



The importance of reconnecting people to place

East Suffolk Community Partnership Forum workshop
East Suffolk Economic Development Team

Icebreaker

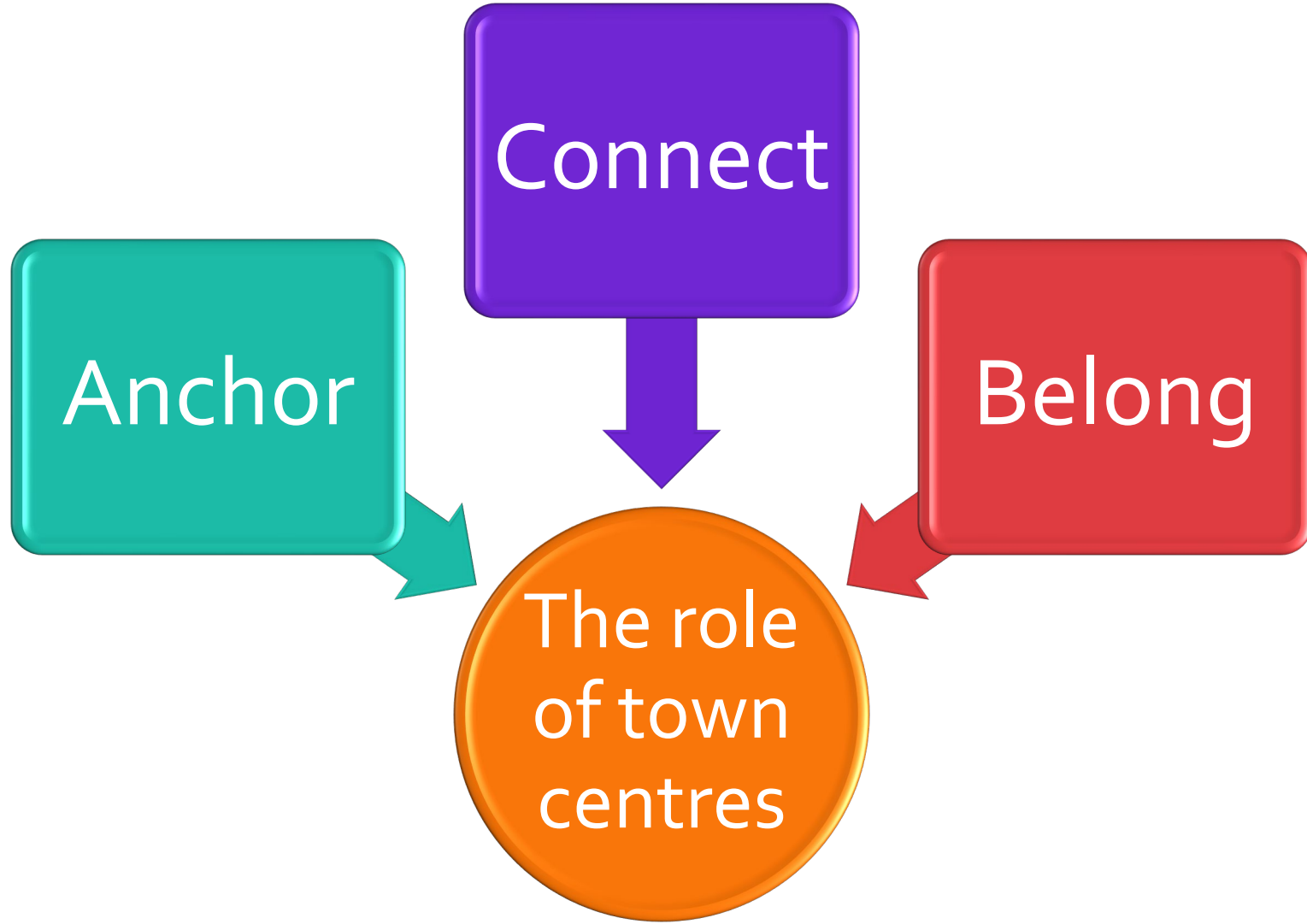
Everyone stand up!

Workshop structure

1. Overview of the role of town centres
2. East Suffolk Town Revitalisation Programme
3. Case studies
4. Workshop questions

Community Partnership themes to consider throughout this workshop:

- Isolation and loneliness
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Financial inequality



Why?

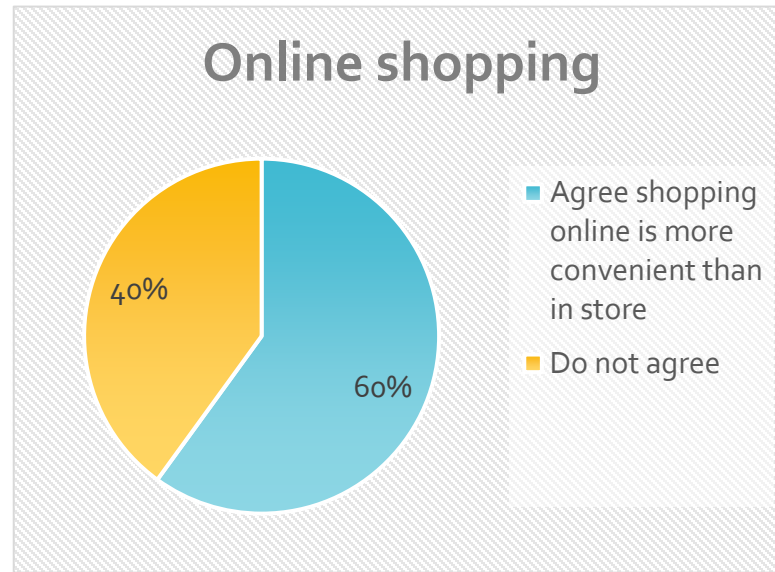
*Retail expert Bill Grimsey set out a vision for town centres and high streets that 'build back better' by transferring power to local communities, arguing that local communities could develop new models for their high streets and town centres, **based on quality of life and local needs rather than mass consumerism.***

- **2020**, How community power could save the high street - New Local

Challenges faced by town centres

- The shift to online shopping
- Changing tastes
- Squeezed incomes
- Costs of overheads for businesses
- Changes to how we live, work and socialise

The Changing Face of the High Street Market Report 2022



60% of UK consumers agree that visiting a shopping destination is a good way to socialise with friends/family.



79% of UK consumers believe shopping areas are an important to the local community.

East Suffolk high streets / towns

Vary in character
and vibrancy

Some are major
destinations within the
visitor economy others
are local service
functions

Provide a wealth of
cultural experiences and
opportunities
for social interaction

Some high streets
chains and banks
remain in our
larger towns

Provide employment
opportunities

Provide key services
to our residents

Serve our rural
communities

Evolving and
changing

Majority of businesses
are in our market towns
are family-owned
businesses and small
and micro- enterprises.



Headline Findings – East Suffolk

44%

Of town centre users surveyed visited for a regular shopping trip, such as groceries.

53% of those surveyed stayed in the town for less than hour

About half (51%) of respondents visit their town centre more than once a week.

Eight out of ten respondents (80%) were aged 45 and over. Of these, just over half of respondents (54%) were aged 65 and over.

The average spend per visiting party was £26.64

Positive messages about: feeling of safety, welcoming feeling and customer service

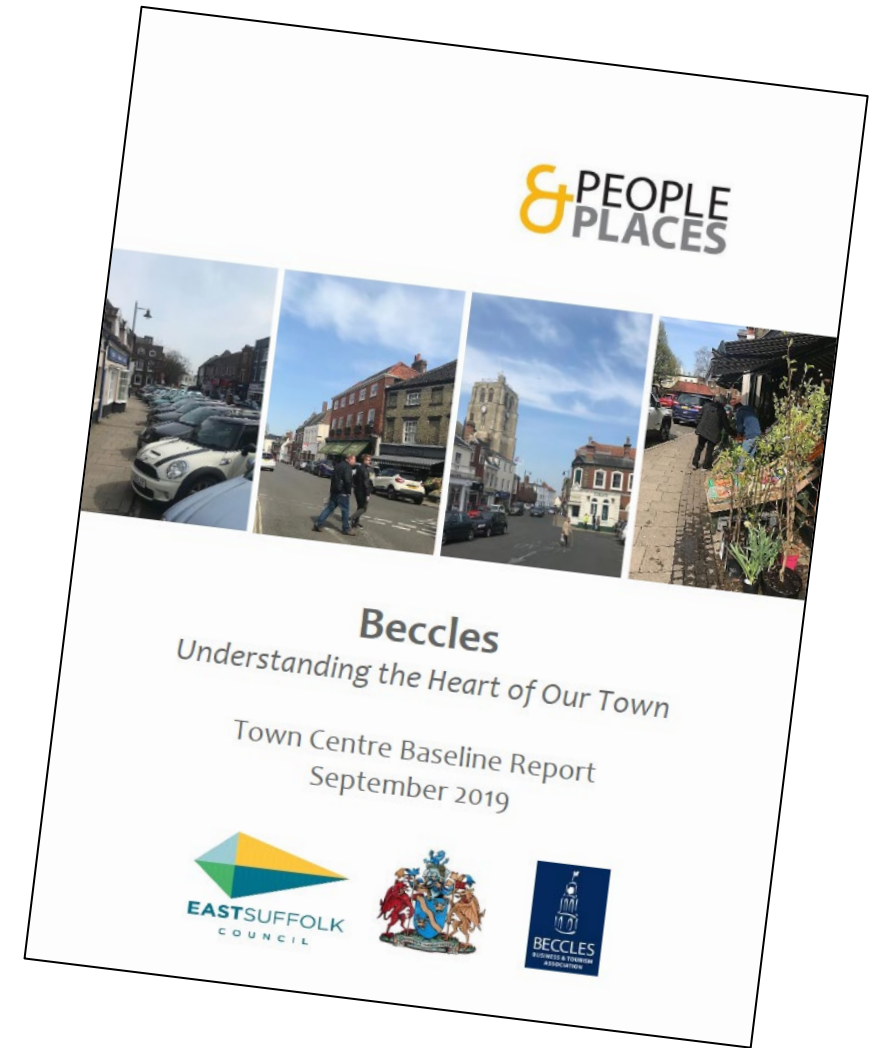
So, how have ESC been supporting our towns and high streets?



East Suffolk Town Revitalisation Programme

Background

- Commissioned research across all East Suffolk's Town centres (People and Places)
- Engagement and close working with place based groups
- Supporting town groups to develop action plans and projects.
- Enabling economic and community development projects in East Suffolk's town centre's.
- Financial support through grants programmes
- Dedicated officer resource for the towns



Ambition of the programme

Become attractive & popular destinations for all

Capitalise on individual character and assets

Enhance their visitor experience

Create visually stimulating and attractive town centres

Encourage increased footfall to the benefit of all businesses

Increase spending opportunities

Install pride and a sense of belonging to East Suffolk residents

Maximise the opportunity for community interaction to support health and wellbeing.

Allow businesses to better communicate with customers and each other

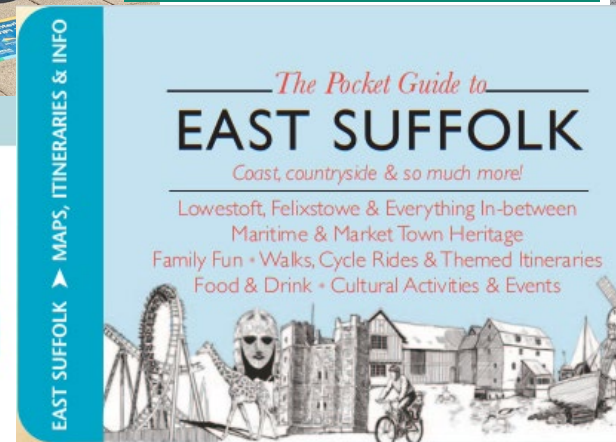
Be innovative and use creativity to offer customers an experience they cannot get online



Encourage and support collaboration amongst all stakeholders to work towards a shared vision

To name a few!



Projects and investment that support East Suffolk Town Centres

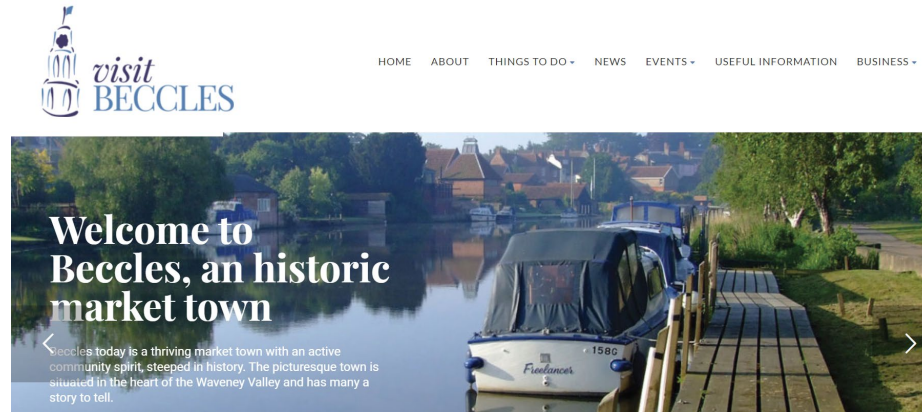




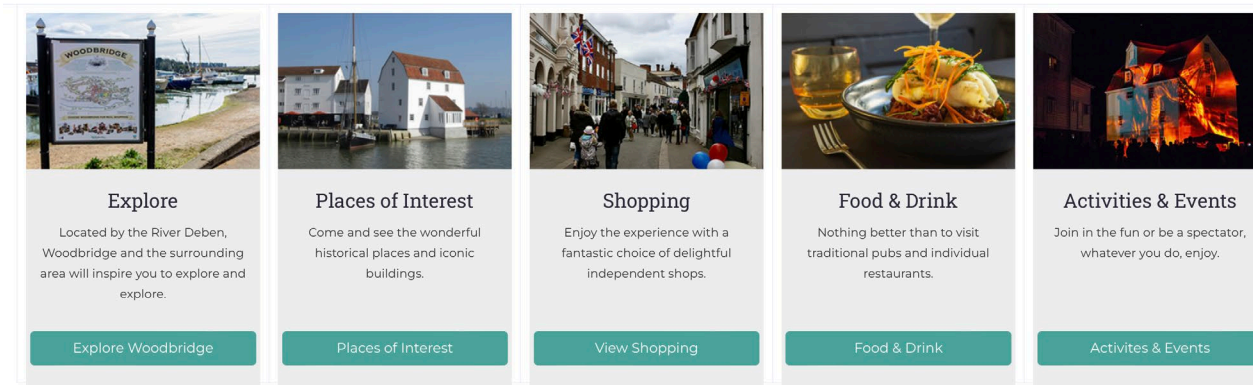
Best practice case studies: marketing

Using effective marketing to attract new visitors and encourage exploration of town assets

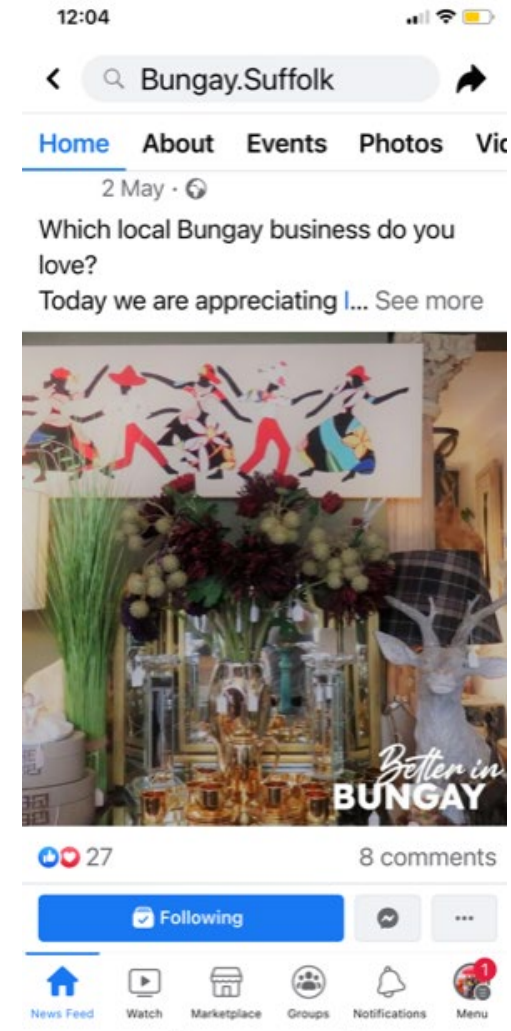
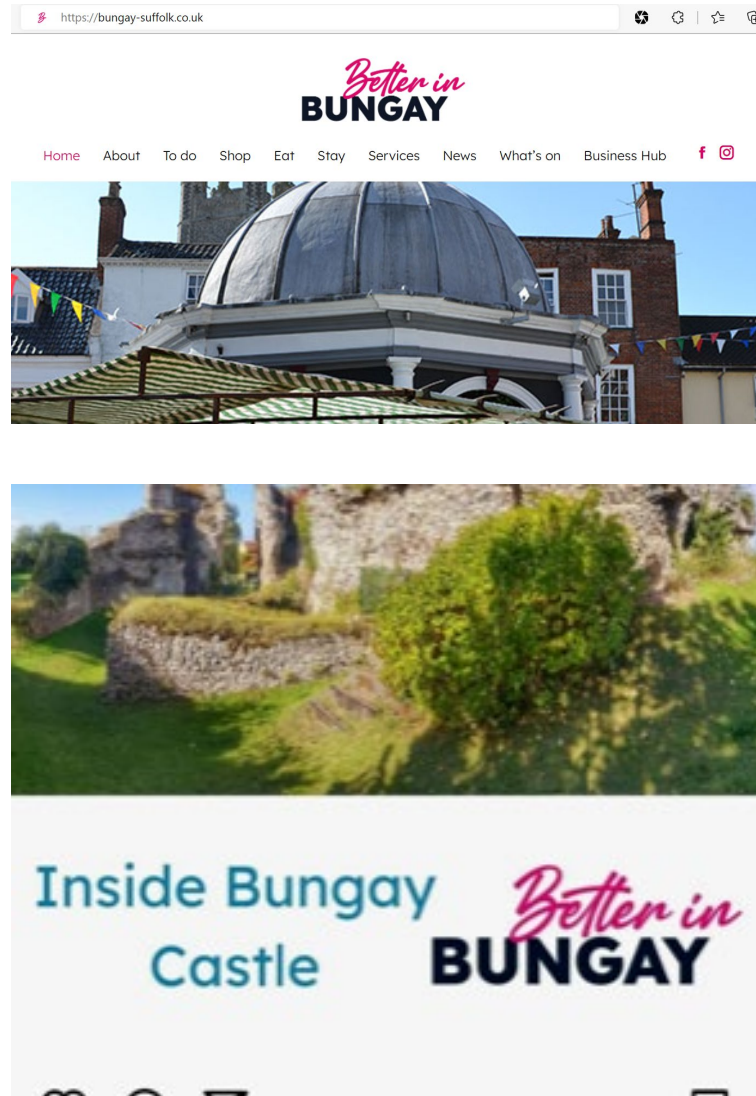
Visit Beccles webpage



- Enhancements and updates to the Choose Woodbridge website



Bungay:
reconnecting
people through
a new town
identity to
develop a
sense of
belonging



Think Local campaign: capturing and promoting the uniqueness of East Suffolk towns

- First campaign focused on Shop Local Stay Safe campaign launched in October 2020
- Follow up campaigns had a specific focus on shopping and dining locally throughout the build up to Christmas 2021 and 2022 as well as focusing on key calendar events like Valentines and Easter





Best practice case studies: events

East Suffolk Town Celebrations

- Delivered by First Light Festival CIC
- Series of 'celebration markets and events', each one specific and original to the specific town.
- Attracting out of season visitors to our town centers
- The programme included a consultancy package of support to advise town councils and local business groups on best practice for event development.



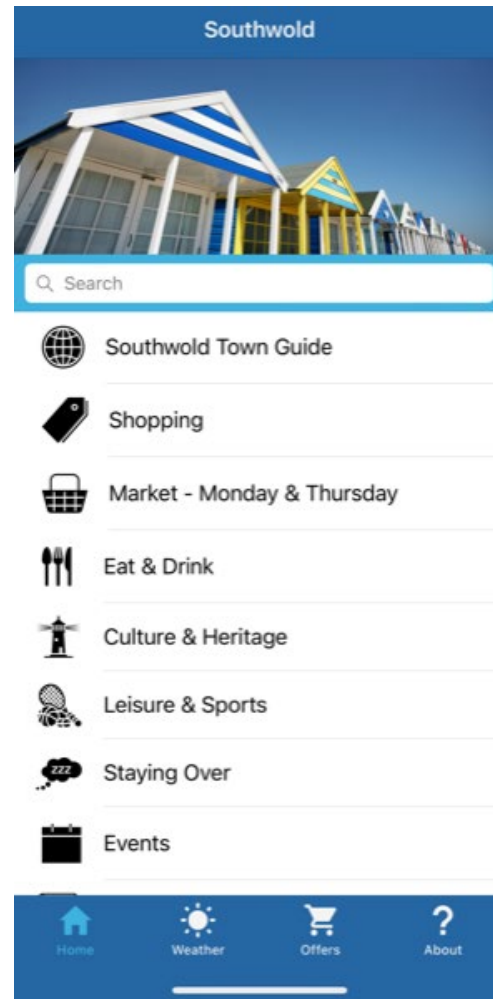
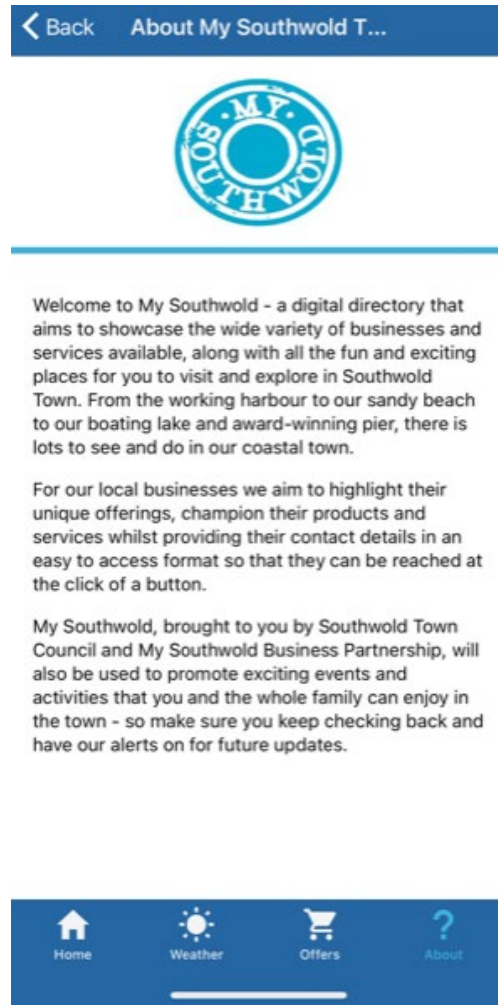


This is the heart of Haverthwaite Town Celebration 2018



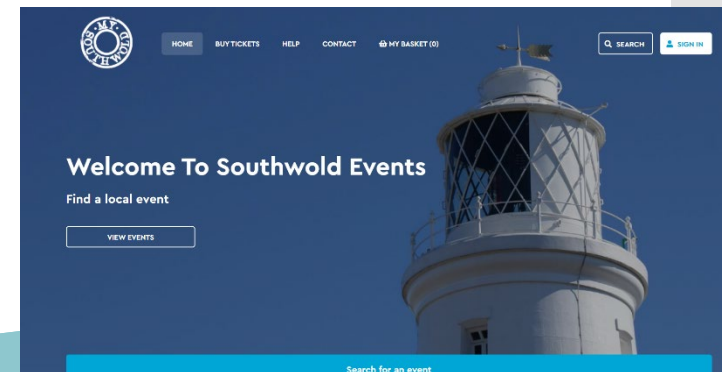
Best practice case studies: Digital

Southwold: engaging visitors through digital platforms



Creation of a Town App that engages with tourists, residents and businesses through one digital platform.

Enhancement of a town event
booking website



Digital trails:
providing
innovative
ways to
explore all our
towns and
promoting
people to get
active



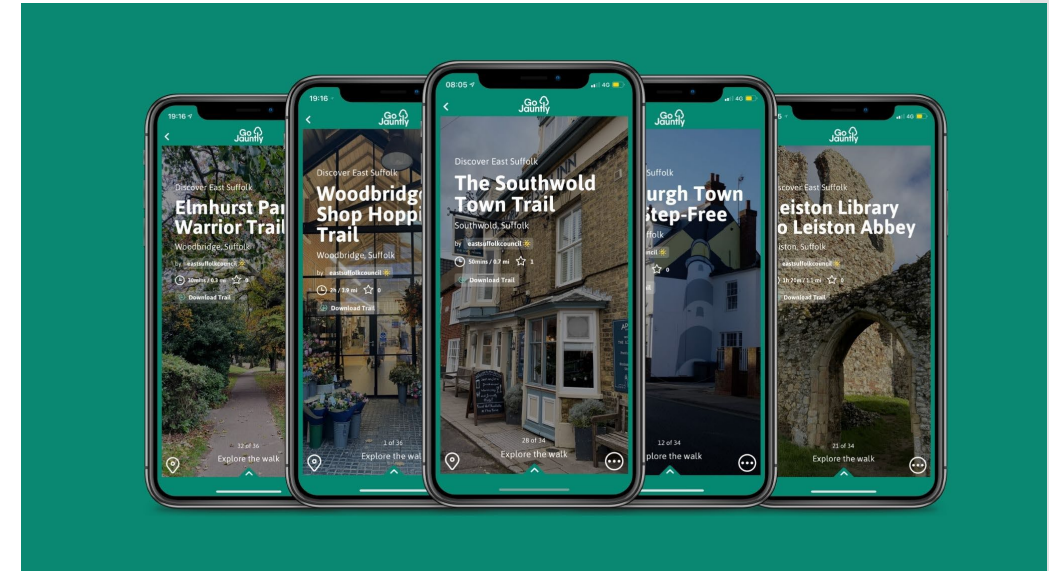
The image shows a smartphone displaying the Go Jauntly app interface. The screen features a search bar at the top with the text "Where would you like to walk?". Below the search bar are four main sections: "Spring Stomp" with a subtitle "Walk 5000 steps a day this spring" and a "Find out more" link; "Discover East Suffolk" with a photo of a bridge; "Routes for sagef" with a map showing a red route and the subtitle "Your unique walks"; and "Walks near you" with a photo of a pier. At the bottom of the screen is a navigation bar with icons for Home, Map, Create, Walk, and Challenge.



Go Jauntly

Discover over 70 miles of walking routes in East Suffolk

Download on the **App Store** GET IT ON **Google Play**

www.gojauntly.com





Best practice case studies: accessible and inclusive towns

Dementia
friendly towns:
making
our towns
accessible to all

Bungay Dementia Awareness Training

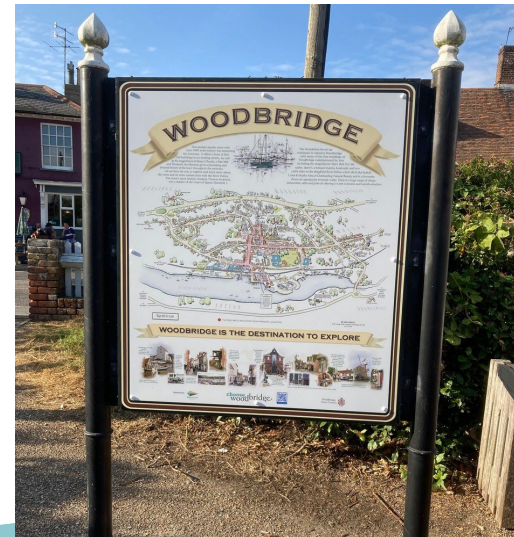


Enhancing town accessibility and encouraging people to explore

Refurbishment and modernisation of the town signs located at the entrance to the town and the town maps found within the town centre car parks



To update and create 8 new town maps which are located in different parts of the town.



A refurbished town sign and a before and after photo showing the newly designed and modernised town maps



Grants

Grants of up to £10,000 for events, arts and culture available now.

Grants up to £15,000 for high street improvements available now.



Events, Arts and Culture Grants
Grants of up to £10,000

EASTSUFFOLK means business GRANTS | **LEVELLING UP** | HM Government



EASTSUFFOLK means business GRANTS | **LEVELLING UP** | HM Government

Supporting East Suffolk Towns

Apply Now

Workshop questions

Case study has been provided on each table.

- Thinking about the case study you have been given please consider the following questions:
 1. Why are they not accessing their local town centre?
 2. What benefits would it bring to them if they did start to visit their town centre?
 3. What innovative ways can we support them to reconnect with their local town centre?

You have approx. 20 minutes to answer these questions in your group. Please be prepared to feedback to the whole group.

Positive regular town user example

Carole is 75, she lives alone in council accommodation that is a 12 minute walk from her local town centre. She suffers with arthritis and doesn't drive. Carole walks into town 4 or 5 times a week and shops little and often. Carole gives the following reasons for using her local town centre:

- Walking into town regularly gives me a reason to exercise which helps my arthritis and keeps me fit.
- All the independent shops and services I use in town know me and make the time to chat to me.
- I meet my friends in town for coffee and I always bump into people I know for a chat.
- I shop little and often as it gives me a purpose to my day.
- I feel very safe in my local town centre
- I like to go to events in my local town as it gets me out the house.
- I feel part of my community and wouldn't live anywhere else.
- I enjoy visiting other towns on the bus with my friends.
- I like to shop local so I know the money stays local.

Real life case study 1

Maya is a 22-year-old, who has just moved back to her rural home village after completing her degree in fine arts and is living with her parents. Maya is currently unemployed, although seeking employment, and cannot afford a car. She does not visit her nearest town centre often as she struggles with using public transport because she suffers from anxiety. Maya is also feeling lonely and disconnected from people her age.

Real life case study 2

Gill and Brian are an elderly couple who are financially secure and live in a small rural market town. Brian is unable to drive due to his health conditions and Gill has early on-set dementia. Brian is feeling increasingly stressed and anxious due to be a carer and doesn't like to ask for help.

Gill and Brian used to rely on their local high street shops, but they switched on home deliveries and friends during covid and have not returned to the high street. Their family do not live locally.

It is becoming increasingly difficult for the couple to access certain services due to their health conditions.

Real life case study 3

John and Kirsty are a cohabitating couple with 3 children. They both work full-time and rely on expensive childcare during working hours. With rising costs, the couple are finding themselves having less and less money to spend on activities and clubs for the children and are spending less money on their weekly shop than they did previously.

John and Kirsty's eldest child (12 years of age) has severe autism.

With rising costs, work pressures and home life to balance the couple are feeling more stressed and have become disconnected from their local community.

Real life case study 4

Sidney is 72-years-old and moved to East Suffolk with his wife for their retirement and she has since passed away.

Sidney could walk to his town centre but will not go on his own since his wife passed away. His health has deteriorated both physically and mentally over the last year.

Sidney has his food delivered and he relies on services that come into the home, all organised by his daughter who lives in France. He feels isolated.

Sidney also doesn't have an internet connection at home or know where to go to access free support.

Real life case study 5

Adam and Maisie are a married couple, in their early 30's, who privately rent a property on the outskirts of town and are on a bus route. They both earn minimum wage and they have very little disposable income once they have paid all of their bills / outgoings. The couple are struggling to manage their money effectively.

The couple would like to feel part of their local community, but they don't know where to start. They feel disengaged with their Town Centre but would like to visit more.

They would like to volunteer in some way but are concerned about offering because of the time commitment

Real life case study 6

Lucy is 24-years-old with four children under five and is a single mother.

Lucy is keen to get back into work but doesn't have very much work experience or qualifications. Lucy is feeling particularly isolated from her local community and would like to build a local support network as she has a few friends of her own age.

Lucy is particularly looking for support with childcare and ensuring her children can access all opportunities despite her limited income.