

**KENT DOWNS AREA OF OUTSTANDING
NATURAL BEAUTY AND ASPIRING
UNESCO CROSS-CHANNEL GLOBAL
GEOPARK**



Toolkit for Businesses

kentdowns.org.uk

Contents

	PAGES
01 <u>The Kent Downs Toolkit</u>	3
02 <u>What is special about the Kent Downs landscape and it's unique characteristics</u>	4
03 <u>What is distinctive about the Kent Downs</u>	5
04 <u>What being in the Kent Downs AONB means for your business</u>	6
05 <u>How to promote your Kent Downs Business</u>	7 - 11
06 <u>The Geopark Story</u>	12 - 13
07 <u>The Visitor Pledge and Countryside Code</u>	14 - 15
08 <u>More opportunities for your business</u>	16
-	
09 <u>Develop a new Tourism Experience in the Kent Downs</u>	17



The Kent Downs Toolkit for Businesses - Welcome

Welcome to the Kent Downs AONB, North Downs Way and Geopark business toolkit.

This toolkit is aimed at tourism businesses operating in the Kent Downs and wanting to attract more visitors and benefit from the ever increasing number of people discovering the area.

It will offer insights into the key characteristics that make the Kent Downs so special and unique from anywhere else and help you align your business with the special qualities of our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The toolkit will also provide ideas and suggestions as to how to get the best outcomes from the digital marketing and promotion of your business, organisation, event, new activity or product with suggested keywords, phrases and hashtags to consider using as part of your social media strategy.

We want businesses to feel connected and proud to be operating in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and equip them with the tools and information needed to add meaningful narrative about the Kent Downs for new and existing customers, with the aim of bringing new audiences and visitors to this very special place.



What is special about the Kent Downs landscape and its unique characteristics

With their spectacular landscapes, breathtaking views, incredible wildlife and rich heritage, the Kent Downs encompass an environment perfectly suited to UNESCO Geopark Status stretching the English Channel, the Geopark will include our neighbouring protected landscape in France; The Parc naturel regional des caps et marais d'Opale. From quiet woodland walks, dramatic hills and tranquil valleys, the beauty of wild flower meadows, the crashing of waves on the many stunning beaches, the area offers an amazing experience for everybody to enjoy.

Cutting across the southeast of England, The North Downs Way National Trail offers walkers, cyclists and riders 153 miles (246Km) of spectacular scenery, picturesque villages and glorious countryside, all easily accessible from London. Running from Farnham to Canterbury and The White Cliffs of Dover, the trail passes through two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Surrey Hills and the Kent Downs, and along the famous Pilgrims' Way and the Via Francigena through Canterbury – one of England's most famous cities.

Recent improvements in the Trail include stunning new art installations, interpretation of the Via Francigena pilgrimage route, and the launch of the Riders' Route enabling cyclists, horse riders and mobility scooters to better explore the trail, with the aim of being accessible to all.



What is distinctive about the Kent Downs?

The unique landscape of the Kent Downs create and contain a rich and distinctive biodiversity providing a home to many plants and wildlife including several species that are largely or wholly confined to the Kent Downs.

A large proportion of the landscape is formed on chalk, creating breathtaking panoramas including the iconic White Cliffs of Dover and colourful grassland containing rare orchids and other chalk loving plants. Rivers, marshes and ponds are important components of the Kent Downs landscape, providing a valuable habitat for wildlife.

The Kent Downs is one of the UK's most wooded landscapes. The woodlands support a variety of wildlife and plants and also offer areas for people to enjoy through walking, cycling, horse riding and many other nature-based activities and experiences.

A long established tradition of mixed farming has added to the natural beauty of the Kent Downs. Sheep can often be spotted grazing grassland surrounded by the hues of neatly planted fields.

The Downs and surrounding areas are home to some of the world's important architectural gems. These include remarkable places steeped in history, from cathedrals to castles, palaces and stately homes with their enchanting grounds and gardens. Vibrant communities can be found in the towns and villages, offering a warm welcome and a tempting array of pubs, ancient inns, restaurants and shops.

To discover more click [here](#) or watch our introductory [video](#)

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What being in the Kent Downs AONB means for your business

The particular characteristics of the Kent Downs, Geopark and the North Downs Way National Trail create a 'Sense of Place' - that is unique to this corner of England. Every business, visitor attraction, pub, restaurant and visitor experience are all an integral part of what is so special about the Kent Downs and Geopark.

