



Steyning

“ Steeped in history and set against the inspiring landscape of the South Downs, Steyning is one of the most picturesque towns in Sussex, and rightfully known as a great destination for walkers. ”



Need for the Project

The Steyning and District Community partnership was set up in order to deliver projects designed to address needs identified in the Healthcheck undertaken in 2006. In conjunction with Tourism South East they organised a Tourism Seminar for local stakeholders. From this, they formed the “Visitor and Tourism Group” who have taken on responsibility for management of Steyning as a visitor destination .

Based on the research gained through the healthcheck, the group identified several key aims:

- Improving the physical environment
- Providing better information on the town and area
- Improving the visitor experience.

These were all designed to increase the economic stability of the town and its businesses, and improve local facilities for residents and visitors alike.

Key Facts	
County:	W.Sussex
District:	Horsham
Population:	5810
Project Started:	2008



The Process

The V&T group had successfully spearheaded several initiatives prior to involvement with Hidden Britain; creating the “enjoy Steyning” leaflet, the steyningsouthdowns website, new finger posts and signage, and improved toilet and carparking facilities.

With these completed the group had struck a small impasse and required a new focus to really move forward. Hidden Britain was invited to audit the progress to date and see if new projects could be identified to continue increasing Steyning’s visitor draw.

Although great progress had been made, Steyning still wasn’t making the most of its strengths and there was little to interpret the information for visitor to encourage longer stays. In order to address this, the group decided to create a series of new self-guided walks, bringing to life the history and attractions of the area. These would be designed on a variety of distance and difficulties to appeal to a broad spectrum of visitors and,, as far as possible, incorporate local businesses and attractions into the routes.

A smaller group took on the task and with support from HBSE: identified the routes, tested them, collected images, drafted content, took editorial decisions on the mapping and design, and planned distribution and publicity. The new walks were completed early in 2010 and launched at the Steyning Showcase on 27th February.

What is Hidden Britain South East?

Hidden Britain South East offers support to rural communities to help them uncover the fascinating wealth of landscape, history and culture within Britain's countryside. What's really special is that the local communities themselves, develop truly unique and distinctive experiences for people who visit their towns and villages.

Hidden Britain has been working in the South East since 2004 to encourage tourism at a locally managed level. The project aims to facilitate rural regeneration and community development where it is needed most. The project is funded by SEEDA through the Rural Development Programme for England.



Hidden Britain

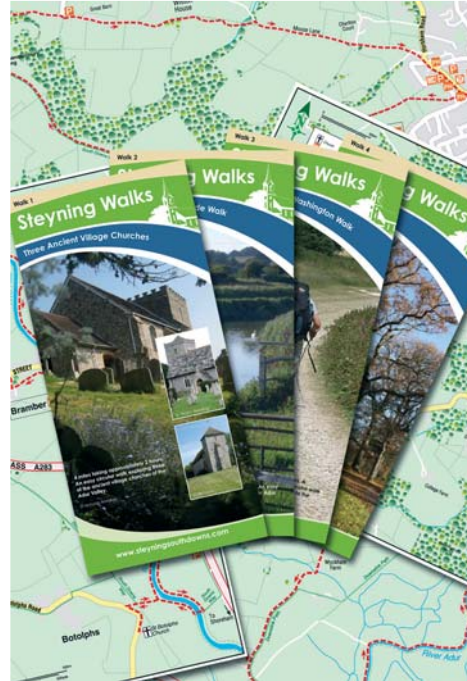
Progress to date

Who is Involved?

The walks group was set up as a sub group of the main SDCP and consisted of five volunteers; Diana Couling, Marlene Carman, Martin Leigh-Pollit, Ian Alexander and Bill Buckley.

This group undertook all the work of the project voluntarily with support from Hidden Britain South East and latterly from the Interegg IVb funded Collabor8 project in the South Downs.

The wider Steyning Partnership and the V&T group has supported and had input into the walks project as well as continuing to look at ways to develop tourism in the town, again in conjunction with Hidden Britain.



