

Tourism Update

AUTUMN/WINTER 2018



News from Warwickshire County Council's tourism team

Welcome to the autumn/winter edition of our tourism newsletter. It's designed to keep all of you – our tourism partners and stakeholders – up to date with how Warwickshire County Council (WCC) is working with you to support a growing visitor economy.

Visitor Economy Forward Plan Agreed

In September WCC's cabinet endorsed a new 4 year work programme outlining priorities from now until 2022. It covers a period of huge opportunity for the County with some notable events on the horizon: George Eliot bicentenary 2019; Coventry City of Culture 2021; and the Commonwealth Games in and around Birmingham in 2022.

The Forward Plan rolls forward and updates our 3 main action areas:

- Supporting tourism partnership activity
- Developing rural tourism
- Improving visitor experience

This edition of our newsletter offers an update on what's already happening in these areas and future partnership opportunities as we move into 2019.

Partnership support

WCC remains committed to supporting the work of our Destination Organisations which are pivotal to coordinating and building place marketing activity with private sector partners.

In the south, private sector membership of Shakespeare's England has grown to over 150. Click the link below to get all the latest news from Shakespeare's England:



<https://mailchi.mp/shakespeares-england/shakespeares-england-members-winter-newsletter?e=c026c6092d>



Northern Warwickshire Tourism launches new website

In the north, membership now stands at around 70.

September saw the launch of NWT's new website, designed to showcase the very best of Northern Warwickshire and surrounding areas. The new site was made possible by a grant from the EU's Leader programme, managed by North Warwickshire Borough Council, which also funded new promotional banners and leaflets.

The website and marketing materials were launched at the Horse & Jockey in Bentley by local MPs, Marcus Jones and Craig Tracey.



New support for rural tourism

As part of its commitment to supporting the economy in rural areas, WCC is coordinating a 'Visit Local' project to help some of the county's smaller towns to realise their untapped visitor potential.



Phase 1 of the scheme sees the launch this month of a new online toolkit and do-it-yourself illustration of how to create a great website aimed at visitors. It's a step by step, interactive guide to make it easy for Warwickshire's hidden jewels to get themselves on the tourism map.

An attractive local website promoting local towns and villages to tourists is a valuable investment, especially when linked to the larger destination sites.

"Warwickshire has so much to offer beyond its more famous attractions," said Alex Holmes, Visitor Economy Manager for the County Council. "Every town has its unique selling point and we hope this tool will make it really easy for Warwickshire communities to promote their strengths".

The toolkit has informed, and been informed by, new pilot website projects in Atherstone, Studley and Alcester. Phase one of the new Alcester site www.visitalcester.com has just been published and has been really well received.

Coventry City of Culture update

Discussions are ongoing with the Trust and our District and Borough Council partners

about how best we can support Coventry's fantastic achievement of winning the "City of Culture 2021" prize.

In September we organised a City of Culture brainstorming workshop with all our key Warwickshire public sector stakeholders. Bags of ideas emerged on how we can ensure Warwickshire joins the party in the run up, during, and after the year itself.

If you haven't already done so, click [here](#) to find out how you can subscribe to all the latest City of Culture news.



Tourism and Culture funding bid

In August WCC put together a bid to the Local Enterprise Partnership for capital money to establish a "Tourism and Culture Asset Investment Fund" for Warwickshire. The aim was to lever new resources to develop our cultural attractions. Unfortunately the bid was unsuccessful but we will continue to monitor opportunities to develop our cultural infrastructure in the run up to 2021.

Coming soon... Warwickshire's first comprehensive accommodation study

We are pleased to announce that Warwickshire's first ever "accommodation futures" study has been given the green light. In October WCC met with all our Warwickshire District and Borough Council partners, plus representatives from Solihull MBC and West Midlands Growth Company to scope the work.



Warwickshire lacks accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date information on visitor accommodation supply and demand. Without this, we cannot plan or respond effectively to market growth.

With two major growth opportunities on the immediate horizon for the region – Coventry City of Culture 2021 and the Birmingham Commonwealth Games in 2022 – we have to ensure we have the right types of accommodation in Warwickshire, in the right places, to meet extra demand into the future.

The aim of the study is to provide a robust, evidence-based, assessment of the opportunities and requirements for the future development of visitor accommodation across Warwickshire. It will look at medium and longer term opportunities towards 2030, and embrace all forms and grades of visitor accommodation – serviced and non-serviced, in urban and rural Warwickshire.

Commissioning work has now begun and we expect to have the final report by March 2019. If you'd like to find out more please contact alexholmes@warwickshire.gov.uk

George Eliot Bicentenary 2019

2019 is a special year for Warwickshire as we celebrate 200 years since the birth of one of this country's greatest novelists.



Arrangements for a full programme of events to mark this milestone are well advanced. WCC has agreed a £10,000 funding package, in partnership with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council (NBBC), to create an improved Eliot visitor experience in Nuneaton, the town of her birth, in and beyond 2019.

The money will support the development of a George Eliot visitor trail around the town, making use of Eliot's famous quotations, and explore opportunities for an "augmented reality" trail. There are also plans to create a legacy annual event to celebrate the author. More details of this and the full programme of events will be announced in the New Year.

In addition to this, WCC is working with NBBC to develop a new brand and identity for Nuneaton, to use on promotional material to attract visitors to the town.

New film to address skills shortages

A short film is currently being produced for use in schools and colleges to inspire young people in secondary schools and colleges to consider a career in the Hospitality and Tourism sector. Funded by WCC, development of the film is being shaped by a group of leaders drawn from Lovely Pubs, MacDonald Hotels, Q Hotels, and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The film will comprise a dozen or so brief 'talking head' interviews with enthusiastic and successful employees who'll talk about their roles, career paths and future ambitions. A wide range of roles will be featured including Chef, Event management, Finance, Gardening, HR, Sales & Marketing and Weddings.

The film will be made available freely to schools and colleges in early 2019 for use in careers sessions and events. It is hoped this will also improve teacher and parent perceptions of careers in the sector. It will also be available for businesses in the sector to use in their own recruitment drives to address skills shortages. For further information please contact glennrobinson@warwickshire.gov.uk.

STOP PRESS...

Coming soon: "My Hospitality World", 28th February - 6th March... a weeklong programme of events in Warwickshire, supported by the Institute of Hospitality, offering young people the chance to learn more about working in this exciting sector. For more information, contact faywinterburn@warwickshire.gov.uk.



England's Waterways project - progress report

We are working with partners across the region to create bookable, commissionable products which inspire inbound visitors to stay in the heart of England, using the waterways as a motivating factor. The Government's "Discover England Fund" has financed the work which is being led by West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC).

This is year one of a three-year programme which aims to boost waterways tourism throughout the year, targeting mainly the German and Dutch markets, and working with a specialist holiday operator, Drifters, to sell through the travel trade.

The early work has focused on a comprehensive product audit, including all Warwickshire businesses within a one mile radius of the waterways.

In August, WMGC held a travel trade workshop for tourism professionals to provide more information about the project and how it can generate opportunities for the whole region.

Rachel Baconnet, Town Centres & Tourism Team Leader for WCC said: "Being able to better understand what visitors want is vital in order for us to ensure that product development and promotion is targeted, relevant and appeals to the right audience in the right way."

In October businesses were given the opportunity to attend workshops to help understand how to work with, and sell and their product to, international tour operators to entice more overseas visitors to the region. Participating Warwickshire companies will also receive one-to-one business mentoring support to bring their ideas to market, and feature in itineraries for German and Dutch operators.

A consumer promotional campaign is underway. You can get a sneak preview on www.greatbritishboating.com

For more information on the project see [England's Waterways Newsletter](#)

Food & Drink Producers Show

Following the success of last year's inaugural Food & Drink Expo, WCC will be hosting another event in March 2019 in order to showcase local food and drink producers to potential suppliers and buyers. The November 2017 event saw 30 local producers exhibit their products to a range of buyers from within and outside of Warwickshire.



Rachel Baconnet, Team Leader for Town Centres & Tourism, said: "The County is host to some high quality producers and a growing diverse range of products and innovation within the industry. However, as a whole, Warwickshire is not well known for its food and drink offering and there is much work that can be done to develop a reputation for the strength of its proposition."

The event will showcase the regional food and drink offer of countywide producers to high quality visitor attractions, independent stockists, supermarkets, restaurants and hotels. It will serve to encourage businesses to discover and use local suppliers and give attendees the opportunity to meet, listen to experts and find out how they can engage in new markets.

The Expo will focus on key priorities that we believe will underpin the economic opportunities of this sector for the region.

- Showcase and celebrate a "sense of place" – what makes the County unique and distinctive as a visitor destination.
- Provide an opportunity for visitor economy businesses across Warwickshire to network with one another and to exhibit what makes them special.
- Encourage local sourcing of services to stimulate the Warwickshire visitor economy, hospitality sector and the sector's supply chain.
- To improve awareness and increase sales opportunities for rural food and drinks' producers countywide.

Any local producers or buyers interested in signing up for the event, please email tourism@warwickshire.gov.uk.

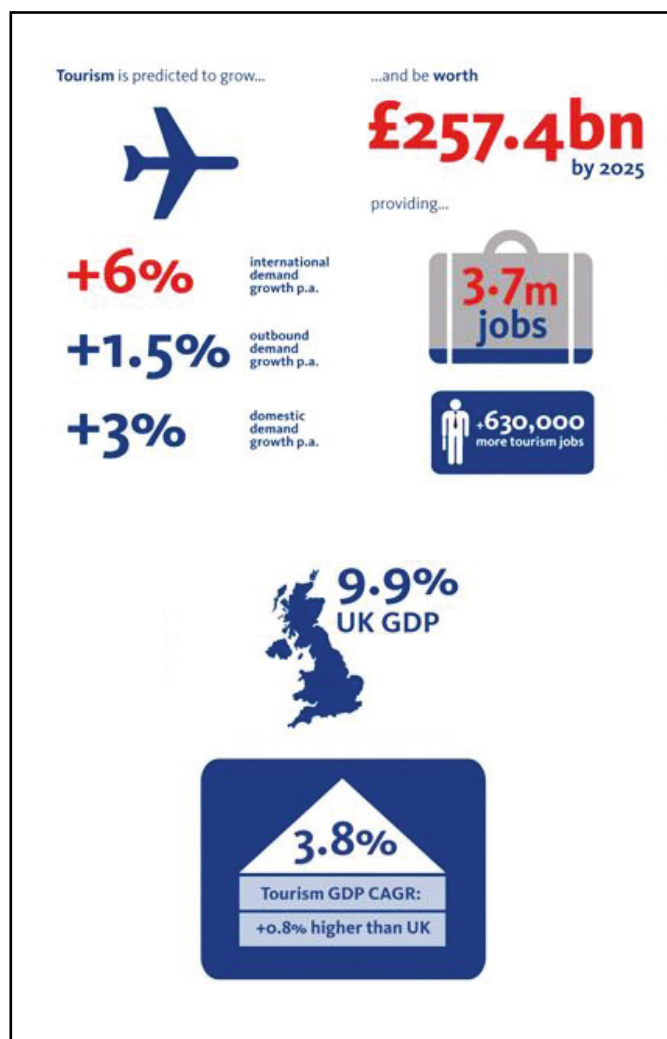
Tourism continues to grow!

Each year WCC commissions an annual Tourism Economic Impact assessment. The figures have just been published for 2017 and they make for encouraging reading.

The most recent report estimates that some 20,300 jobs depend on the industry in Warwickshire and that it generates in excess of £1.127 billion to the local economy - a year on year increase in value of over 4%. The full report is available by clicking [here](#).

This growth is in line with current national trends. Visit England, the national tourist board, has just released data for 2017/18 which reveals record levels of visits and spend by domestic visitors. Overall, visitor spend in England reached £91 billion while inbound tourism from overseas also continued to grow reaching a new record of £24.5 billion in visitor spend.

Please see <https://www.visitbritain.org/our-performance-reporting> for further information.



Source: Tourism: jobs and growth. Deloitte November 2013

Keep in touch

If you would like more information on any of the subjects covered, or have an item that you think could be featured in a future edition, please get in touch! Contact tourism@warwickshire.gov.uk or call us on 01926 412818.