

Green Tourism in Cornwall: Fact or Fad?

Case Study

During the course of the last few months we have worked together on a research project set by the Global Travel and Tourism Partnership (GTTP) regarding tourism in Cornwall, titled Green Tourism – Fact or Fad?

Cornwall, as a result of its enviable coastline and picturesque villages, attracts approximately five million tourists annually, both domestic and overseas. During the peak season there are over 290,000 visitors in Cornwall in any one day, adding around 60% to the resident population. Cornwall has developed a reputation for being a 'Green' destination, something that is crucial considering the influx of people during the tourist season.

Our aim was to investigate the success of Cornwall's Green Campaign. In order to do this we spoke to various key organizations and attractions in Cornwall promoting themselves as eco-friendly such as The Eden Project. We interviewed various members of select organizations to ensure the research we collated was as accurate and informative as possible.

Collecting Data

In order to gain a better understanding of visitor knowledge along with the tourists perception of Green Tourism we created a questionnaire designed to support our research and distributed it about various tourist hotspots throughout Cornwall, including Polperro, Fowey and Looe. To increase our results we also sent our questionnaire out of Cornwall to be completed by people who had holidayed in the county in the past. The questions we included related directly to the concept of Green Tourism allowing us to identify how 'Green' visitors were as well as gauge their understanding of the term itself.

The results of our questionnaire prompted us to form four key questions which would allow us to break down our task and draw an overall conclusion. We used the information we received back from tourists as well as our research on local business to answer the following:

- 1) How much of the income generated by tourists actually stays in the county?
- 2) Are tourists coming to Cornwall making the most of local services on offer?
- 3) Do tourists consider themselves 'green'?
- 4) What do organisations in Cornwall do to promote and support Green Tourism?

What is Green Tourism?

Green Tourism, Ecotourism, Sustainable Tourism, Environmentally Friendly Tourism, Gentle Tourism and Soft Tourism all describe a similar concept. As tourism has developed it has become necessary to consider the impact an increased number of visitors are having on host destinations. Tourist destinations and the attractions they visit need to be well maintained in order to ensure they can still be appreciated in years to come. This means protecting the surrounding environment including native wildlife, reducing any negative impacts on the local economy including local trades and businesses such as smaller accommodation providers and locally owned shops and ensuring all tourist attractions including heritage sites, gardens and coastlines are well preserved.

Green tourism aims to maximise the positive impact on the local economy and environment.

CoaST and Visit Cornwall

Visit Cornwall is the official Cornwall Tourist Board- it is their responsibility to promote Cornwall as a destination to tourists.

CoaST- is Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project

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Organisations such as Visit Cornwall and CoaST are currently working alongside tourist attractions and key destinations in order to educate both hosts and visitors to Cornwall on the ideology of Green Tourism and its importance in today's fast growing industry.

How to be a responsible visitor

Visit Cornwall has spoken out with a very direct message to visitors....

1. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Refuse packaging and bags you don't need, use recycling banks, and if your holiday home has a recycling system, please use it. Help us to keep Cornwall free from litter and environmental damage.
2. Get out of the car! Walking, cycling and riding are great ways to see the area without adding to traffic. Try exploring near to where you are staying.
3. Stay Local, Eat Local, Buy Local, See Local. Visit farmers markets, farm shops, village stores, pubs and cafes.
4. Chill Out - Switch Off! Help us reduce light pollution, energy use and CO2 emissions by switching off lights and all those standby buttons when you don't need them.
5. Follow the Countryside Code - Protect, respect and enjoy: look after plants and animals; take litter away; leave gates and property as you find them; keep dogs under close control; and consider other people and users when visiting the countryside. And enjoy!

Cornwall

Before we tell you about our findings we would like to show you why we and so many others consider Cornwall to be such a special place.

Cornwall is a county situated in the South West of England renowned for its quaint fishing villages, breathtaking views and hidden treasures. Each year approximately five million tourists are drawn to the amazing coastline, most of whom are inbound tourists travelling from other areas in the UK.

Considered to be its own place, Cornwall boasts its own flag and language which derives from Celtic, providing Cornwall with strong historical links.

St Piran discovered that the Cornish land was rich in natural resources- including coal and lots of tin.

Unfortunately the mining industry is getting smaller within Cornwall. However Cornwall is still home to a historic environment which includes outstanding examples from pre to the post-war period. The South West is mostly a rural region, comprising of small towns and villages rather than large cities. It is not surprising that almost 40% of the land is protected as either a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Although tourism brings approximately £1462m to Cornwall every year the county still suffers as one of the poorest areas in the United Kingdom. Historically Cornwall's economy was dependent on tin mining, however at present it relies heavily on the tourist industry. Tourism makes up around a quarter of the economy.

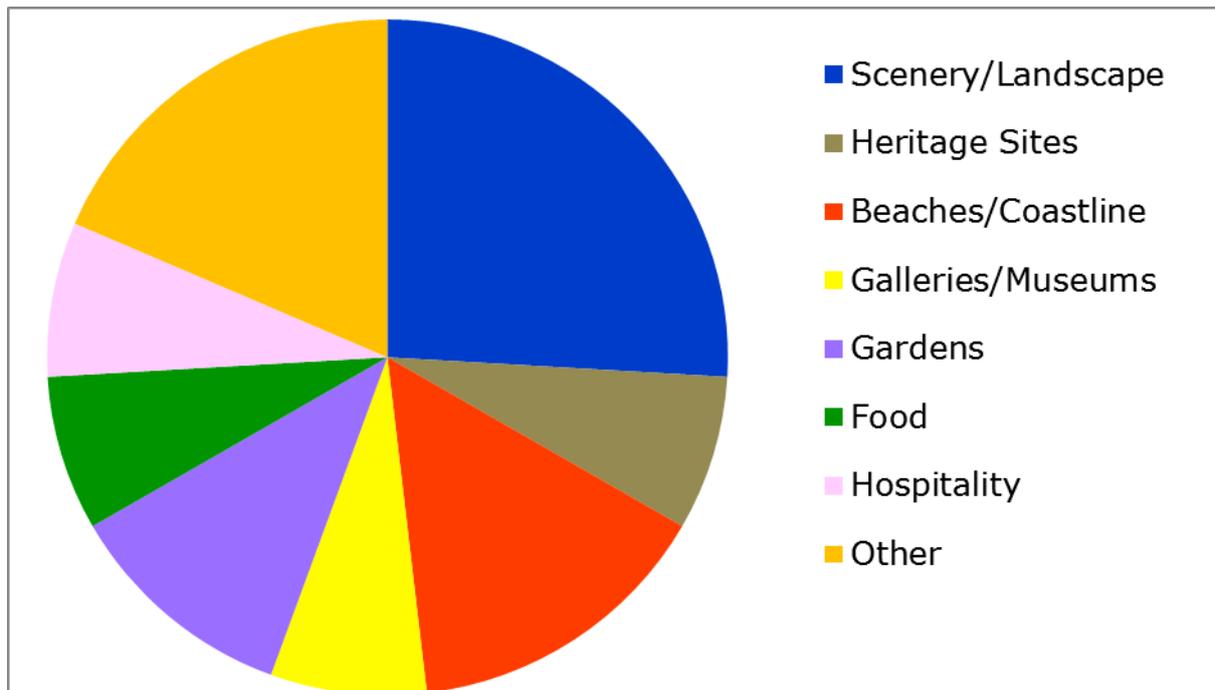
What attracts tourists to Cornwall

Cornwall has a unique culture, spectacular landscape and mild climate which makes it a popular tourist destination, although it is a long distance from other main areas in the UK.

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Cornwall, surrounded by the English Channel and Celtic Sea, boasts miles of desirable rugged coastline and stunning beaches. Other attractions for tourists include vast moorland, country gardens and historic sites.

Our questionnaires allowed us to identify the main reasons tourists visit Cornwall.



The results show Cornwall's primary attraction is its scenery and landscape closely followed by its beaches and coastlines. It's great that tourists appreciate the natural beauty of Cornwall.

The Cornish economy benefits from tourists using facilities such as cafes and paid attractions that tourists use alongside visiting beaches and natural attractions.

1. How much of the income generated actually stays in the county?

To help us answer this we looked at the results generated from our questionnaires

By asking this question we are trying to find out how much of the money that tourists bring to Cornwall is spent in local business and therefore remain in Cornwall and how much is lost to large chains such as McDonalds.

Food: local or national chain?

One of the things that became apparent when analysing our questionnaires was the low percentage of tourists shopping locally to equip self catering accommodation.

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Of those tourists asked 62% would buy their food and provisions solely from large chain supermarkets, with Asda and Tesco being the top two.

Out of those who chose to buy food and drinks from locally sourced establishments, such as Kingsley Village or Lobbs Farm shop, 24% said that they would also shop in large supermarkets when convenient.

As large chain supermarkets operate on a national basis the profits they make are put back into the company not back into the local economy. Therefore Cornwall doesn't benefit from purchases made.

However some of the larger supermarkets stock a small variety of local produce including meats and cheeses which will support smaller Cornish business. Also large chain supermarkets tend to offer employment opportunities to local people.

We put together a typical shopping basket from large chain supermarket store and a local farm shop - it soon became apparent why tourists were being put off buying from local suppliers.

	<i>Large Chain Supermarket Price</i>	<i>Local Farm Shop Price</i>
<i>Loaf of Bread</i>	<i>98p</i>	<i>£1.80</i>
<i>6 Eggs</i>	<i>£1.54</i>	<i>£1.70</i>
<i>2 Pints of Milk</i>	<i>99p</i>	<i>£1.30</i>
<i>2.5KG of Potatoes</i>	<i>99p</i>	<i>£1.80</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>£4.50</i>	<i>£6.60</i>

Looking at these results, it has become apparent that something is discouraging tourists from shopping locally. As you can see most products cost more money when bought at a farm shop compared to a national supermarket.

In our overall shopping basket which included the above items plus meats, cheeses and drinks ended up costing nearly £20 more when purchased from a local farm shop.

Tourists may be aware of the good quality produce available locally but when supermarkets are able to undercut the prices offered by the local shops, tourists are left with the difficult decision between paying out more and putting money back into the county or having a cheaper holiday and assisting in the process of Cornwall missing out.

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It is therefore alarming that only 38% of the tourists we spoke to are actually putting money back into the Cornish economy. If this were to continue local businesses would no longer be able to operate and Cornwall would lose part of its quaint charm that attracts so many people each year.

Accommodation Providers

In order for the local economy to benefit it is important tourists consider their accommodation provider and the importance of using local providers instead of chain companies when selecting hotels, campsites or self catering apartments.

Hotels

Many tourists coming to Cornwall may choose to stay in hotels.

Hotel chains such as 'The Holiday Inn' or 'The Travelodge' are often a popular choice with tourists as not only do they offer the familiarity of a reliable brand name but they also offer accommodation at a lower price, ideal for families and younger visitors such as students. The impact of tourists staying in hotels such as these means a lot of the profit made is directed back into the company and therefore out of the county.

However, large chain hotels do benefit the economy by offering employment opportunities to many local people.

Unfortunately these chains tend to offer higher company positions to centrally trained staff from outside the county.

