

Folkestone & Hythe District Factsheet

The Experiential Offer – Opportunities & Gaps

September 2020



The following factsheet will review:

- ✓ Key trends that resonate with the Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh offer
- ✓ Area product strengths & opportunities
- ✓ Building on the current product for Folkestone & Hythe District
- ✓ Folkestone & Hythe District specific :
 - ✓ Opportunities & examples
 - ✓ Gaps & considerations
- Appendix :
 1. Engaging the visitor with the landscape
 2. Experience product snapshot grid highlighting seasonal opportunities

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Key trends that resonate with the Folkestone & Hythe District offer

Folkestone & Hythe District is fast gaining national and international recognition as the UK's largest outdoor art exhibition location; which is reinforced by the growth over the last 10 years of the Creative Quarter, home to local artisans and creative SMEs. 2021 will see the 5th Folkestone Triennial, bring world class artists to the town, further cementing Folkestone's positioning as a contemporary arts destination and coastal creative centre.

Developing travel experiences, is an effective way for a destination to reach and influence customers. From recent research we already know that:

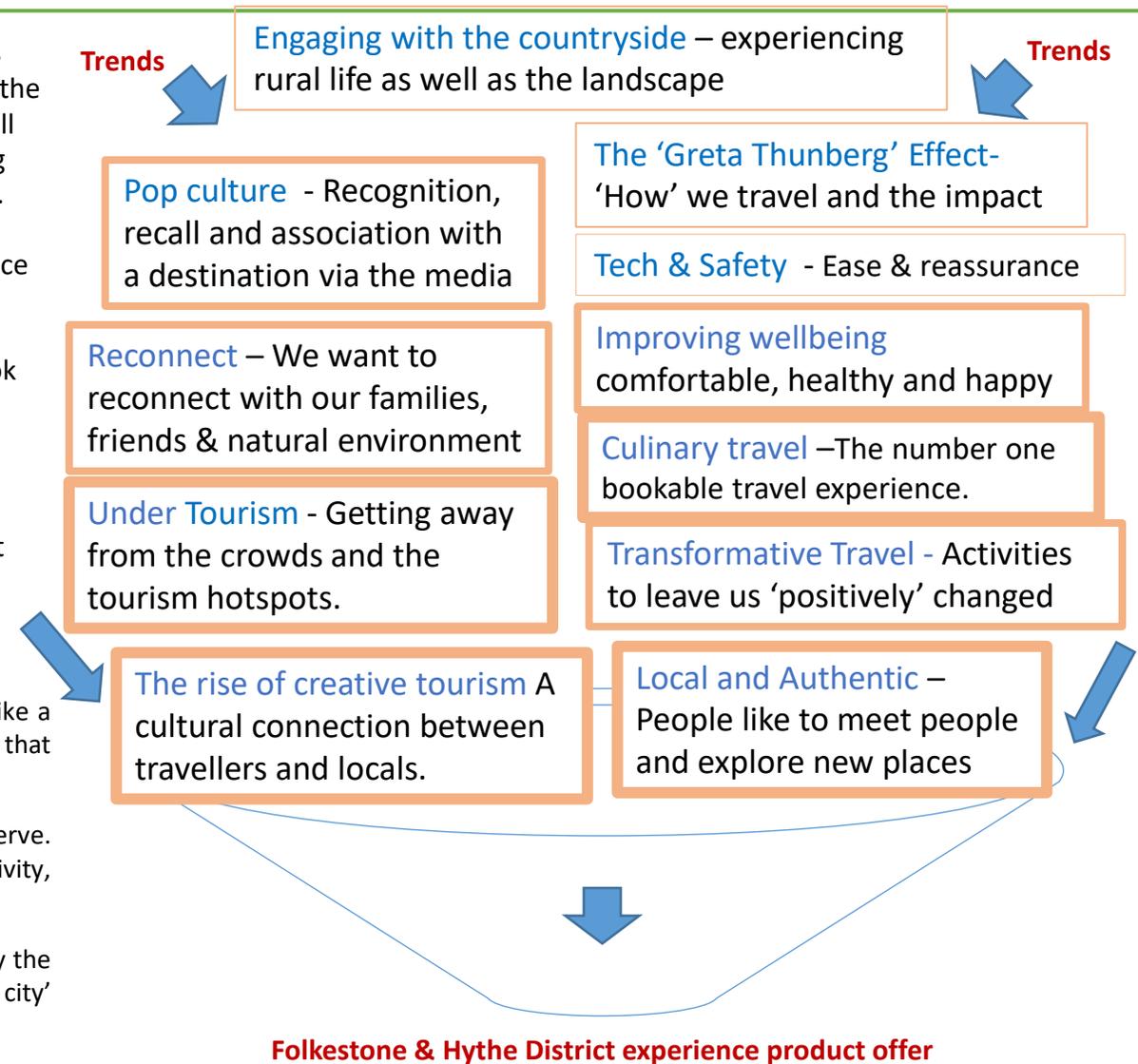
- ✓ **BOOK IN ADVANCE** - When booking an experience, 65% of the domestic market book before leaving home.
- ✓ **WILL TRAVEL UP TO 1 HOUR** - Approximately 80% of customers looking to book an experience are prepared to travel up to an hour, any longer and the % drops dramatically.
- ✓ **EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE DESTINATION CHOICE** - Nearly 60% of the domestic market are influenced by an experience when selecting a destination

