

Tourism in Staffordshire

Introduction

In the past, Staffordshire was recognised for its manufacturing base rather than as a holiday destination. More recently, it has emerged as an important destination for short breaks with an unrivalled range of visitor attractions. In 1992, the County Council launched a vigorous consumer marketing campaign aimed at converting the high number of day visitors to staying visitors. From its inauguration with three major sponsors, the Staffordshire Short Breaks Campaign increased in support and effectiveness so that by 2005 it was operating on a budget of £250,000, supported by 30 sponsors from both private and public sector, representing visitor attractions, accommodation and local authorities.

In April 2006 the Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership was launched, marking a major progression in the management and marketing of Staffordshire's visitor economy. Building on the success of the Staffordshire Short Breaks campaign, the partnership has produced a 3 year Delivery Programme and prepares annual business plans to give Staffordshire a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market. To deliver an ambitious programme of activities the Destination Management Partnership has been structured into a number of sub-groups, each with a specific responsibility. These include marketing and branding, media relations, sustainable tourism, employment and retention, website development, TIC and information, and research and monitoring. The sub-groups report to the main Partnership Board at quarterly meetings (see appendix 1 for organisation structure).

The latest economic impact assessment (2005) reported tourism spend of £927 million per annum with visitor figures of 22 million, 20.5 million day and 1.5 million overnight visitors.

Tourism Product

Staffordshire has an unrivalled range of attractions, including family attractions, heritage, countryside, historic houses and gardens. It has unrivalled family attractions, including two world-class theme parks. Alton Towers has over 130 rides and attractions in a historic setting of gardens and parkland, with two themed hotels, an indoor waterpark and a leisure spa. Drayton Manor Family Theme Park attracts over a million visitors a year, and has a number of major thrill rides in parkland which also includes an award-winning zoo. The SnowDome at Tamworth was Europe's first indoor ski and snowboarding centre with real snow, open all year round. Waterworld is the UK's No.1 indoor tropical aqua park with an indoor water roller coaster, flume rides and rapids. Entry to all four attractions is provided by the Staffordshire Thrill Hopper pass, a joint ticket designed to encourage staying visitors to the county, available as single tickets or family pass. The County also offers many farm and animal attractions, and one of England's finest country racecourses at Uttoxeter.

Staffordshire has some of England's finest countryside including the Peak District, Britain's first and most popular National Park. The area is perfect for a range of activities, from walking and cycling to the more extreme sports of rock-climbing and hang-gliding. In central Staffordshire, Cannock Chase is a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is home to the largest herd of fallow deer in Britain. The eastern fringes of the County now form part of the National Forest. The National Memorial Arboretum is a focus for many visitors to this area, having recently opened the Armed Forces Memorial, the most significant memorial outside London.

Tourism in Staffordshire

Weston Park and Shugborough are the best known of all Staffordshire's stately homes, which also include Moseley Old Hall, Boscobel House, Chillington Hall and Wightwick Manor.

The historic gardens at Trentham have been recently restored as part of one of the largest projects of its kind in Britain, with new plantings by great contemporary designers. The Trentham estate also offers a host of activities including the Monkey Forest, the first of its kind in Britain, a retail village and aerial assault course. Other fine gardens include Biddulph Grange restored Victorian garden and the Dorothy Clive Garden, both of which are members of the Great Gardens partnership of gardens in and around Staffordshire.

The heritage city of Lichfield is known for its distinctive three-spired mediaeval cathedral, together with museums illustrating the life and works of two of its greatest citizens, Dr. Samuel Johnson and Erasmus Darwin. The Lichfield Festival is an important annual celebration attracting some of the greatest names in music and the arts. Staffordshire's charming market towns include Stafford, the County Town, with the Ancient High House and castle, and Leek, gateway to the Peak District and a centre for antiques. Tamworth has a fine Norman castle set in an attractive town park.

Wedgwood and the famous names of ceramics are known throughout the world, and the factory shops, visitor centres and museums of Stoke-on-Trent provide an insight into the craftsmanship involved in the making of fine china. The new Wedgwood Museum is due to open in April 2008, with £5.85 million worth of funding from the Heritage Lottery fund.

Staffordshire is also famous for the breweries that make Burton upon Trent the brewing capital of England. The potteries and brewing industries were largely instrumental in the forging of the canal network in Staffordshire, which today offers more miles of canal for leisure use than any other Shire County. Elsewhere in the County are other reminders of a fascinating industrial heritage, including steam railways and flint mills.

Tourism in Staffordshire

Visitor Attractions

According to the Staffordshire Visitor Survey 2005 conducted by the Heart of England Tourism Board, the most popular activities that visitors to the County had undertaken or planned to undertake include eating out (61%), general sightseeing and visiting an attraction (53%), shopping (46%), walking and hiking (35%) and visiting friends and relatives (28%). The main attractions visited by respondents to the survey included Alton Towers, Wedgwood Visitor Centre, Stafford Caste, Shugborough Hall, Dorothy Clive Gardens and the Coors Visitor Centre.

A list of attractions in Staffordshire, along with visitor numbers where available, are shown in the table below:

Admission Charging and Free Attractions in Staffordshire

Attraction	Visitor Numbers		Other Major Attractions (Visitor numbers not available)
	2005	2006	
Bass Museum (Coors Brewery)	58,000	46,000	Alton Towers
Biddulph Grange Garden	62,579	60,235	Amerton Working Farm
Boscobel House	10,908	12,245	Ancient High House
Brindley Mill	740	711	Borough Museum & Art Gallery
British Wildlife Rescue Centre	42,000	45,000	Cannock Chase Country Park
Drayton Manor Park	1,200,000	<i>Not Available</i>	Children's Farm, Middleton
Heart of the Country Centre	250,000	250,000	Churnet Valley Railway
Himley Hall and Park	200,000	<i>Not Available</i>	Coombes Valley Nature Reserve
Ilam Hall Country Park	50,000	50,000	Coors Visitor Centre
Lichfield Cathedral	100,000	100,000	Dorothy Clive Gardens
Moseley Old Hall	21,262	21,109	Etura Industrial Museum
Museum of Cannock Chase	48,501	48,848	Gladstone Pottery Museum
National Memorial Arboretum	65,000	65,000	Izaak Walton Cottage
Rode Hall	7,512	9,265	Lichfield Heritage Exhibition
Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum	3,711	6,913	Potteries Museum
Sandon Hall	85,310	86,000	Royal Doulton Crystal Visitor Centre
Shire Hall Gallery	95,284	136,922	Stafford Castle & Visitor Centre
Shugborough Hall	100,711	101,272	Tamworth Castle & Museums
Staffordshire Regiment Museum	11,923	15,123	Tittesworth Reservoir
Tutbury Castle	110,000	<i>Not Available</i>	Tutbury Crystal Glass
The Wolseley Centre	20,911	25,259	Uttoxeter Heritage Centre
Wall Roman Site (Letocetum)	5,474	4,247	Waterworld
Whitmore Hall	1,911	1,477	Wedgwood Visitor Centre

Source: Visit Britain, Visitor Attraction Trends - England 2006 & 2005.

Source: Staffordshire Tourism

For further information on visitor attraction trends go to www.tourismtrade.org.uk/MarketIntelligenceResearch/DomesticTourismStatistics/VisitorAttractions.

Tourism in Staffordshire

Accommodation in Staffordshire

There is a wide variety of accommodation within Staffordshire, varying from self catering cottages and bed and breakfast establishments through the growing sector of budget hotels to themed hotels at Alton Towers and 4 star establishments run by small private operators.

Accommodation in Staffordshire consists of approximately 11,262 bedspaces, 600 pitches and 790 units. Although Staffordshire has some 11,262 serviced bedspaces, there is a belief in the County that this current stock is not fully satisfying demand.

Indeed per head of population, Staffordshire has less bedspaces than any other County in the region, an issue that needs to be addressed.

This belief is supported by a report prepared by Locum Consultants in 2005 for the Southern Staffordshire Partnership. This estimated that lodges provide 43% of all available rooms in Southern Staffordshire (covering 6 District Council areas), three times the national average and twice the average in the US and France.

Furthermore apart from lodges, almost all of the other hotels in Staffordshire are of a 3 star standard or below and the 3 star standard hotels are generally mid range rather than at the top "red 3 star" end of the market. Concerns regarding the accommodation sector are reflected by visitor numbers. Whilst Staffordshire attracted 20.5 million day visits (the highest in the region) it attracted just 1.5 million overnight visitors, one of the lowest in the region.

Business Monitoring

The Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership has commissioned the Centre for Economic and Social Regeneration at Staffordshire University to undertake 6 monthly "Business Monitoring" reports to measure levels of business confidence, investment, future expectations and overall feelings towards the tourism sector in Staffordshire.

The most recent report of the Winter / Spring season between October 2006 and April 2007 highlights some of the following points:

- 51% of businesses reported growth in general over the period, whilst only around 30% indicated reduced business.
- There is a need to strengthen off-peak and mid-week markets – to stretch the season as far as possible, or even to de-seasonalise the tourism offer where feasible.
- 54% of businesses increased their business investment with 42% reporting no change.
- The greatest increases in business activity were recorded in the central and southern areas with average increases but significant decreases in the Moorlands.
- The recruitment and retention of high quality staff is a continuing challenge.

For further details on the 6 monthly "Business Monitoring" reports please contact Rick Ball 01785 353472 or Sian Knight 01785 353583.

Accommodation Stock in Staffordshire

Accommodation Type	No. of Bedspaces / Units
Hotel / Guesthouse / Inns	10,005 Bedspaces
Bed & Breakfast / Farms	1,257 Bedspaces
Self Catering	214 Units
Touring Caravans / Tents	578 Pitches
Static Vans	22 Pitches
Second Homes	576 Units

Source: Heart of England Tourist Board, The Economic Impact of Tourism 2005.

Note: Second homes data is based on the 2001 Census.

Tourism in Staffordshire

Employment in Tourism & Leisure

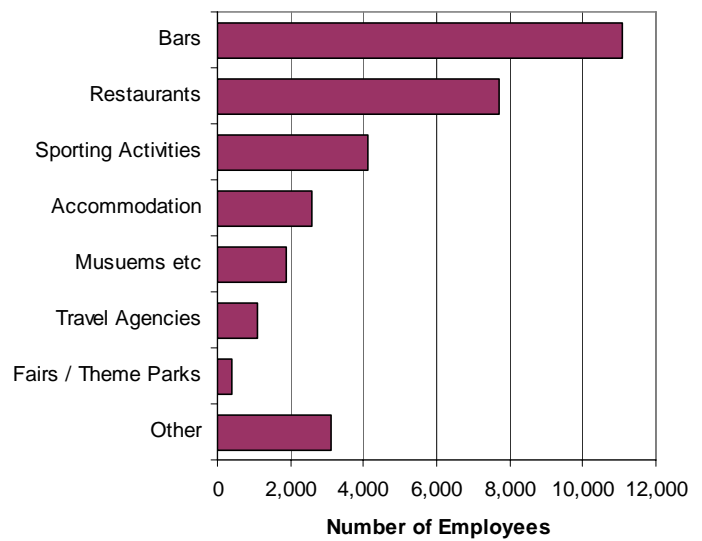
Employment in the tourism sector provides an important part of Staffordshire's employment. In 2005 tourism and its related sectors accounted for 9.9% of all employment in Staffordshire, equivalent to 32,000 jobs.

Among the constituent parts of the tourism sector, the most jobs numerically are within the hospitality industries (bars, restaurants and hotels). These jobs along with the majority of those in the tourism and leisure industry tend to be lower paid occupations by their very nature and in many cases are part-time and seasonally based. Between 2003 and 2005 there was a 17.8% increase in the number of people employed in tourism and leisure related industries.

In 2005, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands have the greatest proportion of total employment within tourism and leisure related industries. Tourism accounted for 12.6% and 12.2% of total employment within these districts respectively. Newcastle-under-Lyme had the smallest proportion of employment within tourism.

