

WESTMORLAND DALES

DISTINCTLY WESTMORLAND DALES
SENSE OF PLACE TOOLKIT

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Made possible with
Heritage
Fund

This toolkit was funded by the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme, grant-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Castle Folds Settlement on Great Asby Scar. Paul Harris © YDNPA



COVER IMAGE: **Looking South to the Howgills.** Andy Kay © YDNPA

This Toolkit can help you make the most of being a part of the Westmorland Dales. It contains ideas for how to:

- Tailor your marketing to reflect the area, its special qualities and 'sense of place'
- Improve your customer relations and visitor welcome
- Enhance your own understanding and enjoyment of the landscape

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Beacon Hill Monument, Orton. Paul Harris © YDNPA

Welcome to the Sense of Place Toolkit: a collection of resources for enabling your business or organisation to get the most out of being in the Westmorland Dales...

INTRODUCTION

The Westmorland Dales forms the north-west corner of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and is a beautiful and distinctive, but relatively little-known, part of east Cumbria with a rich and varied geological heritage.

In an area which lies to the north of the Howgill Fells in Cumbria, extending over 200 sq km from Maulds Meaburn in the north to Tebay in the south-west and Ravenstonedale in the south-east, the Westmorland Dales is an exposed, largely treeless, open landscape offering expansive panoramas of surrounding upland areas. Tranquil and remote with few intrusive elements, it is a hidden corner of Cumbria providing wonderful opportunities for exploration and dramatic night skies.

You are located in a special landscape and benefit from being surrounded by some of the best-loved and most beautiful countryside. It is the distinctive landscape of the Westmorland Dales that helps to attract residents, visitors and businesses to the area. This Toolkit is an aid to your own marketing activity and is designed to help you promote Westmorland Dales to your customers — and in doing so, put your business 'on the map' as part of this special place.

Westmorland Dales has a distinct identity or 'sense of place'. If visitors connect with this sense of place they are more likely to develop an affinity for the area, which in turn means they are likely to spend more time there, spend more money, tell their friends about it and visit again in future. In this way, promoting a strong sense of place can benefit the local economy.

What is ‘sense of place’?

A ‘sense of place’ is the term used to describe the emotions and experiences we associate with places. It’s how places make us feel.

A sense of place is what gives an area its identity and makes it different from elsewhere. It is made up of the different landscapes, wildlife, history, people, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, memories and many other things that contribute to our experience of a place. It changes when we travel from home to work, or from the city to the countryside, or when visiting familiar or new places. One way of understanding it is to think about how you might describe the area where you live — which words would you use, what would you focus on, how does it make you feel when you picture it in your mind? That’s a sense of place.

The Howgills. Paul Harris © YDNPA



How is this relevant to me?

A sense of place can influence the choices we make over where to live, work and spend our holidays. It can influence the value we place on products and services offered by businesses. It contributes to our culture and the identities of local communities. It can even impact on people’s health and quality of life.

Everyone has their own understanding of sense of place, whether they use the term or not. If you are an individual with an interest in the local area, or you belong to a community group, business or organisation, then the more you develop an understanding of your area the more you will appreciate its qualities. This can benefit you and your community in a number of ways. For example it can:

- Help bring communities together and connect people with the landscape
- Add value to local products and services — and help businesses develop new products
- Provide inspiration for education and the creative arts
- Improve the ‘welcome’ and local knowledge offered by staff
- Strengthen the identity or ‘brand’ of an area by encouraging different groups to work together in promoting its special qualities, creating value for the area and tackling challenges across the landscape.

START HERE:
How to use this Toolkit

The Sense of Place Toolkit is designed to help you benefit from what's special and distinctive about the Westmorland Dales.

We use the word 'toolkit' because it is focused on practical outcomes. In the same way that a mechanic's toolkit contains different tools for different jobs, the Sense of Place Toolkit can be adapted to your own specific needs and interests. You don't need any special skills or expertise to use this Toolkit. All you need is a passion for your local area and a willingness to be a little creative!

The Toolkit isn't intended to be read from cover to cover like a book. Instead, think of it as being like a 'menu' that you can choose from whenever you need some fresh ideas and inspiration.

You might like to use the Toolkit when:

- Creating publicity materials such as a leaflet, web page, advertisement, or social media post
- Informing your customers or visitors about your local area
- Developing a plan, proposal or strategy
- Providing training to your staff or colleagues
- Working with your local community.

Stenkrith Park, Kirkby Stephen. Paul Harris © YDNPA



Low Greenside Farm Campsite, Ravenstonedale. Paul Harris © YDNPA



STEP 1:
DECIDING WHAT'S RELEVANT FOR YOU

The Sense of Place Toolkit is organised into three sections, each one focusing on a different special quality of the Westmorland Dales:

- Exploring outdoors (including Dark Skies)
- Local food and produce
- Heritage and stories

Start by reading the introduction to each section and decide which are most relevant to you and your interests. Then move on to Step 2.

STEP 2:
PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Each section of the Toolkit contains three types of information:

1. An introduction, providing a short description of the section and what Westmorland Dales has to offer. You are welcome to use these summaries in your own publicity materials.
2. Lists of places, activities and features that visitors might be interested in. You can also use the lists to quickly boost your local knowledge and learn more about your area.
3. Action points and ideas for simple things you can do to incorporate what's special about the Westmorland Dales in your own communications and marketing — and in doing so, add value to your business by making customers aware that you belong to a special landscape.

You may have already decided which sections of the Toolkit are relevant to you. Now read over your chosen sections in detail and use some of the action points to put together a simple plan of what you'd like to do.

STEP 3:
ACTION!

Using the Toolkit isn't necessarily about doing new things from scratch. It's often more important to look at what you are already doing and make simple improvements, perhaps just by doing things a bit differently: small steps, rather than giant leaps.

Here are three great ways to get started...

1. **Include some information about Westmorland Dales and its special qualities in your own publicity materials**, using the resources available in the Toolkit. This can be done very easily the next time you update your website, social media or printed literature. By doing so, you'll add a 'sense of place' to your publicity.

   People prefer to deal with organisations they can identify with and relate to — and promoting your local sense of place helps people to do this. If you are a business, it can also give you an advantage over competitors and encourage customers to place greater value on your products and services.

Gamelands Stone Circle, Orton. Paul Harris © YDNPA



Kingshead, Ravenstonedale. Paul Harris © YDNPA



2. **Get out and explore your local area for yourself.** We often take for granted the special qualities of the place in which we live and work. Try looking afresh at your area and imagine you are visiting for the first time. What time is the shop open; what special produce is on the menu in the local pub; where's best to go for a walk; are there any local stories that people like to tell; what breed are those cows and sheep in the field? Collect your own information about your area and use it when talking to customers or visitors. Share your knowledge and enthusiasm, make a connection and celebrate what's special about your place.

3. **Make use of resources from the Distinctly Westmorland Dales project.** There's a wealth of information and resources available, covering everything from recommended walks and routes, to landscape and wildlife, accessibility guidance and more. And it's all free! Browse the list below and make a note of what you and your customers might be interested in:

- Walks and rides in the Westmorland Dales. Including Orton Scar, Smardale Gill and the Lyvennet Valley from Crosby Ravensworth. Available from the Yorkshire Dales National Park website. **Visit the link here**

- Short, accessible village-based walks covering the history of routeways and transportation through the area. Available as a printed walks pack from YDNPA online shop and to purchase from local TICs. **Visit the link here**

- Downloadable Geotrails. Geology-themed walks through the landscape. **Visit the link here**
- Downloadable map of the Westmorland Dales. Illustrated map of the area with key locations, available to download. **Visit the link here**
- Dales rocks. A wonderful overview of the geological foundations of the area and interesting rocky features, including limestone pavements and glacial erractics. **Visit the link here**
- Out of Oblivion. An all encompassing overview of the cultural heritage of the Westmorland Dales within the context of the historic environment of the national park, including downloadable links and recommended sites to visit. **Visit the link here**
- Great Asby Scar National Nature Reserve. Including what to see across the seasons and downloadable reserve leaflet. **Visit the link here**
- Smardale National Nature Reserve. Including wildlife highlights and virtual tour. **Visit the link here**
- Little Asby Common. Overview of this important limestone landscape, including Sunbiggin Tarn. **Visit the link here**
- Little Asby Common route leaflet. **Visit the link here**

Pendragon Castle. Paul Harris © YDNPA



A quiet road running through the stunning Westmorland Dales. Paul Harris © YDNPA



- Wildflower ID guide. Cross season beautifully illustrated wildflower ID guide, an ideal accompaniment to any walk across the Westmorland Dales from early spring to late summer. **Visit the link here**
- A Film to the Wildflowers of the Westmorland Dales. **Visit the link here**
- 'It's good to be outdoors' — great overview film of the Westmorland Dales, sharing recommendations on places to walk and things to do. **Visit the link here**
- Engaging talks about the Westmorland Dales. From upland birds and rivers, to railways, glaciation and archaeological discoveries. **Visit the link here**
- Poems. Some inspiring poetry about the Westmorland Dales. **Visit the link here**
- Introduction to the Westmorland Dales. A wonderful film overview to whet your appetite, featuring Sir Martin Holdgate. **Visit the link here**
- Sound mosaic of the Westmorland Dales. Sounds like this... in the Westmorland Dales — listen to the track online. **Visit the link here**

There are lots of other simple steps you can take. For example:

If you are a business...

- Source or develop materials to help your customers explore the area. Perhaps a map of your favourite local walks and places to visit; or an I-Spy sheet of upland birds and other games for families with children.
- Tell the story of your own family or business — and use this story to personalise your products and celebrate your own connection with the Westmorland Dales.
- Consider the benefits of using local suppliers and produce next time you review your supply chain — and make a feature of these local links in your marketing.

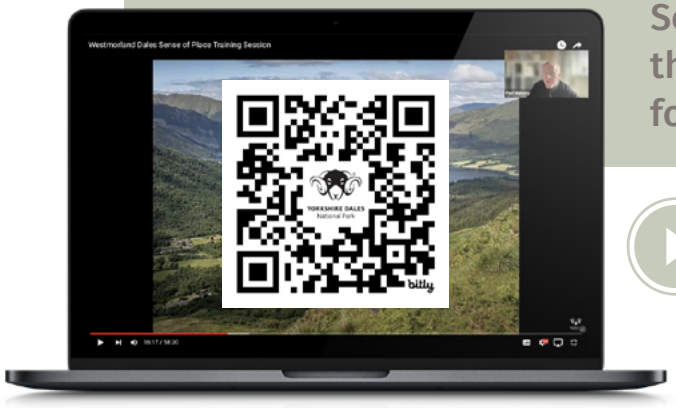
If you are a community group...

- Use information from the Sense of Place Toolkit as a way of describing what's special about your area to other people — it can help them understand the landscape better and what it has to offer.
- Set up a project exploring the sense of place of your local area. This can be a great way of bringing a community together and enabling everyone to share and celebrate what's special about their place.
- Keep a record of information that might be useful for updating the Sense of Place Toolkit in future. This is your place and we want to know why it's special to you! Photographs and quotes from local people are especially useful.

