

Tourists – our special visitors

by Midge Kelly, Exe Estuary Officer (aka the Last Resort!)



The Key Questions

- How important is tourism to the local economy?
- Why do people come to the South West?
- Which factors put others off from coming?
- How can we best focus efforts to attract more visitors?



How important is tourism to the local economy?

- Very
- SW is Britain's foremost holiday destination
- Devon - Actual tourism-related employment 62,651 (46,140 FTEs) and 11% of all employment
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- Devon - £2 billion+ from visitors, plus additional £0.1 billion from friends and relatives, second homes, etc
- 55% of spend is from staying visitors, rest from day trippers; 83% from UK, rest from overseas
- Source: South West Tourism 2008



Is there scope for Growth in Tourism?

- Definitely
- National target of growing tourism 3% per year (5% incl inflation) to 2020
- Tourism could be one key to economic recovery in the SW
- Great opportunities to grow the value of tourism – by providing year round employment, encouraging innovation and quality improvement and, above all, keeping it local.



Why do people come to the South West?

- Based on 2009 study by SW Tourism of the views of people around Britain on the SW as a holiday destination:
- 39% of British population are 'very interested' in visiting the SW, a further 36% are 'quite interested'
- The countryside is the biggest attraction, marginally ahead of beaches.
- People living closer are more interested in visiting,



What do visitors want?

- Women more interested in visiting all aspects of the SW than are men
- Relaxing and unwinding is its greatest appeal
- Women see potential for a social and/or fun experience more than their male counterparts, especially those with families
- Older potential visitors, both men and women, enjoy the cultural experiences (but some younger groups also)
- Men more interested than women in an active experience
- Younger people have higher demand for pubs, nightclubs and other entertainments, older visitors more likely to seek relaxation and learning



Perceptions of the SW

- Based on Non-Visitor Survey 2009 by SW Tourism
- Overall perceptions and feelings very positive
- Peaceful and relaxing, traditional and charming
- More modern attributes not coming through strongly
- Probably makes sense to work with 'traditional etc.' theme than fight it.



Specific Barriers

- Other than immovable ones such as distance/difficult journey; lack of guaranteed sunshine; and no friends or relatives to visit
- Cost
- Not distinctive enough
- Low awareness of what the region has to offer
- Life stage
- Niggles – low level barriers

How can we best focus efforts to attract more visitors?

Visit England have identified 4 priorities for growing tourism nationally:

- Marketing for sustainable growth
- Offer 'compelling destinations of distinction'
- Champion a thriving tourism industry
- Improve the quality of the visitor experience

How can we best focus efforts to attract more visitors?

A. Marketing for sustainable growth:

Sustainable low-carbon growth can be achieved if destinations focus on a combination of:

- Increasing length of stay
- Improving public transport and its usage
- Improving resource efficiency in business
- Encouraging local visitors
- More use of local suppliers and supplies



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B. Offer compelling destinations of distinction:

Visitor satisfaction is an overriding priority of tourism, and factors determining this are:

- Visitor accommodation
- Customer service
- Things to see and do
- The natural and historic environment
- Public realm



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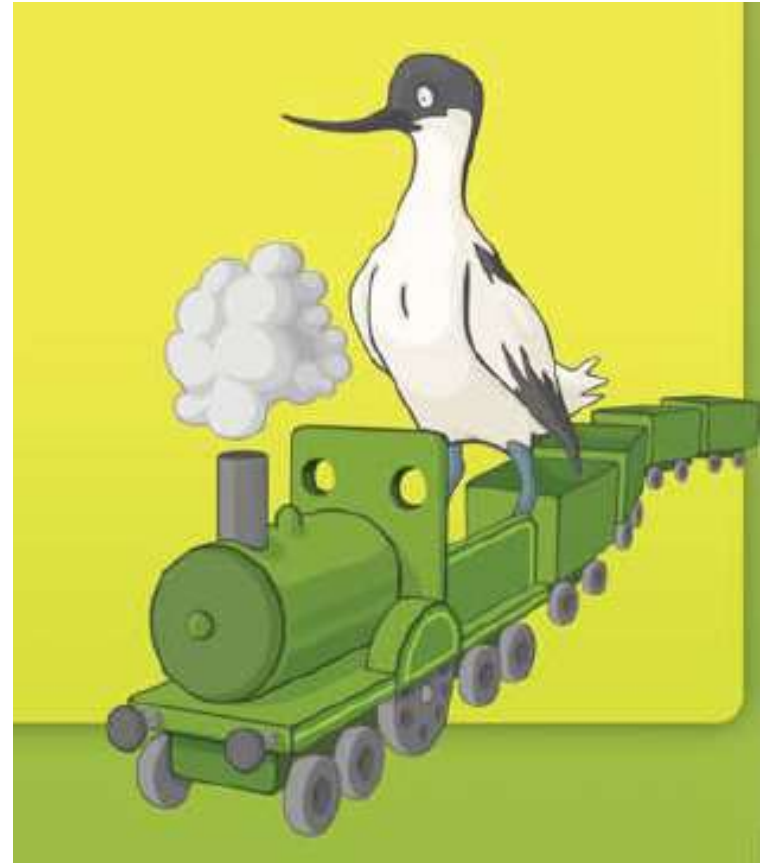
C. Champion a successful, thriving tourism industry:

- Need leadership to articulate issues of local businesses and coordinate
- Need more appropriately-trained people
- Need more information on which to base decisions

How can we best focus efforts to attract more visitors?

D. Improve the quality of the visitor experience:

- Travel
- Accessibility
- Information



Quick tips for more visitors

- More deals!
- Market sunshine – May just as sunny as Aug, combine with deals
- Work with core strengths
- Be quirky, especially history & heritage
- Green is modern as well as traditional
- Good quality, fresh & local food
- Target empty nesters, W Mids. & E of England





Thank you!