

## Brighton i360 defends venue costs



### Venue reacts to criticism of event pricing rates, saying per head costs will be cheaper than The Shard and Gherkin

By Emma Channon 21st August 2015

Brighton's newest venue, the i360, has defended its hire costs after claims it would cost more than central London landmarks The Shard or Gherkin.

The venue, which is set to open next summer, says enquiries have been flooding in while local agencies say they are excited to show it to clients. Claiming to be the world's first vertical cable car, the i360 consists of a 200-person capacity glass pod that ascends to more than 160m, while further meetings and event space is available at ground level.

Local news reports compared the venue's full-use cost of £40k to a foodless function at The Shard for 300, which comes in at £20k. It also said the Gherkin costed up to £16,500 plus VAT.

But Brighton i360 head of sales Pippa Atkinson said these comparisons were misleading, and that the majority of events at the venue would be cheaper.

"The £40k quoted ... is to hire the entire venue exclusively for 1,000 people for an entire evening. It reflects the cost of 'closing the venue' since we would be shutting all of our other facilities for the public, i.e. the i360 vertical cable car, shop, sky bar, brasserie, tea rooms, shop, all of our hospitality rooms and exhibition," she explained.

"The vast majority of events at the i360 will take place in one of our hospitality rooms, which are significantly cheaper since the rooms are independent from the rest of the building meaning we do not need to shut our other facilities.

"These are priced to reflect the unique nature of the i360, offering stunning event spaces directly on the beach and the unique pod hire, and are on a par with the Royal Pavilion, which is the city's other unique premier venue."

Atkinson pointed out the Brighton i360 was cheaper per person at £40 a head (for 1,000 people), compared to The Shard's £67 per head (300 people) and Gherkin's £118 per head (140 people). She added: "The Sky Garden is £40,000 for 400 people. The cost of hiring the London Eye for 30 minutes for 800 people is £34,666."

Michelle Mainwaring, marketing and PR manager for Brighton agency Vivid Event Group, said prices were competitive, and looked forward to showing it to clients.

"We are extremely excited about the i360 and are looking forward to bringing our clients down from London to experience the south coast in a unique way. In terms of the venue hire costings we find them to be very competitive. Comparisons made to the Shard for example have actually been taken out of context and it is unrealistic to pull out figures for hospitality that are not equally reflected in numbers of guests, catering, entertainment and a whole host of factors that a package may include. We anticipate utilising not only the viewing pod but all of the flexible spaces available and are looking forward to being creative with a whole range of events we plan to host."