Key Trends:

Local & Authentic – The visitor is looking for an authentic experience, where they can feel less like a tourist and more like a local. In the search for authenticity, the most popular experiences are ones that take them behind the scenes to gain an insight into a different way of life/ culture or industry.

The rise of creative tourism - Today's creative tourist wants to get 'involved' rather than just observe. Dominated by the millennial segment, they engage with multiple trips often driven by a specific activity, seeking out new destinations.

Under Tourism – Driven by the desire to get away from the crowds, this trend has been fuelled by the current Covid situation. Travellers are seeking out 'second city' destinations that deliver a 'first city' quality of product. E.g. provincial art galleries that showcases global artists.





Strengths & opportunities for East Kent and Folkestone & Hythe District



East Kent has an established product offer built around the coastal, heritage and countryside appeal, but it's dominated by icons. Because this recognition and recall of long-standing product such as Canterbury Cathedral & the White Cliffs is so strong, other key areas have often had to fight to be heard. Folkestone & Hythe District does have a clear positioning on contemporary arts, but also creativity supported by the creative quarter.

Examples of East Kent opportunities:



Creativity

- Music Venues, Festivals & events
- Hand on creative industry
- Contemporary art/ events

Seafood/ Closer to the coast –

- Catch, cook, eat, learn, care
- Beaches & Coastline/ wildlife
- Dining offer

The Great Outdoors

- Walking and Cycling as a component product.
- Getting closer to Nature- Seal watching to fossils.
- Activities - e.g. kite surfing, sand yachting, ballooning
- The Romney Marsh

Countryside & Coast

- Stunning light/ sunsets/ dark skies/ photography
- Iconic coast – geological/ historical/ Military
- Unique accommodation – Port Lympe, Eco domes etc..



Building on the current product for Folkestone & Hythe District

Hands on Creativity – Over the past 10-15 years Folkestone has developed as a hub for creativity, which has rejuvenated the town by supporting SME independents. Research shows that this retail offer engages a younger millennial customer; by developing this appeal into bookable experiences, there is an opportunity to extend the day visitor retail proposition into overnight stay. E.g. Not just purchasing an upcycled piece of furniture, but learning how to do it yourself.

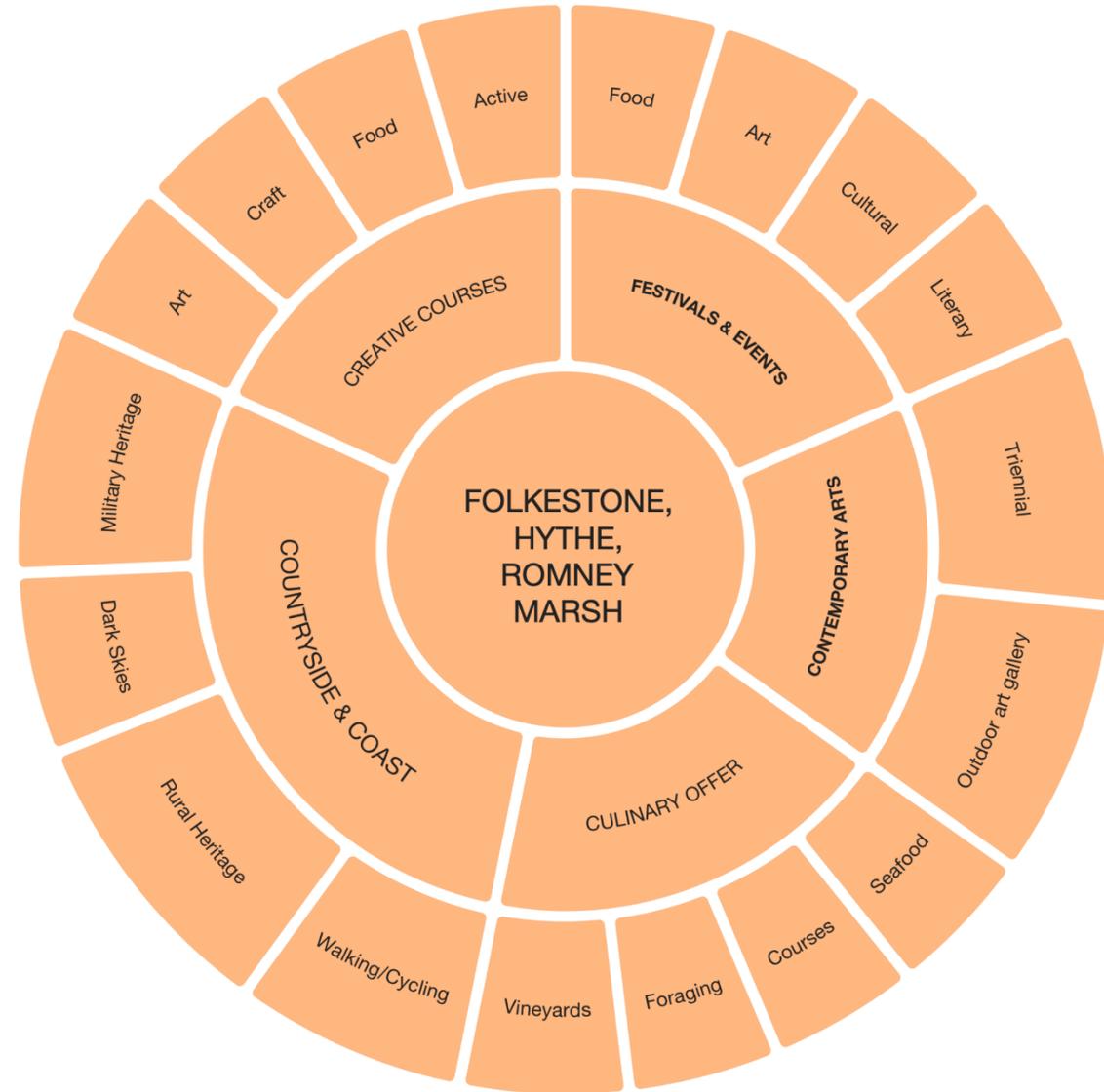
Global art on a local level – Art outside means that it's accessible, 24/7 365 days a year. However, all research shows that it is the overlay of local engagement and interpretation that the visitor is eager to experience. Guided tours of globally recognised art work, delivered by home grown artist talent gives the visitor an authentic and local touch point, making it unique to Folkestone.

Getting more from the coast – organised experiences to get the visitors to explore further than the popular beaches - capitalising on food & drink (Restaurants, tours & courses) hidden heritage (ecclesiastical and military), wildlife and dark skies, fossil hunting, walking & cycling.

Events & Festivals – are the perfect way to showcase a destination, but do often result in a concentration of day visits. Developing events in the shoulder and off season, helps to disperse this business and could also showcase the reason to repeat travel to engage with the creative offer. Having a 'bitesize' creative experience offer giving visitors the chance to learn a new skill over a 1-2 day period would really complement the events programme. Together they form a full year programme.



