

REPORT OF RANGER SERVICE MANAGER

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF SUMMER RANGER PROVISION NORTH AND SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with a review of the 2018 season for the North and South Seasonal Summer Ranger roles.

Background

Following the successful appointment of a South Summer Ranger in 2017 we extended the approach to North Pembrokeshire following the closure of Newport Information Centre last winter. The two rangers were tasked with providing on the spot information and activities in locations where there is a high footfall of visitors and where interaction with a ranger could complement and add to the visitor experience in the north area between St Dogmaels and Fishguard and in the south between Manorbier and Amroth.

The Rangers' Role

The rangers' remit was to provide opportunities to increase visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the National Park by –

- Providing information about the National Park to the public through a mobile presence on beaches, harbours and at events
- Providing family activities to encourage people to make the most of their visit
- Encouraging visitors to venture beyond the beach/town
- Explaining what the National Park is and what makes it special.
- Developing a working relationship with other visitor and information services to provide a co-ordinated offer of National Park information and activities in the local area.
- Making regular contact with businesses reliant on tourists in the area such as campsites, shops, cafes and accommodation providers to ensure they had up to date 'what's on' and other NP information and to answer queries or pass on concerns.

The rangers were employed from June to September 2018 and were based from small liveried vans. Once again we were able to provide a fully bilingual service and the Rangers provided a regular bilingual presence on social media.

Cost

The total cost for provision of this service was £18,800 which includes salary and on-costs, vehicle, equipment and telephone.

Achievements

- The Rangers engaged a total of 2,681 people. 85% of these participated in Ranger led activities; in the south area this represented an increase in participation of 62% from last year. A stand was provided at Newport Carnival, the Opening of the Medieval Pottery Kiln at Newport Memorial Hall, Cardigan Agricultural Show, Nevern Agricultural Show and at the Small World Theatre Cragen Sea Monster events at Tenby North Beach and Goodwick. A large scale beach art event was organised on Tenby North Beach.
- The average attendance for each day's activities was 27 people with activities offered including crab catching, rock pooling, beach cleans and beach games
- The Rangers were in weekly contact with over 120 local businesses with a large number displaying the Ranger's weekly schedule for visitors. An information pack for businesses was created by each Ranger so that their staff could pass on locally relevant information about the National Park to the general public.
- The North Ranger presented at the 'Destination Pembrokeshire' forum to local businesses about the new role and how he could assist them for the season.
- The South Ranger was involved in 2 TV interviews which have been viewed over 11,800 times online.
- In the South area 24% of those engaged had no previous knowledge of the National Park, with over 50% of the visitors at Tenby South and Saundersfoot having no knowledge at all prior to speaking to the Ranger
- Excellent feedback was received from both visitors and local businesses and organisations both face to face, through social media and through an online survey. A sample is provided in the appendix.

Areas for further development / improvement

- To consider wet weather alternatives working with partner venues such as Tenby Museum, village halls or our Centres.
- Ranger activities are popular and on fine days we could offer any number of activities at any number of venues so we need to carefully consider what we want each person to take from their interaction with a Ranger and where we can target this activity to best effect.
- Additional information and display resources to provide an alternative to our information caravan to be used at a variety of venues throughout the summer would be extremely beneficial. There is no doubt that the more visible the presence the more visitors are drawn in to engage with the Rangers. The Ranger Service Manager is looking at a number of ways this could be achieved for next season.

Conclusion

The Summer Ranger presence in North and South Pembrokeshire has been well received by visitors, businesses and local communities. Whilst short duration seasonal posts cannot be seen to replace the service offered by the Information Centres, the Ranger's presence has provided reassurance to communities that the National Park Authority is committed to providing services to visitors. Many of the visitors engaged by the ranger would not have participated in a National Park event had the ranger not been present on the day, and their feedback indicates that the Ranger's work helped them to learn about and experience more of the special qualities of the National Park.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members note the contents of this paper and endorse this approach to provision of visitor services.

(For further information, please contact Libby Taylor, Ranger Service Manager)

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Appendix 1

Feedback from Stakeholders

“It was great for holiday makers to have someone in the area that could supply information about free activities available, particularly in the school holidays. Very informative with his emails...and a lot of people attending even on a wet day. Perhaps a village hall could be used in wet weather”

Osborne Shop, Amroth

“Having the Ranger in the area made sure that there was always a touch-base contact for PCNPA expertise and advice. It also meant that we could actively get involved in a series of joint ventures with PCNPA that we fun and informative and professionally organised. Guto did a superb job this summer.”

Tenby Museum and art Gallery

“It was the first time we had a NP Ranger doing Summer Activities on the beach and it was great we could inform the visitors about this excellent role. Having the poster placed in our window each week was helpful and we could also guide people to go and do other activities in other areas. We really hope that the PCNPA decide to employ another Summer Ranger in 2019!”

Newport Ice Cream Shop

“Ewan always popped in to let us know what activities he was doing in the harbour. Having him around attracted more people and also created a fun environment for all ages. It would have been nice to have had him here more often”

Café on the Quay, Lower Town Fishguard

“I really enjoyed taking part in the rock pooling on Poppit beach with Ewan. He was really busy but made sure he spent time with everyone. As a local B&B owner, I made sure that I told all my guests to take part in the Summer Rangers activities- what a fantastic initiative, plus it was FREE!!

Bethsaida B&B, St Dogmaels

Feedback from Visitors

Always visible, super friendly and engaging. Excellent source of info with mix of educational (enviro impact particularly) and fun / activities available locally. Superb ambassadors for the National Park. Genuinely one of the best NP initiatives I've seen in recent years.

– online survey response

We had a great time crabbing with Ewan at Newport Parrog this evening. The kids (and adults) loved it , they learnt so much and enjoyed every minute! Diolch

- Facebook Recommendation

Great time today with Ewan at Poppit Sands. He was very informative and inspirational to the kids. They had a great time investigating all the little creatures in the rock pools and Ewan was a great encouragement. Definitely a must-do if you are in the area.
- Facebook recommendation

My grandchildren had a really good time doing some of your activities on Saundersfoot beach, and are keen eco friendly people at their schools. Thanks for taking the time! It's good to see someone cares.
- visitor by email

Hi, met Guto on the beach at Tenby today whilst he did some play work with my daughter with my daughter. I deal with the public through my work and wanted to say what an excellent and natural communicator Guto is. A credit and benefit to your organisation. Thanks
- Visitor

Absolutely super day crabbing in Fishguard Harbour with the fabulous Ewan. It was definitely one of the highlights of our week in Pembrokeshire. What a wonderful job you guys do Thank you!!
- Facebook recommendation

