

December 2010

WORCESTERSHIRE UK'S FIRST COUNTY TO GO PAPERLESS IN TOURISM CHASE

The thud of holiday brochures landing on door mats will be a little quieter this January, following a move by Worcestershire's tourism board, Destination Worcestershire, to go paperless in 2010.

Traditional brochures are being replaced with 'e-chures' as part of the county's strategy of sustainable tourism and minimising its carbon impact.

Destination Worcestershire, the county's tourist marketing partnership, decided 2010 would be the year when they stopped producing traditional guides to attractions and accommodation.

Worcestershire's marketing effort will focus on a range of internet-based channels including online advertising, email, Twitter and Facebook as well as its main website www.visitworcestershire.co.uk. Although web-only tourism firms are now commonplace in the private sector, Worcestershire is the first county in the UK to opt wholly for online tourism marketing.

Commenting on the decision, Head of Destination Worcestershire, Rod Nipper, said:

"The web makes us much quicker on our feet - the pace of change in tourism speeds up every year and we need to keep ahead. With printed brochures, we were stuck with fixed content for a year or more

as well as the storage and distribution problems these created - yet we were still only reaching a tiny proportion of the UK population. With electronic marketing, we can adapt to changes such as offers, prices, tastes, even the weather, in real time, and our audience stretches worldwide".

Despite the growth of the internet, the UK tourism industry is forecast to generate some 171 million brochures and other direct mail items in 2010. To produce this will take an estimated 540 tonnes of paper and 16 million litres of water. The cost of printing and posting brochures is measured in hard cash as well as environmental resources.

Destination Worcestershire's research showed that much of its old paper publications duplicated information already available in guidebooks and its members' own leaflets. More importantly, brochures rarely influenced the decision to buy a holiday anyway; according to the research, the ultimate decision was mainly down to personal experience, recommendation and information gathered online.

The initiative forms part of a wider campaign by Worcestershire, a Beacon Council for Tackling Climate Change, to reduce the volume of promotional mail generated by the council and its partners and to focus on modern, electronic channels.

ENDS

For further information or to attend the event, please call Sara Stewart on 07833 467774

EDITOR'S NOTES

Destination Worcestershire is the official public/private partnership promoting the county of Worcestershire as a tourist destination. For more information including What's On, Where to Stay and places to visit see: www.visitworcestershire.org

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