



Selling the Seaside: Opportunities and Challenges for Marine and Coastal Tourism in South West England



The Devon Maritime Forum Winter17 Meeting
10th January 2017 – The Devon Hotel, Exeter

Context

For much of the past half-century the story of the British seaside holiday and of traditional seaside resorts has been one of slow but inexorable decline, as many established UK coastal destinations found themselves out of favour and out competed by continental destinations on service, price, and average hours of sunshine. More recently, however, there has been a new narrative, where growth in the domestic coastal tourism sector is good and where efforts to reimagine and rebrand traditional coastal resorts and change public and media perceptions are gaining traction exemplified by a succession of articles in Sunday supplements proclaiming the 'renaissance of the seaside', 'coastal cool', or the virtues of traditional seaside fun. Increasingly confident, the coastal tourism sector is now worth an estimated £8 billion a year to the UK economy and sustains some 210,000 jobs making it bigger than the telecommunications industry and the motor and railway industries combined.¹

With its spectacular designated coasts, rich natural and cultural coastal heritage, host of maritime attractions and diversity of seaside settlements from quiet fishing villages to vibrant coastal resorts, it is no surprise that the South West is the most popular coastal tourism destination in the England and Wales accounting for 40% of domestic overnight seaside trips. The South West too has, by some margin, the largest number of jobs directly supported by seaside tourism: 68,000, a figure that continues to grow across the range of resorts, but is particularly notable in many of the region's fashionable, smaller coastal towns.²

Coastal tourism, then, especially in the South West, is on the up and doing well – but it can do much better. Nationally, seaside tourism has regained its position as the largest domestic overnight holiday sector, but growth in tourism employment has not been replicated to the same scale on the coast. Coastal tourism continues to face significant competition from the city break, and a range of other challenges relating to staff recruitment and retention, adaptability to short-stay trends, and a persisting lack of awareness about what the coast can offer as a tourist destination, particularly among the under 35s and international visitors. Coastal tourism, therefore, remains under appreciated, undervalued and has significant potential for growth.³

¹ Christina Beatty, Steve Fothergill and Tony Gore (2014) : *Seaside Towns in the Age of Austerity: Recent Trends in Employment in Seaside Tourism in England and Wales*

² Christina Beatty, Steve Fothergill and Tony Gore (2014) *Seaside Towns in the Age of Austerity: Recent Trends in Employment in Seaside Tourism in England and Wales*

³ National Coastal Tourism Academy (2016): *2016 Coastal Tourism: Summary Report of Challenges and Opportunities for Growth.*

Programme

Timing	Agenda Item	Speaker
09.30	REGISTRATION	
10.00	Welcome and House Keeping	Steve Guilbert DMF (Coordinator)
10.05	Chairman's Introduction	Prof. Ed Maltby DMF (Chairman)
Session I – Marine and Coastal Tourism – The National Picture		
10.10	Shore Potential: Opportunities for Growth and Addressing the Coastal Tourism Challenge	Samantha Richardson NCTA: Academy Director
10.30	British Hospitality Association: Creating Coastal Powerhouses	Vernon Hunte BHA: Director Government Affairs
10.50	Strategic Framework for Tourism in England/Tourism Action Plan	Lyndsey Swift Visit England: Head of Strategy & Partnerships
11.10	REFRESHMENT BREAK	
Session II – Marine and Coastal Tourism – Devon and the SW		
11.40	The New Visit Devon – Rationale, Achievements and Future Plans	Robin Barker Visit Devon: Non-Executive Director
12.00	English Riviera Renaissance?	Carolyn Custerson Chief Executive: English Riviera BID Company
12.20	South West Coast Path	Esther Pearson/Mark Owen South West Coast Path
12.40	Morning Questions/Discussion	Chairman/Forum
13.00	LUNCH BREAK	
Soapbox Session		
14.15	S1: Mayflower 2020 Celebrations	Amanda Lumley Chief Executive: Visit Plymouth
14.25	S2: Education Market of Coastal Tourism	Dr. Alun Morgan Plymouth University

14.30	S3: Shoreline Management Plan Update	Graeme Smith South Devon and Dorset Coastal Authorities Group
14.35	S4: Marine Planning Update	Clare Kavanagh Marine Management Organisation
Session III – Marine and Coastal Tourism – Perspectives		
14.40	Sustainability: Sustainable Surfing	Dr. Gregory Borne Director of the Sustainability and Surfing Research Group, Plymouth University
15.00	Safety: Marine and Coastal Safety	Bridie Appleby-Gunnill Education Manager: RNLI Community Safety Team
15.20	CoaST – One Planet Tourism	Manda Brookman Director: CoaST
15.40	Afternoon Questions/Discussion	Chairman/Forum
16.00	Closing Remarks	Chairman

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