

Isle of Wight Council



TOURISM

SIGNING

POLICY

2005

ISLE of
WIGHT
C O U N C I L

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CONTENTS

Introduction	<i>Page 3</i>
oOo	
<i>Section I - Eligibility Criteria for Tourism Signing</i>	<i>Page 5</i>
1. General Requirements Applicable to all Attractions or Visitor Facilities	
2. Specific Requirements for Particular Types of Destination	
oOo	
<i>Section II – Application Procedure</i>	<i>Page 7</i>
oOo	
<i>Section III – Application Review / Bi-annual Audit</i>	<i>Page 8</i>
oOo	
<i>Section IV – Principles Affecting Siting Criteria</i>	<i>Page 9</i>
1. Road Safety & Traffic Management Issues	
2. Environmental Issues	
oOo	
<i>Section V - Siting Criteria for Tourism Signing</i>	<i>Page 10</i>
oOo	
<i>Section VI - Financial Responsibilities and Proposed Charges</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
oOo	
Appendix 1 - Designated Road Network	<i>Page 12</i>

INTRODUCTION

Brown and White Tourism Signposting on the Isle of Wight is the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Council's Highways department in partnership with Isle of Wight Tourism.

Visitbritain and the CSS have both formulated proposals for dealing with applications for new signs. It is proposed that the criteria used for determining eligibility is based upon their recommendations. Eligibility is defined by two categories; visitor attractions and facilities. Attractions are defined as permanently established destinations or facilities which attract or are used by visitors and are open to the public without prior booking during normal opening hours. Those likely to qualify include, for example, theme parks, zoos, museums, historic houses and leisure complexes. Facilities is a much broader category and includes the major changes to the legislation. Examples include accommodation, public houses, restaurants, cafes, shops, cinemas and theatres. Tourist information signs should be considered as a traffic management tool used in the best interests of road safety and should not simply provide an advertisement for any attraction or facility on the public highway.

The Isle of Wight boasts some of the nation's finest rich and varied landscapes and coastlines. There is a risk that a large number of signs will destroy the unique look and feel of the Isle of Wight, as well as creating a distraction for road users. It is important that the impact of new and additional signposting is taken into consideration when each application is assessed. To protect against this the Isle of Wight Council reserve the right to refuse even eligible applications for the wider benefit of the local community and visitors. Therefore, not all eligible applications will be approved, particularly in areas where there is already a proliferation of signs. In some cases applicants will be encouraged to take up shared tourism signposting with other facilities on the same route.

Decisions on the number, siting and content of signs are statutorily the responsibility of the Isle of Wight Council as the Highway Authority.

Tourism signposting is NOT intended for advertising purposes. Tourism signs should supplement rather than duplicate information already provided and the reliance is on the tourist attraction or facility to provide adequate marketing material that must include comprehensive directional information. Tourist signing should only be used:

- Where destinations are difficult to find
- To encourage visitors to use a particular route
- Where there are safety concerns

Although it may seem a simple matter to have a sign put up near your business, please bear in mind that the following issues will need to be assessed before your application can be approved:

- Road safety
- Quality of destination
- Over proliferation of signs

The local revised policy includes the introduction of a two year consent in which the Highway Authority authorises directional information to local attractions and facilities to be displayed on the highway.

The consent is renewable every two years at which time a review of the establishment's signs and continued eligibility will be assessed. In the eventuality that the Isle of Wight Council feel that any sign or posts are in need of maintenance, repair or replacement then the total cost of the work, including the manufacture, supply, erection, design and supervision will be payable by the establishment. Should any adjacent foliage require trimming back, the total cost of the work is, likewise, payable by the establishment.

In the eventuality of non-payment within 28 days all signs to the establishment will be removed. The cost of re-erection of such signs is the responsibility of the attraction or facility.

A review of signage to existing establishments which have been in place for more than two years will be undertaken to ensure that continued eligibility is appropriate, at which time a two year consent will be issued in accordance with the Isle of Wight Councils policy. As part of the review process, the number and siting of signs will be assessed with any existing signs that fall outside the scope of the new policy being removed, if appropriate.

All applications will be administered by the local Highway Authority in conjunction with Isle of Wight Tourism, who will be responsible for assessing any initial applications or renewals. The decision on the number and location of signs is ultimately the responsibility of the local Highway Authority.

In the rural situation applications can be dealt on an individual or generic basis in an attempt to reduce any unnecessary over proliferation of signs. Some form of consultation will be required in order to pull together multiple applications for one area so that they can be combined on a generic sign. The Isle of Wight Council as the Local Highway Authority will provide signs in accordance with the designated road network (appendix 1). The provision of additional signs may be considered if deemed appropriate on road safety grounds by the Local Highway Authority.

In the urban situation, due to the likelihood of very high levels of requests, a different approach is necessary. Signing schemes to facilities will normally be considered which direct traffic to public car parks or lay-bys where TIP's or TIC's will be established. Signs to hotels or guesthouses may be provided on a generic basis, such as 'Seafront hotels'. Alternatively signs to hotels or guesthouses may be included as part of the street nameplate, where the standard accommodation symbol will supplement street naming information. These can be provided on both sides of the road and at either end.

All signs and posts, together with any associated fixings will be designed and implemented in strict accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

SECTION I - Eligibility Criteria for Tourism Signing

1 General Requirements Applicable to all Attractions or Visitor Facilities

The establishment must be a permanently established destination or facility which attracts or is used by visitors to an area, and is open to the public without prior booking during its normal opening hours, and evidence to support this must be provided.

The establishment must at all times maintain all relevant licenses / insurances and ensure they fulfill their responsibility under the relevant legislation, such as planning permission, fire certification or registration under the Food Safety Act.

The establishment shall provide evidence of reasonable steps having been taken to publicise what it has to offer and to inform tourists of the route to it. Copies of marketing material are required to determine the suitability of material.

The establishment shall provide details of on-site car parking available for visitor use, and other parking facilities within a reasonable walking distance (up to half a mile). Where such parking is in alternative ownership, confirmation of approval by the owner should be provided.

The establishment shall demonstrate that it has taken all measures reasonable to facilitate access for the disabled.

2 Specific Requirements for Particular Types of Destination

i. Visitor Attractions

Must sign up to the Visitbritain Visitor Charter (a code practice for visitor attractions throughout the UK)

ii. Hotels and Other Forms of Serviced Accommodation

Must participate in the relevant nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. Visitbritain, AA or RAC.

iii. Holiday Centres

Must participate in the relevant nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. Visitbritain, AA or RAC.

Holiday Centres that offer facilities for day visitors shall provide details of these as they may qualify for signing as leisure complexes.

iv. Camping and Caravan Sites

Must participate in the relevant nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme i.e. Visitbritain, AA or RAC.

Only those sites with over 20 pitches for casual overnight use by touring caravans shall be eligible.

Each site shall be licensed under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and/or the Public Health Act of 1936.

v. Youth Hostels

Hostels managed by the YHA may be granted tourist signing.

vi. Restaurants and Cafes

Facilities shall provide evidence that customers should be able to obtain a full meal without pre-booking.

v. Public Houses

Confirmation is to be provided that meals (not just bar snacks) are available at lunchtime and evenings without pre-booking.

A selection of non-alcoholic drinks should be offered for sale.

Where overnight accommodation is offered, the establishment must participate in the relevant nationally recognised Quality Assurance Scheme i.e Visitbritain, AA or RAC.

viii. Cinemas, Theatres, Concert Venues, Arts Facilities and Sports Venues

The requirement for facilities to admit the public without prior booking during their normal opening hours effectively rules out signing for membership only organisations.

The eligibility for sports venues, will depend on the number of events held there each year.

ix. Tourist Information Centres (TICs) and Points (TIPs)

Only those recognised and networked by Visitbritain may be signed with the international symbol.

TICs and TIPs offer an alternative to directional signs where the local environment or the number of eligible businesses make individual signing impractical.

x. Retail Establishments

Evidence shall be provided that the establishment in question has facilities and features specifically aimed at visitors to the area.

Where entitled, individual or groups of shops will normally be referred to generically rather than by name, such as "Village Shop", "Craft Centre" or "Souvenir Shop".

Shops in rural areas will be more likely to attract signing in recognition of the importance of tourism to rural economies.

xi. Picnic Sites

Should be places conducive to eating in the open air and set aside for that purpose with some seating and tables available for use.

SECTION II – Application Procedure

Stage 1 - Seek Informal Advice about Eligibility

Recognise the need for directional signposting



Contact IWC Highways, tel: 01983 823777 for informal advice about the appropriateness of your application from a visual impact, road safety & traffic management point of view.
Advice gained at this stage may save time and effort at a later stage and may avoid submitting a costly and inappropriate application



Stage 2 - Submit Application

Fully complete the Application Form, using the Guidance notes and return to: The Highways Department of the Isle of Wight Council,
You must enclose the following:

- Application fee £200
- Supporting information, and evidence of eligibility
- Map indicating location of facilities, required signs and existing advertising signs

Stage 3 - Approval

The Highways department in partnership with Isle of Wight Tourism will assess your application in accordance with the Tourism Signing Policy



If your application is approved, IWC Highways will prepare a sign schedule and quotation for the proposed works

If your application is rejected IWC Highways will notify you accordingly



Stage 4 - Putting the signs in place

Upon receipt of the appropriate fee, IWC Highways will issue instructions to an approved contractor to undertake the works

If the applicant wishes to instruct a private contractor to undertake the works, in accordance with the Tourism Signing Policy, written consent is required together the appropriate fee



Monitoring of Signs IWC will conduct a bi-annual audit of all tourism brown signs. If necessary, the IWC Highways will advise you of any improvement work that needs to be carried out, if this work is not completed within the agreed timescale then all existing signs will be removed.

SECTION III– Application Review / Bi-annual Audit

After two years renewal of the consent is required. A review of the establishment's signs and continued eligibility will be assessed by Isle of Wight Tourism in conjunction with the Local highway authority.

In the eventuality that the Isle of Wight Council feel that any sign or posts are in need of maintenance, repair or replacement then the total cost of the work including the manufacture, supply, erection, design and supervision will be payable by the attraction or facility. Should any adjacent foliage require trimming back, the total cost of the work is, likewise, payable by the establishment.

In the eventuality of non-payment within 30 days, all signs to the establishment will be removed. The cost of re-erection of such signs will be the responsibility of the attraction or facility.

SECTION IV- Principles Affecting Siting Criteria

1 Road Safety & Traffic Management Issues

The maximum number of destinations at any individual signing location should be six including non-tourism destinations. Research indicates drivers have difficulty in reading and responding safely to more information.

Each junction will need to be considered on an individual basis. In a conservation area it may be desirable not to provide any signs at all whilst at other locations prioritisation on route continuity or visitor numbers may be necessary.

On Traffic Management and Road Safety grounds it will be necessary to confirm that there is adequate parking available and that the road network to and from the destination is capable of safely accommodating the level of traffic and type of vehicle that the provision of signing may generate, such as coaches.

2 Environmental Issues

Applications for tourist signs will be considered on their merits in relation to the environmental constraints identified in the siting criteria. The environmental impact of additional signing can be significant and the use of signs incorporating generic terms or symbols will be considered in environmentally sensitive locations.

Where a new tourist attraction is to be added at a junction, replacement composite signs may be considered desirable rather than allowing individual sign additions to an existing assembly. The removal of redundant or unnecessary signs is an important aspect of any new signing scheme. The number and siting of signs will be assessed bi-annually with any existing signs that fall outside the scope of the new policy being removed, if appropriate.

