

Welcoming Walkers and Cyclists to your business

[logos] - Experience, KDAONB, NDW, EK, CyclingUK]



EXPERIENCE Kent Downs and the North Downs Way

- ▶ Promotion of sustainable tourism experiences in the Kent Downs and North Downs Way [play PROW film if available]
- ▶ Enhance the infrastructure for cycling and walking
- ▶ Work with businesses to improve offer and experiences for active rural tourism
- ▶ Our partners - VisitKent, CyclingUK, Explore Kent

Kent Downs and the North Downs Way - natural assets

- ▶ Nationally protected landscapes
- ▶ What makes KDAONB distinctive? Natural and cultural environment
- ▶ What makes the area attractive to visitors?
- ▶ North Downs Way - passing through the Surrey Hills from Farnham to Dover, magnificent views, fascinating heritage and follows the legendary and historic Pilgrim's Way
- ▶ Pilgrimage tradition - Via Francigena, Way of St Augustine, Canterbury Cathedral, 150 churches.

Benefits of focussing on active tourism

For your customers

- ▶ Confidence that they're needs will be met - a stress and hassle free trip, that is more likely to be repeated

For your business:

- ▶ A share of a growing market
- ▶ An extended season
- ▶ Being part of a promoted network

For all:

Helping to protect the national landscape for the benefit of tourists, businesses and residents

Why Walkers and Cyclists?

- ▶ A growing market seeking outdoors experiences. This has increased during Covid-19, especially domestic visitors.
- ▶ All year round
- ▶ Over 500million walking trips made to the English countryside with associated expenditure of £6.14billion
- ▶ Cycling tourism spend is £520million, and 1.23m overnight cycling trips. Average spend of £360 per trip.
- ▶ Good public transport from London, the south east and Northern Europe
- ▶ Local and very local audience on our doorstep
- ▶ Contribution to the rural economy - walkers and cyclists stay longer and spend more. They are often looking for more things to do, and incorporate an over-night stay to give them time
- ▶ Can explore less well known places, thus dispersing tourist 'honey-pots', or towns

Who are they?

- ▶ Long distance walkers and hikers
- ▶ Adventurers - looking for challenge! Pre-kids, combine with other activities, eg kayaking
- ▶ Families who want kids to explore the outdoors
- ▶ Social walkers - <4miles combined with a pint, or cream tea
- ▶ Explorers - want new challenges, with either grown up or no kids, a softer adventure, bit more comfort.
- ▶ Older active
- ▶ May have dogs
- ▶ International
- ▶ Groups/ tour operators

Interests include:

Nature and environment

Healthy living - mental and physical

Cultural heritage

Cyclist profile*

- ▶ Touring Cyclists - longer linear or circular routes with one overnight stay
 - ▶ Enthusiast road cyclists or mountain bikers - short break
 - ▶ Casual holiday makers - part of a longer holiday
 - ▶ Day trippers - including cycling events.
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- ▶ Barriers: information, cost, accessibility

*Economic benefits of cycle tourism report, Cycling UK 2020

Don't deliver a service...

Deliver an experience....

How to make your business stand
out to this market



Know your area

- ▶ Know your local routes - this will dictate your cycling market (off road, road cyclists, families)
- ▶ Review your web-site - how do people reach you - make it very clear and include all transport types.
- ▶ What is special about your location - AONB, near to NDW, promoted routes, nearby amenities - promote these online
- ▶ What other local businesses or attractions are around you - could you work with them?

Practical actions

- A warm and friendly welcome in all weathers!
- Have local walking and cycling maps and information available - eg maps and leaflets, **cycle hire**, cycle paths, as well as longer distance. Access to Explore Kent or online mapping services.
- **Instructions for reaching your business by bike or on foot on your website**
- Space available for drying outdoor clothing and footwear
- Boot scrapers, and/or access to water & stiff brush for cleaning
- Water bottles filled for free, and flasks filled
- Somewhere safe to store backpacks
- First aid kit for minor scrapes **and details of nearest hospital etc**

For Cyclists

- ▶ Safe place to lock up bikes (consider lockable and well-lit storage if overnight)
- ▶ Puncture repair kits and basic tools such as a pump
- ▶ Knowledge of cycle repair shops
- ▶ Knowledge about local cycle routes for different skill levels
- ▶ Nearest cycle hire for interested casual bikers who don't have suitable bikes
- ▶ Laundry facilities on site or signposted to
- ▶ Accommodate groups

Extra touches

- ▶ Consider the weather - if its cold or wet a cosy fire and a hot drink goes a long way, if its warm cold drinks and ice-cream
- ▶ Special walkers tea and cake / hikers breakfast / local ale
- ▶ Hot baths, foot spas
- ▶ Walking/cycling magazines and books to browse
- ▶ Guided tours
- ▶ Early breakfasts/ packed lunches (at a charge)
- ▶ Baggage transfer for walkers doing linear routes (at a charge)
- ▶ Overnight drying service
- ▶ 'Netwalk' with other local businesses to build up knowledge and add-on experiences.
- ▶ Ebike charging
- ▶ Mechanical knowledge (puncture repairs etc) or even roadside support
- ▶ Bikes available to borrow

Promotion

- ▶ Online - make finding information and making a booking frictionless.
- ▶ Publicise your walkers and cyclist welcome facilities and look for suitable channels
- ▶ **Join Cycling UK's Cyclists Welcome directory**
- ▶ SEOs - check for keywords - national trails, walking, cycling
- ▶ Use inspiring pictures and images
- ▶ Tag the North Downs Way/National Trails and Kent Downs AONB on your social media.
- ▶ Make it easy for potential visitors to extend their experience with suggested itineraries

Cycle Friendly Places accreditation

Does your business go the extra mile to welcome cyclists?

Join the Cycle Friendly Places programme for accommodation and hospitality businesses (pub, café, hotel, B&B, campsite or similar), and be celebrated for excellence in service and facilities for cyclists

Exclusive training, advice and resources, plus get noticed by Cycling UK's network on Cyclists Welcome, our directory of Cycle Friendly Places

Register for updates: [Cyclinguk.org/cyclefriendlyplaces](https://cyclinguk.org/cyclefriendlyplaces)



Cycle Hubs

Destinations for cyclists to enjoy the fantastic routes and Cycle Friendly businesses throughout Kent - coming soon!

we are
cycling
UK

Further support:

Complete the checklist for welcoming walkers and cyclists and make an action plan of how to improve your offer.

- ▶ Cycling UK - accreditation scheme and grant support to help improve your business for cyclists [make into separate page with contacts and web-site]
- ▶ Walkers Welcome - a scheme to encourage towns and villages to sign up and be promoted as Walkers Welcome destinations
- ▶ Explore Kent - walks and itineraries near you - [talk to EK about whether they want to restart own accreditation]
- ▶ Sign up for the AONB newsletter - to hear about further support for businesses
- ▶ Contact Rebecca.rees@kentdowns.org.uk