

MARKETING & MEDIA

This is Carmarthenshire

CYCLING
TOURISM
TOOLKIT

How businesses can
benefit and get involved

MAY 2019

Cycling is already an important part of Carmarthenshire’s visitor economy - significant investment has taken place and more is planned with the aim of establishing Carmarthenshire as the **‘Cycling Hub of Wales’**.

Introduction to cycling and this toolkit

Cycling is an important product offering for visitors to our county, cycling provides opportunities to showcase our natural beauty, scenery and terrain, it attracts visitors all year round as well and brings health and well-being benefits to our local communities.

By following the guidance on the following pages you’ll be well prepared to capture a larger percentage of a growing market, both in the UK and abroad. Cyclists need places to stay, good food to eat, equipment to buy or hire and detailed local knowledge. Gearing your business to provide for these needs will bring significant lasting benefits.

- 01 Introduction to cycling and this toolkit
- 02 Lets start with some statistics
- 03 Cycling vision for Carmarthenshire – The Cycling Hub of Wales
- 04 Our cycling product
- 05 Making the most of available resources
- 06 Attracting cyclists to your business
- 10 Going the extra mile
- 11 Case study - The Plough Rhosmaen
- 12 Marketing your business to cyclists
- 13 Case study - Erwlon Caravan & Camping Park
- 14 Showcasing Carmarthenshire’s events
- 15 Opportunities through events
- 16 Case study - Matt Page
- 17 Case study - Bean on a Bike
- 18 It’s all about being social
- 20 Useful links

What is this toolkit for?

- To share an overview of the current and future product within Carmarthenshire
- To provide information on how businesses can benefit from cyclists
- To provide information on how businesses can attract more cyclists
- To provide an overview of the cycling events industry within Carmarthenshire
- To signpost resources available to assist businesses

Why cycle in Carmarthenshire?

- Offers family-friendly traffic free cycle routes with great amenities for a day out, plus more routes on the way
- Mountain bikers can enjoy single track riding with marked trails at Brechfa and Cwm Rhaeadr
- Boasts some of the greatest road cycling routes for climbs and views, including the Black Mountain
- Has a low volume of traffic - away from the main A40, A483 and A48 roads, the county is very lucky to have reasonably quiet roads
- There’s a real buzz around cycling events following the county’s hosting of the opening stage of the Tour of Britain in Carmarthenshire in 2018. Who will ever forget seeing Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas race through our countryside?
- Has an impressive 3,487 kilometres of road network, many of them country lanes, which are ideal for road cyclists to explore



Let's start with some statistics

Since the London Olympics in 2012 the so-called 'Wiggo' effect has transformed the sport and wider cycle industry. Cycling tourism contributes greatly to the economy - here are some key facts:

The National Cycle Network (a UK wide network of trails) supports 15,000 jobs and directly contributes £650 million to the economy each year
sustrans.org.uk/news/cycle-tourism-boosts-economy

Mountain biking as an industry is worth £23 million to the Welsh Economy (Natural Resources Wales)

42% of people aged 5+ (c. 25 million people, if applied to the whole of Great Britain) own or have access to a bicycle

Cycle tourists on average spend more: around 9% per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip
assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government

The Tywi Valley Cycle route aims to link with major tourist attractions along the route generating an estimated £860,000 to £2million in the local economy every year as well as creating and supporting between 17 and 41 full-time jobs

There are three main types of cycling tourism:

- 1 Cycling holidays** - where people set out to tour multiple destinations by bike
- 2 Holiday cycling** - where people want to do some cycling whilst they are visiting an area
- 3 Cycling day visits** - where people visit an area with their bike for a day to cycle a particular route or visit a particular place

Single day trips are 100 times more frequent than multiple day trips and offer the greatest growth potential for UK cycling tourism. This is consistent with the increasing number of day visits undertaken by all tourists as people attempt to cut costs. However, this doesn't mean that by improving the services you provide either individually as a business or collectively as a community or region, you can't increase the number of overnight stays as well.



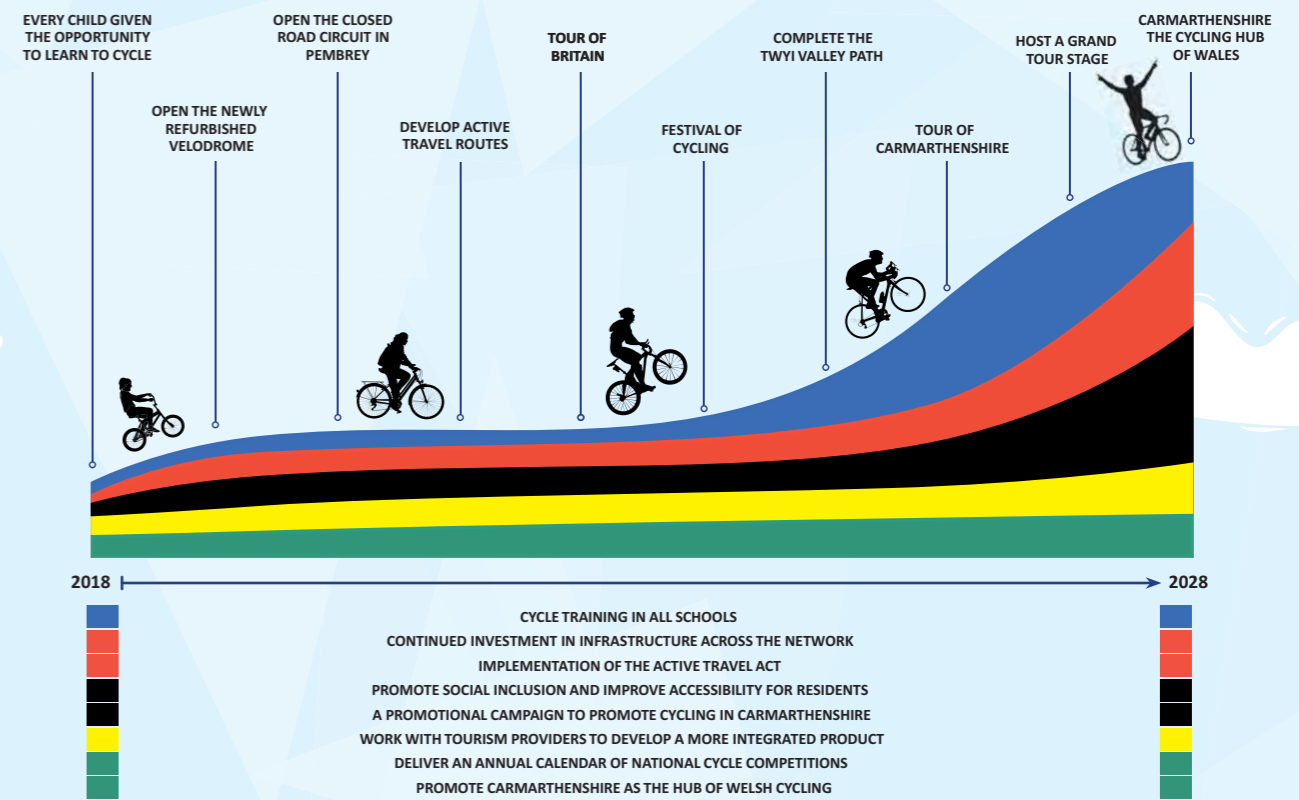
£2.9b total contribution to UK economy
britishcycling.org.uk



Vision for Carmarthenshire - The Cycling Hub of Wales

To achieve growth in the sector, a county-wide Cycling Strategy was created in 2018 with five main themes:

- 1 Education, Development and Training
- 2 Infrastructure and Facilities
- 3 Improve Marketing and Branding
- 4 Tourism
- 5 Events



Some of the ambitions of the strategy linked to economic benefit and tourism include:

- Promote Carmarthenshire as the Cycling Hub in Wales, nationally and internationally implementing solo and partnership (ports, airports) campaigns on the UK, German and North European markets
- Work with tourism providers to help deliver a series of cycling based package holidays
- Host a stage of a Grand Tour
- Host national events across all cycling disciplines
- Host a "Festival of Cycling" to include events for cyclists of all ages and abilities
- Strengthening the quality of the visitor experience and provision for visiting cyclists, encouraging them to stay longer and spend more
- Create "bookable" products, services and experiences and increase the availability of facilities and amenities – more hire points, racks, workstations, wash stations, locks, creation of audio trails, e-bike hire and charge facilities, guided cycling tours/breaks, improved public transport provision for cyclists, luggage transfer services

Our cycling product

From mountain bike trails, to amazing road cycling roads, to closed circuits, here we explain what's what.

Discipline	Where you'll find it?	What to expect?
 <p>Mountain Biking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brechfa Forest Llyn Llech Owain Cwm Rhaeadr Forest Crychan Forest Allt Nant-y-Ci 	Mountain biking is off road cycling ranging from forest roads to manmade single track trails. Graded from Green (easy) to Black (difficult), trails can still be accessible to all levels of cyclists offering introductory trails all the way through to the more extreme end of the sport.
 <p>Road Cycling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countywide 	Carmarthenshire's rural roads are a road cyclists' dream and Carmarthenshire County Council has mapped out a range of spectacular routes, from big hills and adventure to tours of the Teifi and Tywi Valleys.
 <p>Tracks and Circuits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Closed Road Circuit, Pembrey Country Park Carmarthen Velodrome 	Significant investment over the last few years with a Closed Road Circuit in Pembrey and redevelopment of Carmarthen velodrome. Pembrey provides a safe, traffic-free environment for coaching, training sessions, competitive cycling competitions (such as the first stage of the Tour of Britain in 2018). Available for riders to access when no events are booked.
 <p>Family Friendly Trails</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Millennium Coastal Park, Llanelli Swiss Valley Amman Valley Riverside Path 	Safe, traffic-free routes suitable for all the family and a great introduction to cycling. Suitable for most types of bikes from road bikes to hybrids these trails are great for leisure riding with plenty of opportunities for sightseeing and refreshments along the way.
 <p>National Cycle Network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countywide 	The NCN connects a number of towns and villages across Carmarthenshire and includes the long distance 'Celtic Trail' route across South Wales
 <p>Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Countywide 	Carmarthenshire hosts a range of cycling events from mountain bike events, to road cycling sportives, to national events such as the Tour of Britain.

discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/epic-cycling-routes

Making the most of available resources

There are so many valuable resources available to you as a business: route maps, images, leaflets and more. Here is a simple guide to help get you started:

Resource	Where you can find it?
Discover Carmarthenshire's 6 mapped road cycling routes	plotaroute.com/routecollection/630
Videos of mapped road cycling routes	discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/epic-cycling-routes/road-cycling/
Mountain Bike Route information and downloads	mbwales.com
Cycling images	flickr.com/photos/discovercarms
Sustrans cycling guide books and maps	shop.sustrans.org.uk



Attracting cyclists to your business

What does it mean to be cyclist-friendly? How can you make sure your business is geared up for cyclists? Providing facilities that cyclists want and expect and deliver an all-round better experience will make your business more appealing to cyclists. Here are some easy-to-implement tips:

Accommodation providers

Provide a secure bike storage where bikes can be locked up and kept safe (bikes are often worth thousands of pounds). The secure area can be a garage space, shed, purpose-built lockers or basement. Would you allow customers to store their bikes in their room?

Provide outdoor facilities for washing bikes – this can be as simple as a hosepipe, whilst a bucket and sponge is better than nothing.

Provide a place for drying wet cycling gear such as a drying room or access to a tumble dryer. In addition offer a clothes washing service for your guests (or a washing machine if you're a self-catering property), provide a tray to put wet and dirty shoes on, a bin bag or coat hanger is a great way to deal with some soggy jackets in the short-term, and will help keep things clean and dry.

Have the basics in terms of a repair kit on hand for your guests. Why not go along to your local bike shop and ask for advice on what to include?

A first aid kit – your business should have one already but make your cyclists aware of it.

Provide maps and information on local routes - find out what is local, and have some maps to show what is where.

Do you know where visitors can hire a bike from? Some companies can deliver and collect and there may be a qualified cycle guide that you can start working with.

Cyclist-friendly places to eat – this may be you, but do you know anywhere else that is welcoming?

