

Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole offer year-round city-style, countryside and coastal experiences like no other. A gateway to the World Heritage Jurassic Coast and the majestic New Forest, visit a world-class resort by the sea with award winning beaches, coastal nature reserves, vibrant towns, inspiring festivals and quaysides packed with history and culture.

Miles of picture-perfect beaches, vast stunning natural harbours and acres of internationally protected heathland and open spaces offer a fabulous backdrop for groups to explore on land and sea. With its shimmering bays, this unique part of the UK's coastline is packed with more water sports than any other UK resort.

This guide contains a selection of group friendly accommodation (see pg18-20), places to visit and things to do (see pg22-25), plus itinerary ideas and coach driver information for the resort.

Group & Coach Travel Trade Department

BCP Tourism can support you with further itinerary and tour ideas as well as images and copy for your brochures and websites and subscription to our trade newsletters.

☎ 01202 451741

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🌐 coastwiththemost.com

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Disclaimer: Details correct at time of print. Please note details are subject to change and we advise you to check all details when finalising any arrangements. BCP Tourism cannot accept responsibility for any errors, omissions or changes.



Bournemouth



Christchurch



Sandbanks, Poole

LOVE

Bournemouth

Come and stay with your group all year round in Bournemouth, where you can discover and explore beautiful beaches, stunning parks, gardens and nature reserves. Experience great dining, shopping, coastal villages and a host of attractions, activities and entertainment.

Discover our coastline: Hop on board a seafront land train and soak in the stunning views of Old Harry Rocks and the Needles on the Isle of Wight. The land trains run along the promenade eastwards towards Boscombe and westwards towards Branksome Chine in Poole. Enjoy a bird's eye view from our cliff lifts (April to October) situated alongside the zig-zag pathways at West Cliff and Fisherman's Walk, Southbourne.

Historic Piers: Come rain or shine, enjoy the indoor climbing and high wire centre, the world's first pier-to-shore zip wire and family amusements at Bournemouth Pier or discover the free musical play trail and magnificent views at Boscombe Pier.

Hire a beach hut: The perfect way to spend the day on the beach. Choose from traditional beach huts and funky beach pods. Available year-round. To book, go to: bournemouth.co.uk/beachhuthire

Fantastic leisure attractions and activities: From a beautiful historic museum house to plenty of indoor and outdoor activities all year round, our coastline offers lots of exciting experiences for everyone in your group.

Nature at its best: Home to scenic nature reserves and historic award-winning gardens, you will find a unique temperate microclimate with natural habitats. For wildlife lovers head to Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve, a dramatic headland in Bournemouth situated to the south of Christchurch Harbour. For a beautiful river walk visit Kingfisher Barn Visitor Centre at the Stour Valley Nature Reserve a few miles north of Bournemouth town centre.

Dining with a view: Along the coastline enjoy one of the inviting cafés or restaurants offering heart-warming breakfasts, great lunch stops, cream teas and delicious evening dining options.

Festivals & Events: Enjoy our year-round programme of festivals and events, providing entertainment and activities for all. Highlights include the Bournemouth Air Festival, Arts By the Sea Festival and the magical Christmas Tree Wonderland.

For a warm welcome: Head to Pier Approach on the seafront and say 'hello' to the Tourist Information Centre Team. Open seven days a week, the TIC is stocked with maps, leaflets and beautiful souvenirs. The team will be happy to help you plan your perfect break whether you are visiting for the day, weekend or a longer break.

For more ideas and inspiration visit:
bournemouth.co.uk/lovegroups



Russell-Cotes Museum & Arts Gallery



Did you know? Bournemouth has welcomed a new attraction down on the Seafront at Pier Approach, 'Smugglers Cove Adventure Golf' (see pg 22). Discover Bournemouth's past as you smuggle your ball around 18 holes of pure adventure mini golf. Nearby the historic seaside villa, the Russell-Cotes Museum & Arts Gallery (see pg 22) welcomes many changing exhibitions, events, talks and tours.

