

Applying for Tourism Signs

Section 1, Application for Tourism Signing in Kent

Introduction

Kent County Council Highways and Transportation (KCC Highways) control signs on local roads (excluding Medway) and sets out local policy on brown signs for tourist destinations.

Highways England controls signs on motorway and trunk roads. Its policy on brown signs is set out in a national standard (TD 52/04) contained in the 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges'. Applications for signing on the Highways England network therefore need to be made via their contact centre and separately to that for Kent County Council's road network.

These guidelines are to help provide clear advice on tourist signing appropriate to meet the strategic signing needs of the tourism industry with safe, minimal impact on the environment and efficient management of road users. Whilst it is recognised that people can arrive on foot or by public transport, these guidelines are intended for visitors arriving by road.

1.1 Applying for a Brown Tourism Sign

If you are considering applying for a brown sign, we suggest you follow these three steps:

First Step – Does your business qualify as a tourist destination or facility? See Section 2.1

Second Step – Is your business eligible for tourism signing? See Section 2.2

Note: Consideration will be given to tourist destinations or facilities that do not meet the signing criteria if they can demonstrate a traffic or safety requirement. They then may be considered for a black on white directional sign, provided the destination or facility does not front onto a main road where private signage is visible from the road or an evidenced road safety reason that could be improved with local directional signing.

Third Step – Make an application by completing the application form which you can find at www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk along with a cheque payable to, Kent County Council for - **£247.00**. This is a **non-refundable assessment fee** which covers the cost of the application process for KCC Highways to send one of their team to go out and look at the location and positioning of the sign. Send your application form and cheque to the following address:

Pinar Karaoglan
Visit Kent
28-30 St. Peter's Street
Canterbury
Kent. CT1 2BQ

Processing the Application and Payment

Visit Kent will check that you meet the following rules and guidelines set out in this document by the Highway Agency and KCC Highways. You will be notified by letter if you do not meet the criteria at this stage.

Visit Kent will forward any tourist application which meets the criteria to KCC Highways. KCC Highways will assess the application and identify signing requirements. All highway signing in Kent is designed and installed in accordance with the 'Signs and Lines Policy and Technical Directive', they will consider location, size, number of existing signs and environmental sensitivity. Even though the criteria may be met there is no guarantee the permission for signs will be granted as the other criteria set out within this directive may not be met. There is no guarantee if signing is provided on the local roads the highways agency will provide signing on the motorways and trunk roads. This will be subject to a separate application and criteria.

If your application is successful, KCC H&T will contact you and discuss your application. To progress the design of the sign/s, KCC require a further advance payment of £191.00 for a site visit to identify the issues in placing a sign/s and the potential size of the sign and the exact location and £90.00 per sign design. A quotation for the cost of the sign/s and installation will be provided as well. As guidance, a minimum cost for purchase and installation of a small sign and post is in the region of £300.00. The cost depends upon location, size of the sign, number of posts and temporary traffic management requirements to allow safe installation. Signs on high speed roads will cost considerably more (several thousand pounds potentially) due to sign size, passively safe post requirements and temporary traffic management costs. KCC aims to provide you with a sign design and installation quotation within 6 weeks of receiving the advance payment for investigation and sign/s design. If the applicant wishes to proceed following receiving the design and quotation, KCC will require advance payment for the installation.

Any replacement for damaged or stolen signs will be at the tourist businesses own risk.

The customer will need to log a request at www.kent.gov.uk for repair/replacement. The local highway steward will go out to the site and assess what work is required in the normal way, taking photos and measurements as necessary. If there is not sufficient evidence/information on the existing sign to allow replacement without a design, KCC will require advance payment for sign design (£90.00 per sign) and replacement costs (quotation to be provided with sign design) – see application process for new signs. If there is sufficient information so a design is not required, KCC will provide a quotation for the replacement of the sign and post/s. If acceptable, KCC will then require advance payment for the replacement costs.

If you require further information or an application form please contact:

Visit Kent

Tel: 01227 812916

Email: ruby.berkeley-cornner@visitkent.co.uk

Website: www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk

KCC Highways and Transportation

Tel: 03000 41 81 81

Email: traffic.schemes@kent.gov.uk

Website: www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Highways England

Tel: 03001 23 50 00

Email: info@highwaysengland.co.uk

Website: www.highways.gov.uk

Section 2, Does your business qualify for tourist signing?

