

1 February 2023

Celebrating the Year of the Coast in Durham

Durham's spectacular heritage coastline is under the spotlight this year as part of a nationwide campaign to promote England's coast as a sustainable year-round destination.

2023 has been designated as the Year of the Coast and aims to bring coastal destinations together to showcase their diverse offers, while also raising awareness of the challenges faced by communities and businesses in these areas.

Visit County Durham, Durham County Council's tourism service, is a key partner in the campaign, which is being led by the National Coastal Tourism Academy.

Throughout 2023 and beyond, Visit County Durham will seize new opportunities to promote the Durham Heritage Coast, regionally, nationally and internationally. It will work with partners in neighbouring destinations to ensure the region's coastline, which stretches from Sunderland to Hartlepool, benefits from the campaign.

This includes promoting the Durham Coastal Footpath, an 11-mile walking route that takes in stunning grasslands, hidden denes, beautiful beaches and breath-taking views. The route is part of the England Coast Path, which – when it fully opens this year – will be more than 2,700 miles long, making it the longest marked walking route in the world. Walking is a key focus of the Year of the Coast, along with other themes and activities that bring the seaside to life for visitors, including wildlife, wellbeing, food and drink and events such as Seaham Food Festival.

Cllr Elizabeth Scott, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, said: "The Year of the Coast is a fantastic opportunity to raise the profile of the Durham Heritage Coast. This will attract more visitors throughout the year, thereby extending the tourist season, boosting the profits of local businesses and creating new jobs and opportunities for our residents. Sustainability and accessibility are also core themes within the campaign, which ties in perfectly with our inclusive approach to growing the county's visitor economy."

Ivor Stolliday, Chair of Visit County Durham Ltd, said: "The Durham Heritage Coast has a fascinating story to tell; from the discovery of archaeological finds dating back thousands of years, to the growth of industry in the 19th and 20th centuries, to its transformation into a landscape internationally recognised for its rare plants and wildlife. What's more, it is home to vibrant towns and villages, great events and a wealth of places to shop, stay overnight and enjoy delicious, local food. By working with partners who share our passion for coastal tourism, we can inspire new audiences to love, visit and protect our coastline."

East Durham businesses and organisations are also backing the campaign, including Seaham Hall Hotel, Dalton Park Outlet Shopping Destination and the SeaScapes Partnership, a coastal regeneration and conservation project being delivered by Durham County Council and partners across the region.

Continues...

Ross Grieve, managing director of Seaham Hall, said: “We are so lucky at Seaham Hall to be just steps from the stunning Seaham Beach, one of the highlights of the Durham Heritage Coast, and famed as being a hot spot for sea glass hunting. Our hotel celebrates the coast not only through our views, but in the Serenity Spa, with seaweed infused treatments by ishga, and al fresco dining to make the most of the sea air.

“Our new bungalow suites also offer uninterrupted views of the coastline, and our team are always on hand to suggest coastal walks to our guests. We are so proud of our coastal location and are thrilled to participating in the Year of the Coast campaign, to showcase what an amazing coast Durham has to offer.”

The Year of the Coast is just one of the initiatives Visit County Durham is undertaking this year to attract visitors to the county and support businesses. Other ongoing campaigns include Memorable Moments, which inspires people to make memories together in the county, and Spring Breaks, which showcases the county as the ideal staycation destination, with a particular focus on the half-term and Easter holidays.

To help people plan days out, short breaks and holidays on the Durham Heritage Coast, Visit County Durham has created a dedicated section on its consumer website at thisisdurham.com/yearofthecoast

For more information about the national Year of the Coast campaign, visit: <https://englandscoast.com/>

ENDS



All enquiries:

Lizzie Anderson

T: 07867907033

E: lizzie.anderson@visitcountydurham.org

Social Media: Twitter: @VCDBusiness | Facebook: VCD Business | LinkedIn: Visit County Durham

Notes to editors

Image caption: (From left) Ivor Stolliday, Chairman of Visit County Durham Ltd; Ross Grieve, managing director of Seaham Hall Hotel; Cllr Linda Williams, Cabinet member for Vibrant City at Sunderland City Council; Louise Harrington, SeaScapes beach care officer; and Cllr Elizabeth Scott, Cabinet member for economy and partnerships at Durham County Council, at Blast Beach in Seaham.

About

About Visit County Durham:

- Visit County Durham is the destination management organisation (DMO) for County Durham working on behalf of businesses and public agencies, we came into being on 1 April 2006.
- Our purpose is to provide strategic added value, coordination and leadership for tourism activity and the visitor economy in the county, working in partnership with public agencies, private sector, and tourism businesses. We deliver Durham County Council's destination management, destination marketing and place marketing functions. We are supported by a private, not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, with a board of directors.
- Visit County Durham assists the county to fulfil its potential as one of North East England's lead destinations, attracting visitors to the region from across the UK and from target overseas markets. Our objective is to ensure that the tourism sector performs to its maximum potential and brings economic benefits to the county in the form of wealth and job creation. Our broad aims are to attract people to the county by raising its profile and appeal, and to provide visitors with the best possible experience.