

How's the tourism economy today? Tourism survey results 2009

Overview

Wealden's Tourism Survey (2009) was conducted for the third year by the Economic Development and Tourism Team. The aim of the survey is to establish an assessment of occupancy levels and factors that have affected visitor accommodation and tourism attractions in Wealden. From 206 businesses that were sent a survey, we had a response rate of 16%, which was an increase from last year.

Occupancy levels

According to the survey, the average overall occupancy rates for the year were 54%. Summer occupancy levels were 66%, whilst the winter levels averaged 31%. The overall occupancy rate was fractionally down on last year's results at 57.6%. By accommodation type: Hotels - 45%, Pubs - 60%, B&Bs - 50%, Self-catering 40%. At weekends during peak periods; april to September occupancy rates are between 90-100%.

Market Demand

The peak days accommodation were Fridays and Saturdays, highlighting the demand in the area for weekend breaks, from leisure and wedding guests.

Origin and type of visitor

56%-80% of visitors to Wealden come mostly from within the UK with Europeans making up the majority of the remaining visitors. Visitors from countries such as America, Australia, Canada, Japan and New Zealand were also visiting the district.

Pastime factors affecting business

Self-catering, B&Bs and guesthouses felt that their businesses had been positively affected by the fluctuations in the exchange rate. The weather was the greatest determinant of demand for most businesses. Negative factors such as energy costs and transport were seen as a constraint.

**For a full summary of the results contact Sam Reid, Tourism Assistant
T. 01892 602455 E. sam.reid@wealden.gov.uk**



The winner of this year's prize draw was Mr Andrew Joad (pictured) of Hollambys Cottages in Groombridge. Mr Joad was presented with a 'local produce' hamper, full of delicacies from across Sussex which was put together by Corbins from Uckfield High Street.

2010 set to be a good year for UK tourism

During 2010 it is predicted that there will be a strong trend towards favouring the UK as a holiday destination rather than going abroad. This is according to recent research by BDRC Continental – a market research company.

The research shows that 70% of people surveyed are more likely to book a holiday in the UK than travel abroad. The proportion of those who said they were seriously considering taking a UK holiday this year has increased by as much as 10 percentage points to 39% against the same time last year.

The two main reasons BDRC has identified for this trend are the weakness of the pound (notably against the euro) and a certain disillusionment with air travel. Households – and particularly families with children – are going to be cutting back further on their holiday spend, although they still want to be able to go away somewhere.

This is a great opportunity for accommodation providers and particularly those with self-catering accommodation who offer high quality at an accessible price.

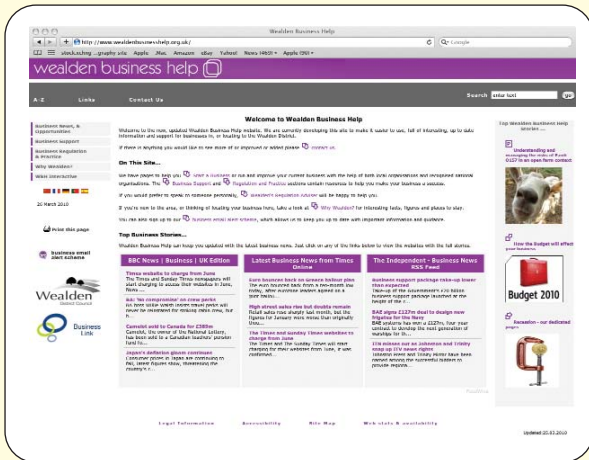
These findings are confirmed by holiday home website holidaylettings.co.uk who report having already received 2.5m visits since the beginning of the year with the UK topping the charts for enquiries.

The UK was also the second most popular destination for the February 2010 half-term and the third favourite destination (after Spain and France) for summer holidays.

W. www.visitbritain.com



www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk Revitalised



Wealden District Council have just re-launched their wealdenbusinesshelp website to give it a fresher, cleaner look, make it easier to use, more accessible and full of useful and interesting information. It is designed to support our Wealden businesses, linking to our services and those of other business support agencies.

