

# MARKET RESEARCH WHITEWELL LODGES

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# Market Research

**Market research to support the development of a Glamping development to be called 'Whitewell Lodges' at Whitewell.**

Whitewell is a small settlement in the east Wales, approximately 18km south-east of Wrexham. The area and surroundings are rich in tourist attractions, which creates a significant economic benefit to the area.

This report will examine whether current accommodation options local to Whitewell and the surrounding areas are sufficient to meet tourist demand. It will also look at tourism trends to suggest if a new glamping site in this area are warranted.

## Main Tourist Markets

### Tourists

Domestic visitors, international visitors, tourists and sight seers are the main market for the Whitewell Lodges. Since the tourism sector in the Whitewell and the surrounding area is expected to increase by almost 20% annually by 2027/2028, it is reasonable to suggest that there will be demand for this development well into the future.

### Events

Whitchurch hosts many events each year, many are within easy commuting distance from the proposed site:

**Party in the Park:** annual event held on a Saturday in June the entertainment includes live music, food and stalls.

**Whitchurch Food & Drink Festival:** Held in May the festival provides live cookery demonstrations and a wide range of exhibitors.

**Whitchurch Walking Festival:** 3 days of walking opportunities and activities that provides an opportunity to explore Whitchurch and the surrounding countryside.

## Visitor Attractions

The proposed site is central to many local attractions listed below:

- **Whitchurch Visitor Information Centre**
- **Alderford Lakes:** Following the extraction of gravel to help build the bypass a fishing lake was developed. Today the site has been further developed to provide walks, a cafe and hosts a range of events.
- **Greenfields Nature Reserve:** Run by volunteers this site provides walks to view meadow flowers and woodlands.
- **Shropshire Way:** This 14-mile section of the route takes in Whitchurch. After Wem, the route takes you along Dodington with its classical frontages, past the former canal wharfage and into Jubilee Park (1897). The path runs through Whitchurch Waterway Country Park, with an optional detour to the Greenfields Nature Reserve.
- **Whitchurch Clock Trail:** Follow the trail around the Town, an ideal way to see the town center.
- **Whitchurch Heritage Centre:** housing a range of artifacts depicting the history of the town since Roman times. Houses a collection dedicated to J B Joyce tower clocks which were produced in the town from 1790 to recent times.

## Food and Drink

Whitchurch has a lot to offer when it comes to 'eating and drinking'. There are a good number of local restaurants, idyllic pubs and breweries and distilleries.

In addition to the areas many excellent restaurants and producers, Whitchurch Farmer's Market is held every Friday. The proposed glamping development is well placed to allow guests to visit & spend at this market.

Three Wrens Cheshire Distillery is all with easy access from the site allowing guests to visit, enjoy tours and make purchases directly from the distilleries.

## Tourism Demand Analysis

### Demand in the Area

Tourism in the area appears to be enjoying stable growth in recent years. We therefore expect demand for accommodation to grow in the years ahead. This is due to in part to Brexit effect (more on this later), but also due to promotion and funding by the Wrexham council by way of their Five-Year Business plan.

This number does not take into account season fluctuation but does suggest a large potential market for the proposed development, which is unlikely to be met by existing accommodation options, especially during peak season.

## Glamping Popularity

Each year we witness a cyclical increase in google searches for glamping (as seen below). This trend matches Glampitect's experience of witnessing increasing demand. Interestingly the trend shows increased demand for both peak and off-peak season & shows no sign of decreasing for the time being.

After a search of the surrounding area, there appears to be no other glamping options within a 5-mile radius. Whitchurch Marina, Caravan and Camping are located 2.5 miles away and just over a 10-minute drive to the East of the proposed site.



Figure 1 - Glamping Popularity

We have seen in other parts of the country that glamping sites are popular even in areas short of tourist attractions. Glamping has a unique appeal, meaning it is now an attraction in its own right.

## Brexit Uncertainty & Covid19 Impact

Historically, uncertain political times have seen UK based tourists' favour 'staycations' over foreign holidays. Fears over foreign travel due to the Covid19 Pandemic are also expected to encourage home based tourism.

This is tempered by the possibility of fewer tourists arriving from the International Market, due to the same uncertainty. However, domestic tourists using accommodation typically outnumbered international tourists by a ratio as high as 9:1, so we view this a potential net benefit.

## Existing Accommodation near Whitewell

Below is a list of accommodation options near the proposed glamping site and the surrounding area.

- Alderford Lake - £100 per night
- The Dodington Lodge - £84 per night
- Lodge Cottage - £81 per night
- Reubens - £70 per night
- Macdonald Hill Valley Hotel, Golf & Spa - £63 per night

After searching various websites, it is clear that local accommodation options tend towards quaint guest house / B&B style.

By comparison to the choices above, the proposed glamping site would be a completely different proposition to the current options and likely attract a demographic, who at present are not catered for locally. The site could expect to command upwards of £130 per night per unit.

Accommodating this new demographic, should also see benefits pass through to the local economy. Increased spending by guests of the site and jobs created which could be filled by local residents.

The tourist trade in winter months is naturally low in most parts of the UK. Despite this, we believe there would still be sufficient demand for glamping site in low season, again due to the innovative and popular wellness treatments and leisure activities.

## Summary

Tourism in the UK is expected to increase in the years ahead, even without the effects of Covid19 & Brexit, which are also expected to accelerate demand. This should also mean increased demand for tourist attractions and accommodation in and around the Scottish Borders area. Coupled to the ever-increasing demands for glamping experiences.

The proposed development will also boost the local and rural economy and offers a scenic stay for guests. We believe that the proposed development will be beneficial to this part of Wrexham Council's, without sacrificing the areas ecology, landscape or residential amenity.