

Red Kite

Special Qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast

Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership



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1 Introduction

1.1 This report provides feedback on a study undertaken by Red Kite Environment to gather views from visitors and local people on the special qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast. The study was part of a contract that also included an interpretation audit and the preparation of an interpretation plan for the Heritage Coast.

1.2 The study was carried out during May and June 2018 and included:

- distributing questionnaires to visitor centres and museums for visitors to complete;
- organising and running drop-in sessions at four locations;
- holding a meeting with key stakeholders; and
- providing a Survey Monkey questionnaire that was available on the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) website and promoted in advertisements carried by Facebook, targeted at communities in the area.

1.3 The study emulated a similar study undertaken in 2010 by the SDNPA for the whole of the South Downs. It used a similar methodology and this report is structured in a similar way. The differences between the studies were that this one included no questions on desired future management of the Heritage Coast but asked a wider range of questions on people's use of the Heritage Coast, their memories of the area and how it makes them feel when visiting the area.

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the special qualities study were provided in the brief for the contract. The requirement was:

Collaboratively establish the 'Special Qualities' for the Heritage Coast

The Heritage Coast (HC) has many special qualities which together define its sense of place and attract people to live and work in the area and visit this place. These special qualities need to be understood, appreciated, conserved and enhanced. The special qualities reflect both the engagement with stakeholders of the HC and technical evidence. The special qualities are an underpinning 'script' for the area and should include key aspects including land, marine, flora, fauna, night sky and heritage.

3 Methodology

3.1 Paper questionnaire

3.1.1 A questionnaire was drawn up (see Appendix 1) and distributed to six visitor facilities within, or close to, the Sussex Heritage Coast. The questionnaire was distributed together with a small ballot box, with an inserted notice inviting people to fill in the questionnaire and place it into the box. The visitor facilities were:

- Newhaven Fort café
- Seaford Museum
- Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre
- Birling Gap Visitor Centre
- Beachy Head Countryside Centre

- Eastbourne Redoubt Fortress

3.1.2 These locations were chosen to cover the length of the Heritage Coast at visitor facilities that have high visitor numbers. Some are outside the Heritage Coast area but are near and are located in communities that are likely to be regular visitors to the coast.

3.1.3 The questionnaire included the following questions:

- If you had to choose one favourite place in the Sussex Heritage Coast, which would it be?
 - Seaford Head
 - South Hill
 - Cuckmere Haven
 - Cuckmere River
 - Seven Sisters Country Park
 - Crowlink
 - Birling Gap
 - Belle Tout
 - Shooters' Bottom
 - Beachy Head
 - East Dean
 - I don't have a favourite
 - Another area
- What do you feel is so special about this place?
- What do you like doing in the Sussex Heritage Coast?
 - Walking dog
 - Walking
 - Cycling
 - Running/trail running
 - Going for a picnic
 - Geocaching
 - Just enjoying the views
 - Swimming, sailing, kayaking/canoeing, rock-pooling, diving
 - Something else
- Which, if any, of the following do you feel currently prevents you from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast?
 - Lack of time
 - Little or no access to public transport to get to places
 - Lack of information about places to go, how to get there and what to do
 - Lack of interest: there are no places locally that I'm interested in visiting
 - Distance: there are no places I can easily visit near me
 - There are no child-friendly places or activities
 - Lack of disabled access
 - I don't feel anything prevents me from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast
 - Comments
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about how you use the Sussex Heritage Coast?
- How does the Sussex Heritage Coast make you feel when you visit?
 - Happy
 - Peaceful
 - Fitter
 - Healthier
 - Relaxed
 - Other

- Do you have any memories you'd like to share about the Sussex Heritage Coast?
- Do you have any other comments or thoughts about the special qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast?

Two questions were included in the questionnaire that aimed to inform the preparation of the interpretation plan:

- Are there any aspects of the Sussex Heritage Coast that you would like to learn more about?
- Which of the following would you be most likely to use to learn about the Sussex Heritage Coast? A list was included of different media types.

The questions were the same as the questionnaire developed below for the online Survey Monkey questionnaire.

3.1.4 The questionnaires were available from Sunday 13 May and collected on 20 June. A total of 58 questionnaires were completed with the following numbers from each location:

- Newhaven Fort
- Seaford Museum
- Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre
- Birling Gap Visitor Centre
- Beachy Head Countryside Centre

3.2 Drop-in sessions

3.2.1 Drop-in sessions that allow people to visit and talk about their perceptions of the coast were provided at four locations within and around the Heritage Coast. The sessions were held between 3pm and 7pm at the following locations:

- Eastbourne Redoubt Fortress on 14 May
- Birling Gap Visitor Centre on 15 May
- Seaford Clinton Centre on 16 May
- Alfriston Old Chapel Centre on 17 May

People were invited to drop into the sessions at any time during the afternoon and evening.

3.2.2 The sessions were advertised in the following locations:

- On the SDNPA website
- In the Brighton Argus
- On posters distributed to visitor centres

3.2.3 At each location a map of the SHC was placed on a pinboard and a selection of questions from the questionnaire were printed onto flipchart sheets and placed on tables around the room. Visitors were invited to put a pin into the map to indicate their favourite place in the SHC area and respond to the questions on the flipcharts by writing their responses on post-it notes. They were also encouraged to talk about their perceptions of the coast.

3.2.4 A total of 70 people attended the sessions. A full transcript of their responses is included in Appendix 2.

3.3 SHC Stakeholders' meeting

3.3.1 A meeting of members of the SHC Partnership was held at Birling Gap on the morning of 15 May to discuss the special qualities of the coast and issues related to the development of the interpretation plan. In attendance were:

Trevor	Beachy Head Visitor Centre
Mike Jeffries	Beachy Head Visitor Centre
Vicky Lawrence	SDNPA
Tim Squire	SDNPA
Stephen Sibbald	SDNPA
Ruth James	SDNPA
Nigel Manvell	SDNPA
Catherine James	National Trust
Jane Kilby	Wealden District Council
Nicky Hill	Sussex Wildlife Trust
Simon Hurt	Eastbourne Borough Council

3.3.2 Two key questions were asked at the meeting relevant to the special qualities study:

- What are the special qualities of the SHC?
- Are there key management issues to be addressed by targeted interpretation?

The second question was useful not just for the study but also for the development of the interpretation plan, to understand some of the key issues facing the heritage coast.

Three further questions were asked during the meeting to seek information that would help inform the selection of appropriate media for the interpretation plan and identify specific audiences for interpretation. Analysis of responses to these questions will be included in the interpretation plan

- What interpretation is requested, planned and required?
- Are there interpretive media that are unlikely to work for the SHC?
- Are there groups that need specific targeting?

A transcription of the notes made on flipchart sheets can be seen in Appendix 3.

3.4 Survey Monkey questionnaire

3.4.1 The questionnaire explained in 3.1 above was also developed as a Survey Monkey questionnaire using the same questions. A link to the questionnaire was made available in the following ways:

- On the SDNPA website
- Emailed to the Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership and to other contacts through the SDNPA.
- Placed in a paid-for advertisement on Facebook from Tuesday 15 May to Monday 11 June 2018

3.4.2 The Facebook advertisement was targeted at all genders aged 18 and upwards living in the following locations:

- Brighton
- Alfriston
- East Dean
- Eastbourne
- Hailsham
- Lewes
- Newhaven
- Peacehaven
- Polegate
- Seaford

3.4.3 Due to the Brighton population being significantly larger than the other locations a separate campaign was created for Brighton to avoid skewing the data. To put the advertisements in front of those most likely to have had experience with the SHC the following interest groups were targeted in the Brighton area only:

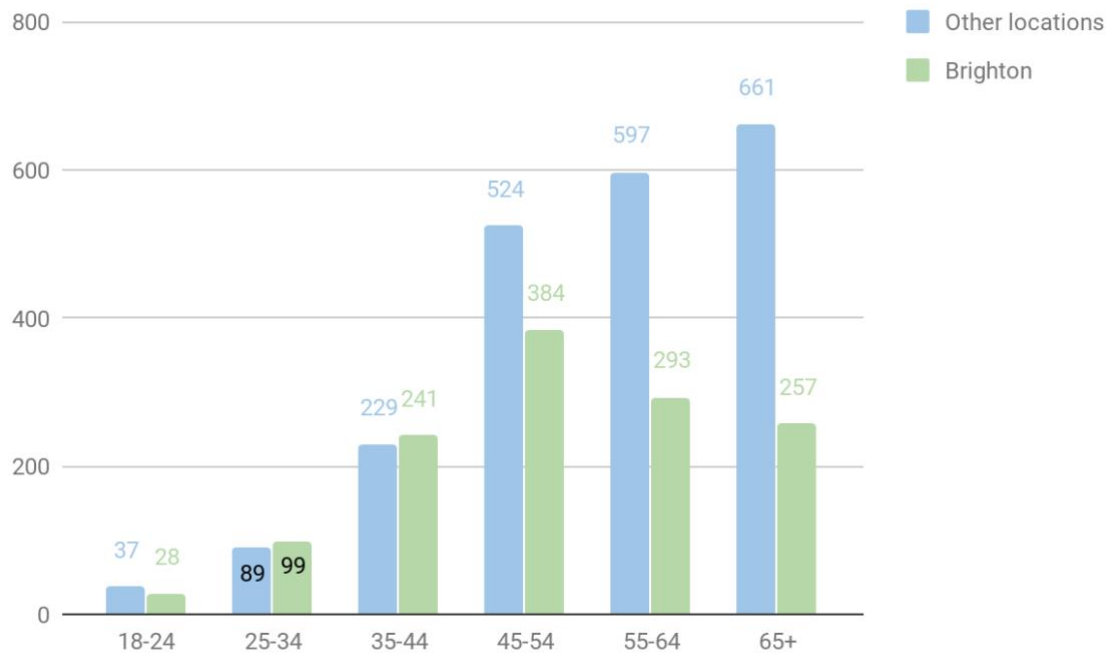
- Dog walking
- Trekking / hiking / walking
- Walking
- Environmentalism
- Sustainability

Four versions of the advertisement were used.

