



Mendip Hills
National
Landscape

Mendip Adventure

**How we monitor
and manage the
most damaging
creature on the
Mendip Hills**

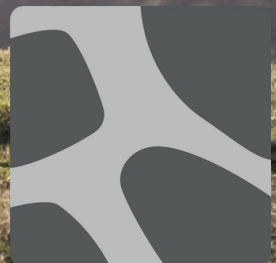
Let's leave it better than we found it

Where's your favourite place in the Mendip Hills National Landscape? What do you love to do? What makes it so special?

No matter where you love to go or what you love to do, one thing is certain - the Mendip Hills National Landscape is a wonderful place to be. It offers a chance to escape from routine, disconnect from screens and schedules and reconnect with the land, with nature and with ourselves.



Nature is good for us! We know that time spent exercising in nature is good for our physical health. It is also good for our mental health. Time spent in green spaces can reduce anxiety, improve mood and even boost cognitive function. Whether you're climbing Crook Peak to watch the sunset or visiting Deer Leap to hear skylarks as they hover high above your head, time spent on Mendip is good for your soul!



We leave a trace

However it is impossible to spend time here without noticing the impact of human activity - eroded paths, litter, fire damage and changes in wildlife behaviour. We see the impact of humans all around us. The Mendip Hills National Landscape is under increasing pressure from visitors.

Our visitor surveys show an increase in visitors across the landscape. We started our annual Big Visitor Count in 2019, as with everywhere else in the country there was a post lockdown surge in visitor numbers. However, now that conditions have returned to normal, we are seeing a steady increase in visitor numbers. This year's Big Visitor Count showed an increase of 10% compared to 2019 data. The data that we record using remote visitor counters show a similar pattern. These counters record for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The data show an increase in visitor numbers, with some locations showing higher visitor numbers in peak season than those recorded during the post lockdown surge. A growing population seeking to explore the Mendip Hills, coupled with the impacts of climate change, mean that pressure is set to increase.



What do we do about it?

We do a number of things to mitigate the impact of visitors on the Mendip Hills National Landscape, starting with understanding visitor numbers across the entire National Landscape. We conduct annual visitor surveys and use remote sensors to monitor visitor numbers and visitor behaviour at different locations across the landscape.

The data are shared with land owners and land managers. The visitor data enable us to take a proactive approach to management in response to changes in visitor patterns.

Second, we focus on education. Through information campaigns, signage and the work of our dedicated volunteer rangers, we engage with visitors to promote sustainable recreation.

Last, and by every means, worst, alongside our volunteers we try and undo some of the damage. We pick up the poo bags, clear away the litter and remove the barbeques. We try and leave it better than we found it.



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What can you do about it?

Sustainable recreation in the Mendips means embracing the practices that protect and preserve. Here's what you can do to leave a positive trace:

- Stay on the trail: You and your group (including the four legged ones) can help prevent erosion, protect sensitive habitats and reduce wildlife disturbance by staying on marked paths.
- Leave no trace: Take all litter and dog waste with you and dispose of it responsibly. Avoid fires and barbeques.
- Give nature space: Don't disturb wildlife and farm animals, keep your distance. Keep dogs on a lead or under close control.
- Leave what you find: Leave rocks, flowers, plants, animals and all natural habitats as you find them. Do not build rock cairns, structures or shelters.

- Share the space: Respect others, avoid damaging property, including gates, walls and fences, and keep noise to a minimum to let nature's sound prevail.
- Support local: Choose local guides, shops and eco-conscious accommodations that reinvest in the community and conservation efforts.
- Travel Smart: Use public transport or carpool to reduce your carbon footprint when visiting.



The Mendip Hills is one of our National Landscapes. It is a special place and with that comes shared responsibility. By making thoughtful choices and encouraging others to do the same, we can ensure that this beautiful landscape remains vibrant for generations to come. Let's all do our part to leave it better than we found it.