



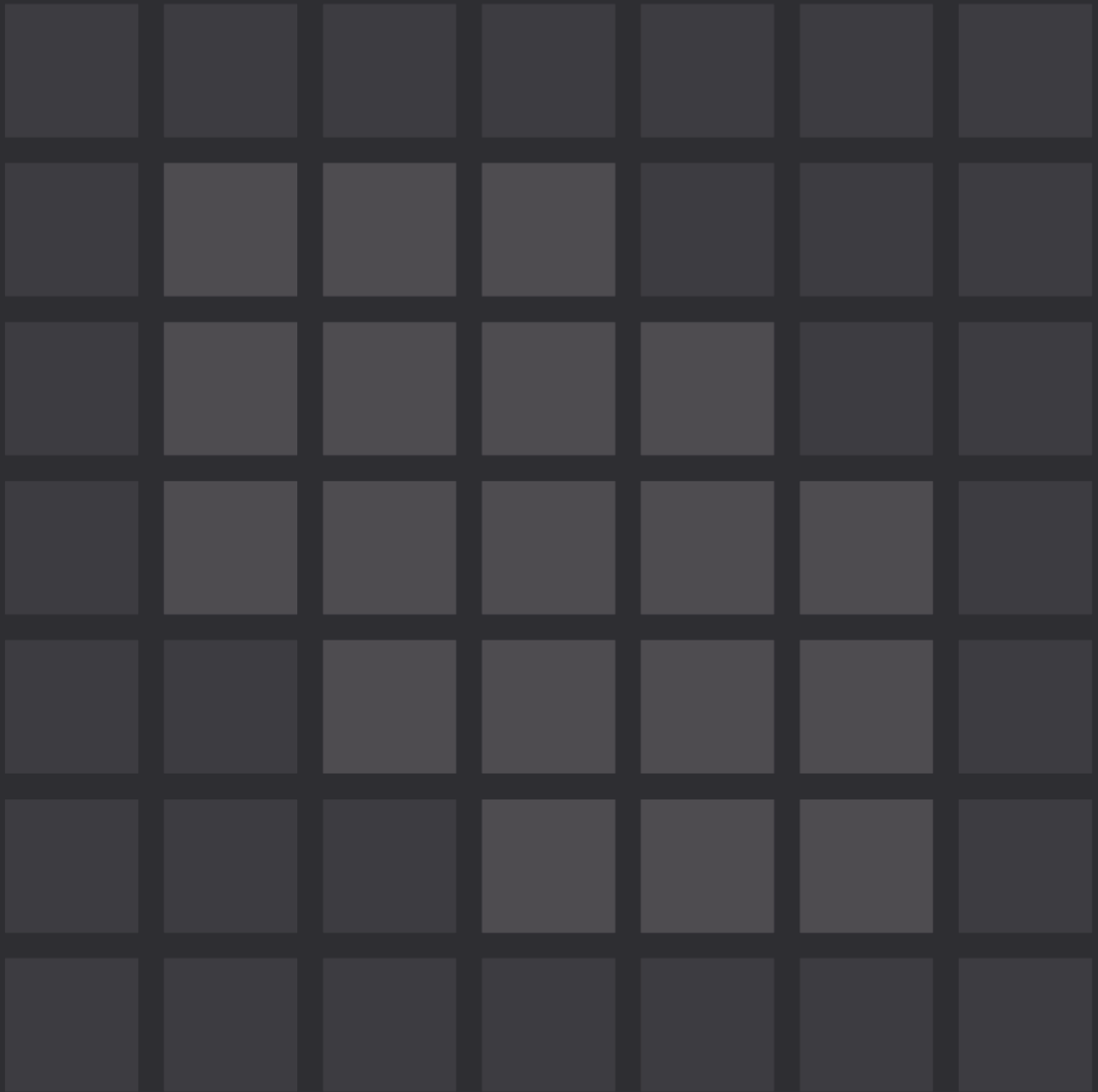
WISTON
ESTATE
SOUTH DOWNS



Whole Estate Plan

APPENDIX 6: Community Engagement Report

JUNE 2017



STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WISTON WHOLE ESTATE PLAN



WISTON WHOLE ESTATE PLAN

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1: This short paper sets out the steps that were taken to engage with the community and key stakeholders during the production of the Wiston Whole Estate Plan. It records the activity that took place and highlights key messages received.
- 1.2: The first task undertaken by the plan making team was to consider what constituted 'community' in respect of the Whole Estate Plan. Discussions were held with advisors from the South Downs National Park Authority and it was agreed that the relevant community should include:
- the Estate team; employees, suppliers and advisors;
 - Estate tenants; those people that live, farm and work in or from Estate property;
 - the neighbouring communities of Wiston, Steyning, Ashington, Ashurst, Washington and Findon;
 - elected representatives from relevant Parishes and local authorities; and
 - relevant Neighbourhood Planning Groups.
- 1.3: It was felt that those people that work for the Estate and Estate tenants (those that live, farm or work from Estate property) should be engaged first, with the wider community to follow.

2. ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

- 2.1: The first cohort that the plan makers engaged with was the Wiston Estate team. These are people that work directly for the Estate. They include those based at the Estate office as well as the property maintenance team, the forestry team, the farm team, the gamekeepers and the winery team.
- 2.2: Engagement was done iteratively, starting with discussions with line managers, then with the group as a whole and finally as part of wider engagement activity at the Estate drinks party held at Wiston House and during the public exhibition held at Wiston Meeting Place in February 2017.
- 2.3: Having engaged with the Estate team the plan making group then sought to engage with the tenant body, those that live, farm and work on or Estate property. This engagement was also sequential, starting with a letter and a questionnaire asking people what they valued on the Estate, what they were disappointed by and what the Estate might do better or more off.
- 2.4: The questionnaire was sent to 110 households (or premises). 51 responses were received, the majority written but also some verbal.
- 2.5: The questionnaire was also sent to key local stakeholders such as the vicars of local churches and Parish councillors.
- 2.6: All those that received questionnaires were then invited to attend the Estate drinks party held at Wiston House in January 2017 where the Whole Estate Plan, its vision and its objectives were introduced by Richard Goring.
- 2.7: The plan making team also engaged with local Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Planning Groups at an early stage of the process. Letters were sent in September 2016 explaining that the Estate was working with the SDNPA to produce a Whole Estate Plan. Explanations were given about the form and role of the Whole Estate Plan and recipients were invited to engage with the Estate (or National Park Authority) to ask any questions they might have. Similar letters were sent to relevant Ward members of Horsham District Council.
- 2.8: The Estate then held a public exhibition to showcase the emerging Whole Estate Plan at the Wiston Meeting Place on 27th February 2017. Letters promoting the exhibition were sent to all tenants, to local Parish Councils, to Ward members, to key stakeholders (such as the SNDPA, Natural England, Historic England) and to members of the National Park board.

- 2.9: The exhibition was open all day and into the evening. A private session was held for Parish councillors, Ward members and SNDPA members in the morning. The hall was then open to all comers in the afternoon and evening.
- 2.10: Officers of the SDNPA were invited to attend and observe.
- 2.11: Information was provided at the exhibition on display boards to explain the background to the Whole Estate Planning process, to show the extent of the Estate and to highlight key emerging projects. Members of the Estate Plan making team and the Goring family were available all day to answer questions.
- 2.12: Feedback was invited, both written and verbal, with feedback forms and a 'post box' provided, both during the event and for a period of up to a week following.
- 2.13: The exhibition was very well attended with a constant stream of people all day and during the evening. Attendees included the Estate team, Estate tenants, people from the communities of Wiston, Steyning, Washington, Ashington and Storrington. Parish councillors from these villages, members of Neighbourhood Planning Groups, elected members from Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council and members of the SDNPA board.
- 2.14: A range of feedback was offered and received.

3. FEEDBACK AND ISSUES EMERGING

- 3.1: The feedback received over the engagement process, both written and verbal, was substantively positive and encouraging.
- 3.2: People from all parts of the defined community were keen to offer their support for the Estate, for the Whole Estate Plan process and for the quality of the environment that the Estate provides and maintains.
- 3.3: Comments were made highlighting the love that people have and the importance that they place on the quality of place that the Estate supports, the landscape, woodlands, parkland and tranquillity that is available.
- 3.4: Concerns were expressed around the risk to quiet enjoyment and biodiversity associated with unfettered and unmanaged access, around the potential impacts arising from development on sensitive environments, on people and places, and around the 'blight' caused by the condition of the site at North Farm.
- 3.5: Support was expressed for proposals to maintain and invest in diverse farming systems, to engage in landscape scale environmental management, to help address housing needs in the local area, to create a high-quality employment site at North Farm, to further develop the Estate wine business and leisure activities, and to find a viable and complementary re-use for the sand quarry at Rock Common.
- 3.6: Compliments were also offered relating to the public exhibition and the quality and extent of the information provided.
- 3.7: People expressed a keen interest in the progression of the Whole Estate Plan and a wish to be kept informed of future developments, projects and proposals.

4. SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- 4.1: Copies of the exhibition boards are available in PDF format via the Estate's website (see Whole Estate Plan pages).
- 4.2: A copy of the letter and questionnaire sent to Estate tenants can be found on pages 11-12 below.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1: Engagement with the defined community has been carried out throughout the plan making process. As a plan making team, we are confident that those with an interest in the Estate, and particularly those with ‘a right to know’, have been fully informed about the process, the issues arising from it and about the Estate’s vision, objectives and emerging projects.
- 5.2: Engagement has been a positive experience. It has been helpful to subject our thinking across a diverse cohort to ‘peer review’. It has also been helpful to expose our thinking to those with suspicions of our motives and to those uncomfortable with the idea of change.
- 5.3: We have drawn great confidence from the support and positivity towards the Estate and the Whole Estate Plan that has been a constant theme of engagement activity. We have taken note of the opinions and views expressed and have varied our thinking, and some of the project activity, in response.
- 5.4: A good example of this is the inclusion of work around tranquillity and a commitment to increase the focus on effective management of access alongside the wish to enable greater access and invest in infrastructure to support this goal.
- 5.5: Overall, the Estate, and plan making team, is confident that the local community has had a clear and real opportunity to engage in and inform the plan making process. The SDNPA can be equally confident of this, and be assured that nothing set out in the plan is likely to come as a surprise to local people.



Wiston Estate: Towards a “Whole Estate Plan”

The South Downs National Park Authority has set an objective for estate owners with interests inside or adjacent to the National Park to produce a Whole Estate Plan. The SDNPA has set out its thinking in a guidance note. If you are interested you can access the document via:

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/supporting-communities-business/whole-estate-plans/>

The idea of the Whole Estate Plan is to produce a document that can record and share an appreciation of an Estate’s assets; that will allow people to understand the contribution that these assets (and the way that people use and enjoy them) make to the Park’s special qualities and to identify opportunities for sustainable development that can help to enhance the contribution that the Estate and its assets can make in the future.

The Wiston Estate has decided to work with the SDNPA to produce a Whole Estate Plan; we hope to have one in place early in 2017.

As part of the plan making process we are keen to understand how you see the estate, which parts of it you enjoy and whether you feel there are areas where we can improve the contribution the Estate makes, both to the National Park and to the lives of the people that live and work locally.

We have therefore set out a series of questions below and would welcome your views. We intend to use feedback received to help us shape the objectives and actions with our Whole Estate Plan.

Name:

(Please leave the above blank if it means you can be more honest in the feedback below)

Q1: what is your relationship with Wiston Estate? Are you:

- A] a member of the Estate team
- B] living in one of the Estate’s properties
- C] renting one of the Estate’s farms or buildings for business purposes
- D] a neighbour
- E] a supplier of goods or services to the Estate
- F] a local interested party

Q2: which part [s] of the Estate do you value?

- A] the woods
- B] the countryside generally
- C] the footpaths and bridleways
- D] the parkland and gardens associated with Wiston House
- E] Chactonbury Ring
- F] the house, property or building that you occupy or use
- G] events hosted on the Estate such as the Big Church Day Out or steam fair
- H] products coming from the Estate like the wine (would you like to see more of these?)
- I] Other – please give details:

Perception of the Estate

Q3. Are there any parts of the Estate that you would like more or better access to?
Please give details:

Q4: Are there any things that the Estate does that you don't agree with or enjoy?
Please give details:

Q5: Are there things that you would like to see the Estate do that it does not do currently?
Please give details:

Q6: In a sentence what are your strongest impressions about the Estate:

We have commissioned Matthew Thomas to take a photographic 'Year in the life of the Wiston Estate'. Please tick below if you are NOT happy for Matthew to take photographs of your home.

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Please return in the SAE to the Estate office. All information given will be treated confidentially.

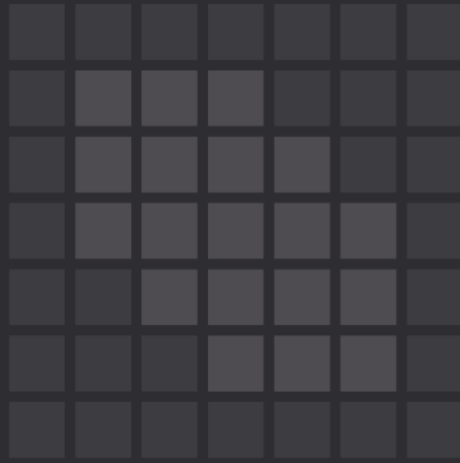
Public Exhibition 27th February 2017



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