LOVE

Christchurch

The historic town of Christchurch lies just a few miles east of Bournemouth, inland from Southbourne and Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve. Situated on the bank of the river Stour, the bustling quay and natural harbour is a central part of Christchurch life. In the summer the rivers and harbour are awash with boat owners, kayakers and stand-up paddle boarders. Throughout the year the quay is host to a variety of cultural events such as the annual Christchurch Food Festival, Stompin' on the Quomps music festival and many more.

With the Priory visible from afar, you can really appreciate the town's rich history as you get closer to the ancient streets and buildings, none of which are quainter than Church Street at the top end of the town. **Christchurch High Street** features cafés, shops, the popular Art Deco Regent Centre with its Visitor Centre and Saxon Square, a pedestrian shopping area. The high street is often taken over by fetes or parades especially during the Summer and Christmas period and visitors can really soak up the town's atmosphere at the regular Monday outdoor market.

Known for the Priory and castle ruins dating back to the 11th Century, Christchurch has a rich vein of history that is marked by heritage sites throughout the town. **The Priory** is one of the few monastery churches to have survived Henry VIII's rule and is reputed to be the longest Parish church in England. **The Red House Museum**, once a Georgian workhouse is a great place to start and is packed with information covering Christchurch's importance from the Ice Age to the present day.

With interesting tales embedded into its streets at every turn, head down a narrow alleyway next to the 600-year-old Ye Olde George Inn to see the famous ducking stool and picture the smuggler tunnels rumoured to be buried underground.

Just a short trip up the coast you will find **Highcliffe Castle**. The Grade I listed mansion house is highly regarded for its architecture and has been described as arguably the most important surviving house of the Romantic and Picturesque style.

Christchurch beaches offer a beautiful natural coastline for all to enjoy. With picturesque cliff and beach walks there are plenty of activities and adventures to be had. Or simply just sit back, relax and watch the world go by.



Highcliffe Castle



LOVE

Poole

Poole is home to Europe's largest natural harbour, with must visit highlights including a bustling quayside, a quaint historic old town, glorious parks and gardens and out of this world beaches including the world famous, Sandbanks beach.

Quayside Delights

Poole's historic quayside is filled with the daily hustle and bustle of a working quay. Enjoy some alfresco refreshments and explore the independent unique shops dotted along the waterfront and lower high street. Set sail on a harbour cruise to take in some stunning scenery and all the action on the water as you mingle with fishing boats, sailing boats and superyachts. The quay also hosts a packed programme of events throughout the year.

Visit: pooletourism.com/whats-on

Fascinating History

Rich in history, there's many a maritime tale to tell! Poole Museum is the perfect starting point with four floors of galleries and a fantastic schedule of exhibitions to enjoy. There is also an impressive collection of Poole Pottery. Take the self-guided Cockle Trail walk to bring the town's rich pirate and merchant history to life.

Harbour Highlights

A simply stunning backdrop to the town of Poole and the gateway to incredible wildlife, countryside, woodland and watersports. The largest of the eight harbour islands is Brownsea. Owned by the National Trust, it is just a 20 minute ferry journey from Poole Quay offering island adventures and wildlife, including the famous red squirrels. If you wish to venture further afield, regular boat trips run from Poole Quay, along the Wareham River and to Swanage.

Park Life

From Poole Quay, follow the level footpath along the quayside, passing through Harbourside Park and into the oasis of Poole Park. Here the central lake is surrounded by a host of facilities and activities to enjoy.

For more ideas and inspiration visit the Tourist Information Centre, located at Poole Museum or visit: pooletourism.com/grouptravel



Sandbanks



Poole Quay

A Date with Nature

ITINERARY IDEAS

Wildlife & Bird Watching...

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are home to a vast array of natural habitats from expansive nature reserves, natural harbours, to miles of coastline and sandy beaches. Come and explore this beautiful area.

Morning Activity Options

Jump on board and enjoy a boat trip from Poole Quay around Europe's largest natural harbour. Poole Harbour is designated a Ramsar site and hosts nationally and internationally important species of birds. Enjoy a tour of the harbour and its islands and discover the stunning variety of bird life throughout the seasons.

