

Telscombe Tye Management Plan 2021-2023

V1.5

Date	Editor
06/09/2021	Policy & Resources Committee
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Introduction

Telscombe Tye consists of five areas of land situated between Telscombe Cliffs and Saltdean along the coast and stretching back to the village of Telscombe. It is one of the few open expanses of downland within the South Downs National Park that reaches down to the cliff top, along urbanised coastline between Littlehampton and Seaford. Most of the site is improved grassland with some remnants of species-rich chalk grassland. There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) on the site.

It is divided into two main sections and three smaller sections, lying between East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs, extending down to the cliff top and up to Telscombe Village with two sections either side of the village. There are several Rights of Way across the site and it is well used by residents and visitors – particularly dog walkers.

Adjoining land is owned by Gorham's Trust and the National Trust.

Telscombe Tye was purchased by TTC in 1989 to safeguard the land from development and to ensure its continued use for quiet informal enjoyment by the general public.

The Tye is now part of the South Downs National Park (except for the section to the east of the Southern Water site) and is being managed and conserved to fit with this designation.

This Management Plan and the separate Action Plan are designed as a working tool and defines how the areas of Telscombe Tye are managed, the objectives for managing the Tye and a point of reference for all stakeholders, including the owners (Telscombe Town Council) and the public.

It is recommended that the management plan is reviewed in 2023 and revised or updated as needed, as a result of new legislation, changes to existing legislation or grants and agreements such as the HLS.

Site Overview

Name:	Telscombe Tye
Location:	Between East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs, with areas to the east and west of Telscombe Village
Grid Reference:	TQ400030 East Sussex
Area:	85 hectares (211 acres)
Landowner:	Telscombe Town Council (TTC)
Commoners:	Stud Farm, Telscombe Village Kirby Farm, Telscombe
Site Management:	Telscombe Town Council
Planning authority:	South Downs National Park Authority (Lewes District Council)
Status:	Designated as part of the South Downs National Park in 2010. Apart from TQ3901 - 0557 - Cliffside of SCR East. TQ3901 - 5330 - Cliffside of SCR West, South of the A259 is part of the Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece was removed from the HLS agreement in January 2021 Registered as Common Land under the Commons Registration Act 1965 All of the site is registered as Access Land under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) on the site

Management Plan Objectives

The management plan aims to protect, conserve and enhance the site as an important feature of the local landscape and part of the South Downs National Park

- To maintain, conserve and protect Telscombe Tye its habitat and archaeology as a unique area of Sussex Downland returning it to an area rich in wildlife.
- To ensure that Telscombe Tye is accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone to use.
- To increase the understanding and awareness of the importance of the site by all visitors

History

Telscombe Tye has a rich and varied history. It is clear from the archaeological evidence that the Tye was well used in the Bronze Age and the presence of a Romano-Britannic camp to the north-west of the Telscombe village suggest that the first road over Telscombe Tye could have been constructed by the Romans. The earliest written records of Telscombe date back to 996 AD.

In the 19th century Telscombe was an important centre for farming and in 1821 the village had a thriving population of 113. At the end of the 19th century Ambrose Gorham became the squire and benefactor of Telscombe village. He owned between 300 and 400 acres of land including common rights over Telscombe Tye. He died in 1933 and bequeathed all his land to the Ambrose Gorham Trust.

In 1978 the Tye was designated as a Common Land under the Commons Registration Act 1965.

In 1989 Telscombe Tye was purchased by Telscombe Town Council to safeguard the land from development, and to ensure its continued use for quiet, informal enjoyment by the general public.

The Sussex Downs Conservation Board took on some management responsibilities for the site in 1996 including grant aid to restore the dew pond. In 2011 the SDCB was superseded by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

Between 1989 and 2004 the e-Piece was partially fenced and divided. The D-Piece was largely divided and incorporated into Gorham Trust land.

In 2004 the main Tye was fenced to protect grazing animals and prevent unauthorised vehicles from accessing the Tye.

In 2010 the Tye became part of the South Downs National Park.

A further restoration of the dewpond occurred in 2012 with a grant from SDNPA.

In 2012, as Kirby Farm was at that time not using its grazing rights for 100 sheep, the Council acquired a community flock to graze the Tye in addition to the commoners grazing rights and to provide an additional source of income from the Tye. However, in 2019 Telscombe Town Council made the decision to sell the flock.

In 2013 the Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement was put in place. This is due to expire after 10 years in 2023.

Archaeology

There are three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) on Telscombe Tye, all of which occur in TQ3902 - 6149. All of the monuments are judged to be in fairly good condition.

Two of them are bowl barrows (funerary monuments dating from late Neolithic to late Bronze Age) of similar size and with similar features. They are approximately 25 meters(m) in diameter. They have been partially disturbed by past cultivation resulting in some leveling, but parts of the mound survive up to a height of 0.75m. Surrounding them are ditches that have become infilled over the years but remain as buried features.

The third monument is a Cross Dyke, which was probably constructed as a boundary marker in the Bronze Age. It is approximately 6m wide and 0.75m deep with a total length of approximately 290m. It is flanked by a large bank 6.5m wide, which remains up to 2m high in places. The monument has been partially disturbed by the insertion of a water main along the length of the ditch. The Cross Dyke has been invaded by scrub whose root systems will cause damage to the monument. Clearance of some of the scrub was undertaken in 1996, but there was no follow-up management as evidence of badger occupation was found and now much of the scrub is regenerating. There was however a substantial area of the Cross Dyke cleared of scrub by the SDNP Ranger and volunteers in 2018/19.

Part of the Cross Dyke and a Bronze Age bowl barrow were leveled during construction of a covered water reservoir in 1909 and this area has been excluded from scheduling.

Previous management

Management of the site was previously covered by a management plan developed for the Sussex Down Conservation Board (SDCB) in May 2002

The majority of Telscombe Tye is grassland and has been managed under the South Downs Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Scheme. The first ESA agreement came into effect for the northern end of the Tye in 1992 being an area of grassland lying on drift clay. Parts of TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece were added in 2003.

In 2013 the Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) Agreement was put into place. The requirements of the HLS are more stringent than the outgoing ESA and require more

input from the town council. This management plan is part of these measures and seeks to identify the objectives and the work programme needed to be undertaken to achieve the agreed outcomes.

The South Downs National Park Authority has dedicated rangers and volunteers that regularly work on the site and in the past have secured funding for works such as scrub clearance.

The South Downs National Park Authority has also worked closely in the past with local based volunteers “The Friends of Telscombe Tye”. Likewise, the RSPB have also been a valuable resource in providing skills, knowledge and projects for the local residents and children to get involved with nature conservation.

Telscombe Town Council contracts a part-time local ranger who helps maintain gates, fences and locks on the Tye. The council staff and Councillors are also involved in managing and maintaining the area ensuring its openness and its safety for the general public.

Legal Constraint

Telscombe Tye is registered as common land. East Sussex County Council keeps the register, and the register unit number is CL2 and CL23. The following entries relate to ownership and rights:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 02/03/67 | Provisional registration by Telscombe Town Council as Common Land. |
| 18/12/69 | Right claimed by Seaboard for an electricity substation, high voltage overhead line and underground cable. |
| 30/06/80 | Registration became final, subject to decisions and directions by the Commons Commissioners that confirmed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a right of common exercisable by the Trustees of Gorham’s Gift in respect of Telscombe Farm, also known as Charity Farm and now known as Stud Farm, for the open and common pasturing of 252 sheep.- a right of common exercisable by the owners of Kirby Farm, Telscombe for grazing up to 100 sheep. |

The site currently has no byelaws, but it may be possible to set up byelaws to give further protection.

Planning Context

Telscombe Tye is protected from development by the Commons Registration Act 1965. It's status as part of the Sussex Downs National Park also gives it protection and these national policies are reflected at a local level in the Lewes District Local Plan, where it is given protection as a 'strategic gap'.

The SDNPA have a Planning Officer who is consulted on all planning applications within the National Park and also those nearby that will have an effect on it. The Planning Officer also comments on Structure Plans, Local Plans and the SDNPA have also produced the South Downs Planning Guidelines.

Legislation

Commons Registration Act 1965

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and/or Sussex BAP species on the site that will need managing as per their individual action plans.

Badgers are protected under law from the Protection of Badgers Act 1992

All reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

Accessibility – Footpaths, Bridleways, Byways

Telscombe Tye is well used by the public for quiet informal recreation such as walking, with or without dogs. There is open access on foot and horseback, throughout the site and there are several rights of way exist across the site consisting of bridleways, footpaths and a restricted by way.

Disabled access gates have been installed on the east and west perimeters and there are disabled parking bays on the A259 coast road.

There is a bus stop on the A259 coast road on routes from Brighton and Eastbourne.

The bridleway adjacent to the Cross Dyke is used by vehicles as a shortcut between Telscombe village and Peacehaven. There is a locked barrier across this bridleway, residents can apply to Telscombe Town Council (TTC) for a key. Please refer to TTC Bridleway 8 gate policy for more information.

Access to the Tye is still unrestricted through Telscombe village although traffic through the village has been much reduced by the installation of the barrier.

Over the years several attempts have been made by travellers to access the Tye. With the installation of the fencing, gates and Kent Gap, illegal access is more difficult.

There are a number of cattle grids on the Tye. TTC has no legal duty to ensure they are cleared out and operational as a cattle grid.

A regular inspection of the gates and fences is conducted by TTC with a view to managing them.

Details are below on the standards required to upkeep these areas:

- **Access Gates** – including cattle grids. Field gates must be erected in accordance with British Standard 3470 and should be made of timber. The height must correspond to the adjoining fence and the gate must be fitted with the appropriate fittings required for its operation and should be maintained in good condition.
- **Path maintenance** - Maintenance of rights of way – strimming grass and vegetation away from access gates and paths.

ELS and HLS Management 2013-2023

The majority of Telscombe Tye is grassland and has been entered into the Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS) scheme, underpinned by an Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) scheme.

The plan of the ELS/HLS agreement is to maintain and restore the grassland to species rich grassland or at least improve the biodiversity of the sward, maintain the archaeological features and improve the environment to benefit all flora and fauna.

There are two key overarching objectives for the management of Telscombe Tye:

Objective 1: To maintain and protect Telscombe Tye and its archaeology as a unique area of Sussex Downland returning it to an area rich in wildlife.

- Managed grazing
- Scrub management
- Dewpond management
- Site surveying

Objective 2: To ensure that Telscombe Tye is accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone to use.

- Ensuring appropriate access for all and preventing improper use
- Control of dogs
- Boundary and fencing management
- Communication plan

An Action Plan has been created for each of the above objectives and outcomes with specific actions, activity owners, priorities and a timetable of start and finish dates.

The Action Plan will form a working document once agreed and approved by Telscombe Town Council. Additional tasks and activities will be added as needed.

Grazing Rights

Grazing rights over the whole of the common exist for:

- Stud Farm, Telscombe for 252 sheep of all ages.
- Kirby Farm for 100 sheep of all ages.

Low intensity grazing levels over a longer period of time are more beneficial for wildlife, suitable species and stocking density – in line with commoners grazing rights and to achieve the conservation objectives.

General timetable for the sheep (Subject to weather conditions)

March to May - Lambing on/off the Tye

May to August - Grazing of ewes and lambs on the Tye

September to October - Lambs sold to market

October to November - Ewes put to the ram and sheep taken off the Tye

Management Plan

TQ3901 - 5330 - Cliffside of SCR West

A narrow strip of grassland (<50m wide) along gently undulating cliff tops with extensive seaward views. Bounded on the seaward side by mesh fencing and on the northern side by the A259. Part of the Brighton to Newhaven Cliffs SSSI.

TQ3901 - 0557 - Cliffside of SCR East

A small area of coastal grassland that appears to be heavily mown. It is part of a larger area of grassland the remainder of which is unmanaged grassland that has a more natural feel, with tussocky grasses and brambles encroaching in places. This is not part of SDNP but is part of a larger area covered by the CROW Act.

TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye

The high ridge of the Main Tye is a very important part of the local landscape as it is one of the few open expanses of downland that reaches down to the cliff top, along the predominately urbanised coastline between Littlehampton and Seaford.

The grassland becomes wider in the northern section of this compartment. It has an altogether more open expansive feel; the main urban areas are further away and there are extensive downland views.