Strengthened and enhanced via a sustainable commitment





Folkestone & Hythe District experience product opportunities

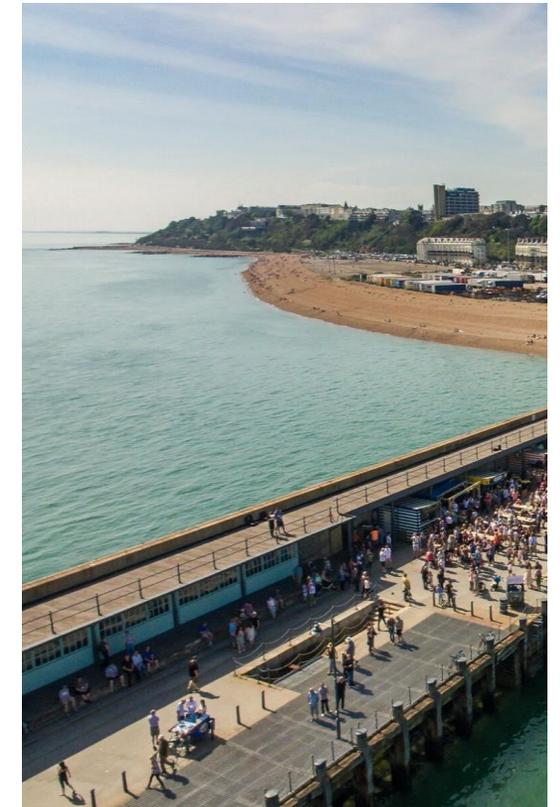
Folkestone, Hythe & Romney Marsh: Product Strengths- Creative Quarter, summer events programme across the whole district, the quality and status of the art installations, the appeal of the coastline/ beaches and the uniqueness of the Marsh offer (landscape/ historic sites & wildlife).

Experience .	Lead Opportunity underutilised at present	Product example
Art walking tours	<p>There has been a considerable investment into the contemporary arts product in Folkestone, at present the visitor interaction is via a comprehensive self-guided tour. There is an opportunity to build on this product and create a local artist-led walking tour and possible workshop experiences. The connection between the art installation and the local artist gives the visitor an insider view/ town pride that you don't get from a self-guided tour. Local guides will also interject with their views, wider facts about the town and quite often insider knowledge such as where to get the best coffee.</p> <p>Art photography tours are an additional opportunity.</p>	<p>This is a successful model already used in NY for guided tours of art on The Highline. Alternative London's street art walking tour, can be purchased with or without a creative workshop session at the end. What makes these tours so successful, is that they are delivered by local artists.</p> <p>www.alternativedn.co.uk</p>
Building the current events programme	<p>Developing new product from Oct-Mar - that taps into key trends and interests e.g. Coffee festivals, Wine and Gin, Geek fest. Creative courses also increase in popularity over the winter period as people look for a release or the workshop had been purchased for an Xmas present</p> <p>Strengthening current product -Eg. Cheriton currently holds a February light festival... workshops are held with local schools and community groups, but they could incorporate public workshops experiences.</p> <p>Equally, capitalising on flexible spaces such as the Quarter House, to deliver a full arts programme</p>	<p>LightNight Liverpool work in partnership with the Lantern Company to create a series of bookable creative workshops throughout February.</p> <p>www.lightnightliverpool.co.uk</p>
The Marsh on Instagram	<p>From cycling tours to sunset photography experiences – often some of the most instagramable subject areas are the hardest to find – Denge Sound mirrors, Fairfield Church or Prospect Cottage (By Arrangement).</p> <p>The Marsh churches offer a variety of experiences and stories which can be brought to life on a tour.</p>	<p>Instagram has the ability to make celebrities of hidden places e.g. the back door to St.Edward's Church in Stow in the Wold</p>
Cooking/ foraging/environmental management	<p>Capitalising on the celebrity status of restaurants like Rocksalt – there is an opportunity to grow the current cooking course offer around Folkestone. Opportunities to develop product around coastal foraging etc in a managed and sustainable way that educates participants on the fragility and uniqueness of the coast.</p>	<p>Celebrity Chef cooking classes in Eastbourne – Airbnb</p>
Youth Culture & Multigenerational travel	<p>With the opening of the F51 skate park, there is an opportunity to further develop a street art and activity offer for Folkestone. Indoor skate parks increase in appeal during the winter months and offer the perfect additional benefit for families with teenage children who are looking for specific activity during a UK short break – An opportunity that has already been noted by Source park in Hastings and nearby accommodation providers during the winter season.</p>	<p>www.skateboard-England.org already offer skateboard summer camps in Birmingham, Leeds, Broadstairs etc..</p>



