



**SustainableSussex**  
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## Local Strategic Vision & Proposals

This paper has been written by **Sompting Estate(SE)** and **Sustainable Sussex (SSx)**.

The purpose of the paper is:

- To inform and engage the wider Sompting community
- To inform the Sompting Parish Neighbourhood Plan (SPNP), complementing the vision and policy work of SPC
- To invite feedback and, if supported, adoption by the community, perhaps through the SPNP.

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6.4.2019

## The Vision in Context:

# The South Downs National Park, Adur & Worthing

This is an aspirational document produced for the Parish Neighbourhood Plan. As such, the emphasis is on changes which may be of broad interest to the local community.

Our Local Strategic Vision has also been produced in the context of the emergence of the Adur & Worthing Local Plans. So it has, where relevant, for example in relation to meeting community housing need, been guided by those plans.

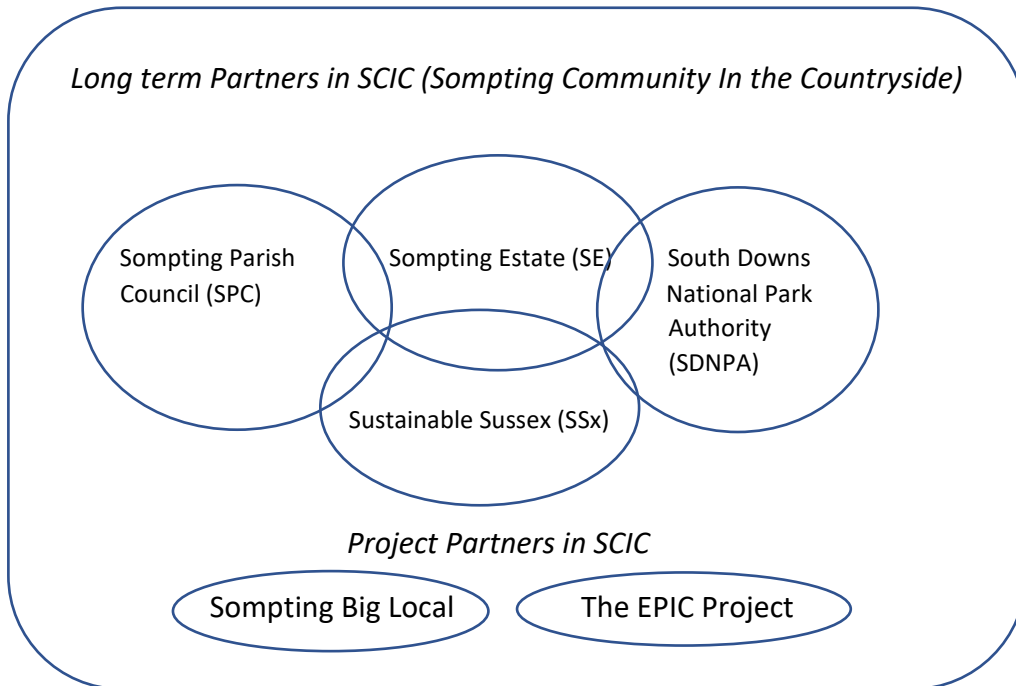
When Sompting Estate produces a Whole Estate Plan for the South Downs National Park Authority, this will give much more detail, for example, on what ecosystems services will be delivered across the Estate, and how. The ideas offered in this document are already just as much about the Park's landscape-led Local Plan, as they are about the objectives of the Adur & Worthing Local Plans.

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)

- A partnership for health and wellbeing of community and countryside
- A partnership that has been growing for 5 years
- Six organizations currently involved



**Sompting Parish Council (SPC)** and **Sompting Estate (SE)** began working together in 2013, with the aim to encourage more Sompting residents to get to know and enjoy the Parish's countryside, and to help look after it. Activities so far include: annual Parish Walk; project to restore Beggars Bush flowermeadow (a public access chalk grassland with car parking); wildlife courses at the Downs Barn; wildflower planting events. SPC appointed groundsman Leighton Clay as part-time conservation officer.

SPC+SE then led a series of guided walks and talks in 2017 and 2018, in which 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](http://www.somptingestate.com/EPIC) was approved for Heritage Lottery Fund support.

Anne Godley of SPC, in summer 2018, initiated a strategic review discussion with Sompting Estate, Sustainable Sussex, Sompting Big Local and SDNPA about aims and opportunities for SCIC. The partner organisations agreed an aim, to:

Develop joint action programs including more stakeholders and bringing together health and wellbeing, education and the experience and conservation of nature.

*Sompting Estate and Sustainable Sussex have gone on to develop a local strategic vision as set out in this paper, with the proposals through which they would like to contribute to the aims of Sompting Community in the Countryside.*

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## 1. Sustainable Sussex (SSx)

### 1.1 About Sustainable Sussex

#### Projects

Sustainable Sussex began as a grass-roots community garden project based at Worthing Leisure Centre. All of 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

The organisation works with mixed needs groups including people with learning disabilities, those with mental and physical health problems, people who have been long term unemployed and anyone else who may find accessing the workplace difficult, or anyone who wants to support the project's activities. SSx volunteers are either self-referred through picking up a leaflet, seeing us at events or on social media, through recommendations or are referred through various organisations including The Aldingbourne Trust (WorkAid scheme) Worthing Job Centre Plus, West Sussex County Council Adult Learning Disabled and Autism Services, The Langford Centre in Bexhill and others.

#### Approach

The mixed ability nature of SSx groups is key to the success of the projects as it encourages people to accept, support, teach, grow and learn from each other. SSx are also able to help more people with their needs as there is more support for everyone. Offering people who may have low self-esteem, for instance the opportunity to help and support others who may have learning disabilities and to learn from them, is a great boost to all. What is often missing in our communities is our own sense of place. Where is our place in our community? How do we fit? SSx offers the opportunity to understand, find and grow into that space.

#### Location

Sussex Chilli Farm is now based on Sompting Estate, supporting the vision of the Estate, SCIC, SPC, SBL and the SDNP by bringing groups who would not usually access the countryside into the heart of the SDNP. A donation of a minibus by Sompting Big Local (SBL) has enabled SSx to bring volunteers to its various sites on Sompting Estate.

#### Sustainability and legacy

SSx has applied for registration as a Charitable Incorporated Organization and aims, in collaboration with the Estate, to be permanently in Sompting. So it fits with the charity's mission to act, if requested, as a legacy body for other voluntary initiatives in SCIC area partnership.

SSx is working with SE and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust (OART) to develop the community legacy aspects of the EPIC Broadwater Brook restoration project. The legacy will tie closely with the development of Sompting Community Farm, enabling resource sharing including classrooms, boardwalk and pond dipping areas and workshops, and assisting SE with the expanded LWS.

## 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.



Sussex Chilli Farm is currently situated in a 30 ft glasshouse at Lychpole Farm on Sompting Estate and in 2 smaller glasshouses at Worthing Leisure Centre. A 36ft poly tunnel has been built by the volunteers at Decoy Lane which will also house chickens in the winter. Here volunteers are growing fruit and vegetables and planning a small perennial and annual therapeutic polyculture

garden around the polytunnel which will house plants from Sussex Chilli Farm. Sessions run 3 days a week and attendance varies between 5 and 16+ volunteers per day.

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



## 1.3 Current Activity - The Sustainable Mind (TSM)

Sustainable Sussex also runs 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.

This project gains direct GP referrals from Ball Tree and Kingfisher surgeries as well as from Adur and Worthing Councils' social prescribing pilot, Going Local, and Mind. TSM also works with Worthing Homes - The Community House and gains referrals from CGL, Sussex NHS Partnership, Worthing Churches Homeless Project, National Probation Service and Strive.

TSM is running 18x 6 week adult mindfulness courses a year. One course per school term plus one drop-in a week is funded by and takes place at the SBL Hub on Cokeham Road and another two courses and one drop-in per term take place at Worthing Homes – The Community House in Dominion Road.

TSM also runs a meditation class at the Harriet Johnson Centre every Monday evening. This is an affordable charged for event with monies covering costs and being available to subsidise people who may not be able to afford attendance.

## 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', and a Community Orchard north of West Street.

The core funding to enable these will come from the Estate's sales of development land under the Adur and Worthing Local Plans. When developments are approved, Sompting Estate will be enabled to confirm their commitment of land and finance to these projects.

The projects aim to support local needs of the community as expressed in the Sompting Neighbourhood Plan and Adur and Worthing Local Plans and the Sompting Big Local Plan 2017-2020, as well as supporting the growth of Sustainable Sussex's current volunteers and projects.

Subject to finance and any timescale that may be set for delivery, Sompting estate and Sustainable Sussex will deliver:

- 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 Nature Trail will include

- a board walk with pond dipping platform.
- ecological interest on the site includes Flushed Fen, a rare and valuable habitat.
- Sustainable Sussex will engage in wetland education, and support the legacy work of the HLF funded EPIC (Enhancing Places, Inspiring Communities) Broadwater Brook restoration 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](http://www.somptingestate.com).

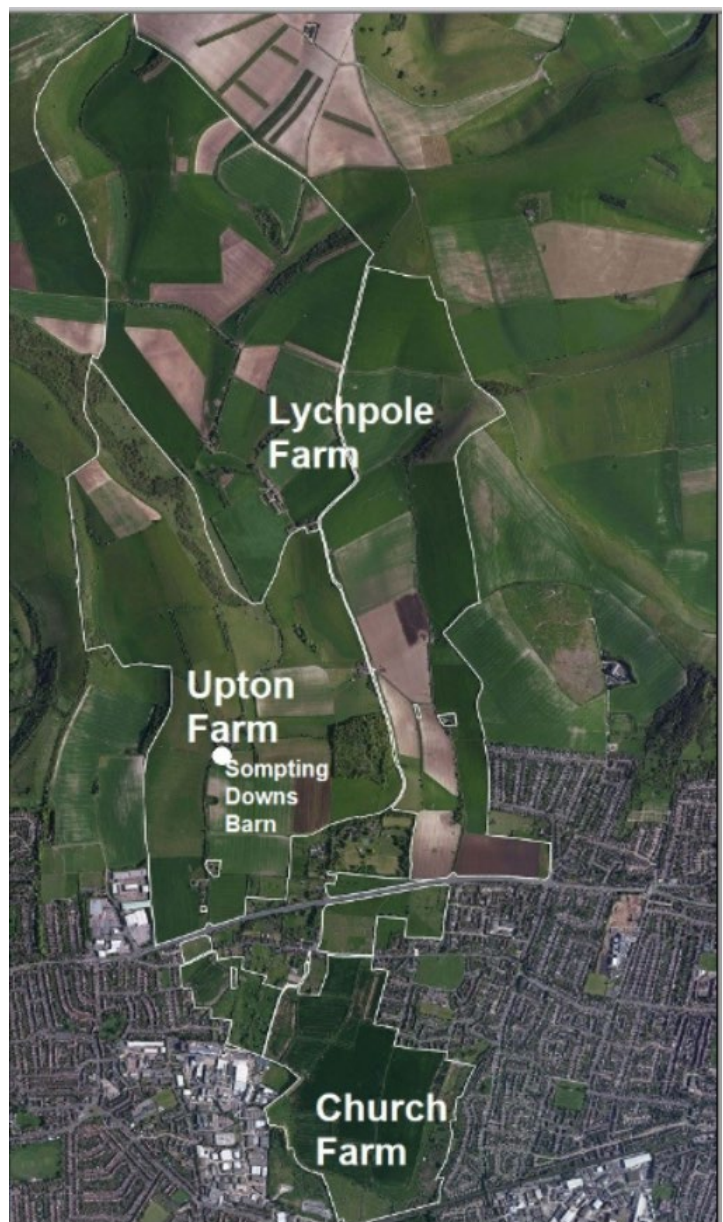
#### Farming and the Estate

Sompting Estate (outlined in white) owns a large part of Sompting's land. There are now three main farms:

- *Church Farm* is farmed by the Estate in hand, working with Frank Grantham as contractor. It is currently mainly arable, with some conservation grazing pasture which Frank grazes as tenant with sheep and cattle.
- *Lychpole Farm* is farmed by Caroline and David Harriott. Its core business is a mixed sheep and cattle farm. It is looking at diversifications too, such as the pumpkins grown in 2018.
- *Upton Farm* is farmed by Philip and Claire Bower. It is also a sheep and cattle farm. It is distinguished by running a suckler herd, and uses its own breeding rather than buying in stock to fatten.

Street Barns conversion sale enabled the Estate to build the *Sompting Downs Barn* on Upton Farm.

It's a beautiful meeting place for the farms, the estate, the environmental community, wildlife courses and small group visits.



## Twentieth Century Changes

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 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, SE 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 learned that their economy needs to change. SE has 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 and Worthing Local Plan development opportunities represent a once in 3 generations opportunity for the Estate to invest in a more vibrant, sustainable future for the countryside of the Parish and the Park. If the ideas and land use changes proposed outside of the development areas are realized, it will be largely thanks to this source of funds enabling investment by the Estate at the same time as meeting housing needs.

## 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 - 10), and then north of the A27 (sites 11 – 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

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## 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 will make 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; water quality and sustainability themed events and learning. Planning permission has been given and Heritage Lottery Funding has been confirmed.

## 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](http://tristramplants.co.uk)). Also, to work with the developers' landscapers on design and maintenance for the farm edges to provide a rural ambience and farmland setting 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 will provide land for a 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 grow food (eg for PYO) 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. and the community orchard will be managed by the Community Farm where resources for communally processing its products will be located.
- *Footpath:*  
A new footpath will link from West Street to the community orchard and FP2071.
- *Dankton Paddock:* the Estate will retain this site alongside Dankton Lane for use in conjunction with Site 5 (working horses) or for other, community health and wellbeing related purposes.

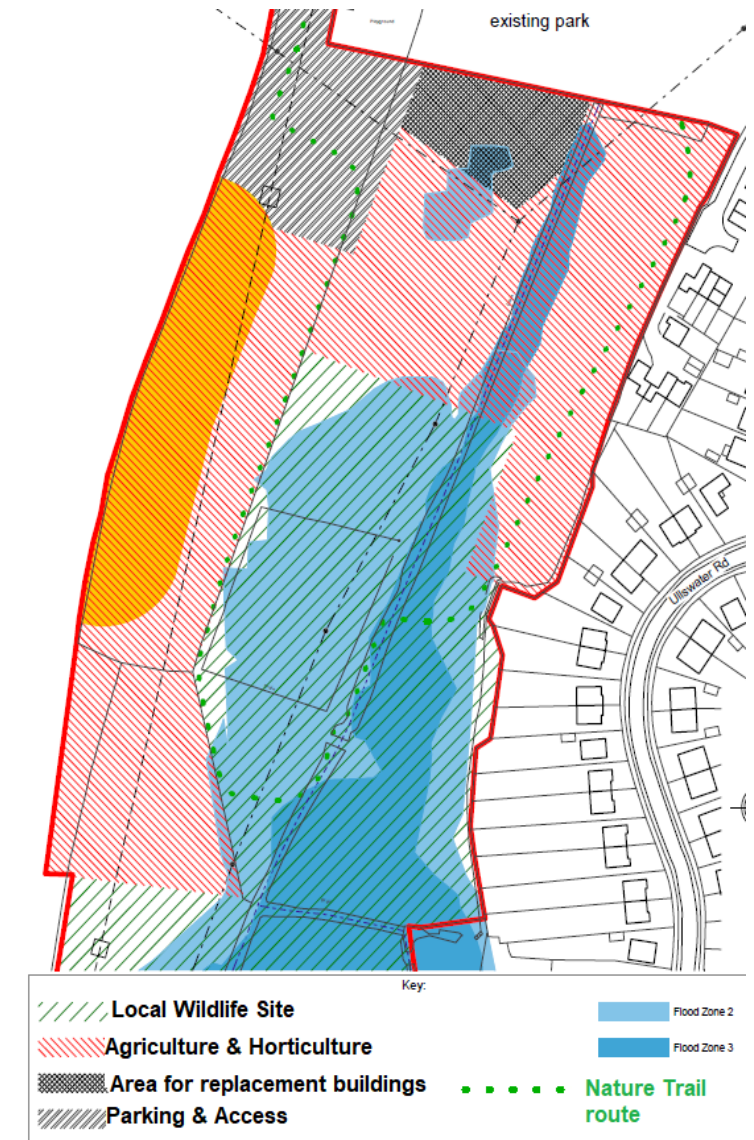
**3. Test Road Site: “The Fen”  
Community Farm**

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 for a couple of years in a small way.

At this site the aim of SSx and the Estate is: to bring together community, land, food production and nature conservation, so as to deliver a new kind of community facility for the benefit of all.

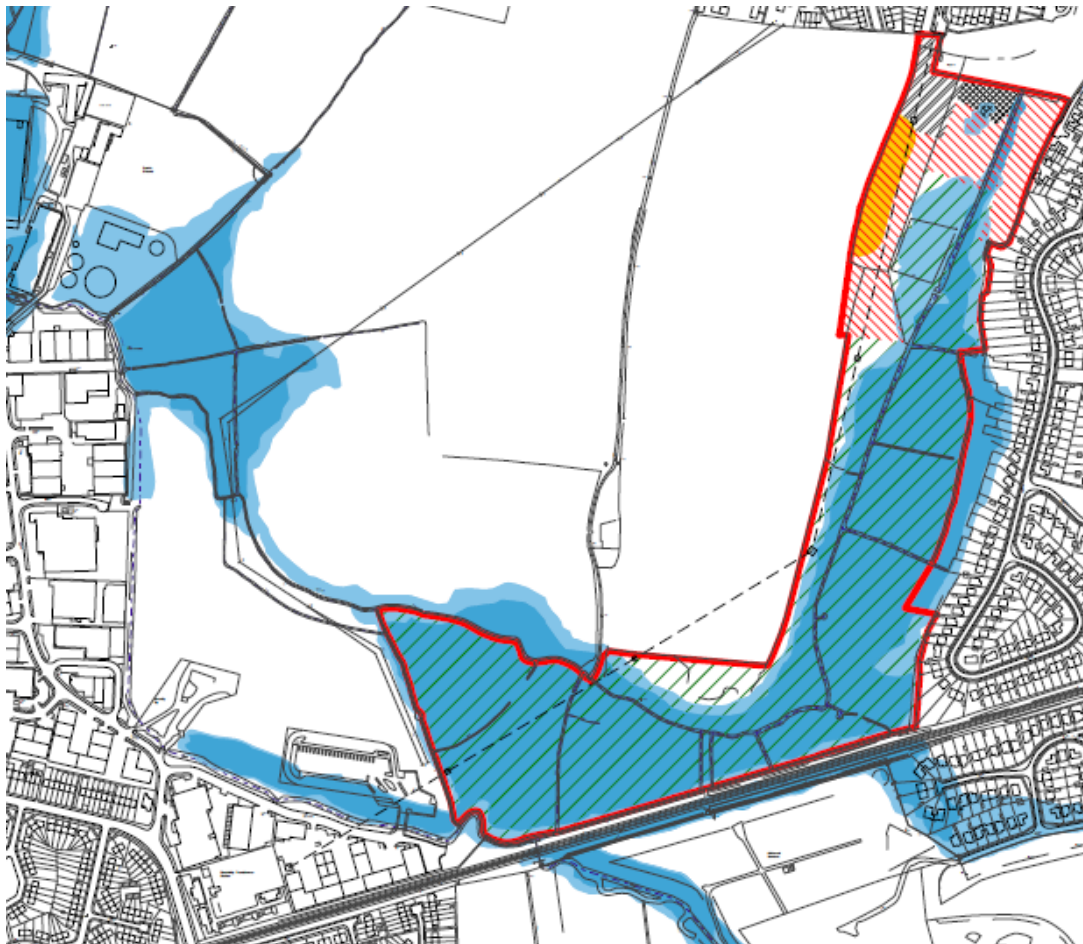
See plan opposite:  
The spot marked ‘existing park’ is the Hamble Recreation Ground, from where the eastern access to the Nature Trail round route will be provided.



Activities and facilities at the Community Farm will include

- Agriculture, horticulture and conservation;
- working together to turn seasonal farm and community orchard products into food and drink;
- café and small farm shop;
- well designed replacement buildings on the site;
- a nature trail open to the public at daytimes;
- sustainability workshops;
- opportunities for 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 also play a role in the conservation grazing management of the extended Local Wildlife Site.

It is proposed to more than double the area designated as LWS, to include 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)** is being 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: Working Horses

Currently the field on the north side of West Street is divided up into small horse paddocks with shelters sheds and haybarn. The north field is pasture, the south side field is arable.

Under the Local Plan's West Sompting development scheme, the strip bordering the west side of Malthouse Meadows, which is currently occupied by Sompting Paddocks' haybarn and parking, will temporarily be required for a construction haul route, so as to minimise village impact. Later, this area will be used for landscaping, public access and stormwater attenuation.

These two fields are at a defining point in the village, 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 side, car parking on the south side of the road.

SE 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.

Some Sompting people with working horses locally have an interest in partnering Sompting Estate, in a project to use these fields primarily as the base for a small scale Working Horse centre.

Young people and volunteers would be involved with the animals and learn skills, and the horses would do work on the Community Farm and Church Farm generally.

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

To enable these uses, in the north field, the current Paddocks field layout will be altered. The defunct Sompting Paddocks stables and buildings would need to be replaced, in either the north or the south field, with a beautiful and traditional (but also functional) barnyard for the horses. A traditional style cartshed will also be needed to house and preserve vintage farm wagons and horse drawn implements, of which Sompting Estate and partners already have a small collection. In the south field, conversion to permanent pasture, and improvement of farm track accesses, will be required.

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

## **6. Upper Brighton Road Site: Housing, shops, farm access, footpaths**

This area is just outside the Parish and District boundary, in Broadwater/Worthing. It has a housing Allocation in the draft Worthing Local Plan (WLP), site A3. Although not in Sompting parish, community life and landscape straddle the boundary. Sompting Estate has recently collaborated with Bramber Primary School to help meet their need for a playing field. Future sustainable farming in south Sompting will need to be considered at design stage (see 6.1-6.4 below).

The allocation requires a footpath along the south side of Upper Brighton Road as part of the scheme. Alongside the proposed housing some retail provision could achieve that local people living in the west of Sompting and the east of Broadwater will no longer have to cross the A27 to buy food, and could more often do necessary shopping without the need for car transport.

*- Farming and access considerations in respect of this site proposal are set out on next page -*



**6.1 Sompting Estate's private road access from the A27 through Lower Lambleys Lane,** used for accessing the west end of Church Farm, though only seldom used, is necessary to the farm at harvest time and when bulky materials such as fertiliser are delivered. This avoids the need for large farm vehicles and lorries to go through the village.

**6.2 Church Farm western entrance** To keep a functioning farm and manage traffic, it will be necessary for the Estate to retain and improve the design of the farm entrance and access in coordination with any land use changes or landscaping proposed in connection with the Worthing Local Plan allocation or any planning application in this area. A well designed and signed farm entrance will make clear to people approaching eastward from the larger conurbation that they are entering the new character area, Sompting Village Conservation Area, whose rural identity is connected with its agricultural roots.

**6.3 Church Farm future barnyard needs** Church Farm, south of the A27, currently still uses Middle Yard Barn grainstore, off Lambleys Lane north of the A27. This has become increasingly difficult and will become more so if Church Farm diversifies its production away from predominantly wheat, to include more pasture, vegetables or other crops. Middle Yard Barn will also increasingly be required for agricultural use by Sompting Estate Vineyard which is also on the north side of the A27 (see under Site 10).

SE aims to develop farm gate sales and PYO as ways to support restored mixed farming and to connect the wider community with the land. To support this, any redesign affecting this western access to Church Farm should keep open the potential for farm gate sales and occasional seasonal PYO to access the farm at Upper Brighton Road, for people coming from this western area, as an alternative to West Street.

A barnyard on Church Farm near Upper Brighton Road allocation site would eliminate the farm's need for travel to Middle Yard Barn, and provide a secure dropping off point for farm supplies (eg seed, fertiliser, equipment). It could also act flexibly as a gathering point for livestock, and as a collection point for harvested vegetables or combinable crops, in a more diversified and sustainable farming economy.

**6.4 Footpath** In terms of public access for recreation and for journeys on foot or bike, we also have in mind, as a community benefit which could enhance access from the Local Plan development, a footpath connection from Clarendon Road in to the new network of paths being created on Church



Farm. See the map on section 9 below for the route connection. Points to consider would include bridging the stream, and working with Southern Water to cover their above-



ground sewer pipe which is on the line of the otherwise attractive route.

## 7. Loose Barn Site: restored barnyard, and, field use east and west of Loose Lane farm track

**The Loose Barn site** is at the bottom of the Loose Lane farm track, by the figure 7. This barnyard was demolished by farmer Peter Phillips in the 1960s when it became unsafe. It was not replaced because the farm was turned over, on Mr Phillips' retirement, predominantly to wheat farming. Within the new conservation management plan (LEMP) for the enlarged Cokeham Brooks Local Wildlife Site (Site 4 in this Appendix), conservation grazing by cattle is a key requirement. 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 and layout to the historic barnyard would be appropriate.

**In the large arable field east of the Loose Barn site**, Sompting Estate envisages a future environmentally friendly land use with opportunities to involve the Community Farm (site 3), working horses (site 5), and the wider community eg through PYO. One approach under consideration is a system variously described as Restoration Agriculture, Permaculture, or Agroforestry: a mixed row cropping system with trees for fruit/nuts, soft fruit bushes, vegetables herbs and salads.

**In the large field west of the Loose Barn site**, Sompting Estate envisages that standard arable cropping will be replaced by permanent pasture.

**In the arable fields northwest of Loose Barn**, a rotation of arable and pasture leys. Both of these 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.



## 8. Decoy Lane Site: small arable fields, and the Decoy Lane smallholding

8.1 **Farm changes** Sompting Estate envisages eventually diversifying these small arable fields for vegetable/salad/fruit growing. These crops would require some protected growing/handling/seasonal PYO facilities at the north end of these fields and in the Decoy Lane smallholding site. (The Decoy Lane smallholding site is currently in use by Sustainable Sussex, prior to the Test Road Community Farm site becoming available, for Sussex Chilli Farm growing activities and some vegetable growing.)

8.2 **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 approx. 1 mile long.



## 9. 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 the footpath mentioned at 6.4 above, eastward from Clarendon Road near the boundary with GSK, is created.



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

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17. St Marys and National Park access	23

## **10. Vineyard site/s**

The first Sompting Estate vineyard will be planted at site 10 in May 2019. The second, in the field north of fig 13 on the plan, will be planted in 2021 or when finance allows. The vineyard will be run by Alex Tristram. Seasonally and as the vineyard business grows, the number of related employment opportunities will increase.

Middle Yard Barn Grainstore area (site no.11) will be used to meet the vineyard's initial facility needs for securely storing vineyard equipment, for handling the harvest, and for staff welfare and management. Initially the Grainstore will still be shared by Church Farm, but as Sompting Estate Vineyard develops, Church Farm will move to its own facilities south of the A27, reducing travel.

The vineyard will initially be selling all its grapes to Ridgeview Wine Estate at Ditchling but once enough grape juice is being produced, named Sompting Estate branded sparkling and still wines will be made. At this later stage a vineyard barn will be required just north of Hillcroft to service staff and small tools on site. It would incorporate a vineyard tasting and talks room for tours. This location will offer great views across the vineyards to the Church and the Abbots, the Mountain, and the sea with its white cliffs in the distance.

