



## **The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism Sustainability and Climate Action Plan**

### **1. Introduction**

The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism is committed to driving and supporting the development of sustainable and regenerative tourism development, especially following the pandemic which saw increased visitation to the destination due to the staycation boom when UK residents couldn't travel overseas as easily. Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism recognises that tourism can be one of the world's major contributors to climate change and understand that the organisation needs to make changes in the way it works to tackle this.

The purpose of this action plan is to support and accelerate climate action within the tourism sector and for the destination to be doing its bit, ensuring we make progress towards net zero at the pace and scale required. This plan complements the action plans of the Cotswolds Plus Local Visitor Economy Partnership, the Sustainable Travel Action Plan and Sustainability Action Plan.

The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism adopts the United Nations' definition of sustainability as being "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The practices that we embed today should work toward preserving the landscape today for visitors and residents alike to enjoy tomorrow. We hope that by making these changes now we can reduce the tensions between residents and visitors that we are currently experiencing on social media and in the years to come.

Timeframe: The plan covers an initial period of three years (2023-2026). This climate action plan is focused on delivering in Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism's key areas of influence to allow actions to be delivered on time. We acknowledge that there is always more to do but this action plan is designed to identify areas where we need to make a change and look at the timescales for delivery. To deliver this climate action plan we will work with our partner businesses, stakeholders and visitors to influence and drive change.

### **Objectives**

To recognise the important role the DMO has in informing and supporting our visitors and businesses to behave in a way that supports the ecosystem of the destination.

To look at our own practices and start to make changes that lead to a more sustainable business.

To adopt a nature first approach to our marketing and communications. That weaves an appreciation of the natural landscape and wildlife throughout our narrative about the destination.

To consider the community in all our activity, how we can improve the lives of our residents by educating our visitors and reducing traffic in and around the destination.

## **2. Current Activity**

Here are the ways we are currently delivering sustainability for the destination:

- Act to assist in nature and wildlife friendly activities, so that we play our part in making The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley a better place for nature, as well as an amazing region to live and visit responsibly.
- Supporting our partners through training and advice encouraging them to operate as sustainably as possible
- Working with the Wye Valley AONB to deliver messaging around the water quality of River Wye and how the river can be used in a sustainable way
- Promoting active travel and sustainable travel options first and foremost for getting to and around the destination
- Work with our public transport providers to give up-to-date advice on travel to inform our visitors about the option to travel on public transport
- To support the Forest of Dean District Council's commitment to net 0 by 2030 [Climate Action - Forest of Dean District Council](#)
- We no longer create printed visitor guides, leaflets, or business cards favouring a digital-first approach to all our marketing to reduce the use of paper. We also do not print our minutes or business documents unless they require a hard copy signature.
- Ensuring we do not promote the honeytraps of the destination during busy times to reduce the amount of queueing for parking and cars idling.
- We, wherever possible promote images of food that shows local produce and promote initiatives like Veganuary to reduce the amount of meat being consumed.
- We promote to slow tourists and encourage overnight stays instead of day trips into the destination improving the economic contribution of the visitor per mile.
- Consider how our staff and board travel to meetings and offer online/hybrid options to minimise car travel around the destination.

### 3. Action Plan

We have divided the action plan into three categories, changing visitor behaviour including educating visitors about the destination and how to help look after nature; supporting our partners to adopt more sustainable practices and finally organisational change, ensuring Visit Dean Wye make changes and lead the way in sustainable tourism.

#### 1. Visitor Behaviour

Activity	Expected Outcome	Responsible	priority (1 low 5 to key)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	Scheduled Completion Date	Completion Date
Help our visitors make informed decisions about where they stay and the activities, they undertake in the destination by providing sustainability information about our partner businesses.	Promotion includes information about sustainable practices of our partners. Website traffic to sustainable partners increases.	RC	4	Staff time	Ignyte/SimpleView	31 August 2023	31 March 2024	

Work with the AONB and Forestry England to promote citizen science projects that visitors can get involved in whilst in the destination.	Both organisation report and uptake in project volunteers for citizen science project.	RC	2	Staff time	FE and Wye Valley AONB	1 July 2023	31 October 2023 (to be repeated every summer)	
Work with Forestry England and AONB to create a code of conduct for visitors whilst they are in the destination to protect the natural landscape.	Reduction in tensions between residents and visitors on social media.  Less use and creation of unauthorised trails.	RC	5	Staff time	FE and Wye Valley AONB	15 July 2023	31 July (needs to be reviewed every year)	
Produce clear and consistent marketing to our audiences that encourages them to make low carbon choices and adopt responsible behaviour in the destination.	1 social media post a week dedicated to sustainability and visitor behaviour a week.	RC	4	Staff time	Navigate	1 July 2023	Ongoing	

<p>Reduce the impact of transport in the destination.</p> <p>Focus on promoting a shift towards more environmentally friendly forms of transport (train, coach/bus, ferry, cycle, foot) both to and within the destination, aiming to reduce carbon emissions, air pollution, and congestion. Work with transport providers to display up-to-date information on how to travel on public transport to and around the destination.</p>	<p>Increases in passenger data from Stagecoach, GWR, Cross Country and Arriva Trains.</p> <p>Traffic data from Highways England shows reduced car numbers into the destination.</p> <p>Parking figures across FE and Town Council sites reduce.</p>	<p>RC and Sustainability Sub-Group</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>GWR, Cross Country and Stagecoach</p>	<p>1 July 2023</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Encourage active travel walking, cycling as well as lesser-known ideas such as seeing the destination using paddleboarding and canoeing.</p>	<p>Traffic data from Highways England shows reduced car numbers into the destination.</p>	<p>RC</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Staff Time and budget for campaign to be sourced through grant</p>	<p>River Wye providers. Navigate</p>	<p>1 July 2023</p>	<p>30 September 2023 (repeated content each year)</p>	

	Canoe and Paddleboard providers show increases in hires.			funding/ sponsor ship				
Share with visitors the locations of EV charging points on the website to encourage use and purchases of electric vehicles.	Increased use of EV chargers reported from our partners who have these facilities.	RC	3	Staff Time	SimpleView.	1 July 2023	31 July 2023	

## 2. Partner Support

Activity	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 low 5 to key)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	Scheduled Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
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Develop and implement a sustainability tourism education programme for partners with the Cotswolds Plus LVEP.	Partners report higher levels of support in partner satisfaction survey.	RC and Cotswolds Plus	5	£5,000 Grant Funded	Green Tourism	1 September 2023	31 March 2024	
Incentivise our partners to reduce waste through a commitment to reduce single-use plastics. Incentives to include enhanced promotion and superior website presence.	10 partners eligible for enhanced promotion through their sustainability achievements	RC and Cotswolds Plus	2	Staff time and training costs see above.  £2000 for web-capability	Simple View and Green Tourism	1 September	31 March 2024	
Share best practice with partners on how to encourage public transport to their location.	10 partners change their getting here pages on their websites to put sustainable travel options first.  10 partners promote how to arrive use public transport	RC	3	Staff time		1 July 2023	31 December 2023	

	through their social media (Float in the Forest already doing this)							
Share training and advice for our larger businesses on how to have a productive workforce where hybrid working is the norm.	10 partners attend training course in hybrid working.	RC and Cotswolds Plus LVEP	2	Staff time	Requires external provider	1 October 2023`	1 June 2024	
Signpost businesses to take part in national campaigns such as Green Week (June) and the Sustrans Workplace Journey Challenge where staff journeys are recorded, either walking, cycling, e-cycling, running, or travelling by bus, car-sharing, train, subway, ferry and tram instead of journeys that would normally have been taken by a higher emission mode of transport.	10 partners' employees commit to Sustrans Challenge	RC	3	Staff time		1 January 2024	31 December 2024	
Signpost volunteering opportunities such as litter picking, trail maintenance, and clearing invasive species.	Partners help promote community initiatives to their customers through social media and newsletters	RC	1	Staff time		1 October 2023	Ongoing	



Support our businesses to reduce food waste by partnering with schemes such as Community Kitchens, Community Fridges, and Too Good to Go.	3 partners donating food to community schemes in 2023	RC	3	Staff time	Need to identify schemes	1 October 2023	31 March 2024	

### 3. Organisation Change

Activity	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 low 5 to key)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	Scheduled Completion Date	Actual Completion Date
Identify opportunities to apply for funding for grants that can accelerate our action plan. Share with partners to support their net0 ambitions.	VDW receives £10,000+ in grant funding for delivery of the sustainable action plan.	RC	4	Staff time	FODD C Wye Valley AONB	1 June 2023	Ongoing (to be reviewed by Sustainability Action Group)	
Write into all our future procurement a requirement for businesses to show their sustainability credentials and consider risk when appointing.	All contracts awarded over £5,000 have a sustainability	RC	5	Staff time	X	1 June 2023	Ongoing	

	question in the scoring.							
Set up a new sustainability subgroup to monitor and evaluate the progress of this action plan.	New sustainability subgroup which meets 4 time a year following board meetings	RC	5	Staff time	X	1 July 2023	22 November 2023	
Apply for BCorp status to gain acknowledgement of our ethical practices as a business.	Some kind of official recognition for the good practices we have adopted acknowledged .	RC and Sustainability Action Group	3	Staff time	X	1 December 2023	31 December 2024	
Consider the make-up of the board and what gaps we have in our skills and experience and how we can recruit new board members to help us deliver our sustainability goals.	New board members recruited at next AGM.  Training for Board Members in	RC	4	Staff time and Board time	X	1 June 2023	31 March 2024	