If you are an organisation...

- Consider the Westmorland Dales when developing or updating your organisation's plans and strategies — how can you help to support and enhance the area and its special qualities?
- Use the Toolkit to improve your team's own understanding of the Westmorland Dales and what is has to offer visitors. Encourage colleagues to use the Toolkit when providing information to visitors and communities.
- Help put Westmorland Dales 'on the map' by promoting the area and its special qualities at every opportunity! Not everyone is familiar with the area and its boundary is sometimes a little fuzzy... so try to include a brief description and a copy of the area map when possible. You can download a copy of the map.
  Visit the link here

A training video to accompany this document is available to view on YouTube



Scan the QR code to view the video on YouTube or follow the link below...

Click here to watch the video

Cyclists on The Dales Highway. Paul Harris © YDNPA



EXPLORING OUTDOORS

The North of England is known for its expansive moorlands, dales and valleys. But relatively little is known about the outdoor experiences only available in the distinctive area of the Westmorland Dales.

This beautiful pastoral landscape has a unique mix of habitats and is home to 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and two National Nature Reserves. Nearly one third of the Westmorland Dales is protected at national or international level because of the wildlife and geology that can be found here. Species such as Scotch argus butterfly, red squirrel, grouse, curlew, lapwing and skylarks call the Westmorland Dales home; as well as rare plants such as limestone bedstraw, birds eye primrose and lady's mantle. Rich wildflower meadows can be found at Bowber Head and Piper Hole near Ravenstonedale, whilst species-rich roadside verges and abundant limestone grassland create special habitats for distinctive plants and insects.

Check out this Wildflower ID Guide, created by the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme and Cumbria Wildlife Trust, which contains a taste of the flora of verges, hay meadows and limestone grassland in the Westmorland Dales across the seasons, and makes a great companion for local walks.

Visit the link here

Whilst the tranquillity of the landscape makes it feel remote, the Westmorland Dales is in fact easily accessible from major routes such as the A685, M6 and A66. Despite this, the area has been largely overlooked for the past 70 years, tucked away as a ‘hidden gem’ between the Lake District and the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It’s a place where visitors can adventure freely, with access to unenclosed common lands and views stretching in all directions — from the North Pennines to the Dales, to the ‘sleeping elephants’ of the Howgill Fells. Why not start a walk or cycle ride from one of the Westmorland’s Dales’ characterful farming villages?

Venture up to the vantage point of the Great Asby Scar National Nature Reserve above Orton, Sunbiggin and Great Asby, and you’ll discover a plateau offering wide-open skies and breath-taking views, complemented by some of the best remaining intact limestone pavements in Britain.

With each season this landscape changes, revealing new and abundant treasures. Across the seasons you can walk the many paths criss-crossing the area, each offering unique rewards and adventure. Enjoy flowers in bloom; the beauty of purple heather moorland; find fossils in limestone dry stone walls and so much more. There’s a wealth of natural heritage to uncover, such as the interesting geology of Stenkrith Gorge in Kirkby Stephen, a gorge known for its peculiar circular holes carved out by pebbles carried by the River Eden over centuries. Stories have long been told of how Stenkrith catered for the Devil’s hot taste and served as his mustard mill!

Cultural heritage is also in abundance here. Enjoy an afternoon stroll with views of and from the viaducts in Smardale National Nature Reserve, which navigate across the dramatic valley of Scandal Beck. Smardale Gill viaduct once carried the railway 90 feet (27m) above the valley and is constructed of locally quarried sandstone.

Howgills. James Allinson © YDNPA



If you are looking for a rainy-day activity, take a trip on the Settle to Carlisle Railway through the Westmorland Dales. This train ride takes a dramatic route through Mallerstang, above Smardale and Crosby Garrett on their lofty viaducts, to the historic town of Appleby and beyond. After your train ride, why not pop in to the Stainmore Steam Heritage Railway Centre in Kirkby Stephen, where you can learn about the historical significance of these landmarks. Or head to Tebay for a taste of Railway Heritage at the Railway Church, a unique building with a permanent exhibition that tells the story of Tebay's railway junction.

Stainmore Railway. © YDNPA



Want to try a different way of exploring this stunning landscape?

Then come along to some of the numerous local events, such as farmers' markets, fell races, mountain biking challenges and agricultural shows throughout the season, or witness a fell gather on the Howgills. Choose a sustainable travel option and cycle or walk from Kirkby Stephen station to explore the fantastic trails, bridleways, quiet lanes, and long distance routeways that cross the Westmorland Dales. Wainwright's Coast to Coast route passes through the villages of Shap and Orton and takes in the dramatic scenery of Smardale National Nature Reserve. Other trails include Lady Anne's Way, which bears testimony to her wide-ranging influence on the area, the Pennine cycleway, Walney to Wear cycleway, the Lakes and Dales Loop and the popular Dales Highway, amongst others.

For visitors with disabilities, Smardale National Nature Reserve offers an excellent accessible trail along the former Stainmore railway line, taking in dramatic Victorian-era railway architecture, industrial heritage, geological features and abundant natural heritage, including the rare Scotch Argus butterfly and occasional red squirrel. Quiet lanes and routeways through the area offer quieter, gentler rambles or cycle ride options compared to the surrounding Lakes and Pennines.

PLACES TO VISIT AND THINGS TO DO...

Great Asby Scar National Nature Reserve



Enjoy a day out in the vast open limestone landscapes of the Westmorland Dales. Great Asby Scar is a National Nature Reserve and home to Castle Folds, a 2000 year-old fortified settlement, found high on the limestone escarpment. Lying between the villages of Orton and Great Asby, this location is famous for its dramatic limestone pavement. The fort itself provides spectacular views from its vantage point of 412m (1352 feet), overlooking the Lune Valley, Howgill Fells and beyond.

www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/places/great_asby_scar

Rutter Force Waterfalls



The River Eden catchment is full of spectacular waterfalls, but one of the most beautiful is Rutter Force near Great Asby. A picturesque scene where two streams join just above the waterfall to form Hoff Beck. Situated next to an old mill that used to grind corn, the waterfall is easy to access and links to fabulous walking trails in all directions.

www.edenriverstrust.org.uk/your-eden/amazing-places/rutter-force

Little Asby Common and Sunbiggin Tarn



Home to abundant natural and cultural heritage including archaeology, geology, wildlife — you name it. Enjoy a pitstop or stay for a picnic; take a stroll in any direction and enjoy fabulous views and tranquillity. Visit the Friends of the Lake District website for a virtual tour:

www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/visit-little-asby-common

Maulds Meaburn



Enjoy this enchanting and quiet local village with medieval roots, a picturesque village green and a circular walk along the Lyvennet into Crosby Ravensworth and back.

Smardale Gill Viaduct. Paul Harris © YDNPA



Smardale Gill Viaduct



Built in 1861 by the Cumbrian engineer Sir Thomas Bouch as part of the South Durham & Lancashire Union Railway, Smardale Gill Viaduct once bore trains carrying coal to the iron and steel furnaces of Barrow and West Cumberland. The line was closed in 1962 after steelmaking finished. It is now a permissive footpath in excellent condition, using the viaduct to cross the valley. The best access point is from near to the old station (NY 741082) where there is also car parking space.

Kirkby Stephen River Trail



Creatives at Kirkby Stephen Community Arts and Stomping Ground have produced a family trail along the banks of the Eden at Kirkby Stephen with lots of fun activities to keep young children (and adults!) entertained. Choose from a 1 or 2 hour walk along a public footpath which takes in the dramatic Stenkrith Gorge and its fascinating geological formations.

www.edenriverstrust.org.uk/things-to-do/kirkby-stephen-family-river-trail

Dales Highway



Explore the Dales Highway covering 90 miles from Saltaire in West Yorkshire to Appleby in Cumbria, and back on England's most beautiful train journey along the Settle–Carlisle line. The Highway starts at Victoria Square by the Four Lions pub, outside Victoria Hall on Victoria Road Saltaire. It finishes by the Moot Hall, at the bottom of Boroughgate, Appleby-in-Westmorland. The route divides naturally into six sections. Seasoned walkers might tackle one section each day, but there's plenty of opportunity to dip into any section of this fantastic trail and enjoy what it has to offer.

www.daleshighway.co.uk/route

MORE INFORMATION:

Experience the outside inside through film

An informative film that covers topics such as walkers are welcome, health walks, an overview of landscape and places, local TIC/visitor centres and more.

Visit the link here

Access the Dales

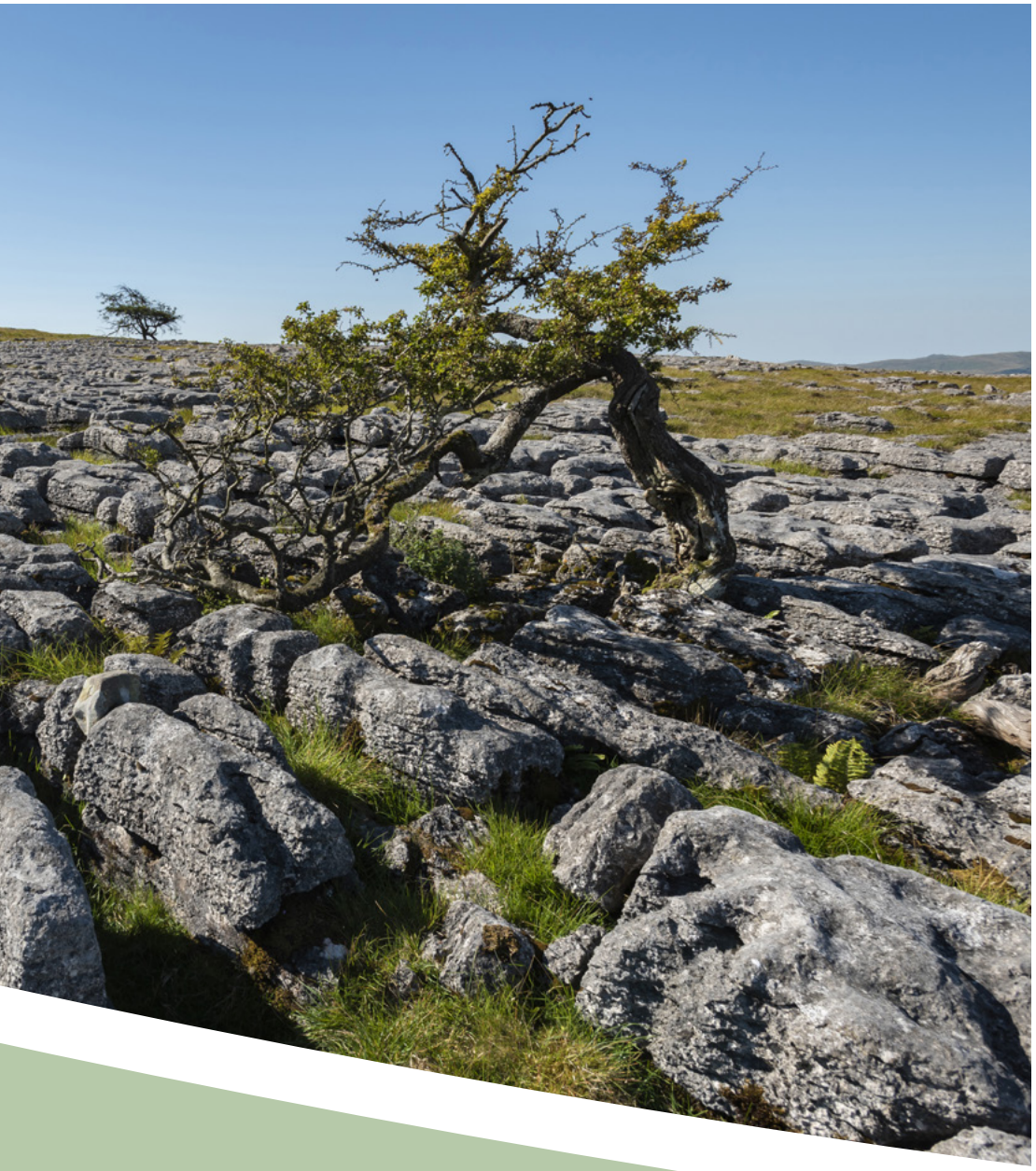
There are a host of accessible walks available through the Access the Dales website taking advantage of the extraordinary railway heritage of the area, as well as the vast unenclosed common uplands such as Crosby Ravensworth Fell, Tebay Common and Crosby Garrett Common.

Visit the link here

ACTION POINTS AND IDEAS...

- Help your visitors to explore the area on foot, bike or even horseback. Use the Yorkshire Dales National Park website to find information about the best trails and most popular events, including a series of 'Discovering' walks and rides based in the Westmorland Dales. **Visit the link here**
- Looking for walks with a geological twist? Then check out Cumbria Geology Trails, including information on Earthcaching in the area. **Visit the link here**
- Point your visitors to the Westmorland Dales' charming villages, where they can find out more through village centre interpretation boards, walks and history trails. The historic churches in each village often host visitor facilities and displays on local history, including Crosby Ravensworth's St Lawrences, The Railway Church in Tebay and St Oswald's in Ravenstonedale. Local pubs, cafés and shops also function as information points and refreshment stops; and many villages offer guided history walks that can be booked in advance. For more information visit the Yorkshire Dales website. **Visit the link here**
- Discover the area yourself — explore your local patch and find a few walks or rides that you would recommend from your front door. Try to include some great views, interesting places or pit stops such as pubs and cafés along your routes. Create a simple route map if you're able to.
- Recommend a variety of grades of walk — gentle ambles for all abilities; challenging hikes for the more active and adventurous; as well as good seasonal experiences (woods in spring and autumn, or views from the fells in winter).

Little Asby Common. Paul Harris © YDNPA



- Provide facilities for your active guests, if possible — drying space for boots and waterproofs; secure storage for bikes; hearty food and take-away lunches.

- Provide maps and guidebooks (on loan) and tell your visitors where to buy them locally. Create an information pack for your visitors promoting local routes and attractions. Collect everything together in a folder and try to keep it up-to-date. Collect your 'Take Time to Delve into the Westmorland Dales' packs from Kirkby Stephen, Penrith, Sedbergh or Appleby TICs which contain booklets covering a range of topics: local legends, geology, churches, farming heritage and more. Also grab a copy of the 'Wildflowers of the Westmorland Dales' leaflet, which visitors can use whilst exploring the area — available online. **Visit the link here**

- Find out about the VisitEngland Welcome Scheme, which provides training and advice for accommodation businesses in welcoming guests with requirements (walkers, cyclists, families and people with pets).

- Refer interested visitors to the Westmorland Dales sections of the Dales Rocks website if they want to know more about the area's superb geology. There's also a great resources section about the area on the Friends of the Lake District website. **Visit the link here**

DARK SKIES

One of the biggest wonders of the Westmorland Dales can only be experienced after sunset. Turn your gaze skyward on a clear night and become absorbed by the total lack of light pollution around you — and you will soon understand why the Westmorland Dales is famous for being a part of the wider Yorkshire Dales Dark Sky Reserve. This area has been designated by DarkSky International (formerly the International Dark-Sky Association). The prime time for dark sky stargazing is typically during autumn to winter months when the air is crisp, and frost blankets the ground.

There is a large population within an hour's drive of the National Park and the appeal of our dark skies to visitors is the contrast it provides to the urban areas where many of our visitors live.

The experience of being under a truly dark sky allows visitors the chance to escape the hustle and bustle of urban life, connect with the natural world, and experience the beauty of the sky in its full glory.

The Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival takes place annually during February to tie in with local school holidays and is run jointly with the North York Moors National Park. Festival events are listed on the Dark Skies Festival Facebook page. **Visit the link here**

The Water Cut Stone Sculpture, Mallerstang. Paul Clark © YDNPA



Pendragon Castle, Mallerstang. Paul Clark © YDNPA



The National Park Authority promotes and co-ordinates the Festival which is made up of events staged by local businesses as part of 'our' programme of local tourism support. Although stargazing is a year-round activity, the Festival provides a focus and another reason for people to visit whilst enabling businesses to attract custom through the traditionally quieter months. The Festival offers visitors the opportunity to experience the amazing landscape of the Yorkshire Dales under a truly dark sky and the chance to experience something unique and a little bit different from the norm with a range of activities from stargazing to starry themed crafts and menus.

DARK SKY FRIENDLY BUSINESSES

In a light polluted country, the quality of our dark skies is becoming increasingly important and is creating a growing market for tourism businesses.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park was designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve in November 2020 and is a fantastic place to enjoy the night sky.

If you own holiday accommodation in the Westmorland Dales and would like to be a Dark Sky Friendly business, contact the Tourism Officer at the Yorkshire Dales National Park or follow the link below.

Visit the link here

MORE INFORMATION:

- Download a ‘family-friendly’ Dark Skies Discovery Pack and find out what’s happening in your area. Gain some ‘top tips’ for stargazing and download a ‘Room Brochure’ — designed especially for accommodation providers to make available to their guests. **Visit the link here**
- Visit the ‘Go Stargazing’ website for more information. **Visit the link here**

ACTION POINTS AND IDEAS...

→ Be sure to tell your customers that the Westmorland Dales is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve. This means that the area is unspoilt by light pollution and is one of the best places in the world to view the beauty of the night sky.

→ Consider investing in some binoculars that your guests can use to enhance their stargazing experience. If you want to get serious, a telescope and a set of star maps will create even more possibilities for studying the night sky.

→ Make sure your guests are comfortable when stargazing. Remind them to pack warm clothing. Consider providing hot food and drink. Think about whether you need external lighting for safety, and if so try to use less powerful, low wattage lights or red-light torches. Guests may want to use stargazing apps and websites to track and log information during their visit, so providing access to WiFi can be helpful.

→ Promote local stargazing activities and events via your promotional channels, or perhaps even host your own as part of the Dark Skies Festival. This can be a great way to bring in additional business. Take advantage of the downloadable resources offered by organisations including YDNPA and Friends of the Lake District, as detailed above. **Visit the link here**

→ Be flexible and consider that guests arriving back late at night may want a late breakfast or checkout the next day.

→ Become involved in the Dark Skies Festival and promote the events on social media to your followers and visitors.

Dark Skies FESTIVAL

YORKSHIRE DALES National Park

North York Moors National Park

Orton Farmers Market. Tom Martin © YDNPA



LOCAL FOOD AND PRODUCE

We are a nation of food lovers, with local produce providing an important way in which we can experience a landscape. Allowing us to connect with local cultures and lifestyles, culinary experiences can be an overlooked opportunity to strengthen the bonds between people and place.

The variety of good quality food and produce available in the Westmorland Dales are numerous and interwoven with the landscape itself. For centuries, small, family-run farms have bred specialised livestock well adapted to the conditions on the high fells and unenclosed commons, as well as lowland breeds that produce the high-quality meat consumed locally.

On the more fertile valley bottoms of the Eden and Lune catchment areas, there has been a long tradition of dairy farming and the production of milk, butter, and cheese. Butter from dairy cattle was once widely exported. Traditional farming practices remain at the heart of the Westmorland Dales culinary experience and make for some spectacular landscapes.

PLACES TO VISIT AND THINGS TO DO...

Kennedy's Chocolate Shop



If you're making your way along the M6, be sure to visit Kennedy's Fine Chocolates. A small, family-run, handmade chocolate making company, Kennedy's Fine Chocolates are based in the village of Orton, midway between Kendal and Penrith, in Cumbria. They have been making luxury chocolates in Orton since 1991 using the best quality ingredients, with over 100 chocolate varieties to choose from. These delicious and unique treats can be found only 2 miles from the M6 Motorway (Junction 38 — Tebay).

www.kennedyschocolates.co.uk

Owen's farm shop



Paul Harris © YDNPA

Quality Home Grown & Local Produce & Café, Kirkby Stephen

Owen's Farm shop prides itself on home grown and carefully selected local produce — much of it home grown and the rest all sourced from carefully selected suppliers including Appleby Creamery, Love Ewe Dairy, Ivy Cottage Baker and delicious cakes from Street Bakes. With a focus on low food miles, the Owen's Shop team even use a handy sticker system to let you know how far your food has travelled.

www.owensfarmshop.uk

Orton Farmers Market

Orton CA10 3RU



Visit Orton Farmers Market and meet the makers of some of the freshest Westmorland produce. Specialising in slow, hand-made and hand-reared produce, local favourites include fell-reared lamb and traditional fudge, with many more varieties of produce on offer from over 30 stallholders. Local provenance is important here, with everything sourced from within 50 miles and often much closer. This adds a strong seasonal element to the available produce and is great for shoppers seeking the freshness and flavour of the changing seasons.

www.ortonfarmers.co.uk

Butchers Arms. Paul Harris © YDNPA



Piper Hole Goat Farm



Paul Harris © YDNPA

Piper Hole Goat Farm is a traditional family run hill farm set on the borders of the Westmorland Dales at Ravenstonedale. The farm has been holistically managed for several generations and its distinctive meadows are protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as well as being recognised as Cumbria's first 'Coronation Meadows' — an appointment by Prince Charles to increase the number of traditional hay meadows in the UK.

However, the real stars of the show are the herd of goats kept at Piper Hole. Here, the dairy herd is milked twice a day through a milking parlour and after pasteurisation the milk is used for making soap, yoghurt, kefir and fudge. Check out their website to arrange a visit or place an order.

www.piperholegoatfarm.co.uk

Berry, Grape and Grain **Deli,** Kirkby Stephen



Looking for a light lunch or some additions to your antipasti spread? Take a visit to Berry, Grape and Grain Deli in Kirby Stephen. An upmarket deli and wine shop, they host a huge range of wines and specialist gins, as well as vodkas and whiskies. The Deli is the perfect spot for a relaxed rest day lunch or an early supper with friends.

www.facebook.com/ berrygrapeandgrain

Appleby Creamery



For some sensational cheese, make your way over to Appleby Creamery, famous for its award-winning Eden Valley Brie (Gold and Silver winner in the International Cheese Awards). This white mould-ripened brie cheese is made with pasteurised Ayrshire cow's milk. Its flavour fills the mouth with intensity and the luxurious creamy texture rounds off a sumptuous taste experience. Not a Brie fan? Appleby Creamery has plenty of other mouth-watering options to offer.

www.applebycreamery.co.uk

Tebay Services Farm Shop and Kitchen



John and Barbara Dunning opened Westmorland Services in 1972 after the M6 motorway was built through their farm. They invited the world to this once-remote stretch of Westmorland to eat a good meal, enjoy a heartfelt welcome and relish the upland landscape.

