

April 27, 2023

PRESS RELEASE: Star Count data backs up picture of a divided Sussex

- *National Park and AONBs enjoy some of the country's best dark skies*
- *Urban areas in Sussex are deprived of the stars*
- *Nearly 90% of citizen scientists in Sussex experienced light pollution*

Star Count 2023 results published today (April 27) have reinforced the picture of a divided Sussex when it comes to enjoyment of the night sky – and the disruption of light pollution.

While Sussex has some of the best dark skies in areas like the South Downs National Park (SDNP) and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), in urban areas we are deprived of the stars.

This supports the findings of previous research including the [Vanishing Stars report in 2020](#) and data from the [SDNP](#) and [High Weald AONB](#).

CPRE Sussex director Paul Steedman said: “The latest Star Count reminds us how important it is to protect our dark skies areas. However, it also highlights how far we have to go to reduce light pollution in urban areas. Cutting light pollution improves people’s health and wellbeing, protects birds and other nocturnal wildlife from harm, saves money and reduces wasted energy. We need to take action now.”

During CPRE’s Star Count week in February, citizen scientists across East and West Sussex counted the number of stars they could see with the naked eye within the constellation of Orion.

If people count fewer than ten stars they are experiencing severe light pollution and counting more than 30 stars is truly dark skies.

Nearly 90% of respondents in Sussex counted 20 stars or fewer. Of those, around half could only see 10 or fewer stars.

Stargazers in Rother and Wealden Districts had the best views of starry skies. In West Sussex there were pockets of darker skies in the Arun, Horsham and Chichester districts.

In evidence presented to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee, CPRE recommended local authorities have legal powers to control light pollution through planning regulations.

Key changes to national and local planning policy were also identified that, if implemented, should lead to a step-change in reducing light pollution.

Find out more about what CPRE Sussex is doing to tackle light pollution at cpresussex.org.uk/what-we-care-about/nature-and-landscapes/dark-skies

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For press inquiries and interview opportunities contact sheena.journalism@gmail.com.

Notes for editors:

About CPRE Sussex

CPRE Sussex is shaping a greener future for Sussex. Our priorities are:

- Beautiful landscapes, rich in nature and greener towns and cities
- Countryside and green spaces which are accessible to all, enriching lives and health
- Sustainable development for thriving communities
- Effective responses to the climate emergency

We engage with decision makers, influencing them and challenging them to protect the Sussex countryside and green spaces. We inform on environmental issues and empower individuals and communities with robust evidence to defend and enhance the green spaces they love. We believe in collaborating with others to ensure a greener future for our county. We research and provide advice on planning issues. Together we can shape a greener future for Sussex.

Star Count 2023

1. Star counts of 10 or fewer stars indicate severe light pollution; 11-15 stars indicate light pollution; and 16-20 stars indicate some light pollution. Star counts of 21-25 stars indicate fairly dark skies; 26-30 stars indicate dark skies; and over 30 stars indicate truly dark skies.
2. Just over 10% of reports across Sussex were for over 20 stars.
3. Nationally, almost 4,000 people took part in the count. Of those, 75% are in areas with the worst three categories of light pollution.
4. 209 reports were received from Sussex in total.