1] Tourism is the economic mainstay of this Lakeland village with approximately 100 hotel rooms, 13 B and B’s, 2 Youth Hostels, 500 camping pitches, 2 caravan sites, 5 pubs and several hundreds of self-catering lets.

John Ruskin’s house, Brantwood, is a major international attraction as is the award-winning Ruskin Museum with its Donald Campbell Bluebird speed record exhibits.

While visitor numbers peak during school holidays, tourism is now a year-round industry.

Coniston offers traditional and new mountain and water based activities and also literary, artistic and cultural opportunities thus appealing to tourists with varying profiles: youth groups, families, the retired, active, less active, from home and abroad.

2] A report from the 2016 Holiday Letting Agents Conference indicates a frequent complaint by holiday makers; that they meet no locals in holiday villages.

This is not the case in Coniston where visitors are welcome to many regular village activities from the Primary School Duck Race to Local History lectures, from temporary membership at Coniston Sports and Social Centre to the Village Lunch.

Throughout the year the village hosts major sporting events; the Coniston 14 road race, the Fell Race, the 1500 Cycle challenge and the Open Water Lake Swim among others.

Coniston is able to provide a wide range of tourist-friendly activities because we are not a “holiday ghetto”. We are—still—a community with a can-do spirit.

3] However, like most rural communities we face debilitating cuts. Our GP surgery is an essential element in the viability of our community but is threatened by changes to the NHS Carr-Hill funding formula.

- In 2012 the surgery recorded 360 visitor consultations
- We are 25 miles from A and E in Barrow
- Roads may be blocked by floods, snow or traffic
- Ambulances can take over an hour to respond to 999 calls
- Letting agents confirm that some prospective tourists enquire about medical facilities

4] We are delighted that EFRA recognises the significance of Rural Tourism.

We believe it is vital that the CQC award-winning Coniston Medical Practice survives to support the interdependent needs of the local community, the tourist industry and those tourists who may need medical attention.

We therefore ask the committee to support the current NHS/BMA Working Party on Atypical Practices to ensure that survival.

September 2016