How you communicate with your audiences, welcome them to your business and the passion you convey about what you do is pivotal to the growth of your individual business and the success of the area as a whole.

Highlighting the unique selling proposition (USP) of how special it is to live and work within the Kent Downs AONB as one voice is key.

Sharing your passion for the Kent Downs will encourage people to visit and experience the beauty of the area. Connecting and collaborating with other businesses will support the growth and engagement, and also lengthen stays and spend, and partnering with complimentary businesses will support your brand to reach new audiences in the future.

To help your business learn more about the Kent Downs, and to discover how you could integrate the Sense of Place into your business offer, please see our Business Resources on our [website](https://www.kentdowns.org.uk)



How to promote your Kent Downs business

The following assets and resources will help businesses to include the special characteristics of the Kent Downs AONB into your own brand narrative and across your websites and social media platforms.

Businesses can access free photography to include within your websites and social media content celebrating the beauty of the Kent Downs AONB. Follow the link below, and sign up to Flickr for free and gain access to beautiful photography from the Kent Downs AONB for your social media content, websites and strategies: [Search](#) | [Flickr](#)

If you would like to use the Kent Downs and Up The Kent Downs logos within your websites, social media or printed material, simply email mail@kentdowns.org.uk to request the logos and to sign our [Landscape Promise](#). The following page shows how you can include and position the logos within your own website and a suggested introduction message to the Kent Downs for your audiences.

The Kent Downs AONB a naturally protected landscape has everything for visitors to explore all year round, stretching from the White Cliffs of Dover to the Surrey and London border. As a business operating in the Kent Downs you can familiarise yourself with our website and other business [resources](#).

Other campaign toolkits to familiarise yourself with to support your business include:

- [Up the Kent Downs](#)
- [North Downs Way Art Trail - The Great Artdoors](#)
- [North Downs Way Riders Route](#)



Include the Kent Downs narrative within your business website and social media platforms using the phrases and hashtags on the following pages - How to promote your tourism business. For example;

'The Kent Downs AONB a naturally protected landscape stretching from the White Cliffs of Dover to the Surrey and London border, has everything you could desire all year round, with unmissable sensory and immersive experiences. Live like a local and enjoy sustainable breaks and experiences.'

Our Logos are available for businesses to use, simply email our team on mail@kentdownsaonb.org.uk sign our **Landscape Promise** and you can then include on your website, social media and printed material.



How to promote your Kent Downs business

This section offers businesses inspiration when planning social media strategies. As a Kent Downs business you could incorporate these words and phrases within your websites and social media content to convey the beauty of the Kent Downs in your narrative:

- Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Head #uptheKentDowns and discover beautiful, picturesque walks, incredible countryside and sea views
- As a local business operating in the spectacular Kent Down AONB we look forward to welcoming you #KentAONB
- You can experience the beauty of the #Kent Downs diverse landscapes all year round
- Did you know that the Kent Downs AONB is one of a family of 46 AONB's across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland which cover one fifth of the UK?
- 450,000 years ago, Dover to Calais were connected by a chalk ridge and today the Chalk and Channel still connect us and our similar landscapes
- Did you know that no other country in the world has Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty? It's a uniquely British designation that belongs to a worldwide Protected Landscape Family
- Did you know that #TheGreatArtdoors art trail has arrived? New permanent artwork sculptures have been installed along the North Downs Way National Trail in Kent and Surrey
- Immerse yourself in the serenity of the Kent Downs and visit one of our spectacular churches, castles and gardens



How to promote your Kent Downs business

- In need of some fresh air? Why not follow one of the beautiful walking trails in the Kent Downs
- Did you know that The Kent Downs of Outstanding Natural Beauty is 339 square mile of picturesque villages, breath-taking landscapes, nature in abundance, a national walking trail, award winning coastlines, traditional pubs, historic castles and so much more?
- Why not immerse yourself and try something new, from creative workshops, walking adventures, riding or simply follow the heritage beneath your feet in some of Kent's spectacular places and geological sites
- Why not dwell a little longer and book one of the experiences and stay in one of the independently run establishments serving local award-winning food?

The following hashtags could be included across social media platforms and will allow your followers and potential customers to find out more about your business operating within the Kent Downs AONB, also using your actual geographical location within posts will instantly get your business recognised nationally and locally.

