

VISITORS URGED NOT TO COME TO PEMBROKESHIRE OVER BANK HOLIDAY

As the Bank Holiday weekend approaches, visitors and second home owners are being urged to continue to stay away from Pembrokeshire.

The message from the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership is that the County will still be here once the crisis is over.

"Pembrokeshire is a beautiful place and when the time is right, we will welcome you. But that time is not now," said Cllr David Simpson, Leader of Pembrokeshire County Council.

"My thanks go to all those who have observed the restrictions and stayed at home so far."

The Chairman of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Cllr Paul Harries, added: "Pembrokeshire has earned its reputation as one of the UK's leading tourist destinations, so it doesn't come naturally to ask visitors to stay away.

"However, protecting our rural communities is our priority right now and this can only be achieved by adhering to Government guidelines.

"We are urging people to remain patient, to stay at your primary home and only visit when the time is right."

Jane Rees-Baynes, Chair of Pembrokeshire Tourism, said there was still 'a lot of concern within the sector that people will be tempted to visit our beautiful area despite it being unlawful to do so'.

"We urge you in the strongest possible terms not to travel to Pembrokeshire this bank holiday," she said.

"We will be here ready and waiting to welcome you back when the restrictions have been lifted and it is safe to return."

Together with Dyfed Powys Police, Pembrokeshire County Council has written to some 6,000 owners of holiday homes (including second homes and holiday lets) at their primary address, urging them to remain where they are.

"The single most important action to stop the infection spreading, to reduce the pressure on our stretched emergency services and ultimately to save lives is for everyone to stay at home," reads the letter, signed by Chief Executive Ian Westley and Chief Constable Mark Collins and supported by Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum.

It adds: "The response from both the public and businesses has on the whole been exceptional, with the majority of people acting in the interests of our communities, notwithstanding the extreme challenges that this can present. We are therefore grateful for the commitment and sacrifices made.

"However, over the period that the 'lockdown measures' have been in force we have received reports of people arriving at various properties in the County to take up occupation – allegedly in contravention of the restrictions. If correct, this risks compromising the disease control measures and puts lives at risk."

Iwan Thomas, Chief Executive of PLANED, added:

"Our communities across Pembrokeshire have respected and worked within the lockdown guidelines. However, there is a growing nervousness of potential visitors from elsewhere at this current time, who could expose our population to external risks which would be unfair and unwelcome during lockdown.

"We need to prioritise the protection and safeguarding of our own communities at this time, and then welcome visitors again, only when it is safe to do so."