

## A room with a view to 2012

After 20 years in the travel industry Craig Willis and wife Claire quit their jobs in the Midlands motivated by a long-term dream of opening their own seaside guesthouse. Their vision was to provide a warm & friendly atmosphere that guests would want to revisit in modern & chic surroundings and after discovering the hidden beauty of Dorset they set their sights on relocating their family to Weymouth.

Wilton Guest House opened its freshly painted doors in July after a well considered refurbishment from a run-down 8 bedroom B & B to a relaxed 6 bedroom property. They now employ 3 members of staff and are taking advantage of Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnerships free 'Welcoming our World' courses. Funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF), they aim to ensure businesses are ready for the impact of the 2012 and beyond.

"When deciding where to start the business we recognised tremendous investment potential in Weymouth. 2012 gives us a golden opportunity to let visitors stumble upon this hidden landscape and we need to get it right to make sure they return."

With a corporate background in world-wide tourism Craig has seen first-hand that exceptional customer service and commercial success go hand-in-hand.

"Training should be available to all, from small businesses to multi-national companies. It shows staff you're committed to investing in them and the knock-on effect is a workforce with a greater sense of loyalty and focus. The fact that we have the facility to get on free qualified training courses is a huge benefit."

The team at The Wilton Guest House attended the 'Welcome International' course during November. To find out more about access to this free course and others for organisations in the retail, tourism and hospitality industries, visit [www.dorsetnewforest.org](http://www.dorsetnewforest.org) or call 01202 451151.

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**Notes to Editors:**

The 2012 Customer Care Campaign, funded by the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) and the European Social Fund (ESF), is called 'Welcoming our World' – WOW for short – and aims to raise awareness of the importance of how, as a region, we meet and greet global visitors. Through free short courses in customer service delivery, front of house skills and team management, businesses are being invited to contribute to the 'WOW Factor!' through positive visitor experiences.

**Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership**

Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership has delivered business and skills development for the tourism industry in the sub-region since 1996. It has secured more than £5m external funding to promote and help develop performance and skills in this sector. The Partnership also manages the Dorset Retail Skillshop which delivers training and support services to the retail sector.

**The Learning and Skills Council**

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive.