



## Welcome to the Exmoor Tourism e-newsletter

Keeping businesses informed of what is happening in tourism around Exmoor and the Quantocks.

Please forward this email to business friends

Interesting? Share this email on social networks

## Newsletter Content

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## Involve yourself with Exmoor's marketing

As Exmoor Tourism continues its work to bring more visitors to Exmoor, the Committee develops and evolves. Our AGM is planned for 2 March 2016 and in advance we want to remind tourism-related businesses that we need to recruit a new Chairman and an Honorary Treasurer.



There is also potential for new Committee members to be co-opted on to the group to join us in steering the vital work of Exmoor Tourism. If you would like to know more about what this might entail, go to [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/whos-who](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/whos-who) and follow the links to the relevant PDF's.

## Join a sub-group

You may not want to commit to the Executive Committee but we are always interested in co-opting people with talents on to our less formal specialist working groups.

We would currently love to hear from anyone who would be happy to share their ideas and could spare some time to join our 'hands on' Marketing Group. Likewise the Membership Group is devoted to developing members' benefits and ways of widening Exmoor Tourism's membership. You may be involved in accommodation, attractions, retail, hospitality or outdoor activities, we need your expertise in our team!

## Exmoor Tourism helping your business flourish

A new Trade website [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/exmoor-tourism](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/exmoor-tourism) has recently been launched to help tourism-related businesses get all the information they need to improve their marketing.

This includes free tools and information sheets, useful links, photo libraries and branding. You can find out more about our Strategic Action Plan and who are on the committees. The site is updated with new information as it becomes available.

Discover the benefits of being part of Exmoor Tourism and how that helps us promote the area.

To join Exmoor Tourism and play your part in promoting Exmoor please visit [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/join](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/join).



## The Visit-Exmoor website and what it does for your business

The new Visit Exmoor website [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk) is the main website for promoting Exmoor and the Quantocks as a prime destination for a peaceful or active holiday. It is packed full of information on things to do, experiences and ideas for visiting the area. It incorporates the Active Exmoor website with information on a wonderful range of activities to enjoy. It works on all platforms, changing layout to suit the size of the screen it is being viewed on.

### Website stats

In August/September compared with the same period last year, Sessions are up 120%, User Numbers are up 97.5%, Page Views up 93%, Session duration is up 3.5% and the Bounce Rate is down by nearly 3%. Returning Visitors has gone from just under 17% to just over 25%, so the site is clearly 'stickier'. Over a longer period the figures are still impressive, being over 100% up on the previous year.

The page views have nearly doubled since March with a peak in August at 54,400, with about 16,000 unique visitors that month. So the site is getting over 500 visitors each day, looking at 3.5 pages on average per visit and are looking for things to do, activities and accommodation.

### Advertising on the site

The website has a modern section for advertising tourism-related businesses. Businesses are listed with Gold adverts given priority. The listings are next to a zoomable Google map with pins for each advert. The list can also be filtered, to reduce the list down to those businesses that fit the needs of the visitor. This works by using 'tags' which are selected when the advert is created.

The listing can then be clicked on to see the full details. These include a large picture (up to 10 for a Gold advert), informative text, location with a map, contact details, prices, all the tags and a link to the providers website. It can also include a Book Now button if the provider has their own online booking system. For more information see the Rate Card. You can now pay ET easily online through Paypal as well as by cheque and BACS.

### Visit Exmoor website stats

Sessions are up 120%

User Numbers up 97.5%

Page Views up 93%

Page Views peak in August @ 54,400

16,000 unique visitors per month

500 visitors per day

3.5 pages per visit

Returning Visitors has gone from 17% to 25%

Session duration is up 3.5%

Bounce Rate is down by 3%

## Online booking calendar

A new feature just added is the ability to add your online calendar to your advert. This means the visitor can view your availability within your advert. See Woodcombe Lodges advert as an example of this. To get this feature you need to go to your online booking system and get the 'widget' code for your online calendar to insert on another website. You may need to ask the Helpline to help you find this code. Once you have it, copy and paste it into an email to the Visit Exmoor website manager at [webmaster@exmoor.com](mailto:webmaster@exmoor.com). It will then get added to your advert, free of charge.

## Special Offers and Late Availability

The new Visit Exmoor website includes a section that displays Special Offers and Late Availability. This section also repeats these promotions on the home page, giving extra exposure. Use this section to sell your rooms by sending details to the website manager. It will be included in your advert already showing on the site. This is a free service to Gold advertisers and a small charge for other advertisers.

## Pay-per-booking sites

These sites have recently become much more popular with accommodation providers, as they provide guests at a known marketing cost. On average they cost about 20% (inc VAT) of the total booking cost. As your marketing costs should be around 4-8% of your turnover, this means that ideally you should be aiming for no more than 25% of your total bookings through these sites. This leaves a margin for other marketing such as your website updates, your online booking system (8%), brochures and other marketing activity.

These types of sites do not have the capacity to promote areas, they could not as they cover the whole world. They occasionally have some basic information, at best. So there is a need and place for destination websites such as the Visit Exmoor website.

This is now the main reason people are visiting our destination website at up to 500 per day, or 16,000 per month.

## Supporting your destination website

The Visit Exmoor website has always relied on advertising revenue to create, build and manage the website. The income also helps support the wider work of ET including PR and marketing work reaching millions each year. But we are seeing a trend towards reliance on the pay-per-booking and online booking sites over advertising on the destination website. If this trend was to continue, then there would not be enough income to support the destination website without outside sponsorship and support.

Without marketing Exmoor and the Quantocks, made possible through the income from the website which is sometimes matched by other funding, then tourism in this area could really suffer. For a potential visitor to use a pay-per-booking site, they need to have an idea of where they are thinking of visiting, as that is how these site filters work. This, of course, also applies to your own business website, where people need to be thinking of Exmoor to search for 'Exmoor accommodation'.

So please consider this when renewal of your Visit Exmoor website advert comes due. If people do not think of coming to Exmoor, because they have not seen its website or marketing, then they will not use the pay-per-booking site to search for Exmoor accommodation, and ultimately, they will not visit us.

If you have some good ideas on how to tackle this problem, then please join one of the committees and have your say. For more information go to [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/whos-who](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/whos-who)



lastminute.com



Booking.com



## Festivals supported by Exmoor Tourism

### The North Devon and Exmoor Walking Festival

The walking festival [www.exmoorwalkingfestival.co.uk](http://www.exmoorwalkingfestival.co.uk) has been running since 2000, and in that time has provided 4,590 individual participants with 790 guided walks across North Devon, Exmoor and the Quantocks.



This festival helps promote some of the best walking with an introduction to the excellent footpaths and scenery in this area. It gives them the confidence to come back and walk unguided. About half those walkers are looking for accommodation and food during their stay.

Next year's festival is being planned for Saturday 30th April to Sunday 8th May 2016. Use the festival to attract walkers to your establishment.

If you know of any guides who would be able to guide for the walking festival, then please let Bryan know, [bryan@combewalks.com](mailto:bryan@combewalks.com).

### The Coast Festival

The Coast Festival started in 2014, run initially by the Lynmouth Pavilion Project. Then Exmoor Tourism took it on for 2015. There were 38 events relating loosely to our coastline. They included leisurely activities, to things for families to do together, to heart-pumping activities on the coast and in the sea. Local volunteers organised the events which we then marketed under the umbrella of the Coast Festival. It took place over 9 days across the May Bank Holiday, coinciding with the school half-term.



Next year's festival is being organised to run from Saturday 28th May to Sunday 5th June 2016. If any organisation or community wants to be included in this festival, please send your event ideas to Bryan at [webmaster@exmoor.com](mailto:webmaster@exmoor.com).

Both events are promoted with leaflets, PR and promotion on the Visit Exmoor website.

## The Tourism Forum

Exmoor Tourism is hosting a new 6 monthly forum in order to engage as many stakeholders as possible in developing and promoting Exmoor's tourism offer. The first of these events is being held on the 5 November at Exmoor House, Dulverton at 10.30am.