#UpTheKentDowns #KentDownsAONB #KentDowns
 #NorthdownsWay #Kent #VisitKent #VisitEngland
 #SustainableTourism #ExploreKent #ViaFrancigena #KentCommunity
 #KentCountryside #LoveKentDowns #UNESCO
 #Unescositesacrossthechannel #KentHeritageCoast #EcoToursim
 #SustainableTravel #Geology #AspiringGeopark #ResponsibleTravel
 #AccessibleNature #GardenofEngland #EasyDowns #RidersRoute
 #TheGreatArtdoors #Arttrail #ArtDoorsArtTrail

Adventure Downs

With the wind in your face & fresh air in your lungs you'll find time-short thrills and epic week-long escapades right here.



Tour Downs

Cycle, walk or bus our trails and ways, you'll find natural highs on every route.



Natural Downs

Cultivate the mind with experiences that celebrate and nurture the land and local way of life.



Track Downs

Tread in the footsteps of Saints & Crusaders on a journey of self-discovery.



How to get the most out of promoting your Kent Downs Business

Creating Engaging Content

Be consistent across your social media platforms when conveying that you operate within the Kent Downs, creating engaging content that can be replicated on your website. Consider what is unique about the Kent Downs AONB and why people should experience your business when visiting the area.

Refer to our suggested phrases and keywords within this document for inspiration and use the phrases within your communications strategy. Don't forget to include your geographical location and include the hashtags associated with your local area.

Collaborate and mention other social media accounts of businesses operating within the Kent Downs in your posts to build trust, interaction and engagement and link to other websites by requesting a reciprocal link. This approach will build your reputation and improve your SEO (search engine optimisation)

Consider offering competitions, partnering with complimentary tourism businesses to support your brand and reach new audiences.

Share, like and comment on other Kent Downs business posts and encourage your own visitors and guests to tag your business and the 'Kents Downs' in their posts. Ask visitors to post a review of their experience on Google, Trip Advisor or your social media platforms to build your reputation within the Kent Downs.

1. Using the Kent Downs Photography

Use your own quality images or select from our Flickr business resources library, and discover beautiful photography from the Kent Downs then simply download to use. Don't forget to tag the source of the photos @KentDowns_AONB on Instagram or @KentDownsAONB on Facebook #KentDownsAONB when using our photography. You could start to build a portfolio of images that give you the opportunity to post quality content regularly as there are many stunning photos to choose from.

Google Business Profile

Having an active Google business profile is important for customer searches and encouraging your visitors to post a review will build confidence in your brand.

Gain Insights

Monitor your free social media insights regularly to identify how your posts are performing and what type of content is inspiring your followers.

Know your local area

Know your local area and what is so special about the Kent Downs from reading this Toolkit and other resources we have shared.

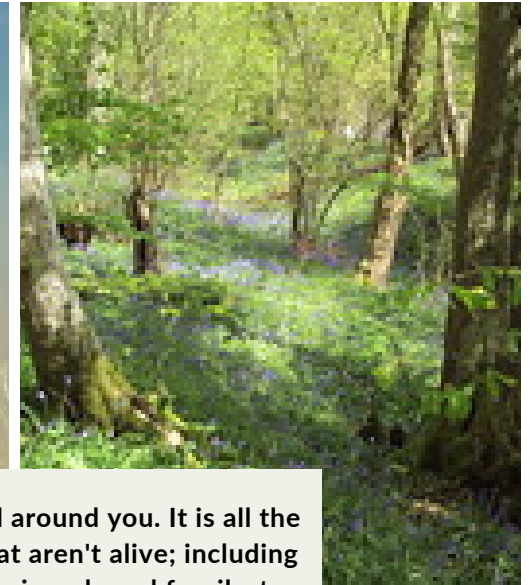
The story of the Geopark

Hundreds of thousands of years ago a catastrophic flood swept away the chalk ridge connecting Dover and Calais, carving out the White Cliffs of Dover and starting Britain's history as an island. The Kent and French coasts are still connected today by the layer of chalk which runs below the Channel, continuing from the White Cliffs and is the foundation of much that is beautiful in the Kent Downs.

In celebration of the chalk and the channel, we are working to secure Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark status for the Kent Downs AONB together with our neighbouring protected landscape in France; the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale. The Geopark will include the protected landscapes and the Channel connecting them, recognising and celebrating the geological connection between us.

Geodiversity is everywhere In the Kent Downs, it's in the soaring chalk cliffs and the intimate microhabitats of rockpools. It's the foundation of ancient bluebell woods, farmland, wildflower-rich chalk grassland, farmland and vineyards, the expansive rolling views, and the chalk aquifer supplying most of our drinking water and It all starts with what is under our feet from millions of years ago.

The UNESCO brand brings sustainable tourism benefits as well as developing local pride in our incredible area and is also about peace and bringing communities together.



'Geodiversity is all around you. It is all the parts of nature that aren't alive; including everything from minerals and fossils, to soils and spectacular landscape.'
#AspiringGeopark



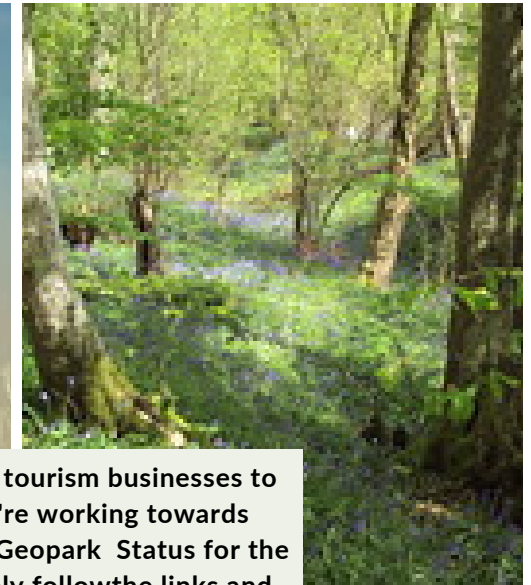
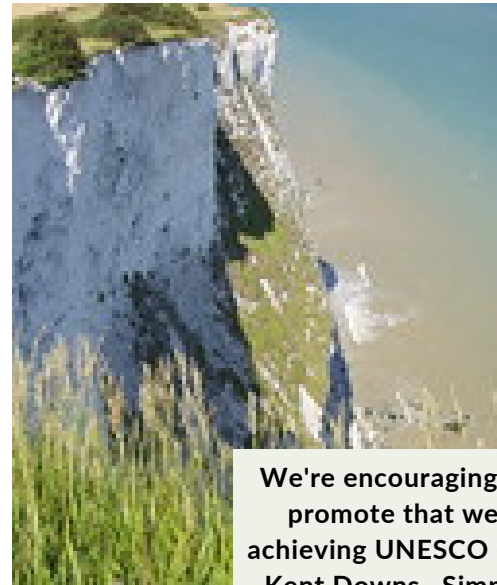
The story of the Geopark

Geodiversity is a hugely underdeveloped angle in terms of sustainable tourism and our understanding of our environment. There's so much potential to develop new nature-based experiences to benefit local communities and economies including nature walks, geocaching, and farm stays and this is where businesses operating within the Kent Downs Geopark can begin to establish some of these new experiences and promote The Geopark.

Geodiversity is an intrinsic part of humanity's relationship with nature. It impacts most areas of society and is essential to the implementation of UN's 17 sustainable development goals.

The proposed Geopark will comprise both terrestrial areas and the marine area connecting the two protected landscapes, recognising, and celebrating the geological connection between us. The Geopark is centred around the coastal and inland Chalk which is exemplified by the landscapes of white cliffs of both coastlines, the chalk hills of the Kent Downs and the Parc Naturel Regional and, of course, the seascape that connects us. It will be the only cross-border UNESCO Global Geopark not connected by a land boundary.

We are encouraging tourism businesses to promote that we are working towards achieving UNESCO Geopark Status for the Kent Downs. Add some of the story described here and [this link](#) to your websites to raise the awareness of The Geopark story and status and to encourage more sustainable tourism to the area. Email mail@kentdowns.org.uk to request the logo.



We're encouraging tourism businesses to promote that we're working towards achieving UNESCO Geopark Status for the Kent Downs. Simply follow the links and share the content across your social media platforms to raise awareness. #AspiringGeopark



The Visitor Pledge - How to encourage your visitors to Protect, Respect and Enjoy

We want everyone to love the Kent Downs, so by including and promoting the following Visitor Pledge on your website and as part of your communications you will help your followers and customers enjoy the beauty of the Kent Downs.

Due to a heightened awareness over recent years to ecological conservation eco-tourism is on the rise. Organisations promoting nature protection encourage partnerships between landowners, farmers and visitors to maintain these habitats.

Protecting the Kent Downs landscape is up to all of us, and your business can help us leave a positive legacy.

Simply include the following visitor pledge messaging within your websites and social media strategy and you will be reinforcing this message to your visitors; -

Eight ways to LOVE the Kent Downs as visitors, to immerse themselves in the area to learn more, support the local community including artisans, local farmers – eating and shopping locally and following the [countryside code](#).



