

The story of Gotland Municipality's 10-point programme - the campaign that has led to a safer, more pleasant Visby in the summertime

Say Visby, and many people think of the idyll of roses and ruins. But perhaps this was not the case for those who visited Visby in the summer of 2003. Then the media was full of reports of drunkenness, fights and sexual assault in the World Heritage city. This is the story of how a municipality has actively addressed the problems that can arise in the backwater of tourism.

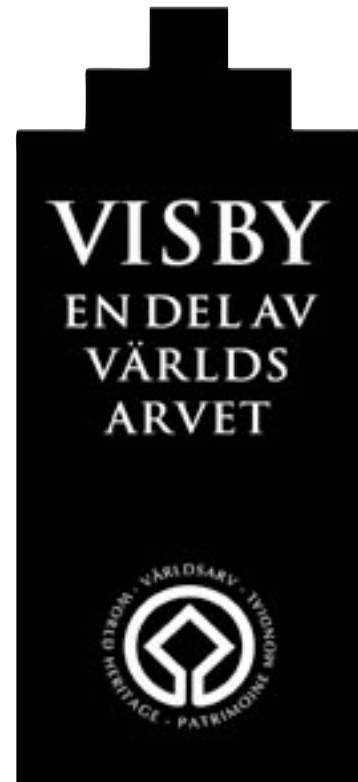
Many people think of Gotland as a dreamdestination. A sleepy, peaceful island with a population of 57,000 during winter. However, in the summer Sweden's largest island welcomes about 700,000 visitors. These tourists are of all ages, but a large group is made up of young adults and youth. The tourist industry, one of the most prominent industries on the island, has an annual turnover of about 1.1 billion SEK (not counting the trip to and from Gotland).

In reality this means not only increased revenues for the business community of Gotland but also makes for more strained municipal services. In the wake of the summer holidaymaking there are also more cases of acute illness, a degree of increased crime, a greater need for assistance on the streets and marketplaces, more garbage and vandalism. This is also the case for other summer municipalities besides Gotland.

Once upon a time in 2003

Holidays also mean that many people increase their alcohol consumption. This is something that affects the summer idyll of Visby where there is the largest number of liquor permits in Sweden. There are about 190 licensed restaurants and bars open on Gotland during the hectic summer period. The summer of 2003 reached the peak of several years' irritating summer disturbances. Residents, workers and visitors in Visby were all having more and more difficulty in sleeping at night due to the commotion caused by partying tourists. People going out in the evening were confronted by an alarming amount of drunkenness, vandalism and high noise levels from the nightclubs. A large number of under-aged young people travelled to Gotland without their parents just to party and have a good time. The World Heritage town was transformed to a party place in general where the police and social authorities had their hands full.

Naturally the situation that summer received a lot of publicity. The city of ruins and roses had become transformed into a city of carousing and dirty streets in the media's texts. And who would want to travel, reside or establish a business there? The municipal authorities, politicians, businessmen, shipping companies, interest organisations and residents were all in agreement. Something had to be done! This is the background to the Gotland Municipality's 10-point programme and the Varannan vatten, "Every second round water" information campaign.



The Hanseatic town of Visby is on UNESCO's World Heritage list



A picnic by the sea in Visby

The 10-point programme emerges

The 10-point programme is a list of measures drawn up to increase comfort and safety on the streets and marketplaces in Visby, both for visitors and residents. The key to creating a quieter Visby has been to focus on alcohol consumption and create a broader cooperation between the municipal administration, public authorities, County Council, the police and business community. Among other things, Gotland Municipality has drawn up guidelines for regulating the opening hours, noise levels and liquor licensing of the town's restaurants and entertainment establishments. This programme was adopted by the Municipal Council on Gotland in the winter of 2003 and implemented the summer of 2004.

This 10-point programme has been developed by a group consisting of representatives from the municipal administration executive, environmental protection office, technical services, and social welfare services. At the end of every summer season the programme is evaluated. The list of measures has been revised and presently consists of:

1. A restrictive procedure when reaching a decision on restaurants' serving hours after one o'clock in the morning.
2. A stringent and meticulous attitude towards alcohol based on risk analysis. For example, the sale of spirits in litre bottles and so-called party-bubbly, is judged to be contrary to the aims of alcohol legislation. Anonymous alcohol inspectors check that the restaurants fulfil their commitments. In addition there is closer cooperation between the police and the municipal administration.
3. Closer collaboration between Gotland Municipality and the municipalities and county councils around Stockholm in terms of youth tourism as well as better cooperation between the social authorities involved.
4. A clause in the municipality's directives to the police on the use of public land for outdoor dining stipulates orderliness both in the dining area as well as its immediate surroundings.
5. From the first week in July until the second week in August, city wardens supplement the police's duties by checking to see that the local rules and regulations are followed in the city parks; for instance informing about the ban on drinking alcohol in public places. They are also meant to enforce the rules for orderliness and work actively to prevent vandalism and littering.
6. The local harbour regulations concerning order and safety for Visby harbour and the area surrounding the harbour were originally reviewed. The aim was to prevent disturbances by parties



The tabloidpaper Aftonbladet Sunday had an article about the rowdy summer in Visby (2003-08-03)

DETTA GÄLLER när du skall ha picknick i Visby



Läs det här!

The city wardens use brochures to spread information

aboard boats moored in the visitors' harbour. No changes have been made.

7. The regular night bus services were reviewed in 2003. This was initiated to determine whether more frequent night service could improve order and safety in and around the inner town of Visby. But the technical committee found that night bus service was not the solution to the problem.

8. The physical environment and furnishings in Visby, including lighting, are constantly adapted, from an order and safety point of view. Areas of priority are Almedalen, Stora Torget and the area just outside Österport. Safety measures have also been implemented in the harbour area.

9. To reduce noise disturbances from bars and restaurants in Visby, lower noise levels are required after 10 p.m., instead of midnight, as was the case previously. This means that loud-speaker music or live performances are not allowed out-of-doors after 10 p.m. Fines can be issued, after surveillance, for activities that obviously do not comply with the rules, even upon repeated occasions.

10. The Social services' youth group with reinforcements patrols the streets during the evenings and nights from the beginning of July until the second week in August. That means that they mingle among youth in the age range 13 to 21 all over Gotland. Their goal is to prevent the use of drugs, assault and crime as well as seeing to it that no one gets hurt.

The Varannan vatten (Every second round water) campaign

In connection with the activities of the 10-point programme, the public health team of Gotland municipality felt that part of the solution to the summer problems was to reduce consumption of alcoholic beverages. Attitudes and behaviour can be changed through knowledge and information. Thus the "Every second round water" information campaign was launched. The campaign is produced by the Municipality of Gotland in conjunction with Alkoholkommittén (the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs Alcohol Committee), the Police authorities, Destination Gotland, the Gotland Tourist Association and Systembolaget (the Swedish Alcohol Retail Monopoly).

The target group is men and women between the ages of 18-40 years. It was introduced for the first time in Visby in the summer of 2004 with the theme of smart alcohol consumption, namely drinking both more moderately and wisely. The campaign does not lecture, but rather attempts to convey the positive effects of not drinking excessively, for example, being more attractive, in better control of the situation, having more



The Varannan vatten slogan has been patented by Gotland Municipality



The Varannan vatten (Every second round water) campaign wants to get people to drink more wisely

stamina, having more fun and feeling better, both that day and the day after. The message has been spread by posters, banners and advertisements in newspapers, on the Internet and the TV-monitors onboard the Gotland ferries.

Others are following suit

The campaign has met with positive response among ordinary citizens, politicians, local businesses and the police on Gotland. Other parallel activities to promote alcohol information conducted by other parties, for example the Alkoholkommittén's Party Method, also help to change attitudes and behaviour.

The Swedish Alcohol Retail Monopoly's campaign, "IQ", uses Gotland Municipality's "Every second round water" campaign and the 10-point programme as good examples for preventing or reducing alcohol-related problems. "Every second round water" has been a source of inspiration for other municipalities wishing to reduce alcohol consumption. For instance, the campaign has been tested in Göteborg in the summer of 2005, during the Göteborgkalaset festival. In a telephone interview 400 festival visitors were asked what they thought of the campaign activities and generally it received a good rating: 3,8 out of 5. Even Örebro is running a "Every second round water" campaign for four summer weeks in 2006. And Karlskoga is also making preparations to launch a campaign.

The 10-point programme and "Every second round water" have made a difference

The Municipality of Gotland, public authorities, Gotland County Council, police and business people all agree that the joint activities, combined with a clear, unified political purpose, have actively contributed to making Visby a quieter, safer place since the summer of 2003. The effects of the 10-point programme and "Every second round water" campaign have resulted in better sobriety in the streets and reduced levels of intoxication in restaurants. And the long-term efforts continue. There is a constant dialogue between Gotland Municipality and the parties involved. Gotland Municipality has registered the Varannan vatten slogan with the Swedish Patent and Registration office.

Would you like more information?

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The 10-point programme is project number 8 in the Swedish Alcohol Retail Monopoly's IQ-campaign



Örebro is also running a Varannan vatten campaign. (Photo: Örebro Municipality)