The site is updated daily with news links to the main business news providers and includes current local issues affecting Wealden businesses.

Information on business best practice and your legal requirements are included. Your feedback on issues and topics you would like to see covered on the website would be welcomed.

As the site develops over coming months it will become more interactive. By highlighting opportunities and events, we want to help businesses to know what is available to help them succeed. If you think your business success deserves to be highlighted, or will help others to improve or prosper, please provide us with the details.

Please forward any comments, suggestions or useful information to [E. gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:E.gail.fenn@wealden.gov.uk) or call Gail on T. 01323 443302.



Wealden Familiarisation Trips 2010

Two new Familiarisation (FAM) Trips are planned for 2010. Pick up the phone and book your space on one or more trips today, and be sure to make a note of them in your diary as well. Please contact Sam Reid, Economic Development & Tourism Assistant on T. 01892 602455.



FAM TRIP 1: Ashdown Llama Park
Tuesday 15th June 11:00 am

The Wealden FAM Trips are a great way to 'go and see' what is on offer for your staying visitor. Better still, they are free to attend. All you have to do is be able to make your own way there.

Wealden District Council's Economic Development & Tourism Manager Sarah Pascoe recently joined local B&B owners on a FAM Trip to the Stone Cross Windmill. This is what Sarah Pascoe had to say about the Stone Cross Windmill: "We were warmly welcomed by a number of members of the Stone Cross Mill Trust, and offered a wonderful reception of delicious home made cakes made from wholemeal flour produced by the Mill. Peter Marshall – a Trustee, the Miller and Heritage Centre Creator gave us an informative tour of the Mill,



FAM TRIP 2: Herstmonceux Castle
Thursday 28th October 11:00 am

and shared with us his experiences of working the Mill. We were also fortunate to meet Mr Dallaway, great grandson of Mr Samuel Dallaway who built the Stone Cross Windmill in 1875".

If you missed the FAM Trip to Stone Cross Windmill, please refer to the website for opening hours and a diary of events: www.stonecrosswindmill.org.uk

You maybe interested to note that **National Mills Weekend takes place on 8th and 9th May 2010**. Why not enjoy a trip to Stone Cross Windmill. Other Mills located in Wealden District include: Nutley Windmill, Polegate Windmill, Michelham Priory Watermill, and Windmill Hill Windmill.

Alfriston & Cuckmere Valley Partnership (AVCP)

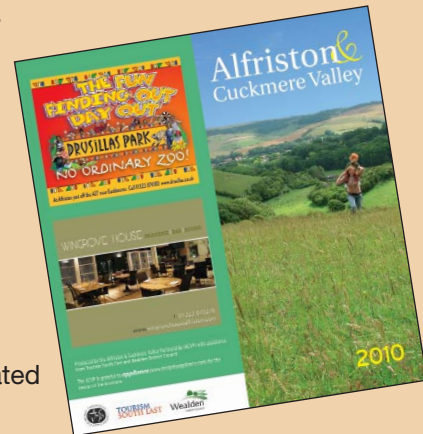
This month, timed to coincide with the opening of the tourist season and the designation of the South Downs National Park, ACVP will be distributing the first of 25,000 copies of their latest full-colour Brochure.

ACVP (previously ADAPTT) have produced their own publicity material aimed at residents and visitors for over 25 years. In 1984 when the first black-and-white folder rolled off the presses it was unique, but today information racks in outlets throughout Wealden are packed with tempting offers. ACVP has watched the competition grow and customer demands become more sophisticated. With regular support from Wealden's Tourism Department, we have constantly honed and improved our publications.

The area, to the East of the South Downs National Park, has much to offer. Not only the beauty of the Downs and the Cuckmere Valley but also a wide selection of shops, hotels, attractions, tearooms and B&Bs. Whereas there were only 46 businesses listed in the 1984 edition, this year there are 82 – proving that despite the economic downturn, all of us are aware of the importance of employment and income provided by tourism and leisure activities.

There is also a need for a constantly changing and improving of the 'menu' of events. Not all our visitors are newcomers; many are from nearby towns, and local businesses recognise the importance of tempting people to visit again . . . and again.