Local bike shops – you don't need to be an expert in cycling, especially if you can point visitors to a local bike shop or give them a telephone number to call. Know where your local bike shop is (it could be 20-30 miles away). They are one of your best allies to give you current local knowledge for routes, issues etc.

Cyclists get tired and bikes break down! Do you know where they can get a bike repaired, or someone who can carry people and bikes? Many local taxis have people carriers that can assist (check they can). There are also luggage transfer and bike carrier companies that can help.

Promote your free Wi-Fi so that guests can research the local area, plan activities and hire equipment. Lots of your potential customers are in an age range that expects good internet access. Without it you may lose the booking.

Offer hearty, energy loaded meals, serve bananas for breakfast! Be flexible, so guests can fit in eating around early and late finishes.

Don't forget to join the Visit Wales – accredited Cyclists Welcome scheme businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/sites/tourism



Cyclists may be late or early to their accommodation, how do you deal with this?

Late arrivers: This is common on the long distance routes, often it is not their fault, as they may have had a breakdown or accident, or had a late breakfast because where they were staying would not let them eat early. A cyclist may turn up after normal food service is over - can you still offer some soup and a roll? And remember that mobile phone reception can be patchy in our county so they may have tried to let you know they were running late.

Early departures: Quite often cyclists want an early start (so they don't arrive late elsewhere!) If this is difficult to provide your normal breakfast service, consider a cyclist 'special' that helps you manage what you can provide for a breakfast.



Useful tips!



Public transport - do you have this information to hand that you can give to cyclists? Check if the public transport does carry bikes as there are situations that arise that mean a cyclist may need to jump on a bus or train.



Weather forecasts - providing a daily weather forecast is not only an easy service to add value for your guests, it helps you know what sort of day your guest is going to have and if they will be arriving wet at the end of the day. Fore-warned is fore-armed!



The ultimate way to be cycle friendly... Ask them how their ride was or is, was it good, was it bad? Send your feedback to marketing@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Cafes/pubs/attractions

Provide cycle racks outside your property for secure bike storage (as an addition why not stock some bike locks). Don't forget cyclists want their bikes parked where they can be seen and where they will not get damaged.

Build your teams' knowledge on local cycling routes so that you can be a useful source of information for cyclists.

Stock local route leaflets and maps.

Be prepared for wet or muddy cyclists and make sure they feel welcome and comfortable.

Consider your menu choices – what are cyclists looking for during a day on the bike?

Toilets – you may have some on your premises - do you mind cyclists using them if they ask or only if they are a customer? A polite notice saying for customers only will be understood and accepted by most and could get another sale. Do you know where the nearest public toilet is, and can you point the cyclist to where they are?

Can you offer a cyclist 'special', either as a discount if you arrive by bike, or free tea with every order? Cyclists love big slices of cake, let them know you have some! Offering a free water bottle refill is a really easy way to show you care! Stock and display cyclist-friendly food near the counter such as energy bars, gels or flapjacks.

Repair kits and spares – this doesn't need to be complicated, and can be as simple as some inner tubes and puncture repair kits. Your local bike shop can help you with advice on this. You can sell these items. Remember though, just like food, inner tubes have a shelf life!

Other kit – A track pump (an upright cycle pump with a pressure gauge), allen keys and spanners.



Going the extra mile

How can you stand out from the crowd?

We've covered the basics. Now what else can you be doing to ensure cyclists have a wonderful experience at your business.

If you're an accommodation provider, why not offer packed lunches for cyclists, offering energy bars, gels, drinks. ✓

Encourage non cyclists to discover cycling as part of their holiday, offering route options and access to bike hire. ✓

Have a library of cycling magazines on hand in your accommodation or café – some great break time reading for cyclists. ✓

Offer discounts to cycling clubs, how about a deal for coffee and cake in your café, or reduced price accommodation if they arrive by bike? ✓

Link up with other providers such as bike hire and guides offering your guests a wonderful unique experience. ✓

Be flexible – cyclists may arrive back late or want to leave early for a day on the bike. Be accommodating and open to their needs. ✓



Case study:

THE PLOUGH RHOSMAEN, LLANDEILO

Nature of Business – **Hotel and restaurant**

Not your typical activity tourism hotel, however this hasn't stopped The Plough Rhosmaen understanding the benefits and opportunities available from targeting cyclists to their business. Their ethos is adapting and tailoring their offer to the desired target market.