Brownsea Island is home to a whole host of thriving habitats and a unique haven for wildlife including the rare Red Squirrel, Sika Deer and a wide variety of birds to watch from their hides including the Dunlin, Little Egrets, Advocets, Common and Sandwich Terns and Oystercatchers.

Visit 'Birds of Poole Harbour' on Poole Quay, who can guide you around some of the well-known and not so well known sites of the harbour; watch their live webcams and speak to their knowledgeable and friendly team.

Afternoon Activity Options

Bournemouth has over 100 parks and public spaces, including 10 nature reserves and four SSSIs. From our cliff tops look out for Dartford Warbler, Stonechats, Sand Martins, Kestrels, Sandwich Terns and Cormorants. The cliffs are particularly important for preserving the rare sand lizard. If you walk through Bournemouth's Lower Gardens to the Central Gardens, you can follow our 'tree trail'. See trees from all over the world, including Persian Ironwood, River Birch, Redwood and Monterey Pine.

Hengistbury Head is a popular spot for nature enthusiasts. Situated at the most easterly point of Bournemouth, the nature reserve is a great place to walk and take in the dramatic scenery. A favourite for wildlife enthusiasts, you'll find a whole host of birds, small mammals, insects, reptiles and amphibians on this historic headland. There is also a programme of guided walks and outdoor events throughout the year.

Christchurch:

With beaches, rivers and excellent nature reserves, Christchurch contains a wide variety of natural beauty. The wildlife havens of Stanpit Marsh and Steamer Point are great places for bird watching and walking trails.

For further details and inspiration visit:
coastwiththemost.com



Sandbanks and Brownsea Island



Red Squirrel on Brownsea Island



Mudford Spit



Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve



Bournemouth Upper Gardens

A Resort steeped in History and Culture

ITINERARY IDEAS

Morning Activity Options

Poole Museum & Scaplen's Court

(see pg 22)

Situated in the Old Town just off Poole Quay the free entry museum tells the story of the historic maritime town. The museum is also home to over 150 pieces of world famous Poole Pottery. Its galleries host a varied programme of changing exhibitions from local interest to world class exhibitions. An upcoming exhibition, opening 2021 is Thomas Hardy – his story retold. Take a fresh look at the life and literature of the Victorian novelist and poet who found his inspiration in the Wessex landscapes.

Explore Poole's Historic Old Town

A picturesque, bustling area featuring cobbled streets, historic buildings and independent shops. Pick up a Cockle Trail leaflet at Poole Tourist Information Centre located at Poole Museum. Follow the brass plaques in the pavement to retrace Poole's rich historical heritage.

Poole's RNLI Discovery Tours & College

The RNLI have a fascinating 150-year history in Poole. Find out how their crews and lifeguards are trained with a behind the scenes 90-minute tour of the RNLI's world class Training Centre.

Afternoon Activity Options

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum, Bournemouth

(see pg 22)

A hidden treasure, full of Victorian charm, it houses some of the most famous Pre-Raphaelite works as well as collections from around the world, gloriously displayed in its spectacular seaside setting with stunning views of the bay. Groups can enjoy a private viewing and tour of the house and grounds with the opportunity for an afternoon tea. New exhibition: 21 Feb – 21 June 2020 -The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy: Beyond the Brotherhood.

Enjoy a beautiful walk round Christchurch's historic past.

Visit the **Priory** and discover the story behind the Miraculous Beam and if you fancy a challenge, take a Tower Tour* and climb the 176 steps up to panoramic views of the harbour and town. In the grounds of the Priory is the **12th Century Castle** and **Constable's House** which survives as ruins. Just a short drive away visit the Grade 1 listed **Highcliffe Castle** (see pg 24) which has received famous visitors in the past including Harry Gordon Selfridge and William Gladstone. Guided tours available.

For further details and inspiration visit: coastwiththemost.com

* Call for details – prior booking is essential

Poole Old Town



Christchurch Priory



Poole Museum



Russell-Cotes Museum & Arts Gallery

Wellbeing & the Great Outdoors

ITINERARY IDEAS

Take a moment to indulge in the stunning landscape that surrounds our resort. Listen to the waves, feel the golden sand between your toes or get close to nature at a stunning nature reserve. There is also a chance to enjoy a spot of Park Yoga in the summer available at locations around the resort.

Morning Activity Options

- **Take to the water.**

Take a boat trip from Poole Quay to discover our beautiful coastline. Why not combine a boat cruise and steam train ride on a Sea Train Adventure?

- Explore **Christchurch River** on a self-drive motor boat from Tuckton Tea Gardens and Christchurch Quay.

- **Bournemouth's Zip Challenge.**

(see pg 25) The world's first pier to shore zip wire. Climb the 60ft zip tower above the sea and zip-surf over the waves to the shore.

- **Feeling competitive?**

Discover Bournemouth's past by smuggling a ball around 18 holes of adventure golf. Smugglers Cove (pg 22) is located next to Bournemouth's award-winning sandy beach and offers group discounts.

- **Expand your horizons and try something new.**

From surfing, kite surfing and stand up paddle boarding to jet skiing and sea

kayaking, take your group on a real adventure! Private charters on luxury powerboats are also available if you want to take in the surroundings in true style.

Afternoon Activity Options

- **Garden Delights.**

In Poole, Upton Country Park has over 100 acres of parkland, shoreline and formal estate gardens, with an onsite art gallery and a packed programme of events year-round. Compton Acres (see pg 23) is acknowledged as one of the finest privately-owned gardens in the country.

- **Anyone for a round of golf?**

The resort and surrounding area have some great courses, so you can certainly find your swing here on the south coast. With 'pay to play' and season ticket options available, your group can enjoy a game of golf any time of year.

- **Walk the Coast**

At any time of the year, the coast and its neighbouring countryside provide some wonderful routes for walkers. Try the 10 - mile coastal walk from Sandbanks in Poole to Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve, with plenty of "pit stop" locations en route.

For more details and inspiration visit:
coastwiththemost.com



Poole Quay



Bournemouth Pier Zip Challenge



Hengistbury Head Nature Reserve



Upton Country Park



Smugglers Cove Adventure Golf

Entertainment, Events and Dining Out

A vibrant, bustling entertainment destination. From international concert venues and theatres to live music nights, comedy and a packed events and festivals programme, groups will be spoilt for choice.

Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) and the vintage Art Deco **Pavilion Theatre** (see pg 24) both offer outstanding year-round performances and events – a stage for pantomimes, live music, comedians and touring West End shows. For those with a passion for performance, a visit to **Pavilion Dance South West** is a must.

Located in the heart of Poole, **Lighthouse** is the largest regional arts centre in the UK and home to the **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**. Lighthouse boasts a year-round programme of national and international events.

The **Regent Centre** is located in the centre of Christchurch and is a resorted 1930's art deco cinema offering an impressive programme of film, theatre and concerts. They also host regular art exhibitions at the centre.

All performance venues will offer discounts to groups so please contact direct for further information.

The Resort has a busy calendar of events and festivals throughout the year. Highlights, perfect for visiting groups include the award-winning Air Festival and Christmas Tree Wonderland (see back page) in Bournemouth. The Poole Harbour Boat Show and Poole Goes Vintage in Poole and a very popular annual food festival in Christchurch. For full event listings visit: bournemouth.co.uk/whats-on and pooletourism.com/whats-on

Our location on the South Coast attracts independent restaurateurs and specialist chefs as well as larger chain restaurants giving groups great choice. Local farms and fisheries provide locally sourced, sustainable food direct from our coastline so it's no surprise the seafood here is among the best in the country.

Bournemouth is proud to have been awarded Purple Flag status, showing that the town meets or surpasses standards of excellence in managing the evening and night-time economy, so you are sure of a fantastic time as day turns to night.

For further information visit: coastwiththemost.com





Stay in Resort

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole welcome groups to stay for a coastal break. There are many hotels that can cater for large group bookings, offering on-site coach parking and specialist breaks and packages.

We also have a fantastic range of other accommodation choices for smaller groups including fabulous sea-facing hotels, national chains, boutique independent hotels and family-run guest houses. We also list self-catering and camping and caravan options on our websites, which are great for the group market.

The accommodation listed on pages 19 – 20 welcome groups and would be happy to assist with your enquiry. Please do mention the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole group guide if you speak to them.

Our Tourist Information Centres would also be happy to help. Contact the teams on the details below:

Bournemouth Tourist Information Centre

T: 01202 451781

E: tourism.information@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

W: bournemouth.co.uk/lovegroups

Poole Tourist Information Centre

T: 01202 262600

E: info@pooletourism.com

W: pooletourism.com/grouptravel

Christchurch Tourist Information Centre

T: 01202 499199

W: visit-dorset.com/explore/towns/christchurch

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www.hallmarkhotels.co.uk

Coastal Shopping

Our destination is lucky to have three towns, with unique and colourful shopping experiences waiting to be enjoyed.

With canopied Victorian walkways and a pedestrianised high street, **Bournemouth** is home to a wide range of independent boutiques, high street favourites and quality department stores. Town Centre shopping areas feed into the historic gardens and glorious beaches offering a relaxed resort by the sea.

For unique gifts, **Poole Quay and Poole Lower High Street** offer fabulous harbourside shopping and dining, with small independent shops, outlets and restaurants. From the Quay, take a short walk along the pedestrianised high street to the main town centre shopping hub.

Shopping in **Christchurch** is best on the high street and in Saxon Square offering an enticing blend of traditional shops, independent boutiques and well-known high street stores.

Shopping Centres-Both Bournemouth and Poole are home to large retail centres. Castlepoint in Bournemouth and The Dolphin Shopping Centre in Poole offer all the latest high street trends and brands and often host their own special events and promotions.

Coastal Villages-There are many coastal villages dotted around the resort including Boscombe, Westbourne and Southbourne in Bournemouth and Broadstone and Ashley Cross in Poole. These are locations away from



the main town centre offering boutique shops, quirky style, antique delights and contemporary cafes.

Markets-Bag a bargain at local street markets including Boscombe Market and Poole Market which both take place every Thursday and Saturday. Christchurch holds their street market every Monday.

Hidden Gems-Don't forget to visit our resort Tourist Information Centre's offering unique gift ideas and a range of locally sourced products.

When in Bournemouth why not pay a visit to **Pinewalk**, one of the longest running open air art exhibitions in the country. Open daily in season and located in the lower gardens in the heart of the town, a bargain may be found when browsing the fabulous art on display.



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poole museum **free entry**

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Poole's rich history is revealed in Poole Museum's four floors of galleries. Displays range from archaeology to art, from pirates to potteries.

The Museum and temporary exhibitions are free of charge, and fully accessible.



www.poolemuseum.org.uk

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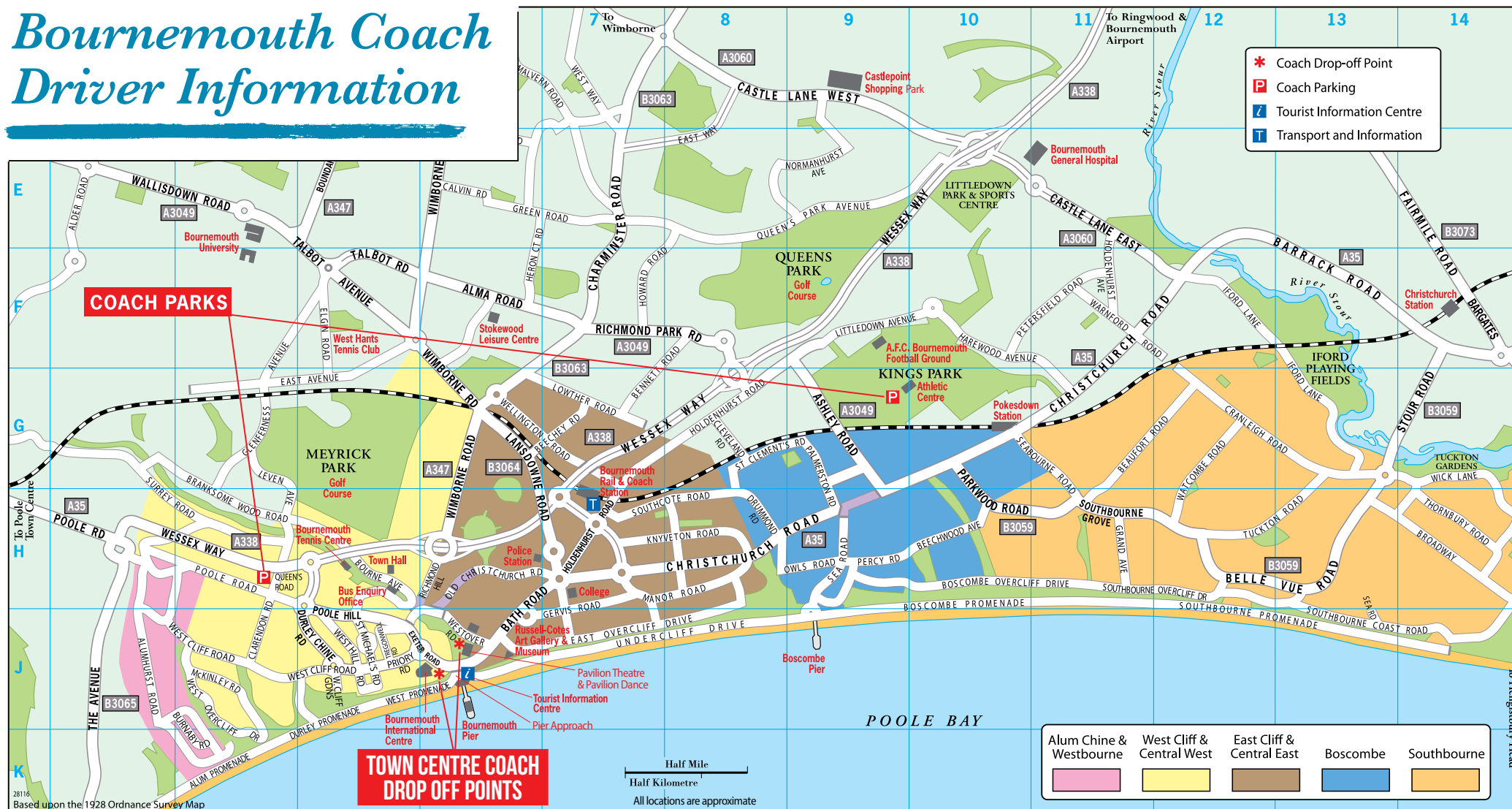
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Bournemouth Coach Driver Information



Coach Parking in Bournemouth

Queens Road Car/Coach Park (BH2 6BE)

This is a small car/coach park situated just off the A338 Wessex Way, approximately 3/4 of a mile from the town centre. Nearest toilet 15 minutes' walk away. Close to bus routes to Bournemouth town centre.

Kings Park Car/Coach Park (BH7 7AF)

Adjacent to AFC Bournemouth Football Ground, Vitality Stadium, Kings Park Drive, Boscombe. Approximately 2 miles from the town centre. Please refer to the tariff boards for current charges.

Bournemouth Rail and Coach Station

Situated just off the A338 Wessex Way. Off-street loading and unloading bays for up to three visiting coaches. Staffed daily, including weekends & public holidays, 8am – 5pm.

Town Centre

Coach Drop Off Points (max stay 15min)

Westover Road: Outside the Pavilion Theatre. Less than five minutes' walk to shops, seafront and pier. Nearest toilet facilities at Bournemouth Lower Gardens or Bournemouth Pier.

Bournemouth International Centre (BIC)

The bus lay-by situated next to the BIC, Exeter Road, walk to shops, seafront and pier. Toilet facilities next to the pier.

Coach Driver Facilities:

Yellow Buses are offering visiting coaches facilities to use their vehicle wash and toilet drop facility. Please note all visits must be booked in advance. Use of vehicle wash (if available) £20. Use of toilet drop £35. All visits must be phoned in advance, please contact Mike Collins at Yellow Buses on 01202 636035 for further details.

