



## NEWS BULLETIN N°8 AUTUMN 2021

### INTRODUCTION

SOSCA has been involved in several meetings and events, some of which we highlight below, but all have been richly rewarding in getting our message across to a wider audience and raising the profile of our Alliance. This has also generated correspondence from other organisations throughout not only West Sussex but also Hampshire, East Sussex, and Kent.

The overriding issue across the nation and of course most pertinently here across our harbours and rivers is the situation of sewage and the amount of illegal discharges especially with regard to Southern Water. The Duke of Wellington's Amendment to the Environment Bill was to challenge the wording of the original Bill that gave far too much leeway to the privatised Water Companies by not holding them to account for the levels of discharges into our seas and rivers. It was presented twice to the House of Commons and each time the Government avoided the arguments i.e.: there is no time scale to the discontinuing of illegal discharges, no

acknowledgement of corporate corruption, and no demand to halt all developments until infrastructure is in place – which was in the Conservative Manifesto. Gillian Keegan MP voted with the Government on both occasions.

### REPORT ON CPRE'S 'ENDING THE WAR ON NATURE' – Shoreham - Sat 2nd October 2021



### Ending the War on Nature A day event to explore global and local solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises

The event was hosted by CPRE Sussex headed by David Johnson who invited SOSCA to attend and to have a stand to promote our work. The theme was to illustrate the damage being done to the planet's

environment by humans and how humans can redress this damage.

The Speakers were:

Dr. Tony Whitbread – President Sussex Wildlife Trust

Isabella Tree – Knepp Castle Rewilding

Nicola Peel – Award winning environmentalist – Amazon Forest

Paul Hannam – Environment Management, Oxford University

Henri Brocklebank – Director of Conservation at Sussex Wildlife Trust

Dr. Elizabeth Corker – Behavioural Science

## **‘THE STATE OF NATURE’ Comments made by Dr. Tony Whitbread**

Since 1950 there has been a huge acceleration of statistics on environmental issues with 1992 as the first International Climate Convention.

There has been more CO2 released since 1992 than in all the previous millions of years

The Holocene is the present planetary climate era- within this time the mass of humans and animals (ie domesticated) is 96%

The total mass of WILD life is a mere 4%

There has been a 75% decline in the insect world

There has been a 75% crash in our fisheries with only 5% left of what we should have

The next creature lined up for extinction with a 95% decline is the Turtle Dove

There have been 5 mass extinction but today we are already in the 6th mass extinction all caused by humans. There used to be 100 times more whales in the seas. They are crucial to life as they circulate nutrients into the seas. They soak up carbon dioxide Kelp such as off the Sussex coast feeds all that the whales eat. There is no value given to the environment as counted in our GDP.

But it should be the opposite as an INCLUSIVE WEALTH.

Our economies are embedded within nature – not external to it.

We need an economy that is fit for purpose.

We need to rediscover our basic humanity i.e. working together.

These are stark facts illustrating just how damaging human activity has been and the lack of comprehension by governments most crucially with the UK. We have the most damaged environment in the whole of Europe.

## **‘REWILDING’ – presented by Isabella Tree – Knepp Castle Rewilding**

Again, the speaker Isabella Tree presented stark data on the reality of the situation:

We have lost 75% of our hedgerows since the war.

We have lost 90% of our wetlands.

We have lost 44million birds since the 1960s.

We waste 30-40% of the food we produce.

There is therefore no room for nature.

We feed animals on grain because we produce so much of the crop. Instead, we should be restoring dynamic natural environments and habitats.

For example, there were 250,000 turtle doves in the 1960s.

Knepp is the ONLY place in the UK where they are thriving.

Since rewilding the entire estate, the soil is now so restored that the floods from the surrounding farms and roads etc which is all polluted is arriving into the estate having been purified.

It has become a huge carbon sink as a result of rewilding.

We should be creating WILDLIFE CORRIDORS so that all species can travel freely

The IPCC predicts that in the next 50 years we will move, for every degree of temperature rise, further north by 150 Ks. So, where we are now in the south will be up by the Scottish borders by the turn of the century.

Whilst birds can fly all the rest will need land bridges (Here she showed a map of how they had persuaded local farmers to set aside areas and even whole fields to do just that so that there was a continuous highway right up to the Ashdown Forest). It was imperative to give statutory protection to these wildlife corridors so that they could not be used by developers.