Their Farm Shop brings together thousands of the finest foods from their locality, region and further afield. They champion a wide community of farmers and makers and nuture a team of dedicated colleagues who share their commitment to handmade and authentic produce.

The Kitchen serves tasty food, made from scratch and the chefs use locally sourced ingredients, including their home-reared beef and lamb.

www.tebayservices.com

Shap Farmers' and Makers' Market



It started as a new venture in 2021 and hosts a good variety of quality food, plant, art, and craft stalls making it an excellent place to shop for produce and gifts.

Live music takes place on the terrace at The Old Courthouse which regularly hosts exhibitions in its Exhibit 'A' Gallery. The Market is a joint initiative between Shap Parish Council, Shap Memorial Hall, and Shap Community CIO (The Old Courthouse). Their aim is to provide local producers and artisans with an opportunity to showcase and sell their goods and to stimulate the local economy by attracting local residents and visitors to the markets.

https://www.theoldcourthouse.org

https://www.visiteden.co.uk/whats-on/march-2024/shap-farmers-and-makers-market

Vista Veg / Homegrownhere



Vista Veg is an ingenious co-operative of growers and veg box schemes aspiring to build a better food system for Cumbria, based in Crosby Ravensworth. They grow a wide variety of fruit and veg year-round in their fields and polytunnels across Cumbria and deliver them through local veg box schemes. Aiming to grow food using methods that are kind to the environment, reduce emissions, promote biodiversity and re-connect local people to the land on which their food is grown, signing up is a no-brainer.

https://homegrownhere.co.uk

Orton Farmers Market. Tom Martin © YDNPA



ACTION POINTS AND IDEAS...

- Visit local food shops, pubs and restaurants for yourself (all in the name of research!). Use your own experiences out to create a list of places that you would recommend to your customers. They'll appreciate your personal suggestions.

- Take a look at the Food Business Toolkit which has been produced by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority in collaboration with the North York Moors National Park, Nidderdale National Landscape and the Howardian Hills, which provides guidance and advice to local businesses about the importance of local produce and local ingredients for your business.

This toolkit includes the following:

- Why use local produce?
- Hints and tips of how to use and champion local produce in your business.
- What's the story? A profile of local produce from our protected landscapes.
- The importance of local produce. **Visit the link here**

- Buy products from local suppliers and mention these on your menu, naming the producer and location, if possible.

- Encourage your customers to buy local products — especially from farm shops and farmers markets, bakers, butchers (especially butchers counter, founded by a local farming family) and other suppliers that are open to the public. Visitors enjoy buying locally and it helps to support the economy too.

- If you sell local produce, make sure you label it as local — either on your price list/menu or when talking to customers. Try to tell the story of the produce: where it comes from, how it's made and why it's distinctly Westmorland Dales.

- Become involved in the Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival, which celebrates local produce. To learn more about how your business can get involved in the Cheese Festival look at our website. **Visit the link here**

  Help to promote Festival events on social media to your followers and visitors. **Visit the link here**

Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival. Stephen Garnett © YDNPA



Pendragon Castle, Mallerstang. Paul Harris © YDNPA



HERITAGE AND STORIES

Stories of geological and human history are etched into the Westmorland Dales. In fact, 'Dales' is a Norse word for valley, dissecting the 'moors' or 'fells', and hinting to a rich history entwined with the landscape.

The rocks that dominate this scene — limestones, shales and sandstones — were laid down as marine sediments in the Carboniferous period beginning about 350 million years ago. Older rocks survive in the Howgill Fells where erosion has produced a distinct and dramatic landscape of smooth, rounded hills and steep-sided valleys. It is the Howgill Fells and Northern Pennines which provide a stunning backdrop to the limestone plateau, rolling hills, valleys and medieval settlements that scatter the landscape.

Wild Boar Fell dominates the skyline of the remote Mallerstang Valley, to the south of Kirkby Stephen. The area is rich in legends and folklore. It is here you will find the atmospheric ruins of Lammerside Castle and nearby Pendragon Castle with its reputed connection to Uther Pendragon — the father of King Arthur.

The vibrant Westmorland market town of Kirkby Stephen, a ‘walkers are welcome’ town, is surrounded by easy-going valley routes and more challenging climbs (such as ‘Nine Standards Rig’, popular with seasoned hikers). For an insight into local life, the Westmorland Dales Festival in July offers guided walks, an artisan produce market and storytelling events. However, if you’re looking to place yourself in the ancient history of this town, call in at Kirkby Stephen Parish Church. Confronting you as you enter is the Loki Stone: an 8th Century carved representation of the Norse God Loki, with sheep’s horns and bound in chains. It is one of only two known carvings of this type in Europe and the only one in Britain. It is not known how the Stone came to be here, but it is a reminder of the Norse influence across the Dales.

In fact, most of the villages across the Westmorland Dales have fascinating churches containing a wealth of information about the history of the area, with intriguing connections to local families and momentous events in history — from the waves of Saxon, Viking and Norse settlers to the age of border warfare with Scotland, the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Civil War and the arrival of the Industrial Revolution.

