



Wicklow County Council

TOURISM STRATEGY AND MARKETING PLAN



VISION

“Our Vision is to make Wicklow the number one choice for visitors seeking an idyllic escape that harmonises a wide range of outdoor pursuits in County Wicklow’s world class natural arena, while driving job creation in the local economy”

Our aim is to make Wicklow the go to place for outdoor recreation.

**By shifting from ‘Great Assets but Little Impact’
to ‘Great Assets and Enormous Impact’**



2017 Wicklow County Council forms a Tourism Strategy Group (TSG) as an action under the County Wicklow Economic Think Tank Action Plan.

Autumn 2017 Bluesail appointed to deliver the Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan for County Wicklow

October 2018 the Tourism Strategy and Marketing Plan is launched by Minister Simon Harris



STRATEGY GOALS

- Establish Wicklow as a year round destination
- Capture more overnight tourism
- Encourage the provision of alternative forms of accommodation
- Convert day visitors to staying visitors
- Integrate development of tourism infrastructure and assets
- Strategic Approach to marketing and promotion
- Deliver sustainable development



In 2016 Wicklow welcomed:

329,000 domestic visitors, spend €71 Million
272,000 overseas visitors, spend €86 Million

601,000

€157 Million

Target for 2023 :

750,000 visitors and spend of €200 Million

Every € 1 m tourism revenue = 27 jobs!

Priority Actions



- **New Accommodation**
- **Key Towns as Visitor Hubs**
- **Masterplan for Glendalough**
- **Grow Thematic Experiences**
- **A Common Narrative**

Accommodation



With around 3% of all Ireland overnights and spend and just over 2% of available serviced visitor accommodation stock, expanding the supply of quality accommodation is a priority.

Wicklow's average spend per visit €261

National average spend per visit €355

The challenge for Wicklow is to create more supply at the right locations, to service and attract our target markets.

Action: Develop a hotels prospectus, setting out the market case, identifying suitable sites and work with FI to market the County

Key Towns as Visitor Hubs



The towns of Wicklow have the potential to function as visitor hubs offering:

- Accommodation
- Eating and drinking options
- Entertainment
- Weather independent activities and attractions
- Retail experiences
- Transport links

Action: work with Town Teams to develop public realm, festivals and events, & to build capacity within the towns.



Masterplan for Glendalough

Glendalough is a Jewel. It has international recognition and a strong reputation. It is regarded as a “must visit” destination

- The quality of the visitor facilities needs to match the quality of the natural environment and become world class.
- The plan needs to determine how to interpret the site and improve orientation, dwell time and satisfaction.
- Traffic management, parking and access arrangements need to work better

Action: Develop a visitor centred Master-Plan for Glendalough in partnership with all stakeholders.

Grow Thematic Experiences



Develop new experiences that capitalise on the thematic strengths of Wicklow and which align to Irelands Ancient East .

Projects under development ; Greenways Blessington/ Arklow-Shillelagh and the Greystones to Wicklow Coastal Route and Screen Tourism/Viking Tours/ Wicklow Outdoors

Continued investment and development of existing experiences Wicklow Gaol, Avondale Forest Park , Powerscourt Distillery and Cool Planet experience

Action Year 1 to 3 Tourism Working Group to provide support to three new experience concepts (e.g Screen Tourism/ Viking Tour, Greenways, Garden Festival)





A Common Narrative

- *There is no single narrative or ‘shared story’ from which service providers large and small can draw on and use in their own marketing and promotional materials.*

Wicklow County Tourism has commissioned an overarching narrative and a series of narratives around various themes.

Action: that Wicklow invests in a shared story – a narrative developed by the tourism community – to produce a series of tools that all of those involved in telling Wicklow’s story can draw on.

- ***The narrative should include an overarching story for Wicklow;***
- ***Stories for the themes and experiences and the towns and main areas***
- ***Guidance on and a supply of imagery and video.***





Marketing

Our Research shows that the priority segments for Wicklow are;

Culturally Curious ; They tend to have more disposable income and are not tied to school holidays. They take multiple breaks year round. Wicklow's assets suit this segments requirements

Great Escapers; Wicklow has what they are looking for and while many of them are attracted to the Wild Atlantic Way, those combining a visit with Dublin can find many of the experiences they seek, close to Dublin. The positioning of Wicklow alongside Dublin for this market makes sense

Connected families; Wicklow has a range of indoor and mainly outdoor experiences that appeal to this segment and they remain a core part of the Wicklow market mix.



Marketing Channels

It is recommended that the following channels be prioritised:

- **The website**
- **Building digital marketing capabilities**
- **Providing the content and narrative to increase the reach and amplify the marketing by all partners within County Wicklow**
- **Strengthening the Press & PR coverage of the County.**



WICKLOW COUNTY COUNCIL SUPPORTED PROJECTS

- Wicklow's Historic Gaol Celebrating 20 Years in business.
- Awarded €200, 000 funding from Failte Ireland
- Wicklow is getting "China Ready" has produced a Mandarin Chinese Tourism Brochure, launched by the Ambassador in April
- Avondale Forest Park –Planning Stage
- Wicklow Outdoor Recreation Committee has been re-established bringing all outdoor recreation projects now under the one committee.
- Wicklow County Council is supporting Wicklow Outdoors" brand by promoting it at festivals and events .Aiming to make Wicklow the outdoor capital of the country.



Working with our Neighbours:

- **Waterford Wexford Wicklow Blueway**
- **Working with Failte Ireland appointed consultants and Counties Waterford Wexford to examine how we can develop a Viking theme across the 3 counties.**
- **Celtic Routes INTERREG project; Wicklow/Wexford/Waterford and Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion in Wales.**



W I C K L O W

ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES