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WELLBEING PLACES

SITES FOR WELLBEING AND CONTEMPLATION



GUIDELINES FOR WELLBEING SITES

Wellbeing Tourism is tourism that supports harmony and balance of body, mind, and soul for guests and hosts, in a sustainable interaction with the local community and environment.

In this guide for wellbeing places, we cover several different criteria and suggestions for basic aspects to consider when planning to promote and market a place as a wellbeing place. Wellbeing tourism implicates an intention to do good, to have a positive impact on people, the surroundings and on the planet, thus there are important things to consider. There is a great variety in places and not all places can attract everyone, but if we consider several of the aspects highlighted in this document, we will meet the needs of many people. The guidelines and criteria should be used as suggestions and useful examples for designing and improving a wellbeing place.

A wellbeing place is a place that will symbolize the increased focus on sustainability and wellbeing for visitors and the host region in the tourism industry. A wellbeing place should allow for contemplation, connection with the natural and cultural heritage, as well as contribute to promotion of the destination as a provider of wellbeing tourism in an innovative way.

WELLBEING CHARACTERISTICS -SOFT CRITERIA



It is essential to ask the question “How does the place contribute to the Wellbeing of body, mind and soul”? We must be able to justify its characteristics and benefits as well as why the place creates a feeling of wellbeing to its visitors. We must also give visitors a reason to travel and spend their time and money to transport themselves to the place.

Balanced energy & feeling

It is important to stress the very feeling the place can give. The creation of feelings does not only depend on what we see but also on the sounds, smells, the natural- and cultural storytelling, weather impacts, etc. The selected place should be as neutral as possible. Sites that are linked to adverse events can affect visitors and lead to a negative connection and bad feelings to the place. Yet, we must keep in mind, that all visitors perceive a place subjective and different based upon cultural background, age, experiences, interest etc. Therefore, we can never truly take all possible aspects of a place in consideration.

Risk: Heavy cultural/historic background giving the visitor a negative association to the place.

Criteria: Avoid places with a clear stated historical background that connects to death, horrors or other tragedies. Burial grounds, execution places or war related places should, as far as possible, be avoided.

Action: Choose places that connect to positive or neutral tales or happenings and memories. It is good to ask the local municipality or locals about the historical background of a place. Inform visitors about happenings or tales that add up to a positive experience for body, mind, and soul.

Experiences with all the senses

When choosing a place, it is also important to consider how a place can be experienced with all the senses. Places that go through a natural change, for example, flowering meadows, fragrant plants, singing birds, sounds and activities from animals, natural lights etc. can add up to a great value for the visitor and promote them to return and create memorable experiences and associations to our region.

Risk: The place might be suitable a certain time of the day or during a period of time but may also be unsuitable other times. Disturbances can occur through noise or odors from traffic, airports, boat/wharf-life, agriculture, etc.

Criteria: When determining a place, it is important to take in its state during different time periods.

Action: Choose places with minimum impact and dependence from the surrounding society (traffic etc.). If impacts can't be avoided, it is important to communicate and inform about events or possible restrictions and disturbances.



Space for recovery

A place should be a place well suited for recovery from hectic everyday life, stress, and crowds. A site's "weakness" can be turned into valuable additions for a place. The lack of infrastructure for instance. If the place lies far away from a base station for mobile network, this should be highlighted (rather than seeing it as a limitation) as an asset for recovery. The lack of mobile connection helps to promote the visitors to shut down and de-connect themselves from the internet. Motivating the visitor to enjoy and take in the surrounding, contemplate or meditate. To focus on their mindfulness and inner wellbeing.

Risk: Too much human impact at the site. By providing too much infrastructure or services the place can lose its connection to the true natural- and cultural values.

Criteria: The place must not be an existing, frequent visited tourist attraction where a lot of activities are going on. It needs to be distant enough from any disturbances from the society. Further it must offer possibilities for activities for physical and mental wellbeing, such as sports, yoga, and meditation. It must be spacious so that there is no risk for crowding.