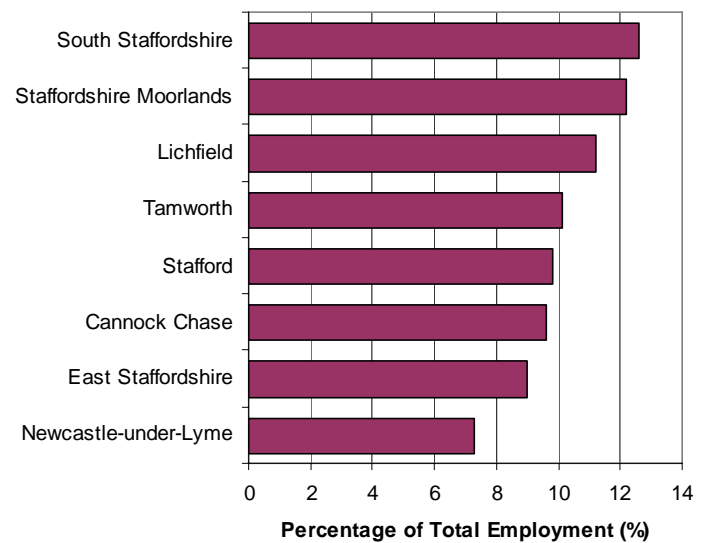
The largest absolute number of people employed within tourism and leisure related industries is within Stafford, with approximately 5,800 employees working within tourism in Stafford. The smallest absolute number of tourism employees is within Cannock Chase, with a total of 3,100 employees.

Tourism and Leisure Related Employment (Provisional 2005)



Source: Annual Business Inquiry, ONS/NOMIS

Tourism and Leisure Related Employment by District (Provisional 2005)



Source: Annual Business Inquiry, ONS/NOMIS

Tourism in Staffordshire

Recent Tourism and Leisure Related Developments and Investments

Staffordshire's tourism and leisure sector has been relatively dynamic over recent years, with expansion plans at major attractions such as Alton Towers, Drayton Manor Park and Waterworld, alongside the development of significant new hotels and smaller accommodation establishments. Some of the developments over recent years are highlighted below:

Tourism and Leisure Related Developments in Staffordshire

Trentham Gardens	Ongoing leisure development to south of The Potteries. Redevelopment of historic gardens, woodland walks, shopping and food and drink, as well as "monkey forest" and "aerial extreme" attractions. Premier Inn 3 star, 119 bedroom hotel due to open in 2008. A 5 star hotel is also planned, with a number of major hotel operators showing an interest.
Alton Towers	"Cariba Creek" water attraction now open at theme park, planning permission for extension to hotel granted in December 2006.
National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas	Armed Forces memorial centre built on site of former quarry at Alrewas near Lichfield. Armed Forces memorial to commemorate service men and women lost to war and terrorism since the end of World War 2 opened in October 2007.
Waterworld	Around £2million further development to Stoke-on-Trent aqua park, including restaurant, new slides and beauty salon. Hotel on site also proposed.
Lichfield City Centre	Significant redevelopment of city centre retail and leisure facilities including hotel, multi screen cinema and work to enhance visitor experience of Lichfield cathedral. Lichfield Cathedral will be resubmitting their InSpires Heritage Lottery bid in Spring 2008, to help fund an £8 million initiative to turn the Cathedral into an international visitor attraction.
Ramada Hotel Cannock	98 bedroom, 12 storey, 4 star hotel built adjacent to the M6 Toll near Cannock. Opened December 2006.
Drayton Manor Park	£4.5 million development of "Thomas World" (based on Thomas the Tank Engine) due to open Easter 2008. Planning approval for 72 room hotel due to begin construction in 2009.
Wolseley Park Development	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Headquarters at the "Wolseley Centre" popular local wildlife and nature conservation attraction.
Wedgwood Musuem	Wedgwood is launching its £9.5 million Museum in Spring next year, following a successful £5.8 million Heritage Lottery bid in 2005; this follows the £4.5 million invested in the Visitor Centre. The new Museum will house the Trust's 8,000 strong historic ceramics collection.

Source: Staffordshire County Council, Research Unit

Profile produced by:

Research Unit, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, Riverway, Stafford, ST16 3TJ.

Contact: Alison Bowyer Tel: (01785) 277453 Email: alison.bowyer@staffordshire.gov.uk

For further information on tourism in Staffordshire, please contact:

Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership, Development Services Directorate, Staffordshire County Council, Riverway, Stafford, ST16 3TJ.

Tel: (01785) 277397 Fax: (01785) 215286 Web: www.enjoystaffordshire.com

If you need a copy of this information in large print, Braille, another language or on cassette, please contact us.

Tourism in Staffordshire

Appendix 1: Organisation Structure

