



Report prepared for:

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**Walking and Cycling Activity Providers
in the South Downs National Park**



Cycling the South Downs Way, Photo: Saddle Skedaddle

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Walking and Cycling Activity Providers in the South Downs National Park

There are a large number of private businesses, clubs, local and national organisations that provide guided walks and cycle rides, cycling and walking events in the South Downs National Park. This inventory report lists this provision and outlines gaps and opportunities for the future.

The provision of walking and cycling experiences in the South Downs is grouped into the following clusters:

1. Activity Providers:

1.1 Walking-only local providers

1.2 Cycling-only local providers

1.3 Walking and Cycling local providers

1.4 Tour Operators, such as HF Holidays (walking), Saddle Skedaddle (cycling) whose head offices are usually located outside the South Downs but organise guided multi-day holidays locally within and around the South Downs, and usually provide transfers, cycling equipment and local accommodation. These primarily focus on the South Downs Way.

2. Information Providers (for self-guided experiences, including the provision of maps, leaflets, guidebooks, downloadable GPS files, etc., such as visitor centres, Information HUBs and other generic website portals), **Clubs & other niche groups** (usually aimed at local residents), **Events and Festivals**.

Inventory

1. Activity Providers:

In general, hotspots for walking and cycling services include the East end of the park between Shoreham-by-Sea and Eastbourne and the North-West triangle between Winchester, Alton and Petersfield. The South West and Centre of the park are more reliant on mobile services such as bike hire delivery and scheduled guided walks that rotate around the region.

Provision is delivered in several ways:

- Self-guided walking and cycling experiences, including cycle hire from a shop
- Pre-arranged walking and cycling experiences with or without a tour guide. These are usually organised through an activity provider or tour operator as part of a single or multi-day package, and may be organised to tie in with walking/cycling festivals or annual walks/cycling programme.

- Bespoke walking and cycling experiences with or without a dedicated guide. These are either organised independently by the traveller/club/group or through a tour operator as part of a single or multi-day package, and can tie in with walking/cycling festivals or annual walks/cycling programme.
- Scheduled activities/events for a group either on a 'turn-up and go' basis or by pre-booking in advance. May include walking festivals/annual walks programme.

1.1 Walking-only local providers

Footprints of Sussex

<http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk>

Footprints of Sussex offer self-guided short breaks, guided walks, an annual South Downs Way walk, plus a baggage transfer service.

Pear Tree Cottage, Jarvis Lane, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3GL



Fig 1: Map of Local Walking Providers (blue bubble icon) showing proximity to main access towns and main railway station (green bubble icon) and information centres (yellow bubble icon):

<https://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?msid=207931643627372328325.0004d7f756f71c755eaea&msa=0>

1.2 Cycling-only local providers

The following providers offer a variety of guided walks, from half-day and full-day trips, to multi-day organised holiday itineraries.

CTC West Surrey

<http://www.ctcwestsurrey.org.uk/>

A member group of the Cyclists Touring Club – the UK's largest touring and

leisure cycling club. CTC has a network of local groups covering the whole country, and has a total membership in excess of 65,000.

Cyclelife Petersfield

<http://www.petersfieldcycles.co.uk>

Within walking distance of Petersfield station, Cyclelife Petersfield has two electric bikes for hire.

Cyclelife Petersfield, Rear of 40 Dragon Street, Petersfield GU31 4JJ

Crank Cycles, Alton

<http://www.crank-cycles.com>

Within walking distance of Alton station, Crank Cycles has two electric bikes for hire.

Crank Cycles, 84 High Street, Alton GU34 1EN

Cycle Works, Haslemere

<http://www.cycleworks.co.uk/haslemere>

Part of the Cycle Works group (other outlets are in Guildford, Leatherhead and Petersfield), a cycle repair and retail outlet, with a range of bikes to buy and accessories.

19-21 West St, Haslemere, Surrey, GU27 2AB

Quench Cycles

<http://www.quenchuk.co.uk>

In the Alice Holt Forest, Quench offers a range of bikes to hire, including children's, buggies/trailer bikes, tandems and electric bikes, plus helmets and other accessories.

Alice Holt Forest, Bucks Horn Oak, Farnham, Surrey GU10 4LS

Meon Valley Cycle Hire

<http://www.meonvalley-cyclehire.co.uk>

Offers a variety of trek bikes and accessories, with special offers for families, plus guided team-building cycling events.

Triangle Lane, Fareham PO14 4HQ

Meonsprings

<http://www.meonsprings.com>

Offers a range of bikes, trailers, seats and accessories for all the family to hire.

Whitewool Farm, East Meon, Petersfield, Hampshire GU32 1HW

South Downs Cycling

<http://south-downs-cycling.webs.com/>

Offers a range of flexible Winchester-based cycling tours and holidays.

Summit Bikes

<http://www.summitbikes.co.uk/>

Providing guided rides across the South Downs National Park, selling quality bikes and accessories from well established brands and hiring bikes from adult

bikes to tow-a-long trailers for children and pets. Offering full servicing facilities from puncture repair to a full strip down and rebuild.

24 Hillfield Rd, Selsey, West Sussex, PO20 0LB

Cycle Tours UK

<http://www.cycletoursuk.com/>

Offers guided tours, self-guided tours, bike hire, maps and routes, within striking distance of Winchester station – they will deliver bikes within a 20 mile radius.

2 Christchurch Gardens, St Cross, Winchester SO23 9TH

Stowaway Bikes

<http://www.stowawaybikes.co.uk/>

Bike shop specialising in electric and folding bikes, offering hire services.

The Chandlery, Chichester Marina, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 7EJ

M's Cycle Hire

<http://www.m-cyclehire.co.uk/>

Offers a small fleet of high end hardtail mountain bikes for hire.

High Street, Shoreham by Sea, West Sussex BN43 5DB

Cowdray Farm Shop

<http://www.cowdrayfarmshop.co.uk>

Have four electric bikes for rent.