Action: The place must offer enough space for the expected number of visitors. There must be a balance and harmony between services (for example, toilets, picnic tables, wind shelters etc.), keeping the place natural and genuine.



Implemented in the landscape

The place must be based on natural characteristics with contemporary values. It should also add up with genuine values for body, mind and soul, as well as take environmental, social- and economic factors in consideration. Further the place must be authentic, fit and blend into the region and the surroundings. It has to be representable and reflect the natural- and/or cultural heritage of the region.

Sustainability

The sustainability aspects are important for the election of the place. The place must be accessible and available to a wide public and offer SMEs/actors the usage of the place in their offerings. The increased attention and awareness of its values can cause unwanted effects and stress the environment, surroundings and effect the locals.

Risk: Damages through visitor pressure, wear and tear on nature and disturbance of wildlife.

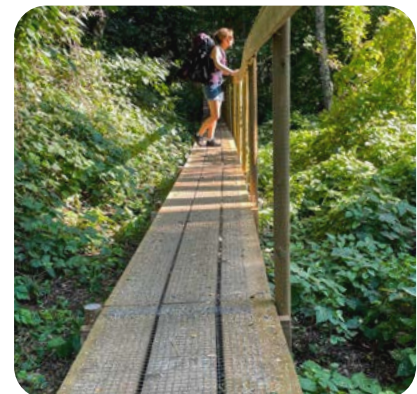
Criteria: The place must be able to withstand certain visitor pressure.

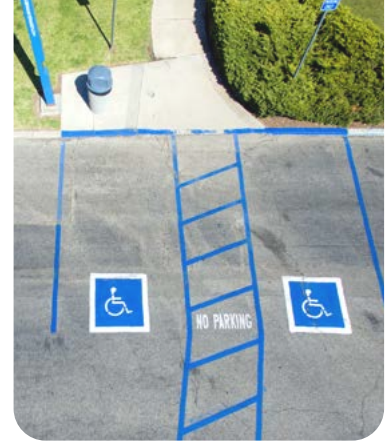
Action: We must ensure its sustainability. Visitors should get directions to trails and paths by e.g. nudging. This requires signs with information or other markers indicating trails and paths. Fencing certain areas, adding walkways, footbridges, limit access in certain periods or prohibiting trespassing by foot or any vehicles (online maps can be updated restricting the pathways) are other possible actions.

Risk: Disturbance for locals by increased numbers of visitors, traffic, sound pollution and emissions.

Criteria: Residential areas should not be in close connection.

Action: The place must be selected considering the wellbeing of locals and the surrounding.





Accessibility

To be able to present the site as a suitable wellbeing place it must be accessible for the target group. This considers both accessibility in terms of transport, infrastructure as well as the access for people with special needs.

Transport

The increased publicity of the place, causing a higher visitor pressure, force us to work on offering as sustainable transportations options as possible. Depending on geographical location of the place, reaching the site by car is in this case eligible. A place that is accessible by public transport, connected to hike– and bike trails, pavements and offer charging stations for electrical vehicles is to be considered having a higher value and priority as a suitable wellbeing place then a place without.

Risk: The chosen place is to remote to be packaged into wellbeing offers for SMEs/actors and does not add up to environmentally friendly means of use and transportation. Remote places, offering silence and tranquility, are often hard to reach by any other then car.

Criteria: All places must also be accessible (in terms of transport) in minimum one environmentally friendly way. For example, by bike, buss, train or by foot.

Action: Taking sustainable transport in consideration, not only to the location itself but also analyzing what possibilities the surrounding offers. For example, by public transport, bike- and electric car rental.

Infrastructure

Accessibility to toilets, showers, barbeque and picnic areas etc. can add great value or increase the attractiveness. Depending on the type of location, it might be necessary to consider the service offered at, or nearby the place. Some places might not offer any service at all whilst other are previously quipped with for example, toilets or bins. The place must also be suited and interesting for families with children. However, infrastructure and services can also affect the authentic and natural values of a place.

