

New 'Explore Wiltshire' heritage app Briefing Note No. 23-18

Service : Heritage and Arts team

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To support residents and visitors in exploring and understanding our town centres, the Heritage and Arts Team and the Wiltshire Towns Programme are pleased to launch Explore Wiltshire, an interactive app providing free heritage trails around our town centres.

The aim of the app is to enable residents and visitors to Wiltshire the opportunity to explore the rich, diverse heritage of more of Wiltshire's market towns. The Salisbury Trails app that was launched in 2020 will amalgamate into the new Explore Wiltshire app. The app has been launched today, 21 June 2023.

The app has been created in collaboration with town and parish councils and is free and easy to use. It has been designed by Bristol-based app developer Calvium, on their Place Experience Platform.

It will initially be launching in five towns plus Salisbury - Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Cricklade, Devizes and Warminster. It will also link to the existing Explore Malmesbury webpage. It is planned that new trails covering the areas of Marlborough, Pewsey, Tisbury and Trowbridge will follow later in the year.

Once launched, the featured town and parish councils, and their local communities, will be able to add their own trails and content will be developed as more communities get involved.

How can people download the app?

Explore Wiltshire is available free for download to Apple and Android devices via the:

- Apple App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/pt/app/explore-wiltshire/id1664891446?l=en>
- Google Play store: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.calvium.pep.visitwiltshire>

What content will the app contain?

The new app is location-aware and features information about historical landmarks, cultural sites, people and events that have helped to shape Wiltshire's heritage.

With interactive maps, walking trails, hunts and challenges; plus photographs, audio and visual clips, engravings and information from the archives of the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

Each town will feature an introduction from Wessex Archaeology and TV's Time Team Phil Harding.

Why has the app been created?

The app will help encourage our residents and tourists alike to get out and about, feel the benefits of fresh air and exercising, whilst at the same time exploring the rich and diverse heritage of Wiltshire's parishes, towns and city.

Visitors and locals can explore these areas in an exciting way, from anyone wanting to go on a quiet walk on their own, or perhaps people who are new to an area or families looking to have a fun, entertaining experience discovering new hidden treasures in our towns.

My town is not included?

We are keen to work with further towns to expand the app and will engage with town centres for a second phase once the current trails have been uploaded and bedded in.

If there are any town or parish councils that express an interest in taking part and featuring on the app, then please direct them to contact WiltshireTownsProgramme@wiltshire.gov.uk

Relevance to the council's business plan

The scheme will support the following Business Plan missions and guiding themes:

- **Empowered people: The people of Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy and enriched lives.** The app will encourage residents and visitors to get out and about on walking trails, feel the benefits of fresh air and exercising.
- **Our communities continue to be beautiful and exciting places to live.** The app will showcase the heritage of Wiltshire's market towns, and offer an opportunity to learn more about the history of our county in an exciting way and discover hidden treasures.
- **Thriving economy: Our local economy thrives and is supported by a skilled workforce.** The launch of this app will support our Wiltshire Towns Programme, aiming to not only increase the footfall throughout the county, but also boost the local economy by encouraging people to spend quality time in our shops, bars and restaurants during their visits.

How this links with other council initiatives

This initiative is part of our **Wiltshire Towns Programme** to help our town centres deal with the economic challenges following the COVID-19 pandemic and decline in the high streets. We are supporting activity on the high street, providing meaningful support to grow businesses, supporting employment and transforming Wiltshire's high streets to meet the needs of the local community. Through the Wiltshire Towns Programme we are aiming to fund activity generation plans that encourage people back to the high street and:

- drive footfall and spend to town centres
- reach a wider catchment, with a focus on new audiences and inclusion
- support an increased retail, community and social function that encourages visits during the day and evening
- support perception of the town centre as a place that will create a convenient and attractive destination for both local residents and visitors
- extend the visitor season for town centres – providing support through quieter periods.

More information about the Wiltshire Towns Programme can be found at:

<https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/news/wiltshire-council-to-continue-successful-grants-programme-to-boost-high-streets>)

What can you do to help?

If you are contacted by residents about this, they can find the app on their app store by searching 'Explore Wiltshire' or using the links above.

We would welcome and encourage you to share any council communications, such as social media posts and press releases, with your contacts and the local community to help spread the word about the app and encourage people to explore their local trails and market towns.

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More information about heritage projects

One of the roles of the Heritage Service is to support over 40 independent, voluntary and town council led museums across the county. The new app will provide opportunities for local museums and heritage organisations, and projects, to add new content and trails to exploit their collections, draw more footfall and link to their digital presence.

This follows the conclusion of a successful Data to Discovery pilot project with selected museums to open up their collections: <https://collections.museumsinwiltshire.org.uk/>.