

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**REGENERATION  
CABINET MEMBER**

**2012 VISITOR FIGURES: THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL PICTURE**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 In 2012, Britain was in the global spotlight with events such as the Olympics and the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. It was also a summer significantly affected by adverse weather leading to the cancellation of many local and national events.
- 1.2 This report looks the national picture and how the North Lincolnshire visitor figures compare.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Tourism is important to our local economy. We are not a traditional tourist destination. However, we have a quality tourism offer ranging from adrenaline sports to historic houses and gardens. There are over 75 places to visit in the area and 1,335 quality inspected bedspaces. Tourism employs over 4,000 people and is worth around £167 million to the local economy.
- 2.2 In January each year we ask 125 event organisers and attractions across the area how many visitors they had in the previous year. We use these figures to monitor how the industry is changing.
- 2.3 In 2012 there were 2,618,517 recorded day-visits to events and attractions in North Lincolnshire. This represents an increase of more than 3.4% on the previous year. Table 1 shows how the number of people visiting the events and attractions has changed since last year.
- 2.4 This is good news in a year where the national visitor figures have fallen. In the September Tourism Survey, Visit Britain says that domestic trips in the UK have fallen by 7% from an all-time high of 11.1 billion in 2011. In England the fall is 6%.

## **Impacts of Adverse Weather**

- 2.5 We know that 2012 was a very difficult year for Britain's visitor economy. The Met Office confirmed that June to August was the wettest summer since 1912.
- 2.6 Destinations on England's west coast suffered the most. One of the worst affected areas was Cornwall where the visitor economy could lose as much as £60 million. Visit Cornwall say that their visitor numbers were down by 20% in June as the rain kept people away from major attractions and events.
- 2.7 Even though we are historically one of the driest parts of the UK, many of our events were cancelled and others were poorly attended due to the weather. The numbers visiting our country fairs, shows and outdoor events fell by 12,840. Had it not been for the crowds watching the Olympic Torch come through the area, this figure could have reached almost 50,000.
- 2.8 Food events however went from strength to strength. The newly established Epworth Food Fair continued to grow despite torrential rain at the June event. It attracted more than 12,000 people during the year.
- 2.9 The rain disrupted people's travel plans. They were less willing to travel and many cancelled their UK short breaks. Blame was also attributed to 'over cautious' television weather reports driving people away from a holiday in the UK in favour of 'guaranteed' sun abroad.
- 2.10 Visit England says that rural attractions were the worst hit with trips to the countryside falling by 7%. This can be seen at many attractions across North Lincolnshire. Despite venues putting on free family events and activities, the poor weather proved too much of a deterrent. Many families simply chose to stay indoors.
- 2.11 The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions say that the visitor numbers for 2012 are sobering reading and that summer 2012 proved a difficult time financially for attractions. They say that "it is our belief that for gardens and outdoor attractions across the UK, the appalling weather during much of the year has led to one of the worst trading periods since 2001 - the year of a foot-and-mouth disease outbreak".

## **The Olympics**

- 2.12 In North Lincolnshire 37,000 people lined the streets to see the Olympic flame pass through Scunthorpe, Brigg and Wrawby. But once the games started the Olympics caused a 'distraction factor' with many people simply preferring to spend time at home watching television.

- 2.13 We have seen a significant rise in those participating in and watching sports. Attractions showing significant increases include The Pods and several of the area's golf courses.

### **Developing a Quality Destination**

- 2.14 We have a growing reputation for quality that brings in visitors from across the UK. Recent investment by the council in attractions such as The Pods and the Baths Hall is helping our visitor figures to rise.
- 2.15 The Pink Pig at Holme has recently won the Best Food and Drink destination in the National Farm Attractions Network Awards. This shows how important people feel that good quality locally produced food is.
- 2.16 We know from experience that people will pay for a quality experience. National figures indicate that the average spend per visit has increased by roughly 4% and 'bed nights' have increase by 3%.

## **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 This report is for information only. As such, there are no options for consideration.

## **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

- 5.1 None.

## **6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

## **7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the report be noted.

## **DIRECTOR OF PLACES**

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None.**

Table 1

**Day visits to events, attractions and activities in North Lincolnshire**

<b>Activity type</b>	<b>How the 2012 figure compares to 2011</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Country Fairs, shows and outdoor events	-12,840	↓
Food and drink events and attractions	+14,203	↑
Sports and outdoor pursuits	+138,237	↑
Heritage attractions and gardens	-9,209	↓
Arts and entertainment	-3,798	↓
Country parks and nature reserves	-20,933	↓
Indoor family attractions	+50,353	↑