



How to Sell Sussex to Visitors

Your go-to toolkit for marketing our
sparkling destination to the world.

MAY 2025

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Welcome



There's nowhere like Sussex.

From rolling hills to picture-perfect villages, buzzing cities, and vibrant seaside towns, our home is blessed with beauty. But you know what? That's just the start of it. Here, you're free to be whoever you want to be. Sussex is a haven for artists, writers, rebels, free-thinkers, non-conformists and marginalised communities.

Got a penchant for wine? Over 25% of the UK's vineyards are in Sussex. Want to catch a match or see a show? You'll find endless iconic events throughout the year. To visit Sussex is to reignite your spark. To feel rejuvenated and reinvigorated. To live easy and leave your worries behind. To create memories that'll last a lifetime.

And all this right on London's doorstep, less than an hour away by train.

Of course, this isn't news to you, right? You know this.

But the person scrolling through their phone, researching their next holiday destination? Well, they probably don't. Not all of it. Not yet.

But with your help, they will.

That's where this toolkit comes in.

Welcome



Ready to get started?

As a destination, we're not *just* competing with London or other home counties. We're not competing with the Welsh valleys or the Scottish Highlands. We're competing with the world. It's never been easier to travel the globe. So, how do we persuade people that Sussex is an unbeatable, unmissable destination that should be number one on their travel bucket list?

In this toolkit, we'll drill down on those key messages that capture the unique spirit of Sussex. Those messages that communicate our distinct identity. You can also find out more about the people who visit Sussex. What type of experiences are they looking for? Where are they travelling from? How can we speak to them in a way that resonates?

It's in all of our interests to communicate these messages, wherever possible. Consistency is key. A joined-up approach will paint a clear, compelling picture of the county. You could be a hotel owner or tour operator, a vineyard or spa retreat – if you're in the business of marketing Sussex, this toolkit is for you.

Let's begin...

Did you know?

10x

The Sussex tourism economy is around 10x bigger than the Isle of Wight's, two-thirds the size of Wales' and a third the size of Scotland's.

19%

Overseas visitors account for 2% of visits and 19% of spend.

£5bn

The visitor economy in Sussex generates £5bn impact and supports 74,000 jobs, matching Iceland's visitor economy.

50%

Staying visitors account for 11% of visits and 50% of spend.



What's in it for me?

1

Our studies show that Sussex does not have a clear identity, unlike areas such as the Cotswolds and Cornwall.

2

To attract more visitors, we need a stronger identity that makes Sussex stand out against our neighbours. This toolkit holds all of the unique themes that makes Sussex, Sussex.

3

Through collective reach, the East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership aims to increase the value of the Visitor Economy sector in Sussex from 5 billion to 7.5 billion. You can read more about the ambitions and plans on [the LVEP website](#).

4

Our aims with this toolkit are to help visitors realise the amazing aspects of Sussex and encourage them to stay for longer, visit different areas and attractions, and invest more money into our economy.

5

By using the messaging in this toolkit you are telling visitors you are part of the wider Sussex offer – you won't fit every theme but you are an important part of the building blocks that will help make Sussex' Visitor Economy sector one of the strongest in the country.

Chapter 1

Landing the message

What do we want to tell people?
And how can we clearly and consistently
communicate these messages?

Summing up Sussex

Sussex is as lively and diverse as the residents that call it home.

From our countryside to the coastal towns and cities, from our iconic attractions to our vineyards, we've got a lot to shout about. And that's amazing. But it also presents a challenge. How do we simply and clearly talk about Sussex's offer while doing ourselves justice?

After much research, we've distilled and developed **six key themes** that we hope you'll agree sum up Sussex. They tell our story. They encapsulate our essence, creating a picture of a destination that's unique from – and stands above – our competitors.

Please try to incorporate the themes that best fit your business and area into your communications.



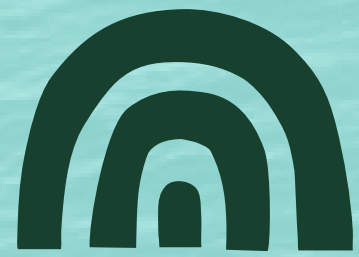
How about that?

Research tells us the best way to attract visitors is by appealing to their sense of individuality and making them feel welcome. So it's lucky that Sussex is such a friendly, unique destination.

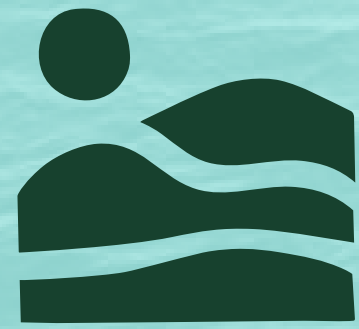
Summing up Sussex



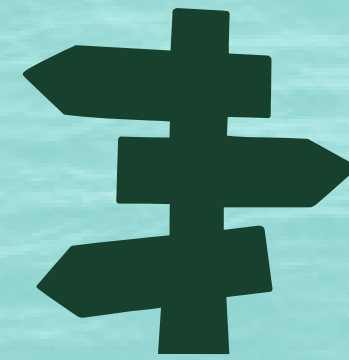
1.
**Distinctly
different**



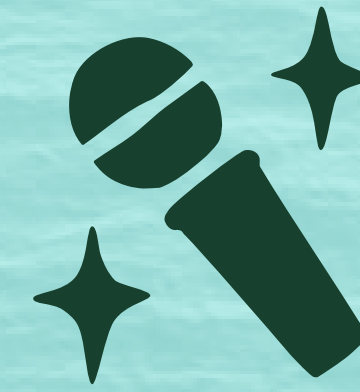
2.
Freedom



3.
Reinvigorating



4.
Location



5.
Iconic events



6.
Wineries

Summing up Sussex

1. Distinctly different

For centuries, Sussex has been London's quirkier neighbour. A haven for artists, writers and rebels; a retreat for free-thinkers and the free-spirited. That individuality, non-conformity and sparkling personality is in our DNA. A real-deal destination that's a multi-faceted kaleidoscope of people and places.

This was the home of Rudyard Kipling. Of smugglers and buccaneers. Of Pagan rituals and Morris Dancing. Who can deny there's something in the air down here? You can still sense that unique spirit when exploring our independent boutiques, visiting our family-run vineyards or simply strolling through our towns and cities.



Summing up Sussex

2. Freedom

Individuality is celebrated in Sussex. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, you'll always be greeted with open arms. After all, Sussex has the fabulous, beating heart of the LGBTQ+ capital in Brighton & Hove.

Want to sashay down the street in your most eccentric ensemble? Fancy trying your hand at plein air painting on the pier? Need to re-centre yourself after working too hard and relaxing too little? Sussex is ready and waiting.

And if you're craving escapism? Let us introduce you to the freedom you feel as you walk through the National Park, immerse yourself in the expansive Knepp Wildland, or stare out to sea from Camber Sands. Lose yourself in our history or try experiences you won't find anywhere else.



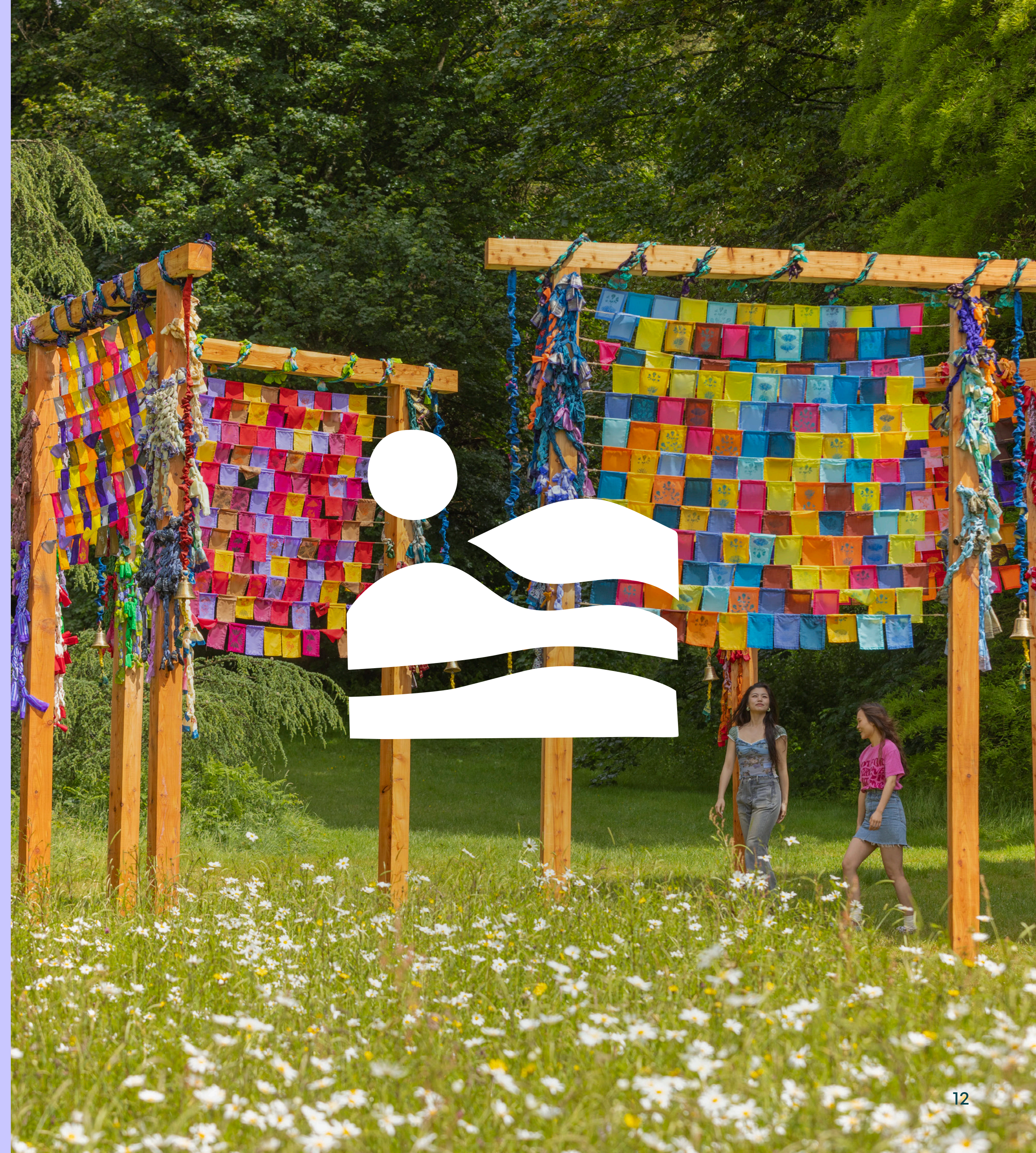
Summing up Sussex

3. Reinvigorating

Isn't that what we all want from a holiday? To feel rested, rejuvenated and reinvigorated. And there's nowhere better than Sussex for reconnecting with nature and reawakening your inner explorer.

Whether it's paragliding or kitesurfing, stargazing or trail-walking, forest-bathing or paddleboard yoga – you'll discover an endless choice of activities for escaping the everyday. This is where a love for nature meets an appetite for adventure.

And speaking of appetite, let's not forget our amazing food and drink producers, who nourish your body and soul. Bringing the world locally sourced feel-good produce, lovingly made. The Sussex way.



Summing up Sussex

4.

Location, location, location

Many people – especially international tourists – won't realise how close Sussex is to London. It's always worth reminding them. Around 16 million people visit London every year. Roughly 40 million passengers travel through Gatwick over the same period. A trip to Sussex could easily be added on to a holiday in the capital. Heck, why not even make Sussex the main show?



Summing up Sussex

5. Iconic events

Pride. Goodwood. Glyndebourne. Music festivals. Brighton Festival and Fringe. Premier League football. Sussex is the stage for iconic events all-year round. There's so much going on here for people to build a trip around or to incorporate into their itinerary. Catch The Albion at a home game, grab some gig tickets to your favourite band, visit the Festival of Speed, head to the theatre or take in some opera.



Summing up Sussex

6. Wineries

Sussex viticulture – the cultivation of grapes for wine – is having a moment right now. The UK’s vineyards are earning worldwide acclaim. There are vineyards in the county, representing over a quarter of all those in Britain. From wine-tastings to tours, overnight stays to on-site dining, our charming wineries offer unparalleled curated experiences in incredible locations.



Find us



Heathrow
Airport

to LONDON

Gatwick
Airport

East Grinstead

Crawley

Ashdown
Forest

Horsham

Midhurst

Petworth

South Downs
National Park

Haywards Heath

Burgess Hill

High Weald
National
Landscape

Uckfield

Robertsbridge

Rye

River
Rother

River
Arun

River
Adur

River
Ouse

Battle

Bexhill

Hastings

Chichester

Arundel

Littlehampton

Worthing

Hove

Brighton

Lewes

Newhaven

Seven Sisters

Eastbourne

Chichester
Harbour
National
Landscape

Bognor Regis

International Ferry
route at Portsmouth

Newhaven to Dieppe
Ferry Route

International
ferry/rail routes
at Dover and
Folkestone

SUSSEX PLAYBOOK

Tagline

What's our equivalent to 'Kent: The Garden of England'?

That's the question we asked ourselves when creating a tagline to capture the essence of our county. You can use it however you like – on posters or on pull-up banners. In email signatures or on social media. You choose.

Option 1

**Sussex.
Extraordinary
by nature.**

For domestic travellers
Visitors who will have a good idea
where Sussex is located.

Tagline

What's our equivalent to 'Kent: The Garden of England'?

That's the question we asked ourselves when creating a tagline to capture the essence of our county. You can use it however you like – on posters or on pull-up banners. In email signatures or on social media. You choose.

Option 2

Sussex. Wildly different.

For domestic travellers
Visitors who will have a good idea
where Sussex is located.

Tagline

What's our equivalent to 'Kent: The Garden of England'?

That's the question we asked ourselves when creating a tagline to capture the essence of our county. You can use it however you like – on posters or on pull-up banners. In email signatures or on social media. You choose.

Sussex. London's extraordinary neighbour.

For international travellers
Visitors who might not realise
we're so close to London.

Boilerplate

If you're wondering how you can bring together these six key themes in a handful of sentences, we've done the work for you. Feel free to tweak or modify for your audience, or just use this messaging as inspiration.

Looking for a destination with a difference? You've found it.

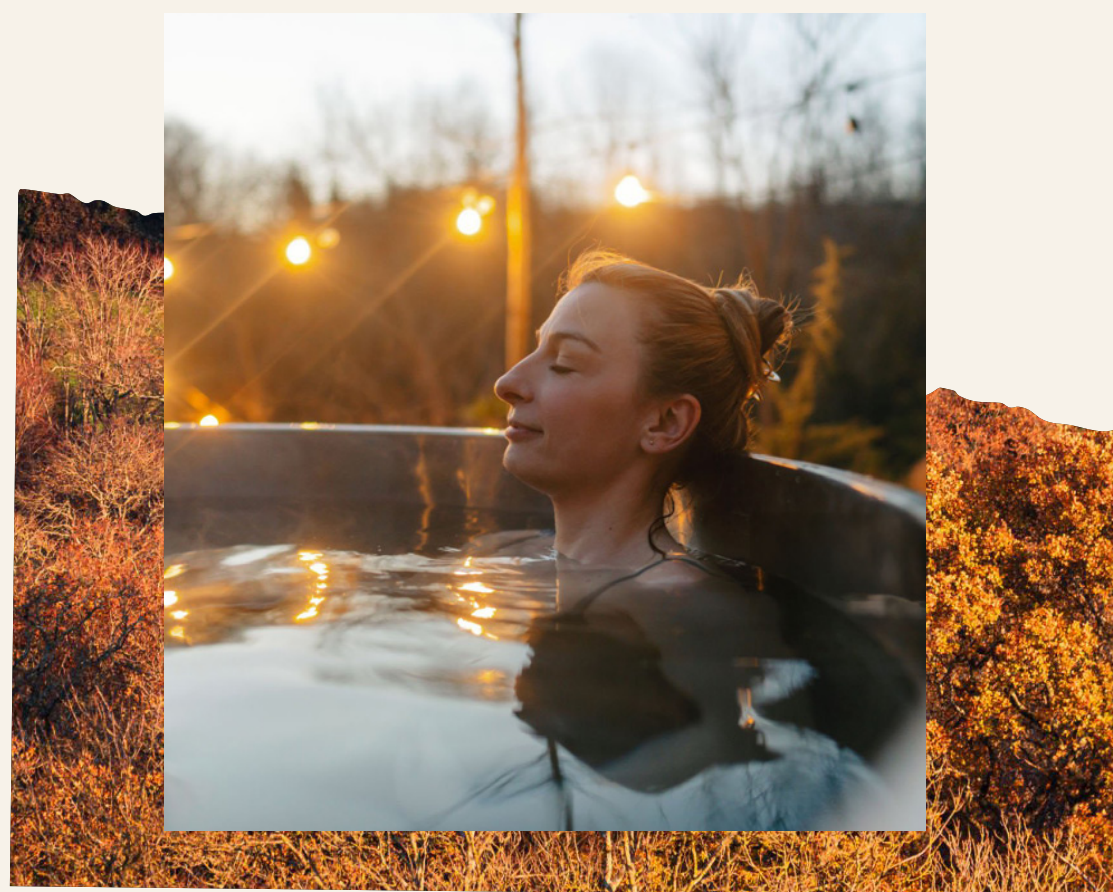
Sussex is as vibrant and varied as the people who call it home. A sanctuary for the free-spirited and free-thinkers; a haven for artists, writers and rebels. Here, everyone's greeted with open arms – whoever you are, wherever you're visiting from.

From our countryside to our coastal towns and cities. From our cultural scene to our culinary delights. A trip to Sussex will nourish your mind, body and soul – whether you have an appetite for adventure or a thirst for a quieter life.

And with iconic events throughout the year and world-beating wineries to explore, you can rest assured that one trip is never enough. So don't be a stranger. We're just over an hour from London, waiting to welcome you.

Examples

Here are some hypothetical examples of how you can use the key messages in your day-to-day communications. As you'll see, it's not about saying all things all at once – it's about emphasising those themes that resonate most with your audience.



1.

The Lodge is set in the beautiful Sussex countryside, where you can feel **free** from the trappings of modern life. Our **unique**, quiet location will guarantee a stay with a difference, leaving you feeling relaxed, rested and **reinvigorated**. And if you fancy a night out? You're a short taxi ride from the city, where you can **catch a show**, go to a gig or just enjoy a glass or two of **locally produced wine**.



2.

The Bistro serves locally-sourced, lovingly made plates, complemented by wines from Sussex's exceptional **vineyards**. Based in buzzing Brighton & Hove, we pride ourselves on our warm, **inclusive atmosphere**. And with a **world-class theatre next door**, we're the perfect spot for enjoying a pre-show meal.



3.

The Grape is a family-run, **independent** vineyard in the heart of the Sussex Downs. **Less than an hour from London**, we offer tours and wine-tasting events throughout the year, giving guests a unique insight into our **innovative methods** and a taste of our fabulous vintages. Whether you're a wine aficionado or not, you'll be made to **feel right at home**.

Chapter 2

Knowing our audience

Who are we talking to?
Where are they visiting from?
And what are they looking for?

Pen Portraits

Our friends at VisitBritain have created several pen portraits for the different types of travellers to the UK. Out of these, there are two that are most relevant to Sussex. These are the 'Explorer' and the 'Experience Seeker'. So, who are they and what makes them different?

The experience seeker

Someone who is free-spirited and spontaneous, always looking for new experiences. They like to do it all – they don't want to miss a thing. Holidays aren't made for lie-ins. If a place has lots of unique, one-off experiences? Perfect. That's right up their street. And they love to check out the cultural scene – but only if there's time.

***Top tip:** There's a lot about Sussex this person will love. Our quirky identity, range of experiences, iconic events and world-leading wineries will appeal to them. They're guaranteed an action-packed itinerary, hopefully filled with experiences that will stay with them long after they've left.*



Create your own pen portraits

You know your audience better than anyone. Use this expertise to ask yourself what you want visitors to experience and feel. Create a persona. Give them a name and backstory. Then keep this person in mind whenever you're writing to this audience.

Pen Portraits



The explorer

Similar to the experience seeker – just a bit more chilled out. They're open to new destinations, new experiences, new opportunities. But they enjoy a much more relaxed pace of life – truly immersing themselves in a destination. A morning of paragliding followed by wine-tasting and a gig? Not their vibe. But a morning walk along the Downs followed by a traditional pub lunch and maybe an exhibition? Yes please.

Top tip: The explorer is here to get to know Sussex. They'll enjoy learning about our history and heritage, and discovering our vibrant cultural scene and free-spirited identity. Nature is a big pull for this person. They want to leave their holiday feeling reinvigorated, having experienced the 'real' Sussex.

International visitors

Whether someone has taken a long-haul flight or a short-haul one is normally a good indicator of the type of visitor they are. Here's what we know...

What about China and the Gulf states?

Increasing the number of visitors from China and the Gulf states provides a huge opportunity long-term. For example, tourists from China are the second highest spenders, yet they rank 13th in terms of how many people visit.

It's worth noting that these travellers are often drawn to the cities – particularly London. Our job is to position Sussex as an unmissable part of their trip – a beautiful, quirky and quintessentially English destination just a short train ride away.

1

Long haul visitors

They're normally from countries like Australia, Canada and – most likely – the USA. In fact, our American visitors are our biggest long-haul audience in terms of how much they spend, and how many people visit.

English-speaking travellers often have cultural ties with the UK or friends and relatives living here. That's good news for us, as it means they know the country well and have an appetite for life outside of London.

2

Short haul visitors

Our short-haul visitors are almost certainly travelling from Europe, particularly France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Nordics.

London is a big draw, but it's not the be all and end all. Many visitors want to experience life outside of the capital, with roughly 10-17% of nights spent in the South East. They're also likely to respond to a year-round offer, visiting Sussex come rain or shine.

As many short-haul flights land in Gatwick, you may want to emphasise Sussex's proximity to the airport.

3

Let's talk business

International business travellers stay longer than domestic ones, with visitors from outside Europe spending most overall. It's likely business travellers are coming for events such as meetings, conferences, trade shows, networking opportunities, training events or team-building exercises – to name a few. Some of these visitors will also extend their trip for leisure.

Tapping into the business market can help you prolong the tourist season throughout the year. You may want to highlight how well Sussex is connected by rail, road, air and sea. And we suggest creating easy-to-navigate webpages, with packages that promote the best of Sussex – from our scenery to our history.

Chapter 3

Tips & Tools

A crash course in copywriting, a quick look at social media, and useful facts and stats about Sussex.

Finding your brand's voice

Your business's tone of voice – or the way you sound when you write – is an important tool in your branding toolkit. It can help you engage and build a rapport with your customer, while creating a personality that's unique to you.

Here are three easy steps for developing a tone of voice for your brand – whether you're a BnB or a food truck, a tour guide or wine bar.



Think about your customer

The purpose of any marketing communication is to grab and hold someone's attention. That's step one. The next step is to inspire an action – most likely parting with money.

So, you need to really think about your customer. What will appeal to them? What will make them think, 'Yes, *that's my type of business*'?



Write down 3 adjectives

Next, jot down three or four adjectives – or values – that reflect your brand's personality. For example, they might be '*Welcoming, free-spirited, energetic*' or '*Sophisticated, informed, eccentric*'.

Take a look at the six key themes mentioned earlier. Could these inspire any ideas? How are you distinctly different? Is your brand a bit rebellious? Do you have a certain free-spirited quality?



Say a bit about your values

Got three or four values written down? Great. Now you need to write a sentence or two explaining them, which you can then refer back to in the future.

For example, you might write something like: '*We're welcoming. This means we use chatty, informal, inclusive language, as if we're writing to a friend.*'

And once you've done that? Voilà – you have yourself a tone of voice.

5 tried and tested writing tips

Don't just take our word for it

Former Sussex schoolboy George Orwell famously wrote six tips for writing. [Check them out here.](#)

1

Avoid sentences over 25 words

Longer sentences are harder to read. Try to keep them short – especially if writing for a channel like social media. If it helps, there's nothing wrong with starting sentences with words like 'And' or 'But'.

2

Keep paragraphs short

When someone glances at a page or screen, you don't want them to think, 'Ugh, that looks like hard work.' Be liberal with paragraph breaks – they make your text much more reader-friendly.

3

Try to say 'you' instead of 'we'

It's tempting to talk a lot about what 'we' think of Sussex. But try to help your reader picture themselves here. For example, instead of saying, 'We've got stunning coastal walks,' you could say, 'You'll love discovering our stunning coastline.'

4

Use small words instead of big ones

It's best-practice to avoid using long words when a short one will do. And remember, international markets might have English as a second language. Try to avoid colloquialisms or complex sentence structures.

5

Make it easy to take action

Ever been on a webpage where you can't find the 'Book Now' button? Frustrating, isn't it? Always think about the action you want your reader to take – and how you can make that as easy as possible.