Project Outputs

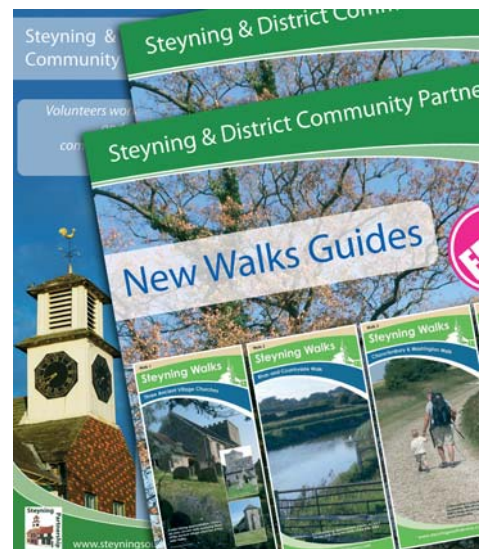
- ▶ 4 x A3 self-guided walks leaflets, each depicting a specific route and detailing a different aspect of the landscape, history and attractions of the area. 40,000 copies of each have been printed and have been distributed to local businesses, strategic venues within a 10 mile radius and wider Tourist Information Centres & large attractions.
- ▶ Interactive page for the Steyning website.
- ▶ Publicity posters and banners to launch the project.
- ▶ Two of the walks have been developed as simplified route cards to be included in the new South Downs Way walks pack.

Status of Funding

£9,965 was gained through a successful funding bid to the lottery funded Awards for All programme in order to cover the costs for developing the walks guides.

This covered the costs for creating the bespoke maps, designing & printing the four publications, creating additional publicity materials for the launch, and to provide counter top leaflet holders for local businesses to display the leaflets.

The Project also attracted an additional £490 of match funding through the Collabor8 project which helped fund the publicity and launch materials. Further in-kind match funding was provided with free design and development of an interactive interface on the Steyning website to tell people about the walks.





Project Achievements



► Businesses engaged (45)

Although one of the group members runs a B&B there has been little active business input to date. However, now that a finished product is available and being widely distributed, the group are actively working to engage better with the businesses, although many have been showcased on the Steyning website and in other marketing materials free of charge.

► no. of volunteers (5)

The sub group of the SDCP have all invested considerable time and effort into making this project a success, although there has and continues to be wider input from the Partnership.

► Skills & training

Whilst no formal training has been arranged as part of the project, volunteers have gained skills and experience in various areas, most particularly in; obtaining funding, project management, commissioning and working with designers and printers, distribution and publicity.

► Marketing support

HBSE has assisted Steyning in development of content for several destination websites, and arranged for inclusion in the South Downs Wat walks pack.

► Other

The success of the project and initial grant has attracted further funding from Collabor8, who in turn are keen to continue to financially support the development of tourism in Steyning.



Hidden Britain Input

Hidden Britain became involved through the Market Towns Advisor for West Sussex and initially prepared a review of the Partnership's work to date and helped identify a series of actions to take forward. As a key action was to make more of the landscape on their doorstep, HB supported the project group in developing the action plan and funding application for the walks guides.

With funding in place HB supported the group every step of the way; from being an interface with cartographers and designers, providing photography, and some mapping, coordinating workload, and providing key tourism expertise to ensure a successful final product.

With the walks complete HB continued to assist in planning the distribution and publicity, creating the interactive web page, designing posters and banners for launch events, and helping develop content for third party websites.



Hidden Britain SE Case Study

Steyning

Going Forward

- ▶ The group is currently distributing the new walks widely across the local area and beyond, they have divided up the task amongst the volunteers to spread the load.
- ▶ The SDCP is actively looking at developing a small corner of the local Post office to act as a Visitor Information Point, and is seeking funding to develop a touch screen kiosk.
- ▶ They are also considering a redesign and redevelopment of the Steyning website, and a reissue of the Enjoy Steyning promotional leaflet.
- ▶ The group are also pursuing other issues, such as signage from the South Downs Way and Downslink trails, redevelopment of the website and visitor research.



Hidden Britain has made a valuable and extensive contribution to this project. Their advice on procurement; funding sources; distribution and graphic design has resulted in the Partnership achieving a very high quality project which has been well received in the market place.

Martin Leigh-Pollitt

Steyning & District Community Partnership



Lessons Learned

- ▶ Make use of local knowledge, some of the best experiences in an area are well known locally but not to visitors.
- ▶ Engaging with external partners can unlock additional funding and opportunities.
- ▶ Imagery is an important selling factor, utilise local skills and factor in enough time to get all the photos you need (in the right season).
- ▶ It helps to shop around when commissioning printing, there are often much better deals out there.
- ▶ Factor in more time than you need to deliver a volunteer run project.
- ▶ Plan your distribution well, a publication is only great if it reaches the right markets.

This case study forms part of a series evaluating the impacts and benefits of the Hidden Britain South East Project across the region. The Project is managed by the South East Rural Community Councils (SERCC) in partnership with Tourism South East. The Hidden Britain South East Project is funded by SEEDA through the Rural Development Programme for England



Further Information
www.steyningsouthdowns.com
www.hiddenbritainse.org.uk
www.sercc.org.uk
www.tourismse.com
www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe

