



Local Strategic Vision & Proposals

This paper is written by **Sompting Estate(SE)** with **Sustainable Sussex (SSx)**.

The purpose of this paper is to support the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan and its consultation, and to encourage community feedback and participation.

The paper also represents work in progress towards a South Downs National Park Authority Whole Estate Plan for Sompting Estate.

11.09.2020

The Vision in Context:

The South Downs National Park & Adur Local Plans

This is an aspirational document produced for the Parish Neighbourhood Plan and a supporting document for its policies where related. As such, the emphasis is on changes which may be of broad interest to the local community.

This Local Strategic Vision has also been produced in the context of the emergence of the Adur Local Plan. So where relevant, eg as regards meeting housing need, it has been guided by that plan.

When Sompting Estate produces a Whole Estate Plan for the South Downs National Park Authority, this will give much more detail, for example, on what ecosystems services will be delivered across the Estate, and how, and will include that small part of the Estate which is in Worthing. The ideas offered in this document are oriented towards the Park's landscape-led Local Plan, as well as towards the Adur Local Plan.

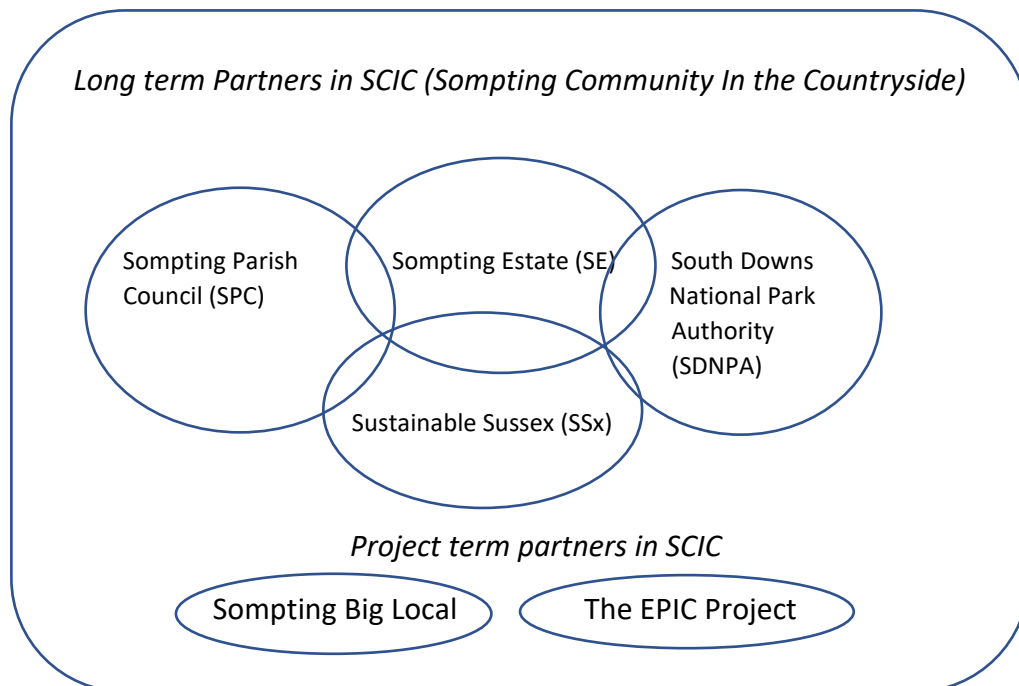
The National Park's Purpose 1 (conserve and enhance the landscape) and Purpose 2 (understand and enjoy the landscape), and its socio-economic Duty for communities, have been and will through this Vision be applied by the Estate, both within and without the actual Park boundary, delivering progress in Sompting as *a place where people and nature thrive*.

The 7 'Special Qualities' in which the Purposes and Duty of the Park are realized, are:	These special qualities can be furthered through the Vision in these Sections: (+ notes)
1. Diverse, inspirational landscapes and breath-taking views	1.4; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3: 1-12, 15; 2.3.3 + 35 years of landscape restoration in the Park landscape north of the A27
2. A rich variety of wildlife and habitats including rare and internationally important species	2.1; 2.2; 2.3: 1, 4, 9, 15, 16 + 35 years of habitat restoration in the Park landscape north of the A27
3. Tranquil and unspoilt places	2.1; 2.2; 2.3: 1,4,9,16,17; 2.3.3
4. An environment shaped by centuries of farming and embracing new enterprise	1.1-4; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3.1: 3,4,5,6.1-3,7,8,9, 2.3.2: 10,11,12,13,14,15
5. Great opportunities for recreational activities and learning experiences	1.3, 1.4, 2.3.1: 1,2a,2b,3,5,6.4,8.2,9 2.3.2: 12,13,16,17; 2.3.3;+10yrs DownsBarn courses
6. Well-conserved historical features and a rich cultural heritage	2.3.1: 5,7,9,12,17 + 15 years working with Lancing & Sompting Pastfinders + 12 yrs restoring trad'l buildings & fields + 8 years local projects with Worthing Archaeological Soc + 4 years founding & sponsoring Sussex Traditions charity.
7. Distinctive towns and villages, and communities with real pride in their area	P3; 1.1-4; 2.1-3; 2.3.1: 1-9; 2.3.2: 10-17; 2.3.3. + support for Sompting Community in the Countryside, Sompting Festival.

About the 'Sompting Community in the Countryside' initiative (SCIC)

SCIC arose from partnership working between Sompting Estate and Sompting Parish Council. Those partners have expanded it to include a wider umbrella group. Invited members of the SCIC group are organisations interested and engaged in the wellbeing of Sompting's community and countryside.

The aim of the SCIC group is to coordinate, share awareness and mutually support action programs which increase the opportunities of the community to promote health and wellbeing, education, and the experience and conservation of nature, in Sompting's countryside.



Sompting Parish Council (SPC) and Sompting Estate (SE) began working together from 2013, aiming to help more Sompting residents get to know, enjoy and enhance the Parish's countryside. Activities included eg walks-and-talks, conservation actions, wildlife courses.

They were joined by Sustainable Sussex (SSx), a charity partnering with Sompting Estate. The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), and Sompting Big Local (SBL), contributed grants. At the same time the EPIC Project www.somptingestate.com/EPIC was approved for Heritage Lottery Fund support.

These partner organisations, and others who may join, aim through SCIC to coordinate and promote action programs which include more stakeholders and further health and wellbeing, education and the experience and conservation of nature in the area.

Sompting Estate and Sustainable Sussex, in this local strategic vision paper, set out to share many of their individual and joint plans proposals and aspirations for Sompting's community in the countryside. Some of these will involve other member organisations in the SCIC partnership.

Feedback through this Neighbourhood Plan consultation process will help all the organisations to refine the vision and turn it into positive community and environmental action.

CONTENTS

1	Sustainable Sussex	
		<i>Page</i>
1.1	About Sustainable Sussex	5
1.2	Current Activity – Sussex Chilli Farm	6
1.3	Partnership Activity – The Sustainable Mind	6
1.4	Sompting Community Farm, Nature Trail & Orchard	7
2	Sompting Estate	
2.1	About Sompting Estate	9
2.2	Sompting Estate Vision	10
2.3	Sompting as “a place where people and nature thrive”	
	2.3.1 South of the A27: Sites 1-9	11
	2.3.2 North of the A27: Sites 10-17	19
	2.3.3 Access opportunities	26

1. Sustainable Sussex CIO = registered charity no. 1182997

1.1 About Sustainable Sussex

Sustainable Sussex is a charity based on Sompting Estate, run by Sompting residents Keith Colin and Liane Webb. Sompting Estate supports and provides a trustee to Sustainable Sussex to deliver a shared vision for the local community and environment.

Projects

The projects aim to be sustainable and are based around growing fruit and vegetables, other plants and trees, the environment, community engagement, health and wellbeing, mindfulness and access to opportunities including the SDNP, supporting the 5 ways to wellbeing: connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, give.

Volunteers

Sustainable Sussex aims to give volunteers positive experiences of cooperation to build sustainable community life. Anyone who wants to support their activities can ask to join in with them. Sustainable Sussex supports mixed needs groups and aims whenever possible to include people with mental and physical health problems, or learning disabilities, people who have been long term unemployed or may find accessing the workplace difficult. New volunteers may contact them directly through picking up a leaflet, or seeing them at events. The majority of volunteers come through recommendations or are referred through various community, social, employment and caring organisations.

Partnership working

Sustainable Sussex works with the other organizations in the Sompting Community in the Countryside partnership to help with their projects in Sompting. For example, they have been working with Malthouse Meadows Forest Garden, Sompting Big Local, and EPIC, and to provide continuity of community environmental voluntary work after the EPIC project will have finished.

Approach

The mixed nature of Sustainable Sussex groups encourages people to accept, support, teach, grow and learn from each other. Offering people who may have low self-esteem, for instance, the experience of helping and supporting others who may have skills to learn, or learning difficulties, and to learn from them, is a great boost to all. Where is our place in our community? How do we fit? Sustainable Sussex offers the opportunity to understand, find and grow into that space. This approach may evolve due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic.

Covid-19 and Resilience

Sustainable Sussex envisages, for a period, working one-to-one to engage people in a safe and controlled environment. Like so many, Sustainable Sussex had to suspend most volunteer activities during lockdown. Safe operation remains a priority during and after Covid. Sustainable Sussex will develop activities, facilities and ideas to help the community with recovery for a thriving, sustainable future.

1.2 Current activity – Sussex Chilli Farm (SCF)

Sustainable Sussex's first big project was to create Sussex Chilli Farm, a social enterprise which engages volunteers and offers experiential learning in a wide variety of tasks, from sowing seeds to chilli jam and infused oil production and selling the products at markets and chilli fairs, with income being reinvested in the projects. Sustainable Sussex inherited a conventional chilli business and is in the process of making it more sustainable, so it is now pesticide and artificial fertiliser free and run by the community.



Volunteers are growing fruit and vegetables and developing a small perennial and annual therapeutic polyculture garden around the polytunnel which will house plants from Sussex Chilli Farm. Although most volunteer activity had to be suspended during Covid-19, Sustainable Sussex and Sompting Estate are continuing to improve facilities for the future, with a new glasshouse,

formerly at Sompting Estate's Tristram Plants, being erected in summer 2020.

Sussex Chilli Farm does not currently have a kitchen to produce their chilli jams and oils, so they are building up a stock of dried and frozen produce ready for when a kitchen becomes available, or once their own is built at the planned Test Road Community Farm.



1.3 Partnership Activity - The Sustainable Mind (TSM)

Sustainable Sussex also works with The Sustainable Mind (TSM) – a project bringing mindfulness education and meditation to people who often do not have access to such training. Mindfulness is presently at the forefront of neuroscience with proven benefits for people with mental health problems like stress, anxiety and depression, chronic illness, pain and addictions.

People have been referred to TSM by Change Grow Live, Sussex NHS Partnership, Worthing Churches Homeless Project, National Probation Service and Strive, as well as directly by GPs from Ball Tree and Kingfisher surgeries as well as from Adur and Worthing Councils' social prescribing pilot, Going Local, and Mind. The Sustainable Mind also refers people into Sustainable Sussex and other appropriate projects. TSM has established online activity during lockdown, offering free mindfulness sessions to Sustainable Sussex volunteers and the wider community, and will later serve the community in a natural setting at the planned Test Road Community Farm.

1.4 Sompting Community Farm, Nature Trail & Orchard

Sustainable Sussex and Sompting Estate are working together to create Sompting Community Farm and Nature Trail at 'The Fen' (Test Road), and at a Community Orchard north of West Street.

Core funding to enable these will derive from Sompting Estate's sales of development land under the Adur Local Plan. As developments are approved, Sompting Estate will be enabled to commit land and finance to these projects.

These projects will aim to support local needs of the community as expressed in the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan and Adur Local Plan and the Sompting Big Local Plan 2017-2020.

Subject to finance and to timescale for safe delivery, Sompting estate and Sustainable Sussex will link the farm and countryside as widely as possible with the community through:

- a community café, class rooms, meeting places, meditation spaces and offices, in addition to the food production areas.
- a teaching kitchen to make products 'community-made in Sompting' and workshops for carpentry and traditional crafts.
- built using sustainable methods and technologies, and with plenty of community engagement at each stage.

The above all require a countryside location to effectively connect people, farm and nature. The Nature Trail will include

- a board walk with pond dipping platform.
- ecological interest on the site includes Flushed Fen, a rare and valuable habitat in the Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site.
- Sustainable Sussex will engage in wetland education, and support the legacy work of the HLF funded EPIC (Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities) Broadwater Brook project.

