

OCTOBER MEETING

First Speaker

The District Tourism Strategy

A talk by Christopher Townend

Reported by Terry Sutton

Tourism in Dover is thriving and benefits to the local economy are growing.

This was the message hammered home to a well-attended Dover Society meeting by Christopher Townend, the district council's strategic tourism manager, who was appointed a year ago. At the October meeting, Chris explained his role and detailed a tourism plan he was about to present to Dover District Council's cabinet, which is increasingly appreciating the importance of the tourism sector in the economy of White Cliffs Country.

According to independent research, it is now estimated that tourism is worth £282 million (£281,968,200) to the district's economy. The research, commissioned by Visit Kent, claimed the industry supported 17 % of total employment in the district while, for the town of Dover, tourism created 7% of all jobs.

One of the interesting details revealed by Mr Townend was that day-trippers to Dover spent, on average, £30 to £42 but, if they could persuade the visitor to remain overnight, the spend increased seven

times to around £210. It was also reported that the average cost of accommodation offered by providers was £71 per night.

Mr Townend spoke with passion about the attractions White Cliffs Country offered visitors to Dover, Deal and Sandwich and along the coast. Key publicity drivers attracting visitors highlighted the district's heritage, landscape and the many pursuits offered.

He also emphasised the growing importance of advertising on the web and offered no-cost digital facilities to accommodation and events providers. He was congratulated on the graphics that accompanied tourism attraction leaflets about Deal, Sandwich and Dover.

Looking ahead he reminded his audience about the benefits to the district that are likely to be accrued with the 149th golf Open Championship at Royal St George's, Sandwich in July 2020. The international event, he said, was expected to attract at least 200,000 visitors (including 500 journalists) as well as providing the region with international publicity.



The Bridge at Kearsney Abbey



Damage to the Cliffs East of Dover