Product Priorities – Opportunities & Gaps

	Primary Themes	Gaps analysis for selected themes
Folkestone & Hythe	Creative Courses / Arts	<p>Creative course development is one of the most effective ways for a small business or attraction to diversify to appeal to small group visiting during off season/ mid week. The courses themselves can range dramatically, from 1 day herbalist courses to cooking, baking, brewing, cooking and growing or a full variety of crafts and practical skills such as upcycling.</p> <p>Increasingly the key audiences for the trendy courses are the millennials, but they are also changing the travel trends of their parents who are retiring earlier, and want to learn new skills, often engaging in crafts and educational courses.</p> <p>They all want more than just a classroom environment; the location, the back story of the teacher/ guide and what they take away from the experience are all important creating more of an 'edutainment' approach.</p>
	Events and festivals	<p>The transformation of the creative quarter over the last 10 years has resulted in a cultural destination that not only has the ability to attract Turner prize winning artists such as Mark Wallinger, but has provided a base attracting an influx of creatives as well as nurturing home grown talent.</p> <p>The breadth of the creative community has not only given rise to the Triennial, but to localised events such as SALT and the Folkestone Book Festival, as well as being home to the UK's largest outdoor exhibition of contemporary art.</p> <p>The reality is that culturally Folkestone is punching above its weight, with the quality and gravitas of the artists it's attracting – But is this offer reaching the wider visitor market all year round?</p> <p>Events give a time specific reason to travel, but bookable product that is available all year round can offer a continual way to engage with the culturally inquisitive visitor, who wants to connect with the community. Delivering a guided local artist tour, potentially linked to a hands on creative experience can be delivered away from the core events programme, so plugging the gap.</p> <p>Events and product that taps into the strength of the destination as well as national and international trends also offer great opportunities e.g. the growth in Food & Drink experiences aligned to a seafood event and the UK's first Giraffe Hotel.</p> <p>The challenge is increasing awareness. The art scene knows what's happening in Folkestone, but does the wider tourism sector? Having bookable product on platforms such as TXGB will deliver creative Folkestone to both a domestic and international consumer/ trade audience. But there must be bookable product.</p>

