Chalk



**Over 650** hectares chalk grassland better managed for nature



**Over 3,600** children engaged in Farm School

- 2 heritage trails**
- 1 art trail**
- 8 exhibitions**
- 1 conference** celebrating the rich heritage of the South Downs

**4 apprenticeships** and **6 traineeships** for young people

**Over 50,000** people directly engaged over **4** years

**30,000** volunteer hours contributed



**180**  
people benefitted from **ecotherapy** in the South Downs



**2**  
**research trials** tested new techniques in practical conservation



**22**  
meat shares supported conservation grazing



**1** ex-golf course + 1 ex-arable farm transformed into havens for wildlife



**250** nature connection sessions and guided walks for local communities



**7** dew ponds restored



Over **6,000** people took part in **Big Dig** excavations



**7** urban wildflower areas created and **18** revitalised

**£147,000** small grants awarded to **32** community projects



**192 km<sup>2</sup>** archaeological features mapped in **Downs from Above** portal



# Nature | Restoring chalk grassland biodiversity

## A landscape where nature can thrive

Under this theme, we worked at landscape scale to restore and reconnect priority chalk grassland, with over 650 hectares now better managed for nature, and increase resilience for wildlife. Collaborating with farmers and landowners, and working on and off partner-owned land, we improved grazing on priority sites and enhanced habitats for pollinators and other downland species, including the endangered Wart-biter Bush-cricket. Condition surveys on Local Wildlife Sites by Sussex Wildlife Trust, pollinator habitat assessments, and wildlife monitoring informed practical action and advice. Research by RBG Kew on seed sowing after scrub clearance and Buglife's vineyard wildflower trials tested innovative techniques. Importantly, local communities stepped up to care for their local sites - with new volunteer groups, supported by Changing Chalk rangers, fostering long-term guardianship.

## The importance of grazing

Chalk grassland has evolved from thousands of years of grazing and, without, its delicate plants are quickly lost to scrub and coarse grasses. The decline of grazing on the South Downs has led to the loss and degradation of this unique habitat, but careful conservation grazing can restore the balance, creating space for rare plants and wildlife to thrive again.

Through the **Grazing Project**, the South Downs National Park Authority has supported farmers and landowners across the project area to graze the chalk grassland by providing funding for fencing, water infrastructure and mobile grazing equipment, and collaborating to develop long-term grazing management plans. Hardy cattle, sheep and Exmoor ponies are grazing new areas and GPS collars for 'fenceless' grazing have been trialled. Graziers can move livestock between



sites more efficiently and farmers, with support from rangers, have worked together to improve habitat connectivity between adjacent sites. Farmer-led workshops created peer learning opportunities to discuss challenges and share best practice on maintaining healthy chalk grassland.

Led by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, **Sussex Grazed** has helped farmers and conservation graziers sell locally through a

community meat box scheme. By bringing conservation grazed meat into the local food chain, it has connected people with the landscape. As well as championing sustainable high-quality food, the initiative has highlighted the importance of grazing to protect vulnerable habitats and helped shift public perceptions of grazing livestock in the landscape.



## From fairways and runways to wildflowers



At **Wilding Waterhall**, 60 hectares of downland habitat have been restored by Brighton & Hove City Council on this former golf course on the edge of Brighton – now a designated Local Nature Reserve and haven for wildlife. Restoration focused on re-establishing the chalk grassland and managing scrub and woodland areas to create a resilient mosaic of habitats. Grazing has been introduced with a herd of Sussex Red cattle and GPS 'invisible fencing'. By adjusting cattle numbers and rotating the herd across the site, a diverse range of habitats has developed - from flower-rich grassland to rough grass, scrub and wood-pasture. More than 350 volunteers have contributed their time through regular task days, helping with scrub clearance, wildflower planting and woodland glade creation: a thriving example of chalk downland restoration and community stewardship.



At **Gayles Farm**, 50 hectares of arable fields have been transformed into wildflower meadows and herbal leys. Delivered through joint farmer and National Trust stewardship, newly-created habitats have increased connectivity with the neighbouring chalk grassland, supporting wildlife to disperse across the landscape. These areas also provide alternative management of the priority chalk grassland. The project also honours the site's RAF Frinton heritage, the only Sussex airfield to see active World War II service, with wildflowers now marking the former airfield runways. Local volunteers monitor for ecological change, and the site hums with life - from guided walks and bumblebees to the occasional Spitfire flyover - bringing nature, heritage and community together.

## Dew pond restoration

Through Changing Chalk, seven dew ponds have been restored by the South Downs National Park Authority, creating freshwater oases and vital water sources for wildlife.



“Thank you so much. It was great to have your expertise and talk through everything from Wart-biters to management for pollinators.”

Buglife training for land managers

## Wart-biter Species Recovery

The Wart-biter Bush-cricket is one of Britain's rarest chalk grassland insects, surviving on just six sites nationwide, four within the Changing Chalk project area. Buglife has worked with farmers to improve habitat for Wart-biters, and trained volunteers to survey and monitor the remaining populations. A major milestone came in the project's final year, when 32 Wart-biters were successfully relocated to a new site with the aim of establishing a new population - a vital step in securing their long-term future.



## Tackling barriers and increasing access

In the project area's coastal towns, social deprivation and poor mental health remain persistent challenges. Many people who would benefit from time in nature are unable to access it. Changing Chalk set out to close this gap.

Physical improvements such as accessible gates, mobility scooters at Seven Sisters Country Park, better interpretation and access at Devil's Dyke, and new waymarked trails at Wilding Waterhall have opened the South Downs to more people. The Gateway to the Downs travelling hub visited libraries, food banks, support groups and markets, offering free maps and children's activity resources, giving thousands of people an accessible starting point for exploring the landscape.

Equally important were activities to increase confidence and help people feel welcome, safe and included in the landscape. Wellbeing programmes, guided walks, family-friendly events, help with transport and tailored activities took nature connection and the wonders of the South Downs directly into communities.

## Inspiring future generations

At the heart of Changing Chalk were children and young people. Across the partnership, projects built connections with schools, youth groups, colleges and universities. Children and young people experienced opportunities to connect with nature, history and their local area, inspiring an appreciation for the landscape on their doorstep – and a desire to help protect it for years to come.

Brighton and Hove City Council's **Farm School** linked over 3,600 primary school children from across the city with their local farms, creating access to outdoor learning that fed curiosity and built confidence and real-world knowledge. Focusing on schools in socio-economically deprived areas, children benefitted from farm visits, workshops and assemblies to learn about food production, farming and nature in the South Downs. Farmers welcomed the opportunity to connect with local communities and the 'one school, one farm' model fostered long-term relationships between pupils, teachers and farmers.



Through **Find Your Future**, 228 young people facing some of the biggest barriers to opportunity - including those not in education, employment or training - were supported to experience the South Downs. Recognising poor mental health and transport as major barriers, free minibus transport and supportive engagement that met them where they were enabled more young

people to take part. Through a flexible stepping-stone approach, young people were able to build soft skills, practical experience, confidence and wellbeing through Countryside Skills sessions and youth volunteering, while paid placements and apprenticeships offered career pathways in heritage and nature conservation and community engagement.



“ Making the link between food and where it comes from matters. Getting out into the fresh air and green fields matters. Learning about nature and how to look after it matters more than ever. Changing Chalk do a fabulous job organising Farm School and we look forward to welcoming many more children to the farm. ”

## Supporting wellbeing through Growing New Roots

Brighton & Hove Food Partnership's **Growing New Roots** provided therapeutic outdoor activities for people experiencing poor mental health. More than 180 people benefitted from taster sessions and multi-week programmes that offered a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where participants could rebuild confidence and connect with nature and the South Downs. The activities helped people feel comfortable, included and increasingly at home

in the landscape. For many, the benefits have been long-lasting. Some have formed sustained friendships, while one participant who was unable to work due to poor mental health returned to employment and still attributes their recovery in large part to Growing New Roots. The programme's impact has been striking: 83% of participants reported improved wellbeing and 92% said they were more likely to visit nature more often.

