

BRITISH TOURISM WEEK 23-29 MARCH 2009

- Britain's fifth largest industry – worth £114 billion – 8.2% of the nation's economy –
- Supports 2.7 million jobs and over 200,000 SMEs – more jobs than construction or transport
- 2009, a defining moment: weak pound makes Britain more affordable than ever –
- 4.9 million Britons will consider taking a holiday at home instead of overseas –

9 March 2009

MPs ASKED TO GO 'BACK TO THE FLOOR' FOR BRITISH TOURISM WEEK

As Britain heads into another holiday season, MPs are being urged to gain a first-hand understanding of local tourism businesses and the issues they face, as part of the third British Tourism Week (23-29 March 2009).

Once again, they are being encouraged to 'go back to the floor' and visit attractions, accommodation providers or tourist information centres in their area for the British Tourism Week 'Constituency Day' on Friday 27 March.

Bernard Donoghue, head of government relations at VisitBritain and co-chairman of British Tourism Week's multi-sector steering committee, says: "I hope that MPs will take this chance to lead the way in demonstrating their commitment to Britain's fifth largest industry and visit a tourism business in their area during British Tourism Week. Their involvement will help highlight the appeals of heritage sites and historic buildings, of exploring our countryside and cinematic landscapes or taking a break in contemporary cities to consumers."

Last year many MPs – including the Government's Deputy Chief and Assistant Whips, the Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party and Shadow Ministers for Wales, for Justice, for Foreign Affairs, as well as the Liberal Democrat Whip, Shadow Secretary of State for Health, and Shadow Ministers for the Environment – visited their local tourist information centres, holiday parks and centres, farms, accommodation providers and attractions.

David Curtis-Brignell, co-chairman of British Tourism Week and past-Chairman of the Tourism Society, adds: "Tourism is an important provider of jobs in many local constituencies. We urge MPs to take some time to show their support for tourism in their area and the people who depend on the industry for their livelihoods."

With His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales as patron, British Tourism Week aims to galvanise organisations and individuals to take pride in being part of the nation's fifth biggest industry. Events aim to raise the profile of an £114 billion visitor economy and draw national awareness to its critical importance and the contribution it makes to local economies and millions of livelihoods.

With sufficient investment, the British tourism industry presents a real opportunity to grow to a £133 billion industry by 2018. However, although every £40,000 of inbound visitor spending would generate a new full-time job, 114,000 jobs could be at risk during the economic downturn.

2009 could be the defining moment as the country enjoys a new affordability and offers great value. Britain can take advantage of a weak pound meaning international visitors find their money goes further, while Britons consider holidaying at home as their favourite overseas destinations become more expensive. Success will mean increasing numbers of visitors; spending more in local economies and creating jobs.

Already around 120 events are listed on the website and organisers hope that every region and destination will organise something to showcase businesses or raise awareness of tourism experiences among consumers.

Visit www.britishtourismweek.com for more information on the week of events being organised around the country.

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For further information, please contact Elliott Frisby, Press and PR on 020 8563 3035 or 07951 996241

Notes to Editors

- British Tourism Week (23-29 March 2009) has been established to demonstrate the critical value of tourism to the economy of the United Kingdom. Through a week of events throughout the UK it will:
 - Increase awareness of the success and importance of the tourism industry
 - Raise quality standards
 - Promote training and professionalism
 - Improve competitiveness of the UK tourism industry
 - Support the preparations for hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- British Tourism Week culminates with the Best of Britain and Ireland trade and consumer event at London's Excel from 26-29 March. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk
- British Tourism Week is organised by VisitBritain and UKinbound with the support of the Tourism Alliance, Tourism Society, ABTA the Travel Association, VisitScotland, Visit Wales, Visit London and Britain's regional tourist boards.