With the demands of running a business, it is not always easy to find additional pairs of hands willing to help. ACVP has addressed the problem, shared by other community organisations, by forming small sub-committees of involved enthusiasts dedicated to organising individual activities such as the brochure, the website and the Christmas Comforts & Joys weekend. They have cut back on unnecessary formal meetings and made greater use of emails, keeping everyone in the loop. Small is beautiful – and it works!



W. www.alfriston.org T. 01323 871272

LEADER update

There is £2.4 million of LEADER funding to spend in the WARR (Wealden & Rural Rother) area, between 2009-2013. Here are the latest successful applicants for LEADER funding.

The EU, national and regional governments think that rural areas need help to become or remain economically, environmentally and socially healthy and sustainable. The money must be used to fund activities that have a long term impact on the profitability and sustainability of land based industries, tourism enterprises, rural businesses and rural communities.

JANUARY 2010

Rocks Farm Shop, Windmill Hill

£3,596 to part fund a walk-in chiller and a serve-over counter for a farm shop on a smallholding, which sells its own meat and poultry and other local produce.

Upper Dicker Village Shop

£22,795 for new equipment to expand the range of local produce and to provide additional community facilities.

Stone Cross Windmill

£11,074 to provide disabled access, heating and insulation to enable this Grade II* listed mill to be used all year round as a heritage and community centre.

MARCH 2010

Kudos Foods and Post Office Stores

£16,637 to part fund an expansion of Ripe Village Stores, to develop an up market frozen food retailer

incorporating grocery and delicatessen and increasing the previously limited post office service.

Trufflepig Films

£8,866 to upgrade filmmaking equipment, in view of exceptional changes in technical standards being introduced by television broadcasters re high definition broadcasting. Trufflepig Films is an independent film production company, based in Selmeaton, making documentary feature films on rural topics.

Hawthbush Eco-holiday Lets and Workshops

£50,000 to part fund the conversion of 3 redundant agricultural buildings in Gun Hill into high quality holiday lets, to offer low impact eco holidays and courses and tutoring, in collaboration with local artists, creative and holistic professionals. Under the current WARR partnership programme £197,992 has now been awarded to projects in Wealden.

For more information please contact:

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WARR Partnership

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T. 01424 787400.



FOCUS ON... Wealden's natural attractions – Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest

Over the past four years, Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest has evolved into South East England's premier site for healthy outdoor activity. Bedgebury Forest offers walking, cycling, mountain biking, horse-riding and adventure play for all ages and abilities. Alongside is the National Pinetum, host to the world's finest collection of conifers and a beautiful place to walk, picnic and escape the stresses of everyday life all year round.

Cyclists of all ages and abilities can enjoy a 10km family cycle route (with an alternative 4km short course) and over 13km of mountain bike trails. This includes a long single-track cross-country loop and a cycle skills area with built structures and a dirt jump track designed to challenge a rider's ability and technical skills.

Bedgebury has numerous all-ability walking routes promoting healthy living. The state-of-the-art Adventure Play Area is themed around the great plant-hunters of the Victorian era. The exciting Go Ape high wire forest adventure course offers a new way to experience and enjoy the forest.

Bedgebury has also added and upgraded 12km of horse riding tracks. The addition of way-marking, a trail map, a secure box park and picnic area, plus links to existing bridleways, has created a wonderful trail riding opportunity. For a good value, healthy, inclusive day out in all seasons, award-winning Bedgebury is a hard place to beat.

W. www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury T. 01580 879842



New Visitor Guide highlights the attractions of Wealden

The 2010 Enjoy Sussex Visitor and Accommodation Guide is now available to tourists and visitors to Wealden free of charge, offering a wealth of essential information on what to see and do in rural Sussex.

The Enjoy Sussex Guide is produced in partnership with Horsham, Mid Sussex, Lewes and Wealden District Councils.

The Enjoy Sussex 2010 Guide provides details about where you can stay and what you can do in this part of Sussex. To complement the 2010 guide, the Enjoy Sussex website enables potential visitors from around the world to discover the vibrant, award winning and individual character of the area.

