

Workshop 5

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SUSSEX COMMUNITIES: PLANTS AND PEOPLE

The Convention on Biological Diversity (1992) stressed the need for communities to be involved in protecting their local wildlife. An innovative project has been undertaken by local people in West Sussex, UK. As a contribution to the Millennium celebrations, a group in Selsey embarked on mapping the vegetation of the Parish. This involved contacting key people including local landowners and interested organisations which culminated in the holding of a public meeting to launch the idea. A group of interested volunteers was assembled, training in vegetation mapping undertaken and then quality assured. The results were put onto one large map and colour coded as required. This baseline map now forms a tool used by the group to protect remaining areas of habitats and species interest in dialogue with local people and specialist interest group. The parish lies between a geological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at West Wittering, Chichester Harbour SSSI and Pagham harbour Local Nature Reserve so the main focus has been tackling issues in the wider environment. The group has drawn up a Parish Biodiversity Plan –the first in the country – and the Chichester Biodiversity Plan has used this as a model to encourage similar initiatives.

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