Cowdray Farm Shop, Cowdray Park, Easebourne, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 0AJ

ZigZag Cycling

<http://www.zigzagcycling.com>

Guided bike rides, tours, breaks and bespoke packages. Bike hire can be arranged through advance booking.

32 Beach Green, Shoreham-by-sea, West Sussex BN43 5YG

Coastal Cycles

<http://www.coastalcycles.co.uk>

Offers bike hire with all the essential accessories included (hybrids, mountain bikes, children's bikes and tandems), plus tours, short breaks and bike delivery.

46a Pier Road, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 5LW

Let's Bike

<http://letsbike-eastbourne.co.uk/>

A range of bike and accessory hire is available.

Lavender House, 255 Southbourne Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN22 8RE

Brighton Cycle Hire

<http://www.brightoncyclehire.com>

A wide range of bikes is available for hire, principally Dutch bikes intended for city, rather than cross-country, cycling. Right underneath Brighton station.

Amsterdammers, Unit 8, under the Station, off Trafalgar Street, Brighton BN1 4FQ

Rayment Cycles

<http://raymentcycles.com/>

Mountain and city bikes, plus helmets and locks, are available for hire close to Brighton station.

12-14 Circus Parade, New England Road, Brighton BN1 4GW

Seven Sisters Cycle Co. & Cuckmere Cycle Co.

<http://www.cuckmere-cycle.co.uk/>

Mountain bikes, children's bikes, tandems and buggies/trailers are available for hire; plus helmets, maps, and general guidance. Guided tours with a mountain bike instructor can be arranged.

Granary Barn, Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, East Sussex BN25 4AD

Hassocks Community Bikes

<http://www.hassockscommunitycyclehire.com>. High quality Saracen Mantra mountain bikes for children and adults are available for hire, as well as free cycle route maps.



Fig 2: Map of Local Cycling Providers (blue bubble icon) showing proximity to main access points and main railway stations (green bubble icon) and information centres (yellow bubble icon):

<https://maps.google.co.uk/maps/ms?msid=207931643627372328325.0004d7e53819c128b12d4&mss=0&ll=51.001564,-0.935447&spn=0.000456,0.001112&source=gplus-ogsb>

1.3 Walking and Cycling local providers

Walk and Cycle

<http://walkandcycle.co.uk>

Walk and Cycle offers a range of walking and cycling holidays, cycle hire, trail guides and a bag transfer service. *123 The Causeway, Petersfield, Hampshire GU31 4LN*

South Downs Discovery

<http://www.southdownsdiscovery.com>

Walking and cycling routes, itineraries, information and advice plus baggage transfer. 18 Hurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 2ER

So Sussex

<http://www.sosussex.co.uk>

So Sussex has various walking day tours and cycle tours. They also have over twenty bikes to hire with a pick-up/drop-off service.

3 Byelaw Cottages, Spithurst Road, Barcombe, East Sussex BN8 5EF

1.4 Mountain Bike & Cycling Training & Skills Courses in and around the South Downs

South East Mountain Biking <http://southeastmountainbiking.co.uk/>

- guided mountain bike trips as well as skills training
- in the South Downs

South Downs MTB Skills <http://southdownshosting.co.uk/sussexmtbtours/>

- mountain bike skills coaching and guided rides
- in the South Downs

ZigZag Cycling <http://www.zigzagcycling.com/>

- As well as tours, breaks, and rides, they also offer basic and bespoke mountain bike skills training
- in and around the South Downs

Seven Sisters Cycle Co. (Cuckmere Cycle Co.) <http://www.cuckmere-cycle.co.uk/index.php/bike-lessons-mechanics-course/>

- Bike hire and activities, as well as some training courses
- in the South Downs

Rock Steady MTB Skills <http://www.rocksteadymtb.com/>

- Mountain bike skills training
- Operates out of Crank Cycles, Alton; on the edge of the South Downs

~~**Quench Cycles** http://www.quenchuk.co.uk/bike_courses.html~~

- ~~- A range of courses for children, skills tuition and bespoke tuition~~
- ~~- in the Alice Holt Forest, on the edge of the South Downs~~

M's Cycle Hire <http://www.m-cyclehire.co.uk/>

- offers training for on-road cycling
- based in Shoreham, just south of the South Downs National Park

Coastal Cycles <http://www.coastalcycles.co.uk/cycle-school/>

- A range of cycle training courses, generally more basic, not mountain biking
- Based in Littlehampton, just outside the South Downs National Park

Future Cycles <http://www.futurecycles.co.uk/tuition-and-hire.html>

- Tuition and guided cycles

- Based in Lewes (in the South Downs) and Forest Row (a little to the north)

Singletrack School <http://www.singletrackschool.co.uk/>

- runs a wide range of different bike skills courses
- in the Surrey Hills - not the South Downs, but nearby (separate AONB)

Cobnor Activities Centre <http://www.cobnor.com/32/british-cycling-at-cobnor-/>

- Range of activities, often for groups and children, emphasis on sailing; British Cycling affiliated courses for mountain bike/off road skills
- near Chichester, very close to the South Downs

TrekCo <http://www.trekco.com/activities/sussex-outdoor-activities/sussex-mountain-biking.aspx>

- offer mountain bike training and activities in Sussex

Again in the Surrey Hills rather than the South Downs there is Mountain Bike training from **All Biked Up** <http://www.allbikedup.com/>

In Bracknell, skills tuition and training is available with

Mountain Bike Tuition <http://www.mountainbiketuition.co.uk/> and

Purple Bike Shed http://www.purplebikeshed.com/mountain_bike_tuition.htm

VC Jubilee <http://www.brightonexelsior.co.uk/vcj-aboutus/vcj-what-we-do> in Brighton offers coaching and courses geared towards the local youth market rather than visitors. Similarly, **Cycle Seahaven** offers beginner mountain bike training, but for residents (<http://cycleseahaven.org.uk/>). **Mr Cycles** offers occasional demonstration days with an education element (<http://www.mrcycles.co.uk/demo-days--events>).

1.5 Tour Operators

There are 18 Walking operators and 10 Cycling operators, whose head offices are predominantly located outside the South Downs but organise holidays (a mix of guided and unguided) locally within and around the South Downs, and usually provide transfers, cycling equipment and book local accommodation. NB. these predominantly focus on the South Downs Way.

Walking Tour Operator	Sample walking holiday
Contours	http://www.contours.co.uk/walking-holidays/south-downs-way.php
Sherpa Expeditions	http://www.sherpa-walking-holidays.co.uk/tours/britain/wsdrc.asp
HF Holidays	http://www.hfholidays.co.uk/holidays/south-downs
Celtic Trails	http://www.celtic-trails.com/south-downs-way/south-downs-way-itinerary/
Xplore Britain	http://www.explorebritain.com/vacdata.asp?code=SD03&currencycode=1
Macs Adventure	http://www.macsadventure.com/walking-holidays/category/reviews/south-downs-way-walking-holiday/
Absolute Escapes	https://www.absoluteescapes.com/South-Downs-Way-Route.html
Load Off Your Back	http://www.loadoffyourback.co.uk/south-downs-way-walks/selfguidedwalks.php

Freedom Walkign Holidays	http://www.freedomwalkingholidays.co.uk/south-downs-way
Go Outdoor Activities	http://www.goactivities.co.uk/products/15/walk-the-south-downs-way
World Expeditions	http://www.worldexpeditions.com/uk/index.php?section=trips&id=892372
Arblaster and Clarke Wine Tours	http://www.winetours.co.uk/tours/view/288/english-vineyard-walk-of-the-south-downs
Absolute Escapes	https://www.absolutescapes.com/South-Downs-Way-Route.html
The Sherpa Van	http://www.sherpavan.com/trails/southdown_way.asp
Footpath Holidays	http://www.footpath-holidays.com/self-guided-holidays/single-centre/south-downs.html
Freedom walking holidays:	http://www.freedomwalkingholidays.co.uk/south-downs-way
Walk and Cycle Holidays	http://walkandcycleholidays.co.uk/southdowns/southdownswaywalkingholiday.html
Let's go walking!	http://www.southdownswaywalking.com/
Saddle Skedaddle	https://www.skedaddle.co.uk/holiday/Biking_Adventures/South_Downs_Way_-_Mountain_Bike_Holiday/32/view.rails
Walk and Cycle	http://walkandcycleholidays.co.uk/southdowns/southdownswaycyclingholiday.html
ZigZag Cycling	http://www.zigzagcycling.com/Experience/ToursandBreaks
Trail Break	http://www.trailbreak.co.uk/lemming/index.php?go=info
Red Spokes	http://www.redspokes.co.uk/cycling_weekend_rides/weekend_ride_cycle.php?TOUR=South_Downs_Way_Weekend_Bike_Ride&ID=8
West Wittering Cycling Holidays	http://westwitteringcyclingholidays.co.uk/17201.html
Footprints of Sussex	http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk/holidays.html
CTC cycling holidays	http://www.cyclingholidays.org/tours/solo.php?Tour=1311
South Downs Way Tours	http://www.southdownswaytours.com
South Downs Discovery	http://www.southdownsdiscovery.com/holidays.php

2. Information Providers, Clubs, Pressure Groups & other niche groups, Events and Festivals

Cycling Club or Pressure Group	Description
1066 Cycle Club	A group of people who enjoy cycling and want to improve the cycling facilities in Battle, Robertsbridge and the surrounding 1066 area.
...a3crg	Team of competitive cyclists renowned for its cycle racing teams and for its time trial events programme.
Alton Cycling Club	Alton based competitive and social rides during the summer months.
Antelope Racing Team	Southampton based racing team competing in time trails, cyclo cross, track and road.
Bespoke Cycle Group Campaign	A non-political volunteer group campaigning for better, safer cycling provision in Eastbourne.
Bexhill Wheelers	Promoting safe cycling and provision for cyclists in and around Bexhill.
Bike for Life	Cycle training and maintenances courses in Brighton and Hove.
Bognor Regis Cycling Club	Catering for all standards of cycling, from beginner to veteran.

Bricycles	A campaign group pushing for targeted cycle friendly improvements to Brighton and Hove city.
Brighton Excelsior Cycling Club	MTB, time trial, road race, track, cross-country, cyclo-cross, touring, training, coaching, youth development... and having some fun.
Brighton and Hove Clarion	Road cycling group who organise fortnightly Sunday cycles around 20-25miles, leaving from Brighton station and returning to town before dark.
Brighton Hove & District Cycling Group	Promoting cycling and campaigning for better conditions for cyclists in the Brighton and Hove district.
Brighton Mitre Cycling Club	A friendly cycling club for those who are readying themselves for competition riding including: track, mountain biking, road biking and time trialling. Introductory and social rides take place on Saturdays.
Classic Cycle Group	The Bexhill Classic Cycle Group associated with The Bexhill Museum and Bexhill Wheelers.
Crawley Wheelers	Open to cyclists of all abilities, in Sussex, Surrey and surrounding areas, from beginners to leisure and racing cyclists.
Critical Mass Brighton	Celebrating cycling and promoting a fun, healthy, sustainable alternative to petrol dependent transport. Group ride around town on the last Friday evening of every month.
CTC Brighton and Hove	Organises leisure bike rides from Brighton to East and West Sussex and further afield. Campaigns for better conditions for cyclists.
CTC Bognor Regis & Chichester	Offering a varied programme of mid-week and weekend rides and social events.
CTC Eastbourne and Hailsham	Cycle rides every Sunday. Meeting place for start of rides – Hailsham shopping precinct 9am unless otherwise stated on the runs programme.
CTC East Sussex	Organises rides and events for CTC members and other cyclists within the East Sussex area.
CTC Horsham & Crawley	A group of cyclists in the Horsham and Crawley area that meets every Sunday to cycle the quiet lanes of West Sussex and Surrey.
CTC Seaford and Newhaven	Cycle rides every Sunday from Seaford and Newhaven.
Cycle Lewes	Formed in 1998, the group works for cycling policies, especially those which form part of an overall strategy to reduce the impact of motor vehicles and improved links with public transport operators
Cycle Seahaven	Community club set up by local residents to promote cycling in the Seahaven area (Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven). Organises rides, social events and cycle training and campaigns for better facilities for cyclists in the local area.
Crabwood Cycling Club	A friendly racing club based in Southampton racing in time trials and cyclo cross.
East Grinstead Cycling Club	A West Sussex club competing in all elements of cycling including road racing, time trialling, mountain biking, winter training and of course a the social side too.

East Hants MTB Club	MTB competitive disciplines, free-riding, club training rides, coaching and cross country.
East Sussex CTC	Explore some of the less well known parts of East Sussex and meet others with an interest in cycling & the outdoors.
Eastbourne Rovers Cycling Club	Eastbourne Rovers is a friendly club encouraging cycling for all at any age or ability; from social rides, to racing or touring, there's something for everyone from complete novice to national champions.
Elmbridge Cycle Group	Surrey-based club that organises rides on the second Saturday of each month, and are typically 20 to 25 miles long with a break for a pub lunch.
Fareham Wheelers Cycling Club	Social and competitive cycling group based near Southampton. Organising regular social and competitive rides.
Farnham Racing Club	Small, easy going club hosting time trial activities, Audax events and triathlons.
Forest Row Bike Club	The club organises rides twice weekly, usually between thirty and fifty miles with a stop for lunch. There is often as much chat as pedalling and the pace is dictated by the slowest rider.
Forty Plus Cycling Club Surrey and Sussex Section	A flexible programme of regular rides for forty plus cyclists, riding a variety of normal to assisted bikes round quiet and countryside lanes.
GS Europa	A group of competitive cyclists based in GS Europa in Southampton.
GS Stella	A modern competitive cycling club based in Storrington.
Horsham Cycling	Our club is welcoming to all types of rider, from leisure cyclist to competitive racer.
I-Team Cyclists Club	Large competitive cycling club based near Havant.
Lewes Wanderers Cycling Club	Offering a regular programme of cycling events throughout the year. Cycling, racing and social events.
Littlehampton Cycling Action Group	A group of cycling enthusiasts, who are campaigning to increase the number of safe routes within Littlehampton, and around the area.
Hargroves Cycles Race Team	Mixed racing team based in Southampton, competing in time trials, cyclo cross, track, road and mountain bike cross country.
Pivot Boompods Racing	Mountain bike racing group based in Brighton.
Peter Hansford Racing	Winchester based racing team.
Portsmouth Cycle Forum (Pompey Bug)	Group campaigning for cyclists rights in Portsmouth.
QSCP Trail Build Collective	A group dedicated to MTB skills and building and maintaining mountain biking trails in Queen Elizabeth Park, Hampshire.
Rogate Downhill Trails	Rogate Downhill Trail is on Forestry Commission land near Liss in Hampshire and is a popular membership place for freeriding and features four or five downhill courses with jumps, doubles (take-off and landing jumps) and neat drop-offs.
Rowledge Road Cycling Team	Primarily for teenagers, the Farnham based club runs regular weekend training and recreation rides.
South Down Velo	Southdown Velo welcomes riders of all abilities and ages, and supporters, who are interested in cycling for pleasure or racing.

	Cycling around the South Downs near to Chichester.
Sussex Cycle Racing League	Friendly summer cycle racing club that meets in Preston Park, Brighton on Wednesday evenings.
Sussex Nomads Cycling Club	A club based in the Burgess Hill and Ditchling area of Mid Sussex organising Time Trials and Road Races, weekend rides and mid-week club nights.
South Downs Bikes Cycling Club	A friendly bunch of cycling and competitive cyclists based out of Storrington.
South Downs Mountain Bike Skills	Mountain bike skills and rides club hosting rides every Tuesday evening from Worthing since 1993.
Southampton Cycling Campaign	Group committed to pursuing better cycling and transport options in Southampton city.
Sotonia Cycling Club	One of the biggest cycling clubs in South England based in Southampton. Competitive training in road, time trialing, cyclo cross, track and mountain biking. Non-competitive Sunday morning social rides.
Team Axiom	Southampton based cycling club that emphasises the chance to get out into the countryside, race, gain experience, confidence or just build up your fitness.
Team Conti	Social and competitive cycling club based from Worthing area.
Team Rose Blann	A friendly group of complete cyclists based in Team Rose Blann in Southampton.
Team Silva	Competitive cycling team based in Midhurst training in Cyclo-Cross racing, MTB Cross Country racing, Road racing and Sportives.
The Backpackers Club – Sussex Area	The Backpackers Club is for those who propel themselves across the countryside whether by walking cycling, canoe or even cross country skiing.
The Bike Train	Daily commute and event social rides and safety-in-numbers initiative from the Brighton Level to University campuses and event locations.
The Kinesis Morvelo Project	A cycling collective with a love for riding and racing across a variety of disciplines based out of Brighton.
University of Sussex Cycling Club	Charity rides, club training rides, coaching and racing.
VC Godalming and Haslemere	Based outside the South Downs but organises a range of led cycle rides for all standards of cyclist in the region, such as Haslemere to Arundel
Velo Club Venta	Racing, health, recreation and long-distance social rides. Meeting in Winchester on Sundays for 40-60 gentle club rides and Tuesday evening for training.
VC Etoile	A competitive cycling club based near Worthing.
VC Godalming and Hasslemere	Social and competitive rides: social riding, training, challenging yourself in races, or enjoying some technical single track; if you want to be out on two wheels there's a place for you in our club.
VC Jubilee	The youth development wing of Brighton Excelsior club.
VC St Raphael	South Coast competitive cyclists training in all disciplines.
Worthing Excelsior	Offering Time Trials and Road Racing as well as a variety of

Ramblers' Associations:

