



Weston-super-Mare Heritage Open Days 2023

Friday 8 September to Sunday 17 September

www.heritageopendays.org.uk

 @heritageopenday  #HODs  /heritageopendays  @heritageopendays

Welcome to England's largest heritage festival, taking place from Friday 8 to Sunday 17 September in and around Weston-super-Mare.

This is your opportunity to explore Weston's fantastic local history, architecture and culture – all for free!

This guide provides an overview of what is on offer. For more detailed, up-to-date information about each event visit:

www.heritageopendays.org.uk/visiting

This guide has been produced as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone initiative funded by Historic England. Enjoy!



Weston-super-Mare

Before wealthy inhabitants of Bristol and Bath began visiting Weston in the late 18th century the village was an isolated, though self-sufficient farming and fishing settlement of about 150 residents. Early travellers came by stagecoach but found little in the way of accommodation or amusement until the first hotel opened in 1810 followed by a health spa on Knightstone Island in 1820. The railway's arrival in 1841 provided a perfect opportunity for rapid growth.

The population doubled each decade such that by 1871 the town had over 10,000 residents with many more seasonal visitors staying in an increasing number of hotels and guest houses. Trade, tourism, services and retirement flourished as did the building industry. Locally quarried grey limestone and

rail delivered creamy Bath stone gave colour to the town's distinctive architectural style.

Elegant crescents, terraces and hillside villas along with rows of semi-detached and terraced properties quickly obliterated all but a vestige of the old village. High Street's outdated farm buildings gave way to shopping. Churches, schools, social institutions, visitor attractions and local government helped create a sense of worth and civic pride. Local architect Hans Fowler Price designed over 800 buildings between 1862 and 1912 and is recognised as the creator of our distinctive 'Weston Style'.

Increasingly in our towns and cities we see heritage act as cornerstone to regeneration. Appreciation of what we already have will help ensure the quality of what might come.

Over the past six years the Heritage Action Zone has co-ordinated Weston's Heritage Open Days providing an opportunity to be part of the National Heritage Open Days. In future years it is hoped that Weston venues will continue to offer access to heritage during the national festival.



Cllr John Crockford-Hawley
Heritage and Regeneration Champion
North Somerset Council

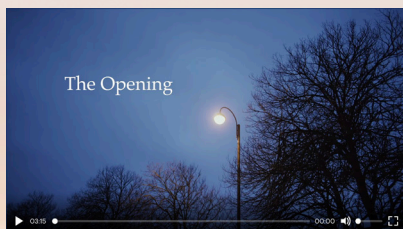


Welcome to Weston

To set the scene, please watch

'The Opening', a short video by Sally Low.

Online: <https://superweston.net/>



The Town and its Seaside Heritage

Weston-super-Mare: The Town and its Seaside Heritage, published by Historic England. Available from the Museum, bookshops and online.

The local area has been occupied since the Iron Age. It was still a small village until the 19th century when it developed as a seaside resort.



High Street Heritage

Weston-super-Mare High Street is full of beautiful buildings. All you need to do is look up! There you will see the variety of original windows, carvings and other details, including a Shakespearian quote and Egyptian elephant heads.

The refurbished Italian Gardens provides a lovely spot to stop, sit and relax among Italianate balustrading, modern fountain (kids love it!) and lawns. Spot Weston's first hotels (now The Royal and Olea), the 1860s Florentine palazzo style bank (now Sass Bar) and University Centre Weston's modern addition to the 1920s Winter Gardens Pavilion.

Visit Walker and Ling, the town's independent department store adjoining the gardens, with a shopfront recently enhanced through the Great Weston Heritage Action Zone project. Parts of the original building were lost to

bombing but the post-war replacement store continues the 130-year-old family business.

From here it's a two-minute stroll past Lloyd's Bank and the 1969 Playhouse Theatre to the relaxing former manorial grounds of Grove Park. On route, pause to admire 132 and 134 High Street which have recently benefited from shopfront enhancement funded by the Heritage Action Zone scheme.

Two other landmark buildings in the town centre have also been restored to their former glory through the same scheme, funded by Historic England: the Fork n Ale Taproom and Kitchen on Walliscote Road and the old Kendall's building on the corner of the High Street and Regent Street.



Creativity unwrapped

1 Archive treasure trove – discover North Somerset’s creative past

Weston Library, Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ

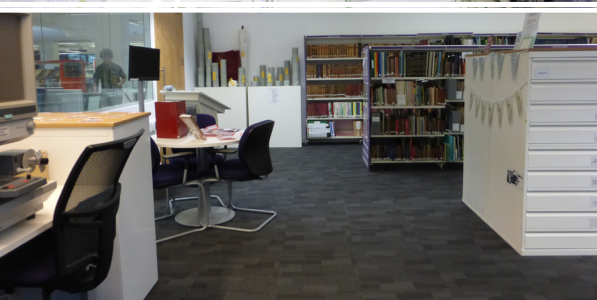
North Somerset local studies library has a superb collection of books, maps, photographs, postcards and ephemera showing the history of North Somerset.

Delve into the archives and find information on people and their creativity. See how the local landscape inspired writers, poets and artists. Find out about local musicians and theatre groups.

Online: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/libraries

Booking: no booking required

Open: Friday 8, Saturday 9, Monday 11, Tuesday 12, Wednesday 13, Thursday 14, Friday 15 and Saturday 16 September 10am-4pm.



2 Unwrapping oneself – coming out stories

Proud Bar and Community Hub
20 The Boulevard, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1NA

Weston-super-Mare’s Proud Bar & Community Hub invites you to find out more about the array of creative and powerful ways that individuals have come out as LGBTQ+ over the decades.

This 90-minute talk will provide a poignant exploration into how people have come out in some of the most beautiful and creative ways in the past.

The evening will include a look at social media and history to identify just how creativity has worked for the LGBTQ+ community as people unwrap themselves and come out.

Online: www.proudbarwsm.com

Booking: no booking required

Open: Thursday 14 September, 7.30-9pm

3 Super Culture celebrates Heritage Open Days' theme of creativity at this year's Whirligig Festival

Italian Gardens, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1JN

A festival where international and local performers come together to bring you jaw dropping outdoor arts experiences in the heart of Weston-super-Mare.

High flying thrills from Belgium's Collectif Malunés, a riot of music with Paraorchestra's SMOOSH! and mesmerising crowd-pleasers from Without Walls supported acts, Alleyne

Dance, Motionhouse and Simple Cypher are just some of the extraordinary experiences packed into this year's award-winning Whirligig Festival.

Kicking off the free, two-day event is Weston's very own Climate Carnival featuring a vibrant, environmentally-themed community parade, plus 'You Shrine' pop-up photo installation

celebrating the people of Weston with a kaleidoscopic nod to the Beatles visit to the town 60 years ago. On the Marine Lake you can take to a rowing boat and lap up the amazing stories within artist Luke Jerram's immersive and thought provoking artwork 'Crossings'.

Family fun is guaranteed with the ever popular and timeless Dizzy O'Dare balloon show; old school slapstick from Avanti Display's 'The Spurting Man'; Spitz

& Co's inimitable comedy in 'Elvis in Blue Hawaii'; Variety Spectacular Show from street theatre legends Jones & Barnard; Circomedia workshops and the irresistible 'Hippochondriac' spectacle from Thingumajig Theatre.

Online: <https://superculture.org.uk/listings/whirligig23>

Booking: no booking required

Open: Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 September, 11am-6pm.



Weston walks

4 Gems of Weston

Stunning Victorian architecture can be spotted all around Weston-super-Mare's town centre.

Discover some highlights of this beautiful seaside town by following this short walk. Download the step-by-step guide and map from our website.

Distance:
about 1.4 miles/2.25 kilometres.

Difficulty:
easy – a level walk on pavements.
Wheelchair, pushchair and dog friendly.

Duration:
about 90 minutes at a leisurely pace.

This walk was developed by North Somerset Council, in partnership with Weston Civic Society and the Health Walks initiative. Funded by Historic England High Street Heritage Action Zone.

Online: <https://n-somerset.gov.uk/gemsofweston>



5 Weston Wallz

Did you know that Weston-super-Mare has one of the biggest and best outdoor galleries of street art in the south west?

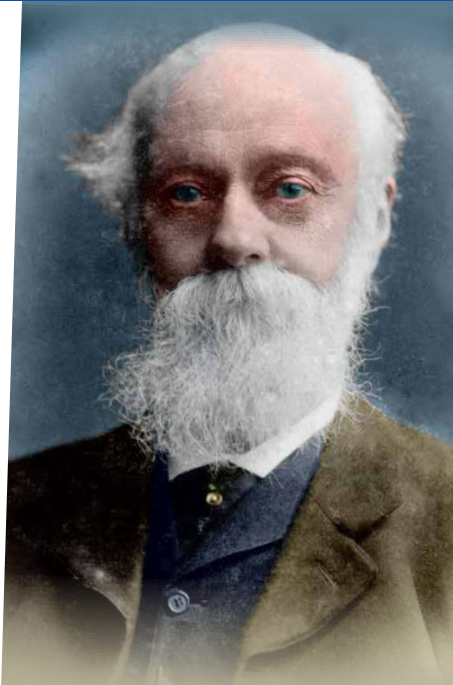
For the last three years, The Upfest Weston Wallz project has been transforming the town by turning some of its walls into giant canvasses for talented artists to bring to life.

More information and a map of all the street art installations can be found on the Visit Weston-super-Mare website.

Follow the map to unwrap the creativity of the Weston Wallz project while exploring the town's heritage and history.

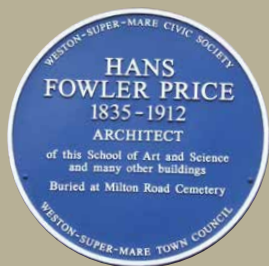
Online: www.visit-westonsupermare.com/things-to-do/street-art-in-weston-super-mare.





In the footsteps of Hans Fowler Price

A walk through Victorian Weston-super-Mare



6 In the footsteps of Hans Price

This walk provides a snapshot of some of Hans Fowler Price's architectural work in Weston-super-Mare.

The walk has been devised by North Somerset Council in partnership with Historic England as part of the Great Weston Heritage Action Zone initiative.

It starts on the corner of Station Road and Graham Road, close to Weston's railway station.

It's on flat terrain and will take about an hour. You can make it a full day out and take time throughout the walk to visit the Museum, Grove Park, The Promenade and enjoy Weston's cafes and shops.

The route highlights just some of the many buildings designed by Hans Price to give some sense of how much influence this famous Victorian architect had on the architecture of Weston.

Online: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/hanspricewalks

7 Grove House/Mayor's Parlour Virtual Tour

The home of Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

Online: <https://youtu.be/zbN4MxlJe7Q>



8 Blue plaques

Find out about the town's blue plaques.

Online: <https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/blue-plaques>

9 Ellenborough Park West

The main entrance to the park is situated opposite Corpus Christi School, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1XW.

Come and experience the beautiful Ellenborough Park West. This site is home to two Red Data Book Plants, one of which is only found in one other spot in Great Britain! The park is south facing and provides the perfect space to lay down a picnic blanket and take a moment to yourself. It's also a brilliant spot for children to take part in wild play just engaging with the environment around them. The park is on even ground in most places. Both gates exit immediately onto a road so care should be taken. On street parking. The park has a no dogs policy.

Online: <https://wsm-tc.gov.uk/our-services/parks-play-areas/ellenborough-park-west-wellbeing-park>

Booking: no booking required

Open: always open

Weston talks

10 Birnbeck Pier Visitor Hub and creative performance

Birnbeck Pier Visitor Hub, Birnbeck Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2EF

After many years' work, Birnbeck Pier came under the ownership of North Somerset Council in July 2023. Read more about this in the [council's news release](#).

The Birnbeck Regeneration Trust is working with North Somerset Council to preserve the natural, historical, architectural and constructional heritage of Birnbeck Pier, the island and the surrounding local area for the benefit of the people of Weston-super-Mare and the nation.

Pop along to Birnbeck to find out more about the history of the pier and island from the Birnbeck Regeneration Trust.

On Saturday 9 September at 2pm, visitors will be treated to a performance by local sea shanty group the Beach'd Buoys.

On Saturday 16 September, local artist

Jordan Cottle will read extracts from his new show 'The Old Pier' at 11am, 1.30pm and 4pm. Using live music, vocal soundscapes and poetic storytelling, Jordan weaves a tale of adventure that explores the forgotten memories of Birnbeck Pier and the magic that can be found right on your doorstep.

Online: www.birnbeckregenerationtrust.org.uk

Booking: no booking required

Open: Saturday 9 and Saturday 16 September, 10am-7pm.

Please note that there will not be any access to the pier or island. Also, timings of creative performances may change slightly depending on the weather.



11 Woodspring Priory by the sea

Woodspring Priory, Kewstoke, Weston-super-Mare BS22 9YU

Woodspring Priory, an Augustinian house of the rare Victorine rule, has a serene atmosphere, surrounded by a working farm, and lying close to the Severn Estuary.

Woodspring Priory, or Worspring as it was known in the Middle Ages, was founded in or around the year 1210. It belonged to the Victorine order of Augustinian Canons, a French foundation of which the Abbey of St Augustine in Bristol was the leading representative in this country. The Augustinians differed from the great Benedictine monastic orders not only in the Rule by which their daily life was governed, but more

particularly in that all its members were clerks who had taken Holy Orders, as against the simpler vows of a monk.

Leaflets on the building's history will be available.

Online: www.landmarktrust.org.uk/news-and-events/upcoming-events/woodspring-priory-open-day-2023

Booking: while booking isn't required, the Landmark Trust recommends pre-booking.

Open: Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September, 10am-4pm.





12 The Old Thatched Cottage

The Old Thatched Cottage Restaurant, 14 Knightstone Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AN

Find out more about the history of The Old Thatched Cottage, the oldest building in Weston-super-Mare.

Discover how the building changed from an 18th century holiday home on the beach (before the seawall was built) to the restaurant it is today.

Step into the private dining room and discover a treasure trove of historical photos and information dating back to the 18th Century.

Plus, find out more about the history of The Old Thatched Cottage restaurant,

one of Weston-super-Mare's most popular restaurants which has been owned and operated by the Michael family since 1959.

Online:
www.theoldthatchedcottage.com

Booking: no booking required

Open: Monday 11, Tuesday 12, Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 September. One-hour tours starting on the hour between noon and 9pm. A maximum of eight people each session on a first-come, first-served basis.

13 The Blakehay Theatre

Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1JZ

Access all areas at the Blakehay Theatre. Join the team for guided backstage tours, a taster weekly studio class/workshop, meet and chat to companies who are bringing their shows and events to the venue. Listen to talks by John Crockford-Hawley on the history of the building and theatre.

The box office will be open, as will the theatre bar for refreshments. Further information about the event can be found on the Blakehay Theatre website.

Online: <https://blakehaytheatre.co.uk>

Booking: No booking required

Open: Saturday 9 September 10am-4pm



Churches

14 All Saints Church

All Saints Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2NL

All Saints Church is a wide, triple gabled Grade II* listed building designed by Royal Academician George Bodley in 1898. The south aisle was added by his pupil, Francis Eden, in 1925.

John Betjeman described All Saints as “the finest church of entirely modern foundation in Somerset”.