As part of their **marketing**, and specifically online marketing, the **hotel website** has a section devoted to cycling with contact details for bike hire in the area and suggested itineraries for days out on the bike. Not only does this help them with informing their existing clientele but also more importantly helps cyclists searching for bike-friendly hotels to find them online.

a place to stay, including secure bike storage, wash down and dry room facilities, print outs of cycling maps, packed lunches and free water bottle top ups. And as an added bonus for any cyclist they also have a sauna to relax in after a day on the bike.

A key ethos of the hotel is also to **tailor their offer to individual group needs** and they will happily offer a high carbohydrate menu for groups of cyclists staying with them.

The Plough Rhosmaen have ensured that they provide the **things cyclists are looking for from**

Their top tips for attracting cyclists:

- ✓ Being flexible and adapt to the needs of guests, offer early breakfast if needed or a late meal in the night.
- ✓ Friendly, personal service with well-informed staff who can provide local information.
- ✓ Providing maps and route guides.
- ✓ Providing information on cycle hire, public transport and taxi information, weather forecasts and nearby attractions.
- ✓ Providing facilities for secure bike storage.



"Currently Britain's athletes are leading the world in cycling. The successes of Bradley Wiggins, Chris Froome and now local boy come good Geraint Thomas has created a cycling boom. Cycle tourism is an expanding business and by being cycling friendly in a beautiful part of the country we will benefit from this upturn." - Andrew Roberts

Marketing your business to cyclists

- ✓ Make the most of events – find out about local cycling events coming to Carmarthenshire. Are there opportunities for you to link in with the event organisers?
- ✓ Social media – incorporate cycling content into your strategy, source images from Carmarthenshire Flickr (flickr.com/photos/discovercarms/albums) and the Visit Wales image library Wales on View (walesonview.com). Do your part in sharing the wonderful cycling product Carmarthenshire has to offer.
- ✓ Keen cyclists have created communities through apps like Strava – think about how you can get involved in these.
- ✓ Your website – incorporate cycling routes on your website. There are 5 road cycling routes plotted online that would be great for your guests.
- ✓ Visit Wales Cyclists Welcome scheme – if you're a Visit Wales graded accommodation provider how about joining the Walkers and Cyclists Welcome scheme for no extra cost?
- ✓ Listing websites – businesses can list their facilities on cycle specific websites such as mbwales.com. These are opportunities for you to benefit from wider marketing activities.
- ✓ Specialist cycling media and websites – are there any opportunities for you to feature or advertise in cycle specific magazines. Do you offer something different? Would your story make a good feature? Here are some of the magazines you could consider:
 - Mountain Bike UK - mbuk.com
 - Mountain Bike Rider - mbr.co.uk
 - Singletrack - singletrackworld.com
 - Cycling Weekly - cyclingweekly.com
 - Cyclist - cyclist.co.uk
 - Cycling Plus - cyclingplus.com



Case study:

ERWLON CARAVAN AND CAMPING PARK, LLANDOVERY

Nature of Business – **Touring and tent caravan park**

Erwlon is located on the edge of the Brecon Beacons in the market town of Llandovery. With a strong focus on providing visitors with information on things to see and do in the area, cycling and mountain biking are an important feature on the Erwlon website.

Erwlon have grasped the opportunity to showcase the fantastic locations to cycle in and around Carmarthenshire and the Brecon Beacons, and have made the most of useful **resources on offer** to them and other businesses. Resources

they have added to their website include **video footage and route maps** which were created by Carmarthenshire County Council, and they'd encourage other businesses to do the same utilising the great resources on offer.

erwlon.co.uk/blog/cycle-the-tywi-valley-castle-tour

Their top tips for attracting cyclists:

- ✓ Provide information on your website and social media for all types of cyclists, from leisure cyclists to road cycling enthusiasts.
- ✓ Engage with bike shops and cycling guides to make them aware that your accommodation is cyclist-friendly.
- ✓ Have as much information to hand as possible for cyclists when they arrive at your business, they'll be thankful for it.