The visitor guide and website is just one of the measures local authorities are offering to ensure that new and repeat visitors continue to visit the area, bringing in vital revenue and supporting local jobs.

Copies of the complete guide are available free of charge from the Enjoy Sussex website or by calling Wealden District Council's tourism section on T. 01892 602884/7, E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk. Alternatively, contact one of the tourist information centres across the Enjoy Sussex destination area.

W. www.enjoysussex.info

You can now also follow Enjoy Sussex on Twitter and Facebook.



Walk Wealden The 2012 Active Challenge

- A programme of free, fun, easy walks
- Get outdoors and meet your local community
- Take your first step towards a healthier lifestyle



Find your nearest walk:

W. www.wealden.gov.uk
T. 01323 443302

New Beachy Head pamphlet



A new pamphlet about the Beachy Head area has been produced by the Gilbert Estate and has been distributed around the region. The pamphlet is primarily aimed at the many tourists who come to see the spectacular sights at the Beachy Head cliff top but are not aware of all the other attractions in the area. Centred on the village of East Dean near Eastbourne, the Beachy Head pamphlet gives details of walks, cycle rides and places of interest nearby and contains a comprehensive map of the immediate area, including places to eat and stay within a radius of about two hours walking time of the village.

The Davies-Gilbert family has farmed the Beachy Head area for over two hundred years and is now gradually diversifying from intensive arable production to tourism and conservation and has set up small businesses in the village such as The Beachy Head Brewery and The Hikers Rest coffee and gift shop. They have also created three luxury holiday cottages with five more planned for the near future.

The distribution of The Beachy Head brochure coincides with the restoration of the Belle Tote Lighthouse as a B&B, the arrival of a new Thai restaurant on East Dean Village Green and the total renovation of the famous Tiger Inn, also on the Village Green, which now has five en suite bedrooms.

W. www.beachyhead.org.uk T. 01323 423878

Charlie Davies-Gilbert told **Tourism Update**

“*Beachy Head is not just a pretty place. There's lots to do and see here and we hope this pamphlet will encourage people to explore the area and to linger awhile whilst they enjoy the charm, tranquillity and hospitality of East Dean.*”

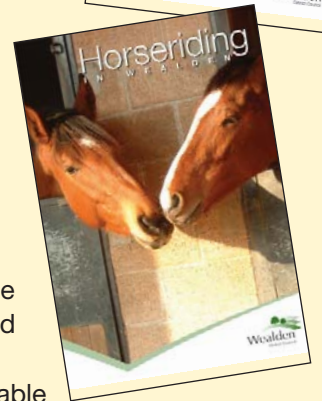
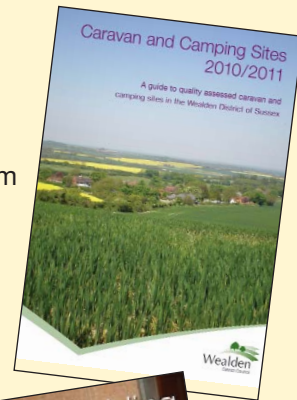
Coming soon . . . Horseriding in Wealden and Caravan & Camping Sites 2010/2011 A5 Guides

Copies of the guides will be available soon from one of the many Visitor Information Racks located around the District or you can request a copy from a member of the Economic Development & Tourism Team on T. 01892 602455. From May you will also be able to pick up a copy from Wadhurst Library, Herstmonceux Castle or Stone Cross Windmill Heritage Centre.

The Horseriding guide contains a wealth of information about local riding stables, where to ride your own horse and riding for the disabled.

The Caravan and Camping guide details all of the quality assessed sites across Wealden, giving information on ratings and available facilities.

If you wish to download the full Caravan and Camping guide 2010/2011 to Sussex please visit: W. www.visitsussex.org/site/where-to-stay/camping-and-caravaning



The **BIG LUNCH** Sunday, 18th July 2010

Following last year's success, The BIG LUNCH will take place on Sunday 18th July 2010. The BIG LUNCH, which aims to encourage millions in the UK to get together and share lunch. This is a great opportunity to enjoy some of the locally-produced food from Wealden and the surrounding area.