For all areas of accommodation there are often local alternatives. 'Watergate Bay Hotel' and 'The Scarlet Hotel' in Cornwall are both popular with tourists all year round. Watergate Bay is a luxurious family friendly hotel offering various seasonal discounts and competitive rates. The Scarlet is a five star spa hotel who market more specifically towards an adult audience. Coincidentally Watergate Bay invested over £100,000 during their recent renovations on sustainable improvements within the establishment. Their campaign to reduce their environmental impacts has so far been successful and their work with the local community has been largely beneficial to both themselves and smaller businesses. The Scarlet Hotel is a purpose built Green Hotel whose primary goal is to ensure sustainability throughout all areas of the business.

Although staying in local hotels promoting sustainability is a fantastic way for tourists to ensure they are acting responsibly, using any local hotel will benefit the Cornish economy. Any money made by local hotels can always be re-invested into the local community and by using local options visitors to Cornwall are securing a future for many small business owners thus boosting the economy.

Campsites

Each year many tourists decide to use the many camping facilities available in Cornwall; staying on camp sites opting for a cheaper and more independent accommodation option. This gives the tourists the opportunity to be truly 'green'. There is minimum effect on the environment- by not using or having TVs and electric heating and it also encourages them to go out into the community to be entertained and to eat and drink.

However, although Cornwall has many campsites to offer some of these are large chain companies such as Parkdean and John Fowler. This means that much like hotels the majority of money people spend within these campsites is often re-invested within the company itself and not the local area. Often facilities on these campsites are also part of national chains such as the *Spar* convenience stores or *Pizza Hut* food chains, again encouraging tourists to use nationally owned establishments.

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B&B's

Cornwall is home to many beautiful and luxurious Bed and Breakfasts. These are usually large houses or barns owned by local residents which have been converted into accommodation for tourists. As we saw earlier CoaST are working with local Bed and Breakfasts to help them save money and ensure they are sustainable with regards to environment and economy.

Tourists are often unaware of the 'green' benefits of staying in Bed & Breakfasts as well as being unaware of the benefit to themselves.

B&B's offer a local personal experience- often owned by people who have a great knowledge and love for the local area. B&B's which are CoaST ambassadors can provide and educate tourists on how to experience Cornwall to its full as well as having a positive impact on the area.

Eating Locally

71% of the tourists we spoke to were staying in self catering accommodation. The majority of these said they would chose to eat within their accommodation either making use of any dining facilities provided by the organisation or actually within their caravan or apartment.

Often the price of eating out discourages tourists and sometimes it can be the convenience. It is important self catering sites promote the benefits of eating out locally to visitors providing them with an incentive and therefore successfully encouraging Green Tourism.

Many tourists who stay within Greener self catering complexes contradict themselves and go against the Green Ethos by not contributing to local businesses and trade.

One of the main ways tourists can contribute to the local economy is by eating in pubs, cafes and restaurants whilst they're on holiday. However it is crucial they recognize the importance of eating in a locally run establishment as opposed to a national chain company. This means that eating in places such as MacDonald's, Starbucks Coffee House, Wetherspoons and Subway can have a negative impact on the local economy as the money tourists spend will be directed back into the large chain company and not the local area. However, larger companies can provide jobs for many local people, therefore also having a positive impact on the local environment. Also these companies can generally afford to hire staff on a more permanent basis, reducing the impact seasonal work (offered by most local businesses) can often have on the economy especially during winter months when the industry declines.

2. Are tourists coming to Cornwall making the most local services on offer?

Using information from our research we moved on to our next question.

Transport

Firstly, we started by investigating the method of transport tourists used to reach Cornwall. Although Cornwall is a fairly remote destination there are multiple travel links branching down from larger UK cities.

- London – Penzance train line

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- National Express coaches to most major cities in the country
- Newquay airport on Cornwall's North coast is serviced by Gatwick, Bristol and Manchester.

Of the people we spoke to a massive 87% used a car as their primary method of transport when travelling to the county. This would suggest that either public transport facilities are still insufficient, too expensive or not publicised well enough. It is important that tourists know about these facilities before they visit the county and they are aware of the benefits of using them.

