

Item: West Norfolk Tourism Update
Committee: Regeneration and Development Panel
Date: December 11th 2018
Report from: Tourism, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

1 Introduction

The report provides updates for the Regeneration and Development Panel on tourism marketing and development activities from January to December 2018 (website statistics from October to October), alongside information on local tourism industry trends. Key tourism marketing continued, with production of the full range of printed guides for 2018 whilst also continuing to focus more attention on digital activity, especially the Visit West Norfolk mobile app.

Tim Humphreys left his Tourism Manager post in late August 2017 and the general day-to-day activities, as well as the primary focus on printed publication production, has been overseen by existing Tourism support officer Phil Eke since that time, ahead of any re-advertising of the Tourism Manager post in any form.

2 Printed Marketing

2.1 2019 West Norfolk Holiday Guide

The final copies of the existing, 2018 West Norfolk Holiday Guide will be made available through the TICs in December before the printing of the 2019 edition happens in late-December (25,000 copies to be printed once again) for early 2019 distribution. The design of this new edition started in September (ahead of last year's schedule by comparison), with final proofing expected by mid-December (again, slightly ahead of last year's schedule).

2.2 2019 Where to Go & What to Do

The majority of the 2018 edition (with the continued print-run of 220,000 copies) has now been distributed through the main distribution agencies used, with some copies still available in our local TICs until February next year. The in-house graphic design of this coming year's edition has already begun (the design work and advertiser contact started back in October 2018, around 6 weeks ahead of last year's schedule).

2.3 Discover King's Lynn

The 2019 edition is set to be published in early February 2019, with the same amount as this current year. Almost all of the print run of 160,000 has now been distributed for this year's edition.

2.4 Hunstanton mini guide and Downham Market mini guide

Both guides were updated and 50,000 copies of the Hunstanton mini guide and a slightly increased quantity of 17,000 copies of the Downham Market mini guide were printed in the Spring of 2018. Likewise, the 2019 edition will be updated, printed (in the same amount) and distributed in Spring 2019 – the exact date of the 2019 distribution dependent on how many of the existing guides are still in stock at that time.

2.5 Other publications

The Borough Council once again supported the King's Lynn Town Guides by arranging the print and distribution of the 2018 King's Lynn Guided Walks programme up until the end of the year's walks programme (October 30th 2018). Next year's publication will be

produced and distributed by the start of April 2019, once again supported by the Borough Council.

2.6 Coaches and Group Holiday makers in King's Lynn & West Norfolk

The King's Lynn TIC still continues to contact all leading coach companies in the UK with packs of our leaflets for their suggested itineraries. We are soon to look at updating our Group Travel page on our website for 2019 - <https://www.visitwestnorfolk.com/travel-and-information/group-travel> - especially our own itineraries pdf document that people can download and print off. We also continue to pay for an enhanced King's Lynn entry in the annual Coach Driver's Yearbook, which includes an enhanced level of detail on facilities and what is on offer for travelling groups to the town, alongside a town map for coaches and illustrative photograph. We also continue to pay for the same type of entries for Hunstanton and Downham Market too.