The organisers hope that the BIG LUNCH will become an annual national event when the communities of Britain can sit down together, share food, drink and conversation, explore their differences and join together in a celebration of what unites us. Last year 730,000 people joined in and this year the organisers are confident that the numbers will exceed this.

The BIG LUNCH website, **W. www.thebiglunch.com** provides more information including details of the nearest Big Lunch to your postcode address.



Wealden Online Events Calendar

Find out about events held in and around Wealden. The Wealden Online Events Calendar continues to grow in popularity as more local businesses and community groups and organisations advertise their events for local people and visitors to the area to enjoy.

Add your own event, for FREE, to the event listings. You can submit your event details online to Wealden District Council anytime of day, and your details should go live within 24 hours. To add your event online today visit www.wealden.gov.uk/events.



Lambing Time

Held daily from Saturday 6 March 2010 to Monday 3 May 2010

Come and see the world's largest collection of breeds of sheep giving birth, view newborn lambs up close in pens with their mum's, help with bottle feeding twice daily, see lots of other farm animals with their young, take a tractor trailer ride

and finish off with a picnic or a Sussex cream tea.

Venue

Seven Sisters Sheep Centre. T. 01323423302

Easter Bunny Trail

Held every week from Monday 29 March 2010 to Sunday 18 April 2010

An Eggciting Easter bunny trail for all the family to enjoy! Find the 10 bunnies hidden in the garden and receive a chocolate Easter egg as a prize!

Venue

Borde Hill Garden. T. 01444 450326

Easter School Holiday Quiz and Llama Hunt

Held daily from Thursday 1 April 2010 to Sunday 18 April 2010

Take part in our annual Easter Llama Hunt. This is our version of an Easter Egg Hunt. Children follow clues around the park to find coloured pictures of llamas, find the answers and receive a small Easter egg.

Venue

Ashdown Forest Llama Park
T. 01825 712040



near Haywards Heath, it'll be a fun day for all the family. Attractions include face painting, guess the weight of the cat, games, lucky dip, raffle, tombola, stalls, Find the Golden Egg and lots more!

Venue

Cats Protection, National Cat Adoption Centre
T. 08707 708650

Bluebell Walk

Saturday 17 April 2010 11am-4pm

Come along to the beautiful Carters Corner Farm in Cowbeech and enjoy a walk along the Bluebell covered woods. Plus, home-made refreshments and stalls will be available.

Venue

Carters Corner Farm. T. 01323 432180



Arlington Bluebell Walk

Thursday 22 April 2010 and Friday 23 April 2010

Enjoy the beauty of the bluebell filled woods. Proceeds of these 2 days of the Arlington Bluebell Walk will be in aid of St Wilfrid's Hospice.

Venue

Arlington Woods. T. 01323 432180

Tulip Festival at Pashley Manor Gardens

Held daily from Friday 23 April 2010 to Monday 3 May 2010

The Tulip Festival was initiated to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the tulip's arrival in Europe from Persia. It has become an extremely popular annual event held in association with Bloms Bulbs, winners of 59 Chelsea Gold Medals.

Venue

Pashley Manor Gardens.
T. 01580 200888



Do you want to make your business more profitable?

Visit Business EXPO 2010



Wednesday, 28 April 2010 10am-5pm, East Sussex National Golf Spa Hotel,
Little Horsted, Uckfield TN22 5ES (Entrance on A22 between Halland and Horsted)

There are hundreds of reasons to visit Business EXPO 2010 – here are just a few . . .

