

Meeting of:	<b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>Tuesday, 16 September 2025</b>
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	<b>Information Report: Annual Tourism &amp; Events Update</b>
Purpose of Report:	To provide an annual update on Tourism and Events in the Vale of Glamorgan
Report Owner:	Marcus Goldsworthy, Director of Place
Responsible Officer:	Phil Chappell, Operational Manager, Regeneration
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>This report does not require ward member consultation.</p> <p>Legal – Committee Reports. Head of Neighbourhood Services Operational Manager Exchequer Services</p>
Policy Framework:	This report is for information
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The report seeks to inform Place Scrutiny Committee of the latest developments in the tourism sector and events within the Vale of Glamorgan. It also advises Committee of the impact the tourism industry has on the local economy. It also seeks to advise the Committee of current and legislation and how that will impact the industry.</p>	

## **Recommendation**

1. That the Place Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) note the contents of the report.

## **Reason for Recommendation**

1. To inform Place Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) on current matters relating to tourism and events in the Vale of Glamorgan.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1** Tourism in the Vale of Glamorgan is driven primarily by the area's natural assets and outdoor activities. The coast, countryside and heritage sites attract visitors from the UK and all over the world. Walking and dog friendly tourism are currently two of the biggest drivers followed by family days out and cycling. Barry Island remains a major draw alongside destinations such as Penarth Pier, the Glamorgan Heritage Coast, and market towns like Cowbridge. Llantwit Major draws in lovers of heritage and walking. Events including food and music festivals, local shows, and local events bring communities together and attract repeat visits. Together, these factors underpin the Vale's strong appeal as a day trip and short break destination.
- 1.2** The Tourism and Events Team, based within the Place Directorate's Regeneration Team, leads on destination marketing, research, development, visitor economy business support and management, while also supporting the Vale's events programme through providing advice and assistance to local businesses and organisations. Since December 2023, the team has also co-ordinated all filming activity in the Vale on behalf of the Council.
- 1.3** On 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2024, a report and presentation were given to the former Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. The Chair suggested that the Committee received an annual report on the progress being made with tourism and events within the Vale of Glamorgan. This For Information Report seeks to update the new Place Scrutiny Committee in a similar way.

## **2. Key Issues for Consideration**

### **STEAM – Monitoring the volume and value of tourism in the Vale of Glamorgan**

- 2.1** All Councils in Wales subscribe to STEAM, a tourism research programme which measures the economic impact of tourism using local data and visitor surveys. This approach provides a clear picture of tourism activity and trends within the destination.

- 2.2** Appendix A sets out the latest STEAM results for the Vale of Glamorgan for 2024. The data, when compared with 2023, demonstrates an overall increase of 1.9% in the value of tourism.
- 2.3** Tourism in the Vale of Glamorgan is now worth £350.41 million to the economy.
- 2.4** When considering the economic value of the industry over the past decade, the STEAM data shows that the Vale’s tourism economy has grown consistently since 2014, successfully navigated the impact of the pandemic, and is now on a stable footing, with the summer months remaining the principal driver of activity
- 2.5** **Overall growth:** Total tourism economic impact rose from £310m in 2014 to £350m in 2024, a 13% increase despite major disruption from COVID-19 in 2020.
- 2.6** **COVID-19 impact:** The sharp drop to £121m in 2020 (down 67%) shows the severity of lockdown effects, but recovery was strong from 2021 onwards, returning close to pre-pandemic levels by 2022.
- 2.7** **Post-pandemic stability:** From 2022–2024, totals stabilised around £344–350m, suggesting resilience albeit a slight plateau in growth, which is consistent with the trend across Wales. The sector is now broadly back in line with 2019, but growth has slowed compared to the earlier part of the decade.
- 2.8** **STEAM** also demonstrates that seasonality is changing, with demand growing outside peak summer, especially in winter and autumn. This presents opportunities to market the Vale as a year round destination.
- 2.9** The Vale’s visitor economy is increasingly day trip led, while staying visits are levelling off. Serviced accommodation faces challenges, whereas self-catering and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travel remain resilient. The growth opportunity lies in converting day visitors into overnight stays to boost higher value tourism spend.
- 2.10** With the Vale’s economy increasingly driven by day visitors, there is support for fewer jobs compared to overnight tourism, with STEAM demonstrating a 4.6% reduction in FTE employment within the sector since 2023.
- 2.11** The decline in staying-visitor employment highlights the pressure on accommodation providers and the need to rebalance growth by encouraging longer stays.
- 2.12** The Vale is seeing healthy growth in day-visitor spend across multiple sectors, but a decline in overnight stays highlights a key challenge for maximising tourism value.
- 2.13** **Key Takeaways (2014–2024)**
- Long-term resilience – despite COVID, the sector grew nearly 13% over the decade.
  - Pandemic recovery – 2024 results confirm full recovery, with figures close to the 2019 peak.
  - Seasonality is changing – demand is growing strongest outside peak summer, especially in winter and autumn.

- Strategic opportunity – focus future promotion and product development on off-peak tourism (e.g. events, short breaks, wellness, food & drink).
- Accommodation Stock Survey 2025. During spring 2025, an Accommodation Stock Survey was completed to establish the number of properties and bedspaces available for visitors in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- In total, across all accommodation types there are now 260 accommodation properties, supplying 2,015 units (bedrooms/self catering units/pitches) accounting for an estimated 6,924 bedspaces available for visitors to the Vale of Glamorgan. This is an increase of 50 properties since the last survey in 2025, of which all are self catering properties.
- A breakdown of property types can be found in Appendix B.

#### 2.14 New Legislation

- **182 Day Occupancy rule.** From April 2023, new legislation came into force for self-catering properties. In order to be liable for non-domestic rates, a property now needs to be available for let for at least 252 days (36 weeks) in a 12-month period, and actually let for at least 182 days (26 weeks). Those that fall below the 182 day threshold could now be liable for Council Tax.
- Many businesses are currently under review following this change in legislation with the Valuation Office advising our NNDR and Exchequers services of properties that are now subject to amended classification.
- Long term empty property/second home legislation. VOG Council currently impose a 100% premium for self-catering properties that are not let for the required minimum 182 days which are now re-classified as liable for Council Tax. Exemptions are in place for some properties.
- **Statutory Registration and Licencing.** Regulation of visitor accommodation in Wales will be carried out in phases. The first being registration of anyone who provides visitor accommodation in Wales, followed by the introduction of further legislation to move towards a statutory licencing scheme.
- The Wales Revenue Authority (WRA) are now leading on the introduction of an Accommodation Register for all properties that provide visitor accommodation in Wales. The aim of the register will be to inform who is operating in the sector. Timescales for the introduction of the register is currently Summer 2026. Statutory Licencing will look to be introduced thereafter.

#### 2.15 Visitor Levy

- On 8 July 2025, the Senedd approved the Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) bill allowing councils to introduce an overnight visitor levy to raise funds for local tourism at their discretion. A tourism tax, or levy, is a charge which would need to be paid by anyone staying overnight in Wales. The aim of the local Tourism Tax is for proceeds to enable councils to invest in tourism infrastructure like toilets, footpaths, beaches, car parks, etc.

- The proceeds from the visitor levy in Wales are ringfenced and must be reinvested into tourism-related infrastructure and services. The bill mandates that funds raised through the levy be used exclusively for "destination management and improvement" within the local authority area where they were collected.
- The legislation specifies that local authorities are required to report on the use of the proceeds, ensuring transparency and accountability in how the funds are spent.
- Local Authorities will decide whether to introduce a visitor levy, and in doing so must consult with their communities.
- Further information on the Visitor Levy can be found [here](#)

## **2.16 Visit the Vale**

- Since the update provided to Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in July 2024, Visit the Vale continues to perform as the destination brand for the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Visit the Vale platforms continue to evolve in accordance with the changing trends of visitors. Since its launch the Visit the Vale website has received in excess of 720k users, and with over 24k followers across social media platforms, 2024 digital marketing activity reached just short of 1.5 million people.
- During 2024/5 a contract with London based PR agency AM+A has secured coverage across multiple outlets including The Telegraph, Times, iNews, Rough Guides 2024, and several top magazines. This was funded through SPF. A selection of coverage can be found in Appendix C. This was funded via Shared Prosperity Fund.

## **2.17 Events**

- 2024/5 has proven to be an exceptionally busy year for events once again. Despite no longer having a budget to host our own events, the Vale has built a great reputation for holding events, and our focus is now on ensuring those events are safe, well managed and fit for purpose.
- The Events Officer supports 3<sup>rd</sup> party event organisers with all aspects of holding events within the Vale of Glamorgan and ensures all documentation is presented to the Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) for review before events take place.
- In 2024/5 funding was secured through SPF to support a town centre events programme in partnership with the town councils and local trade bodies.
- In 2025/6 SPF funding was secured in partnership with the Vale Local Nature Partnership and the Restore the Thaw project to fund a calendar of storytelling sharing sorties relating to the Vales natural environment.
- During the past year, the Vale has hosted a full calendar of events throughout the year. Please see Appendix D.

## **2.18 Filming**

- Between April '24 to Mar '25 the team dealt with 155 direct filming enquiries resulting in 114 bookings and generating £164k income for the Vale of Glamorgan Council. Since April '25, 64 enquiries have been received, resulting in 51 confirmed and active bookings with an estimated income of £29k (to date).
- All income generated is retained by the relevant department, with Tourism & Events team retaining a 20% administrative fee with which we fund various tourism initiatives.
- In 2023/4 filming income supported the creation of video content, updating the Visit the Vale website to incorporate a filming section and dog friendly portal, regional advertising, web hosting, partially funding a Gavin & Stacey marketing campaign, and promotional material for the trade etc.

## **3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?**

- 3.1** Long-term: Tourism and events ensure sustainable economic growth, creating jobs and supporting local businesses, fostering long-term community prosperity.
- 3.2** Prevention: Diversifying the economy through tourism and events mitigates economic risks and promotes sustainable practices, preserving natural and cultural resources.
- 3.3** Integration: Tourism and events integrate multiple sectors, achieving economic vitality, cultural richness, and environmental stewardship.
- 3.4** Collaboration: Tourism and events involve collaboration among local businesses, community groups, government agencies, and residents, ensuring diverse input and shared goals.
- 3.5** Involvement: Community engagement in tourism and event planning fosters ownership and community pride.

### **Well-being Objectives:**

- 3.6** Economic Prosperity:  
Tourism and events attract visitors, create jobs, and support local businesses, boosting local revenue.
- 3.7** Cultural and Community Well-being:  
They showcase the region's cultural heritage, promote cultural exchange, and strengthen social bonds through community events.
- 3.8** Environmental Sustainability:  
Eco-friendly tourism and sustainable events protect the natural environment and promote green practices.
- 3.9** Health and Well-being:

Tourism and events encourage active lifestyles and enhance social well-being through recreational opportunities and community gatherings.

**3.10 Social Cohesion:**

Bringing people together, tourism and events strengthen community ties and foster social inclusion.

## **4. Climate Change and Nature Implications**

**4.1 Positive Climate Change Implications:**

Awareness and Education- Tourism and events can promote environmental awareness and eco-tourism, fostering sustainable practices.

**4.2 Maintaining local spaces -** Revenue from tourism supports the maintenance of public spaces and protected areas. Investment in sustainable infrastructure and green transport options reduces carbon footprints.

**4.3 Negative Climate Change Implications:**

Increased Carbon Footprint- Travel and large events contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions, but to counter this, local tourism is promoted in the Vale.

High tourist volumes can lead to habitat destruction, pollution, and resource strain. For example, Littering and BBQ damage can be issues at Cosmeston Country park and coastal resorts at peak periods.

## **5. Resources and Legal Considerations**

### **Financial**

- 5.1** There are no direct financial, legal or resource implications associated with this report at this time.
- 5.2** The introduction of the Statutory licencing scheme is likely to have implications on the delivery of the scheme at local authority level. Further details on this will be outlined by WG in the coming 12 months.
- 5.3** The Council will need to consider its position in terms of the introduction of the Visitor Levy.

### **Employment**

- 5.4** No implications

### **Legal (Including Equalities)**

- 5.5** Now that the Welsh Government have introduced the tourism levy legislation the full impact, benefit, resource and legal obligations will need be outlined in order to inform the council's decision.

