



Press Release

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Students plan the future for a famous Derbyshire tourist resort

Finding a fresh vision for Matlock Bath's future as a tourist destination is the aim of a partnership between the village and the University of Derby.

Tourism students are working on a research project alongside Matlock Bath Parish Council to develop a plan to help the famous Derbyshire resort refresh its image and boost its economy.

Matlock Bath's setting on the River Derwent between limestone cliffs led it be known as Little Switzerland in its Victorian hey-day, and the village has been celebrated by writers ranging from Lord Byron to former Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman, who dedicated an entire poem to its "romantic rocks."

Cable cars which soar above the gorge to The Heights of Abraham are a major regional tourist attraction, and the village itself is popular with families and a new generation of well-behaved motor bikers for days out.

But changing leisure and travel trends have left the village with an identity problem, says Parish Council Chairman Peter Baranek.

"At the moment it is still very much a day-tripper destination," he said. "But the village has so much more to offer. Everybody is doing a little bit, but there's nobody looking at the big picture," said Cllr Baranek.

"And until we look at the big picture, we do not have a sense of direction. People say what is your vision for the village: I haven't got a vision - but I want the village to provide a better experience for the people who come and visit and for those who live here. There is a lot of love and good will for the village. We want to find out why and build on that."

Encouraged by recent investments and a positive vibe around the village for action, he enlisted the help of Andrew Pugh of the Heights of Abraham who approached the University for help.

Dr Sarah Rawlinson, Head of Department Hotel Resort and Spa Management, will lead second and third year Tourism Management students as they audit Matlock Bath's attractions, businesses and venues, and compare them with competitor destinations such as such as Whitby.

They will also look at connecting Matlock Bath with other attractions, such as nearby Cromford Mill and the Peak District.

“We want to see what is good about Matlock Bath and what needs to be improved,” said Dr Rawlinson.

The first step will be on February 15 when an invitation-only meeting of stakeholders - businesses, councils, residents and local organisations – will start the process.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

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