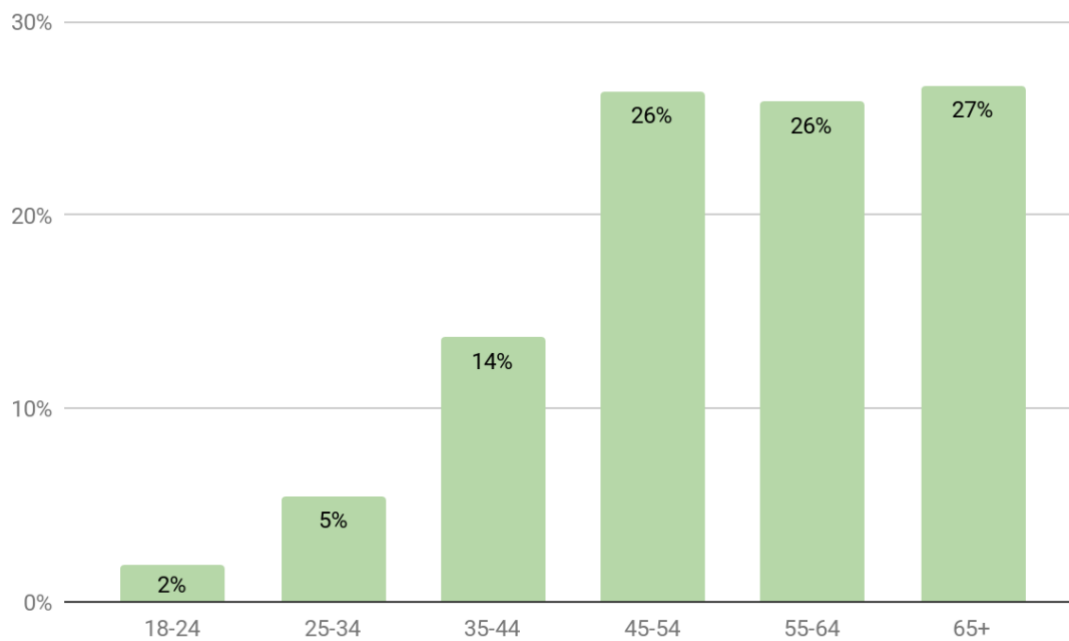
3.4.4 Altogether, the Survey Monkey questionnaire generated 1295 responses, of which 1063 were from the Facebook campaign and 232 from other sources. Of the 1063 responses through Facebook, 382 (36%) were from Brighton and 681 (64%) were from other locations. The average click-through rate (CTR, the percentage of people who clicked on the campaign divided by the number of people it was shown to) was 2.43%. The average CTR for Facebook campaigns is 0.9%.

3.4.5 The age range and gender of respondents to the Facebook advertisements are shown in the following tables.

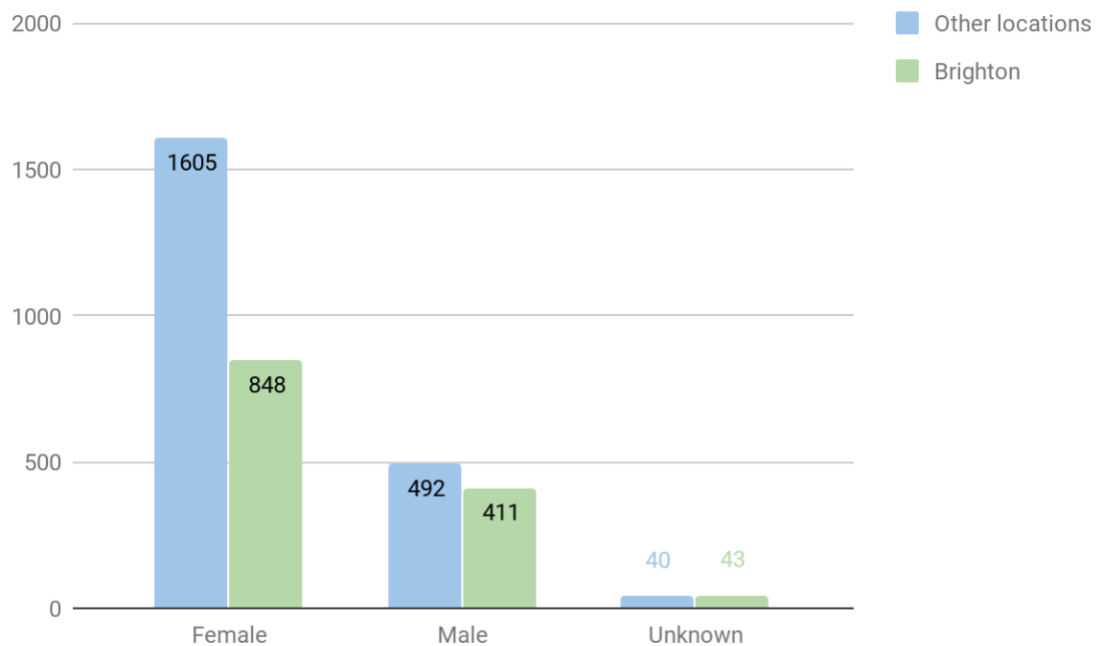
Clicks by age group and location



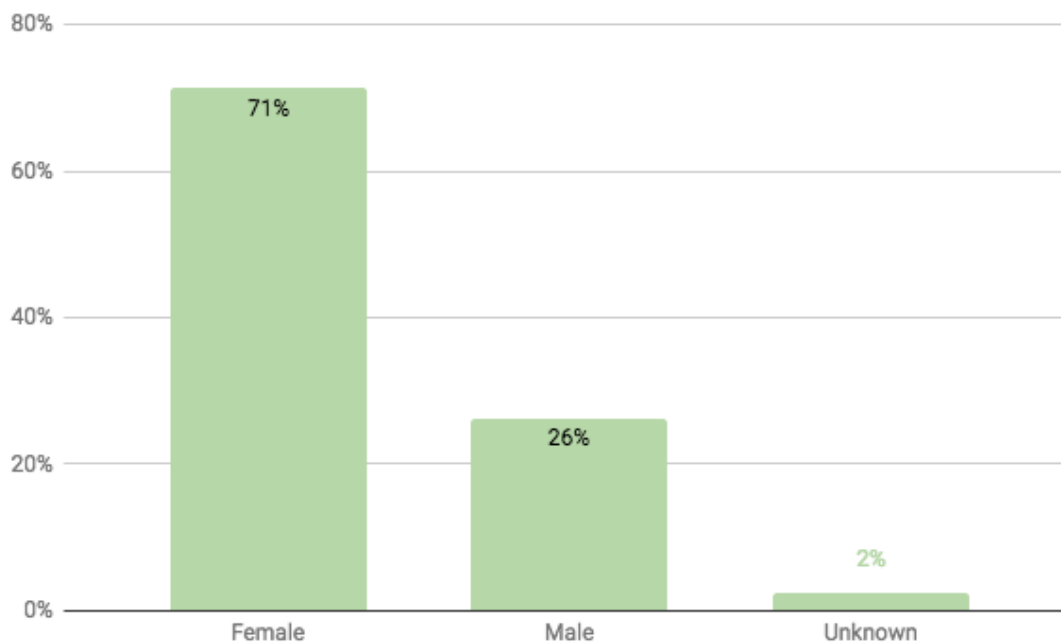
Clicks by age group



Clicks by gender and location



The total clicks by gender



3.5 Conversations with farmers

3.5.1 We had telephone conversations with three farmers who farm within the Heritage Coast area, Tom Masters near Seaford, Richard Brown in the centre of the area and David Fenner at the eastern end near Eastbourne.

4 Findings

4.1 Paper questionnaires

4.1.1 There were 60 completed questionnaires from the six centres.

What is your favourite place?

Beachy Head	13
Seven Sisters Country Park	11
Cuckmere River	10
Cuckmere Haven	7
Crowlink	7
Seaford Head	5
I don't have a favourite	5
Belle Tout	5
Birling Gap	2
East Dean	2
Shooters' Bottom	1
Brass Point	1
South Hill	0

What is so special about this place?

Open spaces and views	22
Wildlife / nature	6
Cliffs / dangerous cliffs	5
Walks	4
Peace and quiet	5
Pretty and iconic	2
Changing seasons	2
Whole place is magical	2
Skies	1
No cars	1
Waterside walks	1
Coast when tide is out, finding crabs and anemones	1
The tide	1
Great for families	1
No houses	1
Proximity to Eastbourne	1
Huge cliffs and low flood plain – picturesque	1
Clean sea and shingle beach	1
Sea, cliffs and rolling down	1
Chalk rock under the sea	1
Local history	1

What do you like doing in the SHC?