Visitors will be able to admire glass

by Kempe and Eden, furnishings and tapestries by Bodley and Eden, a 1930s organ by John Compton and a Modernist sculpture by Laurence Broderick, the same artist who sculpted the bronze bull in Birmingham’s Bullring.

Open: Tuesday 12, Thursday 14 and Saturday 16 September, 11am-4pm.



15 St John the Baptist

Lower Church Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 2AA

An opportunity to visit St John the Baptist and its treasures.

Because of its poor state of repair, the medieval parish church was pulled down in 1824. A new church opened the following year. The chancel was rebuilt and enlarged in 1837; in 1844 the north aisle was added and in 1853 a new porch was built. The local architect Hans Price directed repairs and improvements in 1871–2. The organ chamber was added in 1883 and three years later the vestry was enlarged. In about 1888, the porch was heightened and in 1890, Price & Wooler added the south aisle and new windows.

Visit to discover the church’s heritage and view its precious vestments and silverware.

It is hoped that organ music will be played. Refreshments available.

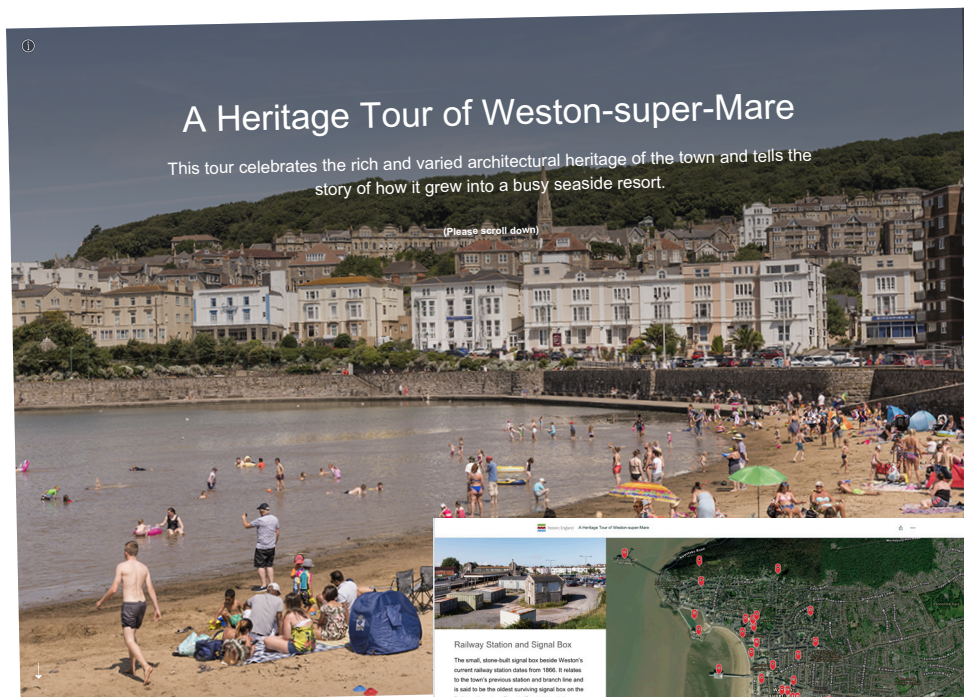
Online: www.westonstjohn.org.uk

Booking: no booking required

Open: Saturday 9 September, 10am-4pm. Sunday 10 September, 1-4pm. Saturday 16 September, 10am-4pm. Sunday 17 September, 1-4pm.



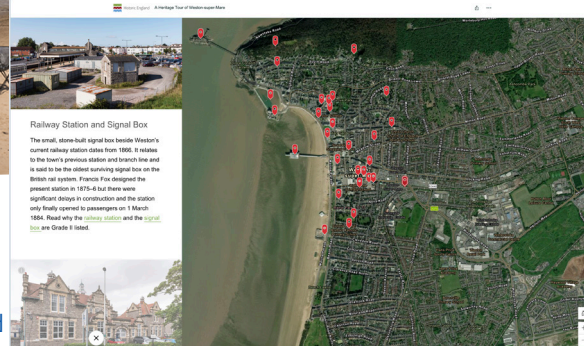
Heritage resources



16 A heritage tour of Weston-super-Mare

This tour celebrates the rich and varied architectural heritage of the town and tells the story of how it grew into a busy seaside resort.

It was prepared by Historic England in partnership with North Somerset Council and is a product of the Great Weston Heritage Action Zones.



Explore the map to find out more about Weston's heritage.

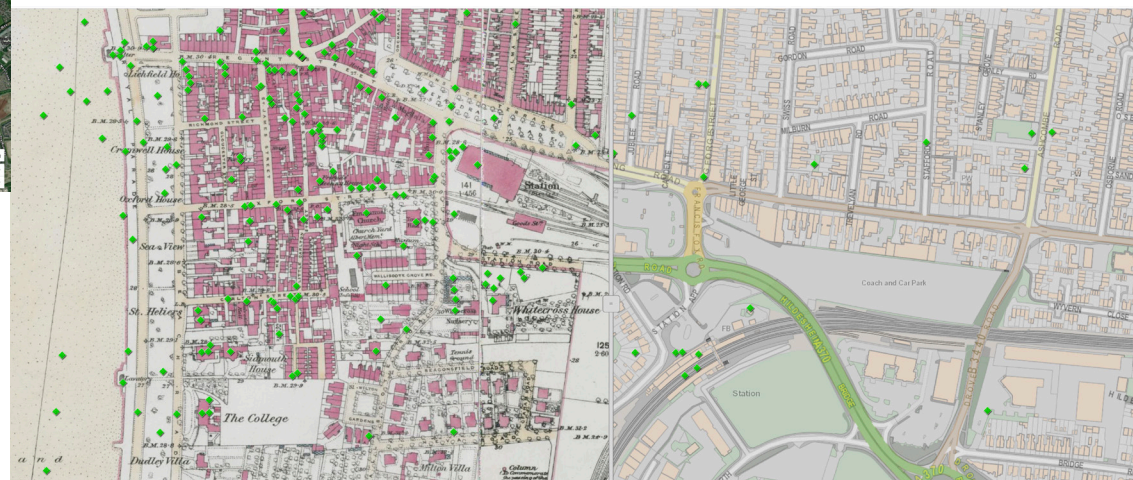
Online: <https://historicengland.org.uk/heritagetourweston>

17 Know Your Place

Know Your Place encourages people to identify what they consider to be important heritage features in their own community.

A dedicated space (Community Layer) on the map allows users to submit contributions which are moderated and validated before being published on the site. The process of identifying these features is the first step towards getting more recognition for them and ensuring their protection. From the coastal communities of Portishead, Clevedon and Weston, further inland to Blagdon and Leigh Woods, you can discover how North Somerset has been transformed over time. Find out more about the depth

of history of your street or village, and explore historic maps going back further than 1840 to see when your house was built. You can also find out a little more about the archaeological and historical past of North Somerset by looking at the Historic Environment Record map layers. To access the map and start exploring, head to www.kypwest.org.uk, click 'Explore the map' and scroll down to 'North Somerset' or head straight to the map at <https://maps.bristol.gov.uk/kyp/?edition=nsom>. Check out the Know Your Place on social media @Know Your Place North Somerset (Facebook) and @KYPNorthSom (Twitter).



North Somerset Heritage Forum Directory

Interested in local heritage, history and archaeology? Get involved in the many groups and societies across North Somerset.

Avon Gardens Trust

A registered charity that are actively involved in the protection and conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes in the area.

Email: events@avongardenstrust.org.uk

Online: www.avongardenstrust.org.uk

Banwell Society of Archaeology and Local History

Online: www.banwellarchaeology.co.uk

Blagdon Local History Society

Online: www.blagdonlhs.com

Clevedon and District Archaeological Society

Online: <https://e-voice.org.uk/cdas>

Crockerne Pill & District History Society

Online: <https://pillandeastoningordano.org/groups/crockerne-pill-district-history-society>

Friends of Weston Museum

Online: <https://westonmuseum.org/your-museum/get-involved/friends-of-the-museum>

Gordano Civic Society

Online: www.gordanosociety.org.uk

Helicopter Museum in Weston-super-Mare

Online: www.helicoptermuseum.co.uk

Kingston Seymour Historic Society

Online: www.kingstonseymour.org.uk/village-history/historical-society

Weston-super-Mare Civic Society

Online: www.westoncivicsociety.org.uk

Weston Museum

Online: <https://westonmuseum.org>

Weston-super-Mare and District Family History Society

For those people who are interested in their families with a connection to North Somerset.

Online: www.wsmfhs.org.uk

Yatton Local History Society

Researching the history of Yatton and its surrounding area.

Email:

yattonlocalhistorysoc@gmail.com

Online:

www.yattonlocalhistorysociety.co.uk

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeology Research Team (YCCART)

Community Archaeology Group carrying out geophysical surveys, projects and occasional digs

Email: yccart@gmail.com

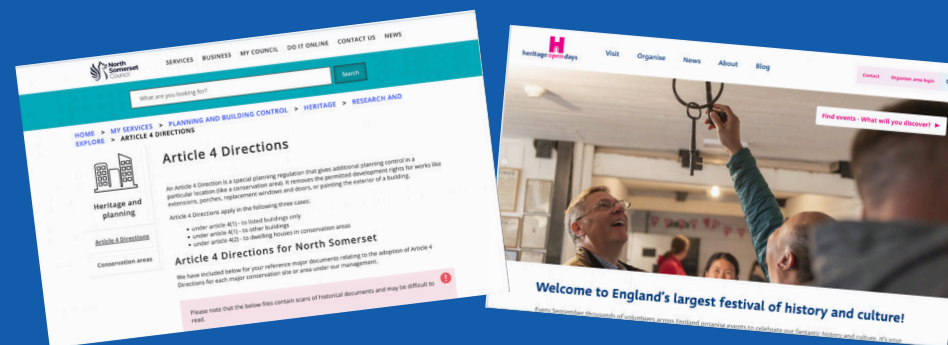
Online: www.yccart.co.uk



High Street Heritage Action Zone

Weston-super-Mare's High Street Heritage Action Zone aims to boost economic growth and keep the town on the map as a great place to live, work and visit.

The project, funded by Historic England, will run until March 2024. To find out more, visit www.n-somerset.gov.uk/heritageactionzone



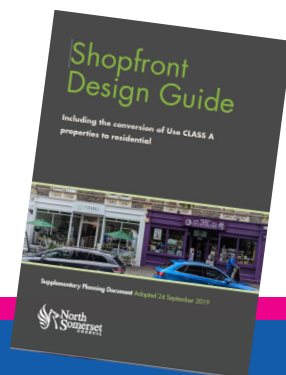
Conservation Area

Weston-super-Mare adopted the Great Weston Conservation Area in 2019. To find out more, visit: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/greatwestonconservationarea



Shopfront design guidance

If you are interested in shopfront design and how we encourage excellence in North Somerset, check out the adopted policy on shopfront design: www.n-somerset.gov.uk/shopfrontdesignguide



Protecting our stone walls

Stone walls are an important part of the character and heritage of large parts of the Great Weston Conservation Area. In recent years many have been lost. In September 2022, an Article 4 Direction was brought in which means planning permission is now required before work is carried out on stone walls in the conservation area. To find out more, visit:

www.n-somerset.gov.uk/article4directions

North Somerset Council

Stories bring heritage to life. Whether you are visiting the places you love during the Heritage Open Days festival or discovering something new, please tell us about it.

Share your experiences and thoughts on social media, tag us in [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#) and use the hashtag #WestonHODS

For full details about all the events listed in this brochure visit

www.heritageopendays.org.uk



Heritage Action Zones
Historic England



In partnership with



National
Trust

