



The Midhurst Society

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**Response to  
The Manning Report  
on Soft Sand Extraction  
in the South Downs National Park**

There has been widespread condemnation of the proposal to re-examine sites in the SDNP which are deemed to have the potential for the industrial extraction of soft sand.

Several organisations, with more resources than The Midhurst Society, are looking at technical and legal aspects of the proposal. We, representing our members and followers, present a simple, non-technical argument as to why soft sand should not be extracted from within the SDNP.

We would suggest that the Inspector has failed to recognise the basic purpose of a National Park. The following quotes are taken from 8-Point Plan for England's National Parks March 2016 ([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf) )

“Covering nearly 10% of the country, containing some of our most memorable landscapes and almost 30% of our internationally important wildlife sites, National Parks are national treasures at the heart of our national identity.”

“This plan sets out our ambition to put National Parks at the heart of the way we think about the environment and how we manage it for future generations. We want as many young people as possible to learn about and experience the natural environment. National Parks are a great way in: inspiring environments that can be lifelong sources of wellbeing, identity, adventure and pride.”

“National Parks are the soul of Britain. They are the centre of our imagination. When people think of Britain, wherever they are, they imagine these landscapes. I'd like to make sure that everyone in Britain and more visitors from around the world have the unique experience of going to our National Parks.”

“Our National Parks are the jewels in the crown of our beautiful countryside and something to be very proud of. They are living, working landscapes that need careful stewardship, for the benefit and enjoyment of all.”

“Long before their formal designation, National Parks and AONBs were recognised as special places, providing rich inspiration for visitors through their natural beauty and the traditions and culture of rural life that contributed to this. Sustaining these historic, often fragile features of our landscapes is critical to ensuring that they remain some of the best places to visit in the country.”

The industrial-scale extraction and transport of soft sand and other minerals within a National Park for use outside a National Park is a gross violation of the Government's plan for the management of National Parks for the benefit of future generations. The extraction processes and the thousands of associated lorry journeys would result in intolerable levels of noise, dust and pollution. The existing condition of roads within the SDNP is poor, with authorities unable to keep pace with the regular appearance of deep pot-holes. Part of the cause is the transport of quarry waste and infill, in heavy lorries, on roads not designed for that purpose. Our small towns and villages already have pollution hotspots where monitoring would likely reveal that EU regulations are being breached, particularly on roads that habitually have stationery traffic. It would be cynical if not criminal to impose yet more pollution on residents of these areas.

We would also like to point out the inconsistency by which an authority within a National Park has to become an expert in resources available outside its area of jurisdiction. It should not be for the SDNPA to suggest alternative deposits of soft sand and other minerals; the role of the SDNPA should be limited to what is happening inside their National Park. It is for the construction industry and/or Central Government to identify alternative sources of supply, including imports from other countries and manufactured sand.

The Right Hon Secretary of State, Michael Gove, addressed the issue in his 25 year Environment Plan (HLWS392): “Respecting nature’s intrinsic value, and the value of all life, is critical to our mission. For this reason we safeguard cherished landscapes from economic exploitation, protect the welfare of sentient animals and strive to preserve endangered woodland and plant life, not to mention the greening of our urban environments.”

90% of the country **ISN'T** National Park. It would be ludicrous for a National Park to be exploited for the benefit of housing and construction in the other 90% of the country. In his report the Inspector is recommending a dereliction of the careful stewardship demanded by the Government's 8-Point Plan.

Sincerely

Harvey Tordoff  
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