

Westminster Hall Debate

**Potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on UK tourism (Nigel Huddleston,
Conservative, Mid Worcestershire)**

Wednesday 12 October 2016

Summary

- Tourism in rural areas has huge potential not only to underpin local economies but also the national economy, while supporting local farmers, producers and making the most of our country's natural assets. The areas for growth include food and drink tourism, which can generate a year round tourism offer, and the opportunities shooting and fishing offer, which not only bolster local economies but enable people to engage with the natural environment.
- Shooting visitors from Europe contribute significantly to the rural economy. We believe we should retain free movement for sporting tourists and would be disappointed if additional and un-necessary restrictions were placed on them. We would fully support the retention of the current system of the European Firearms Pass (EFP).
- Rural tourism, playing its fullest part in the European tourism market, is a huge economic opportunity. With imagination and flair, we can market our heritage, and the interest it engenders for the nation's benefit over the long term.
- We need a well-integrated tourism strategy, which promotes and protects rural tourism following the vote to leave the EU.

Introduction

- The Countryside Alliance works for everyone who loves the countryside and the rural way of life. Our aim is to protect and promote life in the countryside and to help it thrive. With over 100,000 members we are the only rural organisation working across such a broad range of issues.
- The Countryside Alliance welcomes this debate on the potential effect of the UK leaving the EU on UK tourism.
- Tourism is big business in this country. The UK is the 8th most visited country in the world and people come to experience our culture and heritage and visit locations which inspired democracy, industry and the arts. Coupled with this, London is the second most internationally visited city in the world, rightly famous for its museums, theatres and galleries.¹
- Yet only around 17% of visitors left London and the major cities to visit the countryside.² Many visitors are therefore missing out on the British countryside, its county towns and villages and the rural tourism industry is losing out on potential

¹ United Nations Travel Organisation, 2016, Tourism Barometer

² International Passenger Survey
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income. This is why we should be encouraging more people to visit our most precious natural asset.

- Rural tourism provides an opportunity to escape to the countryside for European tourists, providing recreation, tranquillity, local food and drink, culture and a chance to engage with the natural environment, which can also make a contribution to the nation's health by increasing physical activity and outdoor recreation.
- There are many beautiful parts of the world but few have the range of landscapes our comparatively small island has to offer. From the Lake District, Exmoor, the Chilterns and the Cotswolds, to the North York Moors the English countryside is astonishingly beautiful and diverse, and should be a 'must do' on anyone's travel 'bucket list'. Therefore it is encouraging that Visit England is reporting an increase in visitor numbers to the countryside with holidays taken in the countryside increasing 12% between 2006 to 2012.³ However, we must build on this and continue to attract visitors from overseas.

Opportunities with Brexit

- Rural tourism in England contributes at least £10 billion per year to the economy, making up a substantial part of the overall £73 billion value of tourism in England.⁴ It makes a significant contribution to the rural economy, supporting village shops and services, jobs and businesses, and it is crucial to ensuring the long-term sustainability of our countryside. The jobs which are supported by rural tourism – 380,000 in England alone - encourage people to live, work and bring up their families in these communities.⁵
- This is a positive story across the country, and in areas such as West Somerset, which are particularly reliant on rural tourism, where a quarter of all jobs there are in the tourist sector. This is due in part to a good relationship between the private and public sectors, with the National Parks working well with local hostellers and activity enterprises. A further reason behind its success is the draw of country sports enthusiasts from within the UK and abroad to participate in hunting, shooting and fishing in the counties of Devon and Somerset.
- Country sports are not only part of Exmoor's heritage but, as our own research shows they also account for 90% of winter tourism in the area. This maintains employment in otherwise challenging circumstances and provides hotels, bed and breakfast establishments and pubs with vital income in the winter months. Indeed, many businesses would not survive without this trade.
- The importance of buying local and supporting small producers has grown significantly over the last few years and the growth in food and drink tourism is also a success story on which we need to capitalise. This represents a major component of tourism expenditure in rural areas. Promoting local food and drink as part of a tourism strategy can deliver additional economic and environmental benefits; including supporting diversification of farms and producer businesses, creating additional demands for skills and training, and reducing food miles and carbon emissions. Additionally the promotion of local food and drink increases cultural identity and community pride, which in turn makes an area a more attractive tourist offer, while also ensuring the resilience of the local supply of food and supporting our farmers and small producers.

