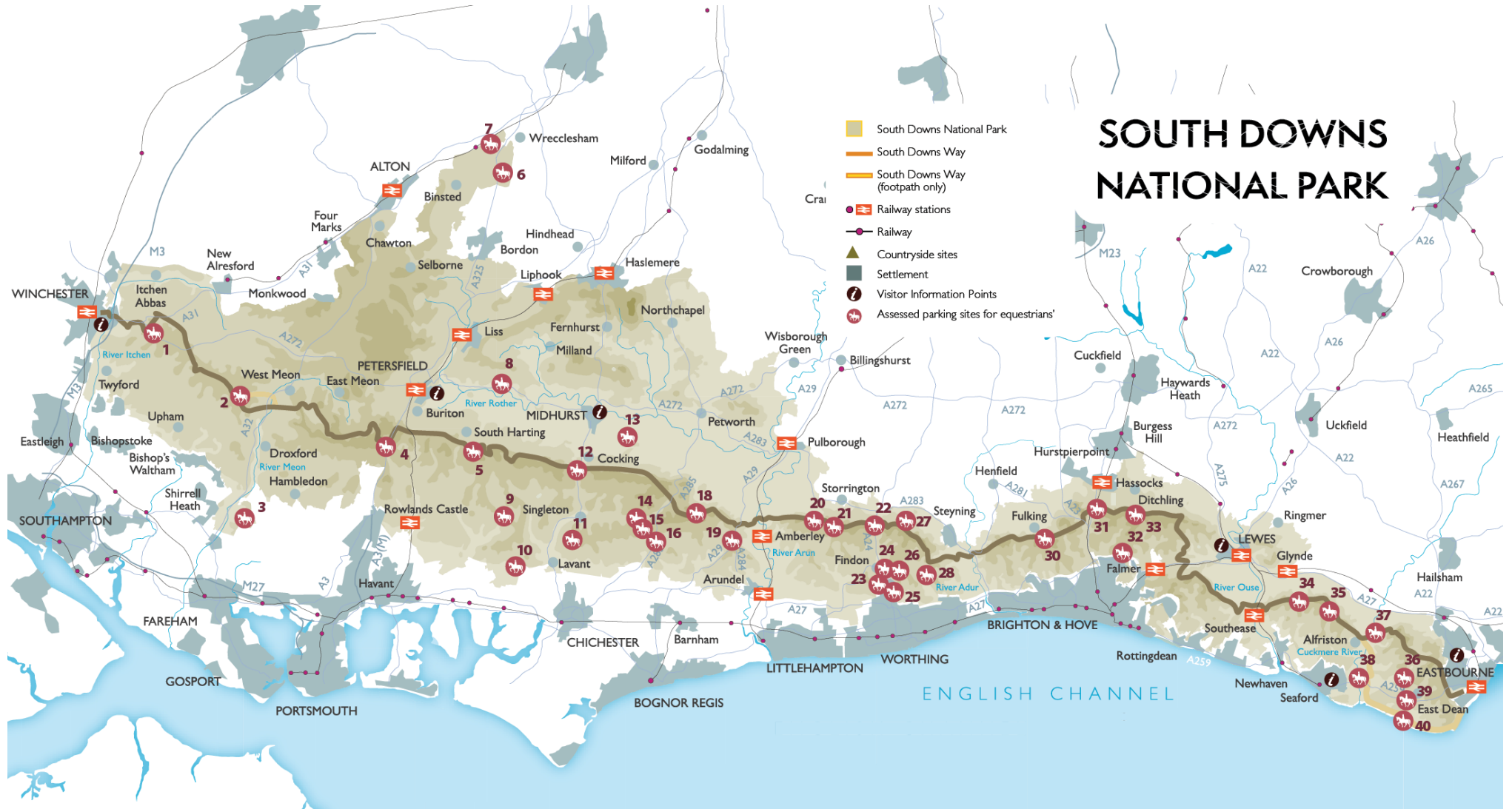


SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

Assessment of parking sites for equestrians



Location Map



Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help riders make informed choices about which car parking sites in the South Downs National Park may be suitable for them and their horsebox or trailer. Each site has been assessed against four key criteria:

- **Approach:** is the approach to the car park easy to navigate with a heavy/wide/long horsebox or trailer?
- **Space:** is the car park of a suitable size to allow a horsebox or trailer to be manoeuvred, parked, and ramps lowered, including when other vehicles are parked on site?
- **Safety:** is it safe to unload and saddle up a horse at the site?
- **Riding:** is there access to good selection of bridleway routes of varying distances?