Contains three Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Two tumuli (bowl barrows (funerary monuments dating from late Neolithic to late Bronze Age) and a Cross Dyke (probably constructed as a boundary marker in the Bronze Age).

TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece

The E-piece is a small-scale valley system, with an isolated and intimate feel to the north-west of Telscombe village. It is surrounded by much larger open arable and improved grassland fields.

Lack of management in recent years has meant that much of the chalk grassland has given way to scrub and, in some places, secondary woodland. In 1997 a program of scrub clearance was started. In line with this sheep were re-introduced to the compartment in 2000 but only temporarily due to fencing issues.

The northernmost tip of the E-piece is predominately open semi-improved grassland with a large area of scrub at its eastern end. It is separated from the rest of the compartment by a road. It is a small part of a valley system which abuts the more large-scale landscape of the 'open east chalk uplands' to the north and east.

TQ3903 - 9178 - D Piece

An improved grassland that forms a small part of a much larger field system. It is part of a large scale, open and expansive landscape with large fields of arable farming and improved grassland

Action Plan

Telscombe Tye Action Plan 2021-23

Objective 1: To maintain and protect Telscombe Tye and its archaeology as a unique area of Sussex Downland returning it to an area rich in wildlife.

Outcome a) Managed grazing

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
A1	Ensure the number of sheep grazing does not exceed 252	Negotiate with those who have rights to graze	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	Grazing regime. See HLS
A2	Rest areas to allow grassland to recover	Fence sheep out of areas Negotiate with those who have rights to graze	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	No more than 10% of the Tye can be fenced off by electric fence for more than 6 months
A3	Define and agree grazing season	Negotiate with those who have rights to graze	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	
A4	Deter supplementary feeding on site	Negotiate with those who have rights to graze	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	
A5	Deter the use of Avermectins	Negotiate with those who have rights to graze	All compartments	Commoner TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	
A6	Communicate clearly with public when sheep will be on the Tye	See comms plan	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner		

A7	Promote dog control around sheep	See comms plan	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	Countryside Code	
A8	Rabbit control (Not popular with TTCG)	Investigate means of humane control	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	Possibility of reduction in numbers of grazing sheep (TBC)
A9	The E-piece has no current conservation status. As chalk grassland it is worthy of at least Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) status and should be designated as soon as possible.	Designate E-piece SNCI		TTC	TTC	TTC	

Outcome b) Scrub management

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
B1	E-piece scrub management	Clearing scrub	TQ4103-0527 E-Piece	TTC SDNPA	TTC NE SDNPA Volunteers		No longer in HLS agreement
B2	Mowing/topping to promote flora and fauna	Set out and agree method and timetable	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	HLS Agreement	Annual mowing (topping) of the Main Tye after late flowering species have set seed and birds have nested, usually after mid-July and before end of September.

B3	Leave areas uncut to promote wildlife and seeds for birds in winter	Agree with contractors of mowing and topping which areas should be left	All compartments	TTC	TTC commoner	HLS Agreement	
B4	Wildflower re-seeding	Re-establish native species	All compartments	TTC	TTC Volunteers	HLS Agreement	Spring (see also A2 Managed grazing section)
B5	Clear scrub appropriately In accordance with existing scrub management plan	Work with SDNP NE to agree and implement scrub clearance	All compartments 'except 'E' piece'	TTC	TTC Volunteers SDNP NE	HLS Agreement	Between 1 October and 28 February, outside the bird-nesting season, to maintain suitable conditions for species and to prevent the development of woodland.
B6	All scrub should be managed by coppicing on a 15–20-year cycle.	Review of scrub and timetable for management created	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	
B7	The remains of the cross dyke are being undermined by the roots from the scrub growing on top of them. However, badger activity in the area needs to be assessed before any work can commence.	Assess badger activity at cross dyke and a phased programme of scrub clearance	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC SDNPA Volunteers	TTC	

B8	Control of undesirable and invasive species such as Creeping Thistle / Spear Thistle /Curled Dock /Broad-leaved Dock /Common Ragwort /Common Nettle by spot treatment, topping or pulling.		TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC Volunteers	TTC	Investigate when this should be completed, treatment to be used, liaise with volunteers/Councillors
B9	All mature or over-mature standing trees and all standing and fallen deadwood must be retained, unless it is a genuine safety hazard. Tree surgery must be limited to that required for the safety of people and livestock.		All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Encourages biodiversity