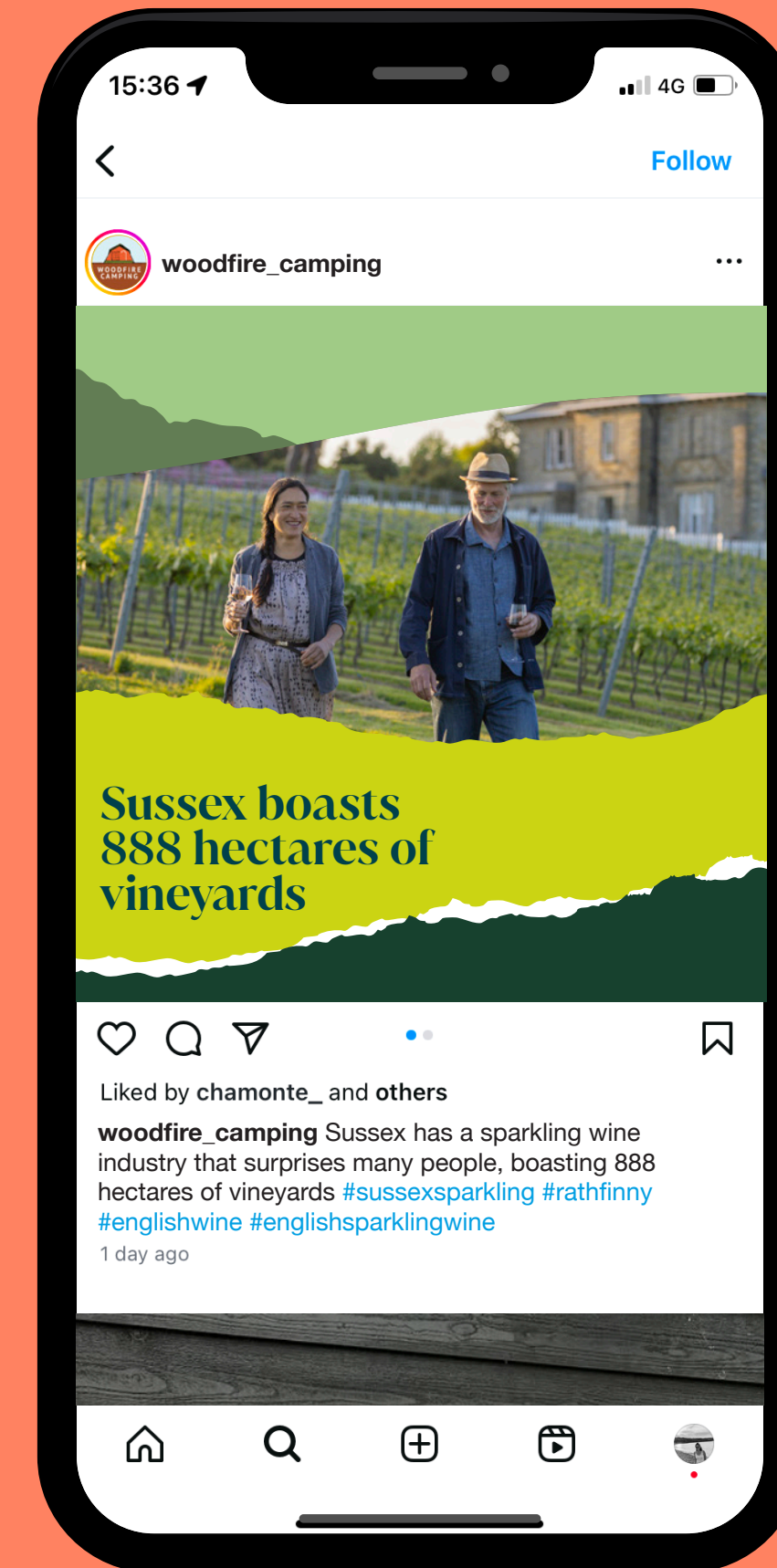
Social media

Focussing on the right channel

As you'll know, different social media platforms have different audiences, and some will be better for you than others.

If you build a large following, social media is a fantastic 'free' marketing channel for extending your reach and communicating messages about Sussex.

Or you may be interested in paid advertising, which can help you target very specific audiences, with very specific messaging. If you're doing this, you should take a moment to familiarise yourself with the ad specifications and best-practice for each channel, which can really improve your marketing performance.



Social media

Focussing on the right channel



Facebook, Instagram and Threads (Meta)

- Meta has over 3bn monthly users. It is by far the biggest social media company in the world, with the widest reach.
- Meta is great for ‘destination inspiration’, as it allows you to post photos and videos that stir people’s wanderlust.
- Instagram users tend to be slightly younger than Facebook users.

[Guide to Meta advertising](#)



TikTok

- TikTok has over 1bn monthly users.
- TikTok users are more likely to be GenZ than Millennials (unlike Instagram)
- TikTok is a video-led platform and sees a lot of content creation, especially from influencers.

[Guide to TikTok advertising](#)



LinkedIn

- 310m people use LinkedIn every month.
- The audience tends to be professionals, as you can imagine. This means they’re more likely to be interested in business travel. But don’t forget they’re also individuals, who like holidays as much as the next person.
- You’ll probably want to create content that relates to people’s working lives in some way. Whether that’s a success story, an insight, a thought-piece or a window into your business and working life.

[Guide to LinkedIn advertising](#)



X

- Around 500m monthly users.
- Its audience tends to be in a ‘discovery mindset’, searching for keywords related to a particular topic.
- Although it’s possible to advertise on X, Meta is a much more popular advertising platform.

[Guide to X advertising](#)

Chapter 4

Facts & Stats

A list of easy to use facts and stats about Sussex, from historic events to yearly local festivals.

17 facts and stats about Sussex

Half a million

Pride celebrations

Pride in Brighton & Hove attracts 500,000 visitors each year. More than 10% of over 16 year olds in Brighton & Hove identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community – the highest proportion in England and Wales.

9³/₄

Lights, camera, action

Harry Potter was filmed in Seven Sisters and Wicked Little Letters, starring Olivia Coleman and Timothy Spall, was filmed in Arundel and Worthing. You can even stay in Sussex's very own Hobbit House.

5th century

All in the name

It was formed in the 5th century when the Saxon warlord Ælle conquered the area, displacing the existing British rulers.

1264

Born to rebel

The radical nature of the destination is nothing new. You've only got to think of the Battle of Lewes in 1264 – which made the 6th Earl of Leicester the 'uncrowned King of England'.

1776

Citizen of the world

There's a strong link to American history. Thomas Paine lived at Bull House on Lewes High Street and later travelled to Philadelphia to drum up support for the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

1974

Mama mia!

Brighton Dome is where ABBA won the Eurovision Song Contest with Waterloo in 1974.



Sussex has a sparkling wine industry that surprises many people, boasting 888 hectares of vineyards, which is over 25% of the UK total.



25%

17 facts and stats about Sussex



500,000

Sussex safari

Boxgrove, near Chichester, reveals that Sussex was home to some of our earliest human ancestors. Fossil remains of *Homo heidelbergensis*, along with lions, bears, rhinos, and more, date back around 500,000 years.

1893

The home of cricket

In addition to Brighton & Hove being home of the beloved 'Seagulls' and a member of the Premier League, Sussex has one of the oldest cricket clubs in the form of the Sussex County Cricket Club, established in 1893.

25

Rich remains

Sussex boasts rich remains from the Bronze and Iron Ages, including 25 hill forts. Notable sites include the Devil's Jumps near Treyford (Bronze Age barrows) and Cissbury Ring, one of Britain's largest hillforts.

127
acres

UK's largest

Brighton Marina is the biggest in Europe, covering an impressive 127 acres and extending 1,100 yards along the bottom of the cliffs at Black Rock.

20th
century

Creative hub

Sussex has a proud cultural heritage. In the first half of the 20th century, it was a major centre for modernism, attracting radical artists and writers to its seaside towns and countryside.

75AD

Home, sweet, Rome

The magnificent Roman Palace at Fishbourne was the largest Roman residence north of the Alps.

17 facts and stats about Sussex



SUSSEX PLAYBOOK

And we're just getting started...

Why not look into local ghost stories, surprising cultural connections, famous film spots or any other facts and stats that might interest visitors?

5/11

Bonfire season

Sussex is known for its strong tradition of bonfire celebrations, involving parades, activities, fireworks, and effigies, celebrating historical and cultural themes.

150,000

Brava! Bravo! Bravi!

Glyndebourne is one of the most famous opera houses in the world, welcoming over 150,000 guests in the summer and autumn months.

1910

Oldest cinema

Brighton & Hove is home to Britain's oldest cinema. The Duke of York's cinema is a well known landmark and offers cosy, theatre-esque surroundings in which to watch the latest releases and re-runs of the all-time classics.

30
languages

Who dun it?

Brighton is home to a well-loved fictional detective. Detective Inspector Roy Grace is the main character in a series of crime novels by best-selling author Peter James. All of the books are set in and around Brighton, the novels are hugely popular being published in over 30 different countries. And the TV show is filmed locally in Sussex too!

Chapter 7

Appendix

Who we are and how we carried out this work.

Who are we

The East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) is a VisitEngland-accredited initiative dedicated to strengthening the visitor economy across Sussex. Bringing together industry leaders, we are committed to sustainably growing the visitor economy, expanding key market segments, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders.

Sussex's visitor economy already generates a £5bn impact and supports 74,000 jobs—comparable to Iceland's tourism sector. Yet, only 2% of visitors come from overseas, and just 11% choose to stay overnight. Our ambition, in line with the Sussex Strategy for Growth, is to increase this impact by an additional £2.5bn by 2034, by increasing the share of domestic and overseas staying visitors. By growing both domestic and international visitor numbers and encouraging longer stays, we can unlock the region's full potential.

Our vision is clear and informed. It has been built on robust, evidence-based research and extensive stakeholder engagement. We look forward to working with the whole tourism sector to bring our wonderful home to the world



*These documents, and the Sussex Visitor Economy Position Statement, can be downloaded at Sussex & Brighton Tourism Research – [VisitBrighton.com](https://www.visitbrighton.com)

How we got here

1

Asking the right questions

To develop this toolkit, we first asked the Sussex tourism sector some key questions. What's special about Sussex? What makes it unique? What makes people not only want to visit but also stay longer?

2

Conducting research groups

Then we went deeper, analysing audiences and conducting stakeholder research groups. We also commissioned a comprehensive series of studies and reports and cross-checked them with our current strategies.

3

Analysing international audiences

We analysed international audiences and their motivators, using key reports from Blue Sail and VisitEngland. We also used learnings from a variety of studies into attitudes and demographics from visitor destinations all over the world.

4

Developing a framework

Informed by these insights, we used a tried and tested model for developing a differentiated positioning called the Credible-Motivating-Differentiated framework. And all this helped us identify the six key themes that define what makes Sussex special.

Thank you

To reach the LVEP team and discuss the resources and our other projects you can look at our website [East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership](https://www.eastsussexbrightonhovewestsussexlvep.com) or contact info@eastsussexbrightonhovewestsussexlvep.com