Domestic Tourism: Where do the Political Parties stand?

With all eyes scrutinising the manifestoes of the key political parties, holidaycottages.co.uk have spoken directly to party representatives on their stance on the UK tourism industry and the effects their policies will have.

Holidaycottages.co.uk have experienced a 37 per cent increase in bookings in the first quarter of 2015 and projections for the future look healthy, but support from the next government is essential to ensure that the ‘staycation’ boom and increase in foreign tourists continues and is sustainable.

Managing Director James Morris says “The UK domestic tourism industry is key to the economy of the UK, contributing over £127 billion to the country’s GDP each year. Tourism supports over 3 million jobs in the UK and it’s vital that all political parties recognise this with their policies, ensuring growth and sustainability in this rapidly growing industry.”

Holidaycottages.co.uk asked the question ‘What is your stance on UK tourism and how do your policies support the industry?’

Below are the replies received by holidaycottages.co.uk from spokespeople for the key Political Parties’ in the upcoming general elections on how they propose to support the future of the industry.

Conservative

Commenting specifically on tourism in the South West, the office of Geoffrey Cox, Conservative candidate in Torridge and West Devon, states that to help attract growth and support new and existing tourism businesses the Conservatives’ key pledge is to improve connections to the South West with major investment in the M5, A358, A30 and A303, and the electrification of the Great Western Main Line – bringing new fast trains on the route.

The Party’s manifesto makes a specific commitment to invest in these and other projects in order to boost tourism here in the South West. The Conservatives understand the contribution the industry makes to our economy, supporting over three million jobs and will continue to step up efforts to recruit more young people and apprentices into the business as the economic recovery continues.

Commenting, Conservative candidate Geoffrey Cox said:

“Tourism is the lifeblood of our local economy and presents real opportunities to secure the growth, investment and jobs we need here in Devon. Under this Government we have seen real progress when it comes to investment in our infrastructure, which is essential in order to attract visitors down to take advantage of the unique mix of outstanding coastline and countryside our area has to offer.”

Labour

“A Labour government will work with the tourism sector to create jobs and growth across the country.
For a number of years the tourism industry has not received the recognition that it deserves, despite many communities across Britain being reliant on tourism for the local jobs and economic activity it sustains. Our rich and diverse cultural and sporting industries attract many tourists to the UK.

Seaside towns too are a quintessential part of Britain’s tourist industry. Many of these towns and resorts have been neglected and suffer from high unemployment and deprivation. Labour will create an innovative development strategy for coastal economies and support tourism.” Said a Labour spokesperson

Liberal Democrats

“Tourism and heritage collectively make up as much as 9% of our economy, and yet, in our view, these industries do not have the status they deserve in government or in wider society. That’s why Liberal Democrats will work to make sure the British tourism industry is able to compete with other major world destinations and be a key generator of growth in the UK economy.” Said a Liberal Democrats spokesperson.

The party promise to strengthen the Hospitality and Tourism Council, which will act as a voice for tourism in Government and will focus on areas where there are barriers to growth facing the sector. They also want to give a higher status to tourism within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and devolve more power, resources and decision-making to local areas to promote their unique tourism propositions in the UK and globally.

The spokesperson went on to highlight the need for a better transport infrastructure, a modern railway system, and less congestion on our roads.

UKIP

UKIP dedicates a section of its manifesto to Heritage and Tourism, promising that they will "stand up for Britain’s beautiful and important heritage and our vital tourist industry".

They pledge to create a new Minister of State for Heritage and Tourism, bring in zero rate VAT on repairs to historic churches and listed buildings and create rural conservation areas to protect our market towns and scenic countryside.

They will introduce a ‘presumption in favour of conservation’ into planning legislation and support the regeneration of coastal towns through ‘Seaside Town Status’ designation.

One of their campaigns of which they’re most proud is their Save the Pub campaign. They pledge to do this through tax breaks for smaller breweries, amending the smoking ban, reversing plain packaging legislation for tobacco products and opposing calls for minimum pricing for alcohol.

SNP

The SNP will plan to use its influence at Westminster to deliver key economic advantages for Scotland, including a boost for Scotland’s tourism and hospitality sectors with plans for reduction in Air Passenger Duty to encourage more direct flights to Scotland.
About holidaycottages.co.uk

An award-winning national business, holidaycottages.co.uk specialises in letting holiday properties all across the UK including dog-friendly cottages, family properties and romantic, group and accessible holidays. Holidaycottages.co.uk let everything from cosy barn conversions on working farms, to grand mansions and country houses sleeping multiple numbers of guests.

Notes to editor:

- Holidaycottages.co.uk is an independent company and features 2,000 self-catering properties in popular holiday destinations across the UK.
- Winners of the Best Medium Holiday Cottage Booking Company 2014 at the British Travel Awards.
- The company offers a high standard of personally inspected holiday cottages which can be booked online via their user-friendly website, or over the phone with their Reservations Team.
- The company has been working with the Green Tourism Business Scheme – a nationally recognised scheme organised by Visit Britain – and currently hold the Gold award.

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