"It makes sense for us to use what has already been created to promote the area and showcase the fantastic road cycling that can be accessed from our doorstep. With six road cycling routes in Carmarthenshire plotted and available online by adding them to our website we're making the most of free tools available to promote Erwlon, Llandovery and Carmarthenshire." - Peter Rees

Showcasing Carmarthenshire's events

Carmarthenshire hosts a number of cycling events throughout the year, many of which are unique and 'home-grown' within the county. Here's our guide to just some of the great events on offer.



Battle on the Beach – Pembrey Country Park (usually in April)

The biggest and most unique off-road race in the UK

Open to MTB and CX, or anything else you can ride off-road, the course is 3 laps (or 2 laps for fun categories), with the total distance being approximately 42km.

battleonthebeach.co.uk



Merlin Ride – starts from Cross Hands (usually in August)

The Merlin Ride is a road event which was established in 2008. With three different routes to choose from, each one is quite different from the other, however they all have their own character and challenges.

county-cycles.com/merlin-ride



Gritfest, Cilycwm near Llandovery (usually in June)

Gritfest is open to all off-road bikes. Two days of incredible riding in Cilycwm, near Llandovery and includes timed special stages on gravel and over a mixture of terrain.

gritfest.co.uk



The Wildflower Duathlon – National Botanic Garden of Wales (usually in March)

The run course will take part within the spectacular Botanic Garden Of Wales and the transition onto the bike will take you out onto the surrounding roads. This outstanding bike course boasts of rolling hills surrounded by stunning farm lands.

toughrunneruk.com/events/wildflower-duathlon-2019/

Opportunities through events

In 2018 Carmarthenshire County Council hosted the opening stage of the Tour of Britain. With the best road cyclists in the county, extensive TV coverage and thousands of spectators, the event is estimated to have contributed £800,000 to the local economy.

As a business make sure you link in with events (whatever the scale). A list of future events can be found on the British Cycling website (britishcycling.org.uk/events/home)



Case study:

Matt Page (Professional cyclist and owner of A Cycling, Llandovery)

Nature of Business – **Event management company**

Matt runs *A Cycling* a sporting events company based in Carmarthenshire, specialising in cycling (both on and off-road), multi-sport and running events.

As a keen cyclist Matt understand that there is **huge tourism potential** from the full spectrum of cycling disciplines. From events to holidaymakers, it's important for businesses to

understand that not all cyclists are racers and many will be here to ride for pleasure and enjoy the area.

Matt's top tips on attracting cyclists to your business:

- ✓ Inspire them – utilise your websites and social media channels to promote the fantastic cycling Carmarthenshire has to offer.
- ✓ Improve your knowledge of local amenities – closest laundrette, bike shop.
- ✓ Increase your knowledge of cycle routes within the area – for example Cycle Llandovery (cyclellandovery.uk) website/flyers is a useful starting point and routes on the Discover Carmarthenshire website.
- ✓ Have information on good scenic spots – those views and hidden gems for cyclists to discover. Places others have not discovered perhaps.
- ✓ Connect with event organisers in terms of partnership opportunities and cross promotion.



We asked Matt why cyclists consider Carmarthenshire as a place to visit: *"It's for our scenic but quiet roads. Very few other places south of Scotland have scenery as good as we do with the added bonus of roads that are as quiet."*

Case study:

BEAN ON A BIKE, CROSSHANDS

Nature of Business – **Café and bike shop**

Bean on a Bike are experts in cycling. Located in a bike shop they have their fingers on the pulse in terms of what cyclists are looking for from a pit stop when out on the bike.

Refuelling is key, starting with serving an award-winning blend of coffee. They also serve home-made food using fresh local produce wherever possible, including free range eggs from a local farm and home-grown salads during the summer from their own vegetable plot.

As a business Bean on a Bike understand that **people are key** - all bike shop staff are cyclists themselves so understand about routes and issues on the bike etc. On-site mechanics do on-the-spot repairs, the bike fit studio is on hand to adjust uncomfortable positions on the bike,

and they also have a clothes drying facility. However even if you're not a bike shop and not able to offer the above services, if you're looking to attract cyclists why not have contact details for your local bike shop to hand and also stock basic repair kits for those unforeseeable issues.