● scores indicate all ok, ● scores indicate some issues, ● scores indicate a major challenge.

Table 1: Sites that are barrier-free, or that have a barrier that is unlockable via an equestrian key scheme

Ref no.	Site name and grid reference	Assessment for equestrians				Notes for barrier-free sites and those accessible via equestrian key schemes
		Approach	Space	Safety	Riding	
1.	Cheesefoot Head SU527278	●	●	●	●	Small site directly off the A272, which is often quite busy. Single row of parking bays, with insufficient room for trailers or large horseboxes. Direct access from the car park to the South Downs Way is provided by an off-road permissive path separated by a hedge from the busy A272.
2.	Beaconhill Beeches SU598227	●	●	●	●	A small site, but it is still possible to manoeuvre a trailer as there is a small turning circle around the trees, or you can park at the edge of the site directly on the roadside where there is a large pull-in. However, do arrive early to be sure of a place. Site is on the roadside, but it is a quiet road so reasonably safe. Riding is more limited here than from other sites – parts of the South Downs Way is footpath only (between Beaconhill / Exton), and there are few accessible circular routes.
3.	Forest of Bere / West Walk (Lodge Hill) SU 601124)	●	●	●	● with TROT permit	No public bridleways; equestrians must have a TROT permit to ride through the forest (www.tollrides.org.uk – search “Creech & West Walk”), which gives access to many miles of forest trails. Access is informal, with no marked routes. TROT recommends that equestrians use this site; other Forest of Bere car parks either have height barriers or are heavily used by families/walkers etc. Decent size, off-road layby on Hundred Acres Road, at Lodge Hill, with separate entrance and exit, suitable for trailers and horseboxes. Close to roadside but with some screening, which improves safety.

Ref no.	Site name and grid reference	Assessment for equestrians				Notes for barrier-free sites and those accessible via equestrian key schemes
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4.	Queen Elizabeth Country Park <i>SU 718185</i>	●	●	●	●	Pay on exit (ANPR system) at this car park which closes at 8pm. Safe site with plenty of space and a separate parking area available for horseboxes. Larger parking areas are also available for special events. Good circular riding routes available. Be aware that the bridleways within the park are heavily used and are very busy with hikers and cyclists.
5.	Harting Down <i>SU 790181</i>	●	● but see note about weekends	●	●	Good circular riding routes available from this National Trust site. Parking charges apply for National Trust non-members. The approach is straightforward, the site is located safely off road, and there is usually space for trailers to turn and park, although it can get busy at weekends. For specific details see www.nationaltrust.org.uk/harting-down .
6.	Alice Holt Forest, (nr Frensham) Buckshot Hole <i>SU812408</i>	●	●	●	● with a TROT permit	Flat and spacious site, organised around a large turning circle. Plenty of bays and pull-ins that are suitable for trailers or large horseboxes. There are few public bridleways nearby, but nearly 12 miles of forestry tracks can be accessed with a TROT riding permit (www.tollrides.org.uk – search 'Alice Holt').
7.	Alice Holt Forest, (nr Frensham) Gravel Hill Road <i>SU802433</i>	●	●	●	● with a TROT permit	Very small site, just a large layby at the end of a dead end lane. Ok for horseboxes but not advisable for trailers as there is very little room to manoeuvre, especially if other vehicles are on site. There are no public bridleways nearby, but nearly 12 miles of forestry tracks can be accessed with a TROT riding permit (www.tollrides.org.uk – search 'Alice Holt').
8.	Rogate/Fyning layby <i>SU 813237</i>	●	●	●	●	A long lay-by off the east-bound A272 between Rogate and Fyning. The approach is good and the site has a separate entrance and exit which is practical for trailers. This is only a small site however and there is only room for about 4 large vehicles. Some safety concerns as the site is on a main A road (although trees and a hedge provide some screening). You need to ride a little way along the minor road network through Fyning and Terwick common to access the bridleway routes to the north.
9.	Stoughton Down <i>SU815126</i>	●	●	●	●	Medium sized site, better suited to horseboxes due to the layout of bays, but trailers could manage if arriving early before the site fills up with other vehicles. Excellent riding through the Kingley Vale nature reserve and beyond.
10.	West Stoke <i>SU825087</i>	●	●	●	●	Medium sized site, ok for small/medium horseboxes, but due to the design of the bays, there is only room to turn a trailer if you arrive early when the site is empty of other vehicles. There are a number of bridleway loops, although all of these do involve some roadwork. Further to the north are also the numerous bridleways of the Kingley Vale nature reserve, although these can be accessed more readily, and without roadwork, from the Stoughton Down site (ref. no.9 if preferred).

Ref no.	Site name and grid reference	Assessment for equestrians				Notes for barrier-free sites and those accessible via equestrian key schemes
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11.	Seven Points (nr Goodwood) SU871109	●	●	●	●	Straightforward approach and safe location at end of lane. Site does get busy, so arrive early to guarantee a space. Site is best suited to small horseboxes as space and turning room is limited. Not suitable for trailers. Be aware that riding is limited – only one short circular route and one long straight bridleway accessible from this site.
12.	Cocking SU 875166	●	●	●	●	A popular and busy car park, which is also very narrow. Not suitable for trailers or large horseboxes. Small horseboxes are ok at off-peak times (although be aware that it could be a challenge to open the ramps if the car park is busy). Good selection of circular routes from this site. The approach is straightforward off the A286, though the road can be busy at times.
13.	Heyshott Common SU 914196	●	●	●	●	On New Road, a quiet and fairly small car park but with plenty of room to turn a trailer. Approach is fine, although if coming from the A272 it is best not to approach via Ambersham Bridge as this is a steep and narrow lane - come instead via Selham and South Ambersham. The site is open to the road but it is a very quiet one. Direct bridleway access to good variety of rides on bridleways and commons, mostly on sandy soil.
14.	Droke, nr East Dean SU 924126	●	●	●	●	This site was previously part of the key scheme at Selhurst Park, but the barrier has been left open since July 2014 and access is now open to all. Medium size grassy site. Winding single track approach with relatively few passing places. Good riding, including some permissive bridleways in Selhurst Park.
15.	Selhurst Park SU 927118 (Height barrier with equestrian access via key scheme only)	●	●	●	●	Height barrier – access to equestrians via key scheme only. Key scheme is managed by local volunteer – contact SDNPA for information. The main Selhurst car park is behind a height barrier, but the landowner has set aside a separate designated horsebox area. The horsebox area is locked behind a height barrier, but registered users are given the combination code. Good riding, including some permissive bridleways in Selhurst Park.
16.	Eartham Woods SU 938107	●	●	●	●	Good site with an abundance of excellent riding routes. Easy approach on a quiet road. The majority of the car park is behind a height barrier, but a designated area has been established near the main entrance, which is barrier free and clearly signposted for the exclusive use of horseboxes and trailers.

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		Approach	Space	Safety	Riding	
18.	Bignor Hill SU 973130	●	●	●	●	Beware the approach which is extremely steep, narrow and winding. It is possible to navigate with care, but only for small horseboxes or high-powered tow vehicles. There are plentiful circular bridleway routes from this site, which has sufficient space to manoeuvre and park a trailer, and it is located safely off road. However, it does get busy, especially at weekends. Trailers should stick to off-peak times, as the layout and entrance position make it difficult to turn round and get out of the site again if it is full.
19.	Whiteways, Arundel TQ 002108	●	●	●	●	Site is easy to approach and enter, with plenty of space, but is situated on a busy main road (A29). There are designated horsebox bays at the northern end, and there is water on site. The parking is some way back from the road but be aware there is no physical barrier between the car park and traffic. Equestrians should be advised that at weekends large groups of motorbikes meet on site.
20.	Kithurst Hill, Storrington TQ 070124 <i>(Height barrier with equestrian access via key scheme only)</i>	●	●	●	●	Height barrier – access to equestrians via key scheme only. Key scheme is managed by local volunteer – contact SDNPA for information. Members complete a registration form, agree to abide by the key scheme rules and confirm they have public liability insurance for their horse. There is a small charge of £20 per year, plus a one-off £25 returnable deposit for the key. Approach is steep and narrow, but navigable with care (small horseboxes and high-powered tow vehicles only).
21.	Chantry Post, Storrington TQ 087119	●	●	●	●	Approach is narrow and fairly steep, but negotiable for a small/medium horsebox. Site is very small, more of a large lay-by than a car park; not much turning space so not recommended for trailers or for large horseboxes. Be aware the surface is quite uneven. Plentiful riding available.
22.	Washington (Frieslands) TQ 120120 <i>(Height barrier with equestrian access via key scheme only)</i>	●	●	●	●	Height barrier – access for equestrians via key scheme only. Key scheme is managed by local volunteer – contact SDNPA for information. Relatively small car park but it is usable for small/medium horseboxes and trailers. Key scheme members are advised to use the site at off-peak times when it is much easier to manoeuvre and park. Straightforward access either off the southbound A24 or southbound off London Road out of Washington village, and the site is located safely away from the main road.
23.	Findon Bost Hill TQ124072	●	●	●	●	Approach is down a narrow lane with passing places. There are no circular routes of any great length from this site, unless you cross the busy A24.

