



**Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting
Tuesday 18 January 2022**

Present;

Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Rick Henderson, REME Museum (Chair); Judy Dain, Vaughan's Cookery School; Jane Thomas, Stonehenge; Sue Williams, Whatley Manor; Katie Pondsford, Bradford on Avon; Hannah Grigson; Army Flying Museum; Lorna Matthews-Keel, Salisbury Chequered History Guides; Pam Weeks, Crofton Beam Engines; Chris Hodson, Boscombe Down Aviation Collection; Hedge Haiden, Salisbury Escape Rooms; Katinka, Bowood House and Gardens; Sarah Forwood, Bowood House and Gardens; Belinda Richardson, Marlborough; Helen Trim, Text Quest; Nicky Evans, St Peter's Church; Melissa Barnett, Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre

Introductions & Apologies

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

Sustainability in Tourism - Case studies on implementing sustainability within a tourism business

Stonehenge

Jane Thomas from Stonehenge about how Stonehenge is working hard to reduce it's environmental impact and become the most sustainable of the English Heritage Sites. You can see their commitment [here](#).

Some of the action Stonehenge are taking include;

- Visitor Centre achieved a VERY GOOD rating on BREEAM Certificate (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) which looks at environmental, social and economic performance. You can find out more about BREEAM [here](#).
- Take water supply from a Bore Hole (not connected to mains supply) – if they take too much they get in trouble, so have to take measures to limit usage including;
 - o Waterless Urinals
 - o Use waste water in toilets
 - o Smart Sinks
- Use a Ground Source Heat Pump – that provides heating and cooling
- 0 to Landfill waste collection policy – refuse is collected by [Grist](#) who sort offsite and anything that can't be recycled is burnt as fuel – working on signage to tell this story
- Incentives for reusing coffee cups & glass bottles for water
- Use [Simply Lunch](#) to provide sandwiches etc who use bio-degradable packaging and have a low emission fleet of vehicles

- Try to source locally as best as possible in the gift shop
- Introduced a range of Bamboo products
- Buses – electric buses not available – so have opted for the lowest emission (euro 6) engines as possible

Whatley Manor

Sue Williams from Whatley Manor gave the group details on how the hotel has managed to make sustainability one of its core principles in the last few years;

- Started their sustainability journey in early 2019 by linking up with some key partners;
 - o [EarthCheck](#) – number 1 scientific body for sustainability in the Travel industry
 - o [Itmustbenow.com](#)
- This prompted them to make some immediate changes including;
 - o Removing single use plastics from rooms
 - o Reducing waste by approx. 70%
 - o This has initially saved them money!
- Measured carbon footprint – this allows them to have benchmark to check progress against
- Created a [Sustainability Report](#) – and made it available online, and hoping to update on progress in 1 months
- Removed gas from kitchen & installed more efficient fridges
- Use 75% less energy to light hotel
- Water reducing shower heads & install a monitor on shower so guests can see how long they use shower and how much water they use – it also records data. They hope to save 20% on water
- Invited suppliers to a workshop to discuss how they can work together and share best practice
- Waste Management – use a [Grundon](#). They have two OCO plants, where they take your waste and as a result of the burning of it manage to make building blocks
- Trying to reduce food waste by being creative with leftovers e.g. Yesterday's Sourdough Crackers
- Check out Sue Garrard – very influential in the world of sustainability
- Carbon Tax is coming – and needs to be considered by all businesses. If you can measure your impact and then demonstrate you are reducing it you will feel the benefit in taxes
- Free software called [Trello](#) – helps to organise the project and measure progress

Vaughan's Cookery School

Judy Dain from Vaughan's Cookery School joined us talk about they have managed to achieve a Zero Food Waste policy

- Each year Vaughan's try to Green the business a little bit more, gradually working towards a green business

- Commercial kitchens produce a huge amount of food waste – globally Organic Waste makes up 44% of total waste. Food decomposes and produces high levels of methane that effects both atmosphere and soil
- Incinerating food waste also produces harmful emissions and is wasteful
- How Vaughan’s are combatting Food Waste;
 - o Using up food – using the whole plant or animal. E.g the green part of the carrot to make a pesto
 - o Anything that CAN’T be used is taking away by [Grist](#) and converted into Biomass energy
- Customers are interested are interested and engaged in what they do
- All packaging is plan based – provided by [Nisbets](#), [Catering 24](#) & [Vegware](#). Biodegradable clingfilm is available from a few outlets
- Most of these options are cheap and easy to use

Bradford on Avon

Katie Pondsford from Bradford on Avon spoke briefly about BoA are working towards being a plastic free town

The Town Council backed the community effort to become plastic free, and the town was awarded ‘Plastic Free Community Status’ in April 2019. The Town Council actively promotes plastic-free businesses via a dedicated section of its Explore BoA website, and also raises awareness of of the need to ‘Refuse, Re-use and Recycle’. Local independent shop, Christine’s Sustainable Supermarket, has been featured as a plastic-free ‘hero’ in our newsletter, website and social media feeds having installed dry goods re-fill stations. The Tourist Information Office sells duck food in compostable bags as well as reusable water bottles and flasks to encourage people not to buy single-use bottled drinks. We have also installed three water fountains across the town, enabling and encouraging residents and visitors alike to refill their bottles.

You can see the full information on the scheme [here](#).

Update from Businesses

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

- Still quiet in regards to international visitors – domestic and local markets remain quite strong
- Summer and up until Christmas remained mainly busy
- Quiet in the run up to Christmas reflecting the nervousness around Omicron
- Some attractions close over the winter months and take opportunity for maintenance etc
- Events are proving popular – some are continuing with popular online events
- Recruiting of hospitality staff remains an issue
- Number of partners using the quieter months to finalise their programmes for 2022
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Update on VisitWiltshire/Great West Way Activity

- VisitWiltshire currently working on our 2022 digital publications, Visitor Guide and Visitor Map. There is still chance to advertise, if you would like to find out more please contact [Billy](#). We also need events for 2022 to be included in the Guide, please send to [Billy](#) or [Fiona](#), and add to the website via the [event form](#)
- Last tranche of digital activity for our Autumn/Winter Escape the Everyday Campaign has just gone live until the end of January
- Working on a 2022 Wiltshire Residents Week – where partners offers to local Wiltshire residents – usually over English Tourism Week (17-23 March 2022). This is still to be finalised
- Great West Way collaborated with The British Museum, English Heritage, Salisbury and Wiltshire museums to offer national and international journalists the opportunity to experience a pre-historic journey along the Great West Way.
A two-day, one-night itinerary took place on Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19 January and was attended by 12 press including national arts and travel journalists from The Observer and The i newspaper, plus international agency AFP, and foreign correspondents from Italy, Spain and Germany. It included curators' tours, walking in Wiltshire's Neolithic landscape and exclusive access to UNESCO World Heritage Site of Stonehenge and Avebury. Find out more from our press release [here](#), which was picked up by [Business Biscuit](#). ABC Newspaper in Spain has already published [here](#) and others will publish shortly.
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- 2nd Edition of the Great West Way map has recently been signed off – in partnership with GWR
- Planning to run a Great West Way digital campaign during March launching the new map and pushing the GWR Great West Way Discoverer Discoverer pass

Training

- Free online training course from VisitBritain & Tourism For All called 'So What Makes You Think You're Not Accessible'. VisitWiltshire will distribute more information on this to partners in due course
- If there are any subjects that you would like to see us provide training on please let [Billy](#) know.

Any Other Business

- If any WAVA members have any suggestions for Guest Speakers at future meeting please [Billy](#) or [Fiona](#) know

Dates of Future meetings;

Thursday 28 April

Thursday 7 July

Thursday 20 October

Thursday 19 January