

REPORT OF WALES COAST PATH PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON WALES COAST PATH PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the work undertaken by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority to promote the Wales Coast Path.

Introduction/Background

The 870 mile long Wales Coast Path officially opened in May 2012, following several years of construction. It is mainly a walking route but also has sections that are accessible to cycle and horse riders.

The 'dragon shell' brand was chosen in 2010, and a marketing plan for the launch of the Path was commissioned and executed. The promotional activity has consisted of a branded website, social media, official guidebooks, leaflets and PR led by Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

A new promotional strategy has been developed to re-focus and promote the path from 2018 onwards. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNPA) has secured funding to promote the Wales Coast Path (WCP) as an iconic asset for Wales to encourage more people walking more often and to develop the brand further to benefit all stretches of the Welsh coastline.

£150k has been secured via Visit Wales from April 2018 till March 2019 alongside match funding (a further £150k) from the Wales Government to extend the promotional activity to 2021. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is working closely with PCNPA, the lead partner for this project throughout this period.

The strategy has updated the vision and objectives. The vision is that the Wales Coast Path:

Becomes an Iconic Asset for Wales

WCP is recognised as symbolic of Wales and a strategic asset, like: Snowdon, Pen y Fan, the Severn Bridge, the Great Glasshouse (Carmarthen) and Y Senedd.

Has More People Walking, More Often

The WCP acts as an iconic walking destination increasing people's access to the coast and boosting associated physical and mental health benefits for residents and visitors to Wales.

Is a collaborative project where everyone benefits

The WCP brand works to benefit all stretches of the coastline in Wales by delivering our collective well-being aspirations through increased economic prosperity and greater 'ownership' of the WCP by communities across Wales.

Strategic Priorities

- To develop and promote the WCP as a valued asset to Wales and the Welsh people.
- To ensure the WCP maximises the environmental, economic and health benefits for local residents and visitors alike.

SMART Objectives

- Raising awareness of the Wales Coast Path, especially amongst priority audiences
- Stimulating immediate new visits to the Wales Coast Path by providing new reasons/products to visit and reinforcing its reputation as a high quality experience.
- Developing themed campaigns, and particularly capitalising on Visit Wales' thematic years, in particular the Year of the Sea in 2018 and Year of Discovery in 2019.
- Encouraging repeat visits from locals and visitors through new products and ideas that, in turn, increase local spending.
- Stimulating economic benefits for the local economy by creating new links between the WCP and businesses and visitor attractions within easy reach of the coast.
- Promotion of sustainable tourism and environmental responsibility on the Wales Coast Path.

Strategic Actions

The strategic actions are focused on:

1. Developing the brand proposition – identifying what is special to key audience groups.
2. Devising audience specific content, by identifying their 'passion points' and the most appropriate channels to reach them.
3. Building new and innovative partnerships to devise creative solutions that will successfully deliver WCP key messages.
4. Engaging more closely with key Welsh Government portfolios e.g Health, Education, Tourism, Culture.
5. Engaging with initiatives such as Visit Wales' themed years and aligning with key brands such as The Wales Way.
6. Using technology to bring the Wales Coast Path to life in new and engaging ways.

Activity since April 2018

Sioned Humphreys (PCNPA) a part time marketing officer has been appointed from April 2018 till March 2020 and has met key Wales Coast Path personnel and partners to familiarise herself with Wales Coast Path governance, brand and the main aims and objectives of the path.

Procurement and the appointment of agencies are now underway to undertake marketing services are as detailed below.

Strategic item no	Promotional tactic	Timeline	Budget (£)	Market segments
1. Brand Proposition	Commission PR and Advertising agency	Summer 2018 – Summer 2020	64,000	All
2. Segment specific content	New Photography and drone footage commissioned New Walking itineraries developed	Summer to Autumn 2018 Autumn 2018	42,000 14,000	Scenic Explorer Couples Pre Family Explorers Active Family Explorers
3. Partnerships	Business to Business events and National walking event to take place	Summer 2018 – Spring 2020	14,000 15,000	Coastal businesses All
4. Political engagement	National participation – encouraging all children to walk a section of path	Autumn 2018 onwards	tbc	Stakeholders and partners
5. Visit Wales initiatives	Support activity for themed years	Summer 2018 onwards	-	All
6. Technology	Commission and develop an Augmented reality experience and interpretation	Spring 2019	62,000	Local Residents Scenic Explorer Couples Pre Family Explorers Active Family Explorers Coastal businesses

Conclusion

The success of PCNPA's work in marketing the Wales Coast Path at a national level both demonstrates the high level marketing expertise that we have within the Authority and how, by working in partnership with key agencies such as Natural Resources Wales and Visit Wales, the Authority is having an impact on the visitor economy far beyond the boundary of Pembrokeshire.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.