“ This has helped in ways medication and therapy couldn't: being outdoors, connecting with others face-to-face, and learning new things have all built my confidence. ”

## Celebrating Changing Chalk's rangers

Our rangers have played a vital role connecting communities with the South Downs. Through **Creating Connections**, a joint National Trust and Railway Land Wildlife Trust project, and at Wilding Waterhall, rangers have brought people together with guided walks, nature connection activities, hands-on learning and practical conservation sessions. As well as delivering habitat for biodiversity, they organised events, hosted school visits and community groups, engaged visitors and dog walkers, supported volunteers, and equipped people with the skills, confidence and knowledge to care for the South Downs long into the future.



## Bringing the Downs to the Towns with Greening the Cities

This project, led by The Living Coast, created seven new chalk wildflower sites and revitalised 18 urban pollinator hotspots across Brighton and Hove, supported by a team of

dedicated volunteer Wildflower Guardians. These pockets of downland habitat are boosting urban biodiversity and helping residents discover and enjoy the unique chalk habitats of the South Downs.

## Communities taking action for chalk grassland

Volunteers have been at the heart of Changing Chalk. Groups have been established at peri-urban sites on the edge of Brighton, Newhaven, Lewes and Eastbourne. Here local communities are taking an active role in caring for their local chalk grassland by clearing winter scrub, monitoring wildlife, planting wildflowers and maintaining paths.



## The stories beneath our feet

Across the South Downs, archaeology, ecology and cultural heritage intertwine, with six thousand years of human stories etched into the chalk. The project area holds around 227 Scheduled Monuments, from Bronze Age burial mounds to Iron Age hillforts. Through community archaeology initiatives such as The Big Dig, guided walks and archaeology training with Monument Mentors and Downs from Above, local communities have explored the landscape's humps and hollows to discover the stories beneath their feet.

Creative workshops, heritage trails and exhibitions have invited people to step into the landscape and discover the South Downs as a place of heritage, identity and inspiration. Long-overlooked histories have been uncovered and activities across the partnership have created space for communities to share their own voices and connection with the South Downs. Changing Chalk has deepened people's understanding of the downland's past and shown how this remarkable landscape continues to inspire and shape lives today.

### Mapping the past, protecting the future

Led by the National Trust, Monument Mentors and Downs from Above have empowered local people to understand and protect the heritage of the South Downs.

Using LiDAR and aerial imagery, Historic England mapped 192sqkm of Brighton downland revealing a wealth of archaeological features, from barrows and field systems to lost WW2 defences. The **Downs from Above** digital platform has enabled volunteers and community groups to explore this data and verify the findings on the ground. This collective impact of aerial mapping, the online portal and volunteer effort has transformed our understanding of this historic landscape.

Meanwhile, **Monument Mentors** volunteers helped assess the condition of 150 Scheduled Monuments, with support from an archaeology apprentice and a youth trainee, creating the most comprehensive evidence base in decades. Their work has

informed management plans and urgent conservation work such as scrub clearance to protect these ancient sites. With growing public engagement, volunteers have 'adopted' monuments, ensuring their ongoing care.



## The Big Dig: Communities excavating the past



Involving over 6,000 residents, schoolchildren and volunteers, **The Big Dig** set out to inspire curiosity about the long history of human settlement around Eastbourne and Peacehaven. Led by Eastbourne Borough Council and latterly History Stories, the project invited local people to take part in archaeological excavations across the town, from public parks and school grounds, to test pits in private gardens. The digs brought the area's history vividly

to life with participants delighting in new discoveries and learning how to identify and record finds. Ancient pathways and droveways worn deep into the chalk were explored and, for many families, it sparked their first exploration of the South Downs. The project also engaged Romany historian, Janet Keet-Black, enriching the story of Eastbourne with Gypsy and Traveller stories through archival research and mapping.