## **6. Background Papers**

None

## APPENDIX A



### STEAM SUMMARY 2024 VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

Total economic impact of tourism £M	350.41
% change on 2023 (£'s 2024)	1.9%

Total visitor days (Millions)	5.89
% change on 2023	3.5%
Staying visitor days (Millions)	2.22
% change on 2023	-0.7%

Total visitor numbers (Millions)	4.26
% change on 2023	5.1%
Number of staying visitors (Millions)	0.59
% change on 2023	-1.0%
Number of day visitors (Millions)	3.67
% change on 2023	6.2%

Number of FTE jobs supported by tourism spend	2,861
% change on 2023	-3.7%

Prepared by Cathy James, GTS (UK) Ltd

## APPENDIX B

### Accommodation Stock Survey 2025

**Self-catering properties:** 194 properties, 262 units, 1,085 bedspaces (of which 107 are AirBnB properties)

**Alternative accommodation:** 15 properties, 39 units, 161 bedspaces

**Caravan and camping:** 16 sites, 1,148 pitches, 4,496 bedspaces

**Restaurants with rooms & country inns:** 8 properties, 29 rooms, 70 bedspaces

**Hotels:** 13 properties, 502 rooms, 1,045 bedspaces

**B&Bs & Guest Houses:** 14 properties, 35 units, 67 bedspaces

# APPENDIX C

## Press & PR Coverage – short selection for reference

### Treat mums to the perfect day out on Mother's Day

From candle making workshops to decadent afternoon teas, celebrate the most important woman in your life on March 30.



**Next read**

- 1 Robert TTC... (with image)
- 2 Norman... (with image)
- 3... (with image)
- 4... (with image)
- 5... (with image)

**Top stories**

- 1... (with image)
- 2... (with image)
- 3... (with image)
- 4... (with image)
- 5... (with image)

**Best for weekend/half-day trips... Haverford Castle, Wales**

The childhood snack that inspired with its... (with image)

Explore... (with image)



Make your mum feel like a queen by treating her to a champagne afternoon tea at a 17th century royal residence. Located less than 30 minutes from Cardiff, Haverford Castle is a truly special historic residence featuring ornate, sweeping staircases, and copper-tiled roofs in the Park of Glamorgan.

Once home to several noble families, it now serves as a superb event space with an award-winning distillery producing world-class gin, luxury experiences and gin-making classes.

Enjoy a spread of specialty teas, champagne, finger sandwiches and sweet delicacies in the castle's Courtyard Hall, accompanied by a live acoustic singer.

**Note:** From 10.00am onwards including a gift from the gin distillery. Events at 10.00am and 3.00pm on March 30. (with image)

INDEPENDENT

NEWS SPORT VOICES CULTURE LIFESTYLE INDYBEST DEALS TRAVEL MORE

The Independent's journalism is supported by our readers. When you purchase through links on our site, we may earn commission.

Travel > UK > Wales

TRAVEL GUIDES

## Barry Island travel guide: Where to eat, drink, walk and stay in the home of Gavin and Stacey

Ten miles down the coast from Cardiff is a famous slice of Welsh seaside that's 'tidy' beyond its Pleasure Park, says **Natalie Wilson**

Friday 22 November 2024 06:00 GMT • Comments





## **APPENDIX D**

### **Vale Events - August 2024 to August 2025**

#### **2024**

##### **August**

Fantastic Fete, St Donats

Vale of Glamorgan Show, Penllyn

Family Fun Day, Central Park, Barry

##### **September**

Barryfornia, Barry Island

Red Bull Shore Shift Event, Barry Island

To The Sea, Penarth & Cosmeston Country Park

##### **November**

Fireworks Fiesta, Jenner Park, Barry

Barry Christmas Festival, King Square & Central Park, Barry

Cowbridge Christmas Weekend and Parade

Llantwit Major Christmas Parade and Laser Show

#### **2025**

##### **March**

St Davids Day Festival, King Square and Central Park, Barry

##### **April**

Run Walk Crawl Race, Wales Coastal Path – Ogmere and Penarth

##### **May**

May Day Event, Bear Field, Cowbridge

Gwyl Fach Y Fro, Barry Island

Barryfornia, Barry Island

##### **June**

Transport Festival, Barry Island

Barry Pride, Central Park, Barry

Rhoose Summer Music Festival, Millburn Park, Rhoose

Barry Island 10K

##### **July**

Penarth Summer Festival, The Kymin, Penarth

Cadstock, Victoria Park, Barry

GlastonBarry, Romilly Park, Barry

Creature Chronicles, shows across Vale Venues

##### **August**

Moo La La, Bear Field, Cowbridge

Fantastic Fete, St Donats

Vale of Glamorgan Show, Penllyn

Barry Island Triathlon