

Dear Fellow Residents,

An open letter to the residents of Exmoor

We are the tourism organisations that support Exmoor and its surrounding areas and towns (Greater Exmoor). We want to assure you that we recognise your concerns and are mindful of your safety and that of your families and friends. We want to give you an opportunity to understand our position on tourism at this time and the work we are doing to support tourism recovery across Greater Exmoor.

We are not encouraging tourism to the area at this time. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis we have promoted “Visit Exmoor, Later.” and this remains our message today. This is in line with updated government guidelines which has increased the ability to travel further for exercise and fresh air, but does not allow for the re-opening of hospitality and tourism businesses at this time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all of us who live and work within Greater Exmoor. The effects will be felt for many years to come. We are focused on supporting our businesses to open safely and re-welcome tourism to the area at the point it is safe to do so, when government advice supports this.

This focus is important. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Exmoor National Park welcomed over 2m visitors a year. Tourism accounts for approx. 60% of all employment within Exmoor National Park and has brought an estimated £368m a year to the Greater Exmoor rural economy*.

- Many of our local retail and hospitality businesses will not survive without tourism income.
- Our shops, cafes, pubs and restaurants rely on both local and visitor economy.

The survival of these businesses is vital to maintain local services and amenities within our communities and to provide income and employment for a large proportion of our population.

As we look ahead to further lifting of restrictions in the future it will be imperative that our tourism and hospitality businesses and visitors act responsibly and within government guidelines. Part of our role is to support tourism businesses and visitors to adapt to criteria that will meet safety, social-distancing and hygiene standards.

If you would like to understand more about the work we are doing and view the area tourism impact assessment, you can view our Tourism Recovery Plan* on the link provided below which has been developed in partnership with the National Park Authority and District Councils.

We recognise that we will all play a vital part in providing a warm welcome to visitors when restrictions have been further lifted. We are stronger together and will continue to communicate across our communities as we move forward. Please feel welcome to contact Visit Exmoor director@visit-exmoor.co.uk with your questions and comments and we will share with your town tourism representatives and respond to you.

Kind regards,