## Amplifying marginalised voices in the landscape

A core aim under the Hearts and Histories theme was to explore the South Downs through diverse eyes and voices, revealing hidden heritage and untold histories, and elevating marginalised perspectives. Taking a community-led approach, the co-curated **Cultural Heritage**

project explored and uncovered the contribution and experiences of Gypsy and Traveller communities in the South Downs, while **Writing Our Legacy @ Changing Chalk** provided a creative platform to showcase the voices of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people in the landscape.

“ People talk about how being outdoors is good for mental health but they often miss that these outdoorsy spaces can feel very white and not very inclusive. ”

## Words, identity and the Downs: Writing Our Legacy @ Changing Chalk

Writing Our Legacy invited Black, Asian and ethnically diverse writers and artists to use the South Downs as a source of inspiration and discovery. The project created a safe, accessible space for participants to deepen their relationship with nature while reflecting on identity, heritage and place. Through seasonal workshops and creative sessions, participants explored their personal connection with the landscape, responding through writing, poetry, storytelling and the visual arts. In addition, 24 microbursaries helped open the South Downs to new perspectives and a richer more diverse tapestry of voices and stories.



“ Thank you for this workshop. It's been so lovely to be out in nature and writing about my family and my ancestors. ”

## Celebrating Gypsy and Traveller heritage

For centuries, Gypsy and Traveller communities have lived, worked and moved across the South Downs, yet traces of their heritage often remain unseen. Working with community members to co-curate activities, the project set out to make this rich history visible, recognised and celebrated. Broad in its remit, it included: an archival audit and research into Gypsy and Traveller heritage in the South Downs; guided walks exploring historic stopping places with

Romany historian Janet Keet-Black; and a travelling exhibition including a canvas tapestry designed by Romany artist, Elijah Vardo. A life-sized sculpture of 'Prissy' - a Gypsy Cob horse conceived by Romany blacksmith and artist, Jake Bowers, and forged with community input - became a powerful symbol of the Gypsy and Traveller communities' deep connection with the South Downs.



## Empowering community action for nature, people and heritage

The Community Grants Scheme empowered local groups and organisations to deliver community-led initiatives which connected around 6,000 people with nature and heritage in the South Downs. Over three years, we invested £147,000 in 32 community projects and reached audiences who might never have engaged with Changing Chalk. Projects included creative and nature-based activities, access improvements, historical and archaeological projects, guided walks, and equipment for groups to look after their local green spaces.

Guided by National Lottery Heritage Fund principles and a Community Grants advisory panel, the scheme offered funding of up to £7,500 (or £15,000 for capital habitat projects) giving grassroots groups the resources to deliver activities that reflected the needs and priorities of their communities.

### Widening participation

Funding projects designed by and for the groups they aimed to support meant the grants created opportunities and activities that were relevant, locally driven and impactful. By prioritising projects that supported marginalised and under-represented groups in the landscape and tackled barriers to

access, one of the scheme's greatest outcomes was the way it broadened the partnership's reach.

The scheme allowed us to connect with people who might never have taken part through traditional routes. Funded initiatives supported people from Queer, Trans and Intersex communities, people of the global majority, women,

families, people with mental health challenges, young people not in school, neurodivergent adults, and Gypsy and Traveller youth participants. Together, these leave a powerful legacy: strengthened relationships, widened participation, new confidence in accessing nature, and local people inspired and equipped to shape the future of their South Downs.

## From grants to growth: how communities flourished

The Scheme has created a powerful legacy leaving local groups more connected, more confident navigating funding, and more resilient as communities.

The funding helped reach diverse audiences across all three Changing Chalk themes with a strong emphasis on improving access to nature and supporting people facing health challenges or socio-economic disadvantage.

Some of the most transformative outcomes came from smaller, relationship-based projects. By working closely with participants over time, these initiatives built trust and helped people gain confidence in the landscape, creating lasting change. In many cases, projects transformed lives – showing how enabling sustained, community-centred work can create lasting impact that extends far beyond headline numbers.



