



Hungerford

Project Case Study



# Supported By



From November 2006 the England Rural Development Programme has been implemented by SEEDA. Hidden Britain is a programme managed under the existing scheme and supported by Defra, Tourism South East, and SERCC. The project works to ensure social and economic growth in rural communities across the South East through small tourism initiatives. [www.seeda.co.uk](http://www.seeda.co.uk)



SERCC is the regional umbrella organisation of the eight Rural Community Councils across the South East. RCCs are independent, county-based, rural community development charities, providing support and advice to rural community organisations and individuals. They are the major rural VCS stakeholder in a range of local, regional and national funding and support initiatives in the delivery of public services. They also provide infrastructure support to rural voluntary and community groups in both generic and specialist arenas. [www.sercc.org.uk](http://www.sercc.org.uk)

## TOURISM SOUTH EAST

Tourism South East is the regional body dedicated to fostering tourism growth and innovation in the region; a partnership of industry with regional and local government.

[www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com](http://www.industry.visitsoutheastengland.com)



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Project Report	4	This report is intended to describe the process used and results delivered by an individual Hidden Britain project. It covers all the major elements of the project so it can be used as a case-study for other communities. In order to make this as useful as possible it is presented in an objective light with attention paid to the failings as well as the successes.
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### Overview of project

This project aimed to provide information and enticement for the visitor to make best use of Hungerford's specialised and distinctive retail, food and drink, and accommodation outlets, and also to promote Hungerford as a base for exploring the surrounding area, by providing information and thereby enticement to visitors to stay longer and make a greater contribution to the local economy.



Other diverse and, in some cases, unique, outlets reside in the High Street, but there is a notable lack of household names, which gives Hungerford its distinctive character.

Despite this Hungerford is only now emerging as a tourist destination with its charming character and setting. It is also a convenient base for visiting other local attractions. However much could be done to increase footfall in the high street businesses, and to keep visitors in the area, rather than losing them to Marlborough or Newbury. The high street, while attractive with a variety of independent local businesses, is struggling, and this affects the environment of the town centre.

Hungerford has the strengths already, it requires the information and interpretation to go along with it, and this is where this project comes in.

### Need for the project

Hungerford is one of the two principle towns of the North Wessex Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is a rural market town with a population of around 5500, and is well served by transport links.

A significant contribution to the local economy is retail, centered largely on the High Street, with many shoppers needs catered for and a large proportion





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This project had two key aims:

1. Provide information and enticement for the visitor to make best use of Hungerford's specialised and distinctive retail, food and drink, and accommodation outlets.
2. Secondly to promote Hungerford as a base for exploring the surrounding area, by providing information and thereby enticement to visitors to stay longer and make a greater contribution to the local economy.



## Planning of the project

Hungerford has embarked on the 2010+ plan which will provide the visions and actions for the future. This process has grown from the Market Towns Health-check and has included a great deal of consultation with the varied groups within the community. Actions under several headings have been defined which when completed will ensure Hungerford a future as a sustainable, vibrant

market town.

In the autumn of 2005, the HB Development Officer attended a meeting of the 2010+ Partnership to explain how Hidden Britain could assist in achieving the tourism objectives of the 2010+ plan. A decision was taken early on to become part of Hidden Britain and the meeting then proceeded to brainstorming of ideas. This was followed up by a smaller group meeting of those keen to take the project forward. From this meeting a project group got together and worked to plan the project.

## Who was involved?

A small working group was established and comprised members with a wide variety of skills and knowledge:

- ◆ Nick Furr - project leader and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce.
- ◆ Chris Ruhl – Business owner
- ◆ Anne Brown – Local Trader





- ◆ Roger Adams – Local resident & former TIC manager at Marlborough

The group worked with James to prepare a funding bid to the Rural Enterprise Scheme through Defra for funds to allow the project to be implemented.