Bean on a Bike also organise **events from the shop**, becoming well-known locally as the hub for cyclists in the area. Why not link with your local bike operator or club to arrange your own events?

Bean on a Bike's top tips to being cyclist-friendly:

- ✓ Have a bike rack outside your premises for cyclists to keep their bikes safe and secure.
- ✓ Be warm and welcoming – staff are your biggest asset. Staff who cycle can relate to the experiences when cyclists visit and empathise when things go wrong, which it inevitably does on the bike.
- ✓ Offer snack-type food – if you're cycling long distances then you don't want a huge meal.
- ✓ And good coffee is essential.



It's all about being social...

Adding cycling relevant content to your website is a great way of engaging with potential visitors, we've provided you with some useful introductory paragraphs which you can use as a starting point to your content.

Suggested website text:

Miles and miles of country lanes, National Cycle Network, purpose built mountain bike trails, one of the oldest velodromes in Wales, off-road routes - Carmarthenshire has it all. Whether you're an avid mountain biker, a roadie or looking for a family day out cycling, we can guide you through the best places to head out on two wheels, as well as recommending you some great stop-offs along the way. And if you're new to cycling or on holiday without a bike how about hiring a bike or a guide for the day?



Road cycling specific

Six road cycling routes plotted out for you to enjoy. From 29 to 65 miles and taking in some of Carmarthenshire's best views and hills, head out and explore Carmarthenshire on two wheels.
discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/epic-cycling-routes/road-cycling/

Example social media posts:

Mountain bike specific

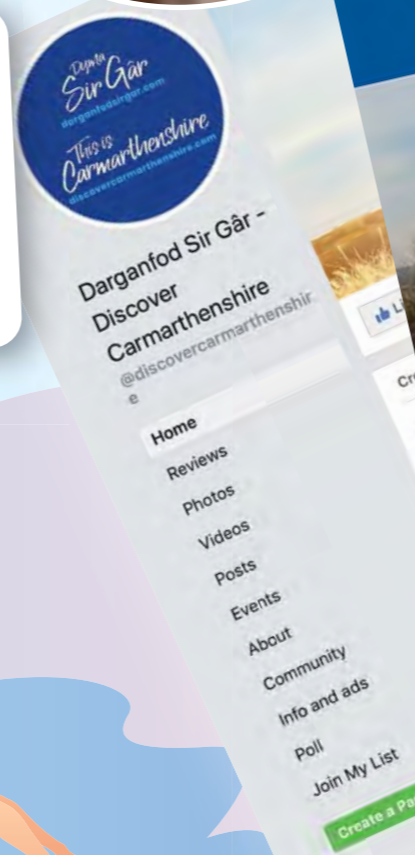
Carmarthenshire has some of the best hidden gems for mountain biking in Wales, from Brechfa to Cwm Rhaeadr, to Crychan Forest. Explore beautiful scenery and great trails in the heart of our county.
discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/epic-cycling-routes/mountain-bike-trails/

Social media tips!

Using popular #cycling hashtags such as #cyclecarms #cyclist #fromwhereiride #cyclingphotos #roadslikethese and #cyclinglife will increase your visibility across social media platforms

Also link in with Visit Wales and Discover Carmarthenshire through using the #'s #FindyourEpic #ThisisWales and #ThisisCarmarthenshire

'Liking' or following interesting relevant events or pages will enhance your cycle-friendly credentials and knowledge of what's happening locally.



Useful links

There are so many valuable resources available to you as a business: route maps, images, leaflets and more. Here is a simple guide to help get you started:

Organisations	Website
Discover Carmarthenshire	discovercarmarthenshire.com/explore/epic-cycling-routes
MBwales (official mountain bike website for Wales)	mbwales.com
Welsh Cycling	welshcycling.co.uk
Visit Wales Industry information	businesswales.gov.wales/tourism
Sustrans - National Cycle Network	www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map
Discover Carmarthenshire Flickr	flickr.com/photos/discovercarms
Cycle Llandovery website	cyclellandovery.uk