“Before joining I was lonely and sad. I moved to the UK to join my children and grandchildren, but they are at work and school all day and I live alone. But now I have a place to belong. Stanmer feels like home.”  
Network of International Women of Brighton & Hove participant

## Project spotlights



The **Network of International Women of Brighton & Hove** offers a welcoming space for women, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, to connect and support one another. Through Changing Chalk, women benefitted from downland walks, ecotherapy and outdoor activities that enabled them to gain confidence in the countryside and overcome barriers such as using public transport. They enjoyed cultural exchange, learned about local heritage, built skills and confidence, and experienced significant wellbeing benefits.



The **Wild Flower Conservation Society**, a volunteer-led organisation, works to conserve and restore threatened native wildflowers associated with chalk grasslands. Through hands-on collecting, growing, community education and reintroduction projects, they bridge scientific conservation and action for the community. The Changing Chalk grant helped them purchase equipment to train new volunteers in seed sorting and propagation, and expand growing and storage capacity. They have supplied wildflowers to several Changing Chalk projects and wider initiatives.



Beachy Head has been a hub of international communication for hundreds of years. In 'Headland Communication: Tracing the lost voices of Beachy Head', **Wildwood Heritage CIC** supported volunteers to carry out archaeological surveys and research, gaining skills while uncovering insights into the area's unique history. The team ran workshops with local community groups, helping residents explore the stories held in the landscape, deepening people's understanding and appreciation of Beachy Head's cultural significance.

## What we learned

### Support for first time applicants is essential

Many of the groups we aimed to support had little or no experience of applying for grants, making the application process itself a barrier. Groups needed additional help to understand the requirements and commitments and to ensure their projects were achievable within the available time and resources.

### Flexible funding structures help remove barriers

Offering 50% upfront grant payments made a significant difference for small organisations with limited cash flow. We increased the available grant sizes in response to rising costs, but cash flow remained a challenge for most groups.

### Targeted outreach helped broaden our reach

Achieving a spread of projects across our project area and themes required proactive effort, targeted promotion and advertising, as well as direct engagement with target audiences. This successfully increased both the range and relevance of applications.



# Legacy | Landscape and communities strengthened

## A lasting impact for nature, people and heritage

Changing Chalk was founded on a shared vision: a sustainable future for the South Downs where nature, communities and heritage flourish together. From the outset, legacy planning was embedded, ensuring our impact continues well beyond the lifetime of the scheme.

The partnership has achieved significant gains for biodiversity: chalk grassland has been restored, grazing improved on priority sites, new habitats created, and resilience increased for wildlife. Challenges have been addressed and sustainable solutions found, with long-term management plans securing a legacy for nature.

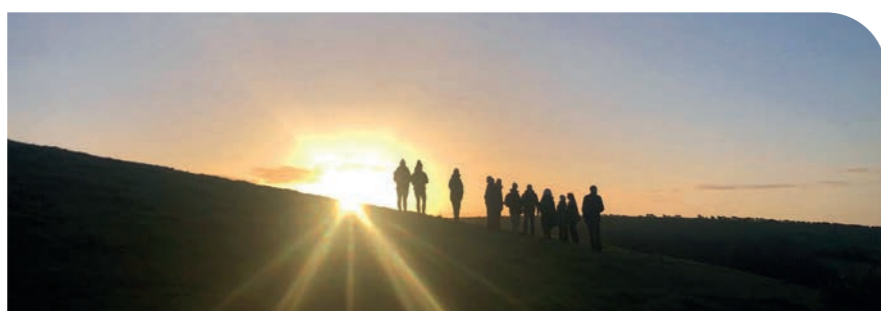
We assessed Scheduled Monuments, made new archaeological discoveries, and trained volunteers to help conserve these features of the past into the future. Hidden histories and diverse narratives have been celebrated, deepening our understanding of the South Downs. Local communities have been exploring their own connections with the landscape and telling their own stories.

The programme's impact on people has been significant: expanding access, improving wellbeing and building lasting connections between communities and the landscape. Dedicated volunteer groups are caring for their local sites, while strengthened relationships between organisations and communities provide the foundations for long-term collaboration.

Together, these achievements represent a powerful legacy.

Looking after the heritage of the Downs helps me see how important it is to preserve history for other people to feel connected to.

