

With good road and rail connections and its own international airport, Bournemouth is a hot ticket when it comes to major meetings

### Large conference

The Bournemouth International Centre is the largest venue of its kind in the region with capacity for 10,000 delegates in four halls. Louise Davis, from Poole-based agency Eventscape, says when the Communication Workers Union used the Windsor Hall, the foyer area was “perfect for its exhibition”. She adds: “The Purbeck Hall is wonderful for gala dinners.”

### Product launch

Venues just outside the town, including Chewton Glen Hotel & Spa and Beaulieu National Motor Museum, are popular for product launches but Davis also recommends making the most of Bournemouth's seven miles of beaches as a great backdrop. The historic Bournemouth Highcliff Marriott Hotel, perched on the clifftop with dramatic sea views, has 11 rooms for events of all sizes, from intimate meetings to large conferences of up to 350 delegates.

### Drinks reception

The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum is the jewel in Bournemouth's crown, boasting impressive views across the bay as well as a wealth of treasures inside, making it perfect for an inspiring reception for up to 150 people.

### What's new

An £85 million project is well underway to build two new Hilton hotels and almost 60 apartments at Terrace Mount between the town square and Bournemouth International Centre. The 120-bedroom, three-star Hampton by Hilton Bournemouth opened in June, to be followed by the four-star Hilton Bournemouth, which will include a Skybar on the 13th floor as well as 172 bedrooms at the end of the year. The Heritage Lottery Fund has pledged £2.9m to help improve Highcliffe Castle, just a few miles from Bournemouth International Airport. The venue's state dining room is available for corporate hire for up to 80 delegates while the Great Hall, with its 10m stained glass window, can accommodate up to 100.

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*Perched on a clifftop, the Bournemouth Highcliff Marriott Hotel*

# Exploring the *beautiful south*

## New in the South West

- **Bridwell House**, the family home of Lord Ivar Mountbatten, in Uffculme, Devon, opened its doors in January for exclusive hire for the first time. Spaces include the house, orangery, chapel and 100 acres of parkland.
- **The Eden Project** has revealed plans for a new £6m sustainable hotel with 115 bedrooms on its site near St Austell in Cornwall to help 'secure Eden's identity as a conferencing and events venue'.
- **Sandy Park**, home to rugby union's Exeter Chiefs, underwent a £10m redevelopment last year to boost its conference and banqueting facilities by 80 per cent, including the addition of six seminar suites.
- Renowned chef **Rick Stein** is set to open a restaurant in Newquay's iconic Fistral Beach.
- Georgian retreat **Pennard House** in Glastonbury, Somerset, is now available for events. The stately home sleeps 12, with an additional five double beds available in tipis in summer, while the converted Coach House's meeting facilities are made up of an open-plan seating area on the second floor with a modern event space below.
- **Carbis Bay Hotel & Estate at St Ives**, Britain's only hotel and spa on its own Blue Flag beach, is undergoing a multi-million pound beachfront regeneration project due for completion in 2017. The end of the first phase saw the £5m Beach Club & Spa complex open in August.
- Cornwall's two Michelin-starred Restaurant **Nathan Outlaw** has relocated from the St Enodoc Hotel in Rock to the fishing village of Port Isaac, where it sits within The Edge building.
- **Atlantic House Hotel**, set to open next winter in Polzeath, Cornwall, will be a stylish 14-bedroom hotel with a restaurant and terrace overlooking the popular surfing beach.