Outcome c) Dewpond management

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
C1	Maintain fencing to keep livestock out	Inspect and repair fencing as necessary	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	All types of fencing should be erected in accordance with British Standard 1722. Removal and repair of any damaged fencing. Sheep fencing must be at least 1.05 metres high. Barbed wire should not be used

							where fencing runs alongside access routes, unless this is unavoidable. Fencing should be maintained in good condition.
C2	Ensure an appropriate variety of flora and fauna for a dewpond environment	Sow and plant as necessary. Remove and clear as necessary	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC SDNPA Volunteers		Initiate an annual check

Outcome d) Site surveying (All actions to be used for ongoing improvements to Management Plan)

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
D1	Skylark survey	Nesting survey to be done annually	All compartments	TTC	TTC Volunteers RSPB BTO		Carried out during the breeding season. Counting of breeding pairs and mapping of territories
D2	Plant survey	1m sq in flowering season	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece	TTC	TTC Volunteers		June/July
D3	Pond survey	Of flora and fauna and quality of water	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC Volunteers		Annual pond survey carried out as part of SDNPA dewpond survey project
D4	Vegetation mapping	In relation to the spread of scrub	All compartments	TTC	TTC Volunteers		Vegetation mapping to check scrub encroachment and

							clearance. Photographic evidence at various points.
D5	Monitoring rare species	As part of surveys above	All compartments	TTC	TTC Volunteers		Invertebrates, insects and other species.

Telscombe Tye Action Plan 2021/23

Objective 2: To ensure that the Tye is accessible, safe and enjoyable for everyone to use.

Outcome a) Ensuring appropriate access for all and preventing improper use

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
A1	Maintain existing disability access points	Annual check and repair as necessary	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	
A2	Maintain existing paths and rights of way	Annual check and prevent overgrowth as necessary	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	
A3	Ensure Tye is not used as a short cut for road vehicles and farm vehicles	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC Commoner Residents	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A4	Encourage safe slow driving where vehicle use cannot be avoided	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A5	Promote safe horse riding and no commercial training of horses.	Encourage reporting of	All compartments	TTC	TTC Local stables	TTC	

		incidents to TTC					
A6	Ensure commercial dog walkers comply with regulations	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A7	Prevent lamping/ferreting for rabbits	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A8	Deter kite land surfing	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A9	Prevent fly tipping	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)
A10	Prevent metal detecting on SAM's or any part of the Tye	Encourage reporting of incidents to TTC	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC	TTC	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)

Outcome b) Control of dogs

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
B1	Ensure dogs on leads around livestock	Encourage reporting	All compartments	TTC	TTC Commoner	Countryside Code	Publicise reporting methods (see comms plan)

B2	Encourage dog owners to clear up after their dogs	Encourage reporting	All compartments	TTC	TTC Public	TTC	PSPO in place in the whole of Lewes District for dog fouling
B3	Report attacks on livestock	Encourage reporting and recording of evidence	All compartments	Commoner	Commoner TTC Public		

Outcome c) Boundary and fencing management

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
C1	Monthly checks on fencing and gates	Ensure council meets reasonable safety standards	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	All types of fencing should be erected in accordance with British Standard 1722. Removal and repair of any damaged fencing. Sheep fencing must be at least 1.05 metres high. Barbed wire should not be used where fencing runs alongside access routes, unless this is unavoidable. Fencing should be maintained in good condition.

