

## APPENDIX TO TOURISM SCRUTINY REPORT

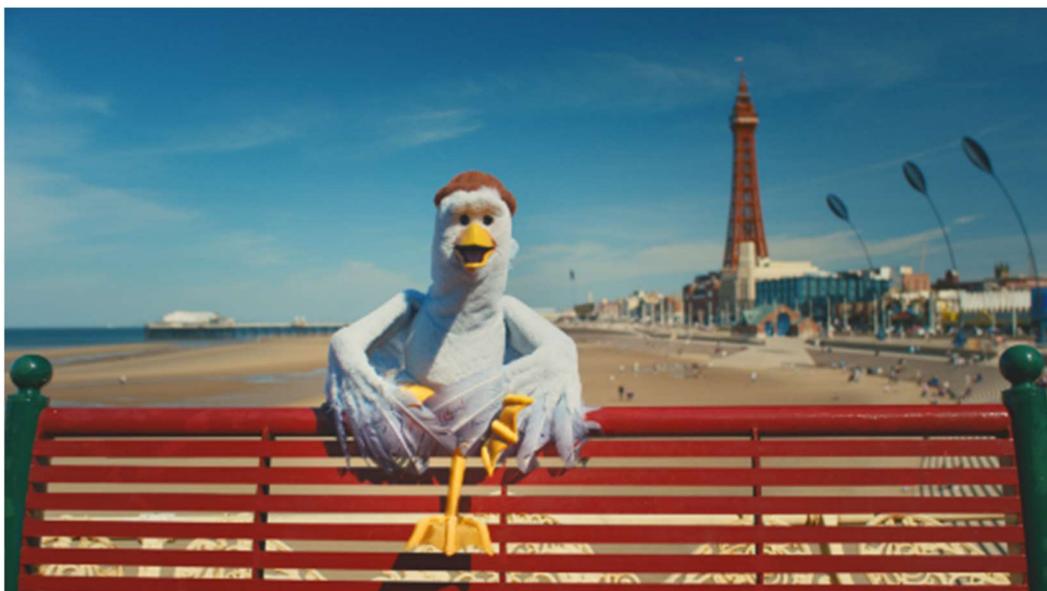
September 28, 2022

### INTRODUCTION

After two years of COVID-19 disruption caused by lockdowns and restrictions, 2022 provided an opportunity to roll out the first full tourism season since 2019.

With no pandemic restrictions in place, it meant we could reinstate some of our major events, giving us an opportunity to build on the tourism recovery plans that were delivered so successfully during the second half of 2021, when an extended Illuminations season and the new Christmas By The Sea village brought record numbers of people to the promenade.

### DESTINATION MARKETING CAMPAIGN



To mark the start of that first full tourism season since 2019, Blackpool launched its biggest ever marketing campaign *Only in Blackpool* – spearheaded by a new “spokesbird” Nigel C Gull.

The £1.3 million partnership between Merlin Entertainments, Blackpool Council, Blackpool Tourism Business Improvement District and other partners features a specially-created seagull puppet called Nigel, voiced by actor and comedian Johnny Vegas.

The campaign seeks to showcase the resort’s wide range of attractions and reaffirm its position as the UK’s capital of fun and ultimate destination for families. Key objectives included increasing numbers of overnight stays and changing any negative perceptions of Blackpool among the core family audience.

In the new adverts, which started airing across TV, radio, social media and video-on-demand from May 23, Nigel visits iconic attractions including Blackpool Tower, the Pleasure Beach, Madame Tussauds, Sandcastle Water Park and SEA LIFE.

Nigel was created by award-winning puppeteer Andy Heath, who has worked with the BBC, The Jim Henson Company and Disney, with the campaign produced by the Creature London agency. A range of Nigel merchandise has been produced for sale in the Tourist Information Centre.

## **Destination Marketing: Initial Results**

We are still awaiting the final report on the economic impact of the campaign which will be completed post October half term. However, we have received initial findings from surveys of 1200 people in the target audience areas. These surveys were undertaken pre and post-campaign with the parents of children aged two to 12 in the North West, North East, Yorkshire & Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands and Scotland. These are some of the findings based on that research:

### **Key Results (to date)**

#### **Recall**

The campaign has strong recall with 56% of respondents claiming to have seen it.

Recall of the campaign was highest in the North East (62%) and Yorkshire (60%).

Half of the respondents (51%) recalled seeing the video creative, with the highest channel recall on live TV at 33%.

When shown a selection of resorts/destinations around the UK, Blackpool was the one with highest prompted awareness.

#### **Perception shifts**

The majority of perceptions about Blackpool are more positive. The biggest shift from the pre-campaign survey to the post campaign survey was in agreeing with the statement “there has never been a better time to visit Blackpool”, increasing from 39% to 48%.

Among those who could recall the campaign, positive perceptions were higher than those who had not seen the campaign.

The majority of respondents (74%) said the ad made them feel more positive about Blackpool. Only 2% said it made them feel less positive.

Most respondents said the TV ad encouraged them to visit Blackpool because it showed a wide array of attractions, and showed the resort as fun and family-oriented destination.

#### **Lapsed and new visitors**

The campaign has been successful at shifting perceptions of new and lapsed visitors.

New visitors, after being shown the campaign are more likely to agree that the campaign “told me something new” and “made me feel differently about Blackpool”.

#### **Intent to visit**

Intent to visit Blackpool across all trip types has risen due to the campaign. Intent to take a longer overnight trip doubled among those who could recall the campaign (14% to 29%).

For longer overnight trips, the campaign drove intent to visit with their children from 65% pre-campaign to 74% post-campaign.

#### **Creative Evaluation**

The campaign was positively received. The majority (74%) said the ad made them feel more positive towards Blackpool.

The campaign performed well in engaging the audience and communicating something new about Blackpool. Two thirds (65%) agreed the ad told them something new.

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

### Footfall

In addition to the annual research such as STEAM, we monitor a basket of performance indicators each month to give us a more immediate picture of trends within the visitor economy.

Given the impact of pandemic lockdown and restrictions during 2020 and 2021, we are using a four-year horizon. The comparison between 2022 and 2019 is an important one because that gives an indication of whether we are returning to pre-pandemic levels.

<b>Promenade Footfall</b>				
	2022	2021	2020	2019
April	4,417,136	2,597,349	484,507	2,301,339
May	4,108,034	3,109,198	732,841	2,241,472
June	3,619,331	3,532,554	1,020,270	2,152,878
July	3,657,807	4,748,189	1,930,471	2,429,515
August	3,187,937	6,102,629	2,737,102	3,051,723
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,990,245</b>	<b>20,089,919</b>	<b>6,905,191</b>	<b>12,176,927</b>
<b>Town Centre Footfall</b>				
	2022	2021	2020	2019
April	2,966,623	1,563,970	849,231	2,760,107
May	2,942,049	1,997,215	1,467,710	2,541,160
June	2,684,844	2,222,935	1,770,706	2,345,667
July	2,742,331	3,086,972	2,985,963	2,793,972
August	2,382,828	3,824,129	4,400,031	3,861,442
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,718,675</b>	<b>12,695,221</b>	<b>11,473,641</b>	<b>14,302,348</b>

Footfall was previously monitored using half a dozen cameras located at key points in the town centre and on the Promenade. However, this only monitored footfall movements rather than individuals and didn't pick up those on the western side of the promenade.

The figures above are taken from Visitor Insights, our new method of monitoring which provides anonymised GPS and mobile phone tracking data, which can be used to identify the location and movements of pedestrians in the town centre and on the Promenade. There are a number of sensor sites which give the total number of unique individuals in a given area.

This method is much more insightful because it includes all of the Promenade and, as you will see from the Air Show report included in this report, it can provide information on where are our visitors are coming from.

As you will see from the above figures, the April to August comparison for 2022 vs 2019 is exceptionally positive. The comparison versus 2021 is showing a deficit, mainly due to exceptionally high figures in July and August last year when the staycation effect was particularly strong given that people could not choose overseas travel as an alternative to domestic holidays.

The downturn in numbers during July and August also coincides with a dramatic increase in fuel prices and a worsening cost-of-living crisis, which is having a dampening effect on the UK's tourism and hospitality industry.

## Other Key Indicators

The tables below show performance on rail, tram passengers and visitor interest (measured through visits to the visitblackpool.com website and the Tourist Information Centre).

The rail comparisons show a significant upturn in numbers of passengers coming through Blackpool North, Blackpool South and Pleasure Beach Stations, between April and August this year, illustrating how well the leisure market has recovered compared to the commuter market. Our figures show 16% growth over 2019 and 19% growth over what was a strong performance last year.

Similarly tram usage has also recovered extremely well, with an exceptional performance in June compared to the same period in 2019.