The archaeology of the Westmorland Dales can also be appreciated in the everyday details and fabric of the farmed landscape, the common lands and the villages themselves, many of which preserve features of their original medieval layout. Archaeological traces, such as ridge and furrow medieval ploughlands around many of the villages, or ancient packhorse routes traversing the hillsides, can be found in the upland areas, almost untouched by time. Such features are best viewed during winter months when the shadows are longest and the vegetation has died back. Dry stone walls, field barns, packhorse bridges and traditional linear farm buildings, with room for livestock at one end and human living quarters at the other, are all inherited from a much earlier age.

The farming heritage of the area can also be appreciated in the continued traditions and hill farming calendar followed by today’s Westmorland farms. Look out for heritage breeds especially adapted to the area, such as the flocks of Rough Fell Sheep and the hardy Fell Pony grazing the high fells. Rural shows take place throughout the summer into tupping season and Kirkby Stephen still retains a busy auction mart just off the High Street.

Truly, this is a landscape where the stories of our past can be found over every hill and dale.

Rough Fell sheep. John Bownass © YDNPA



PLACES TO VISIT AND THINGS TO DO...

Meeting Horses in Ravenstonedale.
Paul Harris © YDNPA



Pendragon Castle



If you're curious about the history of the Westmorland landscape, then Pendragon Castle is a great place to visit. Built in the late 12th Century, it is a monument with a fascinating and turbulent past. After a raiding Scottish army set fire to the castle in 1341, the building was abandoned. Then, although rebuilt in 1360, it was again left in ruins by another fire in 1541. After centuries of misfortune, the castle was finally restored in the mid 17th Century by Lady Anne Clifford.

However, after her death, the castle gradually fell back into disrepair and now remains a romantic ruin, set in glorious scenery.

www.visitcumbria.com/evnp/pendragon-castle

Gamelands Stone Circle



One mile east of Orton at the base of Knott Scar lies the magnificent Gamelands stone circle, some 100 yards in circumference. It's one of the largest stone circles in Cumbria and is thought to have been built during the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age (3000 – 1500 BC).

Upper Eden Visitor Centre



The Upper Eden Visitor Centre is situated in the historic market town of Kirkby Stephen, set amongst an area of stunning natural beauty. The visitor centre offers a wealth of information about local heritage, as well as a range of locally-made crafts and gifts.

www.visituppereden.org.uk

Beacon Hill Monument



Make your way to the summit of this 1283 foot / 391 metre high landmark above Orton and you'll be afforded a magnificent view of the rugged Westmorland countryside and Lune Valley. Commissioned by John Bland in 1887 to commemorate the jubilee of Queen Victoria, the Beacon Hill monument can be seen from miles around and is a popular waypoint for walkers.

Bessy Beck



Bessy Beck provides fly fishing for all abilities and ages in a beautiful Cumbrian setting. Three Trout Lakes in the Westmorland Dales offers fly fishing, both catch and release and catch and kill. The lakes have been established for several years, have a varied fly life and are suitable for any form of fly fishing for groups of up to 30 anglers.

www.bessybecktrout.co.uk

The Old Courthouse, Shap



There's always a lot happening at this community and arts venue, including a monthly farmers market. Cultural events, performances and activities, information and touring exhibitions, arts and crafts, from woollens to oil paintings. Check out the website to see what's on and for opening times.

www.theoldcourthouse.org/events

Waymarker. Paul Harris © YDNPA



ACTION POINTS AND IDEAS...

- Research the history of your local area and share your discoveries or point people in the direction of local history experts.

- Find out the location and opening times of nearby heritage sites and advertise these to your customers in advance (so they can arrange to visit, for example, when a particular place is open to the public). Be sure to mention the smaller places as well as the big attractions — sometimes the less well-known sites are the most interesting!

- Promote local guided walks or events run by heritage organisations or history societies. Many of the Westmorland Dales villages run history walks or events including Crosby Garrett, Great Asby and Ravenstonedale.

- Provide reference material if you have some — for example, books on natural and cultural heritage (ask for recommended books at your local library or from local history groups such as those at Shap, Great Asby, Crosby Ravensworth, Ravenstonedale and the Upper Eden Group at Kirkby Stephen). This works especially well if you're an accommodation provider or café — your guests will appreciate having some reading material that is relevant to their visit.

Pick up your ‘Take Time to Delve into the Westmorland Dales’ set of booklets from one of the local TICs which contains a wealth of browsing material aimed at visitors to the area, including information on heritage; and collect ‘A Way Through’ village walks pack, which gives a wonderful insight into the history of local villages.

- Talk to your guests about the cultural heritage and farming traditions of the area. Tell them about particular breeds of livestock to look out for. Depending on the time of year, mention what farming practices they might notice on their travels — for example, fell gathering, foddering, tupping time, lambing time, walling, haytime, sileaging. Help them to enjoy the countryside responsibly in a way that respects this working landscape. Find out where your visitors can enjoy local produce and whether there are any farming events open to public, such as Lambing Live or the Ravenstonedale Show.

- Speak to friends and neighbours about past events and reminiscences — some of the best stories are shared by word of mouth.

- Tell the story of your own business. People love personal stories and what might seem like trivial details to you may be very interesting to others! Include some of this background in your promotional materials and online to help convey your own story and heritage.

Stone Circle, Orton. Andy Kay © YDNPA



NOTES...

WESTMORLAND DALES

For enquiries about the Sense of Place Toolkit please contact:

The Tourism Officer at the
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Email: **tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk**
Tel: **0300 456 0030**



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Made possible with
Heritage Fund

This toolkit was funded by the Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership Scheme, grant-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Smardale Gill Nature Reserve. Paul Harris © YDNPA