Outcome d) Communication plan

REF	Action	Activity	Location	Owner	Stakeholders	Source	Notes
D1	Responsible dog ownership	Publicise and promote Gate signs checked annually	N/A	TTC	TTC Commoner	Countryside Code TTC	Publicised via Social Media, Web site, quarterly newsletter, gate notices
D2	Clear advance warning of when sheep will be on the Tye	On social media and entrances to Tye	N/A	TTC Commoner	TTC Commoner	TTC Commoner	On social media and possibly with permanent notice/information boards on the Tye
D3	Promote the activities of volunteers and partners	On social media and through established networks	N/A	TTC	TTC Volunteers	TTC Volunteers	To re-establish Friends of the Tye (FOTT) See D5 below
D4	Contact details for problems with sheep on Tye	Contact details for Commoner on TTC website	N/A		TTC Commoner	TTC	On website and possibly with permanent notice/information boards on the Tye
D5	Seek volunteers as necessary for Friends Group to carry out activities on the Tye	Establish a reliable pool of motivated volunteers	N/A	TTC	TTC Volunteers	TTC Volunteers	
D6	Co-ordinate Friends Group activity as necessary	Agree leadership and structure for	N/A	TTC	TTC Volunteers	TTC Volunteers	Volunteer groups can be covered by TTC insurance

		coordinating and completing tasks					
D7	Maintain dewpond info board	Monitor and maintain as necessary	TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye	TTC	TTC	TTC	To be re-instated (Autumn 2021)
D8	Appropriate signage required around the Tye to advise the public of their responsibility when using the Tye regarding livestock and nesting birds.	Review signage, add, repair and replace as necessary	All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	To be incorporated into new signage/information boards
D9	A Welcome Audit should be conducted to cover aspects such as signage and facilities.		All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Completed
D10	List all possible interpretive opportunities such as archaeology, landscape and wildlife.		All compartments	TTC	TTC	TTC	Introduce QR codes on new signage/information boards

Adjoining Land

Ambrose Gorham Trust

The Trustees of Gorhams Gift are responsible for four separate parcels of land to the east of the main Tye that adjoin the D-piece and E-piece, all of which are improved grassland, farmed as arable and only one of which has some form of public access

The trustees of Gorham's Gift have commoners grazing rights on the Tye and the current tenant farmer at Stud Farm exercises these rights.

National Trust Land

The National Trust owns a large field adjoining the E-piece, which is either farmed as arable or left fallow.

Kirby Farm

Owns land east of the Tye and has grazing rights for 100 sheep.

Coombe Farm

Owns land west of the Tye.

Other areas of the main Tye are bounded by urban development. The two cliff top compartments currently have no sea defenses so are subject to continuing loss due to coastal erosion

Operations

Resolving Issues

Telscombe Town Council must react to complaints and events both on the Tye and around the perimeter where they border onto resident's properties. The council has a policy for managing resident enquiries and a copy can be obtained from the council.

Contracts, Maintenance and litter picks

There are 5 dog waste bins owned by TTC and are currently emptied weekly. TTC arranges for a contractor to undertake adhoc repairs on the Tye fencing and gates when necessary. Litter picks to be re-instated with volunteers and Councillors.

Environmental Information

Geology

The underlying geology of the site is upper and middle chalk. The British Geology Survey also shows drift deposits of clay with flints extending over much of the central

and southern parts of TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye and a small section at the southern end of TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece.

The Landscape Assessment of the South Downs classifies The TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye and TQ3903 - 9178 - D Piece as 'open east chalk uplands' and most TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece as 'east chalk valley systems'. The coastal grassland TQ3901 - 0557 - Cliffside of SCR East and TQ3901 - 5330 - Cliffside of SCR were not covered by the assessment.

Open East Chalk Uplands - key characteristics (TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye and TQ3903 - 9178 - D Piece)

- Homogeneous elevated landscape with an open character: typical rounded chalk landforms very clearly revealed and landmarks visible over long distances.
- Windswept exposed character
- Extensive urban development along southern margins of the dip-slope are highly visible and forms a harsh urban edge.
- Proximity to urban areas leads to high degree of public access

East Chalk Valley Systems - key characteristics (TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece)

- Extensive branching valley systems wind through open chalk upland forming contrasts in relief and landscape character
- Relatively narrow valleys which nevertheless have a strong visual influence
- Pastures and patchy scrub predominate on most steep slopes
- Villages, farms, and hamlets are clustered in sheltered sites on valley floors, linked by lanes and tracks
- Enclosed, relatively secluded character

Flora & Fauna

TQ3901 - 5330 - Cliffside of SCR West has a very short sward varying from calcareous to mesophytic in character. Within the calcareous regions Sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina*) is the dominant grass and there are large patches of Kidney Vetch (*Anthylis vulneraria*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*) and Thyme (*Thymus drucei*). Over frequent mowing may be having a damaging effect on the flora and fauna.