For all the latest information visit:
bournemouth.co.uk/lovegroups

Christchurch Coach Driver Information

Main Christchurch Coach Drop off Points

Wick Lane, BH23 1HU

Just a short walk to the high street and town centre.

Entrance to the Two Riversmeet Leisure Centre East Car Park, BH23 1HW

A half mile walk to the high street and town centre.

Christchurch Coach Parking

Two Riversmeet Leisure Centre, BH23 1HW

Highcliffe Cliff Top Car Park, BH23 5JE

Approx. 10 minute drive to this location from the town centre.

For more general information on car parks in Christchurch you can visit:

www.christchurch.gov.uk



Mark Simons

On Your Doorstep

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are lucky enough to have some fantastic neighbours that offer beautiful surroundings and great days out for your group.

To the west enjoy the Isle of Purbeck, a peninsula with beautiful countryside and stunning clifftop paths - or visit the traditional Victorian seaside resorts of Swanage and Weymouth. Stretching across more than 95 miles the Jurassic Coast is a World Heritage Site with iconic beauty spots including Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove, Dancing Ledge and Old Harry Rocks.

Heading inland, there are many charming towns and villages including Corfe Castle, Wimborne Minster, Wareham, Sherborne, Shaftesbury, Dorchester and Milton Abbas.

Set out on an adventure on foot or by bike in the New Forest, take a guided tour or even a horse ride! Be sure to keep an eye out for wildlife around the New Forest, including the famous New Forest ponies,

deer and cattle that roam free in its ancient heaths and woodlands.

Our neighbouring counties of Wiltshire and Hampshire offer a wealth of places to explore, from charming market towns and pretty villages to areas of outstanding idyllic beauty.

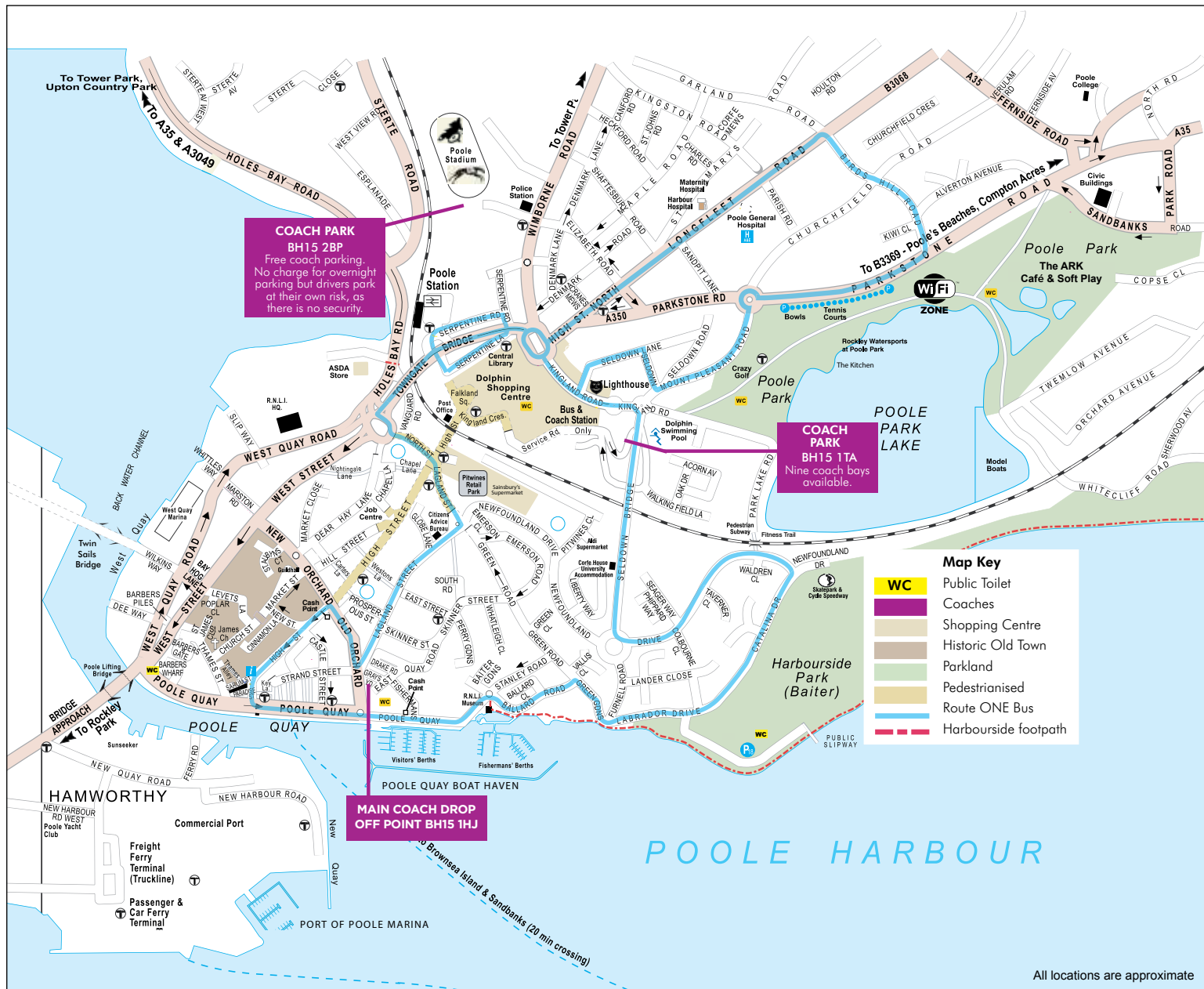
Salisbury, known as the “city in the countryside”, is famous for its timber-framed buildings and iconic early English Gothic cathedral, which is home to the best-preserved copy of the Magna Carta.

