



## **NEW app helps staycationers find the south coast's best beaches without the crowds**

**Beach Check UK works in real time to help maintain social distancing on the south coast this summer**



*L-R: Christchurch, Dorset; Bexhill Beach, East Sussex; Beachlands, Hayling Island*

**6 July, 2021**

**Beach Check UK is an innovative new app which allows visitors to check the status of a beach before visiting in order to avoid congested beaches and to encourage them to discover nearby beaches that are quieter and less crowded. The free-of-charge app has just launched in Hayling Island, Hampshire, West Wittering, West Sussex, Camber Sands and Bexhill Beach, East Sussex, and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole on the UK's south coast, as well as various other destinations around the UK.**

Working on a traffic light system that uses sophisticated technology and on-the-ground authorised users who assign a colour code to beaches according to the number of visitors, ability for social distancing to be maintained and number of car park spaces, the app aims to reduce overcrowding at popular coastal areas and encourage safe social distancing.

The app is free to use, downloadable from [Google Play](#) and the [Apple App store](#) (with no in-app purchases), and is simple to use, allowing users to check individual beaches or see a map showing red (crowded), amber (less congested) and green (uncongested) beaches.

The app will allow staycationers and day-trippers to check the status of the following beaches: West Beach, Beachland Central and Eaststoke (Hayling Island); West Wittering, West Sussex, Camber

Sands and Bexhill Beach, East and West, East Sussex and 17 beaches across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

Piloted by Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council in summer 2020, the app was developed to help manage overcrowding of the area's beaches following easing of the first national lockdown. In its first phase, it had around 40,000 downloads. Following its successful introduction, the app was awarded further funding by the government's Local Digital Collaboration Unit at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for a national roll-out.

**Councillor Mohan Iyengar, BCP Council Portfolio Holder for Tourism, Leisure and Culture, said:**

"The timing is great to have this beach check app for the start of summer. It's free and easy to download and helps people find the right spots with less congestion. We're also adding a lot more so that people can find parking places and toilets, places to eat and attractions on offer.

"As with all apps, we encourage feedback to help us improve it and turn it into something really valuable for our resort. It's part of our offer to help people stay safe and have a great time.

"If we can help other local authorities avoid the hardship we endured in the summer of 2020 then we will have done our bit in minimising the spread of Covid-19 while at the same time helping those champing at the bit for a break-away, some well-earned time off and peace of mind."

**Councillor Clare Satchwell Cabinet Lead for Planning, Hayling Seafront Strategy and Coastal Management commented:**

"Hayling Island has a world-class shoreline with beautiful beaches and a blue flag. Since the pandemic we have seen even more visitors to our beaches. We want everyone enjoying this fantastic place to be able to plan ahead, keep safe and thoroughly enjoy every moment of their day. This is where the Beach Check UK app comes in. It can help our visitors make an informed decision about how busy the beaches and car parks are.

"We are really excited that Havant Borough Council is now included in the Beach Check UK App."

**Councillor Doug Oliver, Leader of Rother District Council, which includes Camber Sands and Bexhill Beach, East Sussex said:**

"We are lucky to have some beautiful beaches in our district and we want people to be able to come and enjoy them safely. Some of our beaches can become very congested on warm sunny days. The Beach Check UK app is a great way for visitors to find out how busy our beaches are and to make an informed decision before they decide to travel.

"I would encourage people to download the free app so they can avoid the crowds and enjoy some of the less well known, hidden gems along the spectacular Rother coastline."

There are plans to sign up more coastal locations, and users are encouraged to contact their local authority if they feel their area would benefit.

**Explore the south coast this summer with these ideas from Beach Check UK:**

#### **Friday night fireworks in Bournemouth during August**

Every Friday night during August, the skies above Bournemouth Pier will light up with colourful displays! Pull up a deckchair, get some takeaway fish and chips, and watch the vibrant pyrotechnics light up the Bournemouth seafront. It's part of the Festival Coast Live 2021, which features a series of other lively pop up activities and events including live music and art. Visit [www.bournemouth.co.uk/whats-on/events](http://www.bournemouth.co.uk/whats-on/events).

