



Summer 2011

# Tourism Link

Keeping you in touch with tourism in West Dorset

Welcome to our summer newsletter keeping you up to date with everything that's happening in your local tourism industry. You can also log on to [www.westdorset.com/trade](http://www.westdorset.com/trade) for all the latest news.

## What's happening at West Dorset District Council?

In July 2010 West Dorset councillors backed plans for the biggest change to local government in the district for 35 years. West Dorset District Council's workforce is to join up with Weymouth & Portland Borough Council to deliver services across both areas. The move aims to protect and improve services and save around £8.5 million over the next five years. A single officer structure for both councils is being developed, including one chief executive, David Clarke, and one management team. The joint workforce will deliver services to 162,000 residents, over 6,100 businesses and the millions of visitors to the areas governed by West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council.

## What does this mean for tourism locally?

In April, Nick Thornley was appointed as the service manager for both West Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council's Leisure and Tourism teams. Nick will now take the service forward and shape the provision of leisure and cultural facilities, tourism and visitor management, harbours, events and cultural development for both local authorities for the future. With changes in the way tourism is supported at central government level and within the south west region, officers are keen to maintain close working relationships between local tourism businesses and the local authorities. Some local authority work is now guided and supported by the Destination Dorset tourism partnership, set out elsewhere in this newsletter. The success of the tourism economy has to be based on effective working relationships between public and private sectors, as the new Government tourism policy highlights. This will become even more important before, during and after the Olympics in 2012.

### Working with West Dorset in 2012

The signs are good for the summer ahead – Dorset has just had its hottest Easter since 1984 and many people are opting to stay at home for their holidays this year. Our offline and online marketing campaigns have been performing very well with around 30,000 West Dorset Holiday Guides sent out in response to various campaigns and we've had over 11,000 new subscribers to our regular e-newsletter. Annual unique visits to [www.westdorset.com](http://www.westdorset.com) have reached over 230,000 and [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com) has performed exceptionally well with unique visits up to 170,000 – that's an annual increase of 318%!

[visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) is the official visitor accommodation site for the sailing events for the Olympic and Paralympic 2012 Games. We have enclosed an Olympics update sheet giving you all the latest news and information.

It's already time to start planning promotional activity for next year. You will receive full details of our 2012 promotional packages in June, offering everything from web only to full promotion via our websites, West Dorset Holiday Guide and Tourist Information Centres.

It's going to be an exciting year ahead for tourism in Dorset and we look forward to working with you to promote your business in 2012.

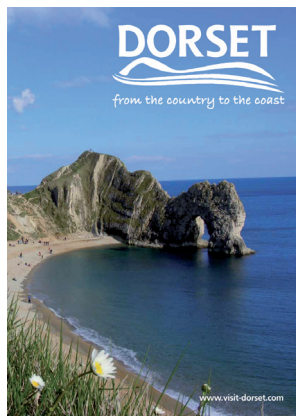
### [www.visit-dorset.com](http://www.visit-dorset.com) getting bigger and better!

[Visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) has experienced a huge increase in unique visits since it was launched two years ago and in April alone generated over 30,000 visits. To ensure the site remains competitive alongside other destination sites and continues to play a leading role in marketing Dorset, [visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) is going to be re-built over the coming months. The new site will contain some fantastic features with superior functionality and swift navigation to help visitors search for information and plan their stay in Dorset.

Take a look at the enclosed advice sheet designed to help you make the most of your web entries on both [visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) and [westdorset.com](http://westdorset.com).

## New Dorset-wide guide

A brand new publication to promote visits to Dorset has been produced by the West Dorset tourism team, working with four other district and borough councils and Dorset County Council, under the Destination Dorset tourism partnership.



The guide promotes links to [visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) which gives the very latest information on your accommodation availability, events and attractions. 10,000 copies of this new Dorset-wide publication will be used to support enquiries, particularly media enquiries in relation to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic sailing events being staged in Weymouth and Portland. You can download the guide from [visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com) and foreign language versions in German and Dutch are also planned in this format.

## Tell us what you think

Please take a few minutes to fill in the enclosed customer satisfaction questionnaire and return it in the pre-paid envelope provided. Your feedback will help us plan future activity, improve the services we offer, and give an overall picture of our local tourism industry.

## Dorset Approved Visitor Accommodation Scheme

This is a cost effective scheme aimed at those who do not wish to be graded under the National Quality Assessment Scheme (VisitEngland or the AA) but would like to have reassurance from an experienced assessor that they are operating their business legally and safely. This scheme which is accredited by VisitEngland, does not provide a quality star rating, but will enable your business to continue to take part in our promotional packages. Most properties can be inspected for as little as £76.50. For more information contact Quality in Tourism on 0845 300 6996, email: [qualityintourism@ukg4s.com](mailto:qualityintourism@ukg4s.com)

## Accommodation availability

Remember to keep our websites and Tourist Information Centres (TICs) up to date with your accommodation availability by using our extranet facility. For more information go to [www.westdorset.com/trade](http://www.westdorset.com/trade) or contact your local TIC.

## Summer opening for West Dorset Tourist Information Centres

1 April 2011 to end of October 2011

Dorchester	Monday - Saturday	9am - 5pm
Bridport	Monday - Saturday	9am - 5pm
Sherborne	Monday - Saturday	9am - 5pm
		<i>(to end of September)</i>
Lyme Regis	Monday - Saturday	10am - 5pm
	Sunday	10am - 4pm

## Advice on Energy Performance Certificates

Some self-catering owners have been asking for advice on Energy Performance Certificates, or EPC's for self catering holiday lets. Currently anyone selling or renting a property to a tenant requires an EPC but holiday lets have been exempt. The Department for Communities and Local Government has announced that from 30 June 2011 the requirement for premises to have an EPC will be extended to self-catering properties that are let for more than 20 weeks per annum. The English Association of Self Catering Operators is advising its members to prepare to get an EPC but wait until nearer the time to do so while it tests the validity of this new requirement. Keep up to date with this topic on [www.westdorset.com/trade](http://www.westdorset.com/trade)

## Dorset Residents' Week 13 - 19 June

Get out and about and enjoy some fantastic local attractions at a reduced price during Dorset Residents' Week. Over 40 attractions across Dorset are taking part with most offering two for the price of one on admission. Full details and offer vouchers have been distributed in the Your Dorset publication to all Dorset residents. For more details on participating attractions contact your local TIC.

## New tourism booklet published on accessible marketing

A new booklet 'At Your Service' which aims to inspire tourism businesses to improve accessibility for customers in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be downloaded on [www.westdorset.com/trade/news](http://www.westdorset.com/trade/news)