

Looking forward to summer following Epic Easter

The Year of Legends 2017 has had a great start with Wales being named as one of the top must-visit destinations globally from the likes of Lonely Planet TripAdvisor, Wanderlust and Rough Guides. The recently launched Year of Legends campaign, which includes an advert starring Luke Evans has also been hailed as a game changer by industry leaders. With the busy holiday season in full flow, the work of marketing Wales continues.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

“Campaign work now continues to convert early interest and opportunities arising from the weak pound into bookings for the summer. A boost to the Visit Wales budget means that there is £26.3m available to invest in marketing and product development this year – this 41% increase has enabled us to pull together a more ambitious programme than ever before for 2017.

“In what is an extremely competitive market place, tourism in Wales is in a strong position. We’ve had two record breaking years and our aim is to sustain growth – being aware that global events and competition will mean that not every year will be a record breaking one. The overall picture – taking into account tourism day visits, international visitors as well GB overnights visits – indicates that Wales saw an increase of almost 16% in overall tourism volumes during the first nine months of 2016.”

Figures published today shows that one of the measures of tourism performance – [The Great Britain Tourism Survey](#) – showed a decrease in the number of British staying visitors. These provisional figures for overnight visits from the GB for the year ending September 2016, are one indicator of tourism performance in Wales. Although they show a fall of 1.5% in terms of trips, this is in line with figures for the GB as a whole.

The Economy Secretary, continued:

“Last week I announced that £24m will be available for the development and marketing of tourism through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 -2020. With the existing EU tourism funded projects currently in development with partners in Wales, we are looking at more than a £100 million investment in the sector up until 2020 which will have a big impact on Wales’ competitiveness in the global marketplace.

“We’re also poised to make the most of one of the greatest shows on earth – the UEFA Champions League Final – coming to Cardiff in June. This will not only mean a boost to visitor numbers and economic impact during the event – but will also have an impact on Wales global profile long after the matches come to an end.

“We look forward to working with the industry on making 2017 a legendary year for tourism in Wales.”

Confidence is high among the industry following the first Bank Holiday of the Year.

The EPIC installation had a great reception at Margam Park.

Margam Park Manager Michael Wynne said:

“We are delighted that Visit Wales chose Margam Country Park as the first stop on the EPIC sign’s tour of Wales during the Year of Legends campaign, and the response has been fantastic. We’ve had a lot of visitors to the park over the Easter Weekend and many selfies have been taken in front of the sign already!

“Margam Park has a long history and more than a fair share of its own myths and legends so this year’s campaign is a great way to showcase what we have to offer. Our bank holiday events saw the park host some epic battles involving medieval knights, archers and horsemen and we are looking forward to welcoming visitors throughout the Easter holidays and beyond to enjoy the beautiful surroundings here at the park.”

Speaking on behalf of The Welsh Rarebits Collection, Wales’ premier marketing consortium for the best independent boutique hotels, Mike Morgan, said :

The whole sector has benefitted from continued capital investment by our member Hoteliers. We know, from over 30 years of marketing high end hotels, that there is always strong demand for genuine quality, but that intangible ‘Croeso’ helps us to compete on the global stage. A notable Year of Legends campaign is the icing on the cake, and Visit Wales has given us all something to get behind and take the Welsh hospitality industry to the world. A strong set of Easter figures usually points to a busy summer season, and we can’t wait to welcome the many new converts to Wales who are visiting for the first time as a result of the exchange rate.

Following refurbishments over the winter months, Folly Farm had a busy start to the holiday season:

Chris Ebsworth, Managing Director at Folly Farm, said;

“We’re feeling confident about the season ahead following heavy investment in a new visitor entrance and gift shop, a new pirate themed playground and improvements to several of our zoo enclosures. Easter is generally a good measure for the season and

we've had an excellent weekend with visitor numbers up by 25%. Visit Wales' marketing campaign for this year is bold and confident, building on their success last year and we feel that Pembrokeshire is well placed to play a significant role in helping Wales achieve long term success."