

What future for tourism?

Changes in national and regional governance impact on Exmoor.

John Penrose, MP, Minister for Tourism and Heritage revealed the Government's tourism strategy in March 2011, with the Prime Minister emphasising that red tape needed to be cut and local policy decisions on tourism were best driven locally, with the industry responsible for its own future. Policies include increasing domestic tourism with easy-to-access packaged trips, improving transport infrastructure, attracting 2m additional visitors in 2012, utilising £100m for overseas promotion.

Regionally, our lobbying, strategic, quality and research body has been abolished. SW Tourism closed in March 2011; the Regional Development Agency in June 2011 - An early illustration of the Government's policy in action, but what is in place to provide a cohesive voice?

Keeping the competitive edge

The Exmoor Tourism Partnership is co-ordinating a joint marketing campaign to raise the profile of Exmoor (including the National Park, Quantock Hills and coastal areas). Funding support primarily from West Somerset Council and the Exmoor National Park Authority is boosted by additional support from the Exmoor Tourist Association and others.



Elsewhere in this newsletter the brochure, new website, PR work and shows are covered and these are core promotional tools. Direct marketing continues to result in requests for the Exmoor 2011 brochure.

This work has been supplemented by a campaign in 'Country Walking' magazine, one of the nation's leading titles covering

The new 'Heart of the South West' Local Enterprise Partnership is in its infancy. SW Tourism Alliance has formed, with membership from Destination Management Organisations, key tourist attractions and local authorities including Exmoor NPA. It aims to provide a collective voice for tourism in the area but isn't a subscription organisation for the industry.

In ETP, mature debate continues as local authorities share challenges with the industry, focussing on consequences of changing public priorities. The reduction in bureaucracy and duplication, coupled with opportunities to build skills, will put Exmoor's tourism industry ahead of others, taking charge of its own marketing destiny.

walking and the outdoors. The campaign, spanning 5 months, included the insertion of the new National Park Pocket Guides produced by the Exmoor National Park Authority and a series of display adverts making use of the recently adopted brand footprint for the area 'Dream, Discover, Explore'.



A further campaign followed in regional newspapers using full page display adverts in key target areas (e.g. Windsor, Slough and South Buckinghamshire).

STOP PRESS!

A three year marketing strategy has been drafted to ensure consistency in our approach. Funding has been secured from the Exmoor National Park Authority's new Partnership Fund, which together with contributions from West Somerset Council means over £50,000 is available to help implement the first year.

The Exmoor Tourism Partnership is a 'virtual' partnership. The role of the Partnership is to enhance the quality of the visitor experience, to improve the viability, sustainability and performance of tourism enterprises and to develop, promote and champion the Exmoor and West Somerset brand in appropriate markets.

Core Partners: Exmoor Tourist Association • West Somerset Council • Exmoor National Park Authority.

Key Organisations: North Devon + • Somerset Tourism. **Exmoor Tourism Network:** Minehead Hoteliers Lyn Association for Commerce and Tourism • Porlock Tourist Association • Combe Martin Tourist Association Exmoor Holiday Group • South Molton Tourism Association • WACET • Exmoor to Sea • Visit Dunster • Quantock Hills.

Exmoor Tourism Partnership

2011 update

www.visit-exmoor.co.uk re-launched!

From the Chairman

We're living through incredibly challenging times: diminishing resources, public services under threat, intense competition in tourism. Exmoor tourism's focus is impressive. Talking and planning together has reduced duplication and enables us to get good value from our joint efforts although we can always do better. Change is inevitable but partnership is clearly paying dividends, as this newsletter shows.

Evelyn Stacey, Chairman

The Exmoor Tourism Partnership (ETP) has revamped and re-launched Visit Exmoor, the area's premier website that showcases the South West's most spectacular holiday hotspots, Exmoor National Park, the coast and Quantock Hills.

Evelyn Stacey, Chairman of the ETP, said: "The website has a contemporary, funky, feel but maintains a clean and open design for a completely new look."

"It has been designed so that everything a visitor needs is only one click away from the page they land on. It's quite a radical change but with so many customers looking for information online, it's much quicker and easier to navigate and saves the endless delving into sub-pages that can be so frustrating."

"It is really easy to navigate, making it the top one-stop shop for visitors looking for places to stay and attractions on Exmoor, the coast and Quantock Hills."

"The 'towns and villages' section has been updated to ensure many hidden gems are revealed. Essential travel information including good use of Google maps, along with plenty of green travel options, provides visitors with all they need to know about how to get to, and around, Exmoor."

Visitor favourites like an events calendar, things to do and see, activities and a section on how to enjoy Exmoor's special environment whilst minimising impacts on the unique landscape, round off the website's comprehensive online guide to the area.

The new website was funded through the Western Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities (LARC) scheme, West Somerset Council and Exmoor National Park Authority.

To view the new-look website, log on at www.visit-exmoor.co.uk. For more information, or to advertise on the website, email office@visit-exmoor.co.uk.

Save the date!

We need YOU at the ETP conference: Wednesday 23 November 2011

Inside

Exmoor on show	2
Exmoor still active!	2
Visitors tell us	2
News in brief	2-3
Brand New PR	3
2012 Exmoor Guide	3
What future for tourism?	4
Keeping the competitive edge	4
ETP membership	4

The launch is being backed by national and regional PR campaigns, marketing, e-campaigns and online advertising for search engine optimisation to increase Exmoor's share of the online market.

Dan James, Exmoor National Park's Sustainable Economy Officer, said: "A new local 'food and drink' section has been included so that visitors can enjoy a true taste of the West Country. Another great addition is our 'favourites' facility which lets people create their own downloadable itinerary packed with details of their best-loved or must-see locations and attractions."



ND+ training opportunities

North Devon + follows its successful Summer Training programme with courses open to Devon & Somerset based businesses:

September

27th - Web Health/Google Analytics
29th/12 Oct - Innovation – (2 days)

October

6th - Managing Business For Profit
11th - Social Media
18th - Renewable Energy (1/2 day)
19th - Cost Effective Marketing

Dates for business start up workshops to be confirmed.

For more information email kwebbe@northdevonplus.co.uk or phone 01237 426426.

Somerset Explorer

Somerset Tourism Association's alliance with FlyBe, First Great Western and Exeter Airport for 'Somerset Explorer', joins attractions and hoteliers to promote day and overnight packages by train and coach, centered initially on Clark's Village, in a bid to attract additional UK and foreign visitors to the area.

STA's John Turner said: "Tourism is the third largest economic driver in the UK. In 2009, international tourism brought £167m into Somerset: and our partnership aims to double this within five years." <http://firstgroup.spideronline.co.uk/firsttravelsolutions/tours/index.php>

Star attraction

Following 2 years work an application has now been submitted in the hope of Exmoor being designated Europe's first 'Dark Sky Reserve'. The result will be known in the Autumn.

Exmoor still Active and Festive!

The Exmoor Tourist Association, with support from partners and funders, has had a busy programme.

The Food Festival will see 30 events taking place between 30 September and 9 October, with six guided walks that include lunches or cream teas on the first four days of the festival.

The Walking Festival has twenty-four guided walks on offer covering North Devon, Exmoor and the Quantocks, from 30 September to 3 October.

Exmoor on show

Antony Brunt, chairman of Exmoor Tourist Association reports that volunteers have been crossing the country from February onwards, raising Exmoor's profile. With attendance at key national Travel and Outdoor shows in Manchester, Birmingham and London, the travelling



exhibition has also been at the Devon and Royal Cornwall shows, in partnership with South West Lakes Trust and at the Bath & West. Local events have included Dunster

Minehead VIIC

This year the VIIC provided accommodation, travel, booking and attraction services with extended opening hours including Sundays a month earlier than usual. New volunteer greeters steered visitors in the direction of things to do and places to visit.

West Somerset Council asked for expressions of interest to run the Centre from organisations or individuals. With several responses, it seems highly likely that a quality service for Minehead and Exmoor will be maintained.

Visitors tell us

The 2010 Visitor Survey conducted by the Exmoor National Park Authority was the first in depth study into the views of visitors to the area for five years.

Encouragingly 99% of respondents said their overall experience of visiting Exmoor was either 'Good' or 'Very good' with just 1% stating their visit as 'Fair'.

The Perambulation took place on a murky Saturday in June. 175 walkers took part but poor visibility meant the event had to be abandoned in the afternoon as the mist became too heavy towards the end of the route.

The 'Active Exmoor' website is new and improved, keeping this well-respected brand very much alive. If you have any activities or active events you'd like promoted, just complete the free form on the new website and you'll be entered into the 'events' section. Non active events can be submitted to the Visit Exmoor website emailing info@visit-exmoor.co.uk.



Country Fair, North Somerset Show, Taunton Flower Show and various literature exchanges. The final event of the summer will be the Group Leisure and Travel Show on 21-22 September. We're always keen to have additional help with this valuable marketing exercise, so please let Antony know if you are able to assist.

Topping the list of attractors are the scenery / landscape, tranquillity / peace and quiet and the coastline / beaches. The top three activities undertaken include walking, visiting towns and villages and visiting attractions. The survey also provides an insight into visitor attitudes to green tourism and public transport and how they obtain information relating to their visit. Full results are available from www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk.

Green Light for 2012 Guide

The high quality publication which won praise in 2011 will be produced next year. To help support the industry, pre-VAT advert prices have been held, with bookings being



taken into September. The accompanying marketing plan will mix national direct marketing, national PR, e-marketing campaigns to increase viewings of the online version of the guide with national specialist and regional media adverts.

2011 has seen a concentrated effort to get increased national distribution for the brochure, as the Exmoor Visitor newspaper is great for people when they get here. Close collaboration ensures that the two publications complement one another.

We are promoting the area to our traditional markets whilst next year's focus will include social media networking, enhancing our national PR and developing more IT focused promotions, attracting additional younger markets.

To view this year's brochure or book for the 2012 brochure call 01271 336037 or visit www.exmoortourismpartnership.org.uk.

Making the Links

This WSC-commissioned project, partly funded from the Western Somerset Local Action for Rural Communities Fund, helps support small businesses, emphasising tourism, food and drink, creative industries and environmental technologies.

A very successful networking event brought 50 businesses together, with excellent presentations from activity providers and an opportunity to make useful business connections and relationships. Information on on-line marketing via social networking has also been provided. More from www.makingthelinks.org.uk.

Brand new PR for Exmoor

Starfish PR has been appointed by the Exmoor Tourism Partnership to promote Exmoor, the coast and Quantock Hills

Specialising in travel, Starfish has successfully marketed visitor destinations via national media including newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

Jennette Baxter, the firm's Managing Director, said, "I am thrilled to be promoting such a beautiful part of the country. With more people

holidaying at home this year, there is a great opportunity to increase UK visitors, and we can showcase our area to overseas holidaymakers too."

West Somerset Council's Corinne Matthews said: "We are delighted to involve an organisation with such experience and contacts to ensure that this area gets the publicity it needs to attract new visitors." She continued: "Pooling resources between West Somerset Council, Exmoor NPA and local industry leaders including the Exmoor Tourist Association and the West Somerset Railway is really paying off."

All information provided in this newsletter was, to the best of our knowledge, correct at the time of printing. Photo Credits: Front Page: Peter Tremain; Page 2 (left): David Southern, (centre / right): Antony Brunt; Page 3 Bryan Cath; Back Page: Quantocks AONB.

Transport Update

www.exploremoor.co.uk was launched last year by the Exmoor National Park Authority as the one stop shop to provide inspiration, ideas and information regarding car free, care free Exmoor.

This year the MoorRover continues to offer a flexible demand response service where no other public transport exists.

Meanwhile a £4.5m transport bid is being prepared to support improved visitor transport services within Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks.



Super-fast Devon and Somerset

A £750 million boost to the local economy and 50,000 jobs should come from £30m Government broadband investment in Devon and Somerset - 85% super fast connections by 2015 and 100% by 2020. £22 million from local councils plus European and private contributions could total £100m. David Hall, Somerset's strategic lead said: "This is great news. The bid required hard work and we thank everyone who made our partnership a success." www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk