

Targeting Asia to showcase pottery prowess

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By Ann King



PLANS: Samantha Hall, visitor economy manager for Make It Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire, and Sebastien Danneels, economic development officer for Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
Picture: Nick Hands

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COMMUNITY and tourism industry leaders are drawing up plans to attract visitors from emerging markets in Asia to boost the region's economy.

They are working with counterparts from five other European cities famous for their pottery expertise to promote tourism linked to the ceramics trade.

Experts from Stoke-on-Trent were yesterday joined by representatives from Limoges, in France, Delft in the Netherlands, Faenza in Italy and Hohn-Grenzhausen and Selb, in Germany.

The six cities are working on projects to draw in the crowds from across Europe and beyond.

It comes after the partners won a bid for 274,000 euros earlier this year from the European Union to help promote the continent's top pottery producing communities.

The projects include launching a website which will include details of each individual destination as well as promote the six cities as a whole.

International marketing business Anderen, based in Heron Cross, is advising the group on selling into the Far East and developing the Chinese market.

The group will also work with local attractions and ceramic producers to develop packages which link accommodation, visitor spots and shopping opportunities.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council Deputy Leader Paul Shotton said the partnership aimed to maximise the economic impact of tourism for the city.

He said: "Stoke-on-Trent is a world class city with a fascinating heritage and amazing products.

"But in an increasingly competitive world we need to work with our neighbours to gain maximum exposure and impact in the international visitor market. By sharing resources, ideas and promotion methods we can reach new markets in new ways."

Councillor Ruth Rosenau, cabinet member for regeneration, said: "People know we are world leaders when it comes to ceramics. This is about reinforcing that and showing people how they can experience it for themselves."

Adeline Porchez, general secretariat for European affairs in the city of Limoges, said: "Our aim is to try and strengthen the ties between the ceramic cities."

Michiel Vissier, representing Delft, said: "All the ceramic cities have their own specialist attractions and the network allows everyone to learn from each other and raise the profile of ceramics on the world stage."

The European visitors have spent much of the week visiting attractions across North Staffordshire which feature in the area's Ceramics Trail.

Read more at <http://www.stokesentinel.co.uk/Targeting-Asia-showcase-pottery-prowess/story-20231574-detail/story.html#90WCxeeDsGsY0id6.99>