

- **Shoreham Parish Council** understands the reasoning behind the proposed sale of the land by SDC.
- **Both councils** function within the **Greenbelt** and **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. This is a huge privilege but with privilege comes **RESPONSIBILITY**.
- Loss of biodiversity is a worldwide threat we need to take seriously. **Chalk grassland** is one of Western Europe's most intricately diverse plant communities, supporting a whole range of wildlife from butterflies and wildflowers including many **rare orchids**, to insects, mammals and birds – many of these species are **specialists**, unable to live anywhere else. Over 50% of such areas lie with the UK and of that 70% exists in the Downs. Where there has been good land management, areas that were in decline are being re-generated.
- **This is a really important area.** Recognition of that was given in the £2 million National Lottery Fund grant to the **Darent Valley Landscape Partnership** for a scheme to be worked through involving several conservation organisations.
- **Land asset managers** have divided the area to be sold in lots for maximum income, apparently without regard for the complex process of **good land management**.
- The future of **Lots 3 and 4** will have most **impact** on Shoreham Village and the valley. **It is essential** that any purchaser is experienced in managing chalk grassland in an AONB and is prepared to work with relevant agencies. The erection of temporary buildings and/or sub-dividing the area into smaller paddocks has the potential to **despoil both landscape and ecology**.
- **Separating** lots 1 and 2 might in fact be a **premature** decision. Any purchaser of Lot 1 wishing to develop an Equestrian Centre or small holding for example, could be anxious to acquire the adjoining land for grazing and hay making. Whilst sheep are the optimum species choice for grazing, with special care horses can be used to conserve grasslands if managed appropriately.

- **Please remember the original reason** for the purchase of this land by SDC: **to ensure its protection.**
- **Shoreham Parish Council** urges the Cabinet to make a responsible decision that ensures:

the value of the land to us all takes precedence: it is owned and managed by those who will conserve it now and for future generations.

Councillor Lesley Spence