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Downland signs and gates

Ref: EFOI / 8856

Information Request

*“...As for the expensive gates what do they do?
I would be grateful if you could inform me of the cost of procurement of all these signs and gates and the costs associated with erect please.*

Could you also tell me at what is the annual cost to your Councils' for which their contractor Milhams incurs for erection of gates and electric fences on the lands around Beachy Head to enable farmers to graze and does the income received in grazing licence fees exceed the cost incurred by the Council.”

Response by Eastbourne Borough Council

- The old (probably around 20 years) Shooters Bottom sign had had multiple repairs, was rotten at the base requiring re-bedding in the ground on various occasions, mentioned the obsolete Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and didn't mention either the Heritage Coast or National Park designations. Other similar signs had the same problems or had already been removed.
- Only four of the eleven sites given new signs have two signs installed. This was considered appropriate where car parks were split into two halves by the road or the site is extra-large as at the main summit car park. It also provides a clear reminder to people arriving on part of the car park that doesn't have a ticket machine that the sites are 'pay and display' and reinforces the important rules about camping, length of stay and fires.
- The car park signs cost £990.36 each including installation. Funding came from the National Park and DEFRA.
- The recently installed wooden bridleway gates have been installed to improve the experience of horse riders and others and reduce the work involved installing and maintaining temporary metal electric fence gates. They have only been installed where they directly adjoin existing permanent farm fencing so not limiting in any way access when electric

fencing is absent nor leaving them as stand-alone remnants. Their installation reduces future work installing and removing temporary gates and the very regular checking of the metal gates which often become loose and require restabilising.

- A wooden gate costs £218.14. A metal gate costs £157.25.
- The cost of the contractor's works are not easily calculable since the fencing is part of a range of routine works and are sometimes shared with the grazier as well as varying year by year. Downland works are funded through a variety of means. For example - DEFRA stewardship arrangements, other farm payments, some grazing income and general council Downland budgets.