

# LEARNING JOURNEYS FOR OUTDOOR TOURISM BUSINESSES

One of the best ways to get ideas about how you can improve and develop what your business does, and how you can market it better is to find out what other businesses do.

This is the reason why the Outdoor Tourism Project has organised some very special opportunities to do exactly that. We have looked around the UK and Ireland to find places which have a great reputation for outdoor tourism and with businesses which are taking innovative and interesting approaches.

Each of the Learning Journeys we have planned will involve a trip to the destination, with like-minded businesses from the Project areas, to hear a series of presentations from selected businesses with a great story to tell. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and discussions to give you the opportunity to find out more.

Presentations will give insights into how businesses have developed their offer, the practicalities of running their business, how they market themselves, how they work together and how they work with their destination.

These learning journeys will be useful for all businesses offering experiences based on the outdoors, from start-ups to those who have been around a bit longer and want to review how they are doing and how they might grow or diversify.

## THE BENEFITS FOR BUSINESSES WILL BE:

- Inspiration and ideas!
- The opportunity to take some time out from the day-to-day demands to reflect on how you might grow your business
- Learning from other businesses who have faced the same challenges you do – and know how to do it not just talk about it
- Informal networking with businesses who are in the same sector you are – share the pleasures and frustrations as well as getting practical ideas and tips
- See how other places have got their businesses together to achieve a critical mass which is more than the sum of their parts
- We are planning two Learning Journeys this year, with two more to follow next Spring. Each has something unique to offer. Dates and locations of the 2013 learning journeys follow below. If you are interested in attending any of the Journeys, we would invite you to contact us to discuss.
- Each learning journey will involve travel the day before, an overnight stay (or two), a day of presentations with lots of time to ask questions, and an informal networking lunch. A draft itinerary is attached.

## CLOSING DATE FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IS: 15TH OCTOBER 2013

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## **TRIP 1: DINGLE & WEST CORK - OUTDOOR TOURISM, MYTHS AND LEGENDS. DATE: TUESDAY 5 AND WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2013**

Dingle & West Cork are the most successful destinations in Ireland because of outstanding scenery, history and heritage. Outdoor tourism has grown through a compelling combination of activities which involve exploring the landscape mediated by expert guides and story tellers. West Cork is also promoting itself on its outstanding food offer built on its local produce and environment.

This Learning Journey involves a day in Dingle and the following morning in West Cork.

Speakers include

- Ann Curran one of the leading lights of Dingle Adventure Group, a group of businesses working together to develop Dingle's outdoor tourism offer. Ann will also be taking the group out on one of the very special walks her company Hidden Ireland offers.
- Cian O'Driscoll, Play at Height (climbing, high ropes and zipwires)
- Jim Kennedy, Atlantic Sea Kayaking
- Anne Ferguson, Ocean Addicts (diving)
- Sally Barnes, Woodcock Smokery
- Stephen Sage, West Cork Foods

Our speakers have developed new experiences such as night-time kayaking, coastal foraging, visiting historical sites and story-telling, constantly reinventing their offer but always making sure it is authentic.

Also included are presentations from some highly original artisanal food producers, who work with activity providers to offer an alternative experience of outdoor tourism.

The learning from this journey will be around

- Developing new and innovative experiences which fit with what the destination is famous for
- Working together with similar and different types of businesses
- Taking imaginative new approaches to your offer to make it stand out in the marketplace.

## **TRIP 2: THE LAKE DISTRICT - ADVENTURE CAPITAL UK DATE: TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER**

The Lake District has long been famous for scenery, hill walking and climbing; the AdCap initiative capitalised on this to bring the place bang up to date for a new, younger market looking for something more exciting. The initiative brought businesses together to work under the new AdCap brand.

During this learning journey you will hear how AdCap was developed and delivered, how the businesses have expanded their offer to fit, and what they have done to make sure they have benefited from the investment which has taken place. You will also learn how outdoor themed festivals and events have grown to become an important element of AdCap.

A range of great speakers will include

- Andrea Runkee, AdCap Project Manager
- Sophie Cade, Eden Bike Sportive Events & Spoke Festival
- Graham Patton, Lakeland Trails (trail running and events)
- Neil Manning, Brockhole Visitor Centre Manager (outdoor activities)
- Nevil Jeffery & Paul Brown, Low Wood Bay Resort & Marina (watersports and Great North Swim & Chill event)

This trip will be of interest to businesses who want to

- Learn how to collaborate with others to extend what a destination can offer
- Invest in new outdoor activities and events
- Understand the nitty gritty of running and delivering successful events with all the challenges from health and safety issues to marketing
- Work with established centres and other organisations to provide outdoor activities for them



# OUTDOORS TOURISM LEARNING JOURNEYS

# LAKE DISTRICT ADVENTURE CAPITAL

## TUESDAY 3 DECEMBER

- 09.45 Arrive at Cumbria Tourism for Business Learning Presentations at Cumbria Tourism Staveley - coffee on arrival
- 10.00 Andrea Runkee, Adventure Capital UK Project Manager – overview of outdoor offer in Lakes and key business learnings
- 10.30 Jo Houghton, Marketing and Sales Manager Holidays (Lake District) or Jane Saxon, General Manager Holidays, National Trust – outline of new partnerships & approach for NT's outdoor activity
- 11.00 Graham Patton, Lakeland Trails/Rides – overview of successful Lakeland Trail running events and key event & business learnings
- 11.30 Sophie Cade - Eden Bike Sportive Events & Spoke Festival and key event & business learnings
- 12.30 Lunch @ Brockhole, Claife Room, Lake District Visitor Centre
- 13.00 Neil Manning, Visitor Centre Manager re outdoor activities and outsourced businesses including Predator Park, Open Water Swimming, Canoe hire, Bike Boat and Tree Top Treks - key business learnings
- 14.00 Paul Noble, Director of 3 outdoor businesses: Total Adventure (event support & outdoor activities), Windermere Canoe Kayak and Grizedale Bike Hire. Meet at Brockhole. Key business learnings
- 15.30 Nevil Jeffery Low Wood Bay Resort Hotel & Marina, General Manager and Paul Brown, Watersports Manager. Meet in Club Lounge in Hotel
- Nevil - Great North Swim & Chill Swim – key event learnings
- Paul - Watersports Centre, redeveloped offer after 10 mile/hr speed limit was introduced some years ago – key business learnings
- 16.45 Meal in the Club Lounge, Low Wood Hotel.
- 18.00 Return Journey



# OUTDOORS TOURISM LEARNING JOURNEYS

## DINGLE AND WEST CORK

MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER

Fly into Cork and drive to Dingle which should take around 2.5 hours.

Overnight in the Dingle area.

TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER

10.00 Arrive for morning of presentations

Presentations x 3

**Ann Curran – Hidden Ireland Tours**

**Jermey Owen - Jamie Knox Watersports**

**Cian O'Driscoll - Play at Height**

Questions and discussion

12.30 Lunch

13.30 Ann Curran will take you on a Hidden Ireland Walk

16.00 Drive to the West Cork Hotel in Skibbereen.

WEDNESDAY 6 NOVEMBER

09.00 Arrive at Venue

**Jim Kennedy – Atlantic Sea Kayaking**

**Sally Barnes – Woodcock Smokery/Stephen Sage – West Cork Foods**

**Jerome from Kinsale Harbour Cruises**

**Anne Ferguson, Ocean Addicts**

Questions

13.00 Lunch

13.30 Return Journey



# OUTDOORS TOURISM LEARNING JOURNEYS

# CONWY/GWYNEDD DIVERSITY IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

WEDNESDAY 13TH AND

WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY 27/28TH NOVEMBER

Outdoor Tourism is a key sector for the N Wales and increasingly the Irish economies. As a sector it has huge potential to provide positive life enhancing opportunities for people from all walks of life and for all abilities. Diversity is also good for business and this course will look at new business opportunities and the tools to exploit them.

Outdoor Tourism businesses have real current challenges, as the sector is going through a dynamic phase, with some segments, such as education-based centres in decline, as education-led provision, which had been a bedrock of the sector facing some real challenges from re-organisation and austerity.

The market for outdoor education is changing in other ways too, as it becomes more aligned to mainstream tourism drivers, and focuses on adrenaline-based activity “products”. This is therefore an important time for Outdoor Tourism providers to consider their market potential as well as their own wider goals.

Work done for the Outdoor Tourism project has shown that Outdoor Tourism providers can make a significant positive impact for their own businesses, as well as for their clients, by improving their appreciation of equality, diversity and inclusion within the sector.

The course will run in two modules, in November, with module 1 based at the Llandudno Junction Business Centre and module 2 will be at a residential centre. It will be an opportunity to understand the challenges faced by the sector as a whole, to look at your own provision and to undertake a practical assignment in focused on your own activities.

The course is fully funded by the Outdoor Tourism project and is being externally accredited; participants can also submit work done within the course for their own CPD credits.



The programme would be comprised of the following components:

- Why equality? Is thinking about equality and inclusion a burden or an opportunity?
- Introductory session to tee up the issues and introduce the approach to be followed;
- Elements that challenge the perception that practice is universally good – this will be a significant component of Day 1, as the experiences reported by minority groups were so different to those reported by providers and businesses, that there is clearly an issue of perception that needs to be broken down;
- What the sector is good at; opportunities we are missing, pitfalls we discovered, what people think of the sector from “outside”;
- Business benefits of focusing on inclusion – e.g., markets that are being missed;
- Market differentiation from an equality perspective – increasing your reach and relevance;
- Good practice case studies – from within the project area and beyond;
- Mutual challenge on current practice – interactive sessions on issues of current concern. If there is sufficient interest we can assist introduction of Action Learning methodologies around this issue and establishing Action Learning Sets.