Portsmouth Ramblers <http://www.portsmouth-ramblers.hampshire.org.uk/>

South East Hampshire Ramblers

<http://www.sehantsramblers.hampshire.org.uk/index.html>

Meon Ramblers <http://www.meonramblers.hampshire.org.uk/>

Alton Ramblers <http://www.altonramblers.org.uk/>

Farnham and District Ramblers <http://www.farnhamramblers.org.uk/>

Waltham Ramblers

<http://www.ramblers.co.uk/groups/groupInfo.php?group=WX11>

South West Sussex Ramblers <http://www.southwestsussexramblers.org.uk/>

Mid Sussex Ramblers <http://www.midsussexramblers.co.uk/>

Arun-Adur Ramblers <http://www.arun-adur-ramblers.org.uk/>

Mole Valley Ramblers <http://www.molevalleyramblers.org.uk/>

Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers

<http://www.godalmingandhaslemereramblers.org.uk/>

Disabled Ramblers <http://disabledramblers.co.uk/>

Brighton and Hove Ramblers <http://bahr.org.uk>

Beachy Head Ramblers <http://www.beachyheadramblers.com>

Rochford and Castle Point Ramblers <http://rcpramblers.org.uk>

Sussex Long Distance Walkers Association

<http://www.ldwasussex.org.uk/>

(There is also a Surrey sub-group, email secretaryp@LDWAsurrey.co.uk)

South Downs National Park Authority

Cycling: <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoying/outdoor-activities/cycling>

Walking: <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/enjoying/outdoor-activities/walking>

Sustrans

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk>

CycleRoute.com

<http://www.cycle-route.com>

South Downs Bikes

<http://www.southdownsbikes.com>

Plumpton Village Action Plan

http://www.plumptonvap.co.uk/team_footpaths.php

South Downs Way (The National Trail)

<http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/Southdowns>

East Sussex County Council

Cycling:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/cycling/guidesandmaps/default.htm>

Walking:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/walks/default.htm>

Surrey County Council Diary of Cycle Rides and Events:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/cycling-and-driving/cycling/cycle-rides-and-events>

Hampshire County Council

Cycling: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/cycling/cycle-trails.htm>

Walking: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/walking.htm>

West Sussex County Council

Cycling:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/walking_cycling_horseriding/cycling.aspx

Walking:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisure/walking_cycling_horseriding/walking.aspx

South Downs Cycling website: <http://www.southdownscycling.com>.

This website warrants special mention as it is a dedicated resource for information on cycling in the South Downs. The website includes links (which it says were checked September 2012) to a variety of cycling businesses, organisations and suppliers, categorised into the following:

Accommodation (3)

Amberfold; Gumbar Bothy; Corhampton Lane Farm

Bed and Breakfast (8)

Garden Cottages; Beacon Lodge; Ocklynge Manor; Buncton Manor; Complyns Bed and Breakfast; Dower Cottage; Copper Beeches; Patching Holidays

Bike Hire (6)

Electric Bike Network; Let's Bike Eastbourne; Staunton Country Park; Meon Springs; Meon Valley Cycle Hire; Hassocks Community Bikes

Bike Hire & Tours (2)

Bike360; Seven Sisters Cycle Co

Bike Repairs (1)

Green County Repairs

Bike Shop (19)

Quantam Bikes; Geared Bikes; Freedom Bikes; Rayment Cycles; i-ride; MSG Bikes; Owens Cycles; The Tri Store; Phoenix Cycles; Mr Cycles; Baker Street Bikes; Quest Adventure; Haslemere Cycles; Petersfield Cycles; Future Bikes; Liphook Cycles; South Downs Bikes; Peter Hansford Bikes; Hargrove Cycles

Bike Shop & Bike Hire (4)

Lewes Cycle Shack; Southwater Cycles; Dutch Bike Shop, M's Cycles

Bike Tours/Guides (5)

ZigZag Cycling; South-Downs-Cycling; Walk and Cycle; SoSussex;

Café (1)

Riverside Tearooms

Campsite (3)

The Sustainability Centre; Honey Bridge Park; Spring Barn Farm

Charities & Cycling Organisations (6)

Bike For Life; Bricycles; Cycle Lewes; Brighton Bike Forum; Active Sussex; Worthing Revolutions

Cycle Clubs (15)

Brighton Mountain Bikers; Southdownvelo; SouthdownsMTB; Brighton Mitre Club; Classic Cycle Group; VC Jubilee Cycling Club; Cycle Seahaven; East Sussex CTC; Brighton Explorers Club; Sussex Nomads; Lewes Wanderers; Fareham Wheelers; Itchen MTB Riders; Excelsior Cycling Club

Cycle-Friendly Pubs (3)

Shepherd and Dog; The Tiger Inn; The Ram Inn

Holiday Cottage (1)

The Artisan Bakehouse

Local Events (6)

Naked Bike Ride; Brighton Big Dog; London to Brighton; SRS Events; Eastbourne Cycling Festival; Burgess Hill Bike Ride

Local Tracks and Trails (5)

Argus Newspaper; GPS routes – Hampshire; GPS routes – Sussex; Queen Elizabeth Country Park; David Shaw's Maps

Manufacturer (1)

Exposure Lights

Key Information Resources for Visitors by Entry Point Town

Entry Point Town	Key Cycling and Walking Resources for Visitors
Whole Park	South Downs Discovery <i>Walking and cycling self-guided maps, destination guides and baggage transfer.</i> SDNP Website <i>Walk and ride self-guide trail information</i> Walk and Cycle <i>Bike rental and delivery, trail maps, bag transfer and guided breaks.</i> Cycle Route.com

