



## Centre of Excellence for Hospitality update

Welcome to this November 2023 newsletter

How did we suddenly find ourselves in November? I'm certain that this thought has crossed all our minds! Understanding the current challenges of aligning everyone's schedule for a call, we've taken the initiative to introduce a quarterly newsletter to update you our valued partners on what we have been working on over the summer months.



## Exmoor Young Chef of the Year competition

The event took place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October, at West Somerset Community College with a inspiring visit from esteemed broadcaster, writer, food critic and Master Chef judge William Sitwell. His presence and motivational words were inspiring to the young cohorts. The young chefs had the privilege of being mentored by a skilled industry professional in preparation for the competition. During the event the judges Richard Hands of Petrock College and Mathias Oberg from Saunton Sands were both thoroughly impressed by the remarkable talent showcased in the kitchen on the day.

Each finalist was awarded further inspirational experiences including a day with the England National Culinary Team and an opportunity to showcase skills at the North Devon FoodFest in Barnstaple.

Reflecting on the success of this event, it was notable that engaging with local schools presented considerable challenges this year. Therefore we urge everyone to actively forge connections with local schools and colleges, as collective efforts can significantly champion the outcome. Together, by strengthening these relationships we can achieve more in subsequent years.

Do take a look at the press release and images:

<https://www.visit-exmoor.co.uk/top-food-critic-celebrates-exmoors-young-culinary-talent>

## Chef Conference

During the winter season, our plan is to host a Chef and Hospitality Conference featuring esteemed keynote speakers and industry experts. The conference aims to spark inspiration and facilitate an engaging platform where local professionals can come together and foster networking opportunities that encourage benchmarking, sharing best practice, and discussion on prevalent issues. Furthermore, post event we hope to establish a dedicated WhatsApp networking account to sustain and enhance these industry professional connections.

If anyone is interested in hosting this event, please reach out to Max [businesssupport@visit-exmoor.co.uk](mailto:businesssupport@visit-exmoor.co.uk).

## Takeover Day

Collaborating with one of our key stakeholders, we're planning to orchestrate a takeover day at a local hotel. The aim is to ignite enthusiasm among young individuals by showcasing the diverse and thrilling career opportunities within the hospitality sector, including, but going beyond the traditional roles in kitchens and restaurants.

If your passionate about inspiring the next generation and wish to be part of this, please reach out to Max via email: [businesssupport@visit-exmor.co.uk](mailto:businesssupport@visit-exmor.co.uk). Your involvement can make a difference in shaping the future of aspiring individuals exploring career paths in this dynamic industry.

## The importance of being a good employer

As the persistent skill shortage continued to affect the region throughout the summer, it became increasingly critical for businesses to shift their attention from recruitment to retention strategies. To this end, we will be developing a series of webinars scheduled for early 2024. The sessions aim to equip businesses with the knowledge and tools needed to establish the right employment practices, training and workplace culture. The objective to empower colleagues to not only be adequately skilled to excel in their roles with a strong customer centric and efficient approach, but also to foster a sense of being valued, invested in and heard.

Extensive data underscore these elements to form the cornerstone of best practice in business and contributing to the retention of talent. By focusing on these key components business will be better positioned to retain their valued workforce, ultimately strengthening their competitive edge and overall success.

On this note, please see the article showing that the over 50s are looking at hospitality as a workplace of choice.

<https://www.caterer.com/recruiter-advice/hospitality-is-now-the-workplace-of-choice-for-over-50s-with-more-than-165k-joining-the-sector-in-3-years>

## Flight to quality

Recent nationwide data and Visit Exmoor's own observations strongly indicate a clear trend towards a flight to quality. As the cost of living continues to impact consumer spending behaviours, people are becoming more selective, prioritising superior quality experiences when they do make purchases. It's crucial for business to reassess their operations and marketing strategies to effectively communicate a message of great quality to their target markets. In preparation for 2024 we are resolutely committed to providing training sessions for business, focusing on empowering them to deliver precisely this quality outcome. That will ensure that businesses are not only responsive to the current market shift but also at the forefront of delivering unparalleled experiences to their customers.

## Can you Help

We invite all our valued partners to explore creative avenues that can propel the Centre of Excellence to new heights. Whilst we understand the constraints of tight budgets, we are committed to sustaining our momentum. Could you consider possibly contributing to the cause by hosting a training or skills development webinar? Your insights and contributions in this regard would be immensely helpful and appreciated. Your support will not only help us maintain our current trajectory but also foster an environment of continuous growth and excellence.

## The Lowry, Schools Liaison Programme

Please see attached article on the work Adrian Ellis if The Lowry in Manchester has developed to incentivise 14-16 year old school children to consider hospitality as a career and build a pipeline into colleges and through to industry.