

19 August 2020

Cabinet Minister visits tourism venues to hear COVID-19 challenges and highlight Enjoy Summer Safely campaign



Secretary of State trying a fun bike at Butlin's Resort

Cabinet Minister Oliver Dowden visited West Sussex visitor attractions on Tuesday to hear the challenges faced by the tourism industry and to highlight the [Enjoy Summer Safely Campaign](#).

The Secretary of State for Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport took part in a round-table discussion with business leaders at Butlin's Resort in Bognor Regis, focusing on:

- the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector
- how summer is going so far and the measures being taken to keep visitors safe
- the ways the Government can help the industry in the coming months.

Bob Lanzer, West Sussex County Council's Cabinet Member for Economy, said: "Tourism is such an important sector for the West Sussex economy, supporting more than 37,000 jobs. We were pleased to highlight to the Secretary of State the hard work of the Experience West Sussex Destination Partnership - hosted by the County Council - in supporting businesses and consumer confidence to ensure we can enjoy summer safely.

"We also welcomed the opportunity to discuss wider challenges faced by many of our attractions and businesses due to the impact of COVID-19."

Nigel Lynn, Chairman of Experience West Sussex Destination Partnership and Chief Executive of Arun District Council, said: "Tourism has been particularly hard hit because of its obvious seasonality, with the coastal areas being an essential economic driver to the county. With the recent announcement of a confirmed recession, we know that the coastal towns are already badly affected by this.

“Recent Experience West Sussex forecasts (June 2020) indicate a decline of 59% for visits in 2020 and a drop of £10.6bn in visitor spend.

“We are really pleased that the Secretary of State understands the value of tourism to West Sussex. It has given Experience West Sussex and Arun District Council an opportunity to highlight issues and ask directly for support which will help to build the tourism offer for our Coastal areas in the future.”

The Secretary of State’s day visit to the south coast started at Portchester Castle, followed by Cobnor Activities Centre at Chichester Harbour, and then Butlin’s Resort, Bognor Regis, for the round-table discussion arranged by the Experience West Sussex Destination Partnership.

Discussion participants included: Cllr Bob Lanzer, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Economy, Nigel Lynn, Chairman of Experience West Sussex Destination Partnership and Chief Executive of Arun District Council, Cllr Dr. James Walsh, Arun District Council Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economy, Jon Hendry-Pickup, Managing Director, Butlin’s Resort, Bognor Regis, Kathy Bourne, Executive Director Chichester Festival Theatre, Paul Bromley, Communications Director, Bluebell Railway, Caroline Wood, Director Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Andrew Lee, Director of Countryside Policy and Management South Downs National Park Authority.

Ends

Notes to editors:

The Experience West Sussex Partnership is a destination partnership delivering collective value through leadership, inspiration and collaboration for the benefit of the West Sussex visitor economy.

The partnership is funded by local council partners and the county council for county-wide delivery of tourism projects through the website ExperienceWestSussex.com.

The partnership comprises: Adur District Council, Arun District Council, Chichester District Council, Crawley Borough Council, Horsham District Council, Mid Sussex District Council, West Sussex County Council, Worthing Borough Council and the Coastal West Sussex Partnership.

As well as being a central voice for the region on tourism and the visitor economy, the partnership delivers local business support and creative marketing campaigns to attract visitors to the area.

For further information please contact the news desk on 0330 222 8090 or email pressoffice@westsussex.gov.uk. For urgent out-of-hours enquiries please call 07767 098415.

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