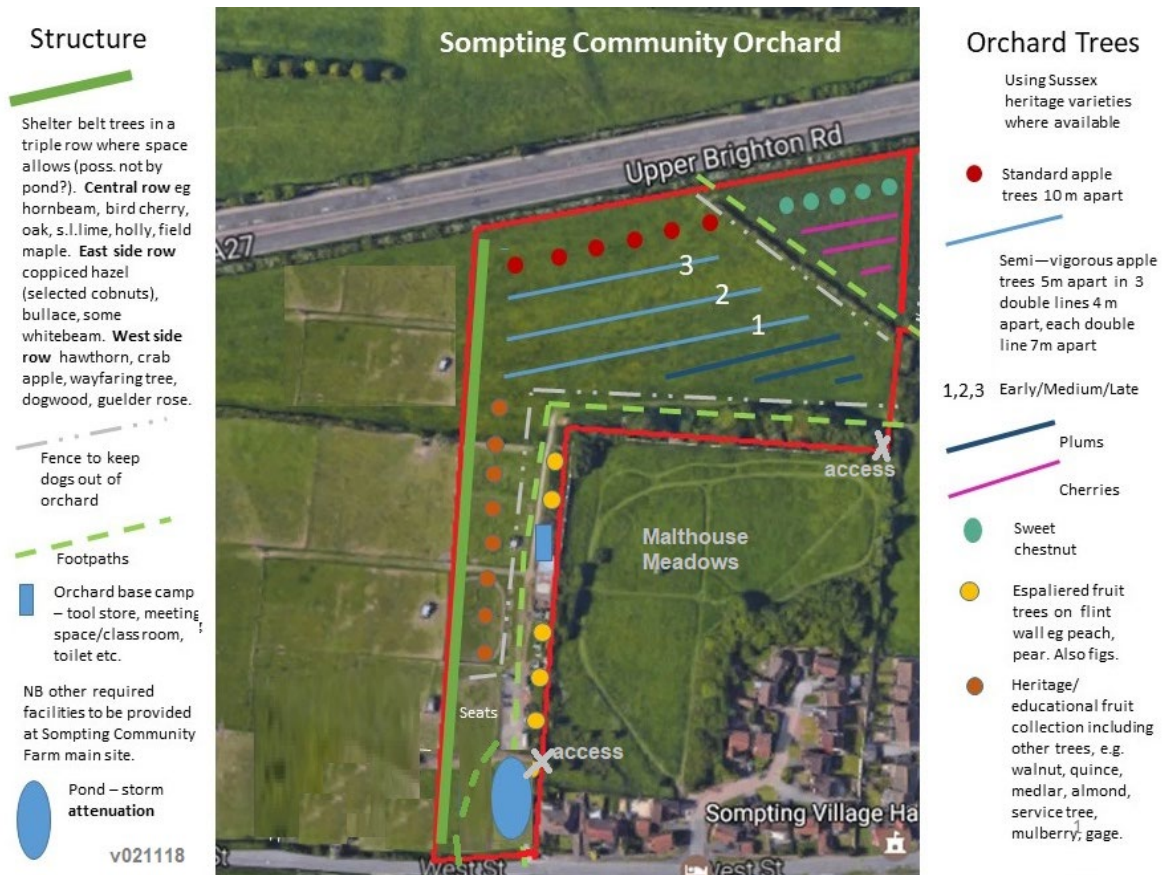
The benefits of creating Sompting Community Farm, Nature Trail and Orchard will include:

- Health and wellbeing
- Experience and Education
- Strengthening community
- Inclusivity, and Reducing inequality
- Improved Natural Environment
- Improved local food resilience

This is an artists impression of the Community Farm and Nature Trail at 'The Fen', Test Road:



This is the SE/SSx draft plan for the Community Orchard in Malthouse Field, north of West Street:



2. Sompting Estate

2.1 About Sompting Estate (SE)

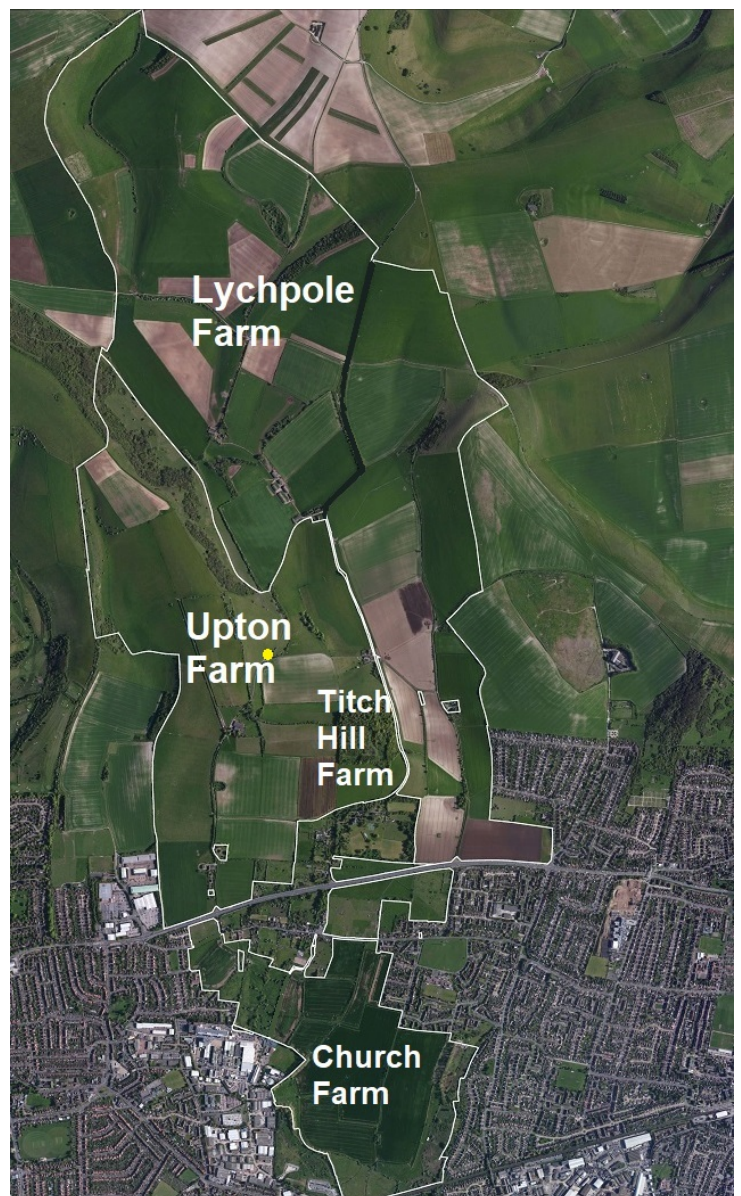
Much of the countryside in Sompting Parish is owned by the **Sompting Estate (SE)**. Landscape, wildlife and community involvement in the countryside were all impacted by the agricultural intensification that occurred under postwar Agricultural Holdings Act tenancies. Sompting Estate and its tenant farmers have been working to restore landscape and biodiversity alongside productive farming since the 1980s. More information can be found on www.somptingestate.com.

Farming and the Estate

Sompting Estate has four farms:

- *Lychpole Farm* is farmed by Caroline and David Harriott, with sheep and cattle. Other crops include the popular Pumpkin Patch and Maize Maze. It has a Local Wildlife Site on Steepdown Hill.
- *Upton Farm* is farmed by Philip and Claire Bower. It also has sheep and cattle. It looks after a Local Wildlife Site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- *Titch Hill Farm* was for a time merged with Upton and is now gradually being taken back in hand by the Estate for vineyard, holiday and conservation management.
- *Church Farm* is farmed by the Estate, with Frank Grantham as contractor. It is currently mainly arable, with some conservation grazing pasture which Frank and his son James graze as tenants with sheep and cattle.

Street Barns sale for housing enabled the Estate to convert the *Sompting Downs Barn* (yellow dot). As well as its main use by the Estate, this is made available at times for the environmental community, wildlife courses and small group visits such as the annual Parish Walk.



Twentieth Century Changes

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Estate employed many local people on the land and was an integral part of the community. Early C20th changes altered this. Between 1950-1990, farmland had by law been put into three-generation tenancies, making the landowner a mere rent-taker. Tenant farmers, guided by the government priorities of the day, intensified the farming. This meant more arable, fewer animals, fewer hedges, fewer flowery grasslands, loss of traditional buildings, less wildlife, car-dependant life, fewer people working on the land or connecting with it.

Twenty-first Century Changes

Since 1990, Sompting Estate Trustees have been developing a vision to restore traditional practices features and wildlife habitats, and to find appropriate ways for the community to enjoy it more. In common with other Estates they have found that their economy needs to change to be sustainable, and have begun to diversify from purely agricultural rental income to a mixed portfolio of business activities. These will aim to be compatible with objectives of Parish and Park and to create more local employment.

Developments: Opportunity to fund the new local strategic vision

The Adur Local Plan development opportunities will not only meet identified housing need, they are also enabling the Estate to invest in a more vibrant, sustainable future for the countryside of the Parish and the Park.

2.2 Sompting Estate Vision

SE Trustees have a vision which aims to:

- restore wildlife, landscape features and habitats in an enhanced landscape,
- create a more vibrant and sustainable economy, and
- promote wellbeing in the community through reconnection with the countryside.

This vision is summed up by Sompting Estate as (Sompting being):

a place where people and nature thrive.

The Sompting Estate Trustees intend to draft a **'Whole Estate Plan'(WEP)** for submission to the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), and consult the parish on it. The SDNPA WEP will give more detail on eg ecology and ecosystems services. This local strategic vision could be a foundation document for the WEP, especially if adopted through the SPNP process.

The other key enablers for Sompting Estate's local strategic vision will be individuals with enthusiasm and ideas for Sompting, and, partnership working with organizations especially through the Sompting Community in the Countryside (SCIC) initiative.

2.3 Sompting as “a place where people and nature thrive”

Proposals are here described under site numbers 1-17. These are marked indicatively on aerial photographs, first **south of the A27** (sites 1 - 8), and then **north of the A27** (sites 9 – 17).

2.3.1 Sompting South of the A27 as “a place where people and nature thrive”



Proposals for sites in Sompting south of the A27

	<i>Page</i>
1. EPIC Project site	12
2. West Sompting housing development	12
3. ‘The Fen’ Community Farm	14
4. Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site	15
5. Rural Events / Working Horses	16
6. Loose Barnyard & fields	17
7. Market Gardening, Leisure & Agroforestry	18
8. Sompting West Brooks	18

1. The EPIC Project Site

This is a partnership project between Sompting Estate and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust. Funded mainly by Heritage Lottery Fund. Creation of a new Broadwater Brook route has created a beautiful and wildlife-enhancing stream through farmland, instead of going through a too-small culvert under the old landfill site picking up pollutants.



The project includes hedge and tree planting and creation of a 4m wide river trail from the West Sompting development site boundary along the stream to view and enjoy it. It also includes supported opportunities for community involvement; ecological surveying and volunteering; oral and local history research; education & the arts; water quality and sustainability themed events and learning. Project staff are based in the Sompting Estate Office. EPIC will also need a base for volunteers and equipment in walking distance from the EPIC stream and path; this will be shared with Sustainable Sussex for legacy purposes.

2. The West Sompting housing development Sites

The housing and public spaces associated with this Local Plan allocation will be described and determined in the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plan and application process.

There is potential for Sompting Estate to supply local garden plants (tristramplants.co.uk), and the farm edges and new access will provide a rural ambience to this part of the village.

2a. West Sompting – South Area – Countryside connections

- *New footpath*: The EPIC project will provide a river trail footpath to its stream.
- *Cycleway*: When a crossing is provided through to Deacon Way (once the future of Decoy Farm WLP A4 is determined), the Estate aims to provide land in Adur for a footpath and cycleway connecting the West Sompting development to East Worthing.
- *Links to the Community Farm*: Links will be provided within the development area for foot and cycle access to the Community Farm/Test Road. The farm track access in the South East corner of the West Sompting development area, connecting the Community Farm to Church Farm, should be retained as a farm track to give the Community Farm scope to engage with the farming on a wider land area in the future.

2b. West Sompting – North Area (Malthouse) – Countryside connections

- *Community Orchard:*
SE has developed a design for a community orchard north and west of Malthouse Meadows – see page 8. The community orchard can be managed by the Community Farm with resources for communally processing its products located at Test Road.
- *Footpath:*
A new footpath will link from West Street to the community orchard and FP2071. The orchard will also connect at 2 points with Malthouse Meadows enabling circular walks.
- *Dankton Paddock:* After a strip bordering Dankton Lane has been made available for road widening, and once the north end is no longer required for haulage access, the Estate will retain this 2-acre horse-paddock site for use in conjunction with Site 5 (working horses) or for other, community health and wellbeing related purposes.



3. Test Road Site: “The Fen” Community Farm

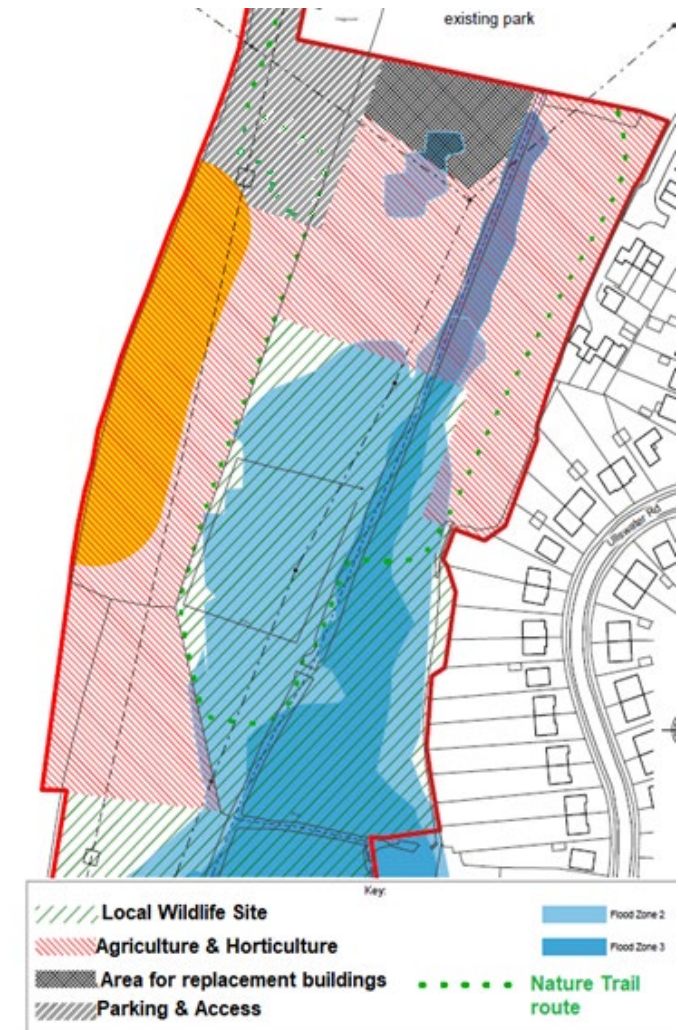
This is a partnership project between Sompting Estate and Sustainable Sussex.

As described above, Sustainable Sussex and Sussex Chilli Farm have been operating on several sites around the Estate.

At this site the aim of SSx and the Estate is to bring together community, land, food production and nature conservation, delivering a community facility for the benefit of all.

See plan opposite:

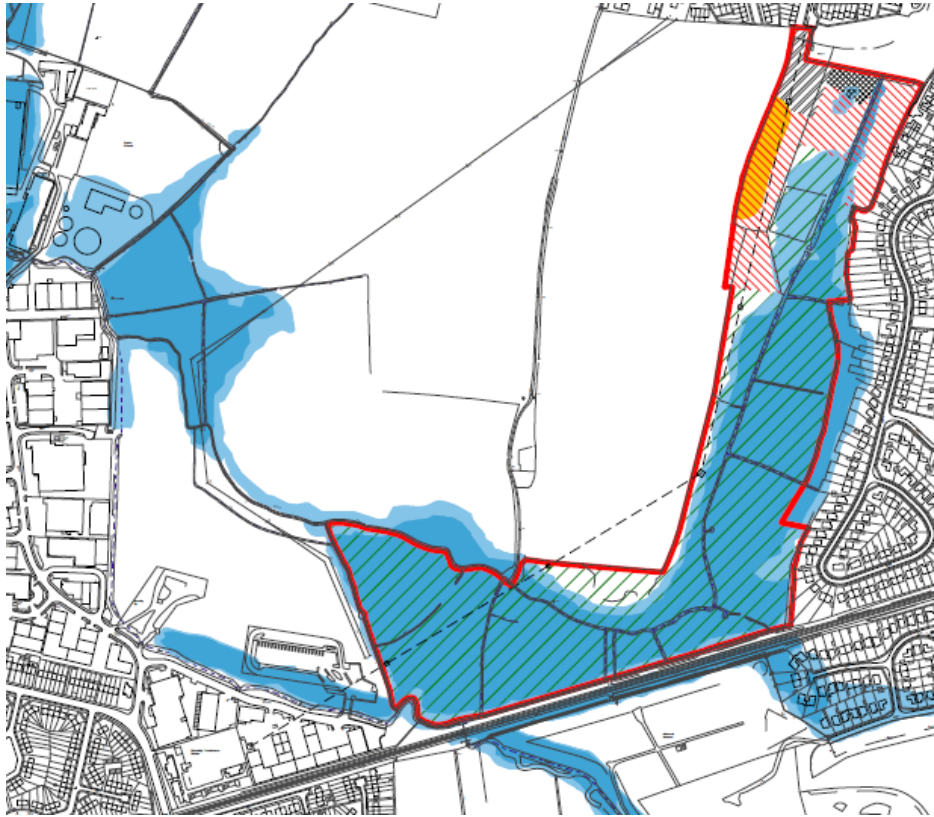
The spot marked ‘existing park’ is the Hamble Recreation Ground, from where the eastern access to the Nature Trail round route will be provided.



Activities and facilities at the Community Farm should include

- Agriculture, horticulture and conservation;
- working together to turn seasonal farm and community orchard products into food and drink;
- café and small farm shop for feeding the farm and countryside volunteers and for offering the produce of the farm;
- well designed replacement buildings of rural design on the site;
- a nature trail open to the public at daytimes;
- sustainability workshops relating to the rural environment;
- opportunities for countryside and farm volunteering, work experience, education, employment skills training, building of confidence and relationships, mindfulness courses.

4. Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site (LWS): Flushed Fen Habitat



The Community Farm will play an important role in helping with the conservation grazing management of the extended Local Wildlife Site (LWS), enabling the sustainable operation of grazing regimes and methods which would not be viable on a simple commercial basis.

The Estate has worked with ecological consultants and Sussex Wildlife Trust and Biodiversity Recording Centre to more than double the area designated as LWS, which now includes all the area hatched green in the plan above.

Detailed ecological surveys have been carried out and experts have advised a low-intensity conservation grazing regime by cattle. This would help restore the diversity of flowers and insects that would have been seen in these brookland meadow fields in the early twentieth century. Birds using these wet areas to feed in the winter include snipe, lapwing and teal.

A **Local Environmental Management Plan (LEMP)** has been produced to guide future management of the site. Through the community farm there will be opportunities for volunteers to be involved.

The Nature Trail managed by the community farm will give daily access with a boardwalk to a beautiful wet area at the northern end of the LWS, whilst leaving most of the area relatively undisturbed for nature.

5. West Street Fields Site: Rural Events / Working Horses

The farm pasture on the north side of West Street was in recent years divided up into small horse paddocks with shelters sheds and haybarn. Under the Adur Local Plan's West Sompting development scheme, a strip bordering the west side of Malthouse Meadows will temporarily be required for a construction haul route, so as to minimise village impact. However, to the west of this strip, a substantial field area will remain in agricultural and equine use by the Estate. The field opposite, on the south side of West Street, is unaltered by the development and is currently arable.

These two fields, north and south of West Street, are at a defining point in the village. It lies in between the old village Conservation Area, and the more built up areas in east Sompting and Cokeham. Here, residents walking cycling riding or driving on West Street can look south into Church Farm, and north towards Sompting's iconic church and the downs.

The fields on both sides of West Street at this location, traditionally part of the farm, were used in 1936 for the first South of England Show: marquees and the show on the north, car parking on the south side of the road.

Sompting Estate has therefore identified these two fields as a site where (a) the village's historic character and traditional farm and landscape values are important, and (b) outdoor seasonal events, through which the public can enjoy their countryside and rural heritage, may be appropriate.



There is growing public interest in traditional and sustainable farming methods. For instance: the Weald & Downland Museum, or the Dorset Heavy Horse Farm Park. A small scale Working Horse centre could be a possibility here: young people and volunteers would be involved with the animals and learn skills, and the horses could do work on the Community Farm and Church Farm generally.

Such activities can provide opportunities for partnership working with another Sompting Estate sponsored charity, Sussex Traditions, which has drawn inspiration and valued local material from Lancing & Sompting Pastfinders.

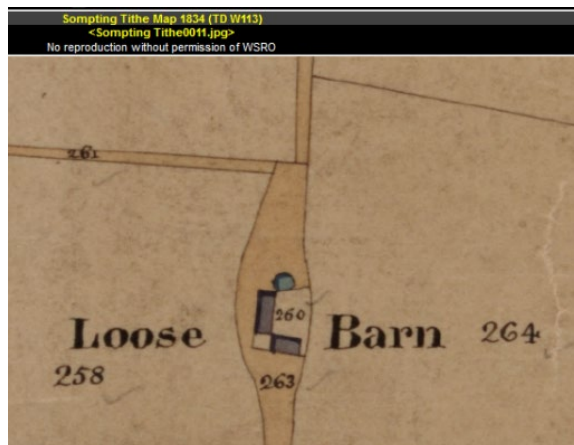
A barnyard and cartshed for vintage horse-drawn equipment could be in either field. In the south field, conversion to pasture, and some improvement of farm track accesses and gateways, will be required, if this field may be used for parking for community rural events.

Regard will be had to the remains of the old Maltheuses in the north field, which the Estate's research partners, the Worthing Archaeological Society, have been investigating.

6. Loose Barn Site: restored traditional barnyard & fields

The Loose Barn site is at the bottom of the farm track which runs south from Loose Lane. This barnyard was demolished in the 1960s when it became unsafe. It was not replaced because the farm was then occupied predominantly with wheat and other arable crops. Within the new conservation management plan for the Local Wildlife Site, conservation grazing by cattle is essential. To achieve this sustainably, the old barnyard will need to be rebuilt so that there is somewhere to pen cattle in shelter off the fen when it is wet. Also somewhere to store winter food, and for protected calving when we get a small resident breeding herd.

A similar barnyard scale, layout and overall landscape appearance as the historic barnyard might be achieved using contemporary materials, and working around the trees that the farm planted there in the 1970s.



In the large field west of the Loose Barn site, the EPIC project has sown a wildflower meadow. Pasture here will support the conservation grazing of the Local Wildlife Site, as will a rotation of arable and pasture leys in the arable fields northwest of Loose Barn. The leys, the pasture and the barnyard will make the conservation grazing of the Cokeham Brooks Flushed Fen LWS (Site 4) more sustainable, by providing some drier pasture and more varied feeding opportunities for the animals.

7. Market gardening, Leisure Access & Agroforestry

7a Farm changes

Sompting Estate envisages eventually diversifying these small fields for more varied and interesting cropping such as vegetable/salad/fruit growing. These crops would require some protected growing/handling/ PYO/seasonal facilities at the north end of these fields and potentially including the smallholding site at Marepond Lane (sometimes called Decoy Lane, south from the Marquis of Granby).

Church Farm already needs, for its arable crops, to have its own facilities south of the A27, reducing travel. Two small barnyards are likely to be needed in the future, to accommodate more diverse cropping on Church Farm, and to make local food more easily available to local residents. One would be at Site 7a, and one further west behind the old Upton dairy buildings.

7a Leisure access

Local horse riders have asked for access to an off-road riding route south of the A27. Sompting Estate is considering making a private bridleway for local riders available on the route shown below subject to consultation by Sompting Estate with the riding community. At the south end, the horse course would run parallel to Sompting Estate's suggested footpath along the southern boundary of the site with GSK. The route is 18pprox.. 1 mile long.



7b & 7c Agroforestry

An approach under consideration for these fields is a system variously described as Restoration Agriculture, Permaculture, or Agroforestry. This would create a mixed row cropping system with trees for fruit/nuts, soft fruit bushes, vegetables herbs and salads. Such cropping systems could enable more diverse, sustainable and biodiverse local food production – together with more opportunities for the Community Farm, and for the wider community eg through pick-your-own.

8. Sompting West Brooks site: grazing, woodland and wetland wildlife

These beautiful small, undulating pasture fields traversed by streams are important to wildlife and will be conservation-grazed in tandem with the Cokeham Flushed Fen LWS (Site 4). Sompting Estate has planted a small woodland at the south end. Views up through this landscape to the village and the downs would be available, if an east-west footpath were to be made here, linking to the EPIC footpath.

2.3.2 Sompting North of the A27 as “a place where people and nature thrive”



Proposals for sites in Sompting north of the A27

	<i>Page</i>
9. Sompting Estate Vineyard	20
10. B&B and Holiday accommodation	21
11/12. Local produce shop, café, visitor centre	23
12. Health & wellbeing sites	24
13. Upper Dankton Lane	24
14. Open Access sites	24
15. St Marys and National Park access	25

9. Vineyard site/s

The first Sompting Estate vineyard was planted at site 9a in May 2019. A little extra home vineyard was planted west of 9b in 2020. Another, at 9b on the plan, will be planted when finance allows, perhaps in 2022. The vineyards are run by Alex Tristram, a first step to involve the next generation in the Estate. Seasonally and as the vineyard business grows, the number of related employment opportunities will increase.

The first vineyard will initially be selling all its grapes to Ridgeview Wine Estate at Ditchling but once enough grape juice is being produced, it is intended that named Sompting Estate branded sparkling and still wines will be made. The small second vineyard will be for still wines for local production and sale.

The vineyard's initial facility needs, for securely storing vineyard equipment, for handling the harvest, and for staff welfare and management, will be met at Middle Yard Barn and grainstore. At this later stage a vineyard barn is likely to be needed at site 9b, just north of Hillcroft, to service staff and small tools on site. It could incorporate an upper room for wine tasting and talks, which would offer breath-taking views across the vineyards to the Church, Sompting Abbots, Titch Hill Wood, and the distant white cliffs and sea.

For a successful Sompting vineyard business, engaging people with experience of the landscape so they are 'drinking and eating the landscape' will need to be an integral part of our offering. We will aim to provide tours and to link the vineyard, and the surrounding traditional landscape use and heritage, to a beautifully designed tourism/arts facility incorporating and protecting a limekiln WAS have excavated for us, within the chalkpit about 200 metres up Lambleys Lane from the proposed vineyard barn site.

Produce of the land in Sompting may also be used in future for non-alcoholic drinks brewed by partner companies at Middle Yard Barn.

The areas on the southern slopes of Upton and Titch Hill Farms which have potential for vineyard use, and the two vineyards planted in 2019 and 2020, are shown below.



10. Sompting Tourism sites: B&B, Holiday accommodation and activities

Farmers and landowners in the South Downs National Park (SDNP) are encouraged to derive income from providing enjoyable experience and understanding of the landscape, alongside food production. If holidaymakers are paying to enjoy our landscape's wildlife and heritage, then conserving this natural beauty and business viability are aligned.

The Estate sees a holidays business both as an important diversified future income stream and also as a key part of its mission to enable more people to sustainably experience, understand and appreciate the history, traditions, nature and beauty of our landscape.

Holiday opportunities will include supported activities events and courses. Education, heritage, health and wellbeing, local food and drink, the environment, ecology, sustainable living, skills and the arts, can all be targeted holiday activity themes. The beauty of the natural and farmed Sompting landscape is the primary attraction. Holiday facilities and management of the landscape will by design be in keeping with this and will have low visual impact on local users walking the paths.



At site 10a, Steepdown Farmhouse

is a large family farmhouse put together in the 1940s from two older farm cottages. This is now the Estate's main in-hand farmhouse. As a first step towards providing opportunities for holidaymakers to stay overnight and for longer periods in Sompting's beautiful part of the South Downs National Park, the Estate family will be offering B&B here. Visitors will be provided with information and activities to enjoy exploring the downs around the farmhouse. A wider range of holiday opportunities on Titch Hill and Upton Farms, as appropriate within the landscape, would include:

- Glamping opportunities in small woodland edges
- Holiday units in small stables south of the farmhouse
- Seasonal bell tent camping in a rewilded area of Titch Hill Farm north of the farmhouse
- Uniquely designed eco-accommodation in the small farmhouse chalkpit

At site 10b (in the numbering on map 2.3.2), Lychpole Old Barns

are beautiful traditional buildings which are no longer used in modern agriculture but are redolent with history. This site had planning permission for holiday accommodation about 10 years ago, but this permission was not implemented, due to lack of funds to commence it. Sompting Estate will submit a new, improved application, which will deliver high quality holidays and better landscape connection in this unique location.

We store traditional horse-drawn farm equipments in the cartshed opposite the old stable barn which was built to house four pairs of working farm horses; these barns offer great opportunities to theme holidays experiences around the traditional buildings uses.

Due to the cost of sustaining these traditional buildings we will need to offer a higher-end holiday experience here for it to be viable. Holidaymakers will experience sustainable livestock farming today through their proximity to the modern livestock handling barn, their arrival and frequent accesses at the old farm buildings will need to be separated from those of herds, large tractors and larger reversing livestock transport lorries.

At site 10c (in the numbering on map 2.3.2), the Stable Cross Barn area

has small hedged fields which open to great views but are not overlooked. This site provides opportunities for summer season camping, offering those on lower budgets the chance to do this in the National Park. Within the Barns site the accessible yet beautiful and tranquil location has potential for an events facility. Some camping-in-the-vines may also be offered in a small vineyard between Stable Cross Barn and the Sompting Downs Barn, giving a more secluded and special experience. All such opportunities will be phased in at times when the landscape is ready to accept them, for example when some hedges and trees have grown up more, aiming always to fit holiday facilities as naturally and harmoniously as possible into the landscape.

At site 10d (in the numbering on map 2.3.2), the Beggars Bush barnyard

south of the Lychpole Old Barns, has mid twentieth century buildings on the site of an earlier threshing barnyard with flint buildings. Part of this site might in the future have potential as holiday accommodation with beautiful views facing south toward Titch Hill Wood. Other potential uses include a wood workshop or other commercial use appropriate to the rural setting, and a base for a 'Forest & Farm School' as it is set between Lychpole Farm and the Lychpole Side Hill SSSI woodland. The long low barn being divisible into separate bays; combinations of these ideas are possible.

Holidaymakers enjoying any of these options, B&B, furnished holiday accommodation, glamping or camping holidaymakers, could benefit from participation in courses and events, enhancing their understanding and experience of the special qualities of our parish's downland landscape.

11. or 12 South Downs Produce Shop, Café and Visitor Centre

The Sompting Downs are difficult for many people in this well-populated area to access. For those who have cars, parking in the Sompting Downs is limited, and for those who do not, crossing the A27 is for most a difficult barrier. (See Site 15 for a relevant proposal.)

The Estate would like to provide a rural National Park 'gateway' facility for refreshment, information about the downs and walk routes, where locals and visitors can also buy produce from Sompting and from the South Downs counties of Sussex and Hampshire. Marketing and sourcing would focus especially on providing people living in Adur & Worthing with a good range of quality produce from as near as practical.

The facility could also host courses events and resources, and be a setting off point for farm, woodland, agroforestry and vineyard tours. It could also offer a physical downland base for the Estate's sponsored partner charities 'Sussex Traditions' and 'Sustainable Sussex'.

