



Contribution from Wijk aan Zee



Tourism in Wijk aan Zee.

Why, when, how?

Why do people come to us?

I think because they find something they like! In Wijk aan Zee we have the beach, the dunes, lots of festivities, -sports, rest and fun-, hospitality, the village-atmosphere, nice pavillions, restaurants, hotels, summerhouses.

When do they come:

Especially in summer, when the weather is nice. When you can swim in the sea, when you can take a sunbath, relax on a terrace.

It's important for people who spend their hollidays with us, to know that there are good alternatives when the weather is not so nice. Interesting towns in the neighbourhood.

Museums, shopping areas. Sport facilities.

How do people come?

By car, by bike, by public transport.

It's nice when there are no parking problems, and when parking is free or not too expensive. It's important that buses etc. have good connections, and acceptable schedules.

Where do people go?

Everybody has his own favorite place to go. A favorite restaurant, a favorite terrace, favorite hotel, summerhouse, campground. Different kind of people enjoy different places, enjoy different hosts.

Some places are popular in general. It's nice when there's a climate in which things can grow.

Economy is one of the impacts of tourism:

Tourism is business. It's my own way of existance.

Last week at Eastern, we had many visitors.

The impact was, that there was no time for an Eastern-lunch or dinner with my wife and children. When other people are enjoying, we have to work. That's hard sometimes!

The impact of living at the coast is that almost all inhabitants of the village have the possibility to rent rooms. Temporary to earn money or longer for hundreds of reasons. In Wijk aan Zee nowadays we have a lack of shops. The impact of that for some visitors is some disappointment, because they can't spend their money in the village to buy souvenirs.. Some enterprisers want to earn their money too easy and see tourists not as interesting people, but as subjects to pick money from. Then the impact of tourism is that people feel themselfe abused and they won't return.

I'm glad to hear often that our village is praised for its local atmosphere, for its local sizework, for its natural rest and hospitality. All this makes people return.

Inconvenience

When many people come and relations become unpersonal, there are threats, that bring **inconvenience**. ..For instance recklessness and too much noise, too much alcohol and too much waste. The impact is that regulation is needed, prevention and anticipation.

Some visitors think they can get what they want, because they pay for it. ...Then the impact of visitors is that you have to accept their behaviour ..or.. that you even have to educate your clients!

Friendship, contacts and new ideas. ..

I think this is the most wonderful impact of tourism. Travelling means surprisement, meeting other people, other cultures, other habits, other languages, music, food; ideas. We notice that artists and creative people feel attracted to Wijk aan Zee. They bring their human riches and integrate these in the village. We have many beautiful examples of the results of these mixes. Of course it' s not easy for everybody to accept all different norms and values that are brought by visitors. But the impact of all those people is that there' s much to talk about in the pub and at the places to meet for the locals.

All seasons are different.

As in nature, it is in our village. In spring we have the bulb-flowers-tourists. In august we pick blackberries. All over the season there are the beach-lovers. Many strangers. Almost no time for local meetings. These must wait until wintertime. Then there' s less or no business. Then there' s more time for social contacts and for making new plans. In winter there' s natural rest and meditation again.

Wijk aan Zee has its own history.

We had fishermen and agriculture after the Middle Ages. Tourism brought a new way of existence at the end of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century the national steel factory was raised nearby and it brought a lot of employment. The factories nowadays are very nearby. The contrast between the village and Corus is enormous. Corus brings dust, smoke and bad smells. Sometimes, not always. It depends on the wind. Of course there are strong controls.

There' s something like a love and hateaffair between us. Corus brought us the worldfamous Chess Tournament. Corus brings us temporary employees from abroad who live in the village, who drink beer in the pubs, etc. A long time the impact of those workers was that they lived in cheap hotels and cheap and bad looking summerhouses. This situation is changing now, but still nowadays it influences the quality of the total of Wijk aan Zee.

The impact of Corus and ' cultural village' is that there' s a terrain now between the village and the steelfactory with a unique art-exhibition of works in steel, opened by our queen and visited by all kind of interested people.