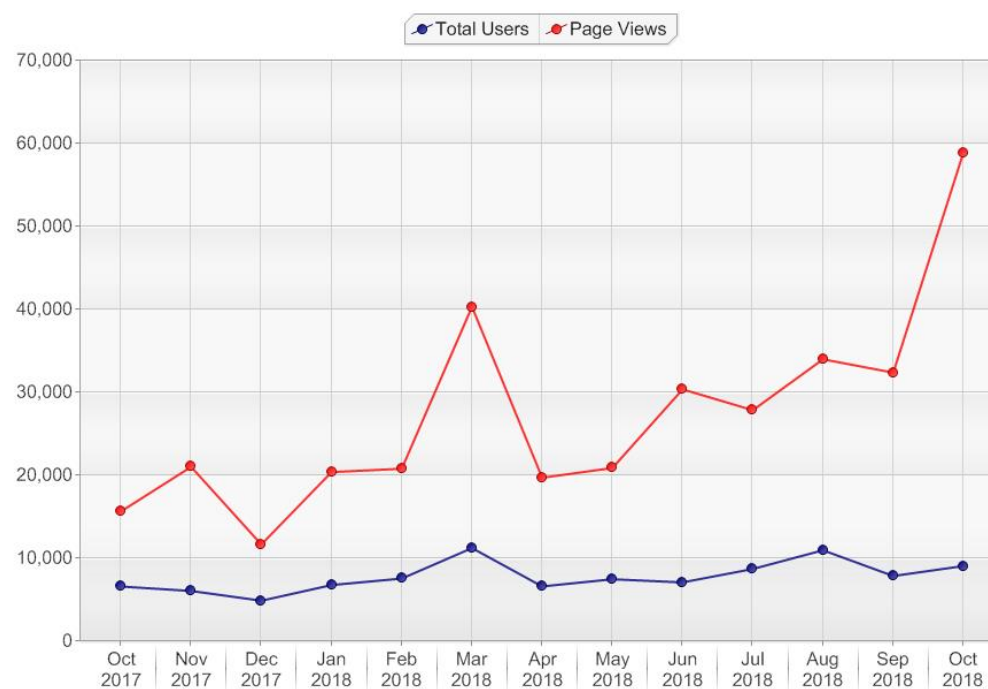
3 Digital Marketing

3.1 www.visitwestnorfolk.com

A marketing campaign to attract new and additional use of the website took place over the pre-Easter holidays period of 2018. Since the departure of Tim Humphreys in August 2017, the Tourism Officer has needed to focus his attention to the printed publications that are always designed from September-February each financial year. It is acknowledged that, once the "Holiday Guide" and "Where to Go..." publications are fully through the proofing stage (January 2019), the tourism officer would then go back to focussing a lot more on the department's online platforms once again.

For the past 12 months there has been 353,350 page views specifically of our dynamic Venues/Accommodation/Event entries and a further 262,348 views of static text-based pages throughout each section of our website too. This makes the total page views of our Visit West Norfolk website as being **615,698 page views** for the past 12 months (in comparison to the 543,057 page views for the previous 12 months – an increase of 72,641 page views for this past year).

Growth in Page Views & Users of Visit West Norfolk *Dynamic Pages only* [over 12 months]



In contrast, the page views of *static pages only* have remained almost the same for 2018 when compared to 2017. This shift in site usage reflects the global internet trend for dynamic content being more of a focus of people's visits.

3.2 West Norfolk mobile phone app

3.2.1 The Visit West Norfolk app (which provides a mobile responsive directory guide to Things to do; Events; Places to eat and local food producers; Shopping; Places to stay, and Local Services throughout West Norfolk) continues to see improvement to its coding by the app designers from New Vision over the course of 2018 (via periodical updates in the two main app stores). The app is now more stable and efficient, and more compatible with the latest updated operating systems.

A marketing campaign to attract new users of the Visit West Norfolk app took place over the pre-Easter holidays period of 2018. This dual app/website promotional campaign was conducted over the Facebook and Instagram platforms as well as on-air adverts all by the KLFM digital marketing team. The geographical scope of the digital campaign reached as far as Lincolnshire and Bedford, the aim to increase staycation and daytrip users of the app especially, as well as visits to the website. The digital campaign subsequently attracted a further 420 Apple device users and an additional 260 Android device users to the existing total of users for the visitor app.

3.2.2 The list of available retail 'Offers' on the app is to be populated ahead of the Christmas sales and the usual seasonal food offers, once the production of the Holiday Guide is near completion (at the start of December 2018).

3.2.3. Users have downloaded the app a total of 4,248 times across both platforms from the start of the app launch up until the end of October 2018 (900 new app users over the past 12 months).

3.3 Events

In the full calendar year of 2017 1,800+ events were promoted on the Visit West Norfolk website with around 44,208 views of individual events. Up until November 19th 2018, this year has seen 1,900+ events promoted as entries on the website/app, with 62,104 views of individual events already (up until the end of October 2018), so there will have been at least a 37% increase in event listing views by the end of this calendar year, continuing the upward trend of the previous year.

Of this notable increase there were three times as many people accessing our events listings in March 2018 and a third more accessing our events listings in October 2018 compared to the same months from the previous year. These two major boosts in events views can also be reflected in the same boost periods for our dynamic page views in general too, as identified in the graph on page 2 of this report. We can assume, in part, that the pre-Easter promotional digital campaign for the website and app was responsible for the March 2018 boost in dynamic page views ('dynamic' here referring to page content that changes due to time/data specific content that is also searchable by visitor-chosen criteria). We can also assume that the boost can also be partly explained by the fact that, for the past 12 months (and for the first year ever), we have made a deliberate effort to illustrate each and every event entry on our site listings - with at least one photograph each - to help increase the 'page visitor' appeal for these listings.

It is fantastic to once again see an increase of Christmas-oriented events being uploaded to the listings this year (the Event entries inputting is mostly overseen by part-time Tourism Department support officer Bob Price, who currently works in the department

three days a week (up until April 2019) as well-needed part-time support for the department in Tim Humphrey's absence.

As always though, we need to encourage more tourism businesses to use the event database not only to promote their own events, but also for business to use it as a resource to promote upcoming events in their locality, which may be of interest to their customers.

4 Planned Activity

- 4.1 The 2-year action plan linked to the Destination Management Plan was updated and rolled forward as a 2017 and 2018 plan through consultations with the West Norfolk Tourism Forum. The Destination Management Plan is now half-way through its implementation and the action plan for 2019-20 will take direct note of the DMP focus and aims for the remainder of its existence. The Borough Council is continually represented on the West Norfolk Tourism Forum and will seek regular advice and feedback from the forum for the creation of a future Destination Management Plan once entering into the final year of the current plan.
- 4.2 A key action highlighted in addition to all the ongoing Tourism work is the development of two themed trails, focussed on encouraging visitors to explore more to the rural areas of West Norfolk and particularly featuring the area's heritage and natural environment product. Web and mobile App technology is to be used to link a series of themed locations and sites, accompanied by information on local businesses and services encouraging people to follow a suggested trail or create their own trails whilst also using local services and facilities.

This project, "Explore West Norfolk", had received funding from the LEADER Programme at the start of 2018 and the associated 18-month fixed-term Project Officer post to help manage the project began in March 2018, the officer's name being Undina Reinfelde. The project is hoped to complement the eventual opening of the planned extension of the Coastal Path link between King's Lynn and Hunstanton.

5 Other Developments

5.1 Local Tourism Industry

The annual Economic Impact of Tourism Report that we commission for the West Norfolk area shows increase in business from both day trips and overnight stays in the area:

Economic Impact of Tourism – Year on year comparisons

| Day Trips | 2016 | 2017 | Annual variation |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Day trips Volume | 8,381,000 | 8,868,000 | 5.8% |
| Day trips Value | £282,576,000 | £290,803,000 | 2.9% |
| Overnight trips | | | |
| Number of trip | 491,000 | 527,200 | 7.4% |
| Number of nights | 1,978,000 | 2,125,000 | 7.4% |
| Trip value | £114,467,000 | £117,603,000 | 2.7% |
| Total Value | £529,116,250 | £544,617,250 | 2.9% |
| Actual Jobs | 10,330 | 10,632 | 2.9% |

5.2 Partnerships

West Norfolk Tourism continues to work closely with Visit Norfolk and Visit East Anglia to promote the county and wider area in a variety of joint campaigns led by those two destination management organisations, including seasonal promotions such as the #FallForNorfolk campaign, a set of online Spring-launched films, and contributions to a series of short promotional films shot this across Norfolk by Geocast throughout the rest of the year, etc.

Author of report;

Ostap Paparega, Regeneration, Heritage & Economic Development Manager, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Tel: 01553 616890, email – ostap.paparega@west-norfolk.gov.uk

Phil Eke, Tourism Support Officer, Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Tel: 01553 616639, email – phillip.eke@west-norfolk.gov.uk