



# Tourism Product Research

## Executive Summary

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Cronifa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu  
Gwledig; Ewrop yn Buddsoddi  
mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig  
The European Agricultural Fund for  
Rural Development: Europe Investing in  
Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

## **Executive Summary**

The aim of the project was to provide a comprehensive mapped audit of tourism product in the rural wards of Bridgend CBC. In turn this audit would inform future marketing and development. The audit would also be represented in a digital map format in order to give an idea of spatial relationships between products.

The audit was based on desk and field based research along with a detailed programme of community consultation. The consultation was also intended to build community 'ownership' of tourism within the rural wards.

In addition to the audit, the consultants were keen to make some recommendations/suggest some creative ideas which would help inform the future strategy for tourism in rural Bridgend.

The audit identified over 270 assets as follows:

- 28 accommodation providers
- 110 attractions (including landscape assets; crafts; folklore sites etc)
- 62 activity related assets
- 78 hospitality/catering providers
- 14 event related assets
- 15 other assets (e.g. shopping; choirs/bands; toilets etc)
- 6 projects currently in development

Analysis of businesses within the audit revealed that the local audience was crucial to the survival of the product. It was, however, encouraging to note that around 40% of the businesses who responded already received significant business from non-local/overseas customers.

In terms of market segments, most operators cited that they relied on a range of users; those particularly noted were locals (and a catch all 'everyone'); families;

visitors; business and corporate; students/schools. In addition, cyclists and walkers were singled out by three providers.

Amongst businesses that do not currently attract visitors, there is significant interest in developing their tourism potential.

Over 80 people attended the consultation events which resulted in significant local input regarding both tourism assets and issues/opportunities facing tourism development within Rural Bridgend.

The consultation helped significantly in contributing towards the audit, and raised a number of issues and highlighted a range of opportunities for development.

The information gathered via the research and consultation has led to a number of issues and opportunities which are detailed in the body of the report. These include:

- The need to address issues re identity and image
- The need to provide basic amenities at key visitor 'hubs'
- Rationalisation of print/web-based information
- The need to further develop the accommodation offer
- The ongoing need for support for Rural tourism in terms of marketing/communication/providing strategic direction/networking
- The need to address public transport weaknesses/provide special services for walkers/cyclists
- The need to lobby against inappropriate development
- The incredible network of walking/cycling routes and the importance of securing resources to maintain them
- The importance of ensuring that community ownership is maintained
- The need to address the issue of improving the quality of many facilities; provide ongoing support for existing attractions and support developments which meet identified needs
- The opportunity to develop strategic links

In addition, the report sets out in detail a number of recommendations regarding product development, including:

- Enhancing the walking/cycling/riding offer
- New products centred around
  - Early heritage;
  - Church tourism;
  - Views and vistas;
  - Informal activity breaks;
  - Events;
  - The story of Richard Price.

The issues (and potential ideas for mitigating them), opportunities and recommendations are also summarised in an action plan.

It is hoped that the information contained in the report will help the *reach* Rural Development Partnership in Bridgend to develop their strategy for taking forward Rural Tourism.