### Status of funding

£19,380 grant obtained from England Rural Development Programme, Rural Enterprise Scheme in June 2006. This was matched by an estimated £3,500 of in-kind time and £1,200 of services given free of charge.

### What was included?

The project created a hand drawn map of the town centre, indicating the location of local businesses, food and drink providers, accommodations and attractions. These maps were placed:  
Under the railway bridge at the centre of the high street.

On the railway platform to entice visitors arriving by train.

In the 2 town car parks to entice visitors arriving by car.

On the website to inform potential visitors about the wealth and location of facilities in the town.

The project also created a Hungerford “in and around” leaflet that illustrated the facilities and services available both within the town, but also whilst using the town as a base. The leaflet was printed at A2, double sided, folding down to A5, with a print run of 15,000. This leaflet is available from local accommodation providers, shops, pubs, the library, canal boats, TIC’s in the area and many other venues.

An event was also planned to launch the project to the general public.

There was accompanying publicity to promote the project to both local residents and visitors.





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## Project implementation

In order to proceed with the project meetings were held to discuss and determine the format and location for the maps and leaflets. All of the content was sourced locally through volunteers and the project group who freely gave of their time to the project. They provided information, contributed illustrative material for the leaflets, tested walks, wrote copy, and took editorial decisions.

The map boards were installed at key points around the town; the main car-parks, the train station, under the bridge in the centre of the high street, and on Charnham Street to catch the through traffic.



The maps were drawn by Susanne Asman, a local artist and the leaflets themselves were professionally designed and printed by David Zeke of Zeke Design, a Hungerford based company. The Map boards were produced and installed by



Digital factory.

The leaflets are now being distributed widely in order to encourage more visitors to find out more about Hungerford and its surrounding area.

Publicity was generated with an insert in Berkshire Life, as well as co-coordinated PR with North Wessex Downs AONB.

No official launch event was actually held due to time constraints on the part of the participants.

## Who benefits?

The outcomes of this project will provide benefit across the designated area, for both communities and rural businesses by providing a source of economic regeneration, and capacity building allowing growth and sustainability for the future.

The main benefit to businesses will be to increase revenue; however local



businesses will also have a greater advantage in terms of promotion to potential visitors.

The maps are highly visible for anyone within Hungerford, as are the leaflets which are freely available for many local outlets. This is complemented by the Hungerford website and the publicity surrounding the project which will reach potential visitors outside the local area.

In addition the walks on the leaflet will take visitors out to the businesses that maybe would not normally be on the tourist trail. Overall this should help maintain and generate sustainable, long-term businesses.



“The last three months have been the busiest ever, with a pronounced increase in both UK and Overseas visitors. Being a relatively small operation we aim to engage all our visitors in conversation and have been asking them how they came to be in Hungerford. The town map and website are the two main sources; keep up the good work...”



(Robert Johnson – The Gentleman’s Shop Hungerford)

Although benefits have in the main been to local tourism and retail businesses, however there have also been community benefits such as; an increased sense of cohesion within Hungerford, and a renewed sense of local pride and confidence.

### Hidden Britain input

The Hidden Britain Development Officer (James Turner (JT)) worked with the group to bring the project forward from the initial brainstorm into a workable action plan. JT then worked with the group to prepare the funding bid and developed contacts with North Wessex Downs AONB and West Berkshire DC. JT also worked with the group to develop the content and layout for leaflets and maps, took images, and helped plan distribution and marketing.



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### Achievements

- ◆ The high quality of work and input by a small group of volunteers.
- ◆ Delivering the project well within timescale
- ◆ The support and input from the AONB unit.



### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Business led projects deliver quickly
- ◆ Business led projects do not require so much planning on delivery as the participants are used to this type of scenarios.

### Future Plans

At present uncertain, there seems to be enthusiasm for a continuation but at present nothing is planned.



- ◆ BUT interest was lost once the initial “hard” outputs are done.
- ◆ Much more restricted in terms of time to contribute.