	<i>Cycle trails across the park.</i> South Downs Way National Trail <i>Self-guided routes along the SDW.</i> The Ramblers <i>Organised group walks.</i>			
		Walking and Cycling Trail Maps	Guided Walks and Cycles	Bike Hire
Winchester	Hampshire County Council Website South Downs Cycling Cycle Tours UK Coastal Cycles	x x	x x	 x x
Petersfield	Hampshire County Council Website: Cycle Tours UK Queen Elizabeth Country Park Visitors Centre Meonsprings, Meon Valley and Coastal Cycles	x x	x x	 x x
Havant (Portsmouth)	Hampshire County Council Website Cycle Tours UK Queen Elizabeth Country Park Visitors Centre Meon Valley	x x	x x	 x x
Alton	Hampshire County Council Website Cycle Tours UK	x	x x	 x
Shoreham- by-Sea	Footprints of Sussex So Sussex Coastal Cycles Zig Zag Cycling M's Cycles	x	x x x x	 x x x x
Worthing	Footprints of Sussex So Sussex Coastal Cycles	x	x x x	 x x
Midhurst	South Downs Discovery So Sussex Coastal Cycles Cowdray Farm Shop (electric bikes)	x	 x x	 x x x
Chichester	So Sussex Coastal Cycles Stowaway Bikes		x x	x x x
Burgess Hill (Hassocks)	East Sussex County Council Plumpton Village Action Plan So Sussex Footprints of Sussex Hassocks Community Bikes	x x	 x x x	 x x
Brighton	Bike 360 East Sussex County Council Plumpton Village Action Plan Brighton and Hove City Parks Walking Trails So Sussex Footprints of Sussex Coastal Cycles Brighton and Hove Cycle Hire Rayment Cycles Cranks cycles (electric bikes)	x x x x	x x x	x x x x x x

Eastbourne	East Sussex County Council	x		
	Beachy Head Visitors Centre	x		
	Seven Sisters Country Park Visitors Centre	x		
	So Sussex		x	x
	Seven Sisters Cycle Co.		x	x
	Let's Bike			x

Events and Festivals

Eastbourne Cycling Festival

<http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/eastbourne/news/2012/may/eastbourne-cycling-festival>

Lewes Hike and Bike Festival:

<http://www.leweshikeandbike.co.uk/wordpress/?p=307>

Orbital Festival (Cycling)

<http://orbitalfestival.com>

South Downs Society's Festival of Green Travel Walks:

<http://www.livefortheoutdoors.com/News-Landing/Search-Results/Events/South-Downs-Societys-Festival-of-Green-Travel-Walks>

<http://www.southdownssociety.org.uk/walkingandevents>

South Downs Way Walk:

<http://www.southdownsway.com>

Surrey County Council Diary of Cycle Rides and Events:

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/cycling-and-driving/cycling/cycle-rides-and-events>

Sussex Walking Festival:

<http://www.sussexwalkingfestival.co.uk>

Gaps and opportunities for the future

Location of information

There is a widespread provision of cycling and walking services for the South Downs National Park, especially regarding the South Downs Way, but also within and around the Park. Cycle hire is possible from a large range of locations, which are by and large well spread out geographically. There are plenty of bike shops, bike-friendly places to eat, drink and stay, and information and maps are readily available. There is also a range of biking holidays, tours, guided cycles, etc., in the South Downs area, offered both locally and by larger operators. The Park's electric bike network is also a great asset. However, the information on the geographical range and diversity of available services is difficult to find, both online and offline. There is certainly a need to create an online directory/one-stop-shop for all these providers.

Geographical Coverage

There are some obvious gaps in provision of walking and cycling experiences relating to the special features of the South Downs. The two ends of the park (East and West) stood out as hotspots for walking and cycling trail provisions. The central region and the Meon Valley appeared to be areas with fewest listings of trails and activities. Overall walking trails are much better mapped and more diverse than cycling trails, although it is noted that Sustrans are in discussion with the Park with regards to improving the cycle network.

Proximity of Cycling Providers to Public Transport Hubs

The South Downs is well served by public transport. There are several railway stations located in the National Park as well as numerous mainline stations in the major settlements adjacent to it, most giving direct connections from London. There is also a network of buses connecting various points in the park, the most accessible and popular routes starting from Brighton. The Park's proximity to London makes ongoing connections to/from the rest of the country by public transport relatively straightforward, too.

However, there are very few facilities for walkers and cyclists at many of the main public transport hubs in the South Downs. While many walking and cycling providers that serve the region are located within towns that have a railway station and/or bus route or offer pick-up/delivery services, only one provider (Brighton Cycle Hire) is actually sited within a railway station and only the following few providers can be considered within walking distance of a major public transport hub:

Cyclelife Petersfield (Petersfield Station)

Crank Cycles (Alton station)

Hassocks Station Bike Hire

Rayment Cycles (Brighton station)

Coastal Cycles (Littlehampton station)

M's Cycle Hire (Shoreham-by-Sea station)

Several other operators (walking and cycling) are located in towns that have major public transport hubs, but don't offer delivery to those hubs and aren't within 10 minutes walk.

At Brighton, there is the combination of a mainline railway station; visitor information, maps and facilities; easily-accessible bike hire; and quick access to the South Downs National Park itself. Elsewhere, what facilities already exist in the National Park could be built upon. There is scope to provide relevant (self-serve) information and map points at every station within the park and its gateway public transport hubs. Encouraging local providers to set up small offices, information points or cycle hire points close to key public transport gateways would facilitate easier, quicker access to all of the South Downs for walkers and cyclists.

There is an opportunity to develop more integrated provision of cycling (and walking) services at the major public transport hubs. NB in our report into the feasibility of the Plus Bike scheme (for the New Forest National Park Authority), we cited this as one of the main reasons the South Downs was not yet ready to roll out such a scheme.


Guided Walks from Railway Stations

There is scope to develop more opportunities for scheduled guided walks from railway stations.

Calendar of Events

Given the range and diversity of walking and cycling provision, guides, clubs, events and festivals available all year round, there is an opportunity to create a calendar of walking and cycling events, to include those delivered locally by operators, third party groups and providers. Event listings on operator websites tend to be personal schedules of tours, or organised walks on group websites. Groups also listed large numbers of walks and cycles that are open to the public, for example the Ramblers have some 400 upcoming events in the South Downs alone. To cope with the large number of events available, one solution would be to share an aggregate events calendar. Operators and groups could opt into having their events aggregated into a calendar on the National Park's webpage. A similar model is used by the Peak District for their guided ranger walking events (see screenshot below).