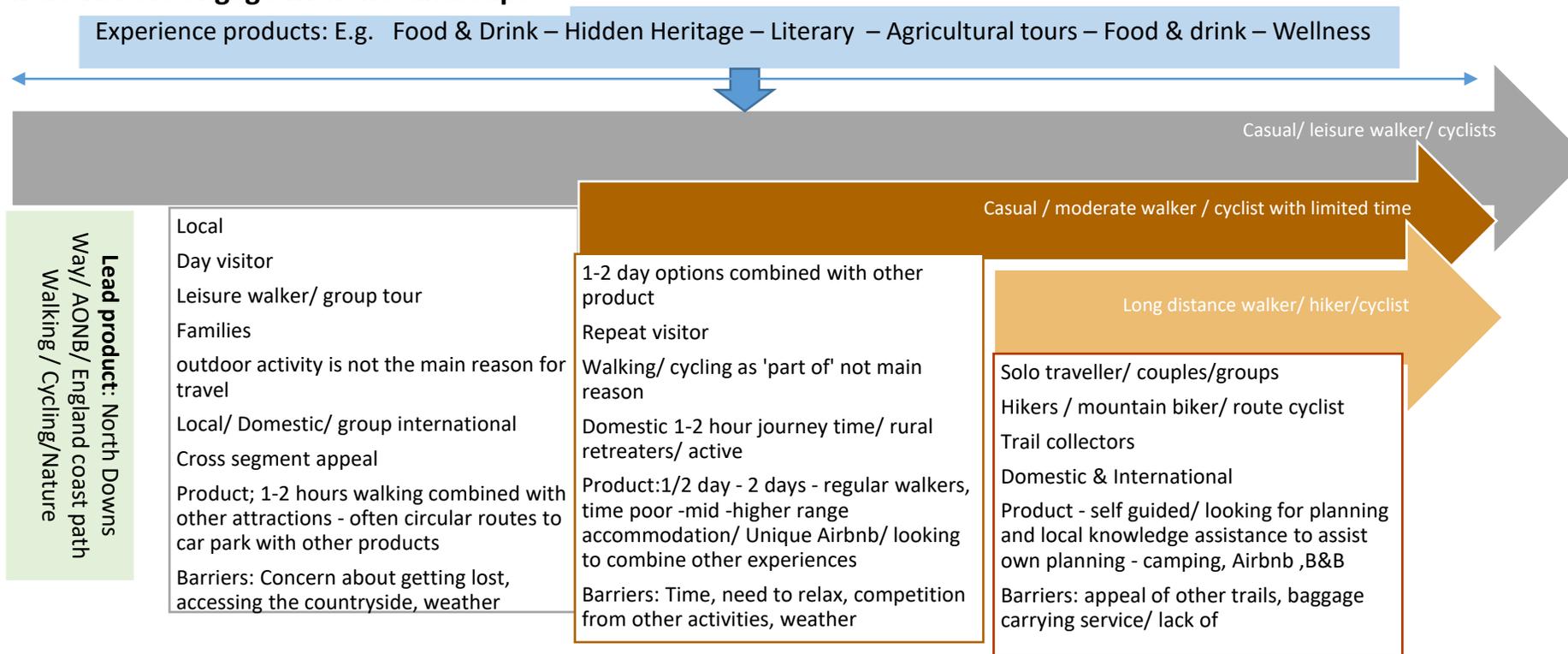


Events & Festivals

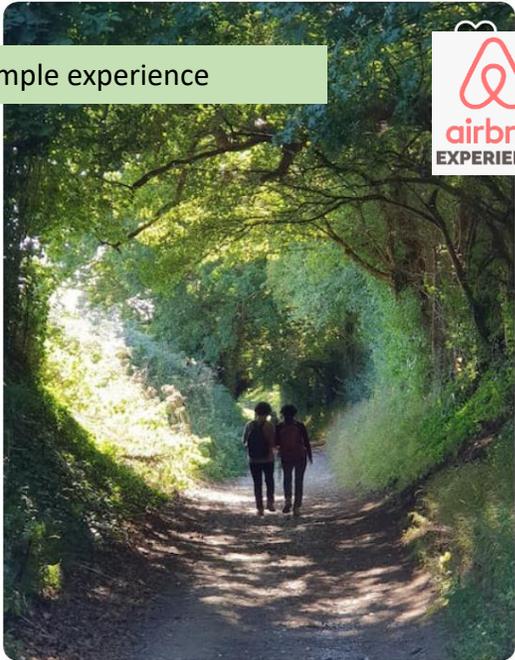


Appendix 1: Engaging the visitor with the landscape

How do visitors engage with the landscape?



Example experience

★ 4.93 (69) · Chichester District

Halnaker tree tunnel and windmill walk

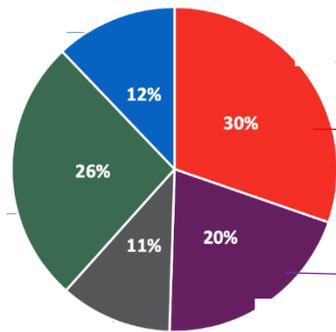
Nature walk · 2.5 hours

From £16/person

Who are the lead segments?

The countryside appeals across all VisitEngland segments, however there is greater resonance for the Folkestone & Hythe District offer with 1&2.