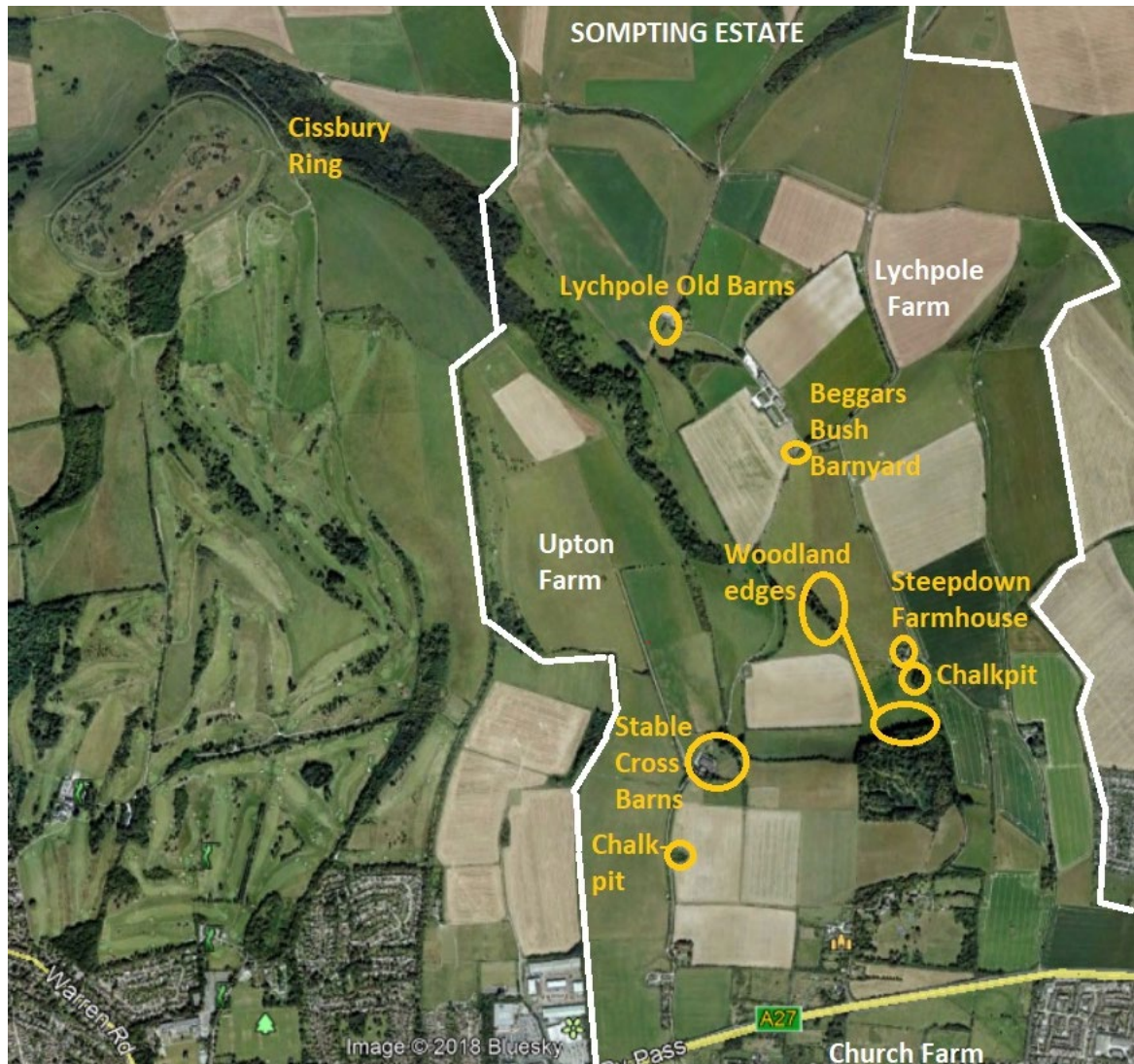
## **11. Lambleys Lane site: Middle Yard Barn**

This old threshing barn and covered yard site was renovated by the Estate in 2011-12. It has been in combined use by Church Farm and Nutshell Construction since then. From 2018-9, there may still be a construction/maintenance presence but the main use will be as a base for the Estate's businesses: farm, vineyard, holidays; also for the Estate's managing agents to use when on site. This will enable Sompting Estate to function more effectively within the parish, for the first time in 100 years having office facilities on site again. Unlike the Downs Barn, Middle Yard Barn is 'on grid' ie receives post and is accessible even in icy/snowy weather.

## **12. Sompting Tourism sites: 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, rather than just focussing on food production. The history traditions and nature of the farm, the parish and this part of the SDNP in Sussex, are valued assets which can be shared with holidaymakers. Economic sustainability will then go hand in hand with sustaining the natural beauty of the Sompting landscape.

SE envisages group holiday opportunities 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 themes. The beauty of the natural and farmed Sompting landscape is the primary attraction. Design of holiday facilities and management of their surrounding landscape will be in keeping with this and have low visual impact on local users walking the paths.



**At site 12a (in the numbering on map 2.3.2) are the Lychpole Old Barns**, 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.

**At site 12b, a much wider range of holiday opportunities on Upton Farm**, to suit all budgets, would eventually include: summer camping around Stable Cross Barn; glamping pods in small woodland edges; a smaller barns conversion; opportunities for architect designed eco-accommodation for groups in chalkpits, perhaps bunkhouse style. Steepdown Farmhouse would be ideal for holiday accommodation for groups. A rainy-day centre for the holidaymakers, and a social/ performance/ event / learning room for those staying for joint educational, artistic or wellbeing courses, could also be provided.

### **13. and 14 'The Crofts' Sites: 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 17 for a relevant proposal.)

Under the working name of 'The Crofts', the Estate envisages providing a rural SDNP 'gateway' facility for refreshment, information about the downs and walk routes, and buying produce from Sompting and the South Downs counties. The facility would also host courses events and resources, and be a setting off point for farm and vineyard tours. This would also offer a physical base for our sponsored charity 'Sussex Traditions'.

Seasonal produce from Sompting Estate's future diversified output – eg lamb, beef, honey, wine, vegetables, fruit, plants, woodland produce and more – would be featured. 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 would 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 Crofts' could be located at either of sites 13 and 14; there are pro's and con's including Highways considerations. In either location, perhaps particularly at site 14, 'The Crofts' could be integrated with other facilities meeting community needs in harmony with the Purposes of the National Park, such as those related to health and wellbeing.

### **14. Health and Wellbeing Sites**

A health and wellbeing facility could be combined with The Crofts proposal in a mixed land use plan connected with local homes and countryside, more broadly benefiting the aims of the National Park and the Parish in north Sompting.

Ball Tree Surgery are considering site and design options for a new GP surgery facility. Complementary to what the Community Farm can offer, options are to be considered, including on Sompting Estate land, for medical and wellbeing facilities for a growing and ageing population. One option would be a larger main surgery site south of the A27, combined with a satellite health and wellbeing facility at site 14.

Until such new sites can be developed, it is understood that Ball Tree's short term needs could be met by an interim solution such as double-decker portacabins on the existing site.

### **15. Upper Dankton Lane site: small fields south and west of Dankton Barnyard**

SE envisages that in the long run some of these fields, sheltered from westerly wind, may be suited to a mixture of Estate or Community Farm permaculture agroforestry, combined with viticulture on some south facing slopes. Dankton Barnyard, whose farm buildings were demolished as unsafe in the 1970s, would be restored as a sub-centre for farming in this area. Being adjacent to North Sompting may make this area suitable to include more PYO, as was popular with Lychpole Farm's 'Pumpkin Patch' in 2018.

## 16. Open Access Sites: **Beggars Bush, and Lychpole Side Hill**

16.1 **At Lychpole Side Hill**, Sompting Estate has hosted occasional Forest Schools, non-intensively so as to retain the undisturbed character. The Estate would like to develop a different version suited to this landscape called 'Forest and Field (or Farm) School' with an appropriate partner organization, which will then be introduced in these or other appropriate sites in the parish.

16.2 **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 other SCIC partners, are working to enhance the value of this site for wildlife, for the community and for National Park visitors.

To foster more flowers, SBL and SDNPA have funded winter grass removal, and SPC volunteers have sown grass-parasitic yellow-rattle for the Estate. Fencing will be needed to permit seasonal sheep grazing, with kissing gates to allow continued public access.

## 17. **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 historic, beautiful Sompting Parish.

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 the Crofts/Tristram family and their tenants have managed the countryside.

It will benefit SCIC purposes if this church building, considered by some to have best claim to the title 'Cathedral of the Downs', becomes more accessible to the local and wider community, as a place where people can reconnect with, understand and respond spiritually to their countryside, landscape and heritage.

- A large part of that is intangible, about what people do and say there and how it relates to this unique church's unique rural setting.
- Tangibly, in planning terms: a safe crossing of the A27 for non motorized users, and improved disabled access at the church, should also be identified and supported. The land on the east side of Church Lane, immediately north and immediately south of the A27, is available if required for that purpose.



*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.



- Red** = Existing public rights of way (including 'permissive paths' west of N.Sompting)
- Hatched Red** = Open access areas
- Orange** = Potential new access routes. See next page.

Following the orange numbers on the map above, potential new access routes are:

1. A SCIC project with the National Park Authority: running north from Steepdown Farmhouse to the Beggars Bush carpark and public access flowermeadow. This will bring walkers off the narrow road, and enable a safer circular walk from N.Sompting including upper Dankton Lane.
2. The proposed circular Nature Trail within the Community Farm and Local Wildlife Site.
3. The footpath that will be created as part of the HLF supported EPIC project.
4. If Worthing Borough Council in the future permit: a link across the old tip to Deacon Way,
5. A connected cycle route from the W.Sompting development could be added.
6. A path linking 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*