You can also now follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/rangerwalks or simply click below!

 Be the first of your friends to follow Peak District National Park Ranger Guided Walks.

July 2013						
<< Previous Month Next Month >> Show Today						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> An Edge in Two Halves	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Walk the Upper Dove's 'Mountains' Life on a Tudor Farm; was this really 'The Good Life'?	<u>7</u> An Aircraft Wreck, a Mill and a Coal Mine Up Hill and Down Dale Crowden Horseshoe
»						
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> Overlooked by Neolithic Ancestors; 5000 Years of Change	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u> Aircraft Wrecks of the Howden Moors Highs and Lows	<u>14</u> Kinder High Thread Wilfrey's Needle
»						
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> Rocking Horses Lead Mines of Taddington - cancelled	<u>21</u> Come and be Lead Astray Eyam and Beyond Bleaklow Summit
»						
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> Big Pit or Small?	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> Lost Villages	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u> Peak District Exposed! Canal Boats and Tractors	<u>28</u> South Head Circular Working Forests of the Upper Derwent
»						
<u>29</u>	<u>30</u> Earth Explorers Wanted! A Fun Filled Activity Walk for Families	<u>31</u> Family Fun Activity Walk in Tideswell Dale				
»						

Fig 3: Peak District National Park Ranger Guided Walks Events Calendar, taken from the website http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/visiting/rangerwalks/ranger-walks-calendar?SQ_CALENDAR_VIEW=month&SQ_CALENDAR_DATE=2013-07-01, Friday 22 March 2013.

Curating and Aggregating Self-Guided Maps

Eighteen providers had trail information or downloadable route maps for cycling and walking (including groups like the Ramblers and the LDWA). Each website held between six to 400 routes suggesting there is a vast and diverse selection of resources available for self-guided trails.

While there are several websites and organisations that make self-guided maps and trails available to the public, few aggregate this information. Website such as South Downs Discovery are the exception. There is therefore a gap in terms of curating and updating these many sources.

While several websites provided details of cycling and walking trails along the South Downs Way, there is an opportunity to provide a more comprehensive one-stop-shop of all the trails and organised walks in the South Downs National Park linked with accommodation, eateries, public transport hubs and visitor attractions. Further research exploring what sectors of the Park are covered by existing maps with respect to South Downs attractions, public transport and local economies would be useful to determining what areas need further self-guide provisions.

These self-guided maps could be displayed through an interactive map: for example see the Ramblers interactive map listing:

Group walks finder

[View Larger Map](#)

Search

Location:

search

Filter options (more options)

From:

To:

Day of the week: Any

Grade: Any

Distance: Any

filter results

Map

Satellite

Hybrid

Switch to OS Map

Walks

Locations

The Ramblers interactive map of organised walks, as taken from their website, 22 March 2013: <http://www.ramblers.co.uk/map-both/#/map?map=true&zoom=5&long=-1.668&lat=53.214>;

Alternatively, by section (see example below) so that when the user clicks on an area they are shown links to websites with self-guided trail listings.

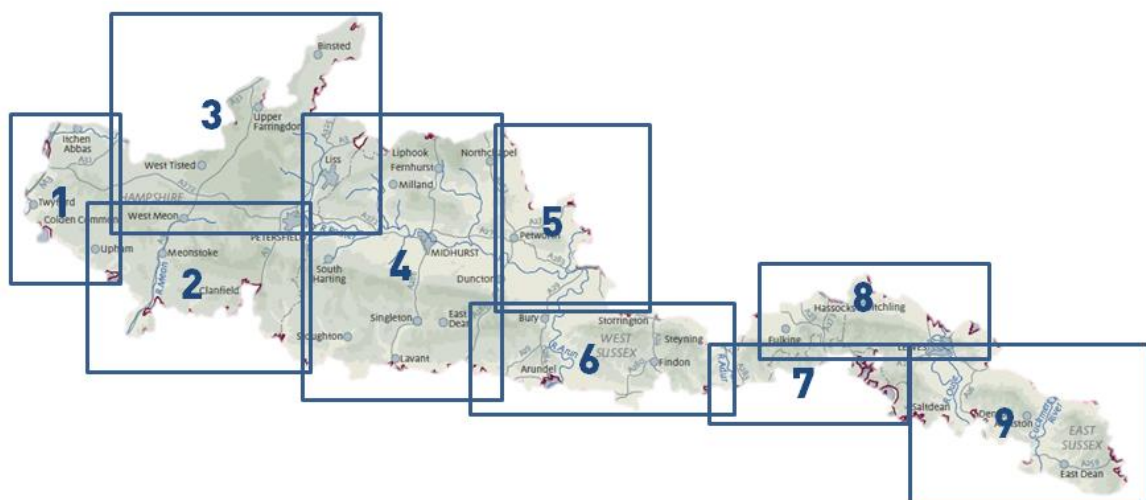


Fig 4: Example of how the South Downs map could be sectioned to group available self-guided trail resources for web user.

Guided Walks and Cycles

Many of the locally based organisations that offer guided walks and cycles in the South Downs Park (a variety of short organised health walks, to day or half day trips, to multi-day organised holiday itineraries) and the 18 walking operators and 10 cycling operators that offer multi-day itineraries, including accommodation tended to focus on the upper end of the market though Footprints of Sussex offer accessible outings for those wishing to explore on a budget. Many of the multi-day itineraries offered by operators also tended to focus on the South Downs Way, and there is certainly scope to develop walking and cycling product elsewhere in the Park. We interviewed Andrew Straw, Director of Saddle Skedaddle, one of the most respected cycling tour operators in the UK (it won the short break operator of the year in the Guardian and Observer Travel Awards, 2012) on whether he thinks there is good opportunity for this. He said that he considered there was opportunity, that the South Downs as “one of the top places in the country for cycling”. That there was excellent accommodation and good links from major transport providers that make it attractive for tour operators to develop product.

Bike Delivery and Baggage Transfer

Four operators offer bike hire delivery: Walk and Cycle, So Sussex, Coastal Cycles and Cycle Tours UK. Between them they cover most of the park. Walk and Cycle offer this service anywhere within the South Downs, and the other three flexibly cover destinations in the East, Centre and West of the park. These provide a valuable link, particularly between smaller public transport stops such as Amberley, Stoughton and Shawford railway stations. Three of the organisations, Footprints of Sussex, South Downs Discovery and Walk and Cycle offer bag transfer services. There is scope to bring all this information together in a section on ‘Bike Delivery’ in the proposed one-stop-shop.

Electric bikes

The South Downs is one of the first National Parks to be involved in the Electric Bike Network (along with the Lake District National Park and Peak District National Park), though currently it is confined to the centre/west of the Park:

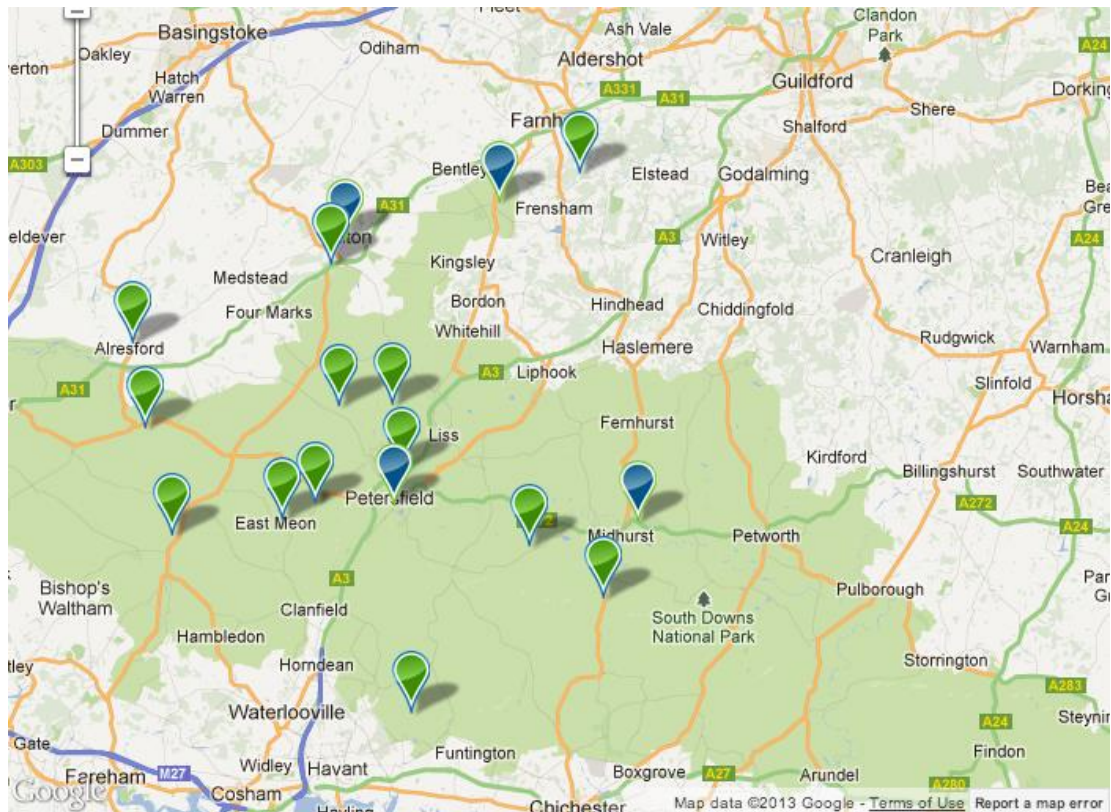


Fig 5: Charging and Hire points for electric bikes, screen shot taken from website www.electricbikentwork.com, 22 March 2013.

There is scope to develop to network to more areas in the Park (particularly in the east, but also develop more charging and hire points). While the website (www.electricbikentwork.com) is a useful resource for locating the hire and charging points, there is scope to develop the information for this network much further throughout the Park and to encourage more visitors to give it a try, through creating itineraries and routes.

Packaging Accommodation and Tours

There is scope to link up bike- and walker-friendly accommodation, see the fairly new (but growing) website <http://bedsforcyclists.co.uk>.

Provision for Accessibility

Information on accessibility for pushchairs and wheelchair users was not readily available on the websites, and there is scope to provide more information on family-friendly and accessible walking and cycling. This could be improved by encouraging providers to include website sections, or to design special trails that are accessible to all.

Research suggested that only two providers (Hampshire County Council and Footprints of Sussex) offer budget friendly guided day tours. While member group walking and cycling trips are available for low income visitors, these do not necessarily include educational guides or instructors. More providers offering low-income accessible day trips would improve access and appeal to large section of the population.

The One-Stop Shop: Linking Park Attractions with Cycling and Walking

Many of the walking and cycling providers, especially those offering standard bike hire, included very little information regarding nearby attractions, local services, wildlife descriptions and park highlights. There is scope for these businesses to add value to their products by providing this information.

In addition, there is scope in the proposed 'one-stop-shop of walking and cycling providers to show their proximity to natural and cultural attractions in the park, such as Country Parks, Meon Valley Old Railway, viewpoints, Birling Gap, scenic trails, river crossings and local tea shops and pubs. We suggest that in the proposed 'one-stop-shop', there is provision for showing the proximity of attractions along walking and cycling routes, as part of suggested itineraries developed to add value to the experiences.

Finally, many of the current information portals for the South Downs don't include anything like a full inventory of cycling and walking providers that are available, nor do they show how those that they do include connect to the key entry points to the park. Even where it may be easy to arrive on public transport, pick up maps and information and hire a bike (such as from Petersfield or Brighton) it is not always clear to the first-time visitor how this can be achieved. There is a clear and compelling need to provide a clear, cohesive display of all the information and facilities necessary to visitors.

End.