Just enjoying the views	38
Walking	36
Going for a picnic	28
Swimming / sailing / kayaking / canoeing / rock-pooling / diving	15
Walking dog	14
Cycling	11
Geocaching	2
Nature watching	2
Running / trail running	1

Learning about history	1
Volunteering	1
Walking on the rocks	1
Looking for crabs	1
Beach combing	1
Photography	1

What prevents you from visiting the SHC?

I don't feel anything prevents me visiting	24
Distance	13
Lack of time	10
Lack of information where to go, how to get there and what to do	9
Little or no access to public transport	9
Not enough child-friendly places	5
Lack of disabled access	3
Lack of interest	1
Litter	1
Not enough dog friendly places	1
Parking	1
Rubbish on beach	1
Fishermen fishing near swimmers	1
Parking for disabled people	1

Anything else you would like to tell us?

Beaches where fishing is banned	1
Somewhere quiet to go	1
Keep away from crowded places	1
Just having a nice day out	1
Family come for fresh air	1
Need more facilities for children	1
Go to the beach and throw stones	1
Want more camping areas	1
Great to be volunteer at Beachy Head	1
So blessed living here	1
Not enough nature reserves	1
Great access for people with every level of mobility	1

How does the SHC make you feel?

Peaceful	41
Happy	38
Relaxed	31
Healthier	24
Fitter	15
Other	0

Do you have any special memories?

Holidays, family and having a nice time	3
Honeymoon	2
Bike riding as a child	1
Ice cream	1
Husband proposed	1
Birling Gap	1
Rock-pooling on a school trip	1
Splash Point	1
Swimming in river at Exceat	1

Swimming in sea with daughter

1

Selected quotes

Doing the 8 mile circular walk over Seven sisters and back, through the forest with a gourmet picnic near Crowlink.

I can look at the cliffs and rocks for hours.

Going with my family.

I came here for a school trip and we went rock-pooling. Somebody fell over and got really wet.

The dramatic view from the light room of Belle Tour on a stormy day.

Spent a lot of time here when I was younger. Parents had a caravan. I now live here. Just love the coastline.

Former camp site at Cuckmere Haven.

Any other comments?

Litter, and want people to take it home	3
Dog poo	1
Need to save Cuckmere meanders	1
Protect for future generations	1
Expensive car parking	1

Summary

4.1.2 The highest score for 'favourite place' was Beachy Head (13), following closely by Seven Sisters Country Park (11) and Cuckmere Valley (9). The Cuckmere Valley and Haven together received a score of 16. 'I don't have a favourite' received a score of 5.

4.1.3 The predominant response to 'what is so special about this place?' was *open spaces and views*. This response included sea views, scenery, the downland and the cliffs. It was the sense of space and the far-reaching views, especially to the sea, that were people's main emotions about the area. An example was '*The combination of the sea, white cliffs and rolling downs.*'

4.1.4 The top three responses to the question 'What do you like doing in the SHC?' were *just enjoying the views* (37), *walking* (34) and *going for a picnic* (27). People liked simply to be outside in the area and enjoying the space. Other important activities were sea and coast-based activities including *swimming / sailing / kayaking / canoeing / rock-pooling / diving*. *Walking the dog* (14) and *Cycling* (10) were also popular.

4.1.5 The highest score for 'What prevents you from visiting the SHC?' was *I don't feel anything prevents me visiting* (23). This was reflected also in the other surveys below. Most people clearly feel it is an easy place to visit. The next highest scores were for *distance* (13) and *lack of time* (10). *Lack of information about where to go, how to get there and what to do* (9) was also an important score, indicating a need for more information about, and interpretation of, the SHC's features.

4.1.6 Asked if there is anything else you would like to tell us, there were a variety of responses including the desire for beaches where fishing is banned (for safer swimming),

the need for more facilities for children, and for camping areas. Other comments were largely about people's positive feelings about the coast.

4.1.7 Responses to the question 'How does it make you feel?' included *peaceful* (40), *happy* (37) and *relaxed* (29). Many people ticked all the boxes for their responses.

4.1.8 There were many different responses to 'special memories', often relating to childhood visits to the coast with their families and time spent at particular points along the coast, such as Birling Gap.

4.1.9 'Other comments' were again varied, with litter being highlighted as a problem by some and a comment about the cost of car parking by one respondent. The need to protect the area from development was also highlighted.

4.2 Drop-in sessions

4.2.1 The findings of the four drop-in sessions are combined in the summary figures below. 70 people attended the sessions and 63 flags were placed in the map.

What are your favourite places (flags on the map)?

Cuckmere Haven	11
Beachy Head	9
Birling Gap	8
Crowlink	7
Flagstaff Point	5
Near Belle Tout	3
Seven Sisters Country Park	3
East Dean	3
The coast near Shooters Bottom	2
The coast near Brass Point	2
Hope Gap	2
Cow Gap	1
Foxhole	1
Haven Brow	1
Coast near Short Bottom	1
Hawks Brow	1
South Hill Barn	1
Whitebread Hole	1
Seaford Head	1

What is so special?

Views and scenery (Downs, cliffs and sea)	22
Walking and dog walking	8
Nature	7
Beachy Head to Birling Gap – beauty of coast	6
Peace and quiet	5
Cuckmere Valley and Haven	4
Unspoilt and natural	4
Crowlink	3
Fantastic place and unspoilt	3
Magnificent facilities at Birling Gap	2
Rolling downs, sea and white cliffs	2
Sight and sound of the sea	2

Rock pools and clean beach	2
Severn Sisters	1
Shape and colour of the landscape	1
Places to explore	1
Wet meadows	1
Flagstaff Brow	1
East Dean walks from Old Town	1
Eastbourne to East Dean and down to Birling Gap	1
Holywell to Birling Gap	1
Geology	1
No 12 bus – one of best journeys ever	1
Chalk Farm	1
Life affirming	1
Good parking	1
Small town and rural beach	1
Ice skating	1
Kittiwake colony at Seaford Head	1
What do you like doing?	
Walking	38
Nature watching	5
Enjoying the views	4
Cycling	3
Solitude	2
Tea rooms and cafes	2
Photography	2
Rock-pooling	2
The pier	1
Wide choice of things to do	1
Running	1
Meditating, ritual space and spiritual circles	1
Farming	1
Swimming	1
Picnicking	1
Litter picking	1
Teaching grandchildren	1
How does it make you feel?	
Happy, well, relaxed, revitalised	23
Very lucky and privileged, superb place	11
In touch with nature makes me feel great	4
Get away from it all / sense of space	3
Proud to be English	3
Peaceful	3
Alive	2
Calm, sad	2
Privileged	2
Happy memories, history	2
Liberated	1
Strong connection with the earth	1
What stops you visiting?	
Nothing	12
Too far	5
Traffic	5

Lack of time	3
Weather	2
Parking	2
Seeing people too close to the edge	2
Bad weather	2
Dog poo	2
Too many tourists	1
Not enough to do	1
Difficult access	1
Litter	1
Increasing age	1
Lack of amenities	1

Special memories?

Responses to this question included a range of happy memories of visiting places within the Heritage Coast as children, great views, exploring features such as Beachy Head and Birling Gap, going on wonderful walks and watching wildlife.

Selected quotes

‘View from Butts Lane over Willingdon Golf Course and beyond to sea is great’

‘Open top bus up to Beachy Head, ice creams at Fuscisdis’

‘Being chased over the hills by cockchafer on a warm August evening.’

‘Seeing hares jumping on the escarpment near Cow Gap.’

‘Coming here as a young girl and still coming here. One of my most cherished places in the world.’

‘Saw Spitfire flying over. Reminded me of my mother who was born and lived in Eastbourne and was in the WAAF in WW2.’

‘Having come back to where I grew up after decades elsewhere but still visiting – many childhood memories. Rock pools, being taught the names of flowers, bringing my own children here.’

‘Ice-skating / ice hockey on the meanders. Seeing first swallow and water vole.’

‘Too many over nearly 60 years of living here and walking the downs.’

Any other comments?

Keep it free from development and change	13
Lovely place to live and visit	6
Lucky to have such a great place	3
Too many people, too much traffic	2
Keep it free from litter and plastic	1
A calm place in the congested south east of England	1
Very clean and natural	1
Living on the edge	1
Keep up the good work	1
Need more defences to stop it falling into the sea	1
Thank you for protecting the Downs	1

Skylarks – recording to listen to later	1
Refuge for all of us	1
Need mixed farming to look after the land for all to enjoy	1
Wonderful place to meditate on life	1
The hidden areas should remain hidden	1
Parking at Seven Sisters is tricky and expensive	1
Need to communicate understanding of cliffs and river	1
Want local people to be listened to more	1

Summary

4.2.2 The locations of the flags show that the three most favourite places within the SHC are Cuckmere haven (11), Beachy Head (9) and Birling Gap (8). These are clearly popular visitor sites and it is not unexpected that they were chosen as favourite places. Crowlink and Seven Sisters Country Park are also popular, including the walks that extend from them. Less popular, though still significant collectively, are the coastal locations of Shooters Bottom, Brass Point, Hope Gap, Cow Gap and Short Bottom.

4.2.3 The most quoted special quality, by a significant margin, is *views and scenery*. Few people stated specifically which views were most important for them, but it was generally across the downs and along the coast. It was clearly that sense of openness and naturalness that was most appealing.

4.2.4 Other important special qualities are opportunities for *walking and dog walking*, *nature*, and *peace and quiet*. Walking is a popular activity and certainly the opportunities for walking along the coast provide it with a compelling reason for people to visit. There are diverse opportunities too for people to watch nature, including the wetlands of the Cuckmere valley and the coast itself. The sense of *peace and quiet* and the related *unspoilt and natural* were also together significant perceptions of the area.

4.2.5 Many people pinpointed specific sections or places along the coast as special, including the walk from *Beachy Head to Birling Gap*, *Flagstaff Brow*, *Cuckmere Valley* and *Seven Sisters Country Park*.

4.2.5 The most popular activity by a huge majority is *walking*. It included walking with dogs, walking on the South Downs Way, walking and birdwatching, and general sightseeing. *Nature watching* and *enjoying the views* were the next popular activities, often combined with walking. Relatively few people enjoyed activities on the coast itself, such as *Rock-pooling* (2) and *swimming* (1).

4.2.6 The predominant responses to *How does it make you feel?* Were *happy, well, relaxed and revitalised* and *very lucky and privileged*. People clearly really benefitted from visiting the SHC, providing them with a sense of wellbeing and appreciation for what the coastal area offers. All the responses were very positive about the SHC.

4.2.7 Responding to the question *What stops you visiting?* the main response was *nothing*. This was confirmed by informal conversation with those attending the sessions. Most people felt it was easy to get to, with few constraints. A few, who lived much further away, felt it was too far to travel and some also thought the amount of traffic prevented them from visiting easily. Only one person thought that the volume of other visitors put them off from visiting.

4.2.8 Many people had special memories about the SHC, often from childhood holidays or from growing up near the coast. People remembered walks and views, rock-pooling and family days on or near the sea. These memories were clearly treasured in their lives.

4.2.9 People felt very strongly about the need to protect the SHC from development (13 responses). They loved the area and felt lucky to have such a great place to visit and enjoy. A few (2) felt that too many people and too much traffic are issues for the area. Many of the responses related to how special it is and how important it is for their lives.

4.3 SHC Partnership meeting

4.3.1 The five key questions discussed during the meeting were:

- What are the special qualities of the SHC?
- Are there key management issues to be addressed by targeted interpretation?
- What interpretation is requested, planned and required?
- Are there interpretive media that are unlikely to work for the SHC?
- Are there groups that need specific targeting?

Special qualities

4.3.2 The predominant response from the partners about the special qualities of the heritage coast was *views*, both of the landscape and the sea. It included the feeling of *openness* and *big skies* and the *quality of the light*. The views along the Cuckmere valley meanders, along the coast and from High 'nd Over were also particularly noted. There were also the views at night where the dark skies allow for great views of the stars.

4.3.3 Other notable special qualities included the *geology*, the *coastland wildlife diversity*, the *sea bird colonies*, the *wild frontier*, and the *diversity of habitats* – the *downland*, *shingles and forest*. *Hidden wildlife* such as *minibeasts* and *rare species* were also considered to be important. The *marine conservation zone* and the *rock pool life* were highlighted for the marine environment.

4.3.4 History is clearly an important dimension to appreciating the heritage coast. The *layers of history*, the *richness of the past* and the *wrecks and smuggling* were all considered important elements of its character.

4.3.5 Overall, the *sense of time* and *sense of space*, and the *rich artistic heritage* associated with the area, were key components of the special quality of the coast.

Key management issues

4.3.6 The main management issues related largely to visitor pressure, with *litter*, *parking*, *footpath erosion*, *pressure on key visitor sites*, *off-road cycling and misuse of rights of way*, and *barbecues and fires* some of the major challenges. There were also many safety issues expressed, including the problem of people walking from the A259 at East Dean along the verge to Birling Gap and *cliff safety* and the demand for cliff edge fencing.

4.3.7 The continual erosion of the cliff face is clearly a management issue but more in terms of how to deal with the inevitable consequences. Erosion causes the loss of archaeological remains and a threat to property but is also poorly understood by the public. There is a lack of understanding about coastal processes, land management and river management. There is also mismatch between public perception of the heritage coast and its long-term sustainable management which can lead to discontented visitors.

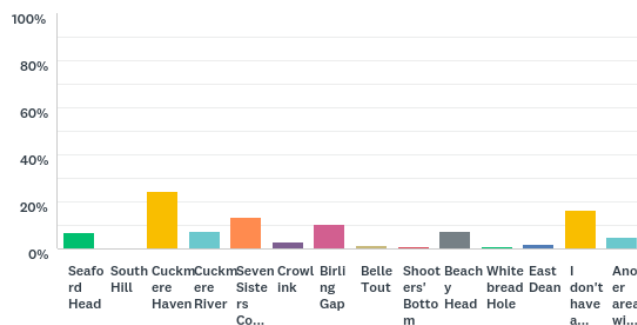
4.3.8 Land management issues include *over-grazing and under-grazing of downland*, the *management of livestock fencing* and how it impacts on the landscape, and the *carving of names in the chalk* at the cliff tops.

4.4 Survey Monkey questionnaires

What is your favourite place?

4.4.1 All 1295 people answered this question. The most popular 'favourite' place in the heritage coast is Cuckmere Haven with 24.32% of the vote (315 people), followed by Seven Sisters Country Park with 13.44% (174) and Birling Gap 10.5% (136). 16.68% of respondents said they had no favourite place. Beachy Head, Seaford Head and Cuckmere River all had just over 7% of the vote (94, 94, and 91 people respectively).

Q1 If you had to choose just one favourite place in the Sussex Heritage Coast, which would it be? Check a Google Map of the area here



4.4.2 65 people (5.02%) responded saying their favourite place was 'another area within the Sussex Heritage Coast' which included places such as Hope Gap, Cow Gap and the Downs.

What is so special?

4.4.2 There were 1003 responses to this question with some people writing short statements and others writing long expositions about their perceptions of the heritage coast. These are all presented in a separate Excel file. A Word Cloud of these responses is presented here:

Q2 What do you feel is so special about this place?

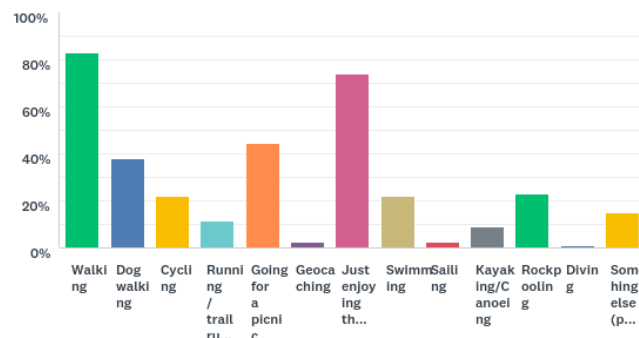


4.4.3 The predominant words used are *beautiful*, *walk*, *sea* and *peaceful*, with *love*, *Seven Sisters* and *landscape* close behind. Many of the words relate to people's emotional responses to the landscape as a whole, rather than to individual features in the landscape.

What do you like doing?

4.4.4 The questionnaire provided options for activities for people to choose from, and 1232 people responded to this question. Of these options the most frequently scored were *walking* (83%, 1023 people) and *just enjoying the views* (74%, 912 people), followed by *going for a picnic* (44%, 546 people) and *dog walking* (38%, 470 people).

Q3 What do you like doing in the Sussex Heritage Coast? (Please tick all that apply)



4.4.5 An option for *something else* had a 14.85% score (183 people). A word cloud of these responses showed that *photography* and *birdwatching* were the most popular activities, followed closely by *horse riding*, *painting* and *paddle* (probably paddle boarding).

Q3 What do you like doing in the Sussex Heritage Coast? (Please tick all that apply)

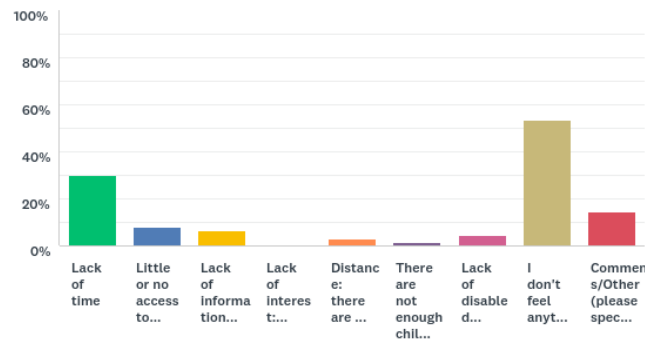


What prevents you from visiting?

4.4.6. The questionnaire again provided options and 1232 people responded. The most frequently response was *I don't feel anything prevents me from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast* (53%, 658 people). The second most frequent response was *lack of time* (30%, 372 people). The other scores were low and included *Little or no access to public*

transport (8%, 101 people), *lack of information about where to go, how to get there and what to do* (6.6%, 81 people) and *lack of disabled access* (4.7%, 58 people). These scores may be relatively low but for those people with access to transport and mobility issues the difficulty in visiting the coast is significant.

Q4 Which, if any, of the following do you feel currently prevents you from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast?



4.4.7 An option to leave comments for this question had 179 responses (14.5%) and a word cloud of these responses showed that parking was an obvious problem. For many of the other words highlighted in this word cloud it was difficult to identify the issues.

Q4 Which, if any, of the following do you feel currently prevents you from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast?



Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

4.4.8 This question was answered by 341 people. This question offered respondents the opportunity to provide further perceptions of the coast and their use of its features. The understanding of their responses relies more on complete sentences rather single words that are captured by the word cloud, but the cloud still provides a flavour of these responses. The most frequently used words were *walk*, *love*, *enjoy*, *natural* and *beautiful*.

Q5 Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about how you use the Sussex Heritage Coast?

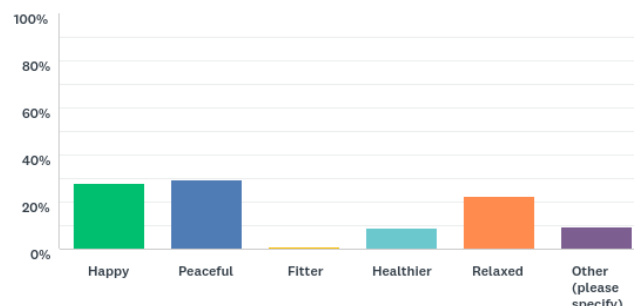
Wish Soul Protected Tide Mills Birling Gap Peace
 Natural Newhaven Park Special Beautiful
 Seven Sisters Love National Trust Walk Stop
 Enjoy Important Coast Litter Place Wild Visitors
 Kids Cliff Volunteer Ranger Generations Cuckmere Haven

4.4.9 Some of the negative written responses included the lack of accommodation and camp sites in the area, the problems of traffic and large numbers of tourists and the cost of car parking.

How does it make you feel?

4.4.10 This question received 1212 responses. Of the six provided options the highest scores were divided fairly evenly between *peaceful* (29%, 357 people), *happy* (28%, 342 people) and *relaxed* (22%, 272 people). Other responses were *healthier* (9%, 110 people) and *fitter* (2%, 13 people).

Q6 How does the Sussex Heritage Coast make you feel when you visit?



There were 110 responses (9%) to *other* and a word cloud identified *relaxed*, *live*, *nature* and *grateful* as the most frequent words used in these responses.

Q6 How does the Sussex Heritage Coast make you feel when you visit?

Boxes Proud Able Healthier Grateful Stressed
 Relaxed Frustrated Live Awe Nature Place
 Inspired Joyful Sad

Do you have any special memories?

4.4.11 This question had 483 responses. There were very varied responses to this question, such as walking with family, taking visitors to particular places, the views, picnics and special events in the area. The single words captured by the word cloud are not as representative of these responses as for other questions but again present a flavour of people's memories of the area.

Q7 Do you have any special memories of a particular area of the Sussex Heritage Coast you'd like to tell us about?



Selected quotes

Camping as a child at Cuckmere Haven and hitching a ride on the little railway up to the farm at Exeat with a can for fresh milk.

As a child in the early 1960s, driving down to Eastbourne from Crawley, where we lived, and going via the Long Man and then down towards the coast and along and into Eastbourne via Birling Gap and Beachy Head.

Bee orchids near the carpark at beachy head..taking my children and dog on walks aall along at different times from seaford to eastbourne and raging over the rape of the crumbles

Visiting cuckmere haven and beachy head with my nan - its now where i live as i feel in love with it

Paddling in the sea while watching the sun go down, casting shadow over the hills - seen it so many times, but every time unique.

Do you have any other comments?

4.4.12 This question had 371 responses, which include the following selection:

It must continue to be protected from buildings/development and have it's wildlife/environment protected as a priority

We are very lucky to live here.

Fantastic environment which is on my doorstep - must be protected at any cost.

I feel privileged to live here and to have grown up in the area. I dread the time when I can no longer walk this coastal area and when that time comes will probably welcome more disabled access.

Please don't let anyone build on it

Consolidated information on access by public transport from major Sussex towns would be useful. esp located on a website

It is going to get very untidy, looking a complete mess, so will be overgrown with blackberry and weeds.

4.4.13 Many of the comments are about the need to protect the area, to stop it being damaged by excessive tourism and to stop any development in the area. There are also many comments on how beautiful it is and how it is special to people's lives. There are also a range of comments about how it has changed over the years and insufficient warnings about the dangers of the cliffs.

4.4.14 A word cloud of these responses has the following most used words:

Q10 Do you have any other comments or thoughts about the special qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast?



Unspoilt Stunning Views Heritage Coast Seven Sisters
Cliff Edge Friendly Visitors Good Work Preserve
Countryside Live Road Protected Experience
Beautiful Tourists Place Stop Love Allow
Wild Life Spectacular Access Given Walk Warning Signs
Future Generations Fracking

4.5 Conversations with farmers

4.5.1 The farmers' perspective of the heritage coast is that the landscape of grasslands, arable, scrub and woodland is the result of hundreds of years of mixed farming, particularly of shepherding of livestock but also for mixed arable use. Each farm is an historic landscape in itself, revealing past farming practices and settlements, as well as the remains of former fortifications.

4.5.2 The concerns of farmers about the Heritage Coast's current use for recreation focus on problems of trespass, failure to close gates, un-controlled dogs and parasitic worms carried in dog faeces. Trespass is only occasional, however, with the majority of walkers and dog walkers keeping to footpaths and keeping their dogs controlled. The advantages of regular walkers outweigh any disadvantages as farmers know many of the walkers well and they help by alerting the farmers to issues and problems on the farm.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Overall conclusions

Favourite places

5.1.1 The top favourite places were Cuckmere haven, Beachy Head, Birling Gap and Seven Sisters Country Park. These are all popular places with visitors, so it is not unsurprising that they are chosen as favourite places. The Survey Monkey responses also scored *no favourite place* highly. People felt that the whole coast was a favourite place without any specific location being considered more favourably than others.

Special qualities

5.1.2 The most popular perceptions for special qualities were considered to be *views and scenery*, opportunities for *walks*, a sense of *peacefulness* and *tranquillity*, and the *beautiful* landscape. It was people's emotional responses to the landscape rather than its specific features that predominated, and it was the sense of openness and far reaching views that captured their attention.

What do you like doing?

5.1.3 By far, the most popular activities were *walking* and *just enjoying the views*, followed by *going for picnics* and *dog walking*. Other popular activities included *photography* and *bird watching*. Many people also enjoyed activities along the coast itself, including *rock-pooling* and *swimming*.

What prevents you from visiting?

5.1.4 The most frequently scored response to this question was *nothing prevents me from visiting*, showing that most people who visit the coast do so freely and easily. Other responses included *lack of time*, *little or no access to public transport* and *parking*. A smaller, though interesting, response was *lack of information about where to go, how to get there and what to do*. There was also an issue of *lack of disabled access*.

How does it make you feel?

5.1.5 The most popular responses were *peaceful*, *happy* and *relaxed*. People also felt very *lucky and privileged* to live and spend time in the area.

Special memories?

5.1.6 This question attracted a good response and people provided a wide range of memories of the area including visiting during their childhoods for picnics and walking, spending time rock-pooling and enjoying time with friends and family. There were fond memories of specific places, such as Birling Gap and Seven Sisters Country Park.

Any other comments?

5.1.7 Many of the comments received expressed people's deep appreciation of the coast and the need to protect it from development. Many were clearly passionate about it and wanted it to be managed well and be available for everyone to enjoy. Some comments were about how it has changed over the years and there was also concern about cliff erosion and the impact of visitors on paths and increased traffic.

The farmers' perspective of the heritage coast is that the landscape of grasslands, scrub and woodland is the result of hundreds of years of farming, particularly of shepherding of livestock. Each farm is an historic landscape in itself, revealing past farming practices and settlements, mixed with relics of fortifications. The concerns of farmers about its current use for recreation focus on problems of trespass, un-controlled dogs and litter.

6 Special qualities

A swathe of sculptured chalk between land and sea

There are few places along the English coastline that have captured the imaginations of residents and visitors as much as the chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head on the Sussex Heritage Coast. The jagged and ever-retreating cliff face at the junction between the rolling South Downs and the sea is a beloved haunt of solace seekers, and a compelling attraction for visitors from far and near. The chalk and flint that underlie the land and sea have shaped the folds of the hills, determined the form and nature of its grasslands and woodlands, and have been sculpted by the sea and the tides into spectacular cliffs and coastal reefs rich in marine life.

For those who live near, and for the many who visit, the coast here is an ‘other-worldly’ place, its far-reaching views fostering strong feelings of openness and peacefulness, with its flower-filled grasslands and tide-revealed rockpools providing glimpses of hidden creatures. The Heritage Coast draws walkers and cyclists, picnickers and birdwatchers, and those who simply want to enjoy the view and to revel in its tranquillity.

The boxes contain quotes reflecting opinions expressed in the Special Qualities consultation.

1 Inspiring, iconic landscapes, with breath-taking open views of sea and land

The undulating landscape of rolling downland carved into the underlying chalk and sheared by the sea into the iconic white cliffs are the predominant special qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast. This is a dynamic landscape, constantly changing, responding to the forces of nature. Pleasure from experiencing the varying conditions of sea and sky, the quality of light reflected from white chalk cliffs, the interaction between land and water and the far-reaching views across the Downs and along the coast are people’s main responses to this coastal landscape.

Other much-loved aspects of the landscape are the low-lying Cuckmere Valley with its ‘canal’ and isolated meanders leading to Cuckmere Haven, and the cliffs themselves whose layers of chalk and flint yield fossils that attract geologists and fossil hunters along the shore.

The Sussex Heritage Coast is a stunning and scenic landscape, a countryside and seaside experience that is open and accessible to all.

The meandering River, the openness of the landscape. No buildings, no noise.

It has a unique character of being spectacular and secluded at the same time, with grand hills surrounding the calm meads.

2 Rich and varied terrestrial and marine wildlife

The ‘edge’ landscape of downland, cliff and sea provide a mosaic of habitats including grassland, saltmarsh and freshwater wetlands, as well as cliffs, shingle, rockpools, shallow

coastal seas with wave-cut platform, varied seabeds and chalk reefs. The grasslands and scrub of the Downs are renowned for delicate and colourful wildflowers, butterflies, moths and other insects, along with farmland birds such as skylark and meadow pipit. There are emergent and submerged plants in the wetlands with amphibians and invertebrates, and a variety of plants and animals on the cliffs.

The coast, with its cliffs, estuary and scrub, attracts birdwatchers, drawn by migrating waders and seabirds, and by the kittiwakes and fulmars nesting on the cliffs. It attracts anglers, too, who cast their lines from the shore to catch mackerel, gurnard, sole and bass, as well as commercial fishermen and crab and lobster potters. Marine life includes seahorses, mussels, oysters and piddocks, and pods of dolphins that are sometimes seen off-shore.

The iconic view and variety of habitats

There is a certain charm about the Cuckmere valley with the old river snaking its way to the sea, full of different species of birds, wonderful.

3 Undeveloped, with an exceptional sense of space, peace and tranquillity

For many people, the special qualities of the Heritage Coast are its sense of peace and tranquillity and its fresh sea air. There is a sense of timelessness here, a perception of 'wilderness' in a crowded corner of England, where visitors feel they have space for reflection and contemplation. People enjoy the natural sounds of the sea and wind and the views of open countryside. The low levels of light pollution along the coast and over the downland also provide fine views of the night sky.

This sense of openness and wilderness is remarkable for a landscape visited by over a million people a year.

It is the bright white cliffs of the Seven Sisters, with the shimmering sea and special green of the chalk downland and shingle beach.

It gets reasonably dark, you can watch the full moon rise over the Seven Sisters, and the atmosphere at night is kind of magical.

It provides a perfect antidote to the hustle, bustle and noise of everyday life.

4 An ancient landscape created by centuries of settlement and farming

The impact of people over millennia has changed the landscape. The prehistoric forests were cleared to make arable fields, becoming pastures for livestock grazing by medieval times. This downland, with its open grasslands and pockets of scrub and woodland in the valleys, is still grazed today, a habitat little changed over the last six centuries and more.

Residents and visitors appreciate this long history of human use and settlement, and value the traces that earlier people have left behind in the landscape, such as ancient field systems and defensive earthworks. Defence has always been important here as this coastline has been the first landfall for invaders and settlers.

It's fascinating to think about both the geological and human history of this place. It makes you feel part of an ancient landscape that is older than you can comprehend.

It also has an amazing amount of history from Bronze Age to WW2. The environment is also unique with the moon carrot and the potter bumble bee have their unique habitats here.

5 Outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation and learning on land and sea

Walking is the most popular activity within the Heritage Coast, closely followed by enjoying the views and picnicking. People enjoy cycling and swimming and exploring the rockpools and shallow sea. The landscape is also a valuable outdoor classroom for students studying geography and landscapes, for understanding coastal erosion and learning about marine wildlife of a chalk coastline.

This is a landscape that invites people to get out and enjoy, whether by striding out on the springy turf of the cliff tops, sauntering beside the river in the Cuckmere valley or getting an alternative spectacular view of the Seven Sisters from a sea kayak.

The nature with its rockpools, cliffs and fossils.

It's a beautiful place to be, I love the shape of the river - it reminds me of geography lessons at senior school.

Appendix 1

Questionnaire distributed to visitor centres and museums

Love the Sussex Heritage Coast?... we want to hear from you!

The Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership wants to know what you feel are the 'special qualities' of the landscape between Seaford and Eastbourne, so they can establish the special qualities for this unique area. This will help inform and prioritise future work throughout the Heritage Coast.

1) If you had to choose just one favourite place in the Sussex Heritage Coast, which would it be?

- ☐ Seaford Head ☐ South Hill ☐ Cuckmere Haven ☐ Cuckmere River ☐ Seven Sisters Country Park
☐ Crowlink ☐ Birling Gap ☐ Belle Tout ☐ Shooters' Bottom ☐ Beachy Head ☐ East Dean
☐ I don't have a favourite

Another area within the Sussex Heritage Coast (please specify)

2) What do you feel is so special about this place?

3) What do you like doing in the Sussex Heritage Coast? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Walking Dog ☐ walking ☐ Cycling ☐ Running/trail running ☐ Going for a picnic ☐ Geocaching
☐ Just enjoying the views ☐ Swimming ☐ Sailing ☐ Kayaking/Canoeing ☐ Rockpooling ☐ Diving

Something else (please specify)

4) Which, if any, of the following do you feel currently prevents you from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast?

- ☐ Lack of time ☐ Little or no access to public transport to get to places
☐ Lack of information about where to go, how to get there and what to do
☐ Lack of interest: there are no places locally that I'm interested in visiting
☐ Distance: there are no places I can easily visit near me
☐ There are not enough child-friendly places or activities ☐ Lack of disabled access
☐ I don't feel anything prevents me from visiting and enjoying the Sussex Heritage Coast

Comments/Other (please specify)

5) Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about how you use the Sussex Heritage Coast?

6) How does the Sussex Heritage Coast make you feel when you visit?

☐ Happy ☐ Peaceful ☐ Fitter ☐ Healthier ☐ Relaxed

Other (please specify)

7) Do you have any special memories of a particular area of the Sussex Heritage Coast you'd like to tell us about?

8) Are there any aspects of the Sussex Heritage Coast you'd like to learn more about? (please tick all that apply)

☐ Local wildlife ☐ Local history ☐ Walking routes ☐ Cycling routes ☐ Places to swim

☐ How to volunteer ☐ Not really

Something else. I'd like to learn more about...

9) Which of the following would YOU be most likely to use to learn more about the Sussex Heritage Coast?

	Very likely	Quite likely	Not very likely	Quite unlikely	Not likely
Social media updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leaflets available in local venues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpretation/information panels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local newspaper articles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conversations with friends and family	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Podcasts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Magazines	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Posters, noticeboards in car parks, visitor centres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local radio features and news	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informative talks or workshops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guided walks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organised Family activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

None of the above /other (please tell us why)

10) Do you have any other comments or thoughts about the special qualities of the Sussex Heritage Coast?

Thank you for your time - please fold and place in the box

Appendix 2

Responses from drop-in sessions

SHC Drop-in Alfriston 2018-05-17

14 people

What's so special about your favourite area?

Open space, natural. Happy memories of a lovely walk.

Views of the meanders and the sea, and cottages beyond.

Seaford Head – kittiwake colony needs maximum protection.

The view.

A superb view of the Seven Sisters chalk cliffs set off by the estuary of the Cuckmere River.

The whole area is beautiful and should be preserved – my special place was where we walked when courting!

My grandmother lived at Birling Manor and I spent much time there during my childhood.

It is unique. In my travels around the world, I have never seen anything like it.

The entire area is my favourite place for the downland, the seven sisters and the sea.

Cuckmere Haven – iconic. Hills meeting river meeting sea. Simply gorgeous and accessible for everyone.

How does the Sussex Coast make you feel?

That it is a superb, undeveloped area and is very special.

Time is passing, I can't do exactly what I used to do. Reminds me of happy memories.

How fortunate I am to live here.

Good to be alive and fortunate to live here.

On the Downs at peace – when not crowded.

Lots of my history.

Very lucky to live in such a beautiful area. I'm very keen that this beauty should not be spoiled.

Unique habitat for birds (in season) – migratory birds.

What do you like doing?

Walking.

Walking and taking one's friends.

Walking and living amongst it.

Walking and observing wildlife.

Walking and admiring the views.

Mainly walking and enjoyment sometimes with a picnic.

Bird watching along the cliffs and peregrines.

Do you have special memories?

Special walking holiday.

Too many over nearly 60 years of living here and walking the downs.

The history back approximately 200 years and more to Roman and Anglo-Saxon times when it was much wilder.

Walking the South Downs Way from West Dean and over the 7S in all weathers.

Yes. We were engaged at Crowlink. My brother's ashes are at Friston Church. All of it is special.

When my parents went to France they left my sister and I with my grandmother. When my parents returned on the ferry we went up to Crowlink and waved pillow cases to welcome them back.

What stops you?

Nothing except traffic.

Increasing age.

Traffic – but it doesn't stop me.

Nothing – it's my patch.