Monument Mentors volunteer



## Testing, embedding, sharing

Changing Chalk has tested approaches and developed models, such as Farm School and the Growing New Roots ecotherapy programme, which can be replicated elsewhere. RBG Kew's scrub clearance research with Natural England and Buglife's wildflower seed trials

in vineyards trialled techniques and produced technical guidance to inform future practice. Data from ecological surveys, new archaeological knowledge, and new resources - from a chalk grassland guide for farmers, to school learning packs and volunteer toolkits - will support

ongoing conservation efforts. Some projects have secured continuation funding, while Sussex Grazed is becoming self-sustaining. Learning and best practice has been captured and is already helping shape new initiatives and partnerships.

The Scrub Research project investigated seed sowing techniques to suppress scrub regeneration and promote the restoration of species-rich chalk grassland and reduce the need for labour-intensive management interventions.



## People-powered skills to sustain the South Downs



Across the partnership, Changing Chalk has left a powerful legacy of skills, confidence and connection. Volunteers have learned to identify species, survey chalk grassland, monitor Scheduled Monuments, and gained skills including traditional methods like hand scything. Dedicated volunteer



groups have been set up to look after their local green spaces. These experiences have deepened people's understanding of the South Downs - its habitats, wildlife and long human story - and equipped communities with the practical knowledge to care for it into the future.

For individuals, the impact has been transformative: improved wellbeing, a stronger sense of community and belonging, and a deeper connection with the landscape. Children and young people have been captivated through learning and outdoor experiences, garnering an appreciation for the landscape on their doorstep and a desire to look after it. For some, Changing Chalk has led to new pathways into volunteering, employment and heritage careers. Together, these skills and relationships form a lasting human legacy, one that will continue to sustain the South Downs for years to come.

## Six lessons learned

**1. Cultural heritage was a strong engagement tool.** Local communities were fascinated by the archaeology and stories beneath their feet – and connecting nature, people and heritage brought together diverse audiences.

**2. The diversity of partners made the project stronger, bringing together a wealth of expertise and broadening our networks.** Flexible structures and adaptable processes were essential to support organisations of different sizes and resource levels.

**3. The Habitat Working Group was an important forum for partners to share learning,** address challenges, refer sites for specialist support and work collectively at landscape scale.

**4. A blended approach to volunteer recruitment at programme and project level worked effectively** and volunteer managers benefitted from shared resources and peer support.

**5. The Community Grants Scheme required more staff resource than anticipated** but delivered wide-reaching impact and engaged new and diverse audiences.

**6. Strong governance, robust processes and clear communication were essential** and enabled us to adapt and respond to challenges while remaining focused on agreed outcomes.



## Lasting relationships, ongoing collaboration

Created around a shared endeavour, Changing Chalk's collaborative culture is one of our most important legacies – with strong appetite among partners and communities to continue working together. The Nature and Heritage Community Network, set up by the partnership, provides a space for local groups to connect, share knowledge and resources, and has become a hub of energy and expertise. Members are committed to continuing it beyond Changing Chalk, creating a legacy of ongoing collaboration and shared stewardship.

Changing Chalk may have come to an end but the story continues. The partnerships, learning and care it inspired will live on in the landscape, in our communities and in a shared commitment to look after the South Downs for many years to come.



## Acknowledgements

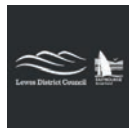
Led by the National Trust, Changing Chalk was a four-year partnership project connecting nature, people and heritage across the eastern South Downs. Supported by a £2.23 million grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, this collective achievement was made possible thanks to the dedication of partners, volunteers and local communities. We'd like to thank everyone involved.



National Trust



BRIGHTON & HOVE  
FOOD  
PARTNERSHIP



Royal Botanic Gardens  
Kew



Changing Chalk has been made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, thanks to National Lottery Players.



With thanks also to The Linbury Trust, players of People's Postcode Lottery, and other generous supporters of Changing Chalk.

THE  
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TRUST



**Changing Chalk**  
*connecting nature, people and heritage*



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