



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

## Need for Tourism

### National Planning Policy Framework 2012

**Supports economic growth in rural areas because such development is seen as helping to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development.**

**“Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres.”**



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

Issues to be addressed  
(SWOT analysis)

## Strengths

History of the town and country  
Views of the landscape from St Michael's Church tower  
Compact, vibrant and bustling town centre  
Free car parking  
New public toilets  
Variety of public events  
Socio-economic benefits of twinning with towns in Europe

## Weaknesses

Brand of the town in that it is not a gateway to the Cotswolds  
Need for professional tourist information point  
Need to promote existing attractions and accommodation  
Need to refurbish public realm in the town

## Opportunities

Possible provision of designated parking space for  
coach/coaches

Possible provision of a designated visitor centre and museum

Establishment of a Chamber of Trade for local businesses

## Threats

Competition from nearby towns

Limited car parking

### Question:

How do you consider that the issues identified by the SWOT analysis should be considered and addressed in the Tourism Strategy?

### Question:

Do you know of any other strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats which require consideration in the Tourism Strategy?



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

## Why we should promote tourism?

### Economic Benefits (2015)

- Wiltshire's visitor economy is worth £1.53bn per annum and supports over 29,000 jobs
- Tourism contributes £860m per annum to Wiltshire's economy
- Wiltshire attracted a record 1.84m staying visitors, spending a record £368m
- Wiltshire's 17.7 million day visits generated £668m
- Day visitors spend an average of £35.50 per person per visit

### Question:

*Do you consider Highworth and its environs will benefit in a similar way?*



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

Why should we be part of Visit  
Wiltshire?

Company established in 2010

The official destination, management and  
marketing organisation for Wiltshire  
representing over 600 partners

Named Travelmole's best UK destination  
website 2016

Ranked highly in the English Tourism Social  
Media Index

Public relations activity now has a reach of  
250 million people

# Belonging to a network of distinct towns!

*Quintessentially English:*  
**TIMELESS**  
*Towns and Villages*

**Stylish independent shops and colourful markets. Fascinating history and heritage.  
Great entertainment. Tempting pubs and restaurants.**

Wiltshire's historic towns and villages are friendly, relaxed and welcoming. Each with something unique to offer. In all four corners of the county you'll find an excellent range of accommodation to suit all budgets. So come and spend time in Wiltshire: the home of timeless experiences.

## Question:

Do you consider that Highworth is a quintessentially English town and should be included in the next edition of the Wiltshire Visitor Guide?

# Being recognised on the visitor map!



## Question:

What do you consider is the “symbol” that best represents Highworth?



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026

Policy RA1 supports tourism in Highworth

*“Support a sustainable market town economy for Highworth by realising tourist potential, in the form of appropriate attractions and accommodation, as a historic market town and gateway to the Cotswolds”*

## Attraction

A place which draws visitors by providing something of interest or pleasure.

## Accommodation

A building where someone can stay or be something which has been supplied to either satisfy a need such as lodging, food and service or travelling space and related services.



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

## Existing Attractions

Highworth town and the immediate area has many attractions which include the following:-

High Street niche shops and services

St Michael's Parish Church

Halo Leisure, swimming pool & gym

Pentylands Country Park

Rec Fields

Bowls Club

Tennis Club

Cricket Club

Highworth Town Junior Football Club

Highworth Town Football Club

Saracens Head Hotel

King and Queen Inn

Rose and Crown Public House

The Globe

The Highworth Restaurant

Rafus Indian Restaurant

Spice Kitchen

Ciao Eatalia Restaurant

The Emporium Gift Shop

Bloomfields Fine Foods

Coffee Republic (Co-op)  
Old Bakery Coffee Shop  
TT Linnet cafe  
Saturday Market  
Wrag Barn Golf and Country Club  
Twigmarket 9 Hole Golf Course/pitch and putt

Wickstead Farm Equestrian Centre  
Roves Farm Visitor Centre  
Buscot Park  
Coleshill Estate (National Trust)

**Question:**

*Do you consider that the attractions we have should be included in the Tourism Strategy?*

**Question:**

*What other attractions would you like to see included?*

**Question:**

*Do you consider there is a need for a designated visitor centre and museum?*

*Where might it be sited?*



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

## Existing Accommodation in the Highworth area

The Highworth (Hotel)  
Saracens Head Hotel  
Highlands Guest House  
Hayward House B & B  
Plough Inn Public House  
Freke Arms (Caravan Club site)  
King & Queen Public House

### Question:

*What other sorts of accommodation do you think will meet the needs of visitors?*

*Where might it be located?*



# **HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY**

## **Highworth Neighbourhood Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan's vision for Highworth states:-

*“We see a future where everyone has the opportunity to live healthy and fulfilling lives, enjoying Highworth’s rich cultural heritage and living in a safe, strong and supportive community. Highworth will become a sustainable community offering lifestyle and work opportunities in an attractive environment; meeting the needs of residents, business partners and visitors. We recognise the importance of attracting wealth into our community and forging a future where poverty and exclusion have been removed”.*

**The Neighbourhood Plan includes a number of community objectives relating to tourism and these are:-**

**Economic Development:**

**Promote and develop the tourism industry and visitor facilities within Highworth.**

**Transport:**

**Protect and extend the rights of way and off-road cycle routes to promote informal recreation and access to the countryside, sustainable travel and tourism.**

**Arts and Culture:**

**Protect buildings and features of local historic interest to preserve the rich and unique cultural heritage of Highworth.**

**Policy 4 promotes the town centre as a place for shopping and socialising, including enhancing the visitor experience by environmental improvements.**

**Question:**

*Do you consider that the town centre performs this function?*

*If not, what improvements do you consider are essential for a good visitor experience?*

**Policy 5 supports tourism by encouraging daytime cafes and restaurants in the town centre.**

**Question:**

*Do you consider that there are sufficient cafes and restaurants to serve the needs of visitors?*

*If not, what else would you recommend?*

**Question:**

*What are the most reasonable opening times to serve the needs of both residents and visitors?*



# HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY

What has been done so far?

## Become a member of Visit Wiltshire

- Membership of Visit Wiltshire is intended to significantly improve the profile of the area
- Cafes, restaurants, pubs and accommodation can advertise free on their website

## Preparing promotional material to inform

- Leaflets on places to stay, eat and park
- Promotional video of area

## Supporting local history for all to enjoy

- Highworth Town Trail will promote the history of the town
- Historical Society will provide guided walks

## Promoting local facilities and events

- Saturday Market in the High Street
- May Day Celebrations
- Wrde Up Festival
- Wickstead Wander
- 10k Run
- Scarecrow Trail
- Football Tournaments
- Fireworks Display
- Christmas Lights turn on
- Highworth Festival
- HTFC Football Tournament
- HTJFC Football Tournament

### Question:

*What else could be included?*



## **HIGHWORTH TOURISM STRATEGY**

How should we brand our town?

At the moment Highworth is branded as  
'Gateway to the Cotswolds'

The town lies close to the Cotswolds but competes  
with places, like Burford and Cirencester for the title.

Could it be:

'Betjeman's Hidden Gem'?

Sir John Betjeman visited the town in the early 1950's  
and described it as "one of the most charming and  
unassuming country towns in the west of England."

### **Question:**

Do you consider the town and area is in need of a rebrand in  
order to attract more visitors? If so how would you describe  
the area?