



# Brecon Beacons NATIONAL PARK

One of Britain's breathing spaces

Toolkit

**WALKING**



**INTERPRETATION**

Enter



# Brecon Beacons NATIONAL PARK

One of Britain's breathing spaces

## Toolkit

# Welcome to the Local Walks and interpretation Toolkit.



This toolkit helps local communities to plan local walks and interpretation projects in their area. It covers all the different stages involved in researching and planning walks and interpretation projects as well as offering advice on how to actually do them. It is divided into six sections: Sections A-C cover walks; Sections D-F cover interpretation projects. There are comprehensive guidance notes, printable resources and case studies as well as links to dozens of useful websites. You can use the toolkit as a document on your computer or as an interactive CD. Simply insert the CD into your computer and away you go!

Website addresses were correct at the time of production.  
If you have a problem with an address please use a search engine.

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Walking.....





This Walking Toolkit has been produced to help local communities develop walks in their local area.

## HOW THIS TOOLKIT WORKS

This toolkit is divided into 3 sections:

### Section A: Introduction

- Introduction: why offer walks?

### Section B: Getting Started

- How to set up your walk
- Who do you want to use your walk?
- What have you got to offer?
- How are you going to plan your walk?
- Public rights of way facts

### Section C: Developing and Caring for Your Walk

- How will it be managed?
- Monitoring and evaluation

### Appendices:

1. Pre-Contact Check list
2. Priority Paths Network
3. BBNPA Walking Tourism Strategy - Audience needs

### How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is a collection of resources that can be used to help with a task. It is not necessarily designed to be read from cover to cover – you can dip into it and pick out what you want, at any time.

The toolkit can be navigated just like a website, either by using the navigation buttons at the foot of each page, or by clicking on words highlighted in blue.

Most sections contain a 'Useful Information' box. The web addresses referenced can be immediately reached with a click of your mouse, providing you are on-line whilst using the toolkit.

### DON'T PANIC!

At first glance, some of the work involved might seem detailed and complicated, but not all of it will necessarily apply to you. Just use what you need, skipping to the sections that are relevant and useful. The one thing that is essential to all projects is to TALK to all the relevant people.

And remember that by gathering a good working group together, you can share tasks and lighten the load.

### Acknowledgements

This toolkit has drawn upon material and publications about footpaths produced by a range of organisations including the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Paths for All, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Countryside Council for Wales and the former Countryside Commission. We would like to thank all of these organisations for the ideas and inspiration from their work, as well as the numerous individuals who have influenced our approach to this toolkit in any way.

### IMPORTANT

Please note that guidance given in this toolkit is of a general nature and, if in any doubt, you should seek expert or legal advice.



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# SECTION A: INTRODUCTION



This section contains information on:

- What is meant by local 'walks'?
- What can the National Park Authority do to help?
- Why consider walks to attract tourists? Pros and cons
- Benefits: tourism, economy, health, recreation, transport, environment, community

## What is meant by local 'walks'?

This toolkit helps you to develop self-guided walks in your local area that can help:

- Attract new visitors, bringing new money into the local economy
- Make your town or village more attractive to existing visitors keeping their money local
- Provide a valuable facility for local people for exercise, health and enjoyment.

## What can the National Park Authority do to help?

Although their resources are stretched, the National Park Authority can help or advise on the following:

- Advice on public rights of way
- Route planning
- Route maintenance
- Advice on landowners
- Planning guidance
- Funding
- Sourcing suppliers

Your first point of contact should normally be the National Park Warden for your area. For general information, see the National Park Authority website, [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org). More specific links are provided at the end of relevant topic sections.

## Why consider developing local walks?

You are reading this either out of curiosity, or because you have decided that a walk is the most appropriate means of drawing visitors into your local area or to your business. If the latter, then you will find that others may need convincing about the usefulness of a walk. So you need to have weighed up the pros and cons if your arguments are to succeed.

To anyone who regularly walks in the countryside, it's obvious that paths and walks provide recreational opportunities and promote health, enjoyment and relaxation. Brecon Beacons National Park is ideally equipped to provide this, having an estimated 3848km (2391 miles) of publicly accessible paths and tracks. This public path network is the largest visitor attraction in the Park and is the foundation of the area's tourism income. The Welsh Tourist Board has estimated walking to be worth £550m every year to Wales!

In recognition of its commitment to walking, the National Park Authority has produced a [Walking Tourism Strategy](#) with the following aim:

- To develop and manage opportunities for visitors to enjoy walking in and around the Brecon Beacons National Park in ways that will bring new economic and social benefits to the area, while minimising adverse environmental and community impact.

Your area is already ideally equipped for offering well-managed and comprehensive access to the countryside to tourists and local people.



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But before we get carried away, pause for a moment and contemplate the pros and cons of offering a walk for tourists. They may help inform your future decisions or provide you with ammunition to persuade sceptics.

Remember, local people will use your walk too, so stress the benefits to them as well.



### Information:

BBNPA 'Walking Tourism Strategy': available in the Tourism Business Information section of: [www.visitbreconbeacons.com](http://www.visitbreconbeacons.com)

Ramblers Association: [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority: [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

The Countryside Council for Wales: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

## Pros and Cons of walks

### PROS

- Value for money – lower costs per visit than leisure facilities
- Open up access – both physical and intellectual
- Stimulate community involvement
- Visitors generate income for local economy – good for businesses
- Increase recreational opportunities
- Boost opportunities for healthy living
- Raise awareness of environmental issues
- Provide educational opportunities through interpretation
- Reduce seasonality of tourist visits – thus contributing to long-term sustainability of businesses
- Long-term project so can plan around/alongside it
- Encourage exploration and discovery by locals and visitors
- Develop positive working partnership with the National Park Authority
- Assist with sustainable rural development in Brecon Beacons National Park
- Encourage use of local transport network
- Provide access for all
- Positively promote your area
- Highlight cultural history



### CONS

- Initial start-up period involves commitment of time, resources and enthusiasm of local community
- Require long-term maintenance, furniture and waymarking
- Need to be promoted
- Leaflets if produced need to be distributed and up-dated
- Could place unwanted stress on local infrastructure
- Could increase visitor traffic
- Potential for founding group to lose interest and project to peter out and become neglected
- Potential problems over long term: responsibilities and liabilities



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Seems like there's more to be gained from establishing a walk than there is to be lost or at least it will be well worth all the effort you've put in to plan and establish it! True, the initial planning stage is hard work and potentially complex, but this toolkit is here to help.

If you are already convinced, go to [Getting Started](#). If not, let's take a closer look at the benefits of developing a local walk.

## Benefits

Your walk could have long-term benefits for the following:

- Tourism
- Economy
- Health
- Recreation
- Transport
- Environment
- History
- Community

But remember, none of these stand alone. They are all interconnected; for example a boost to the local economy will have a positive impact on the community.

## Tourism

A well planned and effectively promoted walk will:

- attract visitors all year round, thereby reducing the seasonality of visits which, in turn, will contribute to the long-term sustainability of local businesses
- help to extend visitor stays
- disperse tourists to less-visited places
- encourage repeat visits and recommendations to friends

Local walks appeal to a much wider cross-section of the public than long distance routes. This means that you're not limiting your appeal, but broadening it to attract all abilities, age ranges and income groups. So, when you come to seek funding for your walk, it will be more eligible.



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For more information on developing and implementing a sustainable and quality orientated approach to tourism, follow the link below to the University of Aberystwyth's pages on Integrated Quality Management. If you are interested in pursuing this concept, get in touch with the Tourism Team at the National Park Authority.



### Information:

Integrated Quality Management in rural tourism destinations:  
[www.irs.aber.ac.uk](http://www.irs.aber.ac.uk)

## Economy

Walking is worth £550m every year to Wales. But what is the National Park's share in this? A survey carried out in 2005 suggested that three and a half million tourist days are spent in the National Park, giving a tourism value of £130m. Of this, at least £50million is down to walking. So it makes economic sense to combine walking and tourism to boost your local economy by developing income generation and supporting local services.

Local walks, compared to long-distance routes, are more conveniently located for access to local 'spend opportunities' such as tea rooms, pubs and shops. Your walk users are likely to combine their walk with lunch or afternoon tea, unlike long-distance walkers who will be more self-sufficient. Aim for developing an easy walking experience that is 'well-integrated with selected places to eat and drink.' (Walking Tourism Strategy).

Think about what businesses might benefit from the walk and ensure walkers have the opportunity to make use of their services – so finish near the village shop or pub, or visit a tea shop on the way. If you are a business yourself, start from your own front door.



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## A success story

A network of 20 miles (32 km) of paths was improved and waymarked to provide circular walks around the village of Straiton in Ayrshire. On average, forty people per day used the walks, with direct impact on local businesses. The local pub and shop reported an increase in business from visitors, the local castle reported their busiest year ever, and, since the walks started, a new café and craft shop have opened in the village. (Source: Ramblers Association/Paths for All)

## Health

Statistics show that regular walks can significantly improve health, for instance by reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, which kills almost 8000 people in Wales every year. Countryside Council for Wales research shows that over a third of people in Wales already go into the countryside at least once a week, many walking close to their homes – so if you can provide more opportunities for local walking routes, then so much the better.

Walking is almost perfect exercise, requiring little by way of equipment, expense or special skills, and is suitable for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Here are some healthy walking facts:

- People are more likely to start and continue walking if they have fun, feel safe, enjoy their surroundings and feel a sense of achievement
- Regular walking reduces the risk of health problems such as coronary heart disease, strokes, diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, Alzheimer's disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, anxiety and stress.
- Walking regularly improves confidence, stamina, energy, weight control and life expectancy

The 'Walking the Way to Health' initiative supports local partnerships of health, leisure and community interests in developing schemes that promote walking for health. Local

walking for health schemes provide, amongst other things, places to walk and self-help information e.g. literature and maps to promote independent walking.



### Information:

'Walking the Way to Health':  
[www.whi.org.uk](http://www.whi.org.uk)

'Take 30' A practical guide to walking for health:  
[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

## Recreation

Recreation and access are about helping everybody to experience and enjoy the countryside wherever they are.

Nearly three-quarters of UK holiday trips to Wales involve walking as a main or important part of the holiday; so stepping out with a map or walk leaflet for a stretch of the legs and a breath of fresh air is high on the recreation agenda.

A local walk increases the opportunities to do this, not just for visitors, but for local people as well. In fact, for local people, a walk can provide a year-round source of recreation and it is the cheapest form of recreation to create and maintain. In contrast to some other forms of recreational facilities, local walks can be used by the whole community regardless of income, age or ability – and they are open all day.

## Transport

Your walk could help people get the most from the public transport system – the more people use it, the more likely it is to prosper and serve your community well. So, design your walk to start and finish near to a bus, or even a train, service.

Linear routes could be supported by public transport links. You might decide to develop a series of walks, one of which could be



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linear, in order to interpret its theme. A bus link from either end would be an enticement to visitors.

## Environment

The 'Walking the Way to Health' initiative demonstrated that regular walking can raise people's awareness of their local environment and conservation issues. So, getting people out into the countryside brings them closer to wildlife and can help them understand how valuable the countryside is, as well as how it is managed.

Ensure that your walk takes people to places where they can enjoy wildlife and experience environmental points of interest such as ancient woodland, old trees and views. You may wish to explain these points of interest with appropriate interpretation (see [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#)). Contact the National Park Authority or local Wildlife Trust for assistance. The Wildlife Trusts website will tell you where to find your local Trust: [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

Ultimately, if visitors are encouraged to access the walk via public transport, they will also lessen their own environmental footprint.

## History

Don't forget your local history – old buildings, famous people, archaeology etc. You may wish to take an aspect of history as your main focus or incorporate elements in a walk that mixes natural and local history. See the [Henry Vaughan walk case study](#) for an example.

## Community

It is important that the community gets involved in planning your walk. Community involvement creates a shared sense of achievement and ownership in a job well done.

Walks can help community development by boosting local business, increasing awareness of local life and heritage and developing understanding of local issues. Memories and reminiscences can be tapped to unearth sources of information to be incorporated in any walk interpretation.

The future maintenance and management of your walk will benefit from committed community involvement.



### Here are some of the things a successful walk can achieve:

- attract funding and grants from various organisations
- help the local economy by attracting more visitors and possibly new businesses
- encourage people to care about your area so that they want to help you look after it
- help people to get more enjoyment from their visit to your area
- help you direct visitors to where you want them to go, by giving them prompts and routes
- encourage people to stay longer, so they are more likely to spend money in local pubs and shops
- give your community a good name and put it 'on the map'
- improve your local environment for people and for wildlife
- bring people together locally
- help local people feel proud of their area and pleased to be in the Brecon Beacons National Park



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## SECTION B: GETTING STARTED



This section contains information on:

### How to set up your walk

- Setting up your team

- Partnership working
- Aims

### Who do you want to use your walk?

- Enticing tourists
- Knowing your audience

### What have you got to offer?

- SWOT analysis

### How big a project do you need?

- Big or small?

### How are you going to plan your walk?

- Choosing your route
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- Path condition survey
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### Public rights of way facts

- What is a right of way?
- Your rights on a right of way
- Management of rights of way
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan

## How to set up your walk

### Your team

Your walk project will be far better and will mean less work for you if it involves a number of people. You can't include everyone, but you do need to have the community on your side. Do involve as many people as possible though – you never know what skills they may bring to the project.

When setting up your group, remember the following points:

- Recruit members with varied skills and from different parts of the community.
- Be sure that your group is united in its purpose and aims.
- Consult the community: hold a meeting or devise a method by which people can comment on proposals, e.g. a suggestions board with post-it notes, a suggestions box or a door-to-door survey.
- Find out what skills people have that may be useful for your project.
- Make links. There are plenty of people out there who can offer support such as your Community Council, Local Access Forums, the National Park Authority and communities who have successfully undertaken similar projects.
- Identify partners with whom you can work.
- Plan for the future. Are group members willing to assist with any maintenance work that might need doing once the walk is in place?
- If necessary, constitute your group. A properly constituted group will help attract funding and will also mean that everyone is clear about what is happening. The National Park Authority can offer advice on this or check: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk). Alternatively, contact your local Community Council to see if you can become a sub-group of the Council.



# WALKING



Further information on managing community groups is available from Community Matters. This organisation publishes a range of leaflets on such diverse topics as creating a business plan to disability discrimination legislation. You could also contact your county's Association for Voluntary Organisations – for those in Powys, this is PAVO.



## Information:

Community Matters:  
[www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)

PAVO – Powys Association for Voluntary Organisations: [www.pavo.org.uk](http://www.pavo.org.uk)

## Partnership Working

Working with a partner organisation isn't essential but it has been very successful elsewhere and is likely to prove beneficial. Partners can offer advice and information that your group doesn't possess and, more importantly, a partnership project is more attractive to funding organisations, e.g. the Sustainable Village Enhancement Schemes (see [Funding](#)).

Potential partners include:

- Local Natural History group
- WATCH group
- Local History group
- School
- Adult Learning Groups such as U3A
- Neighbouring communities
- Community Council
- WI
- Young Farmers
- Local businesses
- Youth Groups
- Local Access Forums: statutory advisory bodies on improving public access to land in their areas for all types of open air recreation.

Working with a partner group will also enable you to share good practice and experience. You may even discover someone who has done it before!

## Aims for your walk

Decide what the aims of your walk are. Agree them as a group and make sure you write them down! Here are some tips:



## Aims can include:

- Bringing more money into the local area
- Attracting new and more visitors to your area
- Helping visitors have a more fulfilling visit
- Guiding visitors to the right places and steering them away from sensitive or dangerous areas
- Protecting special features through better understanding and care
- Improving footpaths and seating
- Improving the wildlife interest of your area
- Looking after your local heritage
- Raising the profile of your area
- Developing better partnership working among local organisations
- Helping visitors and local people appreciate and enjoy the local heritage
- Improving the access to your area for people with limited mobility
- Offering formal and informal education opportunities
- Creating a sense of pride among local people
- Encouraging better care for the environment
- Discouraging parking in certain areas



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# WALKING



## Who do you want to use your walk?

So you have decided that the advantages of a local walk far outweigh the disadvantages. You have the local community on board, but who do you want to use your walk?

### Knowing your audience

The more you know about your audience, the easier it will be to produce your walk. It'll also help you get a better product, with well targeted interpretation. Answering the following questions will help inform your decisions about who you want to attract.

- What are their interests?
- How old are they?
- How much time do they have?
- How mobile are they?
- Do they walk as couples or groups?
- How much experience do they have?
- What sort of experience are they looking for?
- How often do they visit?
- Are they walking here for the first time or do they visit regularly?

Answering the questions listed will help you to identify your target audience. Knowing who your audience is will help when applying for funding.

[For audience categories as defined by the National Park Authority see [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#) and Appendix 3.]

### Enticing Tourists

There is no definitive profile for a typical walker. However, in a summary of research undertaken, the following characteristics of holidaymakers to the National Park are noted:

- Walking in general is significant to all ages – appealing to young and old alike



- Holidays associated with walking appeal particularly to those aged 45-65
- Holidays associated with walking appeal particularly to couples
- Important categories for holidays associated with walking in Wales are affluent retired, affluent working empty nesters, and those with low income /no family.

So the field is fairly open, with any visitor to the National Park being a potential customer for your walk. But what do these walkers enjoy about walking? The following reasons are typical:

- Scenery and views
- Exercise
- Challenge
- Fresh air
- Wildlife and heritage
- Exploration
- Get away from it all

Your walk will doubtless offer all of these, at some level, to every potential user. But knowing your audience's needs will help you make some very important decisions about your walk.



#### Tip:

Don't think your area isn't interesting enough. Things that are quite ordinary to you can be very interesting to many visitors.



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## What have you got to offer?

Almost everyone in the local community, and even in your walk project group, will have a different answer to this question; for example a B&B owner will want their business promoted or the local historian will wish to see his/her interests highlighted. Probably the easiest and fairest method of answering this

question is to undertake a SWOT analysis. This will enable you to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats involved in your proposed walk. From your answers, you will be able to decide what is most appropriate for you to offer and to devise a strategy to deal with any threats.

Here's an example of a SWOT analysis for an imaginary, but fairly typical, community walk.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lots of enthusiasm and commitment from community</li> <li>● Trees, birds and wildflowers</li> <li>● Old church</li> <li>● Pub</li> <li>● Already existing public rights of way</li> <li>● Village shop</li> <li>● Old buildings in village</li> <li>● Several B&amp;Bs</li> <li>● Public transport network</li> <li>● Disused quarry</li> <li>● Stunning views from top of hill</li> <li>● A tranquil place away from it all</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shop closes in the afternoons</li> <li>● Wildflowers only out in spring/summer</li> <li>● Birds not obvious and hard to see</li> <li>● Church locked</li> <li>● Lack of parking</li> <li>● Irregular bus service</li> </ul> 
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More visitors mean shop can open longer which will benefit community</li> <li>● More visitors means that church can be unlocked, under supervision</li> <li>● Increase/boost local economy</li> <li>● Tap into public transport network and increase services</li> <li>● Enthusiastic B&amp;B owner wants to broaden business</li> <li>● Links with National Park Authority</li> <li>● Potential to attract funding</li> <li>● Walk themed on old buildings and building material e.g. timber and quarry stone</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quarry is unsafe</li> <li>● Too many visitors might disrupt tranquillity</li> <li>● Reduction in bus services at end of peak season</li> <li>● Unhelpful locals/antipathy</li> </ul> 



# WALKING



Having done the SWOT analysis, pick the most promising strengths, see what opportunities can be realised and be aware of the weaknesses and threats. Make a list of what you can realistically emphasise, and bear this in mind as you develop your ideas about the route and how to explain it to your audience.

## Remember

Threats and weaknesses can be turned into opportunities. For example special opening hours could be negotiated for the church, or seasonal walks could be designed to spread the visitor load.

## How big a project do you need?

### Big or small?

We are all short of time and money so you have to decide how big a project you want to undertake. You need to decide:

- what you, and those you consult, think is necessary;
- whether you can attract enough funding; and,
- how much time and energy you and your group have to put into it.

You don't have to go the whole hog and do huge amounts of practical work if your walk doesn't need it. Some communities have spent tens of thousands of pounds and have produced a wonderful result, but not everyone has the time to run such a major piece of work. Other communities have spent much smaller amounts and have still produced a successful walk.

Many routes will be in perfectly good condition already or may only need minor upgrading. Small amounts of interpretation such as a leaflet or a sign at the start, perhaps together with some waymarking and a mention on a suitable website, may be sufficient for most of your users. You still need to plan well, get



a group together, talk to everyone potentially involved and raise some cash but the process will be less complex and less demanding.

Use this Toolkit in the way that is most appropriate to you, skipping sections that are not relevant and only doing those things that are apply to your situation.



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The most important thing is to ensure you talk to everyone concerned, including landowners, even if you are undertaking no physical works at all. Not only will you avoid upsetting people, you will pick up invaluable information that will make your project even more successful. You never know, there may be funding opportunities you were unaware of, better ideas to take advantage of, or nuggets of knowledge that become the cornerstone of your interpretation.

## Businesses and walks

Why not work with local businesses such as Bed and Breakfasts or holiday cottages to put together your walk? If it starts from a central point then anyone staying nearby can use it. The Association of Bunkhouse Operators in the Brecon Beacons has walks and bike rides for their guests to use; for more information visit [www.bootsbikesbunkhouses.co.uk](http://www.bootsbikesbunkhouses.co.uk)

## How are you going to plan your walk?

In this section you will be guided through the various stages involved in this process. At certain points, reference will be made to who can help you. Please remember that before contacting any experts for professional support, it is vital that you consider the points listed in the Pre-contact Check List, in [Appendix 1](#).

### Choosing your route

Once you have an idea of what you can offer and who you wish to attract, it's time to begin planning your route. There will be local walkers, especially dog owners, who already do circular walks, so you won't be starting from scratch. You can use and adapt these walks, if appropriate to your aims. National Park Authority Wardens might welcome being involved at this stage to forewarn about safety considerations, landowner issues or maintenance.



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The choice of your route will be determined by many factors, not least which rights of way, if any, pass through, or near, your settlement.

To begin with, plan your route using the Ordnance Survey 1:25000 Explorer map for your area. This map series is a good starting point because all recorded public rights of way are shown, as is access to open country and registered common land together with certain permissive access. All of these can be used for access on foot.

Prior to contacting anyone for assistance or advice, you need to have thought about the route of your walk and its impact on landowners. Do you know who owns the land through which your proposed route goes? If not, the National Park Wardens may be able to help you. Remember – get landowners on board early.

### Circular or Linear?

A circular walk is likely to be your favoured solution most of the time. However, a bus route may give the opportunity to bring people back from the far end of a linear walk. This is really useful if you have a linear feature in your area such as the canal, a long mountain ridge or an old tram road. In this case, talk to your County Council Transport Department to check that the bus service is likely to continue into the medium term. Make sure you tell users to check current timetables with the local Tourist Information Centre or on [www.travelinecymru.co.uk](http://www.travelinecymru.co.uk). Lastly, make sure you include contact details for bus companies and taxis in your walk information.

### Definitive Map

You will need to check your proposed route against the Definitive Map. The Definitive Map is the result of the surveying and recording of public paths that was required under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. It is conclusive evidence in law as to the course of a public right of way. You must check this map to ensure that paths you have chosen are on the legally recorded line of the right of way.

A copy of the Definitive Map is available for consultation at the National Park Authority offices, or a National Park Warden would be pleased to walk your route with the relevant copy of the map. The map records the existence of 1983km (1232 miles) of public rights of way in the National Park. All footpaths recorded on the map may be legitimately used by walkers, walkers pushing bicycles and walkers with (well controlled) dogs. Definitive Maps for areas immediately outside the National Park will be kept by the relevant highway authority (County or County Borough Council).

### Permissive Paths

Permissive Paths are paths that are used under an agreement between the Local Authority and the landowner. There is no Right of Way along the path. Permissive Paths can be used in any walk but be aware that if the agreement comes to an end, for whatever reason, your walk will no longer be able to use it. Only include permissive paths if you have talked to the landowner and NPA Warden and have concluded that it is very unlikely that permission to use the path will be withdrawn within the lifetime of your walk.

### Path terrain

Take into account the terrain the paths are passing over and compare this to the users you wish to attract. If it's too challenging, you may be excluding certain groups of people. You should consider number, length and steepness of slopes, roughness of surfaces and how wet it will get.

### Distance

Remember that your walk has to be fit for purpose. Who is it aimed at and what are you interpreting?

If the idea is to boost the local economy by attracting more visitors, there's no point in sending them on a ten mile hike for which they will pack their own refreshments and return after the teashop and/or local shops have closed.



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Best keep your walk short, after all it needs to appeal to a wide range of abilities and you want to give people sufficient time to linger and enjoy the local facilities. The successful Henry Vaughan walk (see [Case Study](#)) is just 4km (2.5 miles) in length, a distance most people are content to walk in the context of a visit or stay in an area. Better still describe the distance in hours. People can then plan their day around it.

Your walk will probably fit one of the following two categories:

- Gentle stroll: under three miles (5 km) with no obstacles, such as difficult stiles. The route is well-surfaced and can be walked in any type of footwear.
- Easy walk: likely to be under seven miles (11 km). Paths and tracks are easily walked in any weather, there are no significant navigational difficulties, and stiles and gates are in good repair. In favourable weather the route could probably be walked in trainers or other lightweight shoes.

## Roads and lanes

Try not to include public roads or lanes as part of your route unless absolutely necessary. They present safety issues and may not enhance the experience you are trying to offer. However, don't disregard un-surfaced tracks and permissive paths. They can provide important strategic links within your walk where appropriate. Un-surfaced, unclassified roads are an identified part of the highways network and are usually maintained at the public expense.

## Upland Areas and the Right to Roam

Many upland areas are covered by the so-called Right to Roam. However there are quite a few restrictions to the 'right', so don't just assume there will be easy access. Upland areas are often remote from local communities and so generally they are not the best places to direct inexperienced visitors. Get advice before proceeding with an upland walk and remember that safety should always be your priority.

## Too many routes?

Determine the number of themed promoted routes (e.g. long distance paths, national trails and local recreational paths already in existence) where your proposed walk is planned. If an area is already saturated, then you are liable to meet negative responses

from some local residents, farmers and landowners. Practically, this will also cause problems, both getting permission to install things and finding locations on the ground. The Henry Vaughan walk was created in an area that had just about reached saturation point. One part of the route lies on top of the Taff Trail, Brynore Tramway, Usk Valley Walk and a promoted cycle way!

## Consultation

It may sound obvious but you should consult with all interested and involved parties at the very outset of the project, especially landowners whose land your walk will cross. The National Park Authority Wardens may be able to advise on contacting landowners.

Getting landowners on side at the beginning may also have hidden benefits by attracting additional funding from agri-environment improvement schemes such as Tir Gofal.

Check with neighbouring communities that they are not contemplating a similar project. It may be possible to pool resources and produce a combined walk – and there are joint marketing opportunities to benefit everyone. Far better to work together than produce competing walks.

Consulting with all members of the local community will ensure that everyone is kept up-to-date and that they have a stake in the project. Community consultation will also reveal any objections and, more positively, ideas and offers of help. Have a start-up meeting and invite everyone along to contribute. If possible, display a suggestions board or box in a public place for a short while.



### Remember:

- Check the status of paths against the Definitive Map
- Contact landowners



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## Path Condition Survey

Once you have selected the public paths that will make up your walk you will need to assess their condition. This can only be achieved by walking the route either solo or in the company of a National Park Authority Warden. The warden service is willing to provide assistance at this stage, but remember you must have decided the route and checked it against the Ordnance Survey map or the Definitive Map, and found out the ownership, if possible. If you survey the path on your own, you'll need to report on the condition of the path and the state of the furniture and surface to the National Park Authority.

If you discover any unlawful obstructions on your route, such as barbed wire fences, bear in mind that removing them will add extra time to your project planning. The National Park Authority can order the landowner to remove the obstruction or remove it themselves and recover costs but these are legal procedures and inevitably take time.



### Survey Tips:

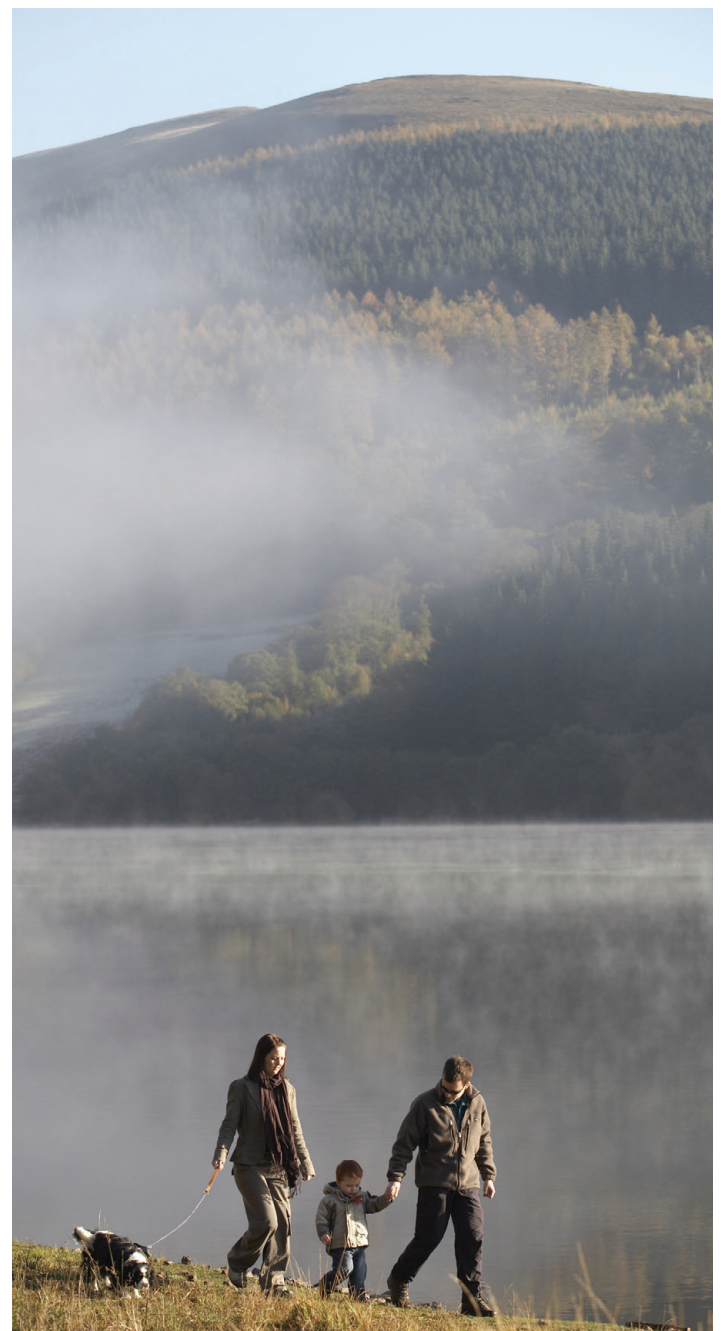
- Draw up a plan showing site location and access points
- If using symbols, remember to provide a key
- Use standard survey sheets
- Try to visit a site after wet weather so that drainage problems and issues will be highlighted
- Try to inspect in both summer and winter, to reveal different issues, e.g. vegetation growth in summer, drainage in winter
- Measure distance on the Ordnance Survey map with a measuring wheel
- Check presence of utilities such as telephone, gas, electricity (underground and overhead - BBNPA wardens have cable detectors) if planning to dig holes for boards or waymark posts
- Look for existing drainage features that may require repair or avoidance
- Check flood levels near rivers
- Check for any unlawful obstructions



### Information:

BTCV Footpaths Handbook:  
[www.handbooks.btcv.org.uk](http://www.handbooks.btcv.org.uk)

Paths for All - Factsheet 5.2 Path Survey and Construction:  
[www.pathsforall.org.uk](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk)



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## Waymarking

Now that you have decided where to lead your visitors, you don't want them getting lost. So you will need to plan the waymarking of your walk.

### What is waymarking?

Waymarking your walk is different from the fingerposts and rights of way markers that the highways authority erects. The latter are the Authority's responsibility and follow set designs.

### Fingerposts

These are used to show where paths leave metalled roads - these are the responsibility of the highway authority.

### Rights of way waymarkers

These enable users to follow the path accurately at points along it where they could become lost. Rights of way waymarkers are also the responsibility of the highway authority but your group can assist with erection and maintenance. You will need to contact both the National Park Authority (the highway authority in the National Park) and the landowner.

### Your local walk waymarkers

Landowner consent will be required if the waymark is to be painted on, or attached to, furniture e.g. a fence post, in their ownership. You will be responsible for maintenance.

Providing effective waymarking is a skilful business. The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Footpaths Handbook provides detailed information on the art of waymarking paths, some of which is summarised here. It would, however, be prudent to seek the advice of a National Park Warden who would be pleased to walk your walk and advise you on the positioning of waymarkers.

### Why waymark?

It's useful because:

- It allows walkers to explore paths without purchasing a map
- It aids route-finding in woodland and scrub where navigation is problematic
- It reduces accidental trespass
- It clarifies the status of paths for walkers
- It encourages the use of little known paths

### What colour are waymarkers?

Footpath - yellow ■

Bridleway - blue ■

Restricted byway - Victoria plum ■

Byway open to all traffic (BOAT) - red ■

Your local walk waymarker - design a logo for your walk and use it as the waymarker. The design should be on a simple plastic disc the same size as existing waymarker discs. If you can incorporate a directional arrow into the design, so much the better.



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## Common forms of waymarking

- Directional arrows on plastic discs fitted to walls, gates or fence posts
- Non-directional markers on rocks, walls and fences from which the next mark is visible
- Wooden posts routed with a directional arrow and/or destination name/ walk name
- Where a walk may be used by the partially sighted, tactile waymarkers should be considered

You could try something different and use sculptural waymarks along your walk. These could take the form of a bird with an outstretched wing or a pointing artisan. Be aware though, that production of such things, which will certainly enhance your walk, will inevitably take time, cost money and may require the landowner's permission. It may also require planning permission; contact the National Park Authority for advice.

Be careful that your waymarkers cannot be confused with those of any other waymarked routes in the area, otherwise your visitors could be accidentally diverted onto another walk!

## The waymark post

Waymark posts are usually made from hardwood such as oak. Close-grained wood such as oak gives a crisper outline to routed letters. Softwood is not durable enough.

Posts need to be fixed securely into the ground to withstand vandalism and rubbing by livestock. The hole will have to be bored or dug, something you will need to factor into the overall costs and timing of the project.

## What to do if your route follows another promoted route

Preferably avoid the situation in the first place.

Avoid more than two routes in any one location. If more than two, you should contact the managers of the other routes and produce a design for a new waymarker that shows all routes on one sign, even if it has to be bigger. Unless agreed otherwise, the last route to want to use the location should be the one to pay for it.



## Top Waymarking Tips:

- Place waymarkers only where they are necessary for a stranger to follow the path, i.e. at junctions or changes in direction
- Only public rights of way should be waymarked with the standard colours – yellow, blue, purple or red.
- If waymarkers are attached to or painted on private property, e.g. hedges, walls, or fences, then the landowner's consent must be gained
- Consult the landowner prior to erecting waymarker posts in the surface of the path
- It is essential to contact the highway authority (which is the National Park Authority within the National Park) at the outset of any waymarking project
- Check the Definitive Map to confirm the correct line of each right of way
- It is advisable to get written permission from landowners before placing waymarkers on their property
- Beware adding waymarkers to the opening part of a gate or any other object which can be moved. If it moves, your route direction will move with it!
- If using wooden posts routed with directional arrows, carefully work out in advance the sequence of arrows as they will be routed and painted in the workshop. Mistakes are difficult to rectify on site
- Beware of complex waymarking if your route crosses others
- Each routed post will cost approximately £50 to make and install



## Information:

See Ramblers Association Advice Note 6 'Signposts, Waymarks and Unauthorised Notices': [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)



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## Gates and stiles: 'Field Furniture'

Stiles and gates on public rights of way serve two purposes: to prevent stock straying and to allow access for legitimate path users. Unfortunately, many existing stiles and gates exclude some potential users who are unable to get through or across them. In developing your walk, the general principle should be to minimise barriers to access. Can existing stiles or gates be removed, just leaving a gap? If not, then go for the least restrictive option, replacing stiles and gates with accessible kissing gates. Remember – people don't have to be in a wheelchair to have problems with access; pushchairs and walking sticks are common amongst your visitors. (See [Disability and Discrimination Act guidelines](#)).

If you are forced to use a stile, ensure it has the lowest possible step. You may also want to include a 'dog flap' device, to let dogs through easily.

There is no statutory design, height or width with which stiles and gates must comply. However British Standard BS5709:2006 on Gaps, Gates and Stiles provides specifications for stiles and gates to ensure that they cause the minimum of inconvenience to users whilst fulfilling the requirement of preventing the passage of animals.

'Footpaths: A Practical Handbook' by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers states that the important elements to consider for stile and gate construction are durability, appropriate design for ease of use by elderly or disabled people and walkers with dogs, frequency and quantity of use and the type of stock in the field.

Field furniture needs to be meticulously specified, and, if possible, examples looked at prior to the whole lot turning up on site. Most suppliers will send a sample. If it's not what you asked for, or up to scratch, send it back. If it's something like an unusually designed kissing gate or stile/dog gate combo, make

sure you understand how it will assemble in the field, so you can show the contractor appointed to install them. A National Park Authority Warden would be pleased to offer advice at an early stage.

### IMPORTANT

If you are thinking about erecting a bridge on your walk then seek advice. There are many health and safety issues attached to bridge building and bridge use so ask the experts.

## Maintenance

The maintenance of any gates or stiles erected on your walk usually defaults to the landowner. However, within the Brecon Beacons National Park, the National Park Authority often assumes the responsibility.

As well as the landowner, the National Park Authority will need to be consulted about any gates and stiles to be erected along the walk. If your group is able to offer assistance with maintenance this will help the National Park Authority agree to your proposal. All furniture you install must comply with British Standards. The National Park Authority wardens can offer advice and tell you about potential suppliers.

You will also need to obtain planning permission for interpretation panels and structures over 2.5m high. Talk to the National Park Authority planning department about other planning permission and change of use.

Lastly, permission must be sought from landowners for the erection of benches.



### Information:

Ramblers Association Advice Note 7: 'Rights of Way and Stiles and Gates':  
[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)



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## Health and Safety

By actively promoting your walk, your group will be inviting visitors to use it. You and your group need to be aware of a number of safety and liability issues.

The following information has been summarised from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Footpaths Handbook, available from [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)

Safety issues may include the nature of the route itself such as steepness, uneven ground and drops. There may also be risks from exposure to weather and links onto busy or fast roads or country lanes with no footway or verge and poor visibility around high hedge banks. You should not invite visitors onto an unsafe route. You need to be able to demonstrate that you have considered this issue. On the other hand, the risks are not all yours as long as you are using public rights of way.

The question of liability if injury occurs to walkers is complex. The surface of the public right of way is the responsibility of the highway authority (within the National Park, this is the National Park Authority) if injury occurs because the path is in disrepair. However, the highway authority may take action against the

landowner if injury results from a failure of maintenance on the part of the landowner, such as an obstruction or overhanging vegetation.

Landowners have a duty of care to people who come onto their land by invitation and who are permitted to be there. A landowner may discharge a duty of care by warning of any hazards and discouraging people from taking risks. In your case, you are encouraging people to use this route, and you therefore have a duty to highlight any particular dangers in any literature you produce.

Remember that if you do anything to the path, or if you get contractors or volunteers to do anything to the path, you will be liable if these actions injure anyone. You can protect your group by:

- Joining BTCV and signing up to their insurance scheme
- Becoming part of the Community Council and so covered by their insurance
- Ensuring you undertake a full risk assessment at the planning stage, and, when the walk is complete, ensuring that any issues highlighted by this process are implemented
- Repeating your Risk Assessment at set intervals



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## Upland Walks

If you are using upland areas or footpaths, you need to ensure your users are warned of the potential hazards. The Brecon Beacons are not high mountains but they should not be taken for granted. Walkers, particularly those without much experience, can get into serious difficulties. Map reading skills, proper clothing and footwear and other safety precautions become essential. Get advice on the safety information you should be giving. However, it's usually best to keep people local – that's where they spend the money!

The recommended way of anticipating any hazards on your route is to produce a risk assessment.

## Risk Assessments

To ensure that all hazards\* and risks<sup>o</sup> have been identified and addressed, you should produce a risk assessment, preferably once all remedial work, waymarking and other improvements have taken place.

\*Hazard: anything with the potential to cause harm

<sup>o</sup>Risk(s): the likelihood and the consequence of the hazard being realised. More than one risk can be identified per hazard.

### Remember the five steps to a risk assessment:

1. Identify any hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate and manage the risks: decide if existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to reduce the risk
4. Record your findings
5. Review the risk assessment to take account of changing circumstances



### Information:

'5 Steps to Risk Assessment' free from Health & Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

For more information refer to BTCV handbook [www.btcv.org](http://www.btcv.org)



## Disabled Access

The Disability and Discrimination Act (1995 and 2005) promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people. Section 19 of the Act makes it an offence for a 'provider of services' to discriminate against a disabled person. The implication of the Act for anyone providing a public service, including your walk, is that where practical you will need to ensure that it is equally available to people with a range of disabilities/abilities. Obviously you can't make every path fully accessible, but you do need to provide the right information, for example, about gradients, path surfaces and obstacles such as gates, stiles and steps. You also need to make 'reasonable adjustments' i.e. you need to have thought about it, built in what appropriate measures it is practical to undertake and have concluded, and recorded, that other changes were not possible, for whatever reason. These reasons can include cost, but not if it means adding only a small amount, say £500, to a £10,000 project. It must be 'reasonable'. Your thinking process and reasons for making or not making adjustments should be written down.

Remember that, like the rest of the population, disabled people are looking for different outdoor experiences, but to enjoy and enable these experiences they need to:

- Get accurate, honest and accessible information
- Be able to get there
- Be able to park if coming by car
- Find the path and not get lost
- Physically travel on a path and negotiate gates or barriers
- Be able to use adjacent facilities



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So what does this mean for your walk plans?

- You should take a positive attitude to route planning and attempt to minimise barriers, thereby ensuring that the widest range of people will be able to use your walk. For example, where possible think 'gate' rather than 'stile', 'gap' rather than 'gate'
- You should contact the National Park Authority Access Officer who will be able to advise on disabled access and point you towards other useful contacts
- The Fieldfare Trust\* promotes countryside access for disabled people and would also be able to offer advice and guidance
- Next, try contacting a local disabled access group who will be glad to offer help and guidance
- Also, consult any local disabled individual(s) who will help determine local needs and priorities

Remember that not all disabled people use wheelchairs and many people have restricted mobility. A single high stile may prevent someone with limited mobility from using your walk. On the other hand, some people with all terrain wheelchairs can get into seemingly inaccessible places. See the Disabled Ramblers website; [www.disabledramblers.co.uk](http://www.disabledramblers.co.uk)

\*The Fieldfare Trust works with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the countryside for everyone. They have produced a number of useful publications including 'Countryside for All Accessibility Standards' and a 'Good Practice Guide' both available through their website.

## Remember

If you are improving your path in any way, it is unlikely to be 'reasonable' for a path to offer no access opportunities to disabled people.

You must abide by Disability and Discrimination Act recommendations.



## Information:

Disability and Discrimination Act (1995):  
[www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

The Disability Rights Commission:  
[www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)

The Fieldfare Trust: [www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)

## Ecological, geological and archaeological Issues

Your walk may pass through or by an area of particular wildlife, geological, or archaeological interest, the value of which might be compromised by attracting more people. This feature may, of course, be central to your reason for wanting to promote the route in the first place!

Find out if you are about to upset the natural balance or irreparably damage a sensitive site by talking to the National Park Authority wardens or other specialist staff, or your local Wildlife Trust or Archaeological Trust at an early stage. They may also be able to offer additional information which adds value to your walk, or suggest alternative routes.

If a sensitive area is highlighted, then you can use your walk to manage visitors positively by directing people away from or around it. And you could use it in your interpretation.

## Car Parking

Not all your walk users will arrive by public transport or be staying within walking distance of the start of your walk. You will therefore need to give some consideration to car parking. The first and cheapest option is to use an existing car park, but make sure the owners/managers of it are happy to see you include it in your plans. If you feel you have to construct something new then:

Your car park should be:

- Accessible to the start/finish of the walk
- Accessible to disabled users
- Secure
- Adequate in size for your intended needs
- Adjacent to public services

If the car park is out of the village centre, then people are more likely to leave the area after their walk, without being enticed



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into the shops/café to spend money. Siting access points near the local facilities will make the walk more attractive to visitors and will potentially increase the amount of money spent in the area.



## Interpretation

For detail on interpretation methods, see the [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#).

A standard method of developing an interpretive theme is outlined below.

### 'Theming' your walk

A walk without a theme lacks focus and therefore lacks a hook to draw in your visitors. Your walk should be recognised as unique. Potential users must be inspired to want to walk your route and discover new information.

A walk advertised as 'A Walk Around the Village' does not inspire. Where's the unique selling point, the invitation to explore, discover and be amazed?

Without a theme, your walk is just a series of potentially interesting, but probably disparate points along a circular or linear route. Basing your walk on a theme will make your walk more memorable. Your audience will leave with a new understanding, or insight, into what makes the place(s) you have shown them special.

Once you have written your overall theme, move onto sub themes. These can literally be represented by the stopping points along your walk. The accepted number is usually six, plus or minus two.

### What is a theme?

A theme is the point of the walk, the whole reason you have established it in the first place. The theme is the one thing you want your audience to remember once they have gone home. Your theme should complete the following sentence: 'At the end of my walk, I want people to understand that.....'

A theme is different from a topic. A topic is the subject of the walk, e.g. a woodland walk, whereas the theme describes what it is about your topic that you want people to understand. Themes should excite. If reading a theme doesn't inspire you, it won't inspire others.

An accepted way of deciding upon your theme is to use the Theme Generator devised by James Carter for Scottish National Heritage. Here's how it works:

1. Complete the following sentence:

*The topic of my walk is*

2. Now simplify this and complete this statement:

*Specifically, my walk will help people discover*

3. Now have a go at a theme

*As a result of completing my walk, I want people to understand*

It's worth remembering that most people are likely to pay closer attention to information at the start of the walk. Therefore think about weighting your walk so that you get across your message early.

'Inspiring Self Guided Walks' Neil Diment & Shropshire CC  
[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)



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## Walk Guides

Effectively steering visitors around your walk can be achieved in a number of ways:

### Leaflet

Leaflets can be used to market your walk and guide visitors around it. A well-designed publication must include:

- Location
- Public transport links
- Parking
- Refreshments
- Access points
- Time and distance
- Map
- Safety information
- Links to similar routes

It should also be downloadable from the web, available in large print size and produced in English and Welsh.

### Walk map

Ensure that any map you use is clear and understandable. If you intend to use a map that either directly belongs to the Ordnance Survey, or is created based on an Ordnance Survey map, then their permission needs to be obtained in advance. Obtaining a copyright licence from Ordnance Survey is likely to have associated costs (definitely if the leaflet is for sale) so these must be factored into your overall budget. Some sort of acknowledgement or copyright statement will have to be included on the map. Visit [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) for more information.

If you choose to use a map, it should clearly indicate the direction of travel and the access points.

A two-dimensional map may not be your best option. Don't assume that everyone is confident using a map. Casual walkers

may be more comfortable with a bird's eye view map with written directions, where confusion may arise, all supported by waymarkers. Look at other examples on the market such as those produced by the National Park Authority, Wainwright, national trail guides and Ordnance Survey walking routes.

### Interpretation panels

For more information see the [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#). Boards, panels and sculptures will need planning permission. See: Planning Guidance Note in [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#).

### Way to go: Podcasts/downloadable audio files

It is becoming easier to download a podcast or audio file from a website to an MP3 player or mobile phone which your visitors probably already own. Offering an audio guide may negate the need for waymarking your walk or producing a printed leaflet. It may also prove to be a very flexible medium, able to incorporate the spoken word, music and sound effects. You will need to include the costs of recording and editing the audio files in your budget. You will also need to upload them on to a website, either your own (designed specifically for the walk), or your local community's if they have one.

## Fundraising

So your group has lots of fantastic ideas, the community and landowners are on-side, the National Park Authority endorses your route, interpretation themes have been decided and a project manager appointed. But, and here's the crunch, who is paying for it all?

Your walk will cost money. Even the most basic walk will require waymarking, possibly a leaflet and some items of field 'furniture', not to mention costs of a long-term maintenance programme. A more elaborate walk, with waymarking made by an artist or craftsman, plus interpretation and promotional material may begin to seem beyond your financial reach. But don't despair, there is funding out there.

Before you can start fundraising, establish how much money you need to raise and whether it can be broken down into specific



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targets i.e. smaller amounts. You will then be in a position to research the funding options.

## Potential funding sources

These include:

- Public funding:
  - Welsh Assembly sponsored bodies such as Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, Wales Tourist Board, Communities First Support Network
  - Health trusts
  - Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
  - Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund for Wales
  - BBNPA Sustainable Development Fund
- Private funding:
  - Charitable trusts and foundations; businesses; sponsorship; donations
- Service organisations:
  - Rotary Club, religious organisations
- Special funds:
  - Heritage Lottery Fund runs a range of grant schemes for different scales of project
  - Sustainable Villages Enhancement Scheme (run by BBNPA, this depends on European money but may be available in 2008)
- Your own fundraising efforts:
  - events, charity shops, appeals, raffles, 100 clubs and membership schemes, legacies, advertising and the internet
  - sponsorship from local firms

Know the differences between these sources of funds: governments and foundations have clear funding policies; individuals will donate on a short term basis and usually inspired by emotions or sympathies; companies wish to gain business benefits; a service organisation may help if you have personal contacts.

For help in finding funders, look at the Apply Yourselfs programme or Funding Information for latest grants information from the Government, Lottery, major trusts, sponsorship, company



funding and Europe. Whatever funding you choose to apply for, you will have to meet certain key criteria, in particular Disability and Discrimination Act and Welsh language requirements.

But beware of being funding led. You need to maintain clarity of vision and purpose and constantly refer back to the aims of your project: why are you doing it and who is it for? Seek funding that complements what you are offering.

If you get grant aid or sponsorship you will probably have to file a report at the end of the project so keep a record (written and



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photographic) of all work done. Most of all don't forget to spend all of the money by the final date!

Remember, funders need to be aware of and involved in any changes you want to make to the project proposal they funded. You will need to keep to deadlines agreed or negotiate changes in the timetable in advance.

Sponsorship may be an alternative to funding. Local businesses may be interested in contributing to the cost of the walk,

especially if they will ultimately benefit from increased visitor numbers. Sponsorship could be in cash or kind e.g. use of a local mini bus or printing facilities.

Remember to check whether any of the work you are doing is liable for VAT.



## Design a 'fundable' project:

Just because you need money for a project, it doesn't automatically follow that a grant will be forthcoming. You will be in competition with other groups and will have to ensure that you have an attractive or 'fundable' project which is:

- Specific
- Meeting an important need which is describable and measurable
- Beneficial to your community and visitors
- Supported by your community
- Achievable
- Led by a team capable of meeting all targets
- Cost effective, i.e. demonstrate value for money by providing a detailed breakdown of costs
- Topical, reflecting current concerns and practices
- Relevant to the concerns of the potential funders
- Appropriate in size to the potential backer; larger projects can be divided into smaller parts if necessary



## Choosing and planning your route checklist:

Have you thought about:

- Objectives of walk
- Key features, route and links with other projects
- Who are the main users
- Community consultation
- Promoting walk to user groups
- Where funds are coming from
- Costs: waymarking, field furniture & interpretation
- Management and maintenance

It's worth getting these points down on paper to assist with your funding application.



## Information:

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website for access to Grantfinder software:  
[www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

Apply Yourself:  
[www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk)

Funding Information:  
[www.fundinginformation.org](http://www.fundinginformation.org)

Tips on the day on fundraising:  
[www.grantsnet.co.uk](http://www.grantsnet.co.uk)

Awards for All:  
[www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

Local Heritage Initiative Grant:  
[www.lhi.org.uk](http://www.lhi.org.uk)



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## Public rights of way facts

### What is a public right of way?

A right of way is a path that anyone has the legal right to use on foot and sometimes using other modes of transport. They are:

**Footpaths** - open only to walkers.

**Bridleways** - open to walkers, horse-riders and pedal cyclists.

**Restricted byways** - open to all non-motorised users: walkers, horse-riders, cyclists and horse-drawn vehicles.

**Byways open to all traffic** - open to all classes of traffic including motor vehicles, though they may not be maintained to the same standard as ordinary roads.

But then we have:

**Permissive paths** - sometimes referred to as permitted or concessionary or courtesy paths. These are not public rights of way, but footpaths or bridleways used by the public under an agreement between the highways authority and the landowner. They should have a notice on the path to that effect. They do not have the legal status of a public right-of-way and the permission maybe withdrawn. Access may also be permitted through a formal agreement such as Tir Gofal or other scheme or else may be informal and verging on 'tolerated access'.



### Tip:

If you want to use a permitted path in your walk check the lifespan of the route is equal to that of your walk, for example 5-10 years.



### Your rights on a right of way

Your legal right is to 'pass and repass along the way'. You may stop to rest or admire the view, or to consume refreshments, providing you stay on the path and do not cause an obstruction. You can also take with you a 'natural accompaniment' which includes a pram, pushchair or wheelchair (though you may find the surface of the path is not always suitable), or a dog. However, you should ensure that dogs are under close control. Note that there is no requirement for stiles to be suitable for use by dogs, particularly when there is livestock nearby.

(See Ramblers Association website: [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk))

### Management of Rights of Way

The National Park Authority states in its 'Walking Tourism Strategy' that the Authority and its partners should assure a minimum standard of path condition across the entire access network and that any walk that is endorsed by the National Park Authority should be well maintained, problem free, well signed and waymarked.

However, funds for this work are, as always, limited and to ensure that your walk is properly cared for in the future, you should consider whether your group could get involved in its long term maintenance. Once the walk is in place you could regularly walk the route, checking on its condition and reporting problems to the warden, or form a working group, taking responsibility for cutting back vegetation and maintaining furniture.



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The legal situation is that rights of way are 'maintainable at public expense', with the surface (the top two spade depths) vested in the highway authority, which is the National Park Authority in the National Park. The local authority, or here, the National Park Authority, is responsible for the maintenance of the surface of the path and any obstructive growth growing from the surface. You need to talk to them about any work you might want to undertake. Overhanging growth is the responsibility of the landowner, but you may reach an agreement with them to clear overhanging brambles, branches etc.

Stiles and gates should be maintained by the landowner in a safe condition, although, again, an agreement can be reached for you to carry out maintenance. This may be a condition imposed by the landowner as part of their permission to undertake the work.

## Remember – public Rights of Way



Footpaths  
Bridleways  
Byways



Permissive paths

## The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act

November 2000 saw a new Act of Parliament, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It gives a new right of access on foot to 'open country' and registered common land, and improves the laws for public rights of way (public footpaths, bridleways and byways).

For your project, this means that you can happily put your path over access land but remember to talk to local landowners. For more details consult the CCW website: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

## Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Judicious choice of the rights of way that will make up your walk may help with future management issues. If your project coincides with one of the National Park Authority's Rights of Way Improvement Plan priorities, then the National Park Authority is more likely to be willing to be involved.

The CROW Act 2000 placed a duty on local highway authorities to produce Rights of Way Improvement Plans. Those authorities with land in the National Park delegated this responsibility for that land to the National Park Authority. The plan involves an assessment of the extent to which rights of way meet present and likely future needs of the public. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is available at [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

One outcome of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be the production of a Priority Path Network (see [Appendix 2](#)). Financially, it is unlikely that every public path in the Park could be made accessible in the short term.

A way forward has therefore been proposed to identify those paths that have the greatest value to community and visitors. This value may be in terms of contribution to the local economy through tourism, through health benefits or through local use and enjoyment. The categories decided by the National Park Authority will help you determine your path selection and will have implications for future management.



### Information:

For queries regarding access and public rights of way within the National Park:  
Email: [row@breconbeacons.org](mailto:row@breconbeacons.org)  
Tel: 01874 624437

For queries about the mapping of access land under the CROW Act: Email: [openaccess\\_e@ccw.gov.uk](mailto:openaccess_e@ccw.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01686 6134000

To view information concerning access land in Wales:  
[www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

To read the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000:  
[www.legislation.hms.gov](http://www.legislation.hms.gov)



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## SECTION C: DEVELOPING AND CARING FOR YOUR WALK



This section contains information on:

- Action plan
- Contractor brief
- Looking after your new walk
- Maintenance programme
- Monitoring and evaluation

It is essential that your group maintains overall management of your walk project. If your walk entails more than simple waymarking, you may wish to appoint a voluntary project manager or have a team of people sharing responsibilities for dealing with contractors for instance, and keeping to the time schedule. The most important thing is to keep tabs on progress by drawing up, agreeing and then monitoring an action plan which has a timetable and deadlines attached.

### Action Plan

Set a realistic timetable for the completion of the project. Work back from the end date and work out what you need to do each week/month. If you are incorporating any interpretation, this must be designed and built so that it can be installed whilst your working party, or contractors, are on site (see [Interpretation Toolkit](#)). Time and money will be wasted installing them separately. Assess the order in which tasks will have to be completed and insert a deadline for achieving the tasks. Use this as a basis for an Action Plan. Your action plan will allow you to measure your progress.

Six months is a minimum realistic timescale for the completion of a walk from initial planning to installation of furniture and

the official launch. Make allowances for any negotiations over the removal of obstructions and other issues. Whatever you do, don't underestimate the length of time and make certain you record each stage of the project to meet any funding requirements. Ensure that the work carried out agrees with the original specifications.

Plan in launch dates at the start, as this will give you a target to aim for and maintain the momentum of the project. A launch event also brings good publicity and will attract people to use the walk.

### Contractor Brief (if needed)

A brief will have to be written for the contractors if you are using them. This will have to be clear on what you want and why you want it. This approach is also useful if you are using voluntary labour. You might not need to be quite so precise in



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this case, but you need to communicate clearly with those who are doing the work.

Your specification must include any Disability and Discrimination Act technical specifications.

Materials such as timber for gates should come from sustainable sources, i.e. environmentally friendly and local suppliers.



## Six Steps to Success:

1. Determine exactly what is required: number of stiles, gates and waymarkers; installation of any panels; any remedial work that needs to be carried out
2. Produce a specification for what you are proposing: route and installation of waymarkers and furniture
3. Produce a bill of quantities to enable work to be priced
4. Appoint a contractor, based on a tender price and issue with a permit to work. Chosen contractor must submit proof of insurance, risk assessments and method statement
5. Provide sufficient site supervision to ensure the contractor works to specification
6. Sign works off through permit to work

## Looking after your new walk

Your responsibilities do not end once your walk is up and running. Poor maintenance will reflect badly on your community and the National Park.

Walks need regular maintenance; they become overgrown and field furniture can become damaged through wear and tear and vandalism. The state of maintenance of a route can affect who is able to use it and whether you remain happy to promote it. If, due to wear and tear, sections of your walk fall below a certain

standard it may require to be formally closed.

From the outset therefore, it is essential to decide on two things: the lifespan of your walk and a maintenance and aftercare programme.

## Lifespan

It's a fact of life that people's interests and loyalties change. This will happen with your working group. Also the novelty value of your walk may wane along with its popularity. Focus of attention may even shift to alternative walks.

As a precaution against your walk declining into an unwanted and potentially hazardous mess, decide on a lifespan.

Begin with five years and review its use annually. If, at the end of five years, demand has not diminished then extend its lifespan by a further five years. However, if demand has slackened off, there must be provision built in for dismantling the walk before it becomes unsafe and a liability.

The initial lifespan should be agreed by everyone and put in writing and the exit strategy decided upon.

## Maintenance Programme

Please bear in mind that, although the National Park Authority can be called on to undertake maintenance, their resources are severely stretched. Talk to them but be prepared to think about other ways of doing this work. It is possible that the NPA would be able to pay for materials if you could do the work.

One possibility is that your Community Council could let contracts for maintenance or undertake the work themselves. Alternatively, your local community could consider establishing a volunteer group to carry out basic maintenance work. Above all, keep maintenance work local and try not to contract out to external companies.

There is no set standard to which rights of way have to be maintained. However, they are expected to be kept in a condition appropriate to their use and reasonable care should be



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taken to ensure that they are safe. In order to meet these basic requirements, you will need to draw up a maintenance programme listing what work needs to be done, when, how and by whom and agree this with the National Park Authority and relevant landowners.

If you find that your walk is popular, you may have to check the route more often and even increase the frequency of maintenance.

Remember, if your walk coincides with a priority route, it will rise in the hierarchy of path maintenance (see [Priority Paths](#)).

The maintenance programme should be agreed in writing at the start of the project together with a support budget. You could consider setting up an endowment fund to cover maintenance costs, perhaps using income from leaflet sales. Make sure that everyone understands the programme. Please see the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Footpaths Handbook for practical advice.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

(For information on conducting visitor surveys see the [Community Interpretation Toolkit](#))

Nearly all funding bodies will request that you monitor your project throughout its development in order to meet the funding criteria and to demonstrate proof of success. But after that, why bother to continue monitoring your walk? Well, collecting information about your walk and monitoring its use will enable you to evaluate your project. But why bother to evaluate it? Surely it's good enough, it's being used and everyone's happy!

But is your walk functioning as well as it could? Is it being used by too few or too many people? Is it attracting the people you set out to target? Above all, is it working?

Finding out how well your walk is used and when people use it



can help to justify the walk. Knowing how many people are using your walk and when peak use occurs can help with the long-term management.

### How to monitor

Monitoring path use is fundamentally straightforward – count every user.

You can count users manually or automatically. For a manual count, simply sit at the start of the walk and count users off with a clicker counter. Manual counting allows you to collect additional information about users such as age, sex, arrival and departure times. Try to do counts at weekends and on weekdays and during high and low seasons.



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Using an automatic counter dispenses with the need to deploy a person and ensures constant rather than random sampling. BTCV and Paths for All provide detailed information on available gadgetry for automatic counting and the National Park Authority staff has experience of them that they can help you with.

## Questionnaires

Counting will only reveal numbers or quantitative information about the people using your walk. It will not provide you with any qualitative or subjective feedback. In order to establish why people are using your walk and whether they find it enjoyable, informative, or challenging, you need to ask them questions. This can be achieved in several ways:

1. Face to face questioning: probably the most efficient because it allows you to gather qualitative experiences, which a simple head count doesn't.
2. Returnable questionnaire, in the form of a tear-off slip attached to a leaflet: a means of returning the questionnaire needs to be provided (box in local teashop or postage). Easy for this to slip someone's mind.
3. Competition questionnaire: provides incentive to return the questionnaire. Short term limitations unless you offer every participant something in return – could get expensive!
4. Invitation to feedback: usually unsupported by a questionnaire and so responses are not tailored to suit your needs. You may also only collect negative comments from habitual complainers.



## Questionnaire tips:

- Keep it short. A long questionnaire is less likely to be completed.
- Be clear what information you are asking for and keep the questions relevant.
- Use yes / no tick boxes or multiple choice answers which can be supplemented by adding a space for comments.
- Include some open-ended questions and spaces for general comments.
- Make it easy for respondents to return the questionnaire.



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# APPENDIX 1: PRE-CONTACT CHECKLIST

Print this off and use it to check that you have thought through the first steps, before contacting the National Park staff or other experts. It's a good idea to let them see it before you meet them to save time.

Who do you want to visit or use your walk?

What are you offering?

Why are you offering it - what are your aims?

Have you:

- Walked the route and checked it against the Ordnance Survey Explorer map or the Definitive Map
- Checked that it is all on rights of way and, if not, can permissions be sought for a permissive link path?
- Found out who owns the land where your route passes?
- Assessed how many other neighbouring routes there are?
- Checked if your walk crosses a promoted route?
- Established the distance of your route?
- Considered a maintenance schedule for vegetation and furniture?
- Considered DDA guidelines?
- Checked with neighbouring communities?
- Thought about funding?



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# APPENDIX 2: PRIORITY PATH NETWORKS

## Priority Path Network Categories

### High Priority

All promoted national or regional trails, or important connections to them.

Paths promoted or endorsed by the NPA as tourism products.

All paths (except 'dead-ends') in or within 1km of a settlement.

Paths providing access to formal, well visited visitor attractions, accommodation and businesses.

Paths known to be in popular use.

Paths accessible to people with limited mobility or sensory impairments.

**All paths in this category should:**

- Have the highest quality infrastructure
- Be made easy to follow without a detailed map
- Have infrastructure giving least restrictive access e.g. gates prioritised over stiles
- Be subject to a more intensive vegetation cutting regime (perhaps twice a year)
- Be subject to most frequent survey (perhaps once every 2 years)

### Standard Priority

Paths with potential to provide new promoted trails or circular routes.

Paths providing important access to or within attractive landscape features.

Important access to or within CROW access land.

Paths connecting to public transport nodes.

**All paths in this category should:**

- Have standard quality infrastructure
- Be made easy to follow if using an Ordnance Survey or other detailed map
- Be subject to restricted vegetation cutting (perhaps once per year)
- Be subject to occasional survey (perhaps once every 5 years)

### Reactive Priority

'Dead-end' paths.

Paths that run parallel with others that have a clearly higher priority.

Paths requiring excessive investment.

Paths under legal/definitive map review or possibly subject to diversion/extinguishments.

**All paths in this category should:**

- Rarely be subject to pro-active work of any kind
- Be governed by the adoption of least resource approach, where reactive work is demanded



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# APPENDIX 3: BBNPA WALKING TOURISM STRATEGY

## Audience needs

Who?	Walk requirement	Accommodation	Comment	Objective	Approach	
<b>Primary Markets</b>						
<b>Holiday Walking</b>						
<b>Incidental holiday walkers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risers.</li> <li>Affluent Early Retired.</li> <li>Affluent Empty Nesters.</li> <li>Better Off Families.</li> <li>Pre-family professionals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short walks of no more than 2-3 miles along clearly defined and waymarked paths.</li> <li>Walking along or to specific landscape features such as waterfalls, lakes or viewpoints.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation – all types</li> <li>May be particularly relevant to families in self-catering accommodation and caravan/camping.</li> <li>More time to influence longer stays.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on walks most likely to be obtained from TICs or accommodation establishments.</li> <li>Walks linked to water are identified in Best Foot Forward as being particularly popular with children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage repeat visits and recommendations.</li> <li>Encourage visitors to walk and understand more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer simple walking experiences that provide a rewarding experience, meeting common standards (least restrictive access, car parking, toilets, good signing).</li> <li>Offer programme of guided walks.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary holiday walkers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affluent Early Retired.</li> <li>Affluent Empty Nesters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy country of around 4-6 miles across fairly gentle terrain.</li> <li>Circular walks are particular popular: linear walks will also be undertaken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>B&amp;B, self-catering, small hotels and inns.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage repeat visits and recommendations.</li> <li>Encourage visitors to spend more in association with their walking experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer walks that provide a rewarding experience.</li> <li>Present a number of walking experiences that are well integrated with selected places to eat and drink.</li> </ul>
<b>Walking Holidays</b>						
<b>Independent centre-based walking holidays and break-takers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risers.</li> <li>Affluent Early Retired.</li> <li>Affluent Empty Nesters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy country walks of varying lengths, most commonly around 5-7 miles.</li> <li>Keener walkers interested in longer distances and hill walking.</li> <li>Primarily looking for circular walks, but also linear walks along a landscape feature or stretch of a promoted route.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short breaks in B&amp;Bs, small hotels, inns, and self-catering.</li> <li>Families tend to stay primarily in self-catering accommodation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local walks leaflets are obtained primarily at the destination, or borrowed from accommodation establishments.</li> <li>Signposting and waymarking is of importance, irrespective of experience.</li> <li>Keen walkers use published material for ideas on where to walk.</li> <li>Some interest in guided walks.</li> <li>Affluent retired may respond to mid-week breaks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage new visitors to consider the Brecon Beacons as a walking destination.</li> <li>Encourage repeat visits and recommendations.</li> <li>Encourage visitors to spend more time in the Park.</li> <li>Encourage visitors to walk and understand more.</li> <li>Encourage visitors to keep car miles to a minimum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Associate walking opportunities with tempting places to enjoy a stay as part of a whole visitor experience.</li> <li>Offer walking experiences that are considered to meet their needs and provide a rewarding experience.</li> <li>Offer programme of guided walks.</li> <li>Present other walking opportunities that are similar to, or progress from, one that they have enjoyed.</li> <li>Offer walking experiences that are well connected with accommodation, including public transport provision.</li> </ul>



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## Audience needs

Who?	Walk requirement	Accommodation	Comment	Objective	Approach
<b>Primary Markets</b>					
<b>Walking Holidays</b>					
<b>Independent Hill Walking Break Takers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-family professionals.</li> <li>• Risers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circular hill walking routes of 8–15 miles.</li> <li>• Also more challenging stretches of National Trails or long distance walks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend breaks using youth hostels, camping, bunkhouses with pub at hand.</li> <li>• Some use of larger self-catering properties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested also in other adventure activities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage new visitors to consider the Brecon Beacons as a walking destination.</li> <li>• Encourage repeat visits and recommendations.</li> <li>• Encourage visitors to keep car miles to a minimum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support promotion of group accommodation, including larger self-catering properties, in association with well researched route information.</li> <li>• Offer walking experiences that are well connected with accommodation, including public transport provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Markets</b>					
<b>Packaged Walking Holiday Takers</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affluent Early Retired.</li> <li>• Affluent Empty Nesters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Favour named routes, including National Trails.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evenly divided between centre-based and point-to-point holidays.</li> <li>• Accommodation tends to be B&amp;Bs, guesthouses, inns, and small hotels.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage package operators to consider the Brecon Beacons as a walking destination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a recreational route or routes, meeting proposed set of criteria.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Walking Day Visitors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looking for walks of 4–6 miles, primarily easy country walks.</li> <li>• Keen walkers walk longer distances and in the hills.</li> <li>• Circular walks are most popular, but also interesting linear walks along a landscape feature or a stretch of promoted route.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minority may join guided walks.</li> <li>• Some interest in walks accessible by public transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage visitors to spend more in association with their walking experience.</li> <li>• Encourage visitors to walk and understand more.</li> <li>• Encourage visitors to keep car miles to a minimum.</li> <li>• <i>(In longer term, encourage visitors to spend more time in the Park).</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present a number of walking experiences that are well integrated with selected places to eat and drink.</li> <li>• Offer programme of guided walks.</li> <li>• Offer walking experiences that are well connected with public transport provision.</li> <li>• <i>(In longer term, offer walking experiences that are well connected with accommodation).</i></li> </ul>



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# Interpretation.....

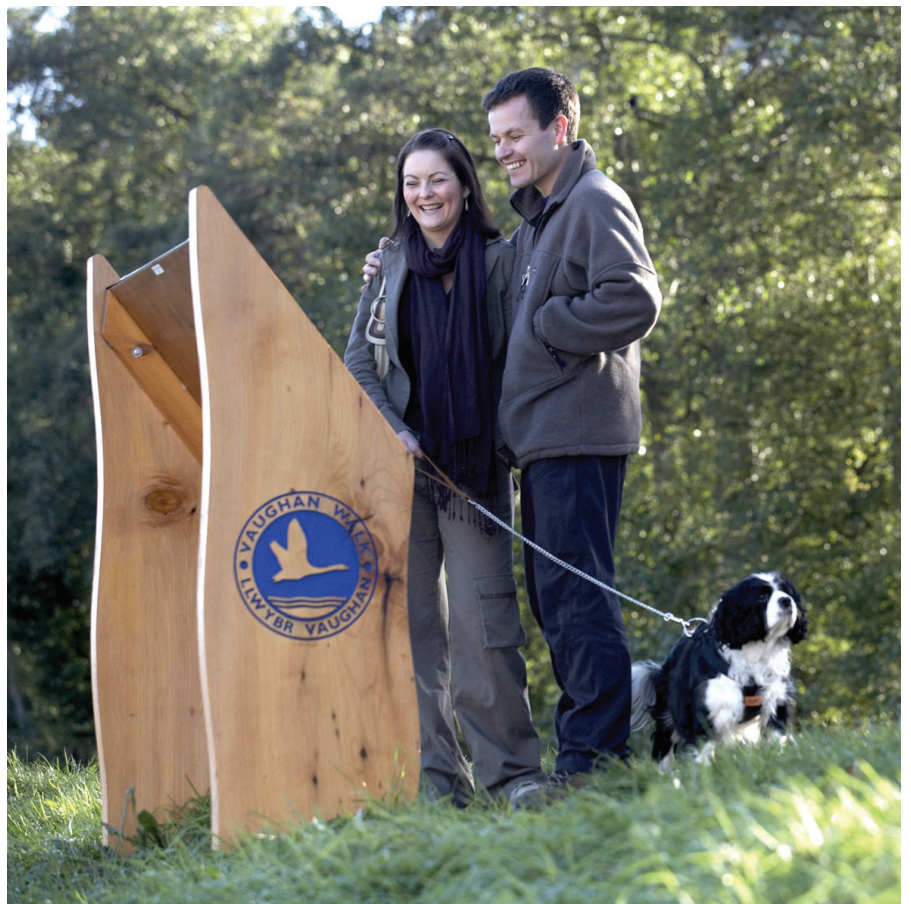




# COMMUNITY INTERPRETATION TOOLKIT

This toolkit helps local communities to tell the story of their area of the Brecon Beacons National Park. It aims to increase residents' and visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the National Park through interpretive projects. The toolkit takes people through the process of developing, producing and maintaining interpretive materials such as leaflets and other publications, outdoor panels, sculptures and events.

It helps local communities to define and present themselves and their local landscape, looking at the special natural and cultural heritage of the area, developing a sense of place, as well as a sense of ownership and stewardship for the environment.



## Acknowledgements

This toolkit has drawn upon material and publications about interpretation produced by a range of organisations and individuals including the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Countryside Council for Wales, the Tourism Partnership Mid Wales, the Welsh Tourist Board, HERIAN, Dehongli Cymru, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Scottish Interpretation Network, the former Countryside Commission, British Waterways, the Association for Heritage Interpretation, the Centre for Environmental Interpretation, Shropshire County Council, Freeman Tilden, Sam Ham, John Ververka, Suzanne Trapp, Michael Gross and Ron Zimmerman, Northamptonshire Countryside Services, Nene Valley Project and Brampton Valley Countryside Project, Neil Diment, Touchstone Heritage Management and Anglezarke Dixon Associates. We would like to thank all of these organisations and individuals for the ideas and inspiration from their work and publications as well as the numerous other individuals who have influenced our approach to interpretation in any way.



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# INTERPRETATION

## SECTION D: INTRODUCTION



### In this section:

- What is a toolkit?
- How this toolkit works
- How to use this toolkit
- What is interpretation?
- What's in it for your community?
- Interpretation in the Brecon Beacons National Park
- What types of interpretation are there?
- Advantages of interpretive planning
- Interpretation Planning – an overview

### What is a toolkit?

The word 'toolkit' means a collection of resources that can be used to help with a task, in the same way that a mechanic's toolkit contains different tools for different jobs.

### How this toolkit works

This toolkit is a collection of resources that can be used to help with a task. It is not necessarily designed to be read from cover to cover but to be used according to your needs.

#### This section of the toolkit is divided into 3:

- D. Introduction to Interpretation
  - E. Getting Started : Planning your Interpretation Project
  - F. Doing it : Implementing your Interpretation Project
- Interpretation appendix 1: Pre-Contact Check List

#### Case studies:

- Govilon Heritage Group
- Henry Vaughan Walk
- Ystradowen and Llynfell Ward Summer Fete
- Gwynfe Spring Show

Section D gives an introduction to interpretation and an overview of the planning processes involved in an interpretive project.

Section E explains the process of planning an interpretation project in more detail, with tips and checklists and some examples of good interpretation.

Section F deals with the implementation of an interpretation project and has information about case studies from the Brecon Beacons National Park. It also includes appendices giving more information about materials noted in Sections E and F.

### How to use this toolkit

The toolkit can be navigated just like a website either by using the navigation buttons at the foot of each page or by clicking on words highlighted in blue.

Each section contains a link to a useful information box. The web addresses referenced in these sections can be immediately accessed with a click of your mouse, providing you are on-line whilst using the toolkit.



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## What is interpretation?

Interpretation is the process of communicating the meaning and significance of an object, a place or an area to people. It's basically story telling, bringing a place or object alive so that you can share what makes it special with others and help them enjoy and understand it better.

The father of interpretation was Freeman Tilden. He was an American journalist who worked on London's Evening Standard newspaper before returning to the United States to join the National Parks Service where he developed the process we now call interpretation. He put forward three guiding principles for successful interpretation – that it should provoke interest, reveal meanings and relationships and relate to the everyday lives of the audience. Nowadays most people add a fourth principle – that interpretation should also help people to enjoy their visit.

**'Good interpretation needs at its heart.... an enthusiasm and love for a place and a desire to share that with others.'** James Carter, 2001.



## What's in it for your community?

Interpretation can bring many benefits to your community, site or feature. It can enthuse local people about their area, encourage and help manage tourism and bring economic benefits as well. It can raise the profile of your community and can help people feel a sense of ownership for their area, their heritage and the National Park.

### Good interpretation can:

- attract funding and grants from various organisations
- help the local economy by attracting more visitors and possibly new businesses
- encourage people to care about your site so that they want to help you look after it
- help people to get more enjoyment from their visit to your area
- help you direct visitors to where you want them to go, by giving them prompts and routes
- encourage people to stay longer, so they are more likely to spend money in local pubs and shops
- give your community a good name and put it 'on the map'
- improve your local environment for people and for wildlife
- bring people together locally
- help local people feel proud of their area and pleased to be in the Brecon Beacons National Park



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## Interpretation in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is keen to help local communities to develop interpretation in their area because of the advantages it can bring to everyone concerned. The National Park Authority employs a member of staff, the Interpretation Officer, to co-ordinate all the interpretation in the Park. The Interpretation Officer and other staff who work in the Countryside, Access, Rights of Way and Community Development Sections can offer advice to local communities who want to get involved in interpretation in their area. This toolkit is one of the ways that the National Park Authority helps communities to develop interpretation projects, giving an introduction to the processes involved.

There are two levels of interpretive plans in the Brecon Beacons National Park. There is an Interpretation Strategy for the whole National Park and there are some Local Interpretive Plans for individual sites, features or areas such as a village trail, a castle

or the waterfalls area. [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

HERIAN ([www.herian.org](http://www.herian.org)), the organisation for industrial heritage in South Wales, has produced an excellent toolkit for producing Local Interpretation Plans and there's also good advice on the websites of Scottish Natural Heritage ([www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)) and the Association for Heritage Interpretation. ([www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk](http://www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk))

## What types of interpretation are there?

There's a wide range of different types of interpretation – from leaflets and outdoor panels to sculptures and events, audio guides and even websites. Broadly speaking, there are four main types:

**Personal interpretation** when visitors 'see' or 'meet' someone face-to-face. Examples of personal interpretation include guided walks, story telling, costumed interpreters, events and activities and 'street' theatre



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## Printed and graphic interpretation

includes leaflets, publications, trail guides, indoor and outdoor panels and exhibitions

**Creative on-site interpretation** includes 2 and 3D installations such as seating, sculpture and specially designed waymarking, incorporating creative use of the arts

**Electronic interpretation** covers a wide range of computer and audio based material including websites, audio guides, podcasts, interactive screens and CDRoms.

When you are deciding what kind of interpretation to develop for your site, it's worth thinking through their advantages and disadvantages, as different kinds of interpretation will work well for different groups and at different sites. This is discussed in more detail later on in this toolkit, in Section E.

## Advantages of Interpretive Planning

Although the idea of preparing an interpretation plan can seem a bit daunting, it's really worth doing as it makes you organise your project and it sorts out a number of potential pitfalls which could sabotage the success of your project in future. In essence, the advantages of preparing an interpretation plan are that it:

- Identifies priorities for action, so you do the most important things first and other, future, projects will fit in with and enhance your current project
- Means you've thought it all through and have clear aims and objectives
- Helps to make sure that the different heritage projects happening in your area can all work together to give visitors clear and coherent stories about your site or feature
- Can help with getting funding for your project, as major funders usually require evidence of cohesive interpretive planning

## Interpretive planning – an overview

Planning is the foundation of all good interpretation, which is why many people start off their interpretation project with an Interpretation Plan. It sorts out why you are doing your project, who you are doing it for, what you are going to interpret and how you'll do it. Equally importantly, it also describes how you are going to manage it and how you'll know if it's working.

The following section gives an overview of the interpretive planning process. There is a series of key questions to think about. The processes you need to go through to answer these questions are discussed in more detail in Section E.



### Contacts:

HERIAN [www.herian.org](http://www.herian.org)

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority:  
[www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

Countryside Council for Wales: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

Welsh Tourist Board: [www.visitwales.com](http://www.visitwales.com)

Tourism Partnership Mid Wales: [www.tpmw.co.uk](http://www.tpmw.co.uk)

Dehongli Cymru: [www.dehonglicymru.co.uk](http://www.dehonglicymru.co.uk)

Scottish Natural Heritage: [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Powys County Council: [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)

Carmarthenshire County Council:  
[www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk)

Torfaen County Borough Council:  
[www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)

Monmouthshire County Council:  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council:  
[www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council:  
[www.merthyr.gov.uk](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk)

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council:  
[www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk](http://www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk)

Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council:  
[www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk](http://www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk)

Caerphilly County Borough Council:  
[www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)



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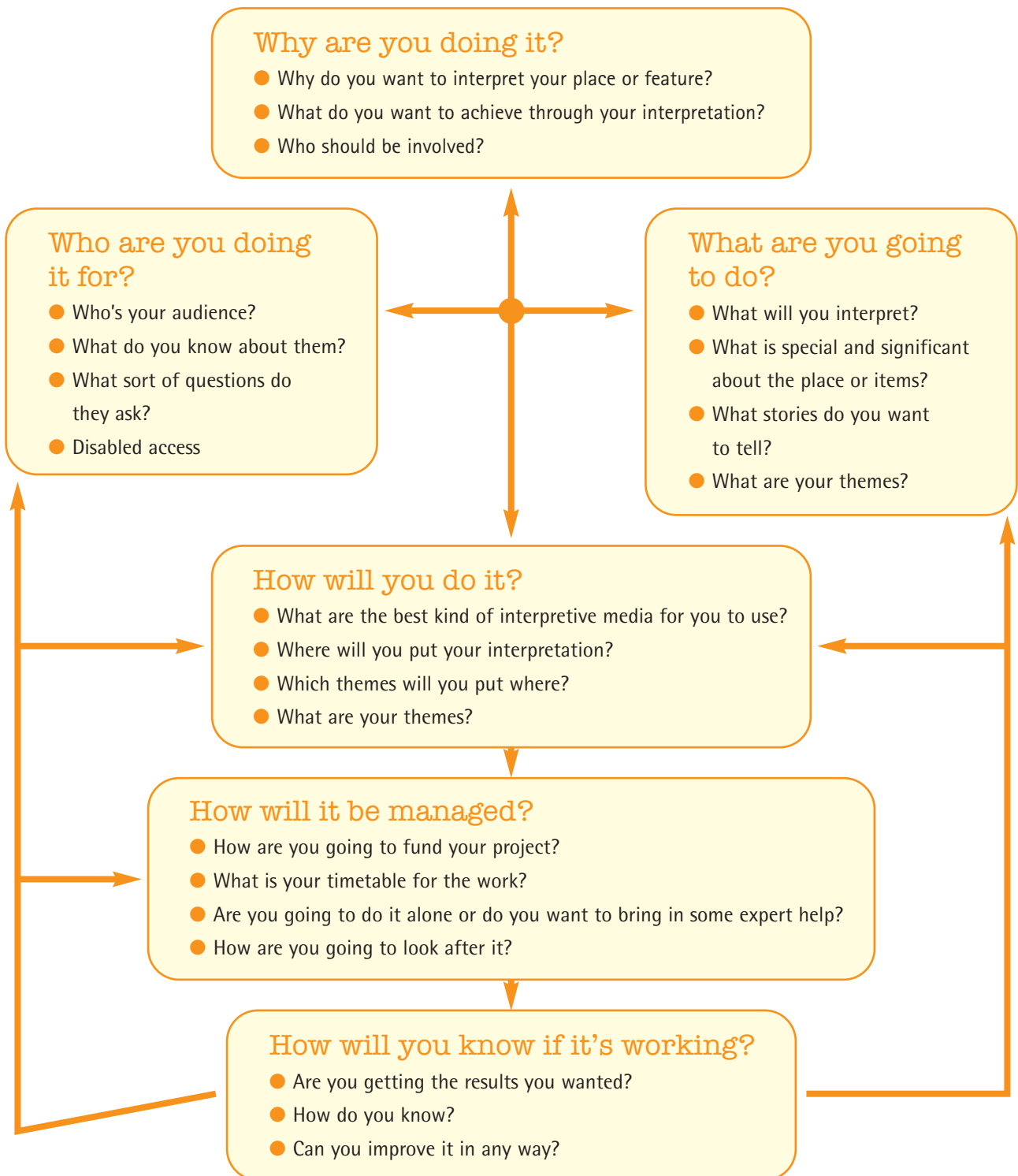
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These are the things you need to think about.....



Adapted from Carter, J. (Ed) 1997, A Sense of Place – an interpretive planning handbook. Tourism and Environment initiative, Inverness.



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# INTERPRETATION

## SECTION E: PLANNING



In this section:

### 1. Why are you doing it – and who should be involved?

- Decide why you want to do it
- Setting the aims for your interpretation
- Aims for interpretation could include....
- Your team – who should be involved and what skills do you need?
- Getting professional help
- Partnerships can bring shared glory
- What kind of group?
- What consultation do you need to do?

### 2. Who are you doing it for – who is your audience?

- Decide who you are interpreting for and find out what they want to know
- Collecting background information
- Visitor surveys
- Questionnaires
- Questionnaire tips
- Using your visitor data
- Who doesn't come and why?
- Who do you want to attract?
- Your target audience
- Including as many visitors as possible
- Disabled Access

### 3. What are you going to interpret?

- What are your stories?

- Gathering your information
- Site-based information
- Information about services and events
- Information about problems
- SWOT analysis
- Storing your information
- Decide what you want to tell people – your theme

### 4. How are you going to do your interpretation?

- What kind of interpretive media do you want to use?
- Personal interpretation
- On-site interpretation
- Printed and graphic interpretation
- Electronic interpretation
- Advantages and disadvantages of different interpretive media

### 5. How will it be managed?

- How are you going to fund your interpretation?
- Potential funding sources
- Using grants for your project
- How to design a 'fundable' project
- Timetabling the work
- Looking after your interpretive project
- Maintenance agreements
- A finite life

### 6. Is it working?

- Monitoring and evaluation



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# GETTING STARTED – Planning your interpretation

This section works through the processes you need to follow to plan your interpretation

## 1. Why are you doing it – and who should be involved?

### Decide why you want to do it

Why do you want to interpret your place or feature? It may be to increase understanding, to improve your local economy or to manage your visitors or site better. Whatever your reason, it's important to be clear why you want to do your interpretation project.

### Setting the aims for your interpretation

What do you want to achieve from telling people about your site or object? You might want to help local people and visitors to understand more about your heritage, to learn about it or to get them to help look after it. You may also want to boost the local economy through tourism or simply to help people enjoy your area. Your broad aims may be to attract more visitors, or you might want to manage your existing visitors better so that they use some routes and not others. You might want to change the way they behave or the way they think and feel about your site, or you might want to help people understand more about your organisation and the way it works.

Whatever your aims are, it is important that you know why you have decided to do an interpretive project and what you want to achieve, as this will guide the whole process.



Aims for interpretation projects could include:

- Bringing more money into the local area
- Attracting new and more visitors
- Helping visitors have a more fulfilling visit
- Guiding visitors to the right places
- Protecting special features
- Improving footpaths and seating
- Improving the wildlife interest
- Looking after your local heritage
- Raising the profile of your area
- Developing better partnerships
- Helping visitors and local people appreciate and enjoy local heritage
- Improving access
- Offering formal and informal education opportunities
- Creating a sense of pride among local people
- Encouraging better care for the environment
- Encouraging good behaviour

### Your team - who should be involved and what skills do you need?

Most projects work best with a team of keen people bringing their interests and skills to share the tasks. Ideally you want to involve a good cross-section of people in your interpretation project, including the local community and representatives of



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organisations which work in the area. You may want to include:

- People who represent interests such as the Community Council, the chapels and churches and the schools
- People who have a detailed knowledge of the area, its wildlife and its history. This could include farmers, foresters and other landowners
- People who are involved with visitors such as the owners of shops, pubs, B&Bs and hotels and others
- People with special skills such as writing, researching, performing arts or design expertise

Whatever kind of interpretation project you're thinking about, you'll need people who can help with planning and researching as well as actually producing your interpretation. There's often a surprising range of skills hidden in your local community so it's worth asking around to find out who could help you. You can do this by:

- talking to as many people as possible
- asking for help through the local media
- asking local groups and schools
- holding a public event or gathering to tell people what you are planning to do and asking for their help

There may be artists, illustrators, performers, writers, photographers, historians, wildlife enthusiasts, carpenters and builders out there - all waiting to be asked to help out!

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Interpretation



Officer can also give you advice on your project. It's worth thinking through the basics of the planning process outlined in Section D of this toolkit beforehand, so that you have a good overview of the stages involved and know the areas where you would like more help and advice. There is a pre-contact check list to help you in Appendix 1.

### Getting professional help

You may decide, in addition to the work that your group can undertake, that you also want some professional advice on your interpretation - to edit your text, to design your panel, leaflet or website or to record your audio material. As a society we are constantly bombarded by professionally produced media such as magazines, newspapers, television and the internet - and your interpretation has to compete with these products. If your interpretation isn't well designed and produced, it could look unappealing and unprofessional. There are a number of firms that specialise in interpretation for countryside and heritage sites, and their knowledge and experience can be invaluable. They will be able to help you sort out the best product and materials to use for getting your messages across. Dehongli Cymru have a Directory of Suppliers on their website; [www.dehonglicymru.co.uk](http://www.dehonglicymru.co.uk) and [www.interpretwales.co.uk](http://www.interpretwales.co.uk)

### Partnerships can bring shared glory

Interpretation projects also offer great opportunities for working with other local organisations - you can share the work and the costs while both achieving great things! You could involve the local Community Council, regeneration groups and local access forums. For an event or trail you could work with other community projects in your area or there might be neighbouring communities who would like to get involved. And remember that you'll need to market your interpretation, so see if there is any individual or organisation that you could work with to market your site. Depending on the type of interpretation you decide on, you could also include information about local services and businesses in the area. If you've decided to hold an event or write a leaflet, you could promote bus services, pubs, cafes and B&Bs. But remember to keep information about businesses



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general as names can change and owners move away. Look at the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's website for more information [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

### Potential partners include:

- Local History groups
- Local Natural History groups
- Wildlife Trusts and any WATCH groups for young people
- Schools
- Adult Learning Groups such as U3A (University of the Third Age)
- Neighbouring parishes
- Community Councils
- Women's Institutes
- Young Farmers Clubs
- Local businesses
- Youth Groups

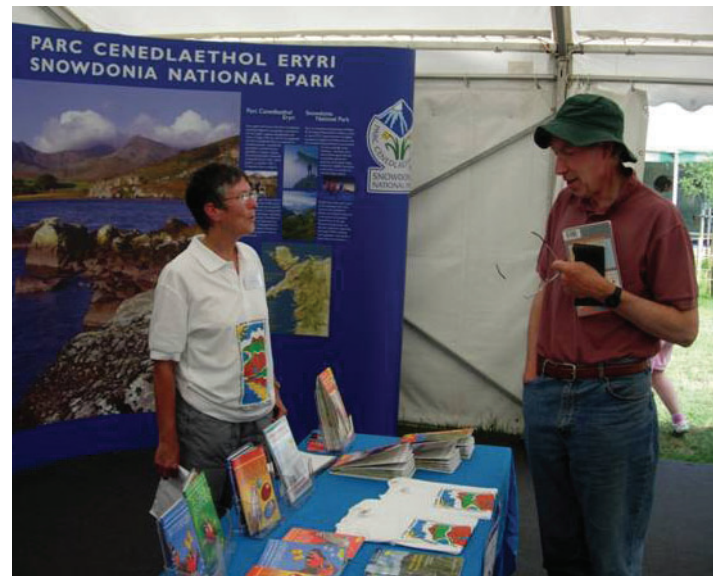
### What kind of group?

A project can be done by a group of interested people but it's often useful to be a formally constituted group as some funding organisations only offer grants to established groups. You'll need to create a constitution and get the group registered. A constitution is a written framework of rules which states your aims and establishes a basis for good practice. For a model constitution contact the Charity Commission: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk).

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority can offer advice on how to become a constituted group. Please contact the National Park Authority's Community Development Officer.

### What consultation do you need to do?

It's best to involve the key individuals and relevant organisations very early on in the planning process so that you can avoid problems that might delay your project in the later stages. One of the first things to do is to find out who owns any site or



feature that you might be interested in and get their permission to interpret it. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority may be able to give advice on this. Depending upon the type of interpretation you decide to develop, you may need planning permission to install some structures such as outdoor panels. There is further information on the [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org) website. If you are planning to install outdoor signs or panels on site, you will need to get the landowner's permission for this. Make sure that you investigate and get agreements, in writing, for the responsibility for Public Liability Insurance for all physical installations.

Consulting with all members of the local community will ensure that everyone is kept up-to-date and that they have a stake in the project. Community consultation will also reveal any objections and, more positively, ideas and offers of help. Have a start-up meeting and invite everyone along to contribute. Send out a letter via the school and other local groups and put up a suggestions board or box in a public place for a short while.





# INTERPRETATION

## 2. Who are you doing it for – who is your audience?

### Decide who you are interpreting for and what they want to know

Who is your audience? Are they local people or tourists, young people, family groups or mainly adults? Are they special groups such as schools or the general public? Once you've decided on your audience, you need to assess what you already know about them. How many people come now and where do they come from? What kind of interpretation do they want and what kinds of future visitors do you want to attract? This information will help you decide upon the kind of interpretive media you choose. For example, if you currently get a lot of visitors who frequently visit your site, a set of fixed interpretive panels may not be the best media for you as people will probably only read them on their first visit. You may decide to supplement them with a series of seasonal guided walks or a leaflet.

### Collecting background information

First of all, find out as much as you can about your existing audience – who is already visiting your area, or aware of, or using your organisation's work? Who currently visits your site or community and what do you know about them? You can get facts and figures about visitors to the National Park from the



Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and other organisations such as Visit Wales, the Countryside Council for Wales, British Waterways and the Forestry Commission also have information about visitors to their sites. It is well worth talking to local shops and pubs as well, to find out what they've learnt about visitors to your area – they're likely to have a lot of useful information.

### Checklist for the information you may want to know about your visitors:

- Who already comes?
- Why do they come?
- What are their interests?
- How often do they visit?
- How much time do they have?
- How old are they?
- How mobile are they?
- Do they visit as individuals, couples or groups?
- What sort of experience are they looking for?

### Visitor surveys

You may decide you need to do some market research to collect more specific information about your visitors and set up a visitor survey. This is best done when your site or area is at its busiest (countryside sites are generally busiest at sunny weekends in the summer). You may want to record the numbers and types of visitors, how long they stay (this may be hours or in some cases days) and where they come from. This is quantitative data about your site. Additionally you may also decide to do a qualitative questionnaire to find out visitors' opinions about your site, feature or area, the facilities they need and would like. It's also very helpful to find out if they know anything about the area and what they are interested in.

### Questionnaires

Think carefully about the questions you ask and the information they will give you. Try them out on a few visitors before you do



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the main survey to check that they can be answered easily. And remember there's no point collecting information about something that you can't do anything about – like the weather! However you can do something about making sure you've got seats for less mobile visitors or the right kind of gate, rather than a stile, for people with pushchairs and buggies.

You'll need about 100 completed survey forms for your results to begin to form a valid cross section. And the survey should be done over a series of days rather than just one day such as the village fete.

It's helpful to know what visitors like about your area, site or feature and what interests them. Is there any other information they want or any other activities they want to do in your area? It's also useful to find out what they don't like about your site or feature – you may be able to improve some aspects of your site, such as the parking arrangements or the opening times, even if you can't sort out everything people dislike.



### Using your visitor data:

- If you get lots of visiting families, think about offering something for children, such as quizzes, trails and story telling.
- If you get a lot of regular visitors, make sure your interpretation has something that people can see or do in each of the four seasons.
- If you get a lot of overseas visitors, think about presenting your interpretation in the relevant languages.
- If you get a lot of visitors with limited mobility or visual impairment, think about the kind of 'furniture' and interpretation you have and make sure that it's as accessible as possible.
- If you get lots of visitors with specialist interests like gardening, archaeology or caving, think about ways of giving them more detailed information about the things they are interested in.

### Questionnaire tips

- Keep it short. A long questionnaire is less likely to be completed.
- Be clear what information you are asking for and keep the questions relevant.
- Use yes / no tick boxes or multiple choice answers which can be supplemented by adding a space for comments.
- Include some open-ended questions and spaces for general comments.
- Make it easy for respondents to return the questionnaire.

### Who doesn't come and why?

These are more tricky questions, but the answers are useful – especially if you want to increase your visitor numbers. [The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#) has some data on non-visitors which may help. You can also gather information and opinions from local and national tourist organisations such as the tourism officers for the relevant local authorities, as well as staff from the Tourism Partnership Mid Wales and Visit Wales.



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## Who do you want to attract?

When you know who's already coming to your site, you can think about who else you want to attract. The National Park Authority has looked at the different kinds of audiences that come to the National Park and has divided them into six categories:

### 1 Local people

- Living within the National Park
- Living in surrounding towns and villages
- People "commuting" through the Park
- Landowners and land managers
- Regular repeat visitors
- Local businesses (accommodation providers, tourism businesses, Tourist Information Centre's)

### 2 Visitors

- Day visitors
- Short break visitors
- Longer holiday visitors
- People staying with friends or relatives
- People using hotels, B&B etc
- Overseas visitors

### 3 Education and young people

- Undergraduates
- A level and college students
- Primary and Secondary school students

### 4 Visitors with special needs

- Visitors with mobility, sight, hearing, communication and learning impairments.
- Families with young children

### 5 Special interest visitors

- Research students (postgraduates) and staff from UK colleges and universities
- As above, but from abroad
- U3A
- Brecon Beacons Park Society
- People on leisure learning, educational or study visits
- Professional geologists or exploiters of rock (quarry operators etc) wanting to see "best practice" conservation or interpretation of geological sites.
- People interested in the cultural heritage of the landscape.

### 6 Activity visitors

- Walkers (long and short distance)
- Horse-riders
- Cyclists
- Cavers and potholers
- Rock climbers
- Organised outdoor activity groups (all ages)
- Fishermen
- Canoeists

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## Your target audience

Once you've gathered together information about your current visitors and you have an idea of who they are, why they come, how long they stay and what they are interested in, you can decide who else you want to attract. It may be more of the same type of visitor or you might want to entice new groups of people. Once you know who you want to attract, you can work out the best way of attracting them. You can offer them some of the services or facilities they want, and then make sure you tell them about it!

For example, if you want to attract families, you'll need to offer them something that they want to do on their day out, such as:

- easy activities to do; finding, feeling or hearing something
- somewhere to play
- picnic space

And remember that many families want access to toilets and baby-changing facilities.

If you want to attract walkers, they'll want information about:

- how to get to you – public transport information, a map of the site
- the facilities in your area – parking, pubs, cafes, shops and accommodation
- the walks – how long are they, what sort of ground they cover and what's special and interesting about them

You may find it useful to summarise information about your target audiences in a table, like the one on the following page, Adapted from Carter, J. (Ed) 1997, *A Sense of Place: an interpretive planning handbook*. Tourism and Environment initiative, Inverness.



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## Summary of the target audiences for an imaginary walk route around a village

Identifiable visitor group	What interests or expectations do they have?	What background information do they have?	How often do they visit?	How long do they stay?
Short-stay tourists	Pleasant walk around the village; sample the local facilities and services	Likely to be low	Once a year	0.5 – 1 hour
Local people, (mainly adults) including dog walkers	Pleasant walk; meet people; exercise the dog	Variable	Varies from daily (some more than once a day) to once a year	Walk takes c. 0.5 to 1 hour
Local people (family group; children under 11)	Pleasant walk in local and safe environment; opportunity for children to visit the play area	Variable	Frequently	c. 1 – 2 hours

Source: James Carter

### Including as many visitors as possible

It's important to make sure that your interpretation is as accessible as possible and that you aren't inadvertently excluding people by using the wrong kind of equipment or materials. For example, it's much better to have self-closing gates, rather than stiles, on a walking route as they're easier for people to get through and better for people with pushchairs. You'll also want to put a panel at a height and a position where it's easy for children or people in wheelchairs to read. Any interpretation that you develop must comply with the guidelines and regulations given in the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and subsequent additions in 2005.

### Disabled Access

Remember that, like the rest of the population, disabled people are looking for different experiences, but to enjoy and enable these experiences they need to:

- Get accurate, honest and accessible information
- Be able to get there
- Be able to park
- Be able to experience the interpretation
- Find the path, if appropriate, and not get lost
- Physically travel on a path and negotiate gates or barriers
- Be able to use adjacent facilities

From the outset, you should adopt an 'Access for All' approach to your project planning to ensure that access is provided in an inclusive and equitable way.

The Disability and Discrimination Act (1995 and 2005)(DDA) promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people. Section 19 of the Act makes it an offence for a 'provider of services' to discriminate against a disabled person on grounds of their



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disability. You must therefore make reasonable adjustments to allow disabled people to use your interpretation.

Contact the [Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#) Assistant Community Development Officer who will be able to advise on disabled access and point you towards other useful contacts such as the Disabled Access Steering Group who can help you determine local needs and priorities. The Fieldfare Trust\* promotes countryside access for disabled people and would also be able to offer advice and guidance.

\*The Fieldfare Trust works with people with disabilities and countryside managers to improve access to the countryside for everyone. They have produced a number of useful publications including 'Countryside for All Accessibility Standards' and a 'Good Practice Guide', both available through their website; [www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)



### Useful Information:

- Disability and Discrimination Act (1995): [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)
- The Disability Rights Commission: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)
- The Fieldfare Trust: [www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)
- BT Countryside Access for All: Available via [www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)
- Dog Rose Trust: [www.dogrose-trust.org](http://www.dogrose-trust.org)
- CCW By All Reasonable Means: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)



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### 3. Decide what you are going to interpret

#### What are your stories?

Many local people take the things they see daily and the stories they grew up with for granted. But for new residents, and for visitors, they are secrets waiting to be revealed. You can tell the stories of small things – like an ancient stone wall, or the chequered history of the local pub. You can look at bigger items like your church and the people buried in your churchyard. Or you can devise an interpreted trail around the village or nearby area, telling the story of its development over the centuries and the people involved.



There's probably a whole range of stories to tell about your area – it's just a question of deciding which ones are best to tell. But do check that other people find the stories interesting and significant as well! And ensure that people are able to visit the places or things you want to interpret – it's vital to get the owner's permission. You'll also need to find out if anything

similar is already interpreted in your area and if there are any other projects being planned for the area in the future. It's a good idea to see if you can make links to other sites and to services like toilets, shops, pubs, tearooms, accommodation and public transport as well as parking. And you need to check the resources you have available – that includes other sites, services like shops and parking as well as staff, volunteers and money.

#### Gathering your information

The first thing to sort out is what is particularly interesting and special about your site. What have you got to interpret? What are its unique features and why are they important? Collect as much information as you can. Good places to start are:

- your Community Council, who will hold information about your area and the services that are available locally
- older residents, who will remember great events and former personalities
- the [Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#), which holds information about the National Park and its facilities for visitors. They can tell you where the definitive Rights of Way are, where Visitor Centres are located, what sites are Scheduled Monuments, what car parks there are and so on
- local libraries and records centre – for books and articles about your area as well as maps and plans. Old plans and maps can be very useful
- the internet
- local societies – such as local history and wildlife groups
- schools, which usually have a good collection of information about their area

The following background information is likely to be useful:

#### Site-based information

- ownership of your site or area
- all the protected and designated elements of your site – if it includes Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and so on
- archaeology and history of your site or special feature



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## Gathering your information

- information about the key characters who have been involved with it, in the past and now
- interviews with residents and people with specialist interests related to your interpretation
- wildlife interest
- landscape interest
- good viewpoints
- photographs or illustrations
- maps and plans, both contemporary and historic ones
- size and layout of your site
- anything quirky and memorable about your area

## Information about services and events

- transport links to and around your site – bus routes, trains, footpaths, cycle ways and bridleways

- services such as nearby shops, pubs and accommodation, toilets, tourist information centres
- local events
- local products such as food, arts and crafts

## Information about problems

- vandalism, fly-tipping, dog fouling, litter, poor parking
- safety issues such as proximity to deep water, former mine workings, dangerous road crossings etc

## SWOT analysis

One useful way of analysing information is to do a SWOT analysis, looking at the Strengths and Weaknesses and the Opportunities and Threats posed by the site or feature. On the following page is an example of a SWOT analysis for an imaginary village:



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## SWOT analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Knowledgeable and enthusiastic potential leaders in the village.</li> <li>● Several interesting old buildings, especially the church and Church Farm</li> <li>● Water meadows near river</li> <li>● Farmer interested in telling people about his historic buildings and the water meadows</li> <li>● Good views across the valley</li> <li>● Good chance of seeing some wildlife, especially by the river</li> <li>● Pub and village shop</li> <li>● Good circular route around village, using existing rights of way</li> <li>● Public transport available to and from village</li> <li>● Parking available at weekends at the school</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No experienced guided walks leaders – training needed</li> <li>● Busy main road through village</li> <li>● River and meadows liable to be flooded in winter</li> <li>● Wildlife most visible in summer</li> <li>● Church is locked when not in use</li> <li>● Parking only available at weekends</li> <li>● Irregular bus service at weekends</li> </ul> 
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Two or three guided walks per year themed on how life has changed in the village through the centuries</li> <li>● Visitors able to understand local farming through talking to farmer</li> <li>● Small number of high quality walks led by enthusiasts and with support from local business</li> <li>● More visitors mean shop and pub will get increased sales</li> <li>● Church can be unlocked for pre-arranged groups</li> <li>● Increase/boost local economy</li> <li>● Tap into public transport network and increase services</li> <li>● Links with NPA – for advice on route, training and promotion</li> <li>● Potential to attract funding</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Key enthusiasts move away or get fed up</li> <li>● Farmer may change mind about showing people around his farm</li> <li>● No-one or too many people may turn up for a walk</li> <li>● Too many visitors might disturb residents and disrupt tranquillity</li> <li>● Reduction in bus services at end of peak season</li> <li>● Health and Safety issues</li> <li>● Insurance liability issues</li> </ul> 



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## Storing your information

It's worth thinking about how you want to collate and record all the information you've gathered – do you want it on computer so it can be easily shared and copied or is it easier to store stuff in a box? It's important that things don't get lost. You can get advice about how to store your information from the Community Archives Development Group

## Decide what you want to tell people – your theme

Most interpretation is based around a principle theme or themes which communicate the key idea that you want people to understand and remember about your site or feature as a result of your interpretation. The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has four main themes which explore the National Park's unique landscape, its human history, its cultural heritage and its varied habitats. [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org). It's likely that your theme will link in with one of the broad subject areas of the National Park Authority's main themes.

Themes are useful because they enable you to organise and edit your information and help you think through what you really want your visitors to understand, rather than just sending them away with a whole heap of unconnected facts.

Once you've decided that you have got something or things that are special and worth interpreting, you need to decide upon your themes. The themes are the ideas and concepts that you want people to understand after they've experienced your interpretation. If people remember only one thing from their visit to your site or object, what do you want it to be? That's your theme.

Generally, themes should be short and pithy, a single sentence containing one clear idea that reveals what the interpretation is about and is presented in an interesting and provocative way. Having a theme usually makes your interpretation more enjoyable as well – as all the information is linked to the theme.

The Theme Generator is a simple tool developed by Sam Ham, an American interpreter, and adapted by James Carter for Scottish Interpretation Network. To generate your theme all you have to do is finish the following sentences:

1. Generally we think our interpretation project is about.....

2. Specifically we want to tell people about.....

3. After visiting our interpretation project, the one thing we really, really want our audience to understand is that.....  
And when you've put the answer to Question 3 into a short sentence, you'll have your theme!

Remember that most people like hearing 'interesting people' stories. So see if you can link your interpretation to a character, but it must be relevant and interesting.

You can also develop sub-themes to support, and expand upon, your main theme. For example, one of the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's main themes is:

*In the past, present and future, the Brecon Beacons is a living working landscape where human activity shapes the land.*

Five sub-themes expand upon the main theme. Here's an example of one of these:

*The Brecon Beacons National Park is rich in natural resources and the extraction of these raw materials has re-shaped the landscape we see today.*

The Fforest Fawr GeoPark is part of the Brecon Beacons National Park. It is the first Geopark in Wales and it protects some of the unique geology of the western Brecon Beacons. It has the following main theme:

*Created by the mighty forces of nature and then by man, the Forest Fawr GeoPark can inspire, support and teach us about our world.*

And the Brecon Riverside Walk, a local interpretive project, gives us another example of a main theme:

*The clean water, vegetation cover and variety of habitats make the River Usk an ideal home for a variety of rare and threatened wildlife.*



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## 4. How are you going to do your interpretation?

This question covers what kind of interpretive media you are going to use, how you're going to fund it and the timetable for the work.

### What kind of interpretive media do you want to use?



This is an important question that can only really be answered once you've sorted out all the earlier questions! You'll need to be sure why you're doing your interpretation, who it's for and what you want to tell them before you can make the best choice about which kind of interpretation will work best for you. Whatever media you choose, remember that to comply with the Welsh Language Act and many funding bodies' policies, all interpretation should be

bilingual, with both Welsh and English given equal treatment. This has obvious implications for text and script – you'll have less space – so you'll need to edit, edit and then edit again!

