



Henfield



“
Henfield Community Partnership are improving the look of their village and visitor information to encourage visitors to come to the village, stay longer and learn more about what the village has to offer.
 ”



Need for the Project

The Henfield Community Partnership was set up in July 2005 following the issue in December 2004 of the first Parish Action Plan. The Action Plan and further consultation with the community and local businesses identified the need to attract visitors to the village to help support local shops and businesses.

Henfield has seen the closure of a number of independent local shops in recent years and while the High Street remains a good option for local shopping, it is felt that additional visitors (particularly from places that can access Henfield by public transport) need to be attracted to keep local businesses working well.

In response to a question in a recent survey of village opinion as part of preparing a new action plan, “would you like to see more people encouraged to visit the village”, 86% agreed.

Key Facts	
County:	W.Sussex
District:	Horsham
Population:	5000
Project Started:	2009



The Process

The tourism group of the community partnership worked hard to bring local businesses on board by holding a number of meetings and workshops and by attending business meetings. These workshops were used to collect views and ideas for ways to

improve Henfield’s offer to visitors and to build support for the project.

Following this broad consultation phase over around 4 months, a smaller project group worked to plan the project, develop a budget and find funding. They have worked with Hidden Britain to produce a bid for funding to the South Downs Leader group. Their expression of interest was received and they were invited to proceed to a full application, which will be considered in mid-May 2010.

The application is for funds to produce 3 High Street fingerposts, 2 new map and information boards to inform visitors of local attractions and encourage them into the village centre, updated displays in existing mapboards and new leaflets detailing Henfield’s facilities and attractions and describing some routes for walkers around the village.

If funding is successful the group will complete these works within a year.

What is Hidden Britain South East?

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

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



Hidden Britain

Progress to date

Who is Involved?

The core tourism group consists of three members of the Henfield Community Partnership, Tony Jackson, Arun Agarwal and David Hayes. They bring community project experience and knowledge to the project.

Additionally a number of others have contributed their time and efforts including the village website owner, Suzy Eames, the Henfield Museum curator and a number of local businesses.



Project Outputs

- ▶ 3 High Street fingerposts
- ▶ 2 new map and information boards to inform visitors of local attractions and encourage them into the village centre
- ▶ Updated displays in existing mapboards
- ▶ New visitor leaflet detailing Henfield's facilities and attractions and describing some routes for walkers around the village.



Status of Funding

The partnership has succeeded in raising around £1,000 in cash locally as well as in kind support from local businesses totalling the equivalent of around £1,000.

They are currently applying to the South Downs and Low Weald Leader fund for around £15,000.





Project Achievements

► Businesses engaged (10)

8 local businesses have been actively involved through attending project planning meetings and some of these have promised cash or in kind donations to the project fundraising effort (such as web design and hosting and use of land to place notice boards). Additionally the visitor group has made a great effort to inform and involve business, by conducting an initial person to person visit to businesses on the High St to inform them about the project and invite them to meetings and by distributing the business questionnaire used as part of this evaluation.



► No of volunteers involved (est. 9)

Three volunteers have contributed consistently throughout to the planning and funding of the project, as mentioned above. Additional volunteers have contributed to project planning and Parish Council members have also worked together with the Community Partnership to ensure the project runs smoothly.

► Skills and training accessed

The project to date has not required any formal training, however those working on the project will have gained improved understanding of tourism, project funding and marketing to visitors.

► Marketing support provided

Hidden Britain has created a Henfield page on Rural Ways and has worked with the village webmaster to improve visitor related information on the existing website, until the new visitor site is up and running.



Hidden Britain Input

Hidden Britain have worked with the visitor group for the past year to run workshops, meetings and consultations with local people and businesses, help to decide which initiatives to implement and to develop an action plan.

In deciding where to apply for funding, Hidden Britain used local knowledge of potential funding streams to help identify a suitable potential source. Hidden Britain worked with the Community Partnership to put together a detailed budget and application for funding.

Henfield hope to secure funding in May and Hidden Britain will continue to work with them to develop the content and design of new boards, leaflets and the website.



Hidden Britain SE Case Study

Henfield

Going Forward

- ▶ The community partnership is currently awaiting the outcome of their funding bid, which if successful will allow the project to be implemented over the next year.
- ▶ The group further intend to build on this work to develop closer links with local businesses to encourage green tourism to Henfield, a village which is already part of the growing “Greening Campaign”.
- ▶ Henfield are also participating in a new Hidden Britain project to try and develop a joined up visitor strategy for villages along the Downslink path.



Without the great support from Hidden Britain SE, we would not be in the position today of having put in a comprehensive funding bid to Leader for our visitor project.

Tony Jackson

Chair Henfield Community Partnership



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



Lessons Learned

▶ Working with businesses is key but engaging them can be a long process. It has required quite a lot of time and effort on the part of community partnership members to build business support – personal contact has been important. The visitor group members have not only invited businesses to meetings but have also gone out and spoken to them in their shops and businesses and developed relationships in that way.

▶ The process of planning and deciding what to do can take a long time if done with significant consultation, but that consultation will hopefully pay off with the engagement of a wider group of people in the end.

▶ It is important to have good and regular communication with local organisations such as the Parish Council so that each is aware of the others’ activities and overlap is avoided.

Further Information

- www.hiddenbritainse.org.uk
- www.sercc.org.uk
- www.tourismse.com
- www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe

