

Tourism Recovery in the New Forest

Travel & tourism represents 10.3% of global GDP and supports 1 in 10 jobs on the planet, but in the New Forest, you can double these figures. Tourism is the backbone of our local economy and why it's vital we urgently get the right measures in place for its re-opening as soon as Government guidance allows.

Tourism businesses will be central in driving the successful recovery of the whole of our local economy. Collaboration and alignment will be paramount to ensure local tourism survives so it can continue to fuel the economy and sustain lots of local non-tourism jobs in its supply chain. In do so, our industry needs to adapt to an enduring shift towards digital solutions and ultimately re-define the "new normal" by giving a much greater focus in its operation to health security, hygiene, wellbeing and environmental and social responsibility.

That is why we've produced a New Forest Tourism Recovery Plan which will help guide all visitor, environmental, resident and business interests towards this new way of doing things as we move through and past the recovery process. The first step over the next month or so will be winning the support of all New Forest residents for our plan as we work to re-open tourism in early July.

Whilst it's understandable that some residents might be nervous about welcoming visitors back when we re-open, it is critical we are able to do so with their full support when Gov't guidelines say we can start operating again. The vast majority of our member businesses are already in a very precarious financial situation, so we also want to explain how important it is for them to open for as much of the summer season as possible.

This will give tourism businesses a fighting chance to stay afloat during the quiet winter months. If not, many simply won't survive and everyone will lose out. In our plan we will also build on the wonderful support we've already received from lots of local people who've purchased forward buy vouchers, supported individual business crowdfunding efforts and used the services our members who are currently offering takeaways, deliveries and online sales, which have been the subject of new web pages on www.thenewforest.co.uk and our successful new Local Services Newsletter circulated weekly to thousands of local residents.

Anthony Climpson OBE

CEO Go New Forest

12/05/20