# WRITTEN STATEMENT

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# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **World Tourism Day**  |
| **DATE**  | **25 September 2023** |
| **BY** | **Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism** |

Wednesday is designated World Tourism Day by the United Nations and it has adopted the theme “Tourism and green investment” this year. The campaign highlights the need for more and better-targeted investments that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN roadmap for a better world by 2030.

The Welsh Government’s tourism strategy, [Welcome to Wales: priorities for the visitor economy 2020-25](https://www.gov.wales/welcome-wales-priorities-visitor-economy-2020-2025), aligns positively with this year’s theme. It states our ambition to grow tourism for the good of Wales, delivering benefits for people and places, including environmental sustainability, social and cultural enrichment and health benefits.

The plan incorporates the vision of Wales' distinctive Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 into everything we do. Tourism cannot exist in isolation; it interacts with wider policy areas, such as transport, the environment, heritage and housing. We want our tourism industry to align with our ambition to ensure sustainable, balanced and thriving communities – striking the right balance between economic growth and our wider wellbeing as a country.

Our strategy focuses on three Ss – Seasonality, Spend and Spread. We want to encourage the growth of off-peak tourism, enticing visitors to stay longer and spend more; while also actively promoting some of the quieter tourist spots in Wales. A fourth ‘S’ – sustainability – runs through everything we do; our activities focus on growing tourism in a positive way and developing the sustainability of our destinations and products.

Last year we piloted a new campaign, Sustainable Tourism Wales, with the aim of helping Welsh tourism businesses to realise their green ambitions. It focused on five areas to help businesses improve their sustainability and help towards net zero – water, waste, supply chain, energy and travel. Welsh businesses, which had made improvements to their own carbon footprint shared their experiences and best practice with those starting their sustainability journey.

Sustainability is also at the heart of our Brilliant Basics capital fund. The £5m scheme for 2023-25 delivers small-scale infrastructure improvements in strategically important tourism locations across Wales. This year’s scheme was open to local authorities and national park authorities, funding 29 projects across Wales. The fund supports infrastructure in popular tourist areas which see a large number of visitors, helping to make destinations more environmentally sustainable. For example, Brilliant Basics funding has supported the installation of electric charging points for cars, boats and bicycles across Wales.

Sustainability is at the heart of Addo – The Wales Promise. First developed in the summer of 2020, in response to the phasing out of lockdown restrictions during the pandemic, Addo is now a long-term initiative. It encourages people to make a promise to care for Wales. It has two strands: asking people to care for our communities and to care for our epic land. Addo focuses on the benefits of being a good visitor, from asking people to behave responsibly when enjoying the countryside to encouraging visitors to support local retail and hospitality when on holiday.

Visit Wales has also been working with Transport for Wales to drive active tourism using public transport. A joint marketing campaign promotes a sustainable tourism message by encouraging use of the train to make day visits, take short breaks and travel for longer holidays.

As we celebrate World Tourism Day we can reflect on the latest industry data, which shows that in 2022, there was £4.6bn of associated expenditure on all inbound, domestic and day trips in Wales. And between April and December 2021 and April to December 2022 there was an increase of 13% in the volume of domestic overnight trips taken in Wales and an increase of 35% in spend.

I am very proud that our marketing campaigns have been recognised on the world stage. The Cymru Wales Brand won the Grand Prix at the 2023 World Media Awards, as well as the Travel and Tourism category. Congratulations to everyone who has worked so hard on these campaigns to promote Wales to the world.

To celebrate World Tourism Day in Wales, I will this week be visiting the National Botanic Garden of Wales, Neath Abbey and Penderyn Swansea Copperworks Distillery.

Wales has so much to offer to visitors and I will continue to ensure that we work to realise that potential, in a way that achieves a sustainable balance between our communities, our landscapes and our visitors.