



St. Margaret's

“ Basking in the first light of the day, this isolated 'island' in the midst of the White Cliffs has at its heart the lovely seaside village of St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe and secluded cove at St. Margaret's Bay. ”



Need for the Project

St. Margaret's initially came to Hidden Britain South East via referral from Tourism South East. A small group of businesses had got together to try and take positive steps to encourage tourism in and around the village.

Working with Hidden Britain and the Kent Downs AONB through the Interegg IIIA Transmanche sustainable tourism project, consultation was held with all the businesses which identified the following key issues:

- A lack of visitor information on the village and its attractions
- A lack of promotion
- A lack of cohesive working amongst the businesses
- St. Margaret's was dependant on outside agencies to promote the village
- Tourism in the village was very seasonal

Key Facts

County:	Kent
District:	Dover
Population:	2500
Project Started:	2008



The Process

Hidden Britain and the KDAONB then worked to support the establishment of a local tourism group, encouraging wider businesses and community members to work more closely together and manage St. Margaret's as a destination. A tourism product audit was undertaken to

identify the businesses and key features of the area for visitors, and to gain a current picture of the tourism economy in St. Margaret's.

The group settled on the name and brand of "First Light Coast & Country" which neatly summed up the destination as a whole. The KDAONB Interegg project funded the publication of the initial leaflet as a quick win. The First Light group then used this as a platform to bring more businesses into the organisation and to grow the initiative.

The First Light website was set up shortly afterwards, developed by volunteers with input and assistance from Hidden Britain, and this combined with the leaflet provided the key vehicles for promoting the village and area.

To date the group has retained a fairly loose structure with a rotating chair and secretary for meetings. However, despite this, there has been plenty of volunteer input into the group's various projects and initiatives. Recently the group has drafted a constitution and code of conduct, which have been agreed and will be formally implemented as and when needed.

What is Hidden Britain South East?

Hidden Britain South East offers support to rural communities to help them uncover the fascinating wealth of landscape, history and culture within Britain's countryside. What's really special is that the local communities themselves, develop truly unique and distinctive experiences for people who visit their towns and villages.

Hidden Britain has been working in the South East since 2004 to encourage tourism at a locally managed level. The project aims to facilitate rural regeneration and community development where it is needed most. The project is funded by SEEDA through the Rural Development Programme for England.



Hidden Britain

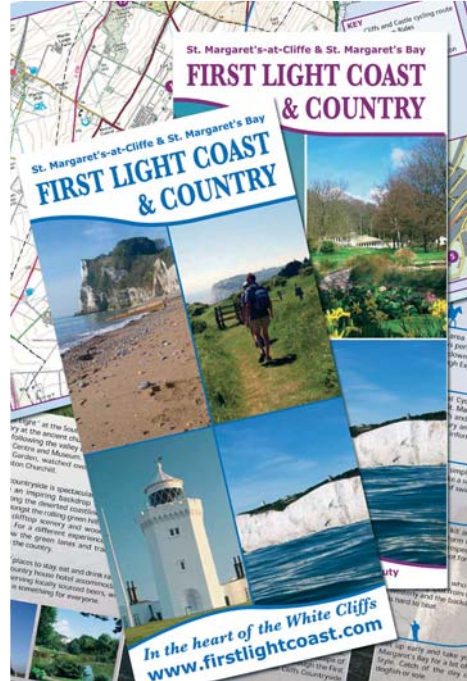
Progress to date

Who is Involved?

The First Light Coast & Country Group comprises 19 active members drawn from local businesses and representatives from the community. This core group represents the interests of 35 tourism businesses in and around St. Margaret's, who are all kept updated with group activities.

The core group are not only involved in direct implementation and planning of initiatives, but many contribute financially to the work the group undertakes.

The group has been supported by the KDAONB, Visit Kent, Best of Dover, Deal & Sandwich and Hidden Britain South East.



Project Outputs

- ▶ The group have produced 2 incarnations of the "First Light Leaflet" an A3 folded to DL publication detailing the businesses and countryside activities available in and around the village.
- ▶ The First Light website at www.firstlightcoast.com has been developed and is currently maintained by local volunteers.
- ▶ The group have set up twitter and facebook accounts to help promote the website.
- ▶ The First Light group have exhibited for the last two years at the Kent Tourism & Leisure Show.
- ▶ The group have developed a constitution and code of conduct for the organisation.

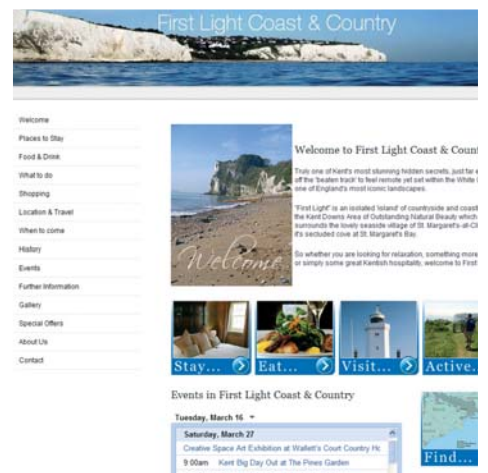
Status of Funding

£2,000 was originally sourced through the Interegg IIIa Transmanche Sustainable tourism project to develop the 2008 First Light Leaflet.

A further £1,500 was sourced from local businesses to cover the costs for the redesign and reprint of the leaflet in 2010. The group implemented a tiered system in this new publication, giving more visibility to those businesses who did contribute.

The website is funded by further contributions from local businesses and maintained by volunteers to keep the running costs to a minimum.

Group Members and local businesses also contribute to the costs for opportunities as they arise, as all see the value in promoting St. Margaret's as a wider destination.





Project Achievements



► Businesses engaged (35)

The group represents and encourages participation from all the businesses (tourism or otherwise) in and around St.Margaret's. Of these perhaps 19 are regular participants in group projects.

► No. of volunteers involved (est. 19)

The majority of group members have volunteered their time and efforts at some point in the process, whether by involvement in proofing publications, supplying copy and images, undertaking research, distribution, representation at events or hosting meetings.

► Skills & training accessed

Whilst no formal training has been arranged as part of the project, volunteers have gained skills and experience in various areas, most particularly in; project management, destination management, commissioning and working with designers and printers.

► Marketing support provided

HBSE has assisted First Light in development of content for Ruralways and several other destination websites, both regionally and nationally. HBSE also enabled First Light to take part in the Flora Pro-Activ promotion, to have a presence at the Bleriot event in July 2009 and helped arrange their participation in the Kent Travel & Leisure Show.

► The First Light group, has had real success in business engagement. Due to this the group has been able to mostly self-finance its actions, which is an important step towards sustainability for the future.



Hidden Britain Input

Hidden Britain became involved via a recommendation from Tourism South East, and initially worked in conjunction with the KDAONB sustainable tourism officer to support the group and deliver the first leaflet (including creating some of the maps) and the logo.

Following on from this HBSE assisted with building and updating the First Light website (with input and content provided by the group) which has now been handed over to a local volunteer to update. Hidden Britain worked with and advised the group on how to draw up their constitution and implement the group structure, as well as supporting the First Light Group to develop the content for Ruralways and other destination sites.

Hidden Britain has been instrumental in assisting in planning distribution of the publications, arranging wider marketing opportunities, and providing structural support to maintain momentum and ensure the First Light group moves forward.



Hidden Britain SE Case Study

St. Margaret's

Going Forward

- ▶ The group is currently distributing the new leaflet widely across the South East, they have divided up the task amongst the members to spread the load.
- ▶ The First Light group are working together to develop a “St. Margaret’s day” which could form part of the Deal festival. This is hopefully a more sustainable method of creating a new event and can act as a springboard to more First Light events in the future.
- ▶ The group is also developing a series of themed itineraries to bring together some of the key strengths of the destination and make them accessible to the visitors.
- ▶ The group are also involved in one of the bookable products in the Kent Downs portion of the South East Protected Landscapes Project



Lessons Learned

- ▶ There is no substitute for real business engagement, for enabling things to happen and to form a real sustainable base for an initiative.
- ▶ However a group based totally on businesses will often struggle to have the time to commit to a project that a broader community group might. You need to manage this and ensure your projects work on a sustainable level of input.
- ▶ A lot can be achieved with only a small amount of financial input, look at the resources you have

try to utilise them as far as possible.

- ▶ It is important to keep up momentum and focus on an initiative once past the initial phases. Keep working on new ideas and projects to keep volunteers and businesses interested and engaged.

“ *The project has made us look further than just rooms, food and drink but into the future, and helped us identify what we all knew but could not really bring together under one banner, but most importantly it has kept the quality of St Margarets intact all year round.* ”

Nigel Wydymus

The Coastguard Pub & Restaurant

This case study forms part of a series evaluating the impacts and benefits of the Hidden Britain South East Project across the region. The Project is managed by the South East Rural Community Councils (SERCC) in partnership with Tourism South East. The Hidden Britain South East Project is funded by SEEDA through the Rural Development Programme for England



Further Information
www.firstlightcoast.com
www.hiddenbritainse.org.uk
www.sercc.org.uk
www.tourismse.com
www.seeda.co.uk/rdpe