There are four broad categories of interpretive media: personal or face to face, on-site, printed and graphic, and electronic. For many people, their first thoughts about interpretive media concentrate on leaflets or panels, but it's a good idea to explore other options such as personal interpretation with a guided walk or an event, or electronic interpretation with a website or audio trail where you can make your information more accessible and multi-layered for a wider audience. There are lots of leaflets and panels around and you might want to do something different, to make your product more noticeable and interesting.

**Personal interpretation** is when visitors interact with someone face to face such as during a guided walk or talk, or through a live performance or presentation from artists, actors and activity and workshop leaders. There's a lot of research which shows that personal interpretation is the most effective and memorable kind of interpretation, but it can be expensive to provide and is often a 'one-off' experience, involving relatively small numbers. The best personal interpretation usually involves an experienced performer who is knowledgeable about their subject and has excellent communication skills.

### Printed and graphic interpretation

includes leaflets, publications, trail guides, indoor and outdoor panels and exhibitions. It's what most people think of when they first consider interpretation. It usually involves a mix of written text and visual material such as illustrations, maps and photographs. It can be cost effective and can reach large numbers of people. The best printed and graphic interpretation has striking design and succinct, stimulating text.

**On-site interpretation** includes 2D and 3D installations such as seating, sculpture and specially designed waymarking. Most of these kinds of interpretation are one-off or small production run installations which are specifically designed for their site. Frequently visually exciting and creative, they often involve local materials and are created by craftspeople. They can be very successful but are sometimes expensive to produce.



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Electronic interpretation covers a wide range of computer and audio based material including websites, audio guides, podcasts, interactive screens and CDRoms. This is a fast developing area of interpretation involving fixed place equipment, such as audio posts, and mobile computer technology involving the use of mobile phones, MP3 players and other sound equipment such as audio wands and CD players. Its potential use and effectiveness for interpretation in nature reserves is the subject of current research being undertaken by the [Countryside Council for Wales](#) the [Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales](#) and the [Brecon Beacons National Park Authority](#).

It's often best to use a variety of interpretive media, as this approach means you can offer different things to different people. Some people love personal interpretation, others find it intrusive or intimidating. Some people enjoy leaflets, others may find them difficult or tedious to read. If you offer a range of different media, for example a small guided walk programme and a self-guided leaflet, you've got a better chance of finding a means of communicating well with a wider range of people. And they can complement each other.

## Advantages and disadvantages of different interpretive media

Personal or face to face Interpretation	
Guided walks, events and activities, story telling, costumed interpreters, street theatre and other performance	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● very effective – research shows that personal interpretation is the most effective kind of interpretation</li> <li>● very flexible – as it's designed specifically for your site</li> <li>● inclusive - can attract a wide audience with people from different ages and social groups</li> <li>● can tell a complex story well</li> <li>● can be creative</li> <li>● responsive to different audiences and their needs on the day</li> <li>● can generate income</li> <li>● can attract good publicity</li> <li>● social experience</li> <li>● can be fun and exciting</li> <li>● can involve multiple skills from different partner groups as co-organisers</li> <li>● can have extended life through websites, photographs, video, reports, post event exhibitions and press coverage</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● outdoor events are weather dependent</li> <li>● some events only reach a small audience</li> <li>● heavy in administration</li> <li>● needs good marketing</li> <li>● needs good forward planning</li> <li>● requires initial financial outlay</li> <li>● needs a range of skills in creation and marketing</li> <li>● audience size can be limited for some events</li> <li>● can be dominated by an individual</li> <li>● can be a one-off experience</li> <li>● if repeated, needs assessment and development</li> </ul> 



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## Printed and graphic interpretation

Leaflets, publications, trail guides, panels and exhibitions

### Advantages

#### All types of printed and graphic interpretation:

- can be unobtrusive in an area
- have good initial impact
- encourage the use of a variety of senses
- can be creative
- people can use them on their own and at their own pace
- some can be used in bad weather



#### Leaflets, publications and trail guides:

- can be used on and off site
- can earn revenue
- can be cheap to produce per unit
- have souvenir value – can be taken home
- can alter language to suit audience
- are portable and pocket-sized
- do not intrude on landscape
- can involve partner organisations such as shops, pubs and B&TBs as distribution outlets
- can include more information than a panel
- can help orientation and navigation

#### Outdoor panels:

- available 24/7
- focus attention on specific features
- can reach a large audience
- easy for people to use
- do not need supervision
- can help orientate visitors
- low maintenance

#### Indoor panels:

- indoor panels/exhibitions can be secure
- easier to be interactive than outdoor panels

### Disadvantages

#### All types of printed and graphic interpretation:

- need good design and writing
- can require high initial financial outlay
- may be ignored and left unread
- are inflexible and dated once produced



#### Leaflets, publications and trail guides:

- require effective distribution
- revenue collection can be difficult with numerous small outlets
- can be potential litter
- have to compete for attention with numerous other publications
- may need re-printing regularly

#### Outdoor panels:

- may require planning permission
- expensive to produce and install
- need regular maintenance and upkeep
- vulnerable to damage by weather, vandalism, animals
- can intrude on landscape
- can cause erosion around sign
- inflexible
- static
- are widely used and may therefore become ignored

#### Indoor panels:

- need space/building
- only available when building open
- immobile
- if high tech, prone to breaking



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## Creative on-site 2D and 3D 'furniture' and installations

Seating, specially designed waymarking, sculpture

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● can focus attention on specific features</li> <li>● available 24/7</li> <li>● can be creative and attractive</li> <li>● can provoke interest</li> <li>● can enhance the appearance of the site</li> <li>● can use local, natural materials</li> <li>● can involve community and craftspeople in production</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● may require planning permission</li> <li>● vulnerable to damage by weather, vandalism, animals</li> <li>● can intrude on landscape</li> <li>● can cause erosion around sign or exhibit</li> <li>● inflexible</li> <li>● immobile</li> <li>● difficult to present complex issues</li> <li>● require regular maintenance</li> </ul> 

## Electronic interpretation

Websites, audio guides, podcasts, interactive screens, CD Roms

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● appeals to a wide audience including younger people</li> <li>● not intrusive in the landscape</li> <li>● opportunities for creative and exciting use of design, sound and/or images</li> <li>● can be multi-layered</li> <li>● opportunities for creative characterisation</li> <li>● can be multilingual</li> <li>● can be used as story-telling</li> <li>● material that can be downloaded from the internet is accessible from some people's home or own equipment</li> <li>● information is easily updated</li> <li>● can be innovative and interactive</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relatively expensive start up costs</li> <li>● some people unconfident using ICT</li> <li>● users need access to specialist equipment – a computer, mobile phone, audio equipment, MP3 etc</li> <li>● possible safety issues associated with use</li> <li>● can isolate users from each other and from the site features</li> <li>● important operational issues such as hire, storage and charging of equipment</li> <li>● technology is developing rapidly so systems vulnerable to dating quickly</li> <li>● equipment can develop faults easily</li> <li>● vulnerable to damage and theft</li> <li>● can be expensive to operate</li> <li>● require regular maintenance e.g. charging batteries for mobile devices</li> </ul> 



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## 5. How will you manage your interpretation?

This question covers how you are going to fund your project, how you will look after it and how you're going to timetable the work.

### How are you going to fund your interpretation?

This is the big question! Who is going to pay for your interpretation? If it's a very small project, you may decide to fund it yourselves through fundraising activities but most groups decide to get external funding for their project – and there's a range of sources for grants to help communities undertake all sorts of interpretive projects.



It's a good idea to work out how much money you need to raise and whether it can be broken down into specific targets i.e. smaller amounts. You will then be in a position to research the funding options. Ask around among other groups who have done similar work and get a variety of quotes for any production costs. You don't want to find that you have underestimated the costs half way through the project! The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority can give advice on potential funding, and there is additional information in the HERIAN Local Interpretation Plans toolkit.

### Potential funding sources

These include:

- Public funding:
  - Welsh Assembly sponsored bodies such as Cadw, Countryside Council for Wales, Wales Tourist Board, Communities First Support Network
  - Health trusts
  - Landfill Tax Credit Scheme
  - Aggregates levy
- Private funding:
  - Charitable trusts and foundations; businesses; sponsorship; donations
- Service organisations:
  - Rotary Club, religious organisations
- Special funds:
  - Heritage Lottery Fund runs a range of grant schemes for different scales of project
  - European funding such as LEADER+, INTERREG 111A.
- Your own fundraising efforts:
  - events, charity shops, appeals, raffles, 100 clubs and membership schemes, legacies, advertising and the internet

Know the differences between these funders: governments and foundations have clear funding policies; individuals will donate on a short term basis and usually inspired by emotions or sympathies; companies wish to gain business benefits; a service organisation may help if you have personal contacts.

For help in finding funders look at the *Apply Yourself* programme or *Funding Information* for latest grants information from the Government, Lottery, major trusts, sponsorship, company funding and Europe. Whatever funding you choose to apply for, you will have to meet certain key criteria, in particular Disability and Discrimination Act requirements.

Be beware of being funding led. You need to maintain clarity of vision and purpose and constantly refer back to the aims of your project: why are you doing it and who is it for? Seek funding that complements what you are offering.



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# INTERPRETATION

If you get grant aid or sponsorship, you will probably have to file a report at the end of the project to keep a record so keep a record (written and photographic) of all work done. Most importantly, don't forget to spend all of the money by the final date!

Remember, funders need to be aware of and involved in any changes you want to make to the project proposal they funded. You will need to keep to deadlines agreed or negotiate changes in the timetable in advance.

Sponsorship may be an alternative to funding. Local businesses may be interested in contributing to the cost of the project, especially if they will ultimately benefit from increased visitor numbers. Sponsorship could be in cash or kind e.g. use of a local mini bus or printing facilities.

## Timetabling the work

Working out what you need to do and when you should do it is a critical part of your interpretation project. It allows you to anticipate and plan for the key stages in the development of your project. Developing an interpretation project will take months rather than weeks. The timing will obviously depend upon the scale of your project, but it's likely to take between 3 and 9 months to develop and complete a small to medium sized project. At busy times of the year, such as in February and March, which are at the end of many organisations' financial year, you could easily find that you had to wait for 4-6 weeks for an interpretive panel to be delivered.

A good way of sorting out the timetable is to start from the end of your project – the event or the launch of your leaflet – and work backwards. Gantt charts are a useful way of doing this.



## Design a 'fundable' project

Just because you need money for a project, it doesn't automatically follow that a grant will be forthcoming. You will be in competition with other groups and will have to ensure that you have an attractive or 'fundable' project which is:

- Specific
- Meeting an important need which is describable and measurable
- Beneficial to your community and visitors
- Supported by your community
- Achievable
- Cost effective, i.e. demonstrate value for money by providing a detailed breakdown of costs
- Topical, reflecting current concerns and practices
- Relevant to the concerns of the potential funders
- Appropriate in size to the potential funder; larger projects can be divided into smaller parts if necessary



## Information

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority website for access to Grantfinder software: [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

Apply Yourself: [www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk)

Funding Information: [www.fundinginformation.org](http://www.fundinginformation.org)

Tips on the day on fundraising: [www.grantsnet.co.uk](http://www.grantsnet.co.uk)

Awards for All: [www.awardsforall.org.uk](http://www.awardsforall.org.uk)

Local Heritage Initiative Grant: [www.lhi.org.uk](http://www.lhi.org.uk)



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Here is an example of a simple Gantt chart for the production of a leaflet:

Imaginary leaflet for village	Jan				Feb				Mar				April				May				June			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Initial meeting	█																							
Set up working group	█																							
Consultation		█	█	█	█	█	█																	
Research		█	█	█	█	█	█	█																
Agree the audience					█	█	█	█																
Agree theme, format and timing					█	█	█	█																
Commission illustrations					█	█	█	█	█	█														
Draft text					█	█	█	█	█	█														
Draft design									█	█	█	█												
Proofread and amendments											█	█	█	█										
Trial draft leaflet													█	█										
Present draft leaflet to group													█	█										
Any further amendments															█	█	█	█						
Agree final leaflet																	█	█						
Translation into English or Welsh																	█	█						
Leaflet printed and distribution																			█	█	█	█		
Launch event																								█
Regular distribution to outlets																								

## Looking after your interpretive project

Apart from events and personal interpretation, most interpretation projects require some form of regular maintenance to keep the material looking good and working well. Outdoor interpretive materials are vulnerable to damage from vandals, animals and weather; and any panels need regular cleaning and the vegetation around them needs clearing. Leaflets and other publications need storing and distributing to various outlets, audio or electronic equipment needs storing and possibly recharging as well as servicing and websites need regular updating.

## Maintenance agreements

It is important to work out an annual maintenance programme for your interpretation and to agree who will be responsible for this. You may decide to set up a group of volunteers to undertake the maintenance, or you may be able to negotiate an agreement with the Community Council. Alternatively you could find a private contractor. But, however you decide to maintain your interpretation, there will be responsibilities and these are likely to involve some costs. Make sure that you get any agreements formalised in writing.



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You also need to agree who owns your interpretation material and decide whether it requires insurance, and if so who will be responsible for it.



### A finite life

It is also important to think about the 'life expectancy' of your interpretation. Things change, information becomes dated or inaccurate and people have experienced your interpretation. It's a good idea to think about how long you want your interpretive material to last. Most outdoor panels need replacing after five years. Other interpretation such as leaflets, audio guides and websites need regular revising and updating.



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## 6. Is it working?

Early on in the development of your interpretation project, it's worth thinking about how you are going to monitor its progress and how you'll know if it's doing what you wanted it to do – in other words, if it's working. Monitoring and evaluation are also important because they show you how you can improve your interpretation. Evaluating your interpretive project provides you with essential data to give feedback to existing funders and may also make it easier for you to attract new funding, as you may be able to demonstrate a need for change or modification.

### Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring can be done in several different ways. The simplest method is to count the users or numbers of materials that are distributed. You can also observe people using your interpretation and interview some of them to find out what they like and dislike about it and what they remember. You can also carry out surveys of users or arrange focus groups to gather feedback from a selection of people who have experienced your interpretation. This kind of feedback, together with a series of personal interviews, will help you to evaluate your interpretation. You can also use websites and mobile phones to gather feedback from visitors.

How you can actually do all of these actions is explained in Section F.



### Useful contacts and web links

- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority: [www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)
- Countryside Council for Wales: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)
- Visit Wales: [www.visitwales.co.uk](http://www.visitwales.co.uk)
- Tourism Partnership Mid Wales: [www.tpmw.co.uk](http://www.tpmw.co.uk)
- Cadw: [www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)
- Royal Commission for Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales: [www.rcahmw.org.uk](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk)
- Powys County Council: [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)
- Carmarthenshire County Council: [www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk](http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk)
- Torfaen County Borough Council: [www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)
- Monmouthshire County Council: [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk)
- Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council: [www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council: [www.merthyr.gov.uk](http://www.merthyr.gov.uk)
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council: [www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk](http://www.neath-porttalbot.gov.uk)
- Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council: [www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk](http://www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk)
- Caerphilly County Borough Council: [www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)
- British Waterways: [www.britishwaterways.co.uk](http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk)
- Forestry Commission: [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)
- Association of National Park Authorities: [www.nationalparks.gov.uk](http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk)
- [www.countrysidecreation.org.uk](http://www.countrysidecreation.org.uk)
- Community Archives Development Group: [www.communityarchives.org.uk](http://www.communityarchives.org.uk)
- The Wildlife Trusts: [www.wildlifetrustswales.org](http://www.wildlifetrustswales.org)
- Local history groups such as members of the Brecknock History Forum, details on: [www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)
- Archaeological Trusts of Wales: [www.cpat.org.uk](http://www.cpat.org.uk); and [www.acadat.com](http://www.acadat.com)

### Information about disability

- Disability and Discrimination Act (1995): [www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)
- The Disability Rights Commission: [www.drc-gb.org](http://www.drc-gb.org)
- The Fieldfare Trust: [www.fieldfare.org.uk](http://www.fieldfare.org.uk)
- Countryside Council for Wales: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)
- BT Countryside Access for All
- Dog Rose Trust: [www.dogrose-trust.org](http://www.dogrose-trust.org)

### Information about interpretation

- HERIAN: [www.herian.org](http://www.herian.org)
- Interpret Wales: [www.dehonglicymru.co.uk](http://www.dehonglicymru.co.uk)
- Heritage lottery fund: [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk)
- Scottish Natural Heritage: [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)
- Countryside Council for Wales: [www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)
- Tourism Partnership Mid Wales: [www.tpmw.co.uk](http://www.tpmw.co.uk)
- Association for Heritage Interpretation: [www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk](http://www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk)
- The Scottish Interpretation Network: [www.scotinterpnet.org.uk](http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk)



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# INTERPRETATION

## SECTION F: IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUR PROJECT



### In this section:

- Getting going
- The writing stage
- Tips for writing interpretation
- The design stage
- Tips for designing interpretation
- General points to consider for developing interpretive media
- Tips for organising a personal interpretation or an event
- Tips for producing creative on-site materials
- Tips for producing printed or graphic interpretation
- Tips for installing a panel or item in the landscape
- Tips for producing electronic interpretation
- Marketing and promotion
- Case studies

### Getting going

Having decided on your aims, the themes and the media you are going to use, you're nearly at the production stage. Stop and get someone to check the accuracy of what you are going to say – it could be an officer at the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority or a knowledgeable local person or another organisation.

### The writing stage

Most interpretation involves writing text. It may be the text for a leaflet, panel or website, or the script for an audio guide, guided walk or performance. Clarity and an arresting, but friendly, writing style, are essential. Your text needs to attract people's attention and be easy and enjoyable to read. It also needs to relate to visitors' experience and follow a logical order so it's easy to understand. Good interpretive writing is hard work – it looks easy but it takes time and effort. You can find advice

in the HERIAN toolkit and Scottish Natural Heritage have produced a very useful series of guidelines for interpretation.

### Tips for writing interpretation:

- Keep it short and sweet! Short paragraphs, mostly short sentences, simple vivid words and easy punctuation
- Use simple, familiar language avoiding jargon or technical terms
- Layer your text – so if people only read the headline they've got the gist of the story. If they want more, then it's in the layers beneath the headline
- Aim your text at 9 -12 year olds – that's a comfortable reading age for most people when they are in a leisure situation, outdoors and in a group. It also helps to make it as accessible to as many people as possible



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- Keep the text to a minimum – brief text can enthuse, while reams are likely to confuse. For panels, aim for about 150-200 words in all, with paragraphs of around 50 words. Don't forget you may need both Welsh and English – so that's only a maximum of 100 words per language. A straight translation may not be your best option – there may be a different story to tell in each language
- Allow time for translation if you decide to produce your interpretation in more than one language
- For printed materials, aim for a good balance between text, images and space; with a maximum of half the space being text, so that it doesn't look daunting
- Interpretation is about communicating ideas not just a string of facts
- One idea per sentence
- Make it personal and friendly – use words like 'you', 'we' and 'them'
- Make it active and present tense rather than passive
- Bring your writing alive by involving as many senses as possible – include information about sounds, smells, tastes and touch as well as sight
- Use metaphors and comparisons to help relate your facts to visitors' lives – such as *You could fit 15 double-decker buses into this tower or This garden is like a motorway service station for birds*
- Use some humour where appropriate
- Think about telling a story using a character to bring your interpretation to life
- Ask questions and get your audience to use their imaginations
- Avoid clichés 'like the plague'!
- Remember your visitors are on a good day out – don't preach or hassle
- Test it out on friends and colleagues
- Be positive – you don't want to depress your readers!

And when words fail you, use good, clear pictures or images. They really can say more than a thousand words – and more people understand them.



## The design stage

Good design is a critical element of all printed and graphic interpretive materials, as well as electronic media and 2D and 3D installations. It's the first thing that people notice and is what will attract people to your interpretation, or turn them away. It is the organisation of the visual elements. Interpretive design is a specialist subject and you'll need to find a designer with relevant experience. For interpretive design, it's vital that the designer understands the theme and messages your interpretation aims to convey – so that the design enhances the theme and creates a cohesive unit.

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has developed a brand for the National Park that can be used by other organisations. This helps to give interpretation materials throughout the National Park a more uniform look and can help organisations as it associates them with the National Park brand. Dehongli Cymru, Interpret Wales, has a directory of interpretive services on their website, [www.dehonglicymru.co.uk](http://www.dehonglicymru.co.uk) and [www.interpretwales.co.uk](http://www.interpretwales.co.uk) The Welsh Language Board can provide advice on bilingual design. You can also find design companies that specialise in interpretation on the [Association for Heritage Interpretation website](http://www.associationforheritageinterpretation.co.uk).



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## Tips for designing interpretation:

- Have a strong focal point and develop a visual hierarchy. Layer the interpretation so it's easy to pick out the primary message. The size of graphics and letters determines the order in which they are viewed – larger elements are seen first
- Remember that you may want to have both Welsh and English text or script for your interpretation; you may also want to produce your interpretation in other languages, depending upon your existing and potential audience



- The materials used for fixed interpretation such as outdoor panels should be sympathetic to their surroundings – make sure they don't dominate the area or obliterate the view! But they do need to be visible
- Use striking images and unusual viewpoints where appropriate
- Many people find maps difficult to use and understand – 'bird's eye' views are often easier to understand
- Simple graphics and symbols work better than words for orientation
- Be aware of the design guidelines in the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Use large point size text to help partially sighted and others with visual impairment. On interpretive panels, make sure the headline or introductory text is at least 48pt, body text at least 18pt

- Choose readable typefaces – simple ones like Arial are easier for most people to read than those with 'serifs' (the twiddly bits at the edges of the letters!) like Times New Roman
- Keep the use of capital letters to a minimum
- Aim for 1/3 text, 1/3 images and 1/3 white space
- Make sure you have good colour contrast to help people with visual impairment
- Remember logos – you may want or need to display the logos of funders as well as any other organisations that have been involved in your interpretation
- Remember copyright – you need a licence to use Ordnance Survey Maps or maps which are based upon their maps

## Some examples of good practice

The leaflet produced by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority for the GeoPark works well because it includes the following design elements:

- It is colourful and attractive
- It has a clear visual hierarchy
- It includes images of people enjoying themselves
- It fits into a standard leaflet racking system and its subject is clear when viewed in a leaflet rack
- The cover summarises the main interest – 500 million years of adventure – Magnificent Mountains, Wonderful Waterfalls and Spectacular Caves
- The cartoons present a complex subject in an understandable way and with humour
- The majority of visitors will be able to relate to, and understand, the links between former shallow seas and a bucket and spade
- It's clear where you can find out more information



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The outdoor panel at Carreg Cennen Castle Woodlands works well because it includes the following features:

- An intriguing and eye-catching title
- A small amount of text presented, in an easy to read format
- The text size is big enough for most people to be able to read it easily
- The design is clear
- The images of the two leaves and the two rock types are striking and relate to what is visible at the site
- Simple images

## General points to consider for developing interpretive media:

Please note that not all of these points are relevant to all kinds of media.

### Have you:

- Consulted with local people and the key organisations involved in the management of your area such as Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the Local Authority, the Community Council, Countryside Council for Wales and the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales?

- Got permission from the landowner if appropriate?
- Checked whether you need public liability insurance or planning permission if appropriate?
- Followed Disability and Discrimination Act guidelines?
- Checked all Health and Safety issues?
- Carried out a Risk Assessment if necessary?
- Checked that your interpretation is accessible to as many people as possible, both physically and intellectually?
- Agreed whether you want to provide text or script in Welsh and English?
- Thought about producing your material in other languages?

## Tips for organising a personal interpretation or an event:

- Have you got permission from the landowner?
- Is your event to be pre-booked by participants or is it open to all on the day?
- Check that any grounds or buildings you want to use are not already booked
- If the event is outside, do you need a wet weather alternative venue or activity?
- Check dates for big national or international events such as Wimbledon, Rugby and World Cup
- Think about linking in with national events such as Bat week, Tree week etc
- Think carefully about arranging something for a Bank Holiday – there are lots of people around but there is also a lot of competition
- Investigate local transport provision and the facilities for visitors such as parking space and toilets – do you need stewards, are you going to charge?



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- Have you checked with the police that the access for the event is satisfactory?
- Do you need first aid services for your event? If you are involving animals do you need a vet?
- Have you advertised the event allowing enough time for people to plan to attend the event? You need a 2 month 'lead-in' time to raise the profile of an event
- Location is important – keep it simple and don't spread an event all over the place
- Don't overstretch the group – keep it small and manageable at first: it can grow the second year

- When looking for funding, try to go for less than 50% from funders as this means you are already covering most of the cost of the event and so it's more sustainable
- Check insurance – the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority advises Public Liability of £1m
- Think about partnership angle – who else can you involve?
- Make sure you clean and clear up after event – take down the posters etc
- If other groups and organisations are involved, they must be acknowledged and thanked – on publicity material as well as publicly at event and formally afterwards



## Tips for producing creative on-site materials:

- Remember that the process of producing arts-based creative on-site interpretive materials is at least as important as the finished product. You can achieve community development and build working partnerships through the process
- Consider interpreting myths and legends and local characters as well as the wildlife and cultural interest
- Check whether you need planning permission
- Check whether you need public liability insurance
- Check all the Health and Safety issues associated with your installation
- Check your installation complies with the Disability and Discrimination Act
- Find local artists and craftspeople if at all possible
- Can you involve the local community in the design or manufacture of the project?
- Can you involve the local school and youth groups in your project?
- Can you use local products – wood, stone and other materials?
- Think about maintenance and potential damage at the design stage



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## Tips for producing printed or graphic interpretation:

- Have you checked the copyright of all material?
- Do you need a licence to reproduce any current maps?
- Do you need permission to use any images or text?
- If you are using a map, have you included a scale, indicated North and provided information about facilities such as toilets?
- Does your interpretation comply with the guidelines in the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005?
- Is your leaflet designed so that it can be downloaded from the internet?
- If you are producing a leaflet, remember that you may want it to fit into a standard envelope and display rack
- Don't forget the distribution of your leaflet – it's not going to interpret your place or object if it is sitting in a box somewhere. You need an effective distribution system – you can buy this service from a number of specialist companies

## Tips for installing a panel or item in the landscape:

- Have you checked if you need planning permission?
- Have you worked out where it will be sited? Check if the site is safe and acceptable to the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Planning Department, the Highways Agency and the Local Authority
- Check whether you need public liability insurance
- Think about the location of your panel; people will stand around it – is the ground surface suitable or do you need to make it more robust?
- If vandalism is likely to be a problem, you may want to locate your panel or structure in a busy area where people will often be around

- Is the panel or item located somewhere that is accessible to people of all ages and abilities?
- Check that any views or features which the panel refers to can actually be seen from the panel – you may need to trim branches in the future!
- Think about the impact of direct sunlight on your panel – some colours fade more quickly in direct sunlight. Direct sunlight can also be reflected off the surface of some outdoor panels
- Think about overhanging tree branches – you may end up with leaves and bird droppings on your installation
- Check that rain water can drain off your panel

## Tips for electronic interpretive media:

- Remember to follow the Disability and Discrimination Act guidelines, especially for the design of websites
- Audio guides offer opportunities for effective and memorable characterisation – often through one main narrator and a series of additional voices



### Information

There are numerous helpful hints and tips on writing and designing interpretation on the following websites:

HERIAN: [www.herian.org](http://www.herian.org)

Dehongli Cymru Interpretation: [www.dehonglicymru.co.uk](http://www.dehonglicymru.co.uk)

Welsh Tourist Board: [www.visitwales.co.uk](http://www.visitwales.co.uk)

Welsh Language Board: [www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk](http://www.bwrdd-yr-iaith.org.uk)

Shropshire County Council: [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

Scottish Natural Heritage: [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Scottish Interpretation Network: [www.scotinterpnet.org.uk](http://www.scotinterpnet.org.uk)

The Welsh Tourist Board has an excellent toolkit for festival and events organisers, available on their website: [www.timelineforevents.co.uk](http://www.timelineforevents.co.uk)



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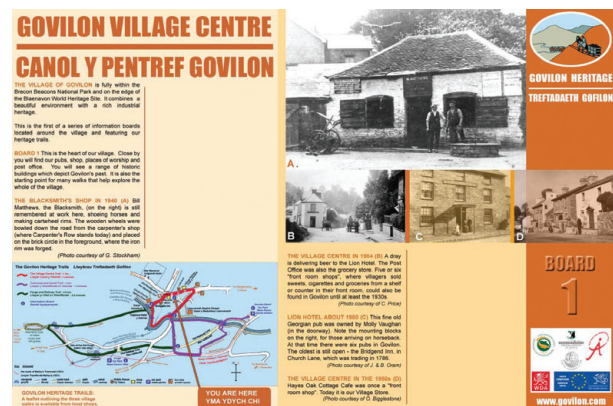


- Sound effects can bring a site or story to life and make it memorable
- Keep the content short – around 2 minutes is the maximum time most people will concentrate on audio material
- Remember that electronic material needs to be well produced. As a society, we are used to high quality television and internet material, and anything that looks amateur is unlikely to be well received by the public

## Marketing and promotion

Marketing and promotion are essential aspects of your interpretation project. There's not much point in producing amazing interpretation unless people come and experience it for themselves! And they won't come if they don't know about it. You will need to tell people about your project. It's worth contacting your local media such as local newspapers and radio stations in the early stages of your project as they may be interested in an article about your plans, and will certainly want to follow this up as the project develops and is completed. Most local media also produce a 'What's On' section and you can usually get free promotion for your event or launch there. You can also advertise an event through the What's On publications produced by the National Park Authority and by the

local authorities. However these publications are usually produced annually and so are prepared in the autumn preceding the year's events. You'll need to find out about the copy date for these publications and plan your entry well in advance. For an event, you need to get the information into the media in sufficient time to allow people to plan their visit, generally about 6-8 weeks in advance of the event date. You'll also need to promote the event for 2 or 3 weeks immediately before the event – through posters, media coverage and advertisements.



### Links:

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority:  
[www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

HERIAN: [www.herian.org](http://www.herian.org)

Scottish Natural Heritage: [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

Countryside Council for Wales:  
[www.ccw.gov.uk](http://www.ccw.gov.uk)

Disability and Discrimination Act (1995):  
[www.opsi.gov.uk](http://www.opsi.gov.uk)

Association for Heritage Interpretation:  
[www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk](http://www.heritage-interpretation.org.uk)



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## Case studies

### Govilon Heritage

Govilon Heritage Group was formed in 2004 in response to the village being included in the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. Working with the village community, the group has produced a series of interpretive materials for their village through consultation with the local community and by working with pupils from the school.

#### They have produced:

- A series of 3 Heritage Trails in and around the village of Govilon. The shortest trail is a circular route around the village and there are two longer routes exploring the local industrial archaeology of old transport routes
- Four interpretive panels located at key points around the village
- A logo for their village which includes key historical features
- A reprint of a book containing villagers' stories about the history of the village
- A village website: [www.govilon.com](http://www.govilon.com)

#### Their tips for success:

- Start with a small, easily achievable project such as a publication and build the confidence of the group
- Involve as many people as you can, early on
- Research the range of small grants that are available in your area – you may be surprised what is available
- Remember that websites need long term maintenance – they have to be regularly updated to be effective
- Research the ownership of any site for an outdoor panel and get their permission in writing for any panels
- Check whether you need planning permission and public liability insurance for any panels

Their funding came from a variety of sources including the Welsh Assembly (Article 33), Rural Community Action, Monmouthshire County Council and Awards for All Wales.

Frances Baines, chairperson of Govilon Heritage Group says

"We've been really pleased at the way that our project has gone and we've received many compliments. It's brought people together in the village and we've had fantastic support from Brecon Beacons National Park, especially from the wardens, as well as from Monmouthshire County Council, Rural Community Action, and the Community Council."

### The Henry Vaughan Walk

The Henry Vaughan Walk is a circular route around the village of Talybont on Usk. It was created to celebrate the life and work of Henry Vaughan, a 17th century scholar, soldier, poet and doctor. He was one of the great confessional, visionary poets and he influenced many later poets including Wordsworth. Residents worked with the local Community Council, the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and local landowners to improve the rights of way used for the walk and developed a leaflet, map panels and a series of swing-out poetry posts.



#### The group have produced:

- A 4km circular walk around Talybont using existing rights of way, with new waymarking, upgraded gates and stiles
- A leaflet describing the walk
- A rest garden with seating and a herb wheel featuring medicinal plants used by Henry Vaughan
- A logo for the signs and waymarking of the trail featuring a swan, as Henry Vaughan was known as the 'Swan of Usk'



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### Their tips for success:

- Consider becoming a constituted group as it's easier to apply for grant aid
- Use existing rights of way for the route as they are established and easier to maintain
- Develop a theme for the walk - Henry Vaughan gave cultural and historic value to an attractive walk and this helped obtain funding
- Install kissing gates rather than stiles where possible as they are easier for people to use
- Plan ahead to allow sufficient time to engage busy, successful contractors
- Beware of the 'VAT trap' – you could lose 17.5% of your grant if your group is ineligible to reclaim VAT
- Check whether you need planning permission and allow for its cost and the time required to apply for it

### Ystradowen and Llynfell Ward Summer Fete

Members of the Residents Association at Ystradowen in the Llynfell Ward organise the annual village fete. Their first 3 fetes included celebrity strong men, which were popular but expensive. This year's fete features a local Marching Band as well as the usual stalls, displays and demonstrations. A fete programme doubles as a raffle ticket. The Residents Association has sought grants for a second hand Portakabin to store equipment, which also doubles up as an office, safekeeping facility and first aid post during the fete.

### Their event includes:

- An opening ceremony with a recognised local figure
- A major attraction which involves the public
- A dog show, car boot sale and flower display
- Beer tent and catering
- Stalls and exhibitions by local schools and community groups
- Face painting, bouncy castles and other craft demonstrations
- Displays of vintage cars, bikes and agricultural engines

- Police presence with vehicles, bikes and sometimes their helicopter
- Participatory games such as junior football, tug of war and sports

### Their tips for success:

- Being a constituted group makes it easier to apply for grants
- The programme raises money through advertising local businesses
- A leaflet promoting the fete is produced at Easter and distributed at other events; it includes directions and contact details
- Remember to budget for public liability insurance
- Involve the police at an early stage for advice on traffic and parking and help with displays
- Produce a running timetable for everyone involved in the event
- Involve local organisations that are fundraising – schools, youth groups, churches and chapels
- Fill the venue and have sound or music to create a lively atmosphere
- Have lots of seating around the fete so people can rest and chat
- People are more willing to help with the event than join committees

Their funding came from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Sustainable Events Fund, Carmarthenshire County Council, Communities First Trust Fund and the Millennium Stadium Charitable Trust.

Vera Morgan, Secretary of the Ystradowen Residents Association says:

"This annual fete is well established. It's always on the first Saturday in July. We build on our success and learn from our mistakes. We are inundated with people wanting to help in the week before the fete. The Residents Association also receives money from Carmarthenshire County Council for its recycling unit and this helps fund the fete."



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## Gwynfe Spring Show

Gwynfe village staged a weekend arts event with funding from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Sustainable Fund. The event involved a Blues and Boogie Woogie evening and art exhibitions as well as arts and craft demonstrations. Local ladies from the Women's Institute and the church organised Traditional Welsh Afternoon Teas.



### Their event included:

- Five local schools who were invited to exhibit pupils' paintings of Red Kites
- Local professional artists exhibiting and selling their work
- Workshops with badge making equipment and display animals
- Local craftspeople who displayed and sold their work

### Their tips for success:

- It's really helpful to have a committee for support
- Get local artists and suppliers involved in an art-based event
- People prefer to offer their help 'on the day' rather than to join a committee
- Having a broad environmental theme, such as Red Kites, made people interested in the event
- Arranging an event over two days, especially a weekend, works well

- Filling the hall with lots of material helps create a successful exhibition

Their funding came from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority's Sustainable Events Fund, the Arts Council of Wales, Carmarthenshire County Council and Somerfield Stores.

June Maderia-Cole, the event coordinator, said:

"The show was a good thing for the village – it was a new event and people were curious to see what it involved. We had a lot of visitors who came to find out what was going on! It was a great opportunity for all generations to meet, mingle and exchange views".



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## APPENDIX 1: PRE-CONTACT CHECKLIST

Print this off and use it to check that you have done the following before contacting an expert. If you can let them have a copy before you meet them it will save you both time.

**Why are you wanting to do an interpretation project?**

**What are you planning to do?**

**Who do you want to visit?**

**What are your main stories?**

Have you:

- Thought about what you want to interpret?
- Found out who owns the site or feature?
- Collected as much background information as possible?
- Contacted landowners for permissions?
- Found out about any other existing interpretation in your area?
- Found out as much as you can about your existing audience?
- Decided on your target audience?
- Thought about what interpretive media you might use?
- Consulted DDA guidelines?
- Found out about any possible funding?



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