

MORECAMBE BAY

Sense of Place Toolkit



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Introduction

This Toolkit has been developed to help visitors discover the special character of Morecambe Bay. It aims to provide businesses around the Bay with a greater understanding of the different elements that make up the area's special character, from its spectacular landscape and views, it's geology, rich nature, deep heritage and varied traditions. The toolkit helps to celebrate the area's uniqueness and provide you with information to develop visitors' perceptions of Morecambe Bay as a destination.

What is Sense of Place?

Sense of place is the combination of unique qualities and characteristics that make a location special. It includes sights and sounds, memories and experiences, people and feelings.

Every place has distinctive qualities that make it special in some way. By recognising and valuing these qualities, you can use them to improve your marketing and promotional activities and enhance your customers' experience of the area.

Why is it Important?

Why is sense of place important to you as a tourism business? Most people like to visit places that are authentic and unique. The more a destination does to enhance its uniqueness, the more attractive it is to visitors. Being confident about what makes the area distinctive encourages more visitors, longer visits, and return visits which will be good for you as a tourism business.



DESTINATION CASE STUDY **The Forest of Bowland**



Over the last 9 years tourism businesses have worked together to develop the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as a destination renowned as a place to enjoy and keep special. Virtually all of the tourism businesses promote its unique sense of place, passing on their knowledge, enthusiasm and affection for the area to their visitors. They are generating more income by 'selling' a sense of place. A visitor survey recently showed that now over 80% of visitors recognise the Forest of Bowland as a destination of scenic beauty with natural and historic places to explore and enjoy, and visitor bookings have increased.

But that's not all - our sense of place describes what we value, and helps us to decide what to keep and what to change. Having a sense of place gives a long-term benefit because it helps our destination to establish and survive.

DESTINATION CASE STUDY **Keep Austin Weird**



When businesses in Austin, Texas were asked what they wanted to say about their city, they came up with the slogan "Keep Austin Weird". This summed up the feeling that Austin was a place for quirky shops and unique music. This slogan gave a clear message, and a vision for the future of Austin too. When a book retail giant asked if they could set up a shop in their city, the city planners said no. The small bookshop stayed open, and so Austin preserved its weirdness. And "Keep Austin Weird" is more than a slogan; it is a recipe for economic success. Research showed that for every \$100 spent in the small independent bookstore, \$44 stays in Austin. But for every \$100 spent in the large shop, only \$30 stays in the local economy.

This Sense of Place Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed to help tourism businesses discover and celebrate the special character of Morecambe Bay. The toolkit brings together some of the qualities and characteristics that make up Morecambe Bay's unique sense of place. Read on to find out about the special qualities of the area and the unique visitor experiences on offer. You'll also find clear messages and statements and links to more information that you can use to build a rich experience for your visitors.

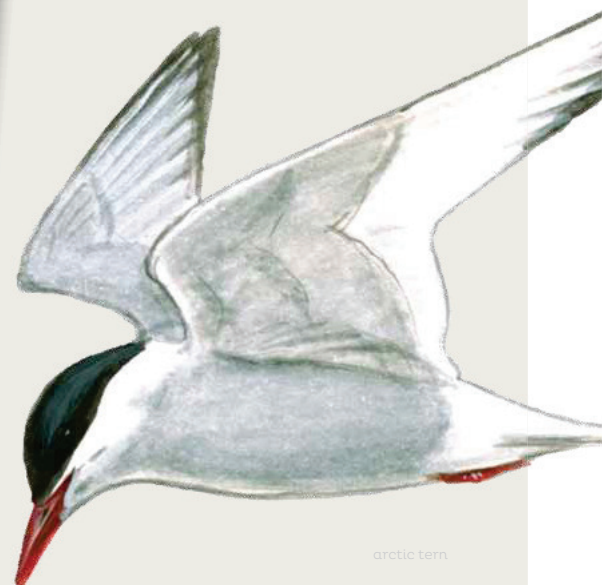
How Can I Use Sense of Place?

Use this sense of place toolkit to give your visitors relevant information that will entice them to choose Morecambe Bay for their holiday, book with you, improve their holiday experience and come back again. Using sense of place is easy, here are some ideas:

- Collect information – Visitor Information Centres are a good starting place.
- Make recommendations and try to tailor them for different audiences such as families or young couples.
- Promote local guides and books.
- Showcase local art and food.
- Create special offers with other local businesses.
- Share your favourite places and stories.
- Give visitors “insider knowledge”, such as a hidden gem or little known fact.
- Help visitors to join in and feel like part of the community.

To develop a richer experience and celebrate a stronger sense of place with your visitors, think about:

1. What do visitors want?
2. What information do they need?
3. Where and when can we share information?



arctic tern

Step 1

What Experiences do Visitors Want?

Visitors don't just want to visit Morecambe Bay, they want to experience it. A recent survey found that visitors to the area love the beauty and tranquillity of the natural environment, and also want to explore it for themselves:

- The most popular reasons people gave for visiting the area was for its beautiful scenery (68% of visitors).
- Another important reason was to enjoy its peace, quiet and tranquillity (57% of visitors).
- The most popular activity people did whilst in the area was looking at the scenery (64%).
- Almost 90% of respondents are interested in visiting places where they can see and/or experience wildlife.
- Just over 70% said they would like to explore the area using car free routes.
- 85% said they would like to explore the area using self guided walking itineraries.
- Over 40% of people visited, or planned to visit a cultural or historic attraction.
- The main reason for visiting such attractions was to learn about the area's history.

Luckily for us Morecambe Bay can meet all these expectations; we have stunning landscapes and diverse wildlife, layers of history, and fantastic train, cycle and walking routes. We've put together a series of **nature on your doorstep guides** that show visitors our great nature and heritage, or you can use this toolkit to design your own.

Step 2

What Information do Visitors Need?

When planning a holiday, from a day out to a week away, visitors need a fair amount of information to make sure they get the best from their trip. This information is usually scattered around and they have to look at lots of sources.

Bringing information together really helps visitors plan a memorable stay and make the most of their experience of our wonderful destination.

This information might be important to visitors:

- activities to do
- attractions to visit
- places to stay and eat
- walking and cycling routes and maps
- opening times
- seasonal information
- special offers
- public transport times and routes
- a variety of interest, like wildlife and history on the same walk
- safety information
- weather forecasts
- tide timetables

Places you can find some of this information include:

- www.golakes.co.uk
- www.visitcumbria.com
- www.visitlancashire.com
- www.tripadvisor.com
- Tide tables
- Met Office
- Coastal weather forecast
- Bay safety information
- Bay Radio
- Lakeland Radio
- www.morecambebay.org.uk
- www.morecambebaynature.org.uk

Step 3

Where and When Can We Share Information?

There are lots of ways to showcase the best of Morecambe Bay to your visitors, and you can do this in person, in print, and online (on computers, tablets and mobile phones).

If you're not using these already, you might like to share information with your visitors through:

- web pages and blogs
- social media (such as facebook, twitter, instagram or pinterest)
- leaflets, magazines and brochures
- walking and cycling routes and maps
- photos
- short films
- event calendars

Social media is a growing marketing opportunity. It may suit some businesses and can be relatively inexpensive. Social media works well once you have built up a profile and a following. To encourage past and potential visitors to follow you'll need to make regular posts. Some people quickly find their voice but it isn't for everyone.



MORECAMBE BAY SENSE OF PLACE - TOOLKIT

The holiday experience is not only the trip itself, it starts with planning the trip, and continues after returning home to show off holiday snaps. Use sense of place to enrich your visitors' experience at all three stages of their holiday:

1. Pre-arrival – help guests to plan their trip...

- email information along with booking confirmation
- post relevant and seasonal information on your website (and link to other sites)

2. On holiday – make it easy once they have arrived...

- leave welcome packs in rooms or post information on notice boards
- share your personal recommendations

3. Post-visit – give them a reason to come back...

- keep in touch with mailing lists or newsletters
- connect with visitors on social media