At the end of the last century most of the shops in Wijk aan Zee closed and the village offered the impression of lost charm. In spite of this the beach stayed popular and the hotels, pubs and restaurants could survive. For youngsters from the whole region Wijk aan Zee always has been a popular village to meet each other in the weekends. Especially at the beach there were possibilities to enlarge the facilities and to enlarge the number of beachhouses. Beach events became popular. Nearby seemed to be one of the best surfingplaces of the continent.

In the village is also a well-respected centre for revalidation. Here' s also a strong tendency for enlargement and this offers some tension with the concerns of our inhabitants and the tourists. The revalidation centre needs parking places for its clients and workers, and it needs buildings for the different type of activities. The result is less houses for inhabitants to live in; an hotel became an educational centre.

Nowadays there' s a discussion to use the reputation and the knowledge of the centre for revalidation to raise a commercial health centre for tourists somewhere in the village.

Wijk aan Zee is part of the municipality of Beverwijk, which is known as an industrial city with an harbour nearby the coast along the canal to Amsterdam. The local government sometimes forgets the interests of our village. This is impact of depending on a bigger total. The city is nearby, divided from us by the only road, 3 kilometers, between. After many years of arrest, the call for new development resulted in a note for a vision for the village of Wijk aan Zee. Many people were participating and now the note is just ready!

It's very positive that the municipality took the initiative to describe a vision for Wijk aan Zee.

It was written from the view, that both living and recreation are important for the future of Wijk aan Zee. We have only 2400 inhabitants and we have a lack of grounds for expansion.

Agreements

We don't want to offer the characteristic meadow in the heart of the village, we cherish the dunes. Laws of the several governments and organisations for nature-protection do the same. We have something like a beach-town-architecture, with some beautiful characteristic houses built in the past for the prosperous and we cherish that architecture too. Renovation is acclaimed and new buildings are welcome if they are raised in acceptable sizes. Of course there's a tension between project development and the associations of the inhabitants. At the moment there are strong discussions about building in the dunes nearby the sea yes or no. Building enough houses for inhabitants is a condition to maintain welfare facilities like the school and the library. The impact of the lack of building areas is that the prices of houses are pretty high. This is a disadvantage for starters. Also for older people, for them it's very hard to find a smaller house to buy or to rent, when they have retired.

New investments in tourism are important for the quality of the village. Tourists can go where they want. The more specialties and quality we offer, the more chance there is, that tourists stay coming to us. This means in particular a well kept maintenance of the total environment, inclusive parking areas.

We don't have the possibilities and we don't choose to become a place like the popular 24- hours a day discotheque-beachvillages.

We notice that our village is strong in small size hospitality and that the different enterprisers offer a lot of personal qualities. It's a challenge for everyone to do his job well! It's also a challenge to make combinations together and to offer individuals as well as groups rest, interesting daytrips, different activities and good food and drinks.

Conclusions for threats and chances:

- Our geographical situation is particular and this influences the whole village-life. It's well-known that our recreation-market depends more or less totally on the weather.
- To maintain facilities and to offer chances for youngsters, we need new houses. Especially for starters and elderly people. A problem is the lack of building areas. So we have to share the available grounds between recreation and homes wisely.
- A steelfactory like Corus as a neighbour sometimes is a handicap, but it also offers possibilities. The same holds for the centre of revalidation.
- To stay attractive both for the inhabitants as for tourists improvements of the quality and the variety of facilities in the village are important. Especially in the heart of the village, because that is the place where people expect activities.
- Building in the dunes is well-discussed. This means that it doesn't happen automatically and that is good for well-balanced solutions.

- Staying alert and cooperation is important for now and tomorrow. Both local cooperation and cooperation with the municipality and within the coastregion and the region until Amsterdam.
- It' s positive that a dialogue resulted in a note with a futurevision for our village. Hereby it' s important to trust our own forces and to make use of them.