



## “Ding Dong the Tolls are Gone”

*-Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism gears up to welcome additional 1 million day visitors in 2019-*



Ahead of the Seven Bridge tolls being abolished next week, Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism is predicting that day visitors to the region could increase by as much as 15% next year, translating to almost an additional one million day trips and £30.2\* million in anticipated visitor spend.

**The area currently welcomes around 6.2 million day visitors spending an estimated £187 million.**

This region is significant as it covers a total area of over 1060 square miles, with almost 8000 people working in tourism across the three counties of Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire. It is also the only cross-border tourism body in the UK, with members spanning England and Wales.

*“We whole heartedly welcome the abolition of the Toll. It will be a truly joyous day for us all in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley. A growth of 15% in day trips is significant but well within our reach with a strong marketing campaign planned to lure new visitors and ensure that our existing visitors come back even more and stay longer”,* commented Helen O’Kane, Co-Chair of Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism.

“There are many people who hope to benefit way beyond the immediate impact it will have to be our commuters who will all have around £1,500 more in their

pockets each year and we hope some of this will be spent within the region too”, continued Helen O’Kane.

“Anecdotal evidence from our members has shown how the toll created a barrier to so many considering the region as a day trip destination from areas such as Bristol, South Gloucestershire and further afield in Wiltshire and the Mendips. These are the people who we will be focusing our message on first, families, day trippers and adventurers”, added Helen O’Kane.

Plus, the region’s members are all in agreement that there’s also a strong market for those ‘spur of the moment’ trips, popping out for dinner / lunch, or an event on a specific day.

*“The lifting of the toll can make that spontaneous decision to go for a day at the races even easier for our captive audience the other side of the bridge,”* said Rebecca King, Marketing Manager for Chepstow Racecourse.

With the uncertainties of Brexit and the current political turmoil it is widely felt that 2019 will be a year for Brits, especially families, to stay closer to home and be more cautious with spending. Another strong reason to put the ‘Forest’ on the map with those close in Bristol and the South West as the ‘bridge barrier’ is taken away.

*“There are already so many great ‘free’ activities for families such as our Family Cycle Trail and the Sculpture Trail at Beechenhurst. Take away the toll and I’m sure we will be top of the ‘must do’ list of value for money day trips for families in the South West,”* commented Dawn Thompson, Head of Recreation & Engagement (West England) of Forestry Commission England.

*“All these opportunities and what we already know are the predicted increases in bridge crossings following the lifting of the toll (11K per day across both bridges), make our target of 1 million extra visitors achievable,”* ended Helen O’Kane.

The entertainment, adventure and hospitality opportunities of the region are far reaching... from mountain biking, cycle tracks, zip-wires and kayaking, to the ancient trees of Puzzlewood, the deep caverns of Clearwell and the steam trains at magical Perrygrove. Lace up your boots to enjoy the Sculpture Trail or walk a section of the Offa’s Dyke national trail, or maybe visit one of the many castles, museums and great churches of the region including the iconic Tintern Abbey.

And, with the £5.60 saved:

- Head to [Beechenhurst Café](#) for a full ‘Woodmans’ fry up (£5.95)
- Take the family to [Puzzlewood](#) or [Perrygrove](#) and the toll saving will almost cover one child’s full entrance (£6/£5.90)
- Head to [Harts Barn Crafts Centre](#) and stop off at The Old Dairy Tearoom for a traditional cream tea (£4.50), with change in your pocket afterwards
- Stop off at [Tudor Farmhouse](#) and enjoy a glass of Journey Maker Chenin Blanc 2017 (£5.25)
- Pick up a couple of locally brewed beers at [Hillside Brewery](#) (£5.60)

- Head to the [Farmers Boy Inn](#) and buy one of their famous takeaway pies: Chicken pie (£5.50) or Vegetarian pie (£4.95)... plus lots more available
- Pop into the [Forest Deli](#) and grab a pick n' mix selection of tempting local cheeses and tasty treats (£5.60)
- Venture to [Krazy Golf](#) in Lydney for a 15-hole course (adult £4.50)
- Take the family to [Wye Valley Butterfly Zoo](#) and the toll saving will more than cover a child's entry (£4.50)
- Call into [MOOT](#) to buy local artisan crafts, unique homewares and gifts in Coleford. You're bound to find something for £5.60 or less!

For further information please go to [www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk)

-ENDS-

For more information and images contact Fiona Reece or Amy Hands at Travel Tonic PR [Fiona@traveltonic.co.uk](mailto:Fiona@traveltonic.co.uk) / [Amy@traveltonic.co.uk](mailto:Amy@traveltonic.co.uk)  
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Notes to Editor:

A spokesperson for the tourist board will be available for media comment on these issues, or alternatively locations for filming / or tourism partners to be interviewed can be arranged to a specified brief.

A selection of high resolution images of the destination is available as well as Severn Bridge images.

\* Source- The Economic Impact of Gloucestershire's Visitor Economy 2016  
- Forest of Dean district

<https://deanwyetourismbiz.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/forest-of-dean-2016.pdf>

### About Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism (WVFOD) was formed in 2006 and is the official Destination Management Organisation representing the interests of almost 400 members.

Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism is the destination management organisation for the "Dean Wye". The area covers the three counties of Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire and is the only cross border tourism association in the UK working with tourism businesses and stakeholders in Wales and England.

Managed by a 11-strong voluntary board, supported by professional advisors, the Forestry Commission and the AONB, it is funded by member subscriptions, the Forest of Dean District Council, Monmouthshire Council (via VisitWales), the Forestry Commission, and grant funding for specific projects.

Tourism in the [Forest of Dean](#) and [Monmouthshire](#) contributes £141.5 million and

£158.1 million respectively to the local economies. WVFOD members include tourist attractions, accommodation providers, outdoor activities, pubs & restaurants, food producers, events and services. The Association delivers four key functions:

1. To represent the local tourism industry at local and national level
2. To promote and raise the profile of Wye Valley and Forest of Dean
3. To support members to improve and market their businesses
4. To enable member businesses to work together

Any business interested in being part of Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism should visit [www.wyedeantourism.co.uk](http://www.wyedeantourism.co.uk) or contact [membership@wyedeantourism.co.uk](mailto:membership@wyedeantourism.co.uk).