

Case Study

Cyclists and Walkers Welcome Scheme & Cycle Parking

Background

The adverse impacts of road traffic in the South Downs National Park (SDNP) include congestion, poor air quality and noise pollution which impact on visitors' ability to experience the special qualities of the National Park and on residents' quality of life. The objective of reducing car use and promoting more opportunities for sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, was set out in the first Partnership Management Plan for the SDNP and was a key component of the National Parks Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT) in 2012.

The *Cyclists and Walkers Welcome* scheme was created as part of the second phase of LSTF funding in the South Downs. It evolved to complement the existing *Cycle Parking* scheme, which was one element of the DfT's Cycle Ambition programme in the National Park.

Both projects were designed to involve communities and support local businesses in promoting and providing facilities for walkers and cyclists. With many businesses already offering a warm welcome to cyclists and walkers, the projects enable businesses to tap into the full potential of this market.



Launch of the Cyclists and Walkers Welcome Scheme, Petersfield 2017

The projects

Cyclists and Walkers Welcome

The Cyclists and Walkers Welcome scheme launched in 2017 and was initially targeted at tourism businesses in two locations: Lewes, in East Sussex and Petersfield in Hampshire. The rationale behind this was to engage local businesses in a new SDNPA initiative - [Go South Downs](#), aimed at encouraging car-free visits and holidays in the National Park. Lewes and Petersfield were chosen as pilot towns as both have good public transport connections. Businesses in and around both towns were encouraged to consider how they might present themselves as car-free destinations by providing information about public transport and by offering a warm welcome to cyclists and walkers.

More than 50 businesses signed up in the first few months of the Cyclists and Walkers Welcome scheme, receiving a complimentary kit containing items such as puncture patches, track pumps, tyre levers and tools for cyclists to use and local maps, cleaning materials and leaflets for walkers. All businesses were listed on an online directory hosted on the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) website and received branded display stickers and digital collateral to promote themselves to cyclists and walkers. Where appropriate some businesses also took up the additional offer of free cycle parking stands.

Cycle Parking

It was apparent from the earliest days of working to promote sustainable travel in the SDNP that many locations lacked any provision for cycle parking. Good quality and visible cycle parking at attractions is proven to encourage cycling and the Cycle Parking initiative was developed in 2015 as a result. Attractions and businesses are encouraged to apply for up to six free stands. A simple application process allows SDNPA to determine whether the proposed parking locations are appropriate and whether additional permissions might be required.

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“My guests at The Brick House Cheriton have been interested in the promotional material and information provided previously and I've made use of the kit to assist people on their way.” *Brick House B&B*

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The Outcome

Since its launch in 2017 more than 100 businesses have now joined the Cyclists and Walkers Welcome scheme and feature in an online directory on the SDNPA website. www.southdowns.gov.uk/directory

In 2018, the scheme was extended to West Sussex businesses and a workshop which brought together existing members of the scheme with interested and newly joined businesses. The first businesses to join the scheme shared their experiences so far and the value of tapping into the cyclists and walkers market. New members received a welcome kit to help get them started.

“We've had a reasonable amount of interest from cyclists in the repair/parts box you gave us I've given out some inner tyres, a first aid pouch and one or two other things over the past year, which were all much appreciated. Thanks again for providing the service”. Berkeley House, Lewes

The Cycle Parking Scheme has also evolved since its initial creation and applicants for parking stands are able to choose between bespoke metal A stands featuring the shared identity (see picture below); a rural wooden post or a moveable Plantlock incorporating a container for plants. A small number of fix-it stations have also been installed at key locations, such as youth hostels on the South Downs Way, country parks and other sites popular with cyclists.

Since its launch in 2015, almost 200 cycle parking stands have been deployed across the National Park and interest for these and for the fix-it stations continues to grow.

The future

The Cyclists and Walkers Welcome scheme continues to accept new members. A small stock of kit is available for distribution and the SDNPA Sustainable Tourism Officer acts as the point of contact for scheme. The Cycling Parking scheme maintains a small stock of cycle stands at SDNPA offices while a wider stock is held by suppliers. The value of both of these schemes is evidenced by the positive feedback from Members and beneficiaries who have welcomed the opportunity to raise the profile of their businesses and tap into the Walking and Cycling markets.

In the long term, when the existing stocks of equipment are exhausted, both schemes could be supported, with the help of the South Downs Trust, via external sponsorship.

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Shared Identity stands and fix it station at West Dean Village Stores, 2018



The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan (PMP) 2014–19 sets out a shared vision for how we all would like the National Park to be in the future. It includes 11 long-term outcomes, and provides a framework for communities, landowners, charities, businesses and public bodies to work together to make this vision and these outcomes a reality.

This project successfully contributes to the following PMP outcomes:

Outcome 5: Outstanding visitor experiences underpinned by a high quality access and sustainable transport network supporting improved health and wellbeing.

southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/SDNP-Partnership-Management-Plan-2014-19.pdf