Welcome to Downham Market

The special environment of West Norfolk provides fantastic bird watching opportunities, see the spectacular display of swans at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Visitor Centre at Welney.

A chance to get active, there are countless walking routes and footpaths to discover along with sailing clubs, golf clubs and angling sites. Horse riders can enjoy an effortless trek through the idyllic countryside and tranquil architecture.

For foodies, there are plenty of places to satisfy all appetites in and around Downham Market, from tea shops to hearty pub meals, fish and chips to gourmet restaurants.

In Downham, enjoy lazy days watching local matches on the sports fields or just simply sit and enjoy the summer sun on the Howdale.

There are regular events and annual festivals hosted in and around Downham Market. Look out for St Winolds Day and St. George’s Day celebrations, the Downham Market Water Festival, and the Christmas lights switch on ceremony. Smaller events can include craft fairs, performances in the Town Hall, morris dancing and music on the town square.

There is a wealth of nearby attractions for great days out with something for everyone such as Church Farm Rare Breeds Centre, Oxburgh Hall, Gooderstone Water Gardens and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Visitor Centre at Welney.

The surrounding countryside has a variety of landscapes including heathland to the east, unspoilt coastline in the north, and fertile fens to the west, where wide vistas can be enjoyed. Historically, the Fens has primarily centred on a farming community, this originating from when the Fens were first drained in the 17th Century to protect the area from flooding and to reclaim land for agriculture.

Discover Downham Heritage Centre
The Heritage Centre is well worth a visit, located in the Old Fire Station in Prince Road. The centre is managed by the Downham Market and District Heritage Society and is a FREE admission. The centre has fascinating displays and exhibits telling the history of Downham Market and the surrounding Fens.

Opening times: Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10am – 4pm. (other days schools, workshops and drop in sessions).

Contact details: Petterton Street, Downham Market, PE38 9HE. Tel: 01366 387770. E-mail: kings-lynn.tic@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Tourist Information Centre
Although situated in King’s Lynn, the Tourist Information Centre offers a wide variety of leaflets and pamphlets that feature the Downham Market area.

E-mail: kings-lynn.tic@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Public Transport Information
Explore by bus: See the map inside for the main bus stop in the town centre.

For local and national bus information phone Traveline: 0871 200 2233 or visit: www.travelineeastanglia.org.uk

Explore by train: Great Northern Railway operates services from London King’s Cross to Downham Market and King’s Lynn, hourly (half hourly at peak times). For further information contact Great Northern Railway. Tel: 0345 220 0220 Web: www.greatnorthernrailway.co.uk

Alternatively contact National Rail Enquiries for timetable information. Tel: 0345 364 3646 Web: www.nationalrail.co.uk

Early Closing Day
Officially half day closing is Wednesday, but most shops do stay open.

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LOCAL PRODUCE
You will find many local butchers, bakers and food producers in the area, particularly on market day. There are also a number of farm shops, the larger ones being at Hilgay, Stowbridge and on the A1122 south of Downham Market. Take a drive west across the fens from Stowbridge where you will come across local produce sold direct from the farms.

SHOPPING IN THE TOWN
Explore the historic town on foot and you can find plenty of shops to browse, including craft shops, delightful independent stores and boutiques. Combine these local businesses with well-known retailers and department stores and you are in for a pleasurable shopping experience. For a directory of many local businesses, visit: www.downham-market-online.com

MARKET DAYS
Downham Market has a regular and popular outdoor market every Friday and Saturday on the Market Place, next to the Town Hall 9.00am – 4pm. The town is also host to a craft and collectables market where there is a great variety of locally produced hand made items and crafts from pottery to jewellery. Held on some Fridays and Saturdays on the Town Square.

For further information on the town’s markets contact Downham Market Town Council, 15 Paradise Road, Downham Market, Norfolk, PE38 9HS.

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Places to Stay
There are a number of accommodation providers around the Downham Market area. Pick up a copy of the West Norfolk Holiday Guide or visit: www.visitwestnorfolk.com

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Rural Escape

1. **Denver Sausage**
   As well as a very scenic setting, the Denver Complex also gives an interesting insight into the history and management of the fascinating local waterways. To arrange a suitable time to visit contact the Denver Complex superintendent on 01366 382013.

2. **Church Farm Rare Breeds Centre**
   Visit Church Farm in How Barton for a tremendous day out, whatever the weather! Make friends with the animals, enjoy a nature walk, take a tractor ride or play in the exciting adventure playground, and the tree house indoor play area. Visit the lean-to and browse the gift shop. Open daily to 28th October. Thurs-Sun from 29 Oct 2018 – 10 Feb 2019. Tel: 01366 382162.

3. **Gooderstone Water Gardens**
   A great day out for all garden lovers, naturalists, artists and photographers. Strid through an enchanting garden, explore the nature trail, perhaps spot a kingfisher and enjoy delicious home made cakes. Open daily all year (seasonally). Tel: 01366 328258.

