

Tourism Report 2021

The Forest of Dean is recognised as a very important tourism location with the total visitor related spend in 2013 at almost £135million with actual employment in the industry of 3,139 which is 8% of a proportion of all employment in the district. There are many attractions and accommodation providers to serve the extensive range of visitors to the area and many of these are small scale operations.

A Destination Management Plan 2015-2020 is supported by the Forest of Dean District Council, Monmouthshire County Council, the Forestry Commission, the Wye Valley AONB and the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association (WVFDTA) with their members. The key priorities are Evidence and Intelligence, Partnership, Place and Product Development, Marketing and Promotion, Welcome and Information, and Business Development. The Forestry Commission reports that Forest of Dean hosts over 1 million visits per annum. Mallards Pike and Cannop Ponds are well-known tourist destinations in the NDP area and the forest is popular with locals as well as visitors for a host of outdoor activities including walking, cycling, birdwatching and orienteering etc. Mallards Pike also hosts a very popular parkrun.org.uk event which attracts local runners and others from all over the UK and overseas.



All six villages in this NDP area have a considerable number of accommodation options from B&B, self-catering options of varying sizes, hostels, camping, glamping and a hotel. Parkend, in particular, also has Dean Forest Steam Railway (and Whitecroft Station), Whitemead Forest Park



(a Boundless holiday park), Dean Forest Cycle Hire with cafe, RSPB Nagshead, Dean Field Study Centre, a village shop/Post Office with café, a cycling track linked to the Family Trail and another to Coleford, Speech House Hotel, three pubs and numerous self-catering accommodation options. The Forest of Dean has also become an important resource as a film location including Merlin, Sex Education, Star Wars, Dr Who ... which has led to an increase in location tourism.

Local public consultation has shown an encouragement for tourism in that it provides employment and supports local businesses. However, there is concern that properties suitable as first time homes are being bought to convert to holiday homes or rentals therefore out pricing local people. It was also brought up as a concern that Parkend will become a tourist destination rather than somewhere with a resident community and increased visitor numbers are linked to the problem of parking in the village. Parking in the Forest is also becoming a problem where damage is occurring with visitors and locals parking on grassed areas to avoid high parking charges in Forestry England car parks such as Mallards Pike and Cannop Ponds.

The potential Dean Forest Greenway multi use track from Parkend to Lydney will only enhance this area and provide a safe off-road route through the forest linking it to Lydney mainline train station and the River Severn.



Local residents highlighted the landscape of the Forest of Dean and tranquillity as very important and it is also the most important factor in the decision to visit the area. However, the rich cultural and industrial heritage as a visitor destination are also notable factors.

The impact of tourism has been highlighted with Covid-19 and the temporary closure of many local businesses in the area.

Explanatory Notes:

<https://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/g0zkse2g/tourism-destination-management-plan-2015-to-2020.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-tourism>

<https://www.visitbritain.org/value-tourism-england>

<https://www.visitdeanwye.co.uk>

www.parkrun.org.uk