Visitor Pledge - Eight ways to love the Kent Downs

1. Live and Learn

The Kent Downs is an area of outstanding natural beauty and an aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark for good reason. The combination of interwoven characteristics give the area a unique quality distinctive from any other landscape. This creates a rich and plentiful biodiversity, providing home to many plants and wildlife including many species that are largely or wholly confined to the Kent Downs. There are 38 sites of special scientific interest, many considered to be of international importance containing a vast array of beautiful flora and fauna and a diverse range of wildlife, many of which are unique to the Kent Downs. Immerse yourself in the stories behind the views and get more from your visit.

2. Go local

The Kent Downs Experience depends on local farmers, producers, artisans, breweries and vineyards. Get a flavour of the real Kent Downs and support our small businesses by staying, eating and shopping local. Our local community and volunteers have plenty to offer too so look for events and activities that bring you closer to Kent life. Discover local businesses on our website where you can visit, support and immerse yourself in activities.

3. Be more sustainable

Consider your own carbon footprint and how you can minimise your impact on the planet. Support our sustainable businesses and together we can minimise impact on the local and global environment.

4. Respect, protect, enjoy

To protect the precious nature and wildlife Follow the countryside code and only leave wonderful memories of your visit. [Countryside Code](#)

5. The road less travelled

Give the car a break, reduce your carbon footprint and enjoy miles of riding and walking as part of your journey. Going by foot, cycling or riding will get you to the heart of the Downs. Public transport to and around the Kent Downs is quick and easy whether by train, bus or boat! Download the [Kent Connect app](#) to find out more.

6. Consider our autumn and winter experiences

Whether it is experiencing the autumnal orchards, forests of colour, snow covered fields, breath-taking coastal walks, the Kent Downs has more to offer all year round. So why not escape the crowds and enjoy the Kent Downs out of season.

7. Share the love

If you love the Kent Downs landscape please share your passion and tag us into your social media posts Instagram @Kent_downs_AONB & Facebook @KentDownsAONB #KentDownsAONB

8. Visitor Pay it back

If you'd like to support the protection of the Kent Downs landscape, and ensure it remains welcoming for everyone, consider making a donation to the [Kent Downs Trust charity](#) – a small share of your budget will make a big difference. You could also donate your time in volunteering for one of the many businesses operating within this landscape, simply email mail@kentdowns.org.uk and one of our team will put you in touch with participating businesses.

More opportunities for your business

Our team is always looking at ways to showcase the brilliant organisations operating within the Kent Downs AONB, and we love to share your events and activities, so please keep us up to date with any new content, stories and events and we will do the rest. [Email us on mail@kentdowns.org.uk](mailto:mail@kentdowns.org.uk)

Sign up to our regular newsletter direct to your inbox, which will offer inspiration for your business. <https://kentdowns.org.uk/our-projects/experiencebusiness/>

Collaborate with partners and providers within the Kent Downs and start to build a network of like-minded businesses and organisations who support each other and market Kent Downs. Kent Downs AONB also organise quarterly networking events that give organisations the opportunity to build networks - find out more here:

You can also support the Kent Downs Trust – our charity that supports projects to enhance the landscape of the Kent Downs, find out how you can show your support by simply following this link: <https://kentdowns.org.uk/our-projects/kent-downs-trust/sign-up-to-our-newsletter>.

We encourage businesses who operate in the Kent Downs to share our principles of 'Celebrating the Landscape' in all we do, using Environmentally positive practices and encouraging local partnerships. If you haven't already signed our 'Landscape Promise' you can do so here and become part of our business community.



Develop a new tourism experience in the Kent Downs

Have you thought about developing a new visitor experience that immerses visitors into the landscape, the wildlife, culture or local food and drink?

Did you know we have already worked with more than 30 businesses to develop new experiences that connect people with what's special about the Kent Downs landscape?

You can [see them featured in our Up the Kent Downs campaign content](#).

Some exceptional examples of innovative projects and partnerships include: Stargazing, Bushcraft, Ambassador walks, Woodland and Wellbeing Escapes and how to become a Rebel Farmer to name a few.

For more details on innovative experiences, [visit our business resources webpage](#).

If you're interested in developing a new experience for your business, you can contact us for advice, or to find a potential partner to work with visit our resources [here](#):

We would love to hear from businesses developing new ideas and experiences and have the opportunity to support them through the process. [Email our team on mail@kentdowns.org.uk](mailto:mail@kentdowns.org.uk)





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