

INFORMATION CENTRES LEAD THE WAY

Hambleton is to get the first manned 'tourist information points' in Yorkshire.

It is expected that the volunteer run facilities – in Easingwold, Northallerton, Great Ayton and Bedale – will lead the way for similar operations to open up across the county.

They will replace the current tourist information centres in the towns. The initiative has been developed following a recent review of the council's tourism function and changes to the national TIC network.

That review encouraged the need to develop Thirsk TIC as the district's flagship centre – increased staffing

levels and opening hours have boosted visitor figures. An advanced booking accommodation service is also being developed for Hambleton which will operate from Thirsk TIC.

But the review also recognised that the TICs in Bedale, Easingwold, Great Ayton and Northallerton no longer met the national min-

imum requirements set down by Tourist Boards.

"Rather than these centres being de-networked by the Yorkshire Tourist Board we have decided to develop them as manned tourist information points instead," said Tourism Manager, David Shields.

"The committed volun-

teers who run them can then continue to serve their communities and be a greater asset to the authority's tourism function. We are leading the field in Yorkshire with this initiative - a scheme which is sure to be followed by many smaller TIC's experiencing low visitor numbers

and income streams."

The new TIP's come into play at Northallerton next month (November) and at Great Ayton, Easingwold and Bedale next Easter.

● Thirsk TIC was runner up in the Yorkshire Tourist Board's White Rose Award for "Most Outstanding TIC in Yorkshire."

£610,000 SCHEME FOR BEDALE

LEISURE and sports facilities in Bedale could be improved in a £610,000 scheme.

The proposed project will see a floodlit pitch constructed and the health and fitness studio at the leisure centre extended.

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) has already given provisional approval to grant aid to the scheme which will benefit PE in the neighbouring Bedale High School as well as local residents through use of the Leisure Centre.

It is the largest single project in North Yorkshire County Council's portfolio of PE and sports schemes looking to draw on £3.2 million of lottery money.

Initially only a floodlit pitch was planned - on land between the leisure centre and the school. But following consultation with local sports clubs, schools and health professionals a need to improve facilities for dance, pilates and health education classes was established.

It is hoped that - subject to confirmation from NOF - construction work will begin next summer.

New Play Areas



TWO new play areas are in the pipeline.

The Council has secured two pieces of land – for the villages of Hutton Rudby and Faceby.

Once developed they will be handed back to the local communities to manage.

"One of the key issues that comes up when we ask local people what would improve their quality of life is to improve public recreational land," said cabinet spokesman on leisure, Councillor Neville Huxtable (pictured at Hutton Rudby).

"We can do this by securing permanent green spaces in villages and towns. Hutton Rudby and Faceby are the latest to be helped - both communities with no facilities at present."

The council has a prioritised programme for these schemes - for more information call Head of Leisure and Tourism Services, Dave Goodwin, on 01609 767147 or dave.goodwin@hambleton.gov.uk

Parade of Sail



Great Ayton youngsters are getting their boats ready for the annual 'Parade of Sail'.

It is just one of the events being staged to mark the 275th anniversary of Captain James Cook's birthday.

The pageant will see hundreds of home made craft sail down the River Leven on October 29. The event begins at Low Green, Great Ayton at 10.30am with prizes for best boat as well as quickest time.

In the week long celebration of the navigator's life there will be a wide range of events along the North East coast – in Hartlepool, Stockton, Middlesbrough, Great Ayton, Staithes, Marske and Whitby. And in Middlesbrough the full size replica of HM Bark Endeavour – Cook's ship – will be in port.

● For more information on the Parade of Sail call Hambleton's tourism section on 01609 767110 or email louise.savory@hambleton.gov.uk.

● For more details on Captain Cook country events check out www.captaincook.org.uk.

Awards for the best of Hambleton

AWARDS for the best of Hambleton's food and drink producers are to be launched next spring.

The scheme will include annual recognition for best restaurant, tea room and breakfast as well as food producer, village shop and specialist retailer of the year.

Residents and visitors will be asked to nominate their favourites which will then be judged by a panel of experts. The awards will be featured in a brand new Herriot Country 'eating out' guide which will hit the shelves next Easter.

The guide will include details on child and disabled friendly eating houses, non smoking policies and the use of local produce.

"Food and drink accounts for 50% of day visitor spending in the countryside so it is important we make sure what they get in Hambleton is the best it can be," said Tourism Manager, David Shields.

"We already have some wonderful restaurants, pubs, cafes and specialist shops. But we hope that the awards scheme will encourage them to create a distinctive local cuisine to bring even more business into the area.

"By using only local produce they can support the local economy themselves."

The first awards under the scheme will be made next October.

TOURISM ON TOUR

HERRIOT and Captain Cook Country will be featured at exhibitions across Europe this winter. Hambleton's tourism section are taking space at several travel shows over the coming months. This month kicks off with the 'British Day' exhibition in Zeebrugge - an annual show which attracts thousands of Belgian holidaymakers interested in breaks across the sea in the North of England. Then its over to Manchester for the annual 'Holiday and Travel Show', Utrecht for Holland's largest holiday exhibition and Bolton for the North West Tourist Board's 'Great Days Out' fair.



Hannah Hauxwell paid a visit to The World of James Herriot last month - on the day the centre recorded its 250,000th visitor. Hannah - most famous for living a reclusive life in the Dales until the mid 80s - visited the centre with friends from Cothelstone where she now lives.

Herriot Revamp

THE World of James Herriot is to undergo a major improvement scheme over the winter months.

The Thirsk based centre will celebrate its fifth birthday next spring with a new look.

A new temporary exhibition room is being created, the original *All Creatures Great and Small* car re-sited and more interactive equipment provided in the 'Visible Farm'.

A wardrobe of 50s costumes will be built up for visitors to use in the recreated TV studios and a facility to have photographs taken 'on set' installed.

And a new toilet block is being built in the garden's foldyard.

The plans will also see the 'Real Alf Wight' displays move rooms. "With the centre's fifth birthday looming we want to give it an overhaul - refresh the rooms and make changes to make it more fun for both new and repeat visitors," said Councillor Mrs June Imeson.

"The plans will see new interactive displays created and another toilet block created in the garden area. We constantly monitor visitors comments at the centre and try to react to them where we can.

"The centre has gone from strength to strength since its opening - we celebrated our 250,000th visitor last month, which is a great achievement. All these visitors are bringing new business into the district and it's important that we build on that success."

● A joint ticketing promotion with Wensleydale Railway runs until the end of this month. Just £10 buys adult entry into The World of James Herriot and a return trip to Leyburn on the newly opened railway. The joint tickets do not have to be used on the same day but are only valid until October 31.

The World of
JAMES HERRIOT

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www.worldofjamesherriot.org

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