



**Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting  
Thursday 29 September 2022**

**Present;**

Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Rick Henderson, REME Museum (Chair); Hannah Grigson; Army Flying Museum; Pam Weeks, Crofton Beam Engines; Belinda Richardson, Marlborough; Helen Trim, Text Quest; Lauren Collins, Hawk Conservancy Trust; Jo Atkins, National Trust; Rachel Farr, Marlborough College Summer School; Jon Carson, Wiltshire Whisky Distillery Co; Zoe Jefferies, Trowbridge Town Council; Christopher Gale, The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum; Karen Phimister, Swindon Borough Council; Maisie Anderson, Salisbury Escape Rooms; Meryl Browning, St Thomas' Church; Sara Donaldson, St Peter's Church; Katerina Rysova, VisitBritain (Guest Speaker)

**Introductions & Apologies**

Chair Rick Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined how the meeting will be structured.

**Update from Businesses**

After going around the room for an update from attendees, here are the key points;

- Most business had a successful and busy summer, reaching close to 2019 levels, however they are starting to feel the effects of the cost-of-living crisis now the summer has come to an end
- Mention some businesses still up to 20% down on 2019 although some were closer to 2019 levels
- Events – a lot of partners are organising more events – especially Autumn/Winter and Christmas programmes
- Mid-weeks seem to be less busy, but weekends remain busy
- Family visits have been down in a few places
- National Trust have just launched autumn campaign with free tickets for up to 2 adults and 4 children, which has generated a lot of positive response. You can book your ticket here - <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/terms-and-conditions-for-the-autumn-free-visit-offer>

**Discussion on publications / leaflets**

Fiona from VisitWiltshire led a discussion with the attending meeting on the topic of print publications and advertising. VisitWiltshire has not printed its Visitor Guide and Visitor Map for 2 years, with it being digital only. For 2022 we did produce a Postcard with a QR that took people to

the publications on the website, these have generated about 9% of the traffic to these pages. The main takeaways from the discussion were;

- There does seem to be a high demand for print from smaller accommodation business e.g. B&B's, Self-Catering etc
- There is definitely a demand from the older demographics – who are in turn less likely to use digital versions of things
- There is a general consensus that people do like to have something when walking around a town
- Hampshire Top Attractions Group have been having the same discussions – there seems to be an even split on what direction they should take
- Hard to tell whether the distribution of print is reaching the right people who rely on print – and distribution costs
- Taking print to exhibitions and events – does seem to be pretty effective
- Hard to tell whether there has actually been an increase in a reluctance to pick up print
- Maybe the time and effort need to be spent on studying on where people find out about the places they visit – and whether print is still effective in general. VisitWiltshire will look into a survey – to see if we can get some more information
- There does seem to be a trend from business that have stopped producing print, haven't seen any difference in their visitor numbers
- Digital activity can be easier to analyse – where people are coming from, age, gender etc
- ACTION: VW to look at the viability of producing a piece of print that can direct visitors to downloadable vouchers as a lead generation tool
- ACTION: Group to produce a form to circulate to find out where people are hearing about each business

### **Guest Speaker – Katerina Rysova VisitBritain**

Katerina gave update on the national Visitor Attraction survey and latest domestic sentiment tracker. I have attached Katerina's presentation from the meeting alongside these notes.

You can see the full report of the Attractions Survey – <https://www.visitbritain.org/annual-survey-visits-visitor-attractions-latest-results>

Latest Consumer Sentiment Tracker - [https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/2022-09-20\\_domestic\\_sentiment\\_tracker\\_report\\_-\\_september\\_release.pdf](https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/2022-09-20_domestic_sentiment_tracker_report_-_september_release.pdf)

### **Update on VisitWiltshire/Great West Way Activity**

#### Website

Year to date the websites have seen 800k visitors – we forecast 1.1 million visitors for the year. Things to Do and What's on are regularly top content pages – this highlights the importance that partners upload their events to the website. You can do this via the [event form](#).

#### Social Media

Our Social Media followers stand at just under 69k. Followers are split - Facebook 23.7k, Twitter 27.8k and Instagram 17.2k.

A great opportunity to reach our audience is by doing an Instagram takeover. This gives partners the chance to post from our Instagram account over a weekend. Check out our [Instagram account](#) to see what other partners have done. If anyone is interested, please contact [Fiona](#) or [Katie](#) and we can schedule you in.

#### Campaign

**TimeForWiltshire Autumn & Winter Campaign** - VisitWiltshire will be running a Autumn/Winter Campaign and are looking for partners who would like get involved. The digital campaign will run for five months (Oct/Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb) and will consist of a campaign web page, consumer newsletter, blogs, social media, banner ads and paid digital promotion. You can see full details of the campaign [here](#). If you would like to take part, please contact [Fiona](#)

**2023 Residents Week Campaign and Shared Prosperity funding** - We are discussing options for a Spring 2023 Campaign and Residents Week with Wiltshire Council. If you have any thoughts on timings – previously its always tied in with English Tourism Week in the Spring please let us know.

#### **Great West Way Update**

##### Great West Way Travel Trade Marketplace

The Great West Way Travel Trade Marketplace event is being run as a hybrid event, in order to maximise international buyer attendance and keep costs down for supplier businesses and destinations. This event will take place over two days:

**Wednesday 16 November – Virtual one-to-one meetings**

**Friday 18 November – in-person networking day, hosted by Ascot Racecourse.**

The aim of the event is to enable suppliers to meet with buyers who are interested in contracting tourism products and selling them to their customers. Buyers will choose from a range of Discovery Visits (taking place over the weekend) enabling them to experience the Great West Way for themselves, with a view to package and sell the route in future itineraries.

Please visit the supplier page <https://www.greatwestway.co.uk/traveltrade/marketplace/suppliers> to register to attend

##### Travel Trade Events

**Destination Britain North America (DBNA) – 9 & 10 September, Washington DC.** Wiltshire and Salisbury were represented by Great West Way/England Originals, where we had 42 one-to-one meetings with north American buyers. Positive event with many new buyers/contacts who are at different stages of selling England

**Next week we are attending Group Leisure Show – 6 October.** We are attending the show in Milton Keynes, and there here is a Wiltshire section on the stand – with Longleat, Bowood, Bishopstrow Hotel.

##### Other Opportunities

We are currently putting together the latest digital version of the Great West Way Travel Magazine which we are hoping will be ready for Mid-October. If you are interested in advertising, please contact [Fiona](#).

Great West Way are looking at opportunities to put a Bid in for GREAT Gateway innovation fund – for international consumer marketing activity. We will be attending a webinar next week. Once we know whether we have been successful and know what opportunities will be available to partners/ambassadors we be in touch

### Training

VisitWiltshire have now started to put together their programme of training courses for 2022/23. These usually take place between October and March, and cover a variety of subjects. Confirmed courses so far include;

Introduction to Podcasts – Online – Thursday 6 October

First Aid at Work – Monday 7 November & Thursday 9 March

We are also in touch with Susan Briggs from Tourism Network about hosting a programme of courses on a variety of subjects including PR, Off-peak business and attracting locals. More details to follow.

If there are any subjects in particular you would like us to cover in our training programme, please contact [Billy](#).

### **Any Other Business**

- A question arose about ways in which Press Coverage could be recorded. VisitWiltshire uses to use a function called Coverage Book – which partners may be interested to look in to – here is the link - <https://coveragebook.com/>

### **Dates of Future meetings;**

January 2023