³ Visit England, 2013, Domestic Leisure Tourism to England's Countryside

⁴ Visit England, 2013, Domestic Leisure Tourism to England's Countryside

⁵ <http://www.cabi.org/leisuretourism/news/5555>

- Brexit should lead to a renewed tourism strategy to maximum tourism from the EU and around the world.

Challenges with Brexit

- There are many challenges which face rural tourist businesses and tourists in visiting the countryside from Europe. From poor public transport (only 6% of tourists use public transport to visit the countryside⁶) and broadband (48% of rural premises can't get 10Mbit/s⁷) to legislation and planning. It sometimes feels that the Government does not value rural tourism. This is not even to mention the great British weather which can determine whether a tourism season is a success or failure.
- To overcome these challenges we need a well-integrated tourism strategy which addresses the challenges of delivering rural tourism while ensuring it attracts tourists from overseas and meets the needs of local communities, while providing year round benefits for all.
- Brexit must not lead to un-necessary restrictions on tourist visits from the EU or the loss of EU wide provisions such as the EFP and pet animal movements etc.

European Firearms Pass

- To continue to support shooting tourism we believe we should retain the free movement of sporting tourists and would be disappointed if additional restrictions were placed on them. We would fully support the retention of the current system of the EFP.
- If you reside in the EU, a EFP is the single document required to enable firearms owners to travel around the EU for sporting purposes. The UK is one of three member state which doesn't accept the EFP as a single document to allow EU nationals to enter the UK with firearms. A police issued 'British Visitor's Permit' (BVP) is also needed.

Facts and Figures

Value of Shooting and Angling to the Rural Economy

- Shooting and fishing have huge potential to contribute to the tourism offer in rural areas, benefitting not only local economies, but the natural environment.

Shooting

- The contribution of shooting to the UK economy is valued at £2 billion (GVA) according to a 2014 report⁸ carried out by the Public and Corporate Economic Consultants⁹ (PACEC) on behalf of a number of shooting organisations. The study found that:
 - Shooting supports the equivalent of 74,000 full-time jobs.

⁶ Visit England, 2014, Domestic Rural Tourism

⁷ Ofcom, 2015, Connected Nations Report

⁸ PACEC, 2014, The Value of Shooting - The Economic, Environmental and Social Contribution of Shooting Sports to the UK

⁹ Carried out on behalf of the Countryside Alliance, the Country Land and Business Association and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, in consultation with the Game Conservancy Trust

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- Shooting is involved in the management of two-thirds of the rural land area.
 - Two million hectares are actively managed for conservation as a result.
 - £250 million is spent each year on conservation by people who shoot.
 - 3.9 million work days are spent on conservation – the equivalent of 16,000 full-time jobs.
 - At least 600,000 people shoot (live quarry, clay pigeons, targets) and at least 1.6 million people shoot live quarry with airguns.
 - People who shoot spend £2.5 billion each year on goods and services, bringing income into rural areas, particularly in the low-season for tourism. The research shows that an established shoot generates local economic benefits for businesses in a radius of up to fifteen miles.
 - The figures show that the amount spent on shooting (£2.5bn) equals almost 10% of the total amount spent on outdoor recreation in a year, which has been measured at £27bn by the Sport and Recreation Alliance.
 - Supervised shooting experience by young people encourages responsibility and discipline at an early age. Those who learn to shoot when they are young are usually the best and safest shots. The degree of skill required for participation in competitive shooting at elite level demands training from a very young age. It is also one of the few sports where able bodied and disabled competitors can compete together.
- Shooting represents a massive private investment in the local economy of the uplands and ensures the future of our heather moorland at no cost to the public purse benefiting all those who engage in outdoor recreation in these areas.
 - There are around 149 estates with grouse shooting in England and Wales and The Moorland Association estimate that in England and Wales grouse shooting has a turnover of £67.7 million per year and as an industry supports the equivalent of 1,520 full time equivalent jobs¹⁰.
 - The Moorland Association members in England and Wales spend approximately £50 million per year on environmental and landscape management.

Angling

- Angling is worth more than £3 billion to the UK economy and the rod licence raised nearly £23 million last year for the Environment Agency to use for management of inland water.
- The Environment Agency (*Economic Evaluation of Inland Fisheries*) in 2007 found that “freshwater angler gross expenditure across the whole of England and Wales was £1.18 billion”.¹¹

¹⁰ <http://www.moorlandassociation.org/economics3.asp>

¹¹ Environment Agency, 2007, Economic Evaluation of Inland Fisheries, p51
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- A report into the value of sea angling commissioned by Defra published in 2004 calculated that the direct spend by recreational sea anglers in England and Wales was £538 million, and the total spend of the sector was around £1.3 billion.¹²
- A Defra survey conducted in 2012 on the economic and social value of recreational sea angling showed that this figure had increased to over £2 billion total spending, and sea angling supported more than 23,000 jobs (these figures include the contributions of the direct and indirect effects of angling).¹³
- In 2007 the angling industry generated more than 37,000 jobs in England and Wales.¹⁴
- Market research carried out for the Angling Trust based on lifestyle interviews found that 3.5 million UK adults either occasionally or regularly coarse, game or sea fished.¹⁵
- A 2012 Defra survey of sea angling revealed the average spend per individual in the sea angling population was estimated to be £1,394 per year - £761 on trip related costs and £633 on major items.¹⁶ Local businesses in coastal communities also benefit directly from spend on accommodation and charter boat hire, amongst other things.
- Nearly four million days of sea angling took place in England in 2012 and between 1,000 - 4,000 angling trips are enough to generate one full time equivalent job per year.¹⁷

Value of Local Food and Drink to the Rural Economy

- Sales of local food and drink totalled almost £10 billion across England in 2013, almost £3 billion of which was sold in rural areas.¹⁸
- Expenditure on local food and drink is significant and visitors are estimated to account for a significant proportion of these sales.¹⁹
- Total tourism expenditure on local food and drink have been estimated to total £2.6 billion across England in 2013, of which £1.4 billion was estimated to be spent in rural areas. This suggests that tourists account for 50% of local food and drink sales in rural areas (comprising 5% of sales in retailers and 63% in food service outlets).²⁰
- This expenditure is estimated to support 81,000 jobs and £1.5 billion of GVA across rural tourism economies in England.²¹

Recommendations

- Tourism in rural areas has huge potential not only to underpin local economies but the national economy, while supporting local farmers, producers and making the most of our country's natural assets. This is why we need to ensure the UK is still an

¹² Drew Associates, 2004, Research into the Economic Contribution of Sea Angling

¹³ Defra, 2013, Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England, p3

¹⁴ Environment Agency, 2007, Economic Evaluation of Inland Fisheries, p5

¹⁵ Angling Trust, 2012, Fishing for Life, A national strategy for getting people into fishing 2013-2018

¹⁶ Defra, 2013, Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England, p5

¹⁷ Defra, 2013, Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England, p1

¹⁸ Defra, 2016, Local food and drink

¹⁹ Defra, 2016, Local food and drink

²⁰ Defra, 2016, Local food and drink

²¹ Defra, 2016, Local food and drink

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attractive destination to European visitors is important and proposals invigorating rural tourism in England are to be particularly welcomed as there are great opportunities to promote visiting England beyond the boundaries of the M25. The Countryside Alliance proposals are:

- Promotion of the natural environment and country sports as part of a tourism strategy to encourage more people, both from within the UK and abroad, to visit more of England's rural places, for longer and at all times of the year.
- Tailored support for farmers and rural residents to diversify into tourism and grow their businesses. Including providing support for innovation, training, marketing, funding advice, mentoring and networking - together with integrating new approaches to food and drink production and distribution and country sports tourism.
- Ensure visitors' experiences are balanced with the need to preserve the environment and the character of local communities.
- Review business regulations related to tourism ensuring they are proportionate and reduce red tape to avoid over-burdening small businesses.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of 'buying local produce' amongst visitors. A strong local food and drink offer can enhance the quality of the local tourism product and influence the choice of destination for visitors. It can also enhance the local identity and reputation of areas and offer new recreational shopping opportunities for visitors. This will also attract additional tourism expenditure and encourage greater expenditure per visit, thereby supporting more economically productive jobs, higher added value, and providing support for economic regeneration.
- The marketing and promotion of specialist food products such as game and cheese must be closely integrated into tourism strategies and promoted online through an interactive map.
- Improve broadband infrastructure and digital skills to ensure tourism businesses are making the most of this digital world and ensures that as tourists are becoming more reliant on technology to access information about attractions, travel and book accommodation that the information is available at their fingertips.
- Public transport must be integrated with tourism attractions in rural areas.
- Extend the tourism season as seasonal unemployment is a major issue in many rural locations. Promotion of country sports and food and drink tourism have huge potential to support year-round tourism as they are less weather dependent and can provide a tourism offer outside of the peak holiday periods.
- The economic contribution of overseas country sports tourists make to rural economies cannot be underestimated. Brexit negotiations must take this into account and ensure no unnecessary or bureaucratic burdens are placed on them through restrictive movement of firearms.