Risk: Non or insufficient infrastructure/service at the place leading to reduced visitors.

Risk: Too much man-made intervention. The place can easily be over facilitated with furniture, gadgets, signs and harm the natural environment and character of a place. This can lead to negative perceptions and give a false impression of our idea of the Wellbeing concept.

Criteria: A minimum and maximum offer of infrastructure and service in all places should be considered for example, information board, picnic table, etc.

Action: Identify the natural theme of the place and the expected number of visitors. Based on our target group further identify the need of infrastructure and service. Pay attention to and consider alternative services in the surrounding. Adjustments made to the place for example, by building or renovating toilets or bins, must be designed to blend and fit in the surrounding. Structures should, as far as possible, be produced in sustainable materials that withstand visitor pressure and weather impacts allowing it to age naturally. If possible, procured and build locally.

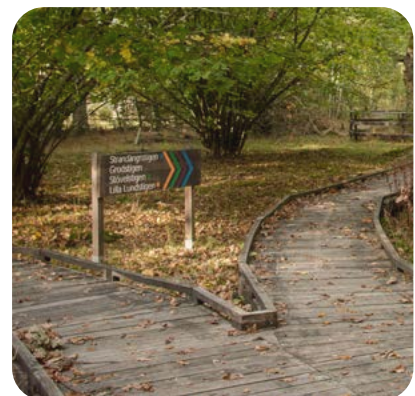
Accessibility for all

The place should be a good example for a place accessible for everyone.

Risk: The place might naturally decrease accessibility by its natural or ancient formation excluding people with certain needs.

Criteria: The place must take minimum one area of disability in concern and offer special arrangement to meet the need to be a good example for other SMEs/actors. This can be offered in the whole place or be divided into a certain part or area.

Action: Inform about the possibilities and restrictions of the place. Adjustments made to the place for example, by adding ramps, braille trails etc. must be designed to blend and fit in the surrounding as well as far as possible be produced in sustainable materials that withstand visitor pressure and weather impacts allowing it to age naturally. If possible, procured and build locally.





Contemplation

As mentioned above, the main focus must be wellbeing. The place must offer contemplation and wellbeing according to the key values body, mind and soul. Specially arranged devices or areas within the site should be offered to encourage visitors to take themselves time for contemplation. For example, placing unique gadgets such as swings, hooks to bring your own hammock, outdoor yoga carpets, seating, sun beds or wind protection. This also supports and promotes the destination as a provider of wellbeing in an innovative way, creating memories inviting the visitors to return.

Risk: Crowded wellbeing place and insufficient contemplation/resting areas.

Criteria: The place must be of adequate size and offer enough space for its use for existing and new visitors.

Action: Planning and choosing the place with care considering the possible number of visitors.

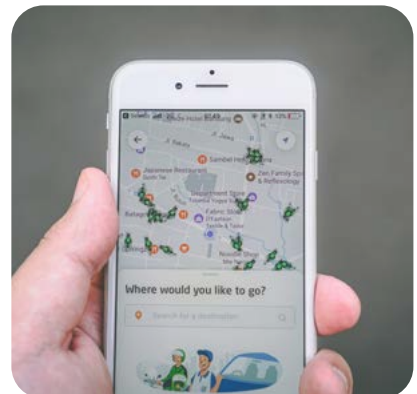
Educational

The place shall contain educational assets which can take various forms depending on the type of place. Since it is a wellbeing place it shall be a good example of what possibilities there are for other places, inspiring not only the visitors, but also SMEs and actors.

Educational material can be signs and information boards, fixed tip rounds, applications guiding visitors through the park explaining natural– and cultural heritage and wildlife, downloadable content such as e-guides, podcasts, questionnaires, and games. Activities such as fundraising (for example, through Samsung pay and Swish) and assisting in conservation of the place by helping on cleaning day or plant a seed/tree also adds up to the wellbeing of both visitors by “welldoing”.

Risk: Production and maintenance of the educational material must maintain good quality in the long run.

Criteria: Minimum one information board containing information about the wellbeing place, the natural– and cultural assets. The board must fit– and blend in to the surrounding and be made of less startling material or natural materials that can age naturally. Like mentioned under sustainability, it should be procured and produced locally.





Values for SMEs and Actors

There is a mutual exchange of values for the destination, the SMEs and actors. The place might be included in tourism products and activities and be advertised. Further, SMEs and actors can use the place as a “wellbeing proof” asset in their offerings, learn and use the place for branding themselves as well as using the place for educational purposes. The place must therefore be suitable and accessible for actors in tourism and outdoor life for packaging and travels to the site. It is important that the place includes natural– and cultural values to be attractive for SMEs, actors, and visitors.

The wellbeing place must be a good example, where SMEs and actors can learn the practices used at the site to foster the creation of new wellbeing places. With the implementation of above-mentioned values and tools, the place also is a place to educate staff.

Risk: The place contains few interesting values for SMEs and actors.

Criteria: The place must fulfill criteria based on our key values of sustainability, (either/or) body, mind, and soul, promote wellbeing and welldoing, offer possibilities for contemplation, education and contain elements, to support the promotion of the destination/region as provider of wellbeing tourism.

Action: All places must fulfill basic criteria containing values for SMEs and actors to work with. Either by packaging or arranging activities/travels to the site. It is important to highlight its natural content to pinpoint options and values.



EXAMPLES OF WELLBEING SITES

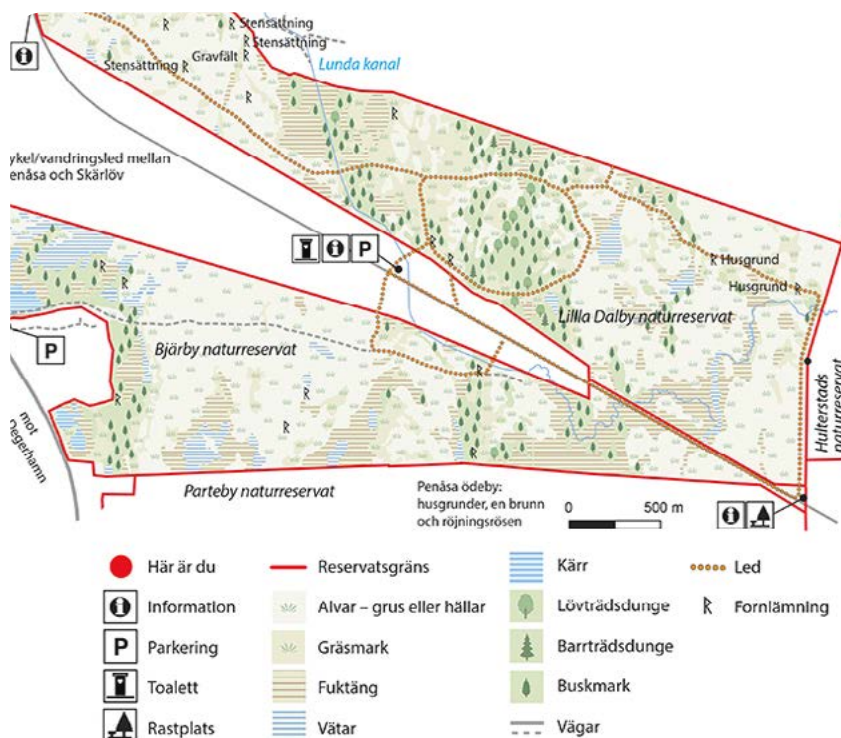
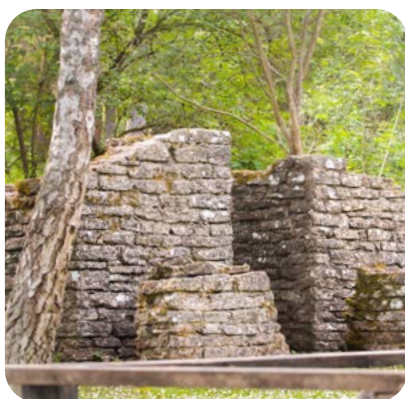
Ancient village - Penåsa Ödeby, Öland

The little ancient village of Penåsa arose in 1779 and consists of two farms located closely to each other. The stone walls that are surrounding the village are the first to be built on the Alvar. Today there are only the basics of a residential building left. There are also fruit trees, berry bushes, ruins of a stone cellar and a well left. In the surrounding forest there are still traces of earlier cultivated lands visible.

When the villagers abandoned the place, stopped cultivating and no more farm animals were grazing the lands, parts of the Alvar, with its special flora, came to grow back again. This small village offers not only space for contemplation and resting but also gives the visitors a good idea of the natural- and cultural heritage of Öland. There are also several hiking tracks connecting to the place. The village lays within the UNESCO world heritage site of Öland and reachable via ancient monument Lilla Dalby conservation area.

At the site: Parking lot, information sign, toilet, wind protection, fireplace, picnic area, several connected hiking and biking trails.

More information about the wellbeing pilot place can be seen at: <https://wellbeingtourism.com/places/penasa-pilot-place/>



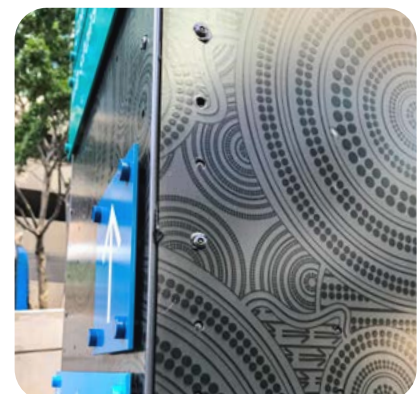
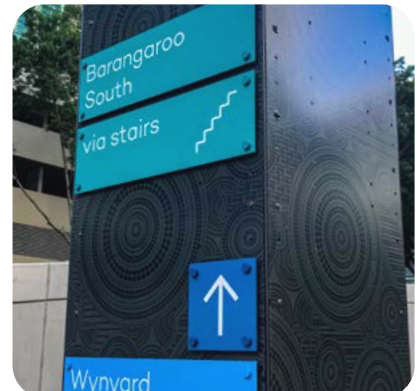
S:T Knuts kapell & Gråborg in Tveta, Öland

Gråborg is Öland's largest ancient castle, built during the Iron Age but used all the way into historical times. There is also a medieval chapel ruin located next to the castle and the small village of Borg with a well-cultivated agricultural landscape. The village of Borg consists of two farms owned by the Academy of Sciences (Vitterhetsakademin). The academy is trying preserve the older farming landscape through traditional farming methods in meadows and pastures. The buildings are well preserved, some of the barns are incorporated and have roofs build with sea reed. 1540, Borg consisted of a farm belonging to Vadstena monastery.

At the site: Parking lot, toilet, walking path to the ruin and several typical cultural/historical farm buildings, located in a scenic location between several flower-rich meadows. The place is connected to three hiking trails (between 4-16 km) and one biking track. In the nearby surrounding there is also a resting area, a windmill, a little farm shop with books from the academy, and an old forge as well as other typical cultural buildings reminding of the historical times of Öland.



Inspiration & ideas



Example of wellbeing place checklist

In addition to the characteristics described in this draft, we add a checklist to ensure the quality of Wellbeing places.

- Consider the basic criteria
- Ensure wellbeing values for:
 - Body
 - Mind
 - Soul

Remember all sustainability pillars:

- Environmental
- Social
- Economic

Consider following aspects and ensure being welcoming towards everyone and create values for visitors and SMEs:

- Accessibility
- Infrastructure/services
- Accessibility for all
- Transport
- Contemplation
- Educational
- Natural and cultural heritage
- Values for SMEs and Actors
- Promotion and information



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Available on: www.wellbeingtourism.com

This guide is produced in the project SB WELL- Wellbeing Tourism in the South Baltic Region - Guidelines for Good Practices & Promotion- with support from the EU Interreg South Baltic Programme.

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