After looking at the transport tourists use to get to Cornwall we then went on to look at the transport they use when they are actually here. Only 37% of tourists asked said that they would use the public transport facilities available whilst holidaying in Cornwall.

The results from our questionnaire revealed that one in four tourists coming to Cornwall believed the county's biggest downfall was its lack of local public transport specifically bus services. Many stated that times were too infrequent with more remote destinations not being serviced at all. This could explain why 63% of tourists avoid using local public transport services to travel around Cornwall.

Attractions

Other services available include visitor attractions. The following destinations and attractions were specifically highlighted by tourists as areas that drew them into the county.

- Fistral Beach- A surf beach on the north coast of Cornwall
- The Lost Gardens of Heligan- A historical garden and wildlife sanctuary
- Lanhydrock House- A protected historic manor house
- The Eden Project- A purpose built
- Newquay Zoo- A zoological park
- Crealy Adventure Park- An adventure park with rides and wildlife aimed at children
- Flambards- A theme park with rides and educational exhibits
- Camel Trail- A beautiful disused railway route which is now used as a cycle trail

Also included are sites such as Mevagissy Model Railway, Cornish Goldsmiths, Jamaica Inn, Watergate Bay and the National Botanical Gardens.

The majority of these attractions have formed direct links with organisations such as 'Visit Cornwall', in order to promote aspects of Green tourism and to really showcase Cornwall's great features.

3. Do tourists consider themselves green?

The main part of our questionnaire focused on tourists perceptions of themselves.

Visitors spend approximately £1462m annually on accommodation, shopping, food and drink, attractions and travel. Cornwall has gained a global reputation for being 'green' which has attracted attention from the media particularly where iconic attractions such as the Eden Project and Scarlet's Hotel.

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For us to assess whether or not visitors to Cornwall could be considered Green we needed to identify the number of tourists who were aware of what it was to be Green. Results from our questionnaire showed that 62% of the tourists we asked had not heard of the term Green Tourism.

Of the 38% that had heard of the term, the majority of them did not understand what was meant by Green Tourism.

We asked those who had heard of the term Green Tourism to explain briefly what they understood it to be. We've lifted these quotes from our research:

- 'Keep your rubbish, help keep places clean and tidy'
- 'Look after and respect the nature and land'
- 'Put money into Cornish shops instead of big supermarkets'
- 'Use green businesses and products'
- 'Look after the environment of your holiday destination'
- 'Have a positive effect on the destination'

The results from our questionnaire show tourists to be either unaware of Green Tourism altogether or misinformed as to the meaning of the concept itself. Most people link Green Tourism directly to the environment overlooking any economical impacts. Therefore many tourists referring to themselves as Green, do so in the belief that they are helping the environment as opposed to making use of local amenities and attractions.

We believe that in order for the Green Tourism campaigns to succeed, it is necessary to educate people on the meaning of Green Tourism. Tourists need to know what it is they are doing that could be having a negative impact on host destinations with an alternative that is more likely to benefit the area.

4. What do organisations in Cornwall do to promote and support Green Tourism?

CoaST

Cornwall's Sustainable Tourism Project (CoaST) are supporting this in many ways. One being the itinerary they have put together for tourists who are keen to be truly green whilst on holiday.

ADD YOUTUBE LINK FOR COAST.

As good as this is, the message isn't reaching enough people as resources like this are only available to tourists who go looking for them.

South West Tourism

SW Tourism is responsible for promoting the South West of England as a tourist destination. Their vision is for *'the South West to be internationally recognised as a modern tourist destination by 2015'*.

Visit Cornwall

Visit Cornwall is the official Cornwall Tourist Board. It is their responsibility to promote Cornwall as a destination to tourists.

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Organisations such as CoaST and Visit Cornwall are currently working alongside tourist attractions and key destinations in order to educate both hosts and visitors in Cornwall. We believe it is necessary to not only make sure tourists are aware of how to be green but that they are aware of the benefits it will have on both holiday destinations and themselves.