Ref no.	Site name and grid reference	Assessment for equestrians				Notes for barrier-free sites and those accessible via equestrian key schemes
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24.	Findon Valley, Nepcote Lane TQ128085	●	●	●	●	A small site with a sloping, uneven surface. The parking area is a patch of sloping grass immediately on the roadside. It is possible to park on the level if you park adjacent to the road rather than at right angles to it, but be aware trailers may struggle to turn and manoeuvre due to the slope. Fine for small horseboxes however, and the site has immediate bridleway access to a huge variety of circular routes.
25.	Findon Valley, Coombe Rise TQ 135066	●	●	●	●	Beautiful riding, easy approach and safely located on a quiet road. However, this is a very small site. It is impossible for trailers or large horseboxes to manoeuvre and park. Suitable for small horseboxes only.
26.	Cissbury Ring, Nepcote Lane TQ 139084	●	●	●	●	A very small site (a single row of spaces) with a sloping, uneven surface, at the end of a long and narrow approach road. Small horseboxes only – no trailers or large horseboxes as there is very limited manoeuvring room. Arrive early, as the site does get busy. Outstanding riding with a huge variety of circular routes.
27.	Chanctonbury Ring TQ 145124 <i>(Height barrier with equestrian access via key scheme only)</i>	●	●	●	●	Height barrier – access for equestrians via key scheme only. Key scheme is managed by local volunteer – contact SDNPA for information. Approach is single track with few passing places. Small site, suitable for small horseboxes only. Can get very busy, especially in summer; key scheme members are advised to use off-peak only. Great selection of riding available.
28.	Beggars Bush (nr Lychpole Farm) TQ 162080	●	●	●	●	Huge variety of riding routes from this site. It is a largish, wide, and little-used layby directly at the roadside on Titch Hill. Best suited to horseboxes as trailers may struggle to turn/park if other vehicles are on site. Be aware that there is no fence or verge between the layby and the road, although it is a fairly quiet B road. Approaching from the north (via Steyning) involves a couple of steep sections; approaching from the south (via A27) is straightforward.
30.	Devils Dyke pub TQ 259109	●	● but see note about weekend	●	●	Large car park, with beautiful riding, located safely off road. The first section of the site is marked out with car bays but the far end is unmarked, with plenty of room (when quiet) for horseboxes and trailers to park. However, it gets extremely busy at weekends, especially in high season, so use with caution at these times. Please note parking charges apply www.nationaltrust.org.uk/devils-dyke
31.	Jack and Jill, Clayton TQ 303134	●	●	●	●	Main car park is located behind a height barrier, but there are two horsebox spaces outside the barrier – although you must arrive early to be guaranteed one! The site gets very busy at weekends and if other vehicles can't find a space in the main site they do sometimes park in the horsebox bays. Approach is flat but is a single track lane with relatively few passing places. Site is safely off road with plenty of space to turn a trailer.

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32.	Stanmer Park, Upper Lodges TQ 324098	●	●	●	●	Medium sized National Trust site, just off the A27 on Ditchling Road. Straightforward approach from either direction along the A27. Sufficient room for trailers but some bays do have overhanging trees which limits the options for high-sided vehicles. Good riding. At the time of writing, some issues have been reported with the gates between Stanmer Park and the Downs beyond, which have been replaced with non-equestrian friendly ones which riders need to dismount for.
33.	Ditchling Beacon TQ 334129	●	● but see note about weekend	●	●	National Trust pay and display site, fee payable by phone. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ditchling-beacon for details. Lovely big site with plenty of good riding. There is a bus stop within the car park which means bus turning space is required at weekends and on public holidays. Riders are advised not to park here at these times. Approach from the south (A27) is straightforward, but approach from the north (Ditchling village) is steep and winding.
34.	Firle Beacon TQ 468058	●	●	●	●	Access is via a long, sustained climb, with strong crosswinds on some sections. Road is wide however, with plenty of room for two vehicles to pass. A height barrier was erected at some point, but a large gap to the side now gives access to all vehicles. There are two good parking areas outside the barrier should it be ever be re-introduced. Lovely variety of riding routes available from this site. Surface is gravel and grass.
35.	Bo Peep TV494051	●	●	●	●	Approach is steep but navigable. Plenty of space, safe car park at the end of the Bo Peep Bostal Road, with lovely riding.
36.	Friston Forest (off A259)	●	●	●	● (with a TROT permit)	You must have a valid TROT permit to park a horsebox or trailer at this site. Box parking is off A259 along a Forestry track via 2 gates with combination locks, (www.tollrides.org.uk – search 'Friston Forest'). Excellent riding along bridleways and the TROT permit also gives access to many miles of extra trails.
37.	Wilmington Chalkpit TQ531032	●	●	●	●	Very small site directly on roadside. Rear of site is grassy and is a reasonable distance from road however. Surface is EXTREMELY bumpy/uneven with large ridges and deep troughs. Not suitable for trailers or large horseboxes. Small horsebox could possibly manage, provided underside of vehicle has enough clearance to negotiate the ridges/troughs.

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38.	Seven Sisters Country Park (visitor centre) TV518995	●	●	●	●	This is the main visitor centre car park for the very popular country park, and is usually very busy with other vehicles. Not the most appropriate site for equestrians, although there is technically plenty of room to park, and bridleway access directly from the car park out into Friston Forest. Pay and display charges apply (£6 for under 2 hours / £12 all day for large vehicles). Equestrians with a TROT permit may prefer to use Friston Forest parking (ref.no.36) instead (www.tollrides.org.uk - search Friston Forest).
39.	Horsefield Car Park East Dean village TV557977	●	●	●	●	Local village car park adjacent to village green. Reasonably sized site but very well used by other vehicles. Best suited to small horseboxes, and the most appropriate option for equestrian parking is in the first row of bays, furthest from the village green, which backs onto a grassy area. Some roadwork is required to access the bridleway network.
40.	Birlinging Gap TV554960	●	●	●	●	Use the overflow car park (located within the hairpin bend of the road) rather than the main pub car park on the opposite side. Large grass and gravel site with space to park (although busy at weekends). The site is located directly on the roadside although there are banked edges which give some protection from the traffic, and the centre of the site is a fair distance from the road. Equestrians do need to cross the road to access the bridleways. Note: Parking charges apply for non-members, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birlinging-gap-and-the-seven-sisters .

Disclaimer:

Please remember that these site assessments are subjective, and are intended as a guide only. Information correct as at July 2017. The majority of sites have been visited by the main authors Katriona Phillips (2014 and 2017) and Hilary Jubert (2014), both experienced horse riders, familiar with riding in the South Downs. Other sites have been visited by National Park Authority staff. The Authors have tried to flag up all potential issues, but depending on the vehicle/rider/horse combination, not all of these will be of concern for all users. If a site has some amber or red grades it may still be perfectly suitable for some equestrians. Riders are advised to make a reconnaissance visit **without** their horse to any site they are thinking of using; to check whether it is suitable for their specific requirements. Where key schemes are in operation, please contact the SDNPA offices for details of the contact for individual sites. Email info@southdowns.gov.uk or call 01730 814810. Note that some parking sites are only available to TROT permit holders. Details from www.tollrides.org.uk