RESPONSE AND RECOVERY PLAN
FOR TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

'RWhen the time is right'

JULY 2020
The purpose of a ‘Response and Recovery’ plan

This plan is designed to create a cohesive and imaginative strategy to attract visitors following the Coronavirus outbreak, and to guide tourism through a period of inevitable change.

Ribble Valley Borough Council and the Ribble Valley Tourism Association have come together to develop an approach that will:

- Deliver confident, consistent messages to existing and new audiences
- Use our limited resources effectively for maximum impact
- Develop new ideas collectively in order to maximise expertise
- Engage with local businesses, communities, and stakeholders, to support and champion the voice of tourism in Ribble Valley

Recovery will take time, and the timetable of this plan will need to remain both flexible and responsive to external change, so long as the future course of the pandemic and its resulting restrictions remains unclear. We do, nonetheless, have this opportunity to create a template for the restoration of the visitor economy, and maximise any available opportunities by working together.

Ribble Valley tourism and hospitality businesses have endured the most painful economic crisis of recent times, but there are good reasons to look forward to recovery in a spirit of optimism. By working together in providing a safe and welcoming destination, we will continue to overcome the present difficulties and achieve prosperity for our borough.

Cllr Stuart Hirst
Chairman of the Economic Development Committee,
Ribble Valley Borough Council

Ribble Valley tourism and hospitality businesses have recovered from difficult times before, and changing the way we operate, being creative and working together, it can recover again.

Amanda Dowson
Chairman of Ribble Valley Tourism Association

Ribble Valley is an incredibly special place, alive with innovation and home to many entrepreneurs. Tourism and hospitality businesses have recovered from difficult times before, and changing the way we operate, being creative and working together, it can recover again.

Amanda Dowson
Chairman of Ribble Valley Tourism Association

This plan relates specifically to the areas of tourism promotion and development, and not to the wider and external responsibilities of Ribble Valley Borough Council in response to the Covid 19 crisis.

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www.knowletop.com
Where are we now?

Tourism and hospitality form a major part of the Ribble Valley economy, both in terms of income and employment. The most recent figures indicate that Tourism in Ribble Valley contributes over £260 million into the local economy. In recent years, and certainly up until the current crisis it has been a most successful and rapidly expanding sector, in which both the economic impact and visitor numbers were rising by over 7% per annum.

Tourism and hospitality have been amongst the hardest hit sectors by the COVID-19 shutdown. The resulting restrictions, at the start of the Spring/Summer season, had a devastating impact on all tourism-related businesses, including the food and drink sector, wedding venues, accommodation providers, and attractions, along with a wide variety of support services and other supply industries. Some businesses may not reopen, significant refunds have had to be made, and countless staff were furloughed.

Uncertainty about the implications of social distancing and other restrictions, which may need to be introduced to ensure the safety of visitors, present further challenges to the viability of individual businesses, and to our retail centres.

Over the longer term the sectors most seriously affected in Ribble Valley by physical social distancing measures include -

- Dining experiences
- Weddings
- Group travel
- Residential / adventure centres
- Theatres/Cinemas
- Events

For these, intervention by way of promotion and support will need to be carefully programmed.

Support and Innovation

Many tourism and hospitality businesses have benefitted from the various programmes of central government support, many of which have been successfully administered at district level. Ribble Valley Borough Council was one of the best performing Councils in England in their prompt administration and distribution of Hospitality and Leisure grants. A good number of businesses have used the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to furlough their staff, and therefore avoid redundancies. A survey of the hospitality sector nationally reported 84% of businesses have used the scheme and only 2% have laid staff off. This is encouraging news for the recovery period, with a wealth of talent ready to return to work.

Many businesses have tried to remodel and provide alternative services during the lockdown, in order to generate at least some income, and to keep in contact with customers. There are also good examples where our businesses have supported their communities and key workers, including offering take-away services, donating to food banks, and making rooms available for quarantine purposes.

There have been some amazing examples of innovation during this time. Some businesses have kept in touch with their customers using social media and newsletters, or by staging virtual events, each designed to maintain contact ready for when they are able to reopen. Similarly, many operators have used lockdown to physically refurbish and refresh their business, and develop their skills, particularly with respect to the use of technology.

Innovation during lock down, keeping in touch with customers and communities
Challenges ahead

Looking ahead, there are many uncertainties, for example, it is hard to anticipate public behaviour post-crisis, nor can we predict how the virus and its control may yet develop. Some of the important considerations in our plan will be -

- Responding to fear – visitors hesitant about travelling, activities and accommodation
- Risk - different age bands or sections of the community may be more or less risk averse
- Booking methods and patterns will change as will payment methods
- Initial consumer markets are likely to be located in Lancashire and the North West
- Business viability due to social distancing measures and travel restrictions
- Anticipated short bursts of "over tourism" often influenced by weather
- Potential over-demand for what may be perceived as safer accommodation e.g. caravans, camping, holiday homes and self-catering
- Potential for local vs visitor conflict

The plan takes into consideration each of these points, resulting in broadening our tourism markets beyond those which historically, have been targeted, to embrace new markets. We will need a long-term approach, driving opportunities for all seasons, and encouraging a spread of visitors to help us enjoy sustained recovery.

Post virus opportunities

As restrictions are lifting, and people travelling more freely, competition, in terms of tourism marketing, is fiercer than ever. That is why it is so important for Ribble Valley, where tourism and hospitality are so integral to the to the local economy, to stay ahead of the game. Latest research indicates some very distinct consumer trends emerging from the crisis, from which we should take heart. These include -

- A boost in the UK domestic travel market
- The need for visitors to feel and be safe – both during travel and whilst at the destination
- A desire to visit open space and countryside, and experience nature
- Strong interest in visiting and staying relatively locally
- Greater interest in buying locally made products and eating locally sourced produce

The make-up of Ribble Valley’s tourism businesses, together with its location and physical geography, make it well placed to respond to these trends.

Consultation

This Response and Recovery plan has been the subject of wide consultation, albeit over a relatively short but necessary timescale.

We have received direct responses for which we are grateful, and we also used the facility of Ribble Valley Tourism Association’s weekly webinars to test some of the concepts.

It is fair to say that the consultation endorsed some clear messages, including:

- The crisis has brought the RV tourism community together and there are many benefits to be achieved by working collaboratively
- “Ribble Valley” is one of Lancashire’s strong and generic tourism brands, which people are keen to ‘rally behind’
- The food offer is particularly distinctive to Ribble Valley, and it should feature more significantly in tourism promotion
- The countryside is an under-maximised resource which could realise its potential as part of the recovery process
- By working together and being creative, Ribble Valley tourism has all the necessary ingredients to thrive in recovery from this crisis.

Evidence predicts a boom in domestic tourism, with a strong trend towards rediscovering the countryside, experiencing local culture and food, whilst keeping travel distances to a minimum.
A Two Phased Approach – the objectives and measures

There are two stages to this plan: Response, in which we react to the immediate impact and the necessary restrictions imposed, and Recovery planning for the way in which tourism and hospitality will need to adapt and change in the future. We now take each of these principles to describe the measures we aim to put in place before moving into the action plan, which has more detail about what we are planning to do.
Response phase

‘Remaining confident for the period during which closure restrictions are in place’

Objective 1 - Support messages from central government
▶ Disseminate and convey relevant information to businesses
▶ Promote sources of guidance and support
▶ Intelligence gathering

Objective 2 - Protect and support local businesses
▶ Distribute grant aid and promote other sources of support
▶ Publicise and support local best practice
▶ Facilitate knowledge sharing, networking and promote relevant training opportunities
▶ Communicate with key stakeholders to gain support for our Recovery Plan

Objective 3 - Maintain Ribble Valley brand awareness and develop tourism products
▶ Rebrand our marketing, keeping Ribble Valley very much in the mind of consumers
▶ Work with tourism businesses to meet any new restrictions and guidelines
▶ Develop new tourism products ready to be shared with the media
▶ Prepare targeted campaigns to attract residents and day visitors
▶ Monitor consumer behaviour to identify potential new markets
▶ Participate in wider campaigns to maximise exposure of the area and its businesses

Objective 4 - Stay engaged with communities and promote the importance of tourism
▶ Share relevant public information
▶ Promote an understanding of the importance of tourism
▶ Adapt and continue event planning
▶ Mitigate any potential impacts of ‘Over Tourism’

Businesses are working tirelessly to put all the necessary measures in place to offer a fantastic service in a safe environment for both customers and staff.
Social media campaigns reinforce our key messages
Recovery phase

“confidently adapting, as restrictions are relaxed”

Objective 1 - Reinforce Ribble Valley brand awareness

► Unify and deliver positive, up-beat messages to manage visitors’ perceptions – conveying ‘safe and welcome’ messages and ensuring Ribble Valley’s unique qualities stand out
► Engage with press and media identifying key opportunities for promotion

Objective 2 - Support local businesses

► Continued promotion of government guidance and support
► Support businesses in dealing with peaks and fluctuations in visitor interest
► Create opportunities for direct partner involvement in campaigns
► Continue to promote networking and knowledge sharing
► Facilitate and promote business-to-business support and training

Objective 3 - Create and promote safe and welcoming tourism

► Review all tourism marketing to ensure safe and confident messages are portrayed
► Encourage tourism businesses to embrace new regulations and join accredited schemes
► Promote examples of innovation and best practice
► Introduce safe and innovative ways to present information to customers

Objective 4 - Develop a programme to support different tourism themes

► Promote to new markets including younger audiences
► Launch a ‘Love the Great Outdoors’ campaign (walking, cycling, drives, and virtual experiences)
► Develop food and drink experiences
► Sustain promotion of important longer-term markets
► Promote Ribble Valley as ‘a place for all seasons’

Objective 5 - Manage tourism responsibly

► Monitor visitor flows, and indications of ‘Over Tourism’
► Promote seasonal offers and encourage a year-round calendar of events
► Promote and support responsible and safe visitor behaviour
Here are some of the headlines of our plan, lifted from the detailed action plans which follow in this document. In each of these we will be keen to work with partners to develop the detail and, when the time is right, to ensure their successful implementation.

Tom Pridmore
Tom.pridmore@ribblevalley.gov.uk
01200 414496
Our Love Ribble Valley Campaign headlines

Response Phase

Campaign ‘When the time is right’
Launch promotional video and social media marketing campaign

This campaign is designed to keep Ribble Valley very much in the mind of consumers, but with the clear message that we look forward to seeing them ‘When the time is right’. Once tourism businesses open, the messages change to ‘Now the time is right’.

Campaign #Love Ribble Valley
Celebrate individual businesses as they reopen by developing the #Love Ribble Valley brand to promote safe visitor experiences

This is important in the restoration of consumer confidence

Recovery Phase

Campaign ‘Love the Great Outdoors’

- New experiences itineraries and ‘Trustworthy Trips’ for driving, cycling, and walking, including visitor attractions, heritage and food

- Developing ‘Virtual Visits’ - Online virtual experiences of Ribble Valley

- ‘Walks with Taste’ – More self-guided walks with great, safe dining experiences

- Reviving other walking experiences including the Tolkien Trail and Ribble Way

These will maximise our open space and attractions, and, most importantly, direct economic benefits to businesses

Campaign – ‘Love Food and Drink’

- Relaunching a ‘Ribble Valley Food and Drink Trail’ as an interactive online promotion

- ‘Love picnics’ – Experiences of locally sourced foods enjoyed in great locations

- Investigate the potential for a week long Ribble Valley-wide series of food and walking events, culminating in the Clitheroe Food Festival

These will raise the profile of RV food and drink, championing them in the tourism offer

Campaign ‘Love Our Businesses’

- Celebrate individual businesses as they re-open or introduce change

- Support the redesign of tourism, ensuring it is safe and welcoming

- ‘Made in Ribble Valley’ - a celebration of arts, music, craft, and creativity

These will help to restore confidence, and retain interest in local products and talent

Campaign ‘Love Weddings’

- Promotion of Ribble Valley as a safe and welcoming wedding destination

It is critical to support this sector which is so important to our local economy

Campaign ‘Love Short Breaks’

- ‘A place for all seasons’ campaign – to grow year-round tourism, with an emphasis on midweek breaks

An opportunity to spread the value of tourism, making use of our natural beauty and available capacity

Campaign ‘Love Meeting’

- Promotion of ‘safe and welcoming’ venues for business and family occasions

Important in building confidence and creating new opportunities.

Our video ‘When the time is right’ reached tens of thousands of people’
## Measure: Support messages from central Government

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
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<th>Partners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disseminate and convey relevant information to businesses</td>
<td>Promote on website and circulars. Reinforce, in all communications, current government messages regarding the coronavirus</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Immediate and ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote sources of guidance and support</td>
<td>Regular ‘Tourism Update’ e-shots to tourism-related businesses, containing the latest guidance</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Initially every 10-14 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence gathering</td>
<td>Promote and respond to consumer and business consultations and research</td>
<td>ML VE/VB</td>
<td>As and when required</td>
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## Measure: Protect and support local businesses

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribute grant aid and promote other sources of support</td>
<td>Promote the availability of grant aid and other support through regular E-shots to businesses. Promote RVBC and RVTA websites as central points of reference</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Grants - ongoing as funds are available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicise and support local best practice</td>
<td>Features on social media platforms</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Ongoing during crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share good news to media and Lancashire audiences</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate knowledge sharing, networking and promote relevant training opportunities</td>
<td>Regular webinar meetings with business on various themes</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distribute the latest guidance on social distancing and safe practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>As it becomes available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with key stakeholders to gain support for our Recovery Plan</td>
<td>Involve stakeholders in the preparation of the plan and consult with stakeholders during English Tourism Week</td>
<td>RVTA and other stakeholders</td>
<td>English Tourism Week</td>
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‘Responding confidently for the period during which closure restrictions are in place’
### Measure: Maintain Ribble Valley brand awareness and begin to design new tourism products

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rebrand our marketing, keeping Ribble Valley very much in the mind of consumers</td>
<td>Launch promotional video ‘When the time is right’ during English Tourism week with underlying message of being ready soon for visitors</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>English Tourism Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with tourism businesses to review their offer in line with any new restrictions and guidelines</td>
<td>Circulate latest information through regular E-shots and RVTA webinars</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>E-shots every 10-14 days and weekly webinars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop new tourism products ready to be shared with the media</td>
<td>Prepare locally focused digital and social media campaigns around key early themes including walking, driving, and cycling, including a review of the Tolkien Trail and an expansion of ‘Walks with Taste’</td>
<td>Specific local communities, Targeted businesses</td>
<td>Ongoing ahead of recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare targeted campaigns to attract residents and day visitors</td>
<td>Draft social media marketing awareness material ready for when the restrictions are lifted</td>
<td>Targeted businesses</td>
<td>Ongoing ahead of recovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor consumer behaviour to identify potential new markets</td>
<td>Be prepared to alter course on campaigns and marketing, dependent on consumer behaviours to changing restrictions</td>
<td>AONB, RVTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in wider campaigns to maximise exposure of the area and its businesses</td>
<td>Contribute content and ideas to Marketing Lancashire and similar campaigns</td>
<td>ML, VE/VB</td>
<td>As opportunities arise</td>
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### Measure: Stay engaged with communities and promote the importance of tourism

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share relevant public information</td>
<td>Actively promote industry best practice and other measures to ensure confidence about tourism within the community</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote an understanding of the importance of tourism</td>
<td>Incorporate the positive aspects of the visitor economy into media releases</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt and continue event planning</td>
<td>Monitor any new guidelines relating to event management and work with event organisers to seek solutions for 2021</td>
<td>Event organisers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitigate any potential impacts of ‘Over Tourism’</td>
<td>In planning the various campaigns, take into consideration the potential for ‘over tourism’ and plan accordingly e.g. by promoting non-honeypots, seasonal experiences, and extended opening</td>
<td>AONB, RVTA</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RVTA** - Ribble Valley Tourism Association  
**AONB** - Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Service (LCC)  
**ML** - Marketing Lancashire  
**VB** - Visit Britain  
**VE** - Visit England (National Tourist Board)  

**References**
- Lancashire Covid-19 Safe Recovery Survey – Marketing Lancashire  
- From Survival to Recovery - An Assessment of the Prospects for the UK Hotel & Visitor Accommodation Industry 2020-2022 – Hotel Solutions  
- Tourism Management Institute Recovery Webinars
### Measure: Reinforce Ribble Valley brand awareness

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<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unify and deliver positive, up-beat messages, conveying ‘safe and welcome’ messages and ensuring Ribble Valley stands out</td>
<td>Relaunch promotional video incorporating more confident key messages</td>
<td>Various businesses</td>
<td>Upon restrictions being lifted</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop follow up video containing consumer activity</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use ‘Safe and Welcome’ narrative in all campaigns and communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage with press and media identifying key opportunities for press promotion</td>
<td>Target media contacts located within one hour’s drive time and drip feed relevant content eg new experiences, publications, and events</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>After restrictions are lifted, feed over a period of weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote key themes to specialist media including food, walking, cycling etc</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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### Measure: Continue to support local businesses

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<tr>
<td>Continued promotion of government guidance and support</td>
<td>Continue to promote opportunities for support and funding to businesses in the regular ‘Tourism Update’ newsletter</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Every 10-14 days as continues to be relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support businesses in dealing with peaks and fluctuations in visitor interest</td>
<td>Promote ‘Love to be Open’ social media campaign – celebrating individual businesses as they open up</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Upon restrictions being lifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support measures to redesign tourism, ensuring it is safe</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ongoing from restrictions being lifted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Launch ‘Made in Ribble Valley’ - a celebration of arts, craft, and creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Once sufficient relevant businesses are open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue networking and knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Continue to host business webinar events with the RVTA</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Gradually relaxing frequency from weekly to two monthly over time as appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promote suitable events organised by other parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate and promote business-to-business support and training</td>
<td>Support regular training and workshop events run by the RVTA in support of local businesses</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>RVTA timetable</td>
</tr>
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*all subject to further restrictions

'Confidently adapting, as restrictions relax but the way ahead remains uncertain'
### Measure: Create safe and welcoming tourism

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review all tourism marketing to ensure positive and confident messages are portrayed</td>
<td>Review each of the tourism websites to ensure the content is portraying the new language and portrayal of ‘safe and welcoming’ tourism</td>
<td>RVTA, VE</td>
<td>By mid-July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invest in new imagery for online and print material</td>
<td>Ensure that all businesses participating in promotional campaigns are adhering to new safety guidelines</td>
<td>VE, QIT, HSE</td>
<td>In accordance with each campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage tourism businesses to adhere to new regulations and join accredited schemes</td>
<td>Actively promote and encourage participation in safe and legal type accreditation</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>Regular weekly feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote examples of innovation and best practice</td>
<td>Actively seek out best practice and highlight on social media</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduce safe and innovative ways to present information to customers</td>
<td>Design ways in which information can be provided for visitors staying in Ribble Valley accommodation and via our visitor information outlets</td>
<td>RVTA</td>
<td>July 2020</td>
</tr>
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### Measure: Develop a programme of new tourism themes

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promote to new markets including to younger audiences</td>
<td>Devise specific marketing campaigns</td>
<td>Hospitality businesses</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and promote a ‘Families together’ campaign</td>
<td>Family-friendly businesses</td>
<td>August 2020</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote a new series of ‘Trustworthy Trips’ including walking, cycling, driving itineraries along with a selection of virtual experiences</td>
<td>RVTA, FA, UU</td>
<td>Staggered programme over 12 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviving the Tolkien Trail and promotion of the Ribble Way, including exploring the potential of linking accommodation and luggage transport</td>
<td>Parish Council, Neighbouring Councils</td>
<td>September 2020, Spring 2021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Ribble Valley as a place for all seasons</td>
<td>Seasonal campaigns based on midweek breaks, liked to walking, cycling etc</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>2021</td>
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### Measure: Manage tourism responsibly

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitor visitor flows and indications of over tourism</td>
<td>Monitor tourism carefully to ensure that ‘Over Tourism’ does not occur, especially in sensitive areas such as Bowland and Pendle Hill</td>
<td>AONB, Pendle BC</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote seasonal offers and encourage a year-round calendar of events</td>
<td>Actively identify opportunities for off season events and activities and support ‘Place for All Seasons’ campaign above</td>
<td>RVTA, ML</td>
<td>Autumn 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote and support responsible and safe visitor behaviour</td>
<td>Include in all campaign and marketing the need for responsible behaviour, for example, using the countryside code and the need to be mindful of the needs of local people</td>
<td>NFU, NE, AONB</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
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*all subject to further restrictions
This document has been produced by Ribble Valley Borough Council with the support of the Ribble Valley Tourism Association. It has been produced in response to the Covid-19 crisis and aims to guide tourism and marketing activity through a period of inevitable challenge and change. It remains a live plan and we always welcome ideas and feedback. Please contact Tom Pridmore on Tom.pridmore@ribblevalley.gov.uk or call 01200 414496.

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