



# START HERE: HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This section explains how to get the most out of the Sense of Place Toolkit.

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# WHAT IS THE SENSE OF PLACE TOOLKIT AND WHAT CAN IT BE USED FOR?

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The Sense of Place Toolkit is a collection of examples and resources to help you benefit from the special qualities of the Biosphere. We use the word 'toolkit' because it is focussed on practical outcomes. In the same way that a plumber's toolkit contains different tools for different jobs, the Sense of Place Toolkit can be adapted to your individual needs and interests.

You don't need any special skills or expertise to use this Toolkit. It's simply about making use of local knowledge and enthusiasm in new and practical ways. All you need is a passion for your local area and a willingness to do some detective work or be creative!

The Toolkit is not designed to be read from cover to cover like a book. Instead, think of it as a recipe book that you can 'dip into' whenever you need some fresh ideas and inspiration.

**You might like to use the Toolkit when:**

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

# STEP 1:

## DECIDING WHAT'S RELEVANT TO YOU

This Sense of Place Toolkit is organised into different sections, each one focussing on a different special quality of the Biosphere:

**Wildlife & Natural Beauty:** the diversity of the natural environment – from hill tops to coastline, its wetlands, lochs and rivers are all bursting with life.

**Heritage & Culture:** exploring the places where people and events have shaped the character of the area – from historical, industrial and religious heritage, to famous connections and local stories.

**Inspiration:** the importance of the area for inspiring the creative arts, both past and present.

**Tranquillity:** the area's special sense of peace, quiet and remoteness.

**Recreation & Enjoyment:** the range of outdoor activities that can be enjoyed locally, including walking, cycling, wildlife watching, sailing, fishing and golfing.

**Local produce:** the abundance of quality food and crafts that are produced locally. Produce ranges widely from Ayrshire potatoes, artisanal cheese and ice-cream to meat from local breeds such as Galloway cattle. The area is also renowned for its crafts from pottery to spinning, weaving and knitting.



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

# STEP 2:

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Each section of the Toolkit contains three types of information:



- **Context**, providing a short description of the special quality and explaining why it is important to the Biosphere's sense of place. This background information provides a 'snap shot' for you and your customers or visitors. This information (including many of the images contained in the Toolkit) is available for you to download from the Biosphere website and use free of charge in your own publicity materials.



- **Examples**, suggests some favourite places and things to do as recommended by local people. This information is intended to inspire you to use your own knowledge to identify the popular activities and interests that people in the Biosphere enjoy locally. A case study demonstrates how local facilities, attractions or communities have used the special quality to promote a business, place or event.
- **Information**, suggests actions you can take and places to search to find out more about your own special place.
- **Worksheets**, (attached separately), provide step-by-step guidance on how to get the most out of the Toolkit and customise its resources relevant to you and your interests. Each section of the Toolkit has its own worksheet, which includes suggested activities, useful contacts, references and links to further about information the special qualities of the Biosphere.



You may have already decided which sections of the Toolkit are relevant you. Now read over your chosen sections in detail and use the relevant worksheet(s) to put together a simple plan of how you are going to use the Toolkit.

# STEP 3:

## ACTION!

The Sense of Place Toolkit can help you to understand the special qualities of the Biosphere and develop an action plan of how to benefit from them. The final step in the process relies on **you** to put **your** plan into action.



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



**Refer to the worksheet(s) you have completed and start with the actions that are easiest to complete.**

**A good way to start is by including information about the Biosphere and its special qualities in your own publicity materials,** using the resources available in the Toolkit. This can be done very easily the next time you update your website, social media, printed literature and so on. This adds a sense of place to your publicity. People prefer to deal with organisations they can identify with and relate to – promoting your local sense of place helps people to do this. If you are a business, it can also give you an advantage over competitors and encourage customers to place greater value on your products and services.

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

There are lots of other simple steps you can take using the Toolkit. Examples include:



**If you are a community group...**

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



**If you are a business...**

- Develop materials to help your customers explore the area and get more from their stay. Perhaps a map of your favourite local walks and places to visit; or an I-Spy sheet and other games for families with children.
- Tell the story of your own family or business – and use this story to 'personalise' your products and celebrate your own local heritage.
- Consider the benefits of using local suppliers and produce next time you review your supply chain – and make a feature of these local links in your marketing.



**If you are an organisation...**

- Consider the special qualities of the Biosphere when developing or updating your organisation's plans and strategies – how can you help to support and enhance these qualities, both now and in the future?
- Use the Toolkit to improve your team's own understanding of the Biosphere, its special qualities and sense of place. Encourage colleagues to use the Toolkit when providing information to visitors and communities.
- Help put the Biosphere 'on the map' by promoting the area and its special qualities at every opportunity! The Biosphere is a brand new status for the region, so please help to raise awareness of its local benefits, national importance and international connections.