

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	18.01.2021	7

Update for O&S on Tourism and Visitor Services

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To provide an update for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the tourism and visitor services and to provide details of tourism activity in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Background

- 2.1** Tourism and Visitor Services incorporates the Visit Garstang Centre, Marsh Mill, Visit Fleetwood Centre and Discover Wyre marketing, promotion and development. The main responsibility for tourism and visitor services lies with the Tourism Development Officer. Operationally this role reports to the Commercial Manager, with strategic responsibility for tourism falling under the Corporate Director Communities.
- 2.2** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. Nationally, this year, the sector is expecting a £73 billion drop in revenue and business are expecting a very slow recovery over the next year. In addition it is not yet known what impact the UK's visitor economy will face after leaving the EU.

3. Tourism and Visitor Services Key Activity

3.1 Tourism and Visitor Services

The tourism offer for Wyre is predominately delivered through the Discover Wyre brand and its purpose is to support the visitor economy for Wyre. It comprises a physical presence at the Visit Garstang Centre, the Visit Fleetwood Centre and Marsh Mill. Financial information for the service is available at section 4.

In 2019, 10,000 Discover Wyre Guides were produced (this is our main tourism guide), of which 6,000 were distributed locally, regionally and nationally to attract day and staying visitors. A downloadable version of the guide was also produced and promoted. In an effort to offset costs the Discover Wyre Guide was self-financing in 2019. A private sector company designed and produced the guide on behalf of the Council. They were tasked with generating advertising revenue for the guide. £3,000 advertising revenue was generated which offset the printing costs.

In the light of the pandemic a Discover Wyre Guide was not produced and there was no associated marketing. Visitors were directed to social media @DiscoverWyre and www.discoverwyre.co.uk for future holiday planning.

The Visit Garstang Centre welcomed 22,000 visitors in 2019. It has a retail section selling local arts and crafts, and is around 80% 'sale or return' items. This means that the Council does not have to invest money in stock for re-sale mitigating the risk of being left with surplus stock.

In 2019 there were 6 open days at the Visit Garstang Centre (TIC) to showcase and sell local arts and crafts and promote Wyre's Outdoor Programme. Visit Garstang works closely with the coast and countryside team to promote and sell guided walks and events.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the centre was closed from 22 March until the end of lockdown 1.0 in June. During this time the centre was used as a community support hub. During lockdown 2.0 the Visit Garstang Centre was closed in November but operated a 'phone and collect' service. The staff continued to operate the community support hub.

3.2 Collaboration with Partnership Organisations

Wyre pays to be a member of Marketing Lancashire, the tourism division is Visit Lancashire, this partnership approach enables Wyre to :

- Collaborate on thematic campaigns (mainly digital campaigns) to attract national visitors. For example: Food and Drink, Countryside, Coastal, Summer Events, Weddings or key attractions etc.
- Inclusion of Wyre in the Lancashire tourism website- www.visitlancashire.com. This website also links to www.discoverwyre.co.uk. In 2019 there were over 556,000 Wyre page views on www.visitlancashire.com, Feature pages include 'things to do' and 'explore'.

Wyre, is also promoted via Visit Lancashire social media. With a twitter reach of over approximately 125,000,000. Facebook reach of just under 19,000 and 382 Instagram engagements.

In 2019 Marketing Lancashire produced 3 themed visitor guides (Wyre was featured in all 3). Released in January (Culture and Heritage), March (Coast and Countryside and August (Short Breaks). Each issue had a twelve month lifespan. 150,000 copies in total were produced as well as a downloadable (online) option.

Marketing Lancashire is currently writing a recovery strategy to 'bring visitors back to Lancashire safely' and this strategy will include Wyre. There will be six strategic priorities that will include: collaboration, lobbying Central Government for industry support, 'Redefine Lancashire' marketing campaign, marketing a promotion of Lancashire as a 'must visit destination', digital investment, Lancashire 2025 bid. Marketing Lancashire are finalising details which will be shared with districts in due course.

Wyre works in partnership with Fylde Coast Partners (Blackpool, and Fylde) Bowland and Morecambe Bay to promote Wyre. Collaborative projects include:

- Visit Blackpool Guide 2019, Wyre advertorial – 45,000 printed guides distributed nationally. Online - 250,000 digital impression and 4,500 reads.
- Morecambe Bay Guide 2019, Wyre advertorial – distribution of Guides and digital promotion
- Discover Bowland Guide – events programme
- Fylde Coast wide - Filming Opportunities
- Cross promotion and tourism and travel shows to the public and trade (locally, regionally and nationally) such as the Great Yorkshire Show and British Travel Trade Show to attract the Groups market in 2019 there were just under 3,000 attendees and 250 exhibitors. This activity did not take place in light of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

3.3 Tourism Marketing and Promotion

Our tourism website is www.discoverwyre.co.uk which is managed by the Tourist Development Officer. In 2019 www.discoverwyre.co.uk had over 50,000 new users (unique visitors).

Promotional Campaigns included:

Things to see and do, where to stay, seasonal thematic activity ie) 'Easter Fun', 'Summer Treats' etc. 'historic wyre', 'weddings', 'sporty wyre', 'on the water', 'Wyre in Bloom' etc

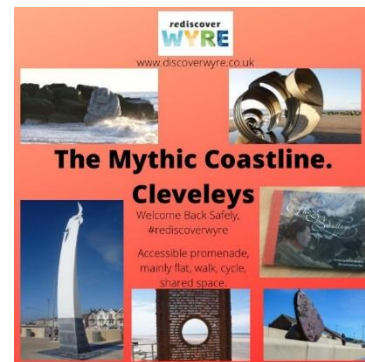
Key Photography (where possible using local photographers)

A range of downloadable visitor guides and walking routes

'Whats On' events section

Wyre is active on social media - DiscoverWyre on Facebook, twitter and Instagram. Visit Garstang Centre and Marsh Mill are active on Facebook.

Since COVID-19, social media has been the most effective way to communicate with our audience. Due to government restrictions in lockdown 1.0 there was no promotional activity to encourage staying visitors, however Discover Wyre created 'spotlight' graphic panels for social media to keep active outdoors (health and wellbeing). See two examples below:



After lockdown 1.0 ended the message was 'stay local and stay safe'. Promotional panels to 'spotlight' local businesses and were produced to encourage visitors back, safely. See examples below (please note: all the main towns and villages of Wyre were 'spotlighted', as well as the main visitor attractions of Wyre, the examples below are a selection)



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WYRE
www.discoverwyre.co.uk

Lancaster Canal Cruises

The Jungle Queen Bilbsborrow, nr. Garstang



It's great to welcome you back, safely.

Social distancing guidelines observed
Face masks/coverings to be worn on board
Bar Open (Table service only)
To book - 01995 640833 or info@lccruises.co.uk

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WYRE
www.discoverwyre.co.uk

Fleetwood Market




It's great to welcome you back, safely.

Discover an array of interesting stalls selling household goods, gifts and accessories and local produce plus much more.
Enjoy a bite to eat and drink at one of the on-site cafes.
Open Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday - 9am to 4.30pm.
SAT NAV: FY7 6AB
Coach Parties Welcome. Coach Parking is Free.
Face masks/coverings must be worn



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WYRE
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Fleetwood Museum

Keeping Fleetwood's History Alive.




New exhibition for 2020!
It's great to welcome you back, safely.
No Pre-booking required
Admission: Ad: £3, Conc: £2
Visitor groups no larger than 5 people.
Face masks/coverings to be worn in designated areas
Free visits in 2020 for Fleetwood households. T&Cs apply, see
www.fleetwoodmuseum.co.uk before you visit.
SAT NAV: FY7 6BT

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Garstang

WELCOME BACK - SAFELY



**BARS, CAFES,
RESTAURANTS, PUBS,
TEAROOMS.
NOW OPEN!**

PLEASE NOTE: ADVANCED BOOKING FOR A TABLE MAYBE REQUIRED.

This social media campaign worked in synergy with a section added to www.discoverwyre.co.uk to promote local, online businesses and to use a 'phone/click and collect services'. The campaign was called: '10 ways to support local businesses in Wyre'.

As well as providing a key online presence Discover Wyre provided a supportive, 'human' presence offering bespoke advice for businesses where needed.

There continues to be ongoing communication with Wyre's tourism and hospitality businesses to promote, training, grant funding, industry news etc. by email, virtually or telephone.

Discover Wyre promoted key local services and community events, when it was appropriate to do so (after lockdown 1.0).

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WYRE
www.discoverwyre.co.uk

Fleetwood to Knott End Ferry Service




So pleased to welcome you back, safely.

Mask must be worn at all times.
Correct change required
Ad/Ch: £2. Babies: £1
Bikes: 50p. Dogs: 50p
Ferry times are based on the tides
www.facebook.com/fleetwoodtoknottendferry
SAT NAV: FY7 6BT

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WYRE
www.discoverwyre.co.uk

Heritage Open Days at Marine Hall, Fleetwood

11 To 20 September open 10am to 4pm.
Tours will not be given, but visitors can see and photograph the dome interior and ballroom.

#rediscoverwyre, welcome back safely




Face masks/coverings must be worn
Due to government guidelines only 6 visitors can enter Marine Hall at any one time.
Please maintain social distancing

Discover Wyre was also part of the Marine Hall 'Virtual Fylde Coast Food and Drink Festival' in August 2020, a 10 minute image led film was produced to promote Wyre, its businesses and things to see and do.

3.4 Marsh Mill Windmill

In 2019 Marsh Mill opened from Easter until November, which included 6 special event days in which the sails turned, and welcomed approximately 4,000 visitors. A dedicated group of volunteers and a member of staff ensure the Mill offers tours to the public.

In light of COVID-19 Marsh Mill could not open in 2020. However to ensure our audience still had the best visitor experience possible a virtual Marsh Mill 10 minute tour was produced, the tour was delivered by a volunteer and posted on social media. This has been active all year and was especially popular during Heritage Open Days 2020.



4. Financial Information

4.1 Below is a summary of the financial information for the tourism budget cost centres.

Cost Centre	20/21 Actual as at 05.01.21	20/21 Updated Budget	19/20 Actual	18/19 Actual
Marsh Mill	12,779	63,240	71,809	32,468
Tourism Policy Marketing & Development	4,815	116,550	98,500	40,300
Fleetwood TIC	1,980	30,940	22,843	5,775
Garstang TIC	39,153	86,720	68,483	55,457

You will note that there has been very little spend on tourism related activity during 20/21 due to the pandemic. Also on the tourism policy marketing and development line, there has been an increase in budget for 2020/21 to £116,550. The table below shows the breakdown between direct costs and recharges. Recharges makes up a significant element of this cost centre.

Tourism Policy Marketing & Development	20/21 Updated Budget	19/20 Revised Budget	18/19 Revised Budget
Direct Costs	35,320	23,290	34,220
Recharges	81,230	75,210	50,750
Total	116,550	98,500	84,970

When we compare our tourism spend with our nearest neighbour family group, the spend is £2.52 per head of population which is the 4th highest. Please note that Marsh Mill is not included in this.

