

## Case Study

# Visit by Rail: Arundel

### Background

Visit by Rail is a schools Sustainable Travel project delivered in partnership between The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and Sussex Community Rail Partnership and funded through the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

The project had two aims:

1. To increase the number of schools accessing the National Park by rail and to embed sustainable travel values and experiences in a wide range of secondary students, equipping them to travel confidently by public transport and to consider the role of sustainable transport in managing rural tourism.
2. To boost the market for outdoor learning providers within the South Downs National Park by encouraging and enabling a wider range of schools to visit by sustainable transport.

Secondary schools within easy reach of train stations were targeted for the project.

A series of Educational Visit Plans were developed and delivered by National Park Learning Providers who are accessible by rail travel.



### The project

The Chichester High Schools for Boys (CHSB) and Girls (CHSG) are located within a 5 minute walk to Chichester Train Station. In order to promote rail travel for educational visits the Head of Geography at CHSB suggested reinstating a sustainable town fieldwork study. This visit took place in October 2015 and was a pupil premium initiative joint venture for Year 8 pupils from Chichester High Schools for Boys and Girls.

Arundel, which is a market town situated in a steep vale in the South Downs, is only 22 minutes by train from Chichester so is ideally placed for a fieldwork study by the schools. The visit was self-led by the school staff and consisted of a variety of surveys in the town at four locations, to assess how sustainable a town Arundel is. Surveys included pedestrian counts, environmental surveys and traffic counts. In addition to the fieldwork pupils completed a sustainable travel worksheet at school following the visit to consolidate their learning.

Thanks to the generosity of Southern Railway, this pilot visit benefited from 34 free pupil and 3 free adult tickets.

Even without these free tickets, the cost of travelling by train for the visit would still be much lower than the equivalent cost would have been by coach. The saving to the school of this sustainable travel approach was around £200 for this one visit. This represents a huge ongoing saving for the schools involved if they decide to keep the visit as part of the Year 7 geography fieldwork.

“It has been good to do this visit by train as there is an underlying emphasis on sustainability within the Geography curriculum”

Mr Peters, Head of Geography CHSB

“It has been a very successful day”

Miss Overy, Geography teacher CHSG

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## The outcome

**34 Year 8 Geography students and 3 adults visited Arundel in the South Downs National Park by train when normally they would have travelled by coach.**

**The school has previously used coaches for educational visits but has now had first-hand experience of using the train as a form of sustainable transport. This fits extremely well with the sustainable tourism focus of the learning and the wider sustainability theme running through the geography curriculum.**

**This pilot visit has also demonstrated that it is considerably cheaper for some schools to travel by train rather than coach for educational visits to Arundel.**

**An Educational Visit Plan has been produced to encourage other schools to visit Arundel by train, and to consider adapting previous visits to use sustainable transport, and this will be promoted through the South Downs National Park Authority, the Sussex Community Rail Partnership and the Chichester High Schools' websites.**

## The future

The LSTF funded Visit by Rail pilot projects will come to an end on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

The Case Studies, Educational Visit Plans and Lessons Learnt documents will continue to be shared on the partner websites and a dedicated Visit by Rail page has been created on the SDNPA Learning Zone to promote sustainable rail travel for future education visits.

The legacy in terms of proven financial benefit of rail over coach travel for schools provides a strong marketing approach. In addition, work with the rail companies to simplify the online school booking process will directly benefit schools using rail travel in the future.

