



# Our Visitor Economy



Summer 2006

**We are lucky enough to live in a beautiful part of the world. This makes tourism an important industry for West Sussex, generating employment and wealth. With beaches, waterways, the South Downs, historic buildings and museums, there are many reasons why people come to visit West Sussex. But as well as stimulating economic activity, tourists, and the infrastructure needed to support them, can have an impact on the very environment which draws them to visit.**

WSSF Steering Group

## Tourism In West Sussex

Based on a presentation by John Gibbs, Tourism Manager, WSSC

Tourism is one of the most significant and fastest growing industries in the UK. It supports 2.2 million jobs, and is worth £74 billion. In 2004 West Sussex was visited by 21 million people, generating a staggering £957 million, and sustaining 16,000 jobs. If business development is to be more sustainable, tourism clearly has a large part to play.

The Visitor Strategy for West Sussex - 'A Strategic Framework for the West Sussex Visitor Economy' recognises the importance of sustainability. As well as highlighting the direct relevance of a number of the priorities from 'Time for Action - The West Sussex Sustainability Strategy', the Framework states that:



'The principle of sustainability covers the interaction between the visitors, the industry that serves them, and the community that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the environment where it all takes place.'

As part of the consultation exercise to develop the Strategic Framework, the Visitor Economy Forum was asked to rank 10 priorities for tourism in West Sussex. The West Sussex Sustainability Forum (WSSF) performed the same exercise.

WSSF's top three priorities and the reasoning for them are :

### 1st Priority - *Protecting the environment / green tourism initiatives*

The environment is one of the key things that attracts people to West Sussex. It is necessary to make sure the environment is protected so it can continue to be a resource to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike, and ensure the visitor economy can be sustained.

### 2nd Priority - *Better marketing and promotion*

Better marketing and promotion is essential to communicate to visitors both why they should come to West Sussex, and how they can enjoy the county in a sustainable way. It was felt that many visitors are not aware of the negative impacts they may be having and that through marketing and promotion this could be alleviated.

### 3rd Priority - *Improving Sustainable Transport*

Improving sustainable transport, and reducing motorised traffic will have a positive impact on the quality of the environment. By improving the sustainable transport options available to visitors, West Sussex would become more attractive and the environment would be enhanced.

WEST SUSSEX SUSTAINABILITY FORUM



## The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Based on a Presentation by Ian Parkes, SOA Development

London's blueprint for the Games contains a number of specific initiatives to achieve a sustainable legacy which improves the environment, health and quality of life for local communities. These are broadly reflective of WSSF priorities for the Visitor Economy here in West Sussex. They include:

- ▶ Investment in public transport, sustainable design and best practice in construction to make London 2012 a low carbon Games.
- ▶ Hosting a zero-waste Games by avoiding landfill and using waste as a resource for recycling and re-use.
- ▶ Conserving biodiversity through the regeneration of the Lower Lea Valley, creating Europe's largest new urban park.
- ▶ Creating partnerships with community groups, environmental experts and stakeholders to deliver a One Planet Olympics.

The South East England Development Agency is committed to maximising the benefits from the Games for the region by:

- ▶ Optimising the tourist impact
- ▶ Optimising cultural/events benefits
- ▶ Taking full advantage of sporting events
- ▶ Ensuring a skills legacy
- ▶ Ensuring an enhanced Visitor Economy infrastructure and public realm legacy is delivered

In West Sussex there is an aim to use the opportunities presented by the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to increase the number of visitors to West Sussex, in line with the sustainable tourism strategy.

If you are interested in volunteering opportunities associated with the Games visit the website [www.london.2012.com](http://www.london.2012.com) and click on 'Get Involved'.



## Tackling Tourism in the South Downs

Based on a presentation by Nicola Redwood, Strategic Access Officer with the South Downs Joint Committee

The South Downs Tourism Network was established in 2003 to encourage and enable individuals and organisations interested in sustainable tourism in the South Downs to develop the product and share knowledge.

The main objectives of the Network are to:

- ▶ raise the profile of local tourism
- ▶ link with local producers
- ▶ establish email communication
- ▶ improve sources of information about the Downs, and highlight the local distinctiveness
- ▶ develop and promote alternative forms of transport

- ▶ forge links between the tourism industry and countryside and management staff.

The Network has also established the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Businesses are independently assessed and can be awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold accreditation in recognition of business achievements in sustainable practice. The businesses are presented with plaques to display on their property, and are promoted on a database. Businesses that have this accreditation and are part of the Network will be in a good position to benefit from opportunities such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



For more information about the Green Tourism Business Scheme visit

[www.green-business.co.uk](http://www.green-business.co.uk)

These initiatives contribute to the following desired outcomes of Time for Action:

- ▶ Encourage locally produced goods and make greater use of local facilities
- ▶ Work in fairly paid employment in a diverse, vibrant local economy
- ▶ Respect the diversity of cultures and local distinctiveness in the County