2.1 What is a tourist destination or facility?

A tourist destination means a permanently established attraction or a place of interest which attracts or is used by a significant number of visitors to an area. The facility must be open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours.

A tourist facility means a place where visitors can rest, take refreshment or/and obtain information.

2.2 Essential requirements for all venues

All destinations and facilities must meet the following criteria:

- Be permanently established.
- Visitors will normally expect to find signed destinations open at reasonable times and a minimum period of opening will normally be required before signing can be considered. For general establishments, these requirements are a minimum of four hours per day, 150 days per year.
- Destinations must demonstrate that they seek to attract visitors from outside the local area through publicity and advertising. Some evidence of this will be required in support of entitlement to signing. This might include leaflet distribution to tourist information centres, websites or participation in joint tourism marketing initiatives. Publicity must provide clear directions and ideally a map.
- No highway signs will be permitted for destinations which have off highways advertising signs, other than those situated at the destination itself.
- It is expected that the facilities will be available without pre-booking and have no membership conditions attached.
- Signing for tourist destinations will not be permitted if the premises are located on and accessible from a main road and clearly visible to passing traffic.
- Establishment must fully comply with statutory regulations e.g. Planning, Fire Regulations, Environmental Health and Disability Discrimination Act.
- Have an access statement.

- Adequate parking on site or close by. The signs should direct road users to the parking facilities rather than the destination itself (including provision for visitors with disabilities).
- Adequate toilets on site or close by (including provision for visitors with disabilities).
- Be of general good quality and well maintained.

2.3 Tourist Attractions

Tourist attractions are places of interest, open to the public, offering recreation, education or historic interest. They include:

- Pleasure of Theme Parks.
- Historic buildings – Castles, Historic Houses, English Heritage Sites, National Trust Properties, Cathedrals and Churches.
- Museums and Galleries
- Zoos and Wildlife Parks
- Parks, Gardens and Vineyards
- Pottery/Craft Centres
- Natural attractions – Nature Reserves, Beaches and Viewpoints as designated on ordinance survey map.

All tourist destinations must:

- Open for a minimum period during the year – for attractions this is four hours per day and 150 days per year.
- Sign up to the Visit Britain Code of Practice.
- Have at least 20,000 visitors per year to be eligible for signs on local roads. If they do not meet the annual visitor numbers they may be considered for tourism signing if the number of visitors in the peak months exceeds 4000 visitors.

2.4 **Tourist Facilities**

2.4.1 Accommodation

Accommodation includes hotels, boarding houses and bed and breakfast accommodation as well as self-catering, caravan and camping facilities. It is clearly not reasonable for all facilities in this category to be entitled to signing in all areas; the number of eligible facilities in urban areas, for example, would mean that such an approach would be unworkable.

All accommodation providers must comply with the essential requirements above. In addition:

Hotels and Guest Accommodation

For hotels, guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation, entitlement to signs will be dependant on membership of a National Quality Assurance Scheme from Visit Britain or AA. Should an establishment no longer remain part of any of these schemes, tourist signs will be removed.

Self-Catering

In this category there should be some evidence that accommodation is available for casual visitors. Most self-catering accommodation will be pre-booked and therefore it should not be necessary to provide signing. In some situations, however, there may be other facilities within the complex which may be open for day visitors for which signing could be helpful. As with hotels and guest accommodation membership of a National Quality Assurance Scheme from Visit Britain or AA is required for entitlement to signs.

Caravan and Camping Sites

Sites must be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or Public Health Act 1936. Sites should offer a minimum of 20 pitches for casual overnight visitors. Static caravan sites will not be entitled to the 'caravan' symbol and will be considered as in self-catering above. Any holiday park should be accredited under the British Graded Holiday Parks Scheme run by Visit Britain.

Youth Hostels

The youth hostel symbol shall only be used for YHA (Youth Hostel Association) hostels.

2.4.2 Catering Establishments

Catering establishments are restaurants, public houses where food is served, coffee shops and tea rooms.

It will not be possible to provide signing for all establishments. Individual catering establishments will not therefore be signed as visitors will expect to find catering establishments within an urban/resort area. In outlying areas generic signing as part of a comprehensive scheme may be accepted. In rural areas premises located on main roads, which are clearly visible at a safe distance by passing motorists, will not be considered eligible for signs as it can be assumed that they already attract passing trade.

Any eligible establishment should be open at least six days per week, six hours per day and six months of the year and be able to accept customers without pre-booking. Ideally the establishments should have a minimum of 20 covers. Meals should be available throughout opening hours and cater for children.

Restaurants

These should be able to provide a meal without pre-booking, offer a choice of menu and have regular open hours.

Public Houses

It is considered that it would be irresponsible for the highway authority to permit signing to premises primarily intended for drinking. However, many public houses now offer a range of facilities which cater for the traveller. For entitlement to signs, premises should provide a range of hot and cold food both at lunchtime and evening as well as providing for children indoors.

Coffee Shops and Tea Rooms

These should be able to provide a choice of light refreshment without pre-booking.

2.4.3 Sports and Leisure Facilities

Sports and Leisure Facilities are considered to be a local facility rather than a tourist attraction. The following facilities are those where localised tourist signing will be considered as long as pre-booking is not a requirement, equipment is available to hire and they meet the essential requirements outlines above:

- Water Sport Facilities
- Equestrian Centres
- Golf Courses
- Motor Sport Facilities
- Canoeing Facilities
- Outdoor Pursuit Facilities
- Roller Skating Parks
- Ice Skating Rinks
- Ski Slopes
- Ten Pin Bowling Alleys

2.4.4 Tourist Information Centres (TICs)

TIC's can be used effectively to direct visitors to a whole range of regional tourist destinations. This has potential benefits in terms of traffic management, safety and in terms of economical regional development of tourism within an area.

Signing to TICs will normally be provided but will be subject to the same considerations as other tourist signing. (i.e. only be provided where the centre provides adequate parking for its visitors. Where off-street parking is not available traffic should be directed to the nearest public car park and pedestrian signing provided from that car park to the TIC. The initial directional signing (at least) to a TIC will include the 'i' symbol.

2.4.5 Picnic areas, Country Parks and Woodland Recreation areas

Evidence should be provided that the picnic site or country park is included in road atlases and is promoted as a tourist facility. An indication of visitor numbers will be required.

2.4.6 Viewpoints

Only viewpoints that are included in ordinance survey maps and are shown on publicity material will be signed. There shall be adequate off street parking or lay by provision available.

2.4.7 Fisheries

It is expected that the facilities will be available without pre-booking and have no membership conditions attached. Evidence of attracting or seeking to attract visitors from outside the local area will be required.

2.4.8 Country Tours and Tourist Routes

It is possible to provide tourist signs along roads linking places of interest that have been designated as a circular country tour or where a linear route has been designated as a tourist route. In such cases the legend Tourist Route, Coastal Route or Scenic Route may be used.

2.4.9 National Parks/Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

National parks and areas that are marketed under a collective theme are not signed unless it can be proved that traffic is routed to a permanently established tourist information facility with good access, parking and toilets the name appears on maps and atlases and the area has signed boundaries.

2.5 Facilities not eligible for Tourist Signs

2.5.1 Unmanned Tourist Information Boards

Will now have traffic signs provided as they should be located in areas which have a large footfall passing them e.g. car parks or in town and village centres.

2.5.2 Sports and Leisure Facilities

Sport and leisure facilities that would not normally qualify for tourist signing (brown and white signs) unless the venue is of Regional or National importance include:

- Sport and Leisure Centres
- Horse Riding courses
- Cricket grounds
- Football grounds
- Swimming pools or indoor water sport facilities
- Cinemas
- Theatres or Concert Halls

2.5.3 Retail

Specialist shops, market and factory shops, shopping centre, supermarkets, retail parks, garden centres and farm shops. Signing for these facilities will only be considered for conventional black on white directional signing provided the facility does not front onto a main road where private signage is visible from the road or an evidenced road safety reason that could be improved with local directional signing.

2.5.4 Exhibition Centres

Signing for these facilities will only be considered for conventional black on white directional signing provided the facility does not front onto a main road where private signage is visible from the road or an evidenced road safety reason that could be improved with local directional signing.

2.5.5 Colleges and Universities

Signing for these facilities will only be considered for conventional black on white directional signing provided the facility does not front onto a main road where private signage is visible from the road or an evidenced road safety reason that could be improved with local directional signing.

Section 3, Provision of Tourist Highway Signing

3.1 What is the purpose of a tourist sign?

Tourist signs (white on brown directional signs) are traffic signs and must comply with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions and the guidance given in the Traffic Signs Manual.

Their main purpose is to direct visitors to a tourist destination along the most appropriate route during the latter stage of their journey, particularly where the destination may be difficult to find. Generally destinations are signed only on one route and will only be installed where existing directional signs are not sufficient. Any sign which is not in the overall public interest or safety interest will not be permitted.

While it is recognised that tourist signs are perceived by tourist businesses as useful marketing tools, this is not the purpose for which they are provided. They should not be used as a substitute for good promotional material or as a means of circumventing planning control of advertisements.

It is not a given that eligibility for tourist signing will guarantee that a tourist sign(s) will be provided. Entitlement will be determined taking into account various criteria including local circumstances and similar establishments in the area.

3.2 The Design

Signing will be designed in accordance with KCC Highways policy on signing as follows:

- There can only be one symbol per venue e.g. a stately home with gardens could have the heritage or the garden symbol but not both, a pub with rooms and restaurants could have a knife and fork or a bed symbol but not both. The symbol will normally reflect the businesses core activity and what it is primarily marketed as.
- Signs at the start of the routes and at major junctions within routes will contain both worded legends and symbols. Subsequent signs with routes will show symbols only, except where more than one of the destinations have identical symbols and are signed in different directions.
- Symbols appropriate to the core activity will be chosen from a selection approved symbols at the national level.
- Destination signs can include the village or town 'name phrase' with a maximum of four words and symbols appropriate to attractions and facilities. The phrase historic needs to be avoided as it is hard to qualify.

3.3 Extent of Signing

Signing may extend from the main access roads to the area in which the destination is situated and this is often the nearest A or B class road to the attraction or facility.

Normally signing for tourist attractions will extend no further than five miles from the destination and for tourist facilities will extend no further than three miles from the destination. In built up areas and villages, the distance may be reduced.

The route along which the traffic is directed must be the most suitable link between the destination and the main access road to the area. Routes with significant safety problems may be excluded.

Signing will not be permitted for tourist facilities which front A class roads unless there is a road safety reason.

In some conservation areas the scope of tourist signing will be limited and may not be possible to provide signs in some locations.

3.4 Sign Capacity

Where there are requests for more tourist destinations than can be safely accommodated, those chosen will be based normally on the highest visitor numbers or level of grading. If this gives no clear priority, the destinations closest to the junction will normally be chosen. Attractions will have priority over facilities and existing attractions have higher priority than new requests.

The number of non-tourist signs at the location should also be taken into consideration. To reduce environmental impact and for the sake of clarity, particularly in urban areas, signs such as For X follow Y should be used, making use of existing signing legends as much as possible and avoiding the need for additional continuity signs. Similar considerations may also apply in rural areas.

In all cases the aim should be to keep the number of signs to a minimum. In urban areas where traffic management considerations preclude signing to the establishments, consideration could be given to signing to car parks or a park and ride in conjunction with pedestrian signs.

The use of generic signing such as, Tourist Shops, Hotels or Seafront Attractions may be appropriate where it will not be possible to sign individual facilities along a route or in an area. Similarly signing to a Tourist Information Centre possibly on the main approach roads to a tourist area should be considered as a way of reducing sign clutter.

3.5 Bypassed Villages and Towns

Where possible signing for attractions and facilities located in bypassed villages and towns will be combined in the form of bypassed community signs. To qualify for these signs you have to have at least two attractions or facilities complying with the criteria above.

The signs will include the village or town 'name phase' with a maximum of four words and symbols appropriate to attractions and facilities. The phase 'historic' and 'market' need to be avoided.

Signs may be provided below community nameplates to indicate symbols appropriate to tourist attractions and facilities present in the village and/or town. No more than six symbols maybe shown.

NOTE: Please note the information within these guidelines are just guidelines and are not exhaustive and are subject to change