Be a responsible visitor:

Visit Cornwall has spoken out with a very direct message to tourists...

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Tourists should use recycling banks, and keep Cornwall free from litter.
- Get out of the car! Tourists should use public transport, walk or cycle.
- Stay Local, Eat Local, Buy Local, See Local. Tourists should buy local goods and use local services where possible
- Chill Out - Switch Off! Tourists should be aware of energy use
- Follow the Countryside Code – Tourists should look after the countryside and its wildlife

The Eden Project

The Eden Project is a built attraction in the heart of Cornwall. It is located in an old mining pit which has been transformed into Cornwall's most famous attraction.

Known as the eighth wonder of the world the Eden Project is home to the world's largest greenhouse and many exotic and endangered species of plant. The first biome houses Tropical plants and the second houses Mediterranean plants.

How does The Eden project promote and support Green Tourism?

Eden grows plants and food from around the world. It shows how the UK and other countries can be sustainable and look after the natural environment. Around the biomes are many interactive and educational activities about sustainability.

They hold workshops for schools, colleges and universities, as well as running various campaigns and projects with the aim of educating visitors on the consequences of acting in a non-green way.

These include:

Real Cool Futures – A unique online Green Career's resource centre including learning materials for teacher use.

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Mud Between Your Toes – Aiming to reconnect children with the outside world.

Green Talent – Offering 5000 work placements for people aged 14-19 in a unique partnership with the Institute for Education Business Excellence.

Green Foundation – An educational course for individuals in Cornwall helping them to detect Greener ways of running their businesses and promoting the idea of sustainability, with particular regards to sustainability in tourism.

Gardens for Life – Thousands of children from four continents are sharing their knowledge and experience of growing food. The project aims to explore the issues of sustainable development.

Climate revolution – Eden's educational programme working with schools and business to explore new technologies for a low carbon world.

We set up an interview with The Eden Project and this is what they had to say about Green Tourism:

- 'Our commitment to sourcing local products is very important to us'.
- 'We have four key sourcing priorities: Cornishness, Quality, Price and Seasonality.'
- 'We try to use Cornish products as a first choice and Cornish suppliers as a second'.

The 'Eden Project' Way

1. Employing local people
Eden creates many jobs for the local community. They employ around 400 core staff, 200 seasonal employees and 150 volunteers all of which are recruited locally.
2. Using local produce
80% of the supplies used in the coffee shops and restaurants at Eden are from local business
3. Working with local businesses
The Eden Project has used 3,000 different suppliers since opening in 2001. 50% of the suppliers used are locally owned.
4. Sustainable transport
Eden offer a discounted entry to visitors who travel there by public transport, cycling or by foot. Furthermore, the 'Eden' bus service runs between the Eden Project and the town centre train station. This makes using public transport easier for visitors coming from further afield.

How successful is The Eden Project?

Eden's stickers are renowned for being stuck to public signs and lampposts around the area. If visitors are leaving the attractions and then littering the nearby surroundings have they really understood the message portrayed to them?

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The Lost Gardens of Heligan

Heligan is a garden, over 200 acres of size, which was neglected in the early 1900's and lay undiscovered for almost 100 years before being brought back to life. It is now a well known natural attraction in Cornwall.

Heligan preserves the history around growing plants and rearing animals. Its main attraction is the preservation of 200 different types of fruit, vegetables and plants that were common to the UK hundreds of years ago but are no more.

Their main aims are to use traditional methods in every area around the gardens, whilst continuing their environmentally friendly approach and supporting local smallholders.

How does 'The lost Gardens of Heligan' promote and support Green Tourism?

We met with Lorna the Marketing Manager and Daryl Cook the Retail Manager to help us answer this question and the simple answer was Heligan does not aim to actively promote green tourism however it does support the idea partly through their awareness of the environment and their hopes to protect it.

Lorna and Daryl also told us:

- 'We try to be organic, but this is not always possible. The spraying of one of the potato varieties for potato blight, is a classic example of this'
- 'For us it isn't about being green it's about being answerable to the decisions we make at every stage'
- It makes you feel good'

The 'Heligan' Way

This is how Heligan believe they support Green Tourism.

1. Local Economy
Heligan is a year round attraction which therefore offers employment all year.
2. Sustainable Transport
Heligan is based in a remote area resulting in travelling by car being an obvious form of transport for those visiting there. However Heligan likes to provide tourists with a more environmentally friendly way of visiting them. They have worked closely with local transport providers resulting in Heligan providing a bus route. To encourage people to use their service visitors travelling by bus also get reduced entry price into the gardens.
3. Recycling and Waste Minimisation
From the offices to the gardens – everyone in Heligan actively recycles. The gardening teams recycle all waste plant material adopting sustainable way of producing compost.
4. Food Production

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The produce from the gardens including meat and vegetables travels 'food yards' not 'food miles' into Heligan's café where they are turned into fresh seasonal dishes for the tourists.

5. Buying Local

The Heligan shop supplies visitors with locally produced crafts and produce benefiting the Cornish economy.

Newquay Zoo

Newquay Zoo is an award winning zoo as well as a conservation education centre in the North West of Cornwall.

How does 'Newquay Zoo' promote and support green tourism?

One of Newquay Zoo's main aims is to look after the natural environment.

They use solar power to heat and light the indoor animal shelters. They display how efficient this is, showing visitors how much energy can be saved using alternative methods. Recycling bins have been placed around the zoo to encourage visitors to think about what items can be recycled.

Newquay Zoo is CoaST ambassador and is used as an example of how businesses can be green.

How does 'Newquay Zoo' promote and support Green Tourism?

Newquay Zoo encourage people to travel by public transport, cycling or by foot. They offer a lower entry fee to visitors that use public transport to visit the zoo. They have also supported the Newquay discovery map which identifies walking and cycling trails connecting attractions in and around the town.

We spoke to the environmental officer at Newquay Zoo and asked him how They promote and support green tourism. This is what he had to say:

- 'We support Cornish suppliers by using 70% of local food and ingredients in our kitchen. We also grow our own produce which gets used to feed the animals'
- 'We like to think people come here, get influenced, and take it back home'
- 'Maintain it, keep it, improve it'

Is it working?

Newquay Zoo are confident they are successful at being green. They are obviously not the only ones who believe this. They have won many awards for their efforts; they were the first attraction in Cornwall to win a Gold Award under the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Newquay Zoo also has its own environmental management system ISO 14001. This is what they had to say about their success, 'it's great to get the awards but for us this is something that we believe people should be doing anyway'.

What have we found?

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From our research we have found that in general...

- Money is being lost from the county by tourists not using locally owned businesses.
- Lots of tourists visiting Cornwall are not green. This means that tourists either don't care about being green or are not aware of how to be.
- Many local organisations are promoting and supporting green tourism by showing good practice, offering tourists an incentive for using green transport, encouraging the use of local shops.

What could be researched further?

- We would like to speak to local transport companies about what they are doing or plan to do to help Cornwall be a green tourist destination.
- We would like to speak to the large chain stores based in Cornwall to find out how they are helping or plan to help the Cornish economy.
- We would also like to do more tourist research by handing out questionnaires in different places and asking more detailed questions.

Thank You

We would like to thank you all for reading about the journey we have made so far.

We would also like to thank the tourists who answered our questionnaires and a particular thanks to the organisations who helped us with our research along the way: The Lost gardens of Heligan, Visit Cornwall, The Eden Project, Newquay Zoo and CoaST. The following companies had also very kindly donated 'Cornish treats' for the other 10 countries to take home with them: Granny Wobbly's Fudge Pantry, Rodda's, Just Water and Kernow chocolate.

And a special thank you to the GTTP and the sponsors of the project, who without, we would not have been given the wonderful opportunity of going to Munich.