There has to be more restoration of hedgerows.  
There should be an end to ploughing.  
There should be more flood plains and wetlands and replenishment of water tables.  
The beaver will be key to this, and they were experimenting within the River Adur.  
All this sequesters carbon capture.  
All this facilitates nature recovery networks.  
All this restores biodiversity.  
SOSCA has been supportive of Sarah Hughes who has been encouraging and advising CDC to instigate and create WILDLIFE CORRIDORS across the whole region.

## **‘BLOOD OF THE AMAZON’ - Nicola Peel - Amazon Environmentalist**

The message from Nicola Peel was one of ‘can do’. One of hope in providing solutions.  
There are 900 Chevron/Texaco oil pits discarded and overflowing across the Amazon jungle.  
She initiated a programme of regeneration by showing the indigenous people that they had the means to restore their land – that there was an alternative way other than the destruction of the forest. She showed them that regenerating the soil and not using agro chemicals they did not need outside help or funds for the solution was there within their land. She taught them the power of using FUNGHI to clean the corrosive chemicals which once recovered they were then able to plant their crops. Funghi are the antibiotics of the future.  
Cloud Forests are so crucial to biodiversity we should be paying for the air that sustains them.  
We need to look at how nature can help us. It is sad that British children are not connected to nature the way the indigenous people are and that we should be celebrating our food seasonally.

## **‘CONNECTION’ - Paul Hannam - Environmental Management - Oxford University**

The presentation opened with Paul Hannam explaining that it is important to understand the connections we have with nature.

We have to understand how we can enjoy a lifestyle that can be good for nature. Knowledge on its own is not enough. Technology will NOT save us.  
We are locked into a dysfunctional system.  
Money seems to trump everything else.  
We are addicted to a toxic lifestyle – consumerism.

## **Humans are the problem**

It is no measure of health to be so well adjusted to what is a profoundly sick society.  
We need to feel a sense of fulfilment, a sense of belonging, an understanding of nature.  
We have to analyse why we want to consume  
Einstein is quoted as saying: “The OTHER is as though everything is a miracle.”  
We must appreciate what we HAVE.  
There has to be a greater sense of GRATITUDE.

## **‘AN EVENING OF WORDS & MUSIC WITH KATE MOSSE & FRIENDS’ 14th October 2021**



Kate Mosse was approached and so generously and graciously accepted to be a ‘champion’ of all the work SOSCA was doing in getting the message across to a wider audience of the reality of the horrors that were and are unfolding across the Chichester Coastal Plain. The depth of feeling over the damage being done was well illustrated by Kate gathering together a wonderful cast of volunteers. There were artists, writers, singers, musicians, and actors who all wished to show their love of this part of the world and that we had to all join together to help protect it.  
It was held at the Chichester’s Assembly Rooms to a full house. The theme of the evening was to not only thoroughly enjoy the event but to express how today’s generation were following in the footsteps of

so many of England's literary giants in loving this part of the world. The director was Greg Mosse and the cast was made up of Imogen Stubbs, Timothy Watson, Isabel Ashdown, John Gleadall, Tony Pegler, Jane Pegler, Felix Mosse, Alice O'Hanlon, Paula Tinker, Suzie Wilde, the OK Chorale Community Choir and Kate Winslet.

The tickets were sold out after only two weeks and the comments of those that attended was one of huge delight at being part of such a special evening. It was not only a great entertainment but also highlighted why our Chichester Coastal Plain needs protection.

Guest Speakers were John Nelson of the Chichester Harbour Trust, and Libby Alexander of SOSCA.

## 14th OCTOBER – SPEECH –

### Libby Alexander (SOSCA)

“Dear Friends, A small chink of good news -

The UK is about to host COP26 next month and our very own Medmerry is being used as an example of creating important Wetlands.

As evening turns to night a soft sea mist from the estuaries unfurls across our beautiful meadows - there is a sudden movement - an owl cries out into the night - and you lie in bed and smile and wait. Nothing happens - there is silence. Owls hunt by sound alone. Knowledge of their astonishing hearing is helping to cure deafness in human beings. Another cry hangs in the air, and you wait and still nothing happens. Slowly your smile turns to concern as yet another cry goes unanswered. There is no response because there is no owl to respond.

But how will our owls flourish - if our polluted rivers and streams are poisoning our voles.

How will our meadows with their rich biodiversity flourish - if they are being eradicated through pollution. 76% of Britain's butterflies have declined since 1976.

How will our wading birds flourish when our shores are being stripped of their wetlands - so crucial for

carbon capture - when they are being destroyed at a frightening pace through pollution. We have lost 90% in the last 100 years.

How will we feed ourselves - if our Grade 1 Agricultural land is covered in concrete.

How will we retain our wildlife - it needs to reach a critical mass and when that falters the species collapses. In the 1960s there were 250,000 turtle doves - today there is only one place in Britain where they exist and that is in the Knepp Estate in Sussex where they are desperately trying to save them from extinction.

Pollution caused by constant discharges of raw sewage into our highly protected seas. - Raw sewage being constantly juggled from one Treatment Works to another as they are moved around in trucks along our crowded roads. - Village high streets that have to cope with regular sewage flooding. Southern Water Treatment Works that are underinvested - out of date- over capacitated - yet somehow manage to pay their shareholders high dividends. The sheer scale of what is unfolding before us is nothing short of vandalism.

As you know the UK is about to host COP26 where it will tell the whole world and its leaders how to save the planet - yet here on planet UK

We have the lowest wildlife survival rates in Europe. And here -

In the UK our rivers and streams - which all end up in our seas, - are the most polluted in Europe.

And still Westminster blathers on saying: 'we must have infrastructure before development, we must save our wildlife before extinction, we must have no more building on green field sites.' As ever the only action is the continuation of building. As ever the only successful companies making huge profits are developers. It comes as no surprise that Developers are one of the highest donors to the Conservative Party. But the hard truth is it is only Westminster that can make real changes.

So, what is at stake – It is the very survival of our ENTIRE Chichester Coastal Plain –

Its natural habitat -with all its rich biodiversity. - Its harbours- its wetlands - its meadows. This very special, fragile, AONB of Chichester Harbour has eleven major International and National protections which outrageously and illegally seem to count for nothing. And this situation stretches across to the Solent for all that happens there has a knock-on effect here. But they too and all along the south coast are being polluted with raw sewage discharges on a daily basis.

Of course we need housing - but housing in the right place, - built sensitively for first time buyers, which will never happen unless Westminster restores back our local democracy. The only way to halt this roll out of wanton destruction is to demand a MORATORIUM NOW -to stop ALL HOUSE BUILDING NOW -

- until the Government listens to the many concerns across our communities and takes responsibility for all the damage that is being done to our land. In East Hampshire they are challenging the Government's unrealistic numbers due to the presence of the National Park. In East Hampshire they declare they will not fall victim to speculative applications that don't have the supporting infrastructure. So, if their councillors can challenge the Government - why can't ours?

How do we here, across Chichester, break this mould? How do we instil the urgency? What can you do? You can all write to relevant people whose e mails are printed on the back of our leaflets and to others. Unfortunately, our elected local government representatives keep letting us down and so it is up to us to do the shouting. It was out of this realisation that SOSCA - Save Our South Coast - was formed and it has grown into an Alliance to act as a lobbying group.

The take up of our concerns is spreading - It has generated support not only locally but across Hampshire - notably Emsworth and Havant, across Sussex and now in to Kent. We at SOSCA are all volunteers, we are not a charity, but we do need to

gain the support of many more - at events such as this, at forums, at meetings, with leaflets and banners and through our web site. In order to continue with such work, we desperately need funding through Donations. Every amount will be enormously appreciated and details on how to donate can be found on our web site.

And so, we express our deep gratitude to Kate and to all these wonderful people who have entertained us so well in showing us - how very special and unique this environment of ours is - and how it has inspired our literary giants of the past - and now our present talented writers. We must all follow their example and do our utmost to protect it for future generations so that when we next lie in bed in the dead of night and hear the cry of an owl, we truly can raise a smile because then we will know we will hear a response. THANK YOU”



‘CREATING WILDLIFE CORRIDORS’ - A site meeting at Climping – Friday 5th November 2021



Through meeting Isabela Tree at the CPRE event in

Shoreham SOSCA was put in touch with James Baird, landowner at Climping.

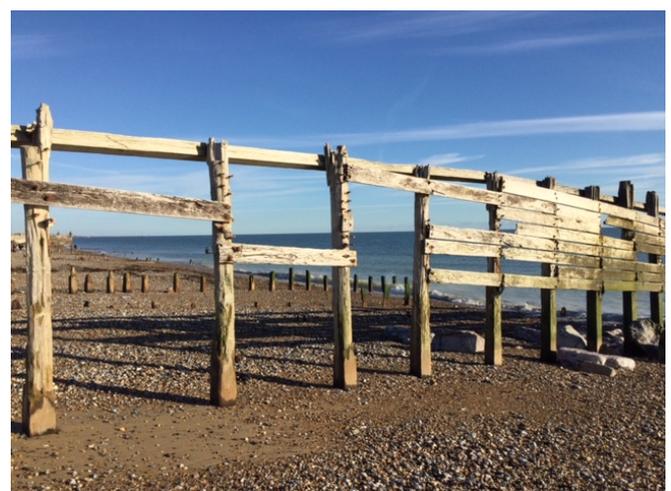
Climping, during the many storms of 2018, had suffered a series of incursions through its pebbled beaches despite its anti-tank concrete squares. These incursions increased over time with the strength of the storms dislodging the beach and washing away huge sections of sand. This in turn flooded the low-lying land behind the once protective sea bund on to James' agricultural land and soaking it in sea water which meant it was ruined for ever. The winds and power of the seas were such that it flooded right up to the A259 Littlehampton Road.

Faced with such a drastic situation he felt the only solution to his problem was twofold. To not only rewild his estate but also create a series of wildlife corridors to help mitigate climate change sea rises. And so he approached the Knepp Estate which had successfully and now famously turned their whole concept of farming upside down having had years of struggling with winters of wet damp clay or summers of baked clay on the Weald.

Faced with land unable to sustain arable crops due to the salt infusion and with the growing threat of rising sea levels James came to the conclusion that he should embrace the inevitable and allow the seas to flood regularly. The small hamlets ringing his land would be protected by a land barrier and where the waters did not reach then they would be turned in to wildlife reserves and open land for grazing.

The Knepp Estate had created a huge network of Wildlife Corridors which appealed to James and he approached local land owners to join with him to create a highway for wildlife across the South Downs National Park to join the Wildlife Corridors that joined Knepp Estate to Ashdown Forest. And so the project of Waves to Weald was created with emphasis on nature recovery.

Interestingly he had also been trying to garner support to encourage Pagham and Medmerry nature reserves to become connected. A wonderfully positive vision. It was fortunate that amongst our group was Sarah Hughes who is the lead Chichester District Council Environment Officer for the creation of Wildlife Corridors across Chichester. Convincing the Councillors of the importance and huge benefits that creating wildlife corridors would have right across the Coastal Plain and up into the National Park has been and continues to be an ongoing struggle. And so It is heartening to learn that both Sarah and James have been corresponding on this project and we hope that our Councillors will take a greater interest and be more supportive as a result.



## 'POLLUTION ACROSS OUR HARBOURS' - SOSCA Meeting 8th November 2021



During the summer SOSCA contacted all the sailing clubs across the harbours to engage with them over the devastating impacts of sewage discharges into the protected waters of the AONB. At the same time the sailing clubs were creating a Federation to expose and discuss these same issues. Throughout this time SOSCA had been in touch also with the hugely influential Hayling Sewage Group who were raising awareness of just how bad the situation was.

Rob Bailey is the lead Water Quality Officer group across the sailing clubs, is a member of the Chichester Federation Environment Forum and member of Chichester Harbour Protection Group responsible for research and producing scientific studies. He has been working together with - Mike Owens, who started Hayling Sewage Watch, is determined to find out what is in the water and to hold the Environment Agency to account. His Facebook site is very active and full of very relevant news.

They have been working together to forge a relationship that shares information, data, and

scientific research. It is because of this connection SOSCA invited them to a meeting so that we might hear first-hand of their ideas. They have formed a 'Clean Harbour Partnership' together with Hayling Sewage Watch and Final Straw Plastics. Their aim is to:

Investigate	i.e.	What is in the Water
Inform	i.e.	General Public and MPs
Improve	i.e.	Major Polluters

It is not only the recording of the many sewage discharges by Southern Water that takes place up and down our shores but also the rising incidents of infections that are impacting upon the health of all who use the seas including animals. As a result, they have invited medical academics from various universities to create a research project into this issue. Also joining together with scientific academics again from various universities to create research papers on the 'true' state of the impact of pollution across the wildlife in our seas due to the sewage discharges.

Part of this research will be the encouragement of the public to participate in the gathering of data and creating videos as proof of these incidents which is where SOSCA will become involved. It will be called 'Project Spotlight'.

We have been asked to approach our supporters to take part, and to help in achieving this we will be holding a webinar on Thursday 2nd December at 7pm - 8pm. Further details will be sent out separately.