### Inbound Rail

Period (Month)	2022	2021	2020	2019	Change from 2019 to 2022	Change from 2021 to 2022
P01 (April)	125,550	57,101	1,590	106,397	18.0%	119.9%
P02 (May)	102,653	77,643	4,951	92,822	10.6%	32.2%
P03 (June)	115,791	141,111	13,632	100,728	15.0%	-17.9%
P04 (July)	155,302	136,929	55,053	126,820	22.5%	13.4%
P05 (August)	184,574	160,545	106,251	162,588	13.5%	15.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>683,870</b>	<b>573,329</b>	<b>181,477</b>	<b>589,355</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

### Tram Usage

Month	2022	2021	2020	2019	Change from 2019 to 2022	Change from 2021 to 2022
April	387,728	101,164	0	407,784	-4.9%	283.3%
May	362,953	200,216	0	434,561	-16.5%	81.3%
June	412,764	329,393	0	321,022	28.6%	25.3%
July	595,739	524,759	66,505	572,024	4.1%	13.5%
August	674,506	692,238	253,359	646,040	4.4%	-2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,433,690</b>	<b>1,847,770</b>	<b>319,864</b>	<b>2,381,431</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>

### VisitBlackpool

#### Website visits

Month	2022	2021	2020	2019	Change from 2019 to 2022	Change from 2021 to 2022
April	98,330	90,297	23,377	82,738	18.8%	8.9%
May	117,171	128,200	40,365	96,779	21.1%	-8.6%
June	127,153	122,055	59,872	100,570	26.4%	4.2%
July	149,928	171,332	126,614	157,156	-4.6%	-12.5%
August	278,062	257,137	194,442	220,520	26.1%	8.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>770,644</b>	<b>769,021</b>	<b>444,670</b>	<b>657,763</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>

#### TIC Visits

Month	2022	2021	2020	2019	Change from 2019 to 2022	Change from 2021 to 2022
April	3,071	1,253	-	4,363	-29.6%	145.1%
May	4,586	3,071	-	5,087	-9.8%	49.3%
June	5,928	4,527	-	5,912	0.3%	30.9%
July	7,789	6,141	-	13,482	-42.2%	26.8%
August	10,964	10,300	-	27,944	-60.8%	6.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32,338</b>	<b>25,292</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>56,788</b>	<b>-43.1%</b>	<b>27.9%</b>

## **RETURN OF MAJOR EVENTS PROGRAMME**

### **QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE**

Blackpool marked the start of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations with a spectacular seafront display of trams, lights, lasers and fireworks.



The event was led by Blackpool's newly-established Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) working alongside partners including VisitBlackpool, Blackpool Transport and Blackpool Council.

After staging one of the largest heritage tram parades in living memory during the day, the night skies were illuminated in a sea of red, white and blue as tens of thousands of people gathered for the first day of an extended holiday weekend.

The resort was one of thousands of locations and landmarks across the UK chosen to take part in the Jubilee Beacon Lighting ceremony. Following a reading of the Royal Proclamation and a bugler fanfare, the heart on the centre of The Blackpool Tower revealed a countdown to the firing of red, white and blue laser beams from the top of The Blackpool Tower, Pleasure Beach and the Blackpool & Fylde College campus.

At the same time, the Golden Mile, beach and sea were bathed in searchlights before the celebrations culminated in a light, laser and firework show on The Blackpool Tower.

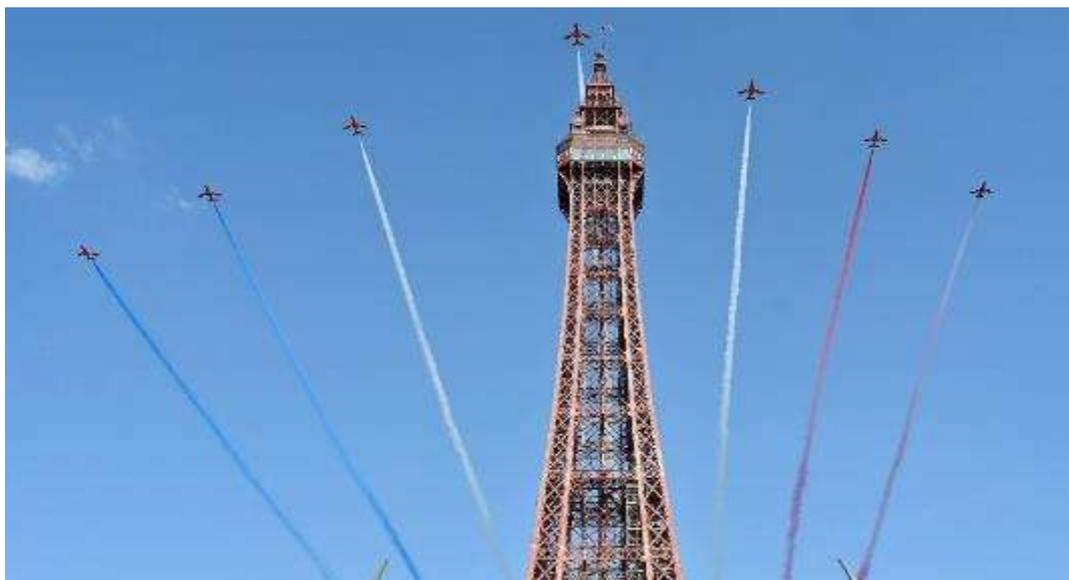
Earlier in the day, 12 of Blackpool's heritage trams travelled in convoy along the Promenade, with more than 800 invited guests on board including schoolchildren, community groups, costume characters from various tourist attractions, and Ukrainian families who have settled in Blackpool.

The convoy made its way to the Comedy Carpet on the Tower Festival Headland where visitors were invited to enjoy the Big Comedy Picnic, an al fresco eating area with free live entertainment.

The celebrations attracted a huge amount of media coverage. Our social media channels also recorded outstanding levels of engagement with a "Here Come The Trams" post on Facebook generating a reach of almost four million and the jubilee section on the VisitBlackpool website attracting 35,000 views. This is a link to a video created for Instagram after the event:

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/CeYXoGmIRf5/> (click video for sound).

## AIR SHOW



A record number of people turned out to watch Blackpool's annual Air Show as a combination of scorching weather and the long-awaited return of the Red Arrows brought crowds flocking to the resort from across the UK.

Around 230,000 people turned out over the two days to watch hours of spectacular free entertainment.

As well as the Red Arrows performing a dazzling finale on both the Saturday and Sunday, there were breath-taking displays by the Typhoon display team, the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, Chinook, Muscle Pitts stunt plane, Strikemaster and the AeroSuperBatics Wingwalkers.

Although the Tower Festival Headland provided the main viewing and commentary point alongside an Air Show Village, huge crowds lined the six miles of promenade.

Visitor Insight mobile phone data shows more than 130,000 visitors on Saturday, almost 100,000 on the Sunday. The analysis shows how far people travelled for the event.

Distance Travelled	Total	%
0 - 20km	133732	58%
21 - 100km	59854	26%
101 - 385km	36812	16%
<b>Total</b>	<b>230398</b>	



Blackpool Air Show will return next year on Saturday 12 August and Sunday 13 August 2023.

**RIDE THE LIGHTS**

Thousands of families took the opportunity to ride along a traffic-free promenade and get a sneak preview of the 2022 Illuminations display.

Ride The Lights was staged on the night of Tuesday 30 August – three days before the Illuminations were officially switched on.

Bikes of all shapes and sizes took advantage of the seafront route in a free family event that is suitable for all ages. The Promenade was closed to traffic from 6.30pm until 10.30pm.

Cyclists were able to participate at any time during that period although recommended to join the event at either the Starr Gate or Red Bank Road gateways to the promenade.

A temporary car park was set up at the airport for those joining at the south end of the route.

**BLACKPOOL CUP**

The Blackpool Cup, an international youth football tournament staged at the new Common Edge Road sports pitches over April and May, has been ranked the number one best junior football tournament in Europe.

Out of 16 international tournaments organised by Euro-Sportring, Blackpool scored top spot with a rating of 95% out of a 100% for the quality of the sports facilities, tournament organisation, entertainment, transport and accommodation.

The event, held over two weekends, and sponsored by Blackpool Council and VisistBlackpool, was an outstanding success attracting over 10,000 visitors to the town and 900 teams from five different countries. The tournament will return to Blackpool over the Easter and May Day bank holiday weekends next year.

**ILLUMINATIONS SWITCH-ON**

TV celebrity and designer Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen switched on the resort's Illuminations to kick-start four months of Illuminations.

The star of Channel 4's Changing Rooms pulled the switch at the end of a 90-minute concert in front of a 2000-capacity live audience in the Blackpool Tower Ballroom, produced in association with MTV and featuring Blue, Tom Grennan, Nina Nesbitt, Fuse ODG and Mae Muller.

Thousands of people who had gathered on the Promenade to watch the show on a giant screen (pictured above) were treated to a burst of fireworks and a spectacular light show on The Blackpool Tower. The show and switch-on moment were also live-streamed to a worldwide audience via MTV's YouTube channel, attracting around 25,000 viewers.

Laurence, who stepped in to replace actor and comedian Johnny Vegas, had earlier told the show's host Becca Dudley of his love and affection for the Illuminations and his pride at being invited to perform the Switch-On ceremony. Over the past few years, Laurence has collaborated with the Illuminations production team, designing a number of spectacular features and installations.

His appearance as Switch-On star this year coincides with the unveiling of a dazzling makeover for the Golden Mile in which Laurence has created a stretch of Art Deco-style features that celebrate a golden age of 1930s glamour.

- The Illuminations Switch-On concert will generate further national publicity when two additional shows, The Best of Blackpool Switch-On and a Tom Grennan Special, are premiered on the night of Friday 30 September across the MTV Music channel. A short video of the highlights has also been created for use across our social media channels: Link here: <https://we.tl/t-7V6gumFe7h>

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **WORLD FIREWORKS BLACKPOOL**

A fourth fireworks event has been added to our autumn events programme – thanks to a new sponsorship deal with Coral Island.

The seafront family entertainment centre will put its name to the three World Fireworks Championship Blackpool events and also to a new UK showcase display in October half-term.



The first of the events, scheduled for Saturday 17 September was postponed due its proximity to Her Late Majesty's Funeral and will now be staged in October half term.

The three countries that will compete are Finland on Saturday 1 October; Barbados on Saturday 15 October; Wales on Thursday 27 October; ending with the showcase event on Friday 28 October

### **LIGHTPOOL FESTIVAL**

The award-winning festival returns for 16 nights in October with a spectacular programme of light-based art installations, live performance, 3D projection shows and family-friendly activities.

There will be an array of international works from France and the Netherlands, with new artwork never seen before in the UK.

The festival, which runs from October 14-29, will also see the unveiling of Odyssey, the biggest standalone light installation ever produced by our own Illuminations team at Lightworks.

The huge interactive installation, which will be located just south of the Comedy Carpet, has been co-created by international designer Jack Irving and a team from Lancaster University.

It will remain in place throughout the extended Illuminations season.

### **RETURN OF STRICTLY**

The BBC's Strictly Come Dancing will return to the Blackpool Tower Ballroom for the first time since 2019. The show will be broadcast over the weekend of November 19 and 20.

Ahead of the launch of the new series, TV documentary maker and former Strictly star Stacey Dooley took cameras behind the scenes at the prestigious Blackpool Dance Festival at the Empress Ballroom in the Winter Gardens (pictured right).

It resulted, in an hour-long special, titled Blackpool's Ballroom Battle, which went out at prime time on BBC 1 and on the i-Player streaming service.



### CHRISTMAS BY THE SEA

Blackpool's spectacular Christmas village is returning this winter – thanks to the resort's tourism businesses and national broadband providers, TalkTalk.

The Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID), which represents hundreds of tourism operators, has joined forces with sponsors TalkTalk to ensure the event can go ahead during the extended Illuminations season.

Last year, Christmas By The Sea delivered the highest visitor numbers ever recorded on the seafront during the winter months.

Situated on the Tower Festival Headland opposite The Blackpool Tower, the village will once again include a free-to-use skating rink, festive light installations and projection shows, themed log cabins, artificial snowfalls, Christmas trees and Christmas tram rides.

The village, which will operate from Friday 18 November to Monday 2 January, will also see themed children's attractions and the return of the Star Flyer which, at 260ft tall, is one of Europe's tallest swing rides.

### BUSINESS TOURISM: MeetBlackpool

Winter Gardens Blackpool, VisitBlackpool and Blackpool Council have launched a new partnership to showcase the resort as a destination for large-scale events and conferences.

MeetBlackpool provides a single point of contact to simplify and streamline the generation and management of conference and visitor enquiries. The offer is based around the new £30m Winter Gardens Blackpool Conference & Exhibition Centre, which opened earlier this year and hosted the Conservative Party Spring Conference as its inaugural event.

With the addition of the new Conference & Exhibition Centre, the full Winter Gardens Blackpool complex provides 12 distinct venues, all under one roof.

### TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (TBID)

The TBID was established in July 2021 and is now firmly established with a management steering group in place. Its mandate is to support destination marketing as well as establishing new events. It has a five-year mandate and has the potential to generate around £1.5m to support the tourism industry over that period. In its first full year of activity it has already funded the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations as well as making significant contributions to destination marketing and the 2022 Christmas By The Sea event.

### TOURISM RECOVERY GROUP

The group that was established during the first lockdown in 2020 continues to meet on a weekly basis with representation from attractions, venues, and transport and accommodation providers. It remains an invaluable forum for sharing performance (and particularly accommodation booking and attraction ticket sales trends) and common issues such as recruitment and staff training.