Invites will be sent shortly to organisations such as local tourism associations, TIC's, neighbouring destinations and other stakeholders. The morning session will provide a key update on the work of ET since its formation in March. It will also provide an opportunity for others to feed in ideas and to share their own activity so we can collectively work together for the benefit of all.

## Training Opportunities

There are two courses coming up soon for those based in West Somerset / Sedgemoor:

### Welcome International Training Courses:

Customer Service & Cultural Awareness Training (for those working in hospitality / tourism businesses)

Training Course Dates:

- Monday 23 November 2015 – The Canalside, Bridgwater
- Tuesday 24 November 2015 – The Beach Hotel, Minehead
- Tuesday 23 February 2016 – The Princess Theatre, Burnham-on-Sea



- Wednesday 24 February 2016 – The Sanctuary, Watchet

**Training Course charge is £10 + VAT per person** – this is a subsidised Event! (usual cost £95+VAT per person) Funding restrictions apply\*

‘Welcome International’ training is targeted at tourism / hospitality businesses, covering B&Bs, hotels, cafes, pubs, restaurants, and business which primarily serve the visitor market.

Welcome International helps participants to communicate successfully and provide an exceptional customer service experience to international visitors and UK residents from different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The course will cover:

- the international tourism industry
- how to communicate effectively
- how to greet visitors in their own language
- identify cultural expectations

For full course details please visit [www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk/trainingprogrammes/welcome-international.asp](http://www.welcometoexcellence.co.uk/trainingprogrammes/welcome-international.asp)

### Booking:

To book please contact West Somerset Council Customer Services department on 01643 703704 or email [customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk).

## Rural Tourism Business Toolkit Training (COOL):

Training Course Dates:

- Monday 16 November 2015 – The Canalside, Bridgwater
- Tuesday 17 November 2015 – The Beach Hotel, Minehead
- Tuesday 9 February 2016 – The Princess Theatre, Burnham-on-Sea
- Wednesday 10 February 2016 – Exmoor National Park Authority, Dulverton

**Training Course charge is £10 + VAT per person** – this is a subsidised Event! Funding restrictions apply

The Rural Tourism Business Toolkit is a series of easy-to-follow guides to help new and existing tourism operators make the most of their offering and develop robust business processes.

It is designed to help you with business evaluation, market identification and effective communication and marketing, as well as inspire you to create great visitor experiences.

Although the modules are aimed at rural tourism businesses, non-rural operators will also find some relevant information on topics such as sustainability and marketing. For more information go to [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/rural-tourism-toolkit](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/trade/rural-tourism-toolkit)

### Booking:

To book please contact West Somerset Council Customer Services department on 01643 703704 or email [customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@westsomerset.gov.uk).



## Update on Washford Cross Road Works

EDF Energy is continuing to make good progress on the new roundabout at Washford Cross. Work to make the junction safer restarted on 7 September following a break for the summer holiday period.

There will be three way traffic lights throughout some of these works as well as closures on the B3190 over the weekend of 31st October and 1st November. As ever, all diversion routes will be fully sign-posted and disruption kept to an absolute minimum as work is progressed as quickly as possible.

Aggregate Industries are making the improvements on behalf of EDF Energy and remain confident the roundabout will be operational by early 2016.

If you would like further information, please contact the EDF Energy community relations team:

Email: [Hinkley-enquiries@edf-energy.com](mailto:Hinkley-enquiries@edf-energy.com)

Free phone: 0800 0969650



## Forthcoming Events

Here are some of the events showing on the Visit Exmoor website [www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/types/events/map](http://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/types/events/map) that should attract plenty of visitors to the area. Use them to attract off-season visitors. Click the links for more details.

28.10.15 - The Big Autumn Adventure

29.10.15 - Bampton Charter Fair

4-5.12.15 - Dunster by Candlelight

6.12.15 - Dulverton by Starlight

28-29.12.15 - West Somerset Railway Winter Steam Festival

31.01.16 - 1.03.16 - Snowdrop Valley



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