

Bournemouth tour company achieves Jurassic Coast Quality stamp of approval

Well known local tourism operator Discover Dorset Tours is the first company in Dorset to become a recognised Jurassic Coast Quality Business.

Owner of Discover Dorset, Tim Sanders is among a growing band of business owners to sign up to the new scheme that aims to drive up the quality of the visitor experience to England's only natural World Heritage Site

As part of South West Regional Development Agency's (SWRDA) investment package for the Jurassic Coast - £7.1million in principle - the Quality Business Scheme has been launched to encourage and recognise individual businesses for their part in the quality tourism offering.

By successfully demonstrating a range of good business practices, a working knowledge of the Jurassic Coast, environmental awareness and a commitment to staff and visitor satisfaction, tourism outlets throughout the area can become a Jurassic Coast Quality Business. Those who also engage in supporting the work of the Jurassic Coast Trust can use Jurassic Coast Quality Business branding within their promotional activities.

'The reputation of the Jurassic Coast is gaining in momentum with many of our international visitors now putting it on their 'tick-list', said Tim Sanders. 'UNESCO World Heritage Status sets a high expectation in visitors' minds, both of the site itself and its local services and products. The framework set out by the Quality Business Scheme is a great way to check what you're doing right – and what you're doing wrong and help where improvements are needed'.

The Scheme, which is managed by the Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership, is open to all tourism and hospitality operators associated with the Jurassic Coast including hotels, attractions transport services, restaurants and holiday parks.

'Participants are required to demonstrate good business practice in areas such as environmental awareness, legislation, quality assurance, health and safety, customer service, financial management and business planning. Discover Dorset sailed through the process by having most necessary procedures already in place'.

Discover Dorset offers a tour service that allows visitors to engage with and understand the Jurassic Coast through guided tours and personal commentary. 'The fact that we are the first company in Dorset to achieve this accreditation was welcome recognition for all the work that has been put in by our team, it fits very well with what this company is all about' concluded Tim Sanders.

More information on the Quality business Scheme can be found on www.dorsetnewforest.org or by calling Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership on 01202 451151

For more details on the service provided by Discover Dorset Tours please visit www.discoverdorset.co.uk or call 01202 557007

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More information:

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Editors Notes:

Something about Discover Dorset

Discover Dorset is a local business established in 2004 by Tim Sanders and is based in Charminster, Bournemouth employing 9 (full and part-time) staff

Tim Sanders is Entrepreneur of the Year in the Bournemouth Tourism Awards 2006.

Although only 8% of Bournemouth visitors are from overseas, they make up 84% the Discover Dorset customers.

Discover Dorset's distinctive blue stripy bus leaves Bournemouth for day trips of the Purbeck and Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site picking up customers from local hotels and pick up points.

Discovering fossilised dinosaur footprints, holding the 135 million year old bones of an ichthyosaur and searching the beach for 143million year old ammonite fossils are all part of the Discover Dorset experience.

Something about Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership

The Jurassic Coast Quality Business Scheme is managed for South West RDA by Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership and is part of the wider investment in the development and management of the Dorset and East Devon World Heritage Site.

Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership have been established since 1996 delivering overseas marketing activities and business and skills development for the tourism industry in the sub-region. 1996 – 2007 the Partnership has secured more than £5m external funding to promote and develop tourism skills and business performance.

www.dorsetnewforest.org

Background information Jurassic Coast

South West RDA is a key partner in the development of the Jurassic Coast in Dorset and East Devon, which is the first natural World Heritage Site (WHS) in England to be designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The Project aims to improve the economic, social and environmental regeneration of the 95 mile-long coastal area and hinterland.

The work is being led by the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Steering Group, and coordinated through a World Heritage Team based in Dorset County Council, and supported by Devon and Dorset County Councils with English Nature.

South West RDA was established by government in 1999 to promote the long-term economic success of the region. It does this by working with others to give people the skills they need, encouraging enterprise, improving infrastructure, helping communities with regeneration and promoting the strengths of the region.