

Experience West Sussex Supports Local Tourism

English Tourism Week 2021

Supporting English Tourism Week, 22 – 31 May, the Experience West Sussex team is highlighting the importance and often under-valued contribution the sector makes. The tourism industry in West Sussex was worth over £2.1 billion to the local economy in 2019 and growing, with an increase of £6.5 million from 2018. Over 38k people were directly employed in the industry. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic hit hard and continues to have a devastating impact on tourism in the county, UK and worldwide.

The many lockdowns that we have all endured have only served to emphasize how much people miss their freedom to travel and enjoy days out, short breaks and holidays when it is taken away from them and how important it is to keep this sector buoyant. Throughout 2020/2021 the [Experience West Sussex Partnership](#) (EWSP), the central voice for the region on tourism, destination management and the visitor economy, has continued to support the local tourism and hospitality businesses so badly affected by the pandemic.

The EWS website has added a new Industry Support section, featuring the latest Government and Visit Britain advice and information on the pandemic, as well as details on where businesses can find expert help, funding opportunities, toolkits, webinars and online courses. During lockdowns, the Zoom networking drop-in sessions were particularly well-received by those struggling to manage.

Cash-strapped businesses requested help with marketing during and after lockdowns and EWS were able to roll out a series of campaigns including #WestSussexWishlist and #RediscoverWestSussex utilising video assets, e-newsletters, digital ads and social media to keep West Sussex front of mind when visits were allowed.

The EWS #ShopSussex initiative, promoting local West Sussex products and services as gifts for Christmas, proved so popular that the #ShopSussex section is now a permanent fixture on the website. The #SummerInWestSussex campaign, launched on Boxing Day with a brand-new video, also aimed to increase cashflow by encouraging visitors to book early for their accommodation in the county. Investment is ongoing with new videos, industry partnerships and ongoing digital marketing with [Fox&Bear](#).

Looking forward, EWS is delighted to welcome and support new attractions, accommodation and experiences in the county this summer.

[Sky Park Farm](#) opens May 2021 aiming to revive the ancient British tradition of red deer farming, inviting visitors to experience life on a real working farm. Alongside the butcher, farm and gift shop, The Grazing Rooms, cafe and takeaway offer delicious local produce cooked to perfection.

The newest Pig hotel & restaurant, [Pig in The South Downs National Park](#), will open in West Sussex in September 2021 at Grade II-listed Madehurst Lodge and boasts the largest kitchen garden in the Pig group and also the group's first vineyard.

The new [Ashling Park Vineyard](#) near Chichester is already producing some of the most delicious and characterful sparklers in West Sussex. Its brand new one and two bedroom lodges set in the grounds were built by Will Hardie of TV's Amazing Spaces.

The [LOOP Watersports](#) is the only local built watersports centre within the area of Littlehampton on the south coast, offering tuition in Kitesurfing, Wing Surf/Foil & Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP).

[Cycling for Softies](#) expands into England – and in particular Sussex – offering the best of Sussex wine with a carefully created e-bike tour: five nights and two vineyards with plenty of time in between to relax and explore.

Jo Williams, Head of EWS said: “The county is expecting a busy summer season for our businesses. In anticipation of increased numbers, we are also running a consumer campaign encouraging responsible visits this summer, highlighting visitors to ‘Protect, Respect Enjoy’ and to Keep West Sussex Safe. Meanwhile planning is full steam ahead for the Autumn and Winter months, as the sector will not be back to full capacity for some time. ”

If you’d like to join Experience West Sussex, participate in their marketing activities, receive industry support and sign up your tourism or hospitality business for a free web listing, please email getinvolved@experiencewestsussex.com

EWSP backs the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions call for an extra Bank Holiday this year to help boost the visitor economy <https://travelweekly.co.uk/news/tourism/call-for-september-bank-holiday-following-devastatingly-hard-year>

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