The Increasing Influence of WHS Status on Tourism Development at the Giant’s Causeway

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Presentation overview

• A brief history of World Heritage at the Giant’s Causeway
• A question of brand
• Increasing the WHS message
• Visitor mix and emerging markets
• What next?
• Questions
THE GIANT'S CAUSEWAY
DESIGNATED
A WORLD HERITAGE SITE
1986
Award winning Causeway Visitor Centre opens June 1986
100,000 visitors per annum
GCVC destroyed by fire May 2000
Photo taken at 3.00am
Temporary visitor facilities established
New visitor facilities
Changing (challenging!) perspectives on brand

- An iconic internationally known name
- National Trust
- A designation of global significance
  - Primacy
  - Relevance
  - Synergy
The importance of being a WHS

- We initially undervalued our WHS status on 2 levels:
  - Its conservation value and significance as a (rare) naturally inscribed site
  - Its growing global importance as a destination brand

How did we find out???
Our visitors told us!!!

• 82% of out of state visitors were aware of the Giant’s Causeway before taking their trip. For 47% it was their main or a very important reason for coming to NI

• 77% were aware of the sites WHS status and for over 50% this was an influencing factor in their decision to visit

Source 2013 MillwardBrown Survey commissioned by NT and Tourism NI
What have we done?

• Added emphasis on our WHS status
  • Additional signage
  • Increased use of the logo
  • Boundary stones
• Marketing activity
• Full blown membership of WH:UK
• Working in partnership to promote WHS status
Coastal Overview & Orientation
Vibrez au rythme de l'Irlande

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La route côtière de la Chaussée des Géants. Site classé au Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO
巨人堤道
超乎想象的鬼斧神工

nationaltrust.org.uk/giantscauseway  giantcausewaynationaltrust  GCausewayNT

Giant’s Causeway
Shaped by Imagination
What has changed

- 788,000 visitors to the site in 2014
- 208 different nationalities
- Top 10 countries: Northern Ireland, Rest of UK, USA, Germany, China, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Australia, Italy, Canada
- China increase of 75% on last year – WHS status?!
Guided walking tours

UNESCO discovery tours
7. Fly a kite

Building Bee Boxes
What next?!

• Continue to push the World Heritage message
• Work in partnership: Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, WH:UK
• Building links with international tour operators
• Develop the WH brand within the National Trust framework?
• Develop a WH product for the island of Ireland?
Any Questions