4. **Oxburgh Hall**
   Visit National Trust Oxburgh Hall, a magnificent 15th Century moated manor house. Discover secret doors, a great hall, the magnificent Tudor galleon house along with miles of woodland walks and trails. Opening times vary throughout the year. Tel: 01366 326058.

5. **Walking the Footpaths**
   As well as the long distance trail, the Fen Rivers Way, there are many public footpaths starting in the town leading out into the nearby countryside and alongside the waterways. Visit www.visitwestnorfolk.com for details.

6. **Bird Watching**
   For fantastic bird watching visit the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, Welney with its eco-friendly visitor centre. Open daily from 9:30am in the summer and from 10am in the winter (Nov – Feb). Contact WWF Welney on 01353 810202 or visit www.wwt-welney.org.uk. Wings Farm Equestrian at Marshland St James provides riding lessons, hacking and pony days. Tel: 01603 712913.

7. **Horse Riding**
   For a great equestrian experience explore miles of open fenland and countryside bridleways. Visit www.countrycyclingaccess.norfolk.gov.uk for further bridle route information in the area. The Magpie Centre provides horse riding for the Disabled Association. Tel: 01553 810202 or visit www.pale-westnorfolk.org.uk. Wings Farm Equestrian at Marshland St James provides riding lessons, hacking and pony days. Tel: 01603 420749.

8. **Cycling**
   There are many cycling routes through the area, including National Route 11 and National Route 1. Route information can be found on www.sustrans.org.uk. Other local routes are detailed on the Norfolk Trails website www.norfolktrails.co.uk.

9. **Fishing**
   Angling is a popular pastime in this area. Some fishing areas on the River Great Ouse, Great Ouse Relief Channel, Great Ouse Cut Off Channel, River Wicken and the Middle Level are controlled. A permit can be obtained from the King’s Lynn Angling Association (see overview). A rod licence can be obtained from the Environment Agency (see overview). There are also various private managed fishing lakes in the area where you can pay on the day.

10. **Boating & Sailing**
    Regulated boats with an Environment Agency navigation licence can moor up next to the pub in Denver or Stowbridge to stop for lunch and roam the countryside. The River Great Ouse connects with the main inland waterways network (see overview for further details). Both Denver Sailing Club and the West Norfolk Rowing Club are based at Denver Sluice. The rowing club offers taster sessions and learn to row courses. Details: www.wnrc.westnorfolkrowingclub.co.uk

11. **Golfing**
    There are two golf clubs in the area, an 18 hole pay and play course at Denver Golf Club and a 9 hole course at Ryston Golf Club. Both offer superb courses and day ticket visitors. Details: phone 01366 386716 / Ryston Park Golf Club: 01366 382133

12. **Arts & Crafts**
    Enjoy outdoor summer theatre performances at Oxburgh Hall and look out for concerts and drama performances in the Town Hall. Pick up a local market information)

13. **Discover Downham Heritage Centre**
    Through changing exhibitions and displays the Heritage Centre tells the story of the area from farming and wildlife to people through the ages. (See overview for opening times)

14. **Gingerbread Town**
    Throughout Downham you will notice many buildings built with distinctive local carrstone, hence the town’s nickname ‘Gingerbread’. Look out for fine examples of carrstone walls, gate pillars and archways giving access to the rear yards, a legacy of the layout of the medieval town.

15. **Shopping**
    Alongside popular high street names you will find many long established independent shops along the High Street and Bridge Street. Whether shopping for a unique gift to take home or local produce, you will find the perfect souvenir.

16. **The Willows Nature Reserve**
    A great spot for all the family to take a walk, the secluded nature reserve is home to woodland, reed beds, ponds and a wealth of wildlife. Access for the Willows is via Birchfields Lane.

17. **Footpaths**
    Experience the unique qualities of the Fens on a riverside walk along the Fen Rivers Way. There are also footpaths to enjoy throughout the town for example, a leafy walk up Ryston End.

18. **St Edmunds**
    The parish church, overlooking the town centre, is the town’s oldest building dating back to Norman times and is Grade I listed. The crown and arrows of St Edmund can also be found inscribed on the town sign.

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**The Town Clock, Town Square**
At the heart of Downham Market lies the town square home to the unique black and white tower, probably Downham Market’s most distinctive feature. The Town Hall was constructed to celebrate Queen Victoria’s jubilee in 1887 and is now a busy function venue. The Town Hall is also home to the local cinema, showing a whole variety of films. Telephone 01366 367770 for details of currently screened films.

**To King’s Lynn**

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**The Market Place**
Downham Market is a bustling market town, boasting two outdoor markets every week on Fridays and Saturdays selling a variety of local produce. A craft and collectibles market is held on some Fridays and Saturdays. (See overview for market information)

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**Fen Rivers Way**
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