

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK INQUIRY 2007 – TOPICS 3/4
BOUNDARIES AND ADDITIONAL AREAS

1. **Basis for Submission.** The Harting Society’s charter of 1960 states: The Society’s aim is to increase public awareness of the natural and architectural beauty of the Harting Parish so as to safeguard the character of the area.
2. **Assumption.** It is assumed that the proposed boundary that bisects the Parish of Harting will be included in these topics.
3. **Statement.** The Harting Society strongly objects to the proposed boundary of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) where it cuts through the Saxon pre-Domesday Parish of Harting.
4. **Rationale.**
 - a. **View to the North from the SDNP.** Most national parks are wilderness areas, whereas the proposed SDNP is located in the more populated and developed southeast of the country and it is, therefore, crucial that the views from the park should be preserved as an essential element of the park itself. Without wonderful views over open countryside the park could become an irrelevance.
 - b. **Need for a Recognizable Boundary.** The proposed boundary is not based on natural or artificial features such as rivers or roads and is difficult to trace on a map. The Harting Society recommends basing the boundary on the River Rother, an ancient parish boundary which is easily recognized by both individuals and public authorities.
 - c. **Administration of the Planning Process.** The current proposal disregards parish boundaries but focuses instead on maintaining the integrity of “settlements”. The settlements of both Nyewood and West Harting are, nevertheless, divided by the proposed boundary which bisects the parish of Harting. The Parish Council would be required to co-operate with two different planning authorities, possibly on adjacent properties or even, because of the lack of a recognizable boundary, on a single property on an ill-defined boundary. Rural populations are more than ever dependent on their parish councils to protect the quality of their environment and maintain their cohesiveness; the fact that many parishes are unsatisfactorily divided in other national parks should not be used as justification for dividing yet another parish (in our case, an ancient one).
5. **Conclusion.** The present proposed SDNP boundary through the Parish of Harting is unsatisfactory for the above reasons.
6. **Recommendation.** The SDNP boundary through the Parish of Harting should be re-drawn to follow the natural and historic boundary feature of the River Rother.

Signed: John Sladden, Committee Member for the Environment, Harting Society

Signed: John Stevens , Chairman, Harting Society

**SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK INQUIRY 2007 – TOPIC 5
AONB STATUS OF EXCLUDED LAND**

1. **Basis for Submission.** The Harting Society's charter of 1960 states: The Society's aim is to increase public awareness of the natural and architectural beauty of the Harting Parish so as to safeguard the character of the area.
2. **Assumption.** It is assumed that the proposal to remove the protection currently offered by the AONB status from areas to be excluded from the SDNP will, if approved, impact on the AONB status of those parts of the Parish of Harting which may be excluded from the SDNP.
3. **Statement.** The Harting Society strongly objects to the proposal to remove the designation of AONB from parts of the Parish of Harting.
4. **Rationale.**
 - a. There is no explanation of the thinking behind the proposal to remove AONB status from any AONB land excluded from the SDNP. Are these areas suddenly and inexplicably no longer beautiful? This cannot be the case.
 - b. Application of this proposal to the SDNP would imply that the same principle would invariably also apply to all other AONBs not included in all the other national parks. This is clearly not the case.
5. **Conclusion and Recommendation.** There is no logic, precedent or justification for automatically removing AONB status from areas to be excluded from the SDNP.

Signed: John Sladden, Committee Member for the Environment, Harting Society

Signed: John Stevens, Chairman, Harting Society