Lousy weather.

Traffic – lack of amenities (decent restaurant etc)

Nothing – but we avoid the busiest areas if possible, eg Birling Gap on a holiday weekend.

Nothing stops me from visiting as I am able to walk extensively.

Only being busy.

Other comments

This is the most superb place to enjoy – a feeling of space, set off by the sea and beauty.

We need to communicate better the understanding of cliffs and river.

Please let it be kept unspoiled.

Just keep it as it is.

No more development.

I'd like the local people to be listened to more and their views given more influence.

Very close to being spoiled by traffic.

Responses from public consultation at Birling Gap 15.05.2018**14 people****What is so special about your favourite place?**

Sad but life affirming.

The whole area is outstanding.

Wonderful views and when time is right, very peaceful and inspiring.

Views, good parking, un-commercialised, rock pools, clean beach x2.

Birling Gap – sun sets, cliffs, smell of the sea, big sky, NT centre.

Beautiful scenery, peaceful / tranquil. Water clear.

Outstanding scenery. A protected area for all time. The same peace for the past 40 years we have been coming.

1 brilliant views in all directions. 2 peaceful. 3 gorgeous. 4 natural with farming.

What do you like doing?

Walking, working (I am a farmer) and cycling.

Having a cup of tea at Birling Gap Hotel.

Walking the dog.

Walking, walking, walking – taking in all the magnificent sights and sounds.

Swimming, scenery, walking.

Walking the South Downs Way.

Walking, photography, paddling, rock pooling.

Having a picnic in the car park or on the beach.

Gentle stroll up to Belle Tout Lighthouse. Snoozing on the beach.

How does it make you feel?

Peaceful, relaxed, nice.

Proud to be English.

Calm, sad, slightly other worldly.

Peaceful and hope for the future. Thank you.

Calm, reflective, able to cope with life, reassurance.

Exhilarated, close to nature, amazed, wondrous.

It makes you proud to be British.
Mostly happy, always peaceful and inspiration.
Up-beat, big view, fresh air, too many people.

Do you have any special memories?

Talk to my love.
Hours spent by the beach with grandkids.
Many, many fabulous walks in wind and rain and sun.
Have come for many years, children have grown up.
Coming here as a young girl and still coming here. One of my most cherished places in the world.
Come with my composer friend. Always send him a photo.
First visit – will definitely return. Lovely area to catch up with an old friend.
Memories of visiting with family. Glorious sunsets and rainbows.
Saw Spitfire flying over. Reminded me of my mother who was born and lived in Eastbourne and was in the WAAF in WW2.

What stops you visiting?

Bloody coaches.
Nothing.
Seeing people too close to the cliff edge.
Nothing.
Feeling too sad (too risky).
Sadly I live a long way from here now. Otherwise would come regularly.
Distance from Birmingham. No direct train time.

Other comments

Glorious
Feels good to be here.
Skylarks – I've recorded them – fantastic to take home and listen to in the dark.
Lovely area of the world that I knew nothing of as I normally would go to Devon.
A refuge for all of us and probably unique in the world.
Balance is what we need and that means mixed farming to look after the land and the landscape for all to enjoy.
Wonderful place to meditate on life, given right conditions.

SHC Drop-in Eastbourne 2018-05-14

31 People

What is so special about your favourite place?

Birling Gap – wonderful views, magnificent facilities
Severn Sisters
Stunning scenery
Rolling downs and sea and white cliffs
Cuckmere Valley
Cuckmere Haven – wonderful place to take little ones – exciting adventure with lots to talk about and see... and end up with the **?????** at the end – the sea, the **Wanes??** - a real connection.
Cuckmere Haven – lovely view of ox-bow lake and river.
Cuckmere, very tranquil, beautiful area
Birds
Wildlife x 2

Wet meadows
Walks
Fantastic place, grew up here
Flagstaff Brow
Walking from Crowlink towards the sea, skylarks singing, smell of gorse, heaven!
Crowlink is one of my favourite spots for its coastal views and wide expanses of downland
The views
Fantastic coastline
Walks into Eastbourne
Walks to Birling Gap and beyond
Memories of walks off the main drag where 360' views can be enjoyed, 365 days of the year
Unspoilt and natural, good walking and views
Good walks and paths to get to the sea (Wheelchair user)
Beachy Head to Birling Gap because of the beauty of the coast has not been commercialised.
East Dean is marked with my flag- I love being able to walk via footpaths from Old Town Eastbourne to East Dean and down to Birling Gap.
Beautiful scenery
Peace and Quiet
Sound of the sea
Lovely views
Love watching the waves
Beachy Head and the Downs
Scenery
Serenity
Nature
Holywell to Birling Gap – one of the best walks in Britain.
The geology and easy access walks/path
No 12 bus is one of the best journeys ever!
Most beautiful countryside with magnificent views of the sea and downs
Beachy Head to Birling. Views along the coast, spectacular scenery and very historic
Beachy Head – regular walks and access to open spaces
Beachy Head – great place to watch the stars and the moon on a clear night
Crowlink – spiritual connection to the land
Chalk Farm – spiritual connection to the land- tumuli, yew tree, causeway enclosure.
I love living by the coast. Eastbourne is the best place ever to live!

What do you like doing?

Walking on the Seven Sisters
Enjoying the views and hopefully climate
Coffee and tea rooms
Birdwatching
Rambling
Solitude
Thinking
Walking, especially the dog
Photographyx2
The pier
Family walks over many years
Walking Eastbourne Promenade
The choices of sea, country, villages and forest, so much to stimulate the senses
Walking along the sea front from Eastbourne and across to Beachy Head/Birling Gap
Fishing, shooting
Walking, photography
Walking and listening to birds, being in the moment

Walking from Birling Gap to Eastbourne

Walking, picnicking, enjoying wildlife, flora and fauna, migrating birds on the downland

Walking my dog, getting away from it all where the countryside and coast can be enjoyed together.

Walking and siteseeing

Walking in the fresh air

Cycling and stopping to soak in the sights sounds and smells

Walking, just being, beachcombing, gazing at the white chalk cliffs

Walking and appreciating the scenery

Walking and sightseeing in the summer

Natural beauty and accessibility

Walking the downs and the sea – so lucky!

Running, walking, dog walking

Walking along the promenade after dinner

Walking, relaxing

We've walked and explored much of the area between Eastbourne and Seaford via the footpaths taking in the views across the clifftops and exploring Friston Forest, the Cuckmere Valley and Crowlink – love discovering new ways across this area.

Meditating, holding ritual space and spiritual circles with friends – attuning to the energies of the downs' unique vibration that nourishes and sustains this whole area and everyone here

What stops you visiting the SHC?

Weather – too hot

Too many tourists

Too wet

Lack of time/Busy life x5 – come when free as a special treat. Manifesting more time! It's the best place ever!

Nothing, make it a priority, I live here x8

Living in Staffordshire! Possibly most landlocked county in England

Living in the Midlands and having no transport

Living in London

Time

Traffic

Bank Holidays too many people

Parking if it is a long way to walk

Not much, time at present but we moved back for the coast.

Not enough to do – activities are expensive

Try not to put reasons to stop coming to the coast, I live here.

The experience of Cuckmere car park

Maybe access to some areas? We don't have a car, but enjoy the freedom of walking out from Eastbourne or planning our journey by travelling by bus or train to Willingdon or polegate or Lewes and exploring from there.

How does it make you feel?

Very lucky indeed

Refreshed, relaxed, thankful

Happy, well, relaxed

Exhilarated, fresh, healthy

Wonderful

Good mentally and healthy environment – feel good about yourself

Happy and uplifted

Privileged

Liberated – it blows away the cobwebs

Refreshed, relaxed, happy
Relaxed, happy and the stress just goes away
Alive, thankful to live in such an area. Sad when I see it being abused, eg litter
Wonderful and happy
Lucky
Invigorating and uplifting
Lovely feel to get away from the town for a nice change
Calm, relaxed, lucky, thankful
Sense of space is good – unspoilt coastline, long may it remain
Very lucky
At peace
Revitalised, sets me up for the week
Happy, energised, revitalised, relaxed, fart
Very lucky to live nearby, energised and stress relieving
Gives the opportunity to be in touch with nature in all its glory, so makes me feel great!
Amazing – in touch with nature – and connected to ancestors and history. Just really enriched by every walk.
Energised, invigorated, revitalised, spiritually attuned and connected..
It gives me a feeling of strong connection with the Earth that is very ancient.
We sometimes host visitors (students) from other countries who always comment how beautiful the country and seaside are.

Do you have any special memories?

View from Butts Lane over Willingdon Golf Course and beyond to sea is great
Curlew and green plover calling
Born and bred in Eastbourne- have travelled but so lucky to come back her. Happy childhood memories
Going to the Redoubt as a youngster, running around the casemates
Tour bus – fantastic
None as yet – this is my first visit so I am making memories
Open top bus up to Beachy Head, ice creams at Fuscisdis
Growing up at Birling Gap
Childhood holidays with mum and dad between 1976 and 1990. Since then day trips.
Seeing hares jumping on the escarpment near Cow Gap.
Friston Forest
Having two lovely holidays here and always happy to come back
So many wonderful runs
Running and watching the sun rise
Memories are endless of dogs long gone and people long gone but the views, sights, sounds and smells remain the same.
Being chased over the hills by cockchafers on a warm August evening.
Many walks and gatherings organised by part of Keep Our Downs Public Campaign.
Walking with the man I love.
Family days by the sea or walking on the Downs across the Seven Sisters to Exceat.
Living by the sea has become very special to me having moved here from the Midlands 10 years ago.
Spiritual ceremonies we did on the downland when we were protecting the land being sold by the council.

Any other comments?

It's my favourite coastline in the south east.
Keep it free from development and too much traffic.
Hope it stays protected, ie wildlife etc.
Keep the plastic away. Regular clean-ups.
We need to protect it for future generations.

Protect it at all costs.
An oasis of calm within the congested south east corner of England.
Please continue to maintain its beauty.
Need to protect it and make sure stays in a good condition.
Very clean and natural.
Hope it stays as it is.
Lovely place to live especially now more appreciative in my 50s.
Please do not commercialise it. Keep it as natural and beautiful as it is.
Continue to protect the downs!! Need to continue to protect it and continue to repair areas that are damaged / eroding.
It is a unique part of the world where the sea and the downs create true beauty and atmosphere.
We are living on the EDGE. That is what is so special and exciting. And creative!
Sussex coast with its iconic downland and rare habitats must be protected for future generations.
It needs our protection! Biodiversity land management. Protect our chalk aquifers.
We are just very lucky to have such a great adventure playground on our doorstep.
Keep up all the good work.
More needs to be done to keep it from falling into the sea. More defences around Beachy Head and cliffs.
Thank you for protecting the downs. They nourish and sustain us all. Heart and squiggle.

SHC Drop-in Seaford 2018-05-16

11 people

What's so special about your favourite place?

Good memories with the dogs and family walks, also the view over the sea.
Like walking and taking dogs.
The sea and the views.
The breathtaking scenery.
Fantastic biodiversity. Chalk grassland is uplifting. No development all the way from Seaford to Eastbourne. Lots of other people interested in the wildlife.
Rockpools. The shape and colour of the landscape – curves and the pale shades resulting from chalk underneath. Chalk flora seen this year – violets, cowslips, red campion, speedwell, purple vetch, thrift and common orchids, skylarks.
Places where all you can see is green and blue and flowers with butterflies and quiet so you can hear the birdsong and which species of grasshopper.
Blend of small town and rural beach.
Space, sky, vista, simplicity.
Good places to explore and journeys to them are good.
Childhood memories, ice skating on the meanders. Walking dogs. The changes throughout the year. The views, wildlife and flora.

What do you like doing?

Site seeing and litter picking. It pains me to see such a pretty site in such a mess.
Walking the dogs.
Walking, botanising, butterflies.
Wonderful views, lovely walks to see the sea, birds, butterflies and flowers.
Walking, looking for wildlife (fungi, orchids, insects, rockpool creatures), talking to like minded people.
Cycling on bridle paths (when allowed) and walking.
Building dens, cycling, walking, running.

Pond dipping, rock pooling.

Walking dogs, showing grandchildren about the countryside and teaching them about flora, fauna, geology.

How does it make you feel?

Joyful and full of wonder as I look to the sunset on the horizon.

Happy.

Happy, fulfilled and eager to maintain it.

Happy at home.

Glad to be alive.

Privileged.

Privileged to live in the area.

Proud and spacious and relaxed.

Glad to have been born in such a special place to grow up in – still here enjoying every day.

Do you have any special memories?

Old Jess Dog chasing rabbits and going for a swim at the bottom of the hill.

Finding early spider orchids below Belle Tour lighthouse.

Ice-skating / ice hockey on the meanders. Seeing first swallow and water vole.

Having come back to where I grew up after decades elsewhere but still visiting – many childhood memories. Rock pools, being taught the names of flowers, bringing my own children here.

Bird watching with my father.

Bees mating on the Seaford Head.

What stops you visiting?

All the litter and the people who make the place violent and dangerous.

Nothing.

Nothing when I want the fresh air.

Only really bad weather.

Nothing – all weathers.

Dog poo prevents you going with children.

Nothing but additional waste – poo bins would improve pleasure.

Any other comments?

It is a beautiful place to go to think and clear your head after a long or stressful day.

The hidden bits, ie Crowlink should remain un-published and allow people to discover for themselves.

Life is good here on the Sussex Heritage Coast.

Parking at 7S is tricky at times (expensive).

Fantastic – great to see so many tourists (particularly Japanese) enjoying the area and young people learning about it.

Rose Gauntlet

1 Walk to Hope Gap beach with nothing in your view but flowers, butterflies, birds and sea, is utterly restful, framed by the gently folding slopes around you.

2 Rural beaches are to be treasured. We go to the beach because it is not the townscape. We want to see the landscape not solid blocks, signs large enough to be read from yards away, man-made materials, colours that shout for your attention. We want to drink in the green and the blue and be mesmerised by the curling waves and their sweep up and down the beach and the curves of the bays and the brows. The modelling of the chalk when the sun's angle changes. The white is cheering.

3 France Bottom, secret valley.

4 Charleston Bottom and view of white horse.

- 5 Path to Lullington Heath views.
- 6 Folkington wood path to Wilmington Hill. View to Glynde and Firle Beacon, via Berwick Spire. The bowl shape of hill as seen from the path below the man.
- 7 Jevington snow drops and horse fields.
- 8 Wilmington Rd towards Litlington.
- 9 Winter flooding around Alfriston.
- 10 View of White Horse from Alrison Rd and from the river between the bridges.
- 11 Grass at the bend below the White Horse and trees for children to play.
- 12 Belle Tout flowers.
- 13 the Valley between Friston Church and East Dean green for a picnic bought in the deli or at the pub tables.
- 14 Friston pond.
- 15 South Hill barn must have no distractions. No man-made materials or colours, no structures which cannot grow lichens or algae. Notices are best placed horizontally not vertically.
- 16 Whitebread Hollow.
- 17 Path up to Firle Beacon.
- 18 Crowlink path.

Each place has different angles of shapes.

Appendix 3

Responses from stakeholders' workshop 16.05.2018

Flipchart comments

Special qualities

- Magnificent views
- Inspiring landscape
- Relaxing
- Openness / big skies
- Quality of light
- Don't feel hemmed in
- Sea views equal = optimism / calmness
- View of the meanders
- View from High 'nd Over
- Diversity – downland, shingles, forest
- Coastland wildlife diversity
- Sense of scale from the sea – in kayak looking toward the cliffs
- Sea bird colonies
- Limited evidence of human intervention – over-signage
- Sounds / smells
- Good film location
- Richness of the past / time
- Layers of time
- Temporal sense
- Geological and human – sense of time
- Wild frontier
- Past and future
- Stepping outside time
- Accessible – everybody can walk there
- Minimal physical boundaries / open access
- Wrecks and smuggling
- Dark skies
- Wildlife diversity and rare species
- Marine conservation zone
- Dynamic environment
- Rock pool life
- Hidden wildlife – mini-beasts
- Rich artistic heritage
- Farming

Key management issues

- Visitor pressure
- Stupid visitors
- Over-grazing / under-grazing
- Litter
- Parking
- Korean visitors
- Korean pop video – walking from Birling Gap to the road
- Carving names in the chalk at the cliff top

- Cliff safety
- Demand for cliff edge fencing
- Dogs
- Plastic on the beach
- Water run off
- Losing archaeological heritage through cliff erosion
- Public perception vs long term sustainable management – which can lead to discontented visitors
- Toilets
- Erosion – footpaths
- Off-road cycling and misuse of PRow
- Management of livestock fending
- Limited resources
- Pressure on honeypot sites
- Insufficient facilities – toilets
- Intrinsic value of landscape that cannot be monetised
- BBQs and fires
- Lack of understanding – coastal process, land management, river management

Interpretation requested, planned and required

- Seven sisters view needs interpreting
- Orientation – local and global
- Directional signage
- Public transport information
- Where to walk your dog off the lead
- Where to have BBQs and information about BBQ issues
- What can I see in an hour, half and day, day?
- What activities are there for children?
- What is there to do?
- Tide times
- Walking along the beach at low tide
- Scattering ashes
- Curriculum linked material
- NT – putting a lot of information and interpretation out on website – easier to manage and update
- Conservation message is important
- Respect issues – permissions not being sought for drone flying etc
- Maps, events, social media for disseminating
- Use events as interpretation – have a wide catchment area
- Beachy Head VC has website and leaflet – distribute in Eastbourne.
- SDNP – visitors like it when rangers talk personally to them
- SDNP – big demand for images and video content
- SDNP favour digital access panels with NFC tags – cheap front end and easy to update remotely
- SWT has website which informs a regular audience, and use social media to gain new users and new audiences

Not working

- Can't always rely on phone signal for digital access
- Panels and leaflets not appropriate for younger audience
- Not reaching irresponsible people...?

Other audiences to reach

- Disseminating information in unusual locations
- Drone flyers
- Urban fringe
- Younger people
- International visitors
- Fishermen
- Surfers and other marine users

Prepared for the Sussex Heritage Coast Partnership by

Red Kite

We would like to offer our thanks to everyone who provided the information and insights that enabled this work to be carried out. Any errors and misinterpretations in the report are in good faith and remain our responsibility.

Red Kite Environment
October 2018