- 1. COUNTRY-LOVING TRADITIONALISTS**
- 2. FUN IN THE SUN**
- 3. FUSS-FREE VALUE SEEKERS**
- 4. FREE AND EASY MINI-BREAKERS**
- 5. ASPIRATIONAL FAMILY FUN**



1. COUNTRY-LOVING TRADITIONALISTS

Empty nesters with traditional values, they are likely to have recently taken a countryside break in England. Good quality, secure accommodation is a priority when booking a holiday.

2. FUN IN THE SUN

Typically parents looking for family-orientated summer holidays where beaches play a starring role. Tend to seek cheaper, more 'social' alternatives to hotel accommodation, such as caravans or holiday camps.

What makes a good walking experience?

- ✓ Landscape/ views/ architectural vistas
- ✓ historical or cultural insight often delivered as insider knowledge
- ✓ A chance to relax, unwind and recharge – linking to the well-being and mindfulness trend.

Appendix 2

Kent/Lead District Snapshot - Strength, Opportunity and Gap analysis

– Experience led product only

Please note: This is not a definitive list of the county's tourism product, each district factsheet will have a more in-depth product snapshot.

Strength (S) – The product is already established but could be more experiential/ season lengthened

Opportunity (O) – There is an opportunity to develop this product to raise the profile of the area through experience

Gap for development (G) – There is a consumer interest and potential for the destination to showcase this product

Seasonality Key for product delivery (Actual and Potential)

High	Potential for high product delivery in this quarter – This product may not be currently delivering in this month
Med	Potential for Medium level product delivery in this quarter due to - weather, product, availability of local support
Low	Low product delivery in this quarter due to – Reliance on weather, volunteer base, product availability

Product Grid	Kent (All)	Kent Downs AONB	White Cliffs Country NDW/AONB	Folkestone & Hythe District	Canterbury NDW/ AONB	Thanet	Ashford NDW/AONB	Tun Wells	Gravesham NDW/AONB	Medway	Seasonality			
											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Golf	O		S/O	O			O							
Hidden Heritage	S	S/O	O	O/S	S/O	O	S	S	S/O	S/O				
Archaeology	O		O/G		O/G					O				
Gardens/ Gardening Courses	S/O	O		O			O	S	O					
Fossil Hunting	O		O	O/S	O	O								
Military heritage	O		S	S			O		S/O	S				

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											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Wildlife	O	S	S/O	S/O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O				
Walking & Cycling	S/O	S	O/G	O/G	O/G	O	S/O	O/G	O/G	O/G				
Water sports	O	O	O	O	O	O								
Food & Drink	S	S/O	O	S/O	S	O	S/O	O	O/G	O				
Multicultural	O	G	O	O	O	O	O		S/O	O				
Foraging	O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O					
Pilgrimage	O	S/O	S/O		S/O		O		O	O				
Photography	O/G	S/O	O/G	O/G	O/G	O/G	O	O	O	O				
Agriculture		S/O	S/O	S/O	S/O	O	S	S	O					
Vineyards	S/O	O	O	O	O		S	O	O					
Theatre/ Music	O		O	S/O	S/O	S/O		S/O		O				
Creative courses	O	O	O	S/O/G	O	S/O/G	O	O	O	O				

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											Jan - Mar	Apr - June	July - Sept	Oct - Dec
Art tours	O			S/O/G		O				O				
Lux escapes	O			S/O	O		O	O						
Wellbeing	O	S/O	O	O	O	O	O	S/O	O	O				
Maritime	S/O		O	O	O				S	S				
Seafood	O		O	S/O	O	O								
Outdoor pursuits			O	O/S	O	S/O								
Events	S/O		O	S/O	S/O	S/O/G	O	O	O	S/O				
Markets	O				O		O	O	O	O				
Retro culture	O		O	O	O	S				O				
Pop Culture	O			O		O			O	O				
Screen tours	O		O	O	O/G	O/G	O			S/O				
Fishing	O		O	O	O	O								
Cooking	O	O	O	S/O	O	O	S/O	O	O	O				
Family/ small group focus			O	O	S/O	S	O	O	O	O				
Bespoke tours	S	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O				

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