- Free entry to the event
the exhibition, seminar & workshop programmes and all the other activities that make up this unique business event.
- 6 free seminars:
 - 10.00 Business Rates – your questions answered
 - 10.45 E-Commerce
 - 11.30 Making Social Media work for your business
 - 2.00 Employment Law: myths and misunderstandings
 - 2.30 Connexions
 - 3.00 How to make your business more profitable
- 1:1 professional advice from experts
- The No.1 place to meet
suppliers, manufacturers and new partners for your business
- Networking area & bar
network with your peers and make new contacts for your business

■ The Exhibition

featuring up to 100 companies showcasing the latest products, services and special offers – offering the best of what's available to businesses

FREE ENTRY

Approx: 100 Stands • Free Seminars • Refreshments

For more information or to book a stand, contact:
E. eastsussexoffice@fsb.org.uk T. 01323 482018 or
E. claire.moran@wealden.gov.uk T. 01892 602887



Countryside 2010 – A Breath of Fresh Air

29th May to 13th June 2010

A new boost for the countryside . . . COUNTRYSIDE 2010 is a pioneering campaign that puts new audiences in touch with the wide range of recreational activities and events which take place in the countryside of South East England.

COUNTRYSIDE 2010 will invite the public to enjoy a two-week showcase of events and activities which illustrate the many different ways in which we can enjoy the countryside.

The fortnight runs from 29th May to 13th June, which includes the schools' half-term holiday.

Calling all organisers . . .

The COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme brings together activities from organisers great and small.

For the first time ever, it offers everyone the opportunity to be part of a free, high profile promotion which shows

new audiences who they are and what they do.

Everyone who meets the criteria set for the campaign is invited to contribute an event or activity to the COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme and to take advantage of the pre-publicity provided by the website and media activities.

Register your interest . . .

If you are interested in contributing an event or activity to the COUNTRYSIDE 2010 programme, please register your interest online now. This will enable The Rural Ways Partnership to keep you up to date with all new developments and opportunities offered by the campaign. Please spread the word about COUNTRYSIDE 2010, and help celebrate our great outdoors!

W. www.countryside2010.org.uk

Sussex Training and Skills Opportunities

It is now more important than ever to invest in skills development to boost business success. Tourism South East has funding available to offer businesses support and training at heavily subsidised rates. In-house delivery to suit your organisation can also be arranged.

WELCOME HOST – ONE DAY

The UK's number one customer service course – core practical skills for all staff to improve their day-to-day performance (nationally recognised City and Guilds qualification available for an additional £12pp)
22nd April 2010 – Chichester, West Sussex
5th May 2010 – Lewes, East Sussex
19th May 2010 – Eastbourne, East Sussex
29th April 2010 – Brighton, East Sussex

WELCOME LINE – ONE DAY

Learn how to communicate effectively on the telephone and via email and acquire the skills needed to convert enquiries into sales.
17th March 2010 – Chichester, West Sussex
18th May 2010 – London Gatwick, West Sussex

WELCOME ALL – ONE DAY

Learn how to welcome and look after customers with disabilities and varying access needs – ensuring you are truly fit for business.
11th March 2010 – Lewes, East Sussex
15th April 2010 – Eastbourne, East Sussex
26th April 2010 – Fletchers Tea Rooms Rye, East Sussex
13th May 2010 – Chichester, West Sussex
Funded by Accentuate

LEAD, MOTIVATE & SUCCEED – ONE DAY

Designed to help supervisors and managers to lead, develop and motivate their staff so that the whole team delivers world-class customer service. Ideal for first-time line managers and supervisors.
10th March 2010 – Chichester, West Sussex
27th April 2010 – Lewes, East Sussex

WELCOMING WALKERS & CYCLISTS – ONE DAY

This inspirational one-day course highlights ways in which accommodation providers and others can tap into the specialist market of walkers and cyclists, improving the customer experience and increasing business profitability as a result.
20th April 2010 – Lewes, East Sussex



For more information please contact:
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T. 023 8062 5533
E. train@tourism.com
W. www.tourismtrainingsoutheast.com

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W. wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk
W. wealden.gov.uk W. enjoysussex.info

Tourism Update is published four times a year. If you would like to feature an article, please submit details by **Monday 7th June 2010.**

Tourism Update is usually only available in electronic format or to download at **W. wealden.gov.uk**

To ensure you are on the mailing list, please email details to **E. tourism@wealden.gov.uk**

Portfolio Holder for Community:
Councillor Ron Cussons

If you have any questions about this newsletter or comments on our service, please contact us.