

Creating an Accessible Destination

Presentation abstract

We would like to share how we are creating an accessible destination and a 'movement' across our area to improve accessibility through our organisation: Accessible Derbyshire. The work of our organisation has helped our area to secure Derbyshire and the Peak District a reputation as one of the most accessible destinations in the U.K.

We have six children between us, three of whom are disabled. We wanted to give our children the opportunity to get out and about and enjoy our beautiful part of the world - but there was a problem: finding information about what was accessible to them in our area was difficult.

Going out meant searching through countless websites, making telephone calls and trawling through leaflets to try to find information on their accessibility: information that was often missing or inaccurate.

Our experience was not unique: according to research by Euan's Guide in the U.K. 93% of disabled people have tried to find accessibility information about a venue before they visit. If they can't find the information they need, 85% won't travel.

We decided to do something about it: to create a 'one-stop' website providing easy-to-access, accurate information about the accessibility of our area.

With an initial £10,000GBP funding from our Derbyshire County Council, we set up Accessible Derbyshire: an organisation dedicated to improving the lives of disabled people living in or visiting our area, by improving accessibility. We established a website: www.accessiblederbyshire.org and set about gathering information on the countless accessible opportunities available in our beautiful part of the world. Accessible activities, attractions, transport, toilets, picnic sites, accommodation and events were researched and showcased on the Accessible Derbyshire website. To augment our information we filmed 30 holiday properties from a wheelchair-user's perspective enabling potential visitors to assess the accessibility of these venues for themselves.

We officially launched Accessible Derbyshire in 2014 with the support of our Destination Management Organisation: Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire, at their annual conference. James Berresford, then CEO of VisitEngland attended the event and gave his support.

After the launch we began fundraising to buy equipment and services that would improve accessibility, adding to our current local offer, acquiring charitable status for Accessible Derbyshire in the process to assist in our fundraising efforts.

To make Accessible Derbyshire work, we knew that partnership working with all the major organisations in the area would be key. To galvanise support we launched a two year drive to improve accessibility called The Big Push. Launched in December, 2014, this initiative brought together representatives of Marketing Peak District and Derbyshire, Derbyshire County Council, The Peak National Park, The Youth Hostel Association, Derbyshire Sport, Sheffield Hallam University and others for the 'Big Push' launch. The Big Push gave our initiative a great boost.

Since the launch of our charity we have:

- Had over 400,000 page views on its website: www.accessiblederbyshire.org
- Had over 110,000 users of the website

- Developed a following of 3,868 on Twitter
- Sent 16,500 'tweets' and had over 28,500 twitter views in just one week!
- Provided equipment to increase the accessibility of 8 holiday properties and filmed 30 holiday properties from a wheelchair-user's perspective
- Provided the equipment for a new accessible camping pod in the Peak District
- Raised funds for a wheelchair-accessible fishing boat for Derbyshire
- Raised funds towards the Peak Park's BOMA 7 'All-terrain' wheelchair
- Purchased a Mountain Trike for use by visitors to Chatsworth House.
- Donated funds for 'Climbing For All'
- Been listed in the 'Lonely Planet' global accessibility guide and become reviewers for the Rough Guide To Accessible Britain.
- Appeared on BBC Breakfast and other national and local media
- Brought the first ever debate on Changing Places to parliament in 2015 and initiated the first National Changing Places Day in 2016
- Initiated the first ever 'autism-friendly' session at C.F.C's Proact Stadium
- Become a member of the England Inclusive Tourism Action Group helping to write guidelines for the tourism
- Won an 'Achieve' magazine award a Derbyshire Times 'Pride' Award
- Won a Derbyshire Voluntary Sector Organisation of the Year Award
- Been shortlisted as VisitEngland Tourism Superstars
- Supported several multi-million pound projects to improve accessibility

We want to share our unique Accessible Derbyshire model, and our experience in creating and sustaining it, with delegates, outlining what has been good, what has been difficult and giving our Top Tips creating a Destination For All.

Lead speaker : Gillian Scoford

Organisation : Accessible Derbyshire

City (Country) : Derbyshire(United Kingdom)

Biography : Gillian is the Co-Founder of Accessible Derbyshire and Access For All UK. She is a professional access consultant, public-speaker, trainer and adviser on accessible tourism as well as an inspirational charity founder, fundraiser and published tourism author with an unrivalled insight into all aspects of disability gained as a highly experienced and compassionate medical professional with over 25 years experience.

2nd speaker : Jane Cooper



Organisation : Accessible Derbyshire

City (Country) : Derbyshire (United Kingdom)

Biography : Jane is the Co-Founder of Accessible Derbyshire and Access For all UK. Jane is a professional access consultant and a passionate and creative designer, presenter and facilitator of targeted and effective training and development interventions. She is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Personnel and Development (MCIPD) with a successful track-record of over 25 years professional experience in the fields of training and development, consultancy, communications, engagement and business development in major, blue-chip companies. Jane is also a disability campaigner as well as a published writer on disability-related issues with particular expertise in the field of autism.