TQ3901 - 0557 - Cliffside of SCR East has a very short sward with Sheeps fescue dominant in places. Chalk grassland species present such as Thyme and Mouse-ear Hawkweed as well as maritime species such as Thrift (*Armeria maritime*), Sea Beet (*Beta vulgaris*) and Buck's-horn Plantain (*Plantago coronopus*).

The majority of the grassland in TQ3902 - 6149 - Main Tye has been subject to input of fertilizers and as a result exhibits low species diversity. The grassland is now managed in HLS so that fertilizers may no longer be added, and it is hoped that over

time a sward with a more natural, diverse composition will develop. However, diversity may be limited due to clay deposits that occur here.

There are also various banks within the compartment, on the eastern and western boundaries, on the sides of the restricted byway, known locally as the funeral track, (the bank on the southern boundary is not part of the site as it is owned by ESCC). Because of their steepness they have remained largely unmanaged. In places the banks are dominated by brambles and scrub. False-oat Grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) dominates some parts of the banks but on others there is a more diverse sward with Upright Brome (*Bromus erectus*) and a range of calcicoles such as Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*) and Quaking Grass (*Briza media*). The vegetation on the margins of the pond is dominated by Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and Common Reedmace (*Typha latifolia*).

The grassland on the southern end seems to be dominated by cultivated grasses such as Rye-grass (*Lolium* sp.) with sporadic evidence of other species such as Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Rough Meadow-grass (*Poa trivialis*).

The northern end is improved grassland with a species-poor sward. Typical species include Cock's-foot, Rough meadow-grass and Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lantana*). There are forbs present like Goat's-beard (*Tragopogon pratensis*), Rough Hawkbit (*Leontodon hispidus*) and Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*).

TQ4103 - 0527 - E Piece is an area of unimproved grassland on relatively steep banks of various aspects. Scrub, brambles and Tor Grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*) have taken over much of the grassland. In some places secondary woodland (dominated by Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*)), is beginning to establish. Small patches of species-rich chalk grassland remain with species such as Carlina Thistle (*Carlina vulgaris*), Hairy Violet (*Viola hirta*), Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*) and Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*) present.

In order to conserve and expand the chalk grassland resource grazing was re-introduced and a programme of scrub clearance was started. Some of the areas that have been cleared have been colonized by species such as nettles and thistles; these areas need to be managed if they are to successfully revert to chalk grassland.

At the southern end much of this small spur of land has been incorporated into an adjacent improved grassland field, south of the public bridleway, known as Church path, between Telscombe village and the north of Peacehaven. The remainder is a narrow strip of rough grassland suffering from encroachment of scrub and brambles.

On the northern side is a triangular area of land, north of Gorham's Lane, incorporated into the adjacent field. An area of semi-improved grassland, that appears to have been fertilized at some time in the past. The grassland is mainly open but with a large block of scrub to the east of the compartment, a few patches of scattered scrub and some larger trees by the roadside. There are some patches of moderately diverse grassland

that include species such as Common Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Salad Burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*) and Hairy Violet.

TQ3903 - 9178 - D Piece is a small area of improved grassland that is largely incorporated and grazed as part of a much larger improved adjacent Gorhams Trust grassland field. It has a Rye-grass dominated sward with other species present that include Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Common Daisy (*Bellis perrenis*) and thistles.

The presence of a group of species including Squinancywort *Asperula cynanchica* and Fairy Flax *Linum catharticum*, Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea*, and round-headed rampion *Phyteuma spicatum*, would indicate that the chalk grassland has an unbroken history. There are also several species of orchid on the site – particularly in the areas with less disturbance Common Spotted-orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, Pyramidal Orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*.

In a local context the area is important for its abundant opportunities to view birds, including the nightingale, yellowhammer, common and lesser whitethroat. Migrant species, such as fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* and redwing *T. ilacus* use the area as a resting and feeding place and passage migrants such as Ring Ouzel, redstart, warblers and wheatear are seen in the spring and autumn.

The mosaic of habitat types (close grazed turf, longer grass, scrub and scrub edge) has resulted in a particularly rich butterfly fauna. There is a good population of Silver-spotted Skipper on the e-Piece, Brown Hairstreak on the north end of the e-Piece, along with nationally scarce Dotted Bee-fly. Tortoiseshell, Wall and Meadow Brown are frequently seen on the main Tye. There is an active badger *Meles meles* sett on the main Tye.

Notable species

Birds:

- Skylark
- Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*
- Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*

Insects:

- Small blue (butterfly)
- Wall (butterfly)
- Brown hairstreak *Thecia betulae*
- Silver-spotted Skipper *Hesperia comma*
- Dotted bee-fly *Bombyllus discolor*

Plants:

- Chalk Milkwort *Polygala calcarea*
- Round-headed Rampion *Phyteuma orbiculare*
- Bee Orchid *Ophrys apifera*
- Deadly Nightshade *Atropa belladonna*

Habitats

'Chalk grassland is one of the richest habitats in Western Europe, containing a great diversity of plants and animals. However, it is now very rare and fragmented, and is of international conservation concern' - South Downs National Park, Chalk Downland Resource. The Chalk Grassland Habitat Action Plan includes the following targets.

- ensure all existing chalk grassland sites to be given appropriate international, national or local status by 2005
- increase by 10% the area of chalk grassland by the management of invasive species at suitable sites.

The E-piece has no current conservation status. As chalk grassland it is worthy of at least Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) status.

The Chalk Grassland Habitat Action Plan advocates the clearance of scrub to restore grassland. This should be done gradually to minimise erosion and to allow a gradual re-establishment of grassland.

Not all scrub should be cleared as it provides habitat/shelter for wildlife. Where scrub has been established for a long time it could be retained as chalk grassland reversion would be very slow. The scrub/grassland interface is particularly rich for wildlife. To retain its wildlife value, and to prevent it reverting to woodland, all scrub should be managed by coppicing on a 15-20 year cycle.

Exclusion of fertilisers and pesticides and establishment of a sympathetic grazing regime should lead to slow but gradual enhancement of biodiversity.

A new mowing regime needs to be adopted for TQ3901 – 5330 and TQ3901 - 0557 that will benefit wildlife.

Public Information, Awareness and Signage

There is an information and interpretation board on Gorham Way and a sign at the dewpond.

Temporary information notices are posted on access gates when required.

An Access Audit has been undertaken and covers aspects such as signage and facilities. New signage will have QR access codes for interpretive opportunities such as archaeology, landscape and wildlife.

Stakeholders

The site is owned by Telscombe Town Council who contract a part-time ranger to inspect gates and fencing.

The volunteer group Friends of Telscombe Tye (FOTT) have previously undertaken much of the work on the site with additional help from the South Downs Volunteer Rangers. The FOTT is currently dormant but there is a plan to resurrect it.

Commoners rights – Stud Farm, Kirby Farm

SDNPA - Ranger

Saltdean and Telscombe Residents Associations

Natural England - Manage and monitor the current HLS agreement.

English Heritage - SAMs

Gorham Trust - adjoining land

National Trust - adjoining land

Kirby Farm – adjoining land

Coombe Farm – adjoining land

General public

Site Management Contacts

Telscombe Town Council	01273 589777
Lewes District Council (PSPO for dog fouling)	01273 471600
East Sussex County Council (Rights of Way)	01273 481000
Savills (Land Agents for Gorham Trust)	01798 345980
South Downs National Park Authority	0300 3031053

SDNPA Ranger	Contact through TTC
Natural England	0300 0600300
English Heritage	01483 252000
Stud Farm (Grazing rights)	01273 302486
Kirby Farm (Grazing rights)	Contact through TTC

References

Telscombe Tye Management Plan May 2013

Telscombe Parish Flora Checklist – published by Steven Munday 26th June 2011

Developing a grazing policy – Grazing Advice Partnership

Benfield Management Plan – 2011-2016

Commons Factsheets – Natural England

Natural England - Entry Level (ELS) and Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS)
Agreement - 2013-2023

Abbeylands Report - April 2009. Report on the historic issues and management of
Telscombe Tye by Bob Milton.

Appendices

Maps