In environmentally sensitive areas such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coasts and Conservation Areas, signing may only be permitted if the proposal does not adversely affect the visual amenity and the character of the area. Advice and an assessment of impact will be requested from the AONB Unit and the Isle of Wight Councils Conservation and Design Team.

There should not be any private advertisement signs relating to the establishment at or near the location of any proposed tourism traffic.

SECTION V - Siting Criteria for Tourism Signing

In general, tourism signing to visitor attractions should only be provided from the nearest junction on the designated road network (See Appendix 1). Those with direct access on to that network may have signs approaching the entrance and directly opposite on road safety grounds.

In the rural situation applications can be dealt on an individual or generic basis in an attempt to reduce any unnecessary over proliferation of signs. Some form of consultation will be required in order to pull together multiple applications for one area so that they can be combined on a generic sign. The Isle of Wight Council as the Local Highway Authority will provide signs in accordance with the designated road network (appendix 1). The provision of additional signs may be considered if deemed appropriate on road safety grounds by the Local Highway Authority.

In the urban situation, due to the likelihood of very high levels of requests, a different approach is necessary. Signing schemes to facilities will normally be considered which direct traffic to public car parks or lay-bys where TIP's or TIC's will be established. Signs to hotels or guesthouses may be provided on a generic basis, such as 'Seafront hotels'. Alternatively signs to hotels or guesthouses may be included as part of the street nameplate, where the standard accommodation symbol will supplement street naming information. These can be provided on both sides of the road and at either end.

In a small minority of cases, signing may be desirable along more than one route, depending on local circumstances, although a single, preferred route would only normally be signed. Attractions with visitor numbers in excess of 100,000 per year will be eligible for the signing requirements to be tailored to reflect the traffic management and road safety requirements of the area.

Permission will normally be granted for tourist signs to qualifying establishments provided that the proposal does not have a significant negative impact upon the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape in:-

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Heritage Coasts
- Conservation Areas

SECTION VI - Financial Responsibilities and Proposed Charges

Normally the provision of tourism signing should result in no cost to the highway authority, the signs provided however will remain its property. There is a need to develop appropriate arrangements for applications to be processed and the resultant costs recovered.

Set out below is a schedule of prices to recover the cost of the Authorities involvement:-

FUNCTION	COST (Excluding VAT)
Initial enquiry	No charge
Formal application (including vetting and definite response)	£200.00 – one off charge
Provision & replacement of signs and posts and the cutting back of adjacent foliage where applicable (including manufacture, supply, erection, design & supervision)	Actual Cost
Supervision Charge (If applicable)*	£200

A quotation, based on the small works tender will be provided to applicants in respect of the manufacture and erection of signs and will include all associated fees (design and supervision).

- * Under current regulations the applicant is at liberty to obtain comparative quotes and nominate a contractor to carry out signing works. However, any such contractor must be approved by the Highway Authority, and all works carried out by a nominated contractor must conform with all relevant Health & Safety Regulations, British Standards and Codes of Practice etc. to the satisfaction of the Highway Authority. A Street Works Licence will also be required which is obtainable from the New Roads and Street Works Section at The Isle of Wight Council. All contractors' operatives are required to be in possession of the appropriate Street Works Accreditation. A charge for supervision and maintenance will be payable in these circumstances. All signs are required to conform to Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions 2002.

Where more than one establishment is to share the costs, one of them is to be nominated as the prime contact, who will be responsible for the payment of all monies due in relation to sign provision.

Appendix 1 - Designated Road Network

- a. All 'A' classification roads
- b. All 'B' classification roads
- c. C16 Downend Road from Arreton Cross to the junction with Long Lane
- d. C57 Briddlesford Road / Park Road from the junction with Long Lane to the junction with A3054 at Palmers Brook