#### **Award-winning sparkling Sussex stays in a luxurious 'Amazing Space' in West Sussex**

Visit a truly fascinating vineyard on an estate dating back to 1822 in Funtington, Chichester. [Ashling Park Estate](#) vineyard, in West Sussex, is a heavenly retreat boasting trophy-winning sparkling English wines, gin distilled from Pinot Noir grapes grown on the estate, an infinity tasting terrace overlooking sublime views of the vines, pop-up eatery 'The View', and luxurious cabin accommodation designed and built by Will Hardie of Channel 4's Amazing Spaces.

## **The 50<sup>th</sup> Rye Arts Festival – 10-26<sup>th</sup> September**

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> year, the Rye Arts Festival in the East Sussex harbour town of Rye, near Camber Sands, will stage a packed roster of classical and contemporary music, books and talks, theatre and film, walks and tours against the backdrop of this pretty waterside town.

<https://box-office.ryeartsfestival.org.uk>.

**1066 Country Walk, East Sussex:** This 31-mile route which follows in the footsteps of the Norman invaders, has been transformed with new signage, information panels, benches and trail sculptures. Starting at Pevensey, passing through Battle and ending at Rye, much of the walk travels through the High Weald AONB. Taking the Bayeux Tapestry as the theme, East Sussex sculptor Keith Pettit is producing a series of sculptures to act as key points along the route. Five of the sculptures are already in place with the remaining five due to be installed later this year. An illustrated guide features a map, history of the area and eateries to stop at en route.

<https://www.visit1066country.com/things-to-do/1066-country-walk-p881061>

**De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill:** The spectacular modernist 1935 Grade 1 listed Pavilion sits just above the promenade on Bexhill's seafront. The Pavilion is hosting a fantastic programme of events over the summer including art exhibitions, comedy shows, music events and outdoor concerts.

<https://www.dlwp.com/>

For more information, visit <https://www.englandscoast.com/en/blog/beach-check-uk-app>

### **Press:**

For further information on Beach Check UK, or high-res images, please contact Lizzie Cooper or Jackie Franklin at [Travel PR](mailto:Travel PR) on [l.cooper@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:l.cooper@travelpr.co.uk) (07772 136 027) / [j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:j.franklin@travelpr.co.uk) (07779 336 158).

### **Notes to editors:**

1. Launched in July 2020, the Beach Check app is the brainchild of BCP Council, designed using sophisticated technology to help manage over-crowding among its busy beaches.

2. Each location the app is operated will provide information specific to the data available. In some locations the new version will use camera feeds to determine the traffic light system across beaches and will include updates on car park availability. It is simple to use, free to download from Google Play and the Apple App Store and it allows users to check individual beaches or see a map showing red (crowded), amber (less congested) and green (uncongested) beaches.

3. App data is supplied by a mix of sources. At the start of the day, a prediction is set for each zone, based on previous data, factoring in the date and weather to show how busy we forecast each zone will be. From mid-morning, beach management staff (seafront rangers) will update each section on a regular basis to reflect any changes in congestion observed. This is supplemented by CCTV and some footfall counters. Plans are underway to embed the app on coastal destination's tourism webpages.

4. The app has been funded by the government's Local Digital Collaboration Unit at MHCLG the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government which includes funding the launch and maintenance of the app in its first year at no cost to local authorities. The total funding secured for this development is £160,000.

5. The beaches can be searched for individually as well as seen on a wider map. Where data is not available this will be indicated on the app or if any location is temporarily closed. Options allow the consumer to change the colour-codes of the beaches if required. Those who have already downloaded the app will find it updates automatically to the national version.

6. Visit

[www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/summerreadiness](http://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/summerreadiness) <<http://www.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/summerreadiness>> for more information.