Seasonal produce from Sompting Estate's future diversified output would be on offer, such as lamb, beef, honey, wine, vegetables, fruit, plants, woodland and agroforestry produce. The capacity for the Estate to sell own farm products at retail margins, will make it more economically sustainable to use less-intensive, village-scale, more environmentally friendly methods in the parish. There could also be opportunities for the Community Farm to participate in this venture in ways which further the social and charitable objectives of Sustainable Sussex.

The facility could potentially be located at either of sites 11 or 12 depending on planning and Highways considerations. In either location, perhaps particularly at site 12, the proposed development could be integrated with other facilities meeting community health and wellbeing needs in alignment with the Purposes of the National Park.

12. Health and Wellbeing Sites

A downland health and wellbeing facility could be combined, at site 12, with the shop/café/visitor-centre proposal, as a mixed use connecting with local homes and countryside. This should complement Sompting Big Local's proposals at Halewick.

Options will also need to be considered to enhance local medical and other wellbeing facilities for a growing and ageing population. Ball Tree Surgery are considering expansion of their current site, for the short to medium term. For the longer term, site and design options will need to be identified for a new GP surgery facility. One option might be to combine a satellite health and wellbeing facility at site 12 with a principal surgery site south of the A27 where most residents live.

13. Upper Dankton Lane site

The fields here are currently used by Lychpole Farm. Some of these fields, sheltered from westerly wind, may also be suitable for permaculture agroforestry, perhaps with PYO, and for viticulture on some south facing slopes.

Dankton Barnyard, whose farm buildings were demolished as unsafe in the 1970s, was used in the decades after that for burning garden waste, and is now being lent to Breathing Spaces for wildflower production. It could also have a future, restored, as a local base for diversified agriculture in this part of the Estate.

14. Open Access Sites: **Beggars Bush, Lychpole Side Hill, Steepdown Hill**

14a The Beggars Bush open access flowermeadow next to the little car park on top of the Sompting Downs, is many people's first point of access to this landscape. The Estate and Parish Council, with Community in the Countryside partners the National Park and Sompting Big Local, have been working to enhance the value of this site for wildlife, for the community and for National Park visitors, in tandem with Adur's Malthouse Meadows site.

The Park Ranger is leading on a major improvement project here for 2020/21. To sustainably increase the wildflowers which make this site so valuable for butterflies moving between Steepdown Hill and Lychpole Hill Local Wildlife Sites, the meadow will be enlarged and fenced to permit seasonal sheep grazing, with kissing gates to allow enhanced public access and enjoyment of the site. A new footpath southward will also be created, allowing circular walks.

14b At Lychpole Side Hill SSSI Local Wildlife Site and Open Access Area,

Sompting Estate has hosted occasional Forest Schools, non-intensively so as to minimise disturbance. The Estate is interested in the development of a different version suited to this landscape called 'Forest and Farm School', with a local partner organization to be found.

14c Steepdown Hill Local Wildlife Site and Open Access Area is especially beautiful in cowslip season and for its long views across to Cissbury Ring.

15. St Mary's Church Sompting, and, access to the National Park

For more than a millennium, Sompting's iconic church has been a centre for Sompting's community in the countryside. It is the most widely recognized symbol of the special character of the historic and beautiful Parish of Sompting.

This church building is considered by some to have best claim to the title 'Cathedral of the Downs'. Its spire can be seen rising up against the downs from many parts of the Adur & Worthing coastal plain. This visual presence makes it a natural place for many to go, from the wider area as well as the parish, to deepen their connection with the National Park landscape and heritage.

Farming and fishing, family life and funerals, faith and doubt, peace and war, nature and nurture, music meditation and worship, have all come together here. This is where the community can come to access 1000 and more years of its heritage and roots. For a quarter of that time this Sompting Estate family and their tenants have managed the countryside through many changes. But the church's use for worship services has recently reduced, not least because of severance by the A27 from most of the village population.

So this is a time to develop ideas for ways in which it can more accessibly serve, and be conserved by, the local and wider community. St Mary's can offer everyone a place to step outside the everyday, to reconnect with, understand and respond spiritually to their countryside, landscape and heritage. The Sompting Estate, the Friends of Sompting Church, and other local bodies will be keen to help the diocese assure its safe and useful future.

Ways to make it safer for non motorized users to cross the A27 to the church, and improved disabled access at the church, should be identified and supported. Land on the east side of Church Lane, immediately north and immediately south of the A27, can be made available by the Estate if required for a bridge or underpass. However, this would cost potentially over £2M. The most practical, affordable and sustainable solution in the climate and environment emergency which is not going away, and the most appropriate on the edge of the National Park, would be for the Sompting Bypass to be made 40mph same as the single carriageway routes to east and west. Then, more people would feel they could cross safely on foot; quiet would be restored to St Mary's; and cyclists could use any surplus A27 width.



The path up into the Sompting Downs ascends on the west side of the St Marys and the Abbotts

2.3.3 Access opportunities

Sompting parish's access network is already good north of the A27, so opportunities for improvement are mainly to be sought south of the A27.



THE SOMPTING ESTATE

— poss. future

BASED ON ORDNANCE SURVEY DATA WITH THE PERMISSION
OF THE CONTROLLER OF HMSO. CROWN COPYRIGHT



KEY to map on previous page:

Red = Existing public rights of way (including 'permissive paths' west of N.Sompting)

Hatched Red = Open access areas

Orange = Potential new/improved access routes.

Access is already very good across the northern part of the parish. Following the orange numbers on the map above, potential further improvements are:

1. a. This route which is a partnership project with the National Park Authority will bring walkers off the narrow road, enabling a safer circular walk from the Beggars Bush car park and from other footpaths.

b. This route is under consideration as it would enable walkers more easily to complete a circular dewponds walk within the Estate.

c. This route could make it easier for walkers from North Sompting to more directly access the Lychpole Side Hill SSSI Open Access Area and Cissbury, without disrupting the Estate's plans for secluded areas for holidaymakers on Upton / Titch Hill Farm.
2. A proposed daytime circular Nature Trail within the Community Farm & Local Wildlife Site.
3. The footpath that is being created as part of the HLF supported EPIC project.
4. In collaboration with Worthing Borough Council: a foot and cycle link across the old tip to Deacon Way, Worthing Station and the coast.
5. A direct country cycle link from W.Sompting to Worthing could be added here.
6. A footpath linking the EPIC path to the new Worthing Local Plan housing allocation site at Upper Brighton Road, or to Clarendon Road, is also under consideration for the future.
7. This indicates foot and cycle path within the West Sompting development area (south)
8. New footpath and community orchard within the West Sompting development area (north)
9. New footpath along south side of Upper Brighton Road

End