Explore the picturesque Channel Island of Guernsey which is accessible for a day trip by ferry from Poole with Condor Ferries (see pg 24).



New Forest District Council

Poole Coach Driver Information



ROUTES4COACHES:

Leave M27 at J1, join A31 westbound towards Bournemouth. Join A338, follow signs to Bournemouth (A35). Pick up signs for Poole (A350) and then follow signs for Poole Quay.

Main Coach Drop off Point Poole Quay, BH15 1HJ

(no waiting allowed at this point)

Five drop off spaces located just off Poole Quay, perfect for a selection of activities, attractions, shops and restaurants.

Coach Parking

Main Coach Park – Poole Stadium, BH15 2BP

Free coach parking (25 spaces). No charge for overnight parking but drivers park at their own risk, as there is no security.

Seldown Car & Coach Park – BH15 1TA

Free coach parking (nine coach bays available) at this town centre car park adjacent to Poole Bus Station. Access back to Poole Quay on Route One circular bus route (no Sunday service).

For all the latest information visit:

pooletourism.com/grouptravel

Highlights include:

- Free meet & greet service by Tourist Information Team (on request call 01202 262600)
- Free coach parking and two central sites (see above)
- Driver refreshments available at Harbour Station Café on Poole Quay.
Website: www.harbourstationcafe.co.uk
- Toilet drop facility at More Bus depot (BH15 1SN) - charges will apply.



All locations are approximate

3rd Spectacular Year

Enchanting Illuminations to Create Lasting Memories

BOURNEMOUTH
Christmas Tree

Wonderland

Mid November 2020
to 1 January 2021

The perfect seasonal event for the group market

- Walk the spectacular Christmas tree trail
 - Explore the Alpine Market
 - Skate under the stars on the outdoor rink
 - Ride the Big Wheel
- Enjoy a round of adventure golf at Smugglers Cove, illuminated for Christmas

Extend your stay....

Make sure a festive winter wonderland break is at the top of your itinerary list, with group friendly accommodation available throughout the Resort. Across Bournemouth, the surrounding coastal villages, Christchurch and Poole, discover the festive charms of many events, attractions, activities, theatres, shopping experiences and great eating out options.

christmastreewonderland.co.uk

