

## The Rossendale Tourism & Heritage Group profile and proposed future initiatives

The Rossendale Tourism & Heritage Group (RT&HG) was officially formed in March 2012, specifically to take on the role of Tourism development and Heritage. The group feels strongly that Rossendale more than ever needs to develop tourism in the Valley in order to prosper in the future. The group includes as members Jackie Oakes, the Rossendale Tourism Champion and Andy MacNae, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

The Groups Mission Statement is:

***To encourage and develop tourism throughout the valley, promote individual facilities and attractions throughout the North West through leaflets and other media and encourage collaboration between all sections of the community.***

***Develop a comprehensive range of tourist information and Establish Tourist Information Points where needed and possible.***

***Identify Heritage buildings and if needed help to arrange funding for restoration.***

***To help and assist in developing Heritage initiatives within the Rossendale Valley.***

The RT&HG have identified some relatively basic initiatives that they feel will have a significant and immediate effect on tourist numbers:

- Signage – Information and directional signage coming into the valley via the motorway system and major trunk roads is virtually non-existent and needs immediate attention. The issue has been raised at the highest levels but still hasn't been resolved. The RT&HG feel that if visitors aren't informed of what Rossendale has to offer why should they visit? This particular initiative is firmly in the hands of the RBC and LCC, and is yet to be resolved.
- A Tourism Website – the RT&HG identified that the current 'Visit Rossendale' website was both out of date and very expensive and proposed that a new, more effective and cheaper website could be developed in partnership with a local website developer. It was envisaged that the site will be simple to update and can be maintained within the RT&H group, providing a facility that is far more effective and can quickly react to changing conditions and circumstances. The RBC agreed to fund this initiative and the new web site was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> October. Savings of some £6K per year have been achieved through this initiative. It is becoming increasingly recognized that the website is a key tool in promoting the attractions and heritage that exist in Rossendale, and in particular the world class sports venues that make Rossendale a unique Lifestyle Sports destination.

- A Tourist Information Network (TIN) - The Tourist Information Network will essentially be a group of outlets/ attractions that have a significant footfall that will promote each other through a carousel based Information unit sited at the premises. This network will also promote the lesser-known attractions that would otherwise find it difficult to improve visitor numbers. Once established the TIN will be self perpetuating in that the network members will provide leaflets to each other. The RT&HG feel that the investment in the TIN will make a major difference in promoting the assets of Rossendale and increase tourist numbers. A TIP has been established at Fitzpatrick's in Rawtenstall and discussions are currently ongoing to establish a TIC at Ski Rossendale. Sites are currently being sought in Bacup, Edenfield, Crawshawbooth and Waterfoot. Funding has now been secured through the RBC to begin to establish TIP's in these towns.
- Temperance Museum – the RT&HG are in the process of applying for funding to develop a Temperance Museum within Fitzpatrick's. Discussions have taken place with The Heritage Lottery Fund and they are very supportive of the project.