Llwybr Arfordir Cymru
Wales Coast Path

**Wales Coast Path
Promotion Strategy
June 2018 to March 2021**

Background

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The 'dragon shell' brand was chosen in 2010, and a marketing plan for the launch of the Path was commissioned and executed. The current promotional activity consists of a branded website, social media, official guidebooks, leaflets and PR led by NRW.

This is the Wales Coast Path (WCP) Promotional Strategy from June 2018 to March 2021 and draws from the Cartwright Associates rapid refresh plan developed in January 2018 following consultation with partners and stakeholders.

This is a national strategy aimed at developing the Wales Coast Path into an iconic National Brand aligned to the following Visit Wales brand values:

- Elevate Wales' status
- Surprise and inspires
- Reinforces positive perceptions
- Do good things
- Be unmistakably Wales

This document sets out the vision, strategic priorities, SMART objectives, target audiences, monitoring and reporting procedure, timeline for activity and the role of partners. It's focused on describing the activity needed to re - focus the promotional work of the WCP Promotion partnership.

Vision

The vision is that the Wales Coast Path:

Becomes an Iconic Asset for Wales

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Targets

Visitor and Business surveys are undertaken that provide insight, statistics and trends relating to use and awareness. Targets have been agreed for 2018-2020.

Target 1: To increase coastal walking in Wales from 14.861million "3+ Hour Leisure Day visits" (as defined by the Great British Day Visit Survey 2014) to 15.232 million by 2020. Increase in coastal walking will then deliver an increase in gross spend by 2.5%.

Measured by: Re run of Great British Day Visit Survey

Target 2: To increase the number of businesses who are aware of the WCP 16% (from 79% to 95% by 2020)

Measured by: A re-run of the Benefits to Business Survey in 2019.

Target 3: To increase the number of businesses who report an increase in custom resulting from the WCP by 32% by 2020 (18% to 50%)

Measured by: Re run of the Benefits to Business Survey in 2019

Target 4: Increase reach, engagement and amplification on digital media channels

Measured by: Google Analytics (website) and social media management tools.

Governance

WCP Promotion Partnership leads the promotion and has representatives from Natural Resources Wales, local authorities, third and private sector organisations. It reports to the National Management Partnership which has the national overview.

Partners support the promotional activity by providing input to meetings, lead and/or support delivery and integrate the activity outlined into their own marketing and promotion strategies.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Evaluation using a range of methods will be undertaken including visitor surveys, Business surveys and the regular assessment of the condition of the trail.

Google Analytics (website), social media management tools will be used to measure reach and impact.

Key Audiences

The prioritised audiences are identified as:

- Scenic Explorer Couples *
- Pre Family Explorers *
- Active Family Explorers *
- Coastal businesses
- Stakeholders and partners
- Local Residents

* These segments are the same as Visit Wales' key audiences.

External factors affecting promotional activity:

Aging Population

An aging but fitter population, defined as the Visit Wales' '*Scenic Explorer Couples*', is growing.

Increasing Competition from Medium and Long Distance Routes

North Wales: The Pilgrims Way and the Slate Trail have been launched in the last 6 years and the English Coast Path (ECP) is currently being developed and is scheduled to open in 2020.

Technological Innovation

Our strategy will take the following into account:

- **Increasing Sophistication of Mobile Devices**

Mobile devices now have technical abilities including operating augmented reality (AR) graphics, filming and sharing images and sounds. Maps and apps and large sized files can be easily obtained almost anywhere providing there is sufficient 4G, GPS and Wi-Fi coverage.

- **Digital communications**

The success of brand amplification is largely dependent on *who* the target audience are following. e.g. influencers, vloggers, celebrities, and on what platform. The strategy will be focussed on developing experiences and "bookable products" that are easily accessed on these distribution networks.

Staff Resources

One part-time marketing officer in post (employed by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) to carry out the aims and objectives of the strategy with support from a member of the WCP team. Promotion Partnership members will also contribute towards fulfilling the strategic aims and objectives.

Strategic Actions

Our strategic actions are focused on:

1. Developing the brand proposition – identifying what is special to key audience groups.
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4. Engaging more closely with key Welsh Government portfolios e.g Health, Education, Tourism, Culture.

5. Engaging with initiatives such as Visit Wales' themed years and aligning with key brands such as The Wales Way.
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Timetable of planned promotion activity

Strategic item no	Promotional tactic	Timeline	Budget (£)	Market segments
1. Brand Proposition	Commission PR and Advertising agency	Summer 2018 – Summer 2020	64,000	All
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3. Partnerships	B2B events and National walking event	Summer 2018 – Spring 2020	14,000 15,000	Coastal businesses All
4. Political engagement	National participation (schools)	Autumn 2018 onwards	tbc	Stakeholders and partners
5. Visit Wales initiatives	Support activity for themed years	Summer 2018 onwards	-	All
6. Technology	Augmented reality experience and interpretation	Spring 2019	62,000	Local Residents Scenic Explorer Couples Pre Family Explorers Active Family Explorers Coastal businesses
Total (£)			211,000	