

in brief



Visit Brighton

The council's tourism arm, Visit Brighton, continues to work hard to raise the profile of the city on both the national and international stage, whilst also looking at ways to improve the visitor's experience of Brighton and Hove. May saw the publication of the a pocket sized guide to the city in conjunction with Time Out magazine, whilst this month they'll be launching a new visitor information desk at the Toy Museum on Trafalgar Street under Brighton station.

www.visitbrighton.com



Beds in Brighton

A new accommodation booking service launches on 1 June. Beds in Brighton will focus on providing tailor-made packages for leisure groups visiting the city.

www.bedsinbrighton.com

London Road masterplan

Brighton's London Road area could be transformed into a network of attractive avenues, streets and lanes if a vision outlined in a council report becomes reality. A masterplan for the area says something should be done to increase investment and improve the appearance, sustainability and traffic flows around what is key gateway to the city.

A consultation is currently underway and information can be found on the council website.

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

brighton means business

Brighton Visitor's monthly round-up of tourism news

Tourism Futures is Brighton's Future

The Tourism Futures initiative goes from strength to strength and now has a membership of 82 businesses based in Brighton & Hove, including Brighton Pier, SEALIFE and Brighton Dome, alongside numerous hoteliers, restaurateurs and retailers.

Members are all committed, by signing the Tourism Charter, to improving the crucial visitor economy of the city through improving local employment in the tourism and hospitality sector, whilst raising the skill level of existing employees within their businesses. Tourism Futures, through the quarterly Tourism Forum events, also offers excellent opportunities for managers and proprietors to discuss issues they face in their organisations and possible collaborations with like-minded businesses.

Working Links – a major Welfare to Work contract delivery organisation – has strived to ensure a high retention rate of previously long term unemployed candidates, making this employment initiative one of the most productive and high profile within the city in the past 12 months. Partnership and Provision Co-Ordinator Linda Shaw tells us: "Due to the success of the project, Brighton and Hove City Council has subsequently awarded further funding for 2009/10 in order to continue with the programmes. There is now a demand for places on the training and employers are recognising the impact on the quality of candidates applying for jobs within the sector".

Key businesses in Brighton have got firmly behind the initiative and directly benefited from their commitment. "We found the recent experience of allowing work shadowing to take place a positive one", says Jason Mannix, Human Resources Manager of Brighton Pier. "I was so impressed by the work done on the Pre-Employment Training scheme that I'm now working alongside Working Links and Job Centre Plus to bring a PET programme directly onto the Pier".

In addition to the employment and training benefits, Brighton Pier has created new commercial links with Brighton Dive Centre to offer a scuba diving experience off the maintenance deck of the Pier. "Without the Tourism Forum our relationship with the Mark and Joe of Brighton Dive Centre would never have formed," Jason adds. "It's been great forming relationships with other businesses in the sector to create new opportunities for visitors to our city".

Meanwhile, for existing employees, the courses provided free-of-charge to signatories to the Tourism Charter by City College have proved incredibly popular with businesses large and small. These courses have ranged from customer service and basic book-keeping through to visual merchandising and health & safety.

"Tourism Futures is a great way to improve your business through raising the skills of your staff and in turn improving your customer's experience", says Nick Mosley publisher of Brighton Visitor magazine. "It's also a straightforward way to contribute your own knowledge and experience for the positive growth of the tourism and hospitality sector within the city, and that can only be a good thing."

Tourism Futures has managed to accomplish so much over the past 18 months. "It's fantastic to see this partnership between the private and public sector really work for everyone involved", says Claire Mitchell, Chair of the Tourism Forum. "We're achieving everything we set out to achieve whilst having a lot of fun along the way; delivering courses businesses actually want; getting the long term unemployed into sustainable employment; and improving the 'Tourism Experience' in the City. It's good to see business members recognise if they invest their time into this Forum then they will get a lot out of it".

The next Tourism Forum will be hosted by Orb360 in their marquee on Devil's Dyke on the afternoon of Thursday 16 July. Transport will be provided from central Brighton by The Big Lemon Bus.

If you would like to find out more about the Tourism Futures, or to attend the next forum, then please contact Claire Mitchell on 07812 177 427.

what are members saying about Tourism Futures?

Max Leviston, General Manager, SEALIFE Brighton

"I was new to Brighton and my position in the Sea Life Centre in August 2008, so had a lot to contend with learning a new position, a new business, and a new city. When Claire from Engage Solutions came knocking on my door I signed up, but in all honesty I did not have high hopes that this forum would deliver what it said on the tin.

A few months went by and because I was putting nothing in, I was not getting much out. I then went to one of the quarterly meetings and began to meet other like-minded business heads and realised the power of networking through this forum. I not only developed new friends but also important business contacts always willing to sound ideas through and discuss ways to move Brighton tourism forward.

I have recruited all my staff through Working Links (and supported their work experience programme), or through sending out job descriptions through the forum mailing list. I have made use of the 'Train to Gain' packages offered by City College and the majority of my team have been on at least two training courses free of charge.

If you are unsure, my advice is sign up and give it a chance to see what benefits your business may gain as a result."

Hayley Plews, Manager, Build A Bear Workshop

"I have only attended two forums so far but I have been welcomed by everyone and I find them very informative. I feel it is a great opportunity to network and through the contacts I have already put a number of marketing initiatives into place that will benefit our business.

The training courses in which myself and my colleagues have also attended at City Collage have been very successful and my lower management team have found them very helpful in their development in, and understanding of, the retail sector. I would highly recommend these courses to allow both management and staff to gain a better understanding of ways in which to drive your business to success."