

For Immediate Release
Tuesday 19 March 2019

'ALL ABOARD' FOR CLOSER TIES BETWEEN NORTH LAKES AND CHINESE VISITOR MARKET!

Today, Tuesday 19 March 2019, a new and innovative marketing partnership was formally launched at The Rheged Centre near Penrith. Focussed on raising the the profile of our World Heritage status landscape to the valuable Chinese market, The North Lakes China Forum (NLCF) comprises 25 member businesses and destinations from around north Cumbria and is now the largest overseas marketing collective in Cumbria.

The launch was attended by over 50 people; following an address from keynote speaker and VIP guest, the Chinese Consul General Mr. Zheng Xiyuan, guests were treated to a bespoke filmic 'tour' of the North Lakes on Rheged's state of the art cinema screen. Lunch showcased Cumbrian produce and included Sticky Toffee Pudding and Sarah Nelson's Grasmere Gingerbread. Finally, guests boarded a Stagecoach open top bus, brought back into commission specially for the occasion, to make the short journey to Pooley Bridge where they joined an Ullswater 'Steamer' for a celebratory cruise on Ullswater.

Mr Zheng Xiyuan commented:

"It's been an honour and a pleasure to launch the North Lakes China Forum on behalf of its members today. While I am of course generally very familiar with the English Lake District, it's clear that there are many lesser-known corners of this County well worth seeking out too by visitors from China. I wish the group every success and look forward to hearing of their future achievements."

Since its inaugural meeting in July 2018, the NLCF has been incredibly busy. Working closely with Marketing Manchester who have an established gateway into this relatively inaccessible but huge potential market, the group have achieved the following to date:

- Familiarisation trip in September 2018 in association with Marketing Manchester for 14 travel agents from all over China visiting attractions and staying in the Ullswater Valley.
- The group have created bespoke print in Mandarin promoting the North Lakes and all it has to offer
- Marketing Manchester travel trade print including the Forum's members

- China Welcome training for members in collaboration with the DTI.
- Creation of a dedicated Chinese language micro website
- Group members were represented at the 2018 Visit Britain Workshop in China, where hundreds of travel agents come together each year to find out what's new for their clients
- Recent familiarisation trip for Visit Britain/ Marketing Manchester Beijing based staff to North Lakes
- Building itineraries including North Lakes product for promotion in China
- Social media posts in China
- Creation of new North Lakes video with mandarin language voice over which was launched today.

In the next few weeks

- The group will attend a special overseas operators' workshop in Manchester
- Will conduct sales calls to Chinese operators offices in London

Traditionally the Chinese tourism market has been associated with group travel. However today the largest growth market from this economic super power are Financially Independent Travellers (FITs). While group travel remains a popular option, FITs are hungry for authentic experiences and paths less-travelled. In addition, they have more time to spend on holidays as well as significant spending power.

The North Lakes China Forum Chairman, Jim Walker said:

"This is an important day for the North Lakes area. Our economy already benefits from significant numbers of overseas visitors. However, we must continue to work hard to attract our share of new markets to ensure the long term viability of our visitor economy and I believe the North Lakes China Forum has a vital role to play in this."

For more information on the work of the forum or to discuss becoming a member, please contact Jim Walker email jimw@lakedistrictstates.co.uk

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For further information or images please contact Sam Bunting on 07866 492 891 or at sam_bunting@hotmail.com

Notes to the Editor

- This less well known and quieter area of the Northern Lake District, Cumbrian Coast and Eden Valley features historic houses, castles, gardens, heritage transport, museums, theatres, action activities and tranquil lakes in or near two National Parks. We believe here is the best hotel accommodation in the Lake District alongside 'hobbit hole' glamping! Add our locally sourced food, award winning restaurants, here

is an unequalled destination for your clients. Our partnership represents 22 products welcoming groups and individuals in three distinct areas.