Both Rob and Mike will make presentations on their work and explain how you can become involved. SOSCA has become a sponsor to this important work and have made a donation towards their research projects. Now more than ever it has become imperative that we all become involved and help with the collection of this data which will be the benchmark to holding both Southern Water and the Government and its Agencies to account.



## COP26 GLASGOW – ‘THE IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS’ - 11th November 2021



It was with huge delight that, together with examples in four countries, one in the Cayman Islands, two sites in China, one in South Korea, and one in - Medmerry UK which was the fourth example chosen to illustrate the power of wetlands to COP26.

It was a wonderful international acknowledgement of the huge importance of the work Medmerry represents and how determined local environmentalists, such as Dr. Carolyn Cobbold, were to the vision and completion of such a major European project.

Wetlands are the smartest Nature based Solution to draw down carbon from the atmosphere and reach net-zero. Yet, today the world is losing wetlands at a rate three times faster than forests. The science is clear - if the world is to keep 1.5c within reach we

need to urgently safeguard and restore wetlands. They are home to 40% of biodiversity yet we are consuming more fresh water than nature can replenish.

The downside to this is the reality of the situation. Due to the continual and long historical discharges of sewage across our harbours these precious environments are being permanently damaged - a state of affairs that the government is flagrantly ignoring. Every day there is more evidence of the irreparable damage being done across our harbours and every day the voices of our communities grow louder and every day they are ignored. We have to make a stand before it is too late.



'KELP FORESTS SUMMIT' – Royal Society  
of Wildlife Trusts, 17th November 2021



The Summit was held at the Ropetackle in Shoreham and was opened by Joan Edwards OBE, of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Part 1 Kelp – Background and UK in Global Context  
Seaweed Diversity and the Importance of Aquatic Forests  
From Little Things, Big Things Grow  
Uncovering Hidden Forests

Part 2 Sussex Kelp - Beyond the Byelaw –Part 1  
The Man Who Loves Kelp – film by Sarah Cunliffe of BigWaveTV  
Restoration and Collaboration  
Kelp Science Film  
Future Opportunities  
Surveys and Monitoring  
Blue Carbon  
Assessing the Genetic Profiles of Sussex Kelp

Supporting Low Impact Fisheries in Sussex  
Part 3 – Communities – Beyond the Byelaw Part 2  
Wave Awareness  
The Role of Local Authorities  
Important of Citizen Science  
Connecting Communities to their Coast  
Q and A  
End

Forests of Kelp once stretched right along the 25 miles (40km) of the West Sussex Coastline from Selsey to Shoreham and extended at least 2.5 miles (4 km) seaward.

The Kelp Forest provided habitat, nursery and feeding grounds for many sea creatures including sea horses, cuttlefish, lobster, and sea bream. It also locked up huge quantities of carbon, improved water quality and reduced coastal erosion by absorbing the power of ocean waves.

Of this once healthy forest from 1980s only 4% is now left.



The seabed floor is barren through constant trawling, and nothing is left of the rock strata and fields of towering green and diverse sea weeds.

A Nearshore Trawling Byelaw introduced by Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority was passed in 2019 by The Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. Trawling is now banned throughout the year in large areas along the Sussex coast to allow habitats to regenerate.

The Blue Marine Foundation has been engaging with local fishermen to understand the project and become involved in the regeneration scheme. Fishing will be limited to the traditional inshore boats which are under 10 metres in size and the project will involve the wellbeing of the fishermen and the protection and growth of local marine life. This will also include the potting catch which will be monitored as the crab and lobster stocks are very endangered. The Shellfish Potting Study was launched in 2021. This all looks very promising with dolphins appearing more frequently and stocks stabilising.

This was a hugely positive and reassuring presentation into the regeneration of our Kelp Forest by a series of very accredited scientists and environmentalists who were all involved in deep research into their

specific fields. Many national institutions were involved and funding all this incredible work. However, it was brought down to earth in the Q & A section when the two elephants in the room were exposed. The first was on the present state of Southern Waters discharges of sewage right along the Sussex coast and the impending Rampion 2 wind farm. Both questions were answered without being actually answered. Perhaps this is an ongoing set of problems that have yet to be accommodated.

## Contact

If you have any comments or ideas on the above, please do get in touch. We welcome any input, any links, any connections.

Email us via [contact@sosca.org.uk](mailto:contact@sosca.org.uk)