



**Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting
Thursday 18 May 2023**

Present;

Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Rick Henderson, REME Museum (Chair); Lauren Collins, Hawk Conservancy Trust; Christopher Gale, The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum; Maisie Anderson, Salisbury Escape Rooms; Aimee Edwards, Cholderton Rare Breeds Farm; Tracey-Ann Walpole, Corsham Town Council; Jo Atkins, National Trust; Shane Brennan, Salisbury Cathedral; Emily Burgin, Westonbirt; Jane Thomas, Stonehenge; Vicky Goodwright, Salisbury TIC; Meryl Browning, St Thomas' Church; Hannah Grigson, Army Flying Museum; Graham Horn, Tours2Order (guest speaker).

Introductions & Apologies

Chair Rick Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting, offered apologies on behalf of those who couldn't make it and outlined how the meeting will be structured.

Graham Horn, Tours2Order – Guest Speaker

Graham gave a short talk about Blue Badge Guides, introducing the organisation to the group and how they work as well as demonstrating their training, professionalism and versatility. The main focus was how a blue badge guide can enrich visitors experience at your attraction and how you can make the most of working with a blue badge guide.

If you are interested in working with Blue Badge Guides you can get in touch with Graham - graham@tours2order.com

Update from Businesses

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

- Bad Weather during Coronation Day, meant that places that were open or running events didn't see high number of visitors
- Consistent bad weather hasn't helped with those attraction that are predominantly outside
- Most are gearing up for school holidays and planning events for the summer
- Most businesses had a good Easter, especially the first week when weather was better
- Most reported a good/surprising start to the season – approaching or exceeding pre-pandemic levels
- Outlook for rest of the season generally positive

Update on VisitWiltshire/Great West Way Activity

A reminder of some of the activity you can take advantage of as part of your partnership;

- **Spotlight On Blogs** – these are a great opportunity to increase your presence on the website and to drive traffic to your product. They take the form of an interview with a member of your team, it could be a chef, a gardener, a volunteer or even a business owner. You can see a couple of examples of Spotlight On blogs below;
 - [A Spotlight on Helen Browning](#)
 - [A Spotlight On: Charlie Pitcher, Owner of Live Escape Rooms Salisbury](#)
- **Competition prizes** - we're always looking for prizes if you would like to feature in one of our competitions – you will get additional exposure via our social channels, website and be featured in the newsletter.
- **Instagram Takeovers** - We are now inviting VisitWiltshire partners to take part in Instagram Takeovers on our Instagram channel. This will be an opportunity to take control of our account and to promote your imagery and content over a whole weekend to our 18K+ Instagram followers. Check out [our account](#) to see how other partners have made the most of this opportunity.
- **Newsletter features from £110 a month.** Useful for anything specific you want to promote – an event, or special tickets etc.
- If you are interested in any of the above, please get in touch with [Katie](#).

Website

Check your page - As we now head into the busier time of year for Tourism Businesses, it would be an ideal time to check your product page on the website. It is important to make sure that content is up to date, especially correct opening times and prices.

If you wish to update your page please send changes and new content to [Billy](#) and [Katie](#).

Book Now - We are developing new content pages that will highlight partners that visitors can book direct and in return receive best price guarantee. Please take some time to have a look at your page on www.visitwiltshire.co.uk. If your page has a GREEN BOOK NOW button, please check that you are happy with where the page the link goes to. If you do not have a green book now button and would like to link directly to your booking page from the VisitWiltshire page and be included within this new content page please email [Fiona](#) with your booking page URL that you would like the button to link to. If you have any questions or queries about this please contact [Fiona](#).

Campaign

Autumn/Winter Campaign - Our latest digital marketing campaign which ran between October and March has now come to an end, with positive results. We received a total reach of 2.6 million across all promotional activity, with 43,142 direct engagements. You can see a full report on the campaign [here](#).

Wiltshire Towns and Villages Campaign - Our new Wiltshire Towns and Villages map and campaign was launched during English Tourism Week, 17-26 March 2023. The campaign included, targeted distribution of the printed map, paid for digital promotion, PR and third-party promotion and organic digital activity. The estimated campaign reach was over 2 million. The towns and villages

map has been printed. If you would like copies, please go to <https://ivisitinfo.com/products/its-time-for-wiltshire-towns-and-villages-map>

Digital Publications

All of our [core digital 2023 publications](#) are now live Wiltshire Visitor Map, the It's Time for Wiltshire Visitor Guide and the Wiltshire Travel Trade guide. Please do share these on all your digital channels.

To date for all the publications including the town and villages map there have been just over 16k views.

2023 Fam Passport

VisitWiltshire [Fam Passport](#) for 2023/24 is now live and ready to download. This year there are 29 offers from a variety of partners this year, resulting in over £530 in savings.

Travel Trade and Great West Way Update

Wiltshire has been shortlisted as a **Group Leisure & Travel Awards Finalist 2023**. We're encouraging the industry to vote for Wiltshire as the Best UK Destination at www.groupleisureandtravel.com/awards/vote. Voting closes on 2 July and the winner will be announced at the Group Leisure & Travel Awards dinner on 4 October.

Recent and upcoming travel trade events include:

- **Explore GB**, 27 February – 3 March. Wiltshire was represented at this virtual event with approximately 20+ buyer meetings and VisitBritain overseas reps from USA, Italy, Spain, France, Belgium/ Netherlands, Australia/New Zealand and Germany/Austria/Switzerland
- **Coach Tourism Association Networking event** – 13 March. This event took place at Hampton by Hilton Bath and we were invited along to informally network with 10-15 domestic group organisers, coach and tour operators.
- **ETM North American Marketplace** – 21 March. We met with approx. 16 buyers at this virtual ETOA event.
- Wiltshire will be exhibiting at **Group Leisure & Travel Show**, Milton Keynes on 5 October on a Great West Way stand. Confirmed stand sharers include English Heritage, Longleat, Reading, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Ascot Racecourse. Literature Distribution is also being offered for representation at £375.

Great West Way Update

The Great West Way [Travel Trade Directory](#) is being reviewed and updated and by offsetting the advertising income we are aiming to cover costs and/or generate a small surplus income. This is the main resource being used by the trade including 100+ Great West Way Official Tour Operators. It is distributed widely via the database and third parties with an estimated reach of approx. 4,000 key trade contacts all over the world. Booking an advert will get you more visibility and we urge you to consider this. The advertising prices and spec can be seen [here](#).

Our annual event, Great West Way Marketplace event is being planned as a virtual one-to-one event, plus networking day and Discovery Visits. Due to take place autumn 2023. Further details will be distributed in due course.

Consumer opportunities

The next issue of the Great West Way Travel magazine will be October 2023.

if you are interested in getting involved and advertising in the next edition of the Magazine you can see the prices and relevant information [here.](#)

Training

VisitWiltshire has been delivering their programme of training courses since the autumn that cover a variety of subjects. This year's courses have included;

Upcoming confirmed courses;

Why Reputation Matters

Wednesday 14 June 2023 2-4pm

Mapping the reputation of your company. Discover and adopt the foundation principles and pillars to ensure good reputation management and practical steps to take to build your reputation and enhance your bottom line.

Photography for Social Media Training

Wednesday 28 June 2023 10am - 4pm

with Andrew Eberlin from [Brighter Side](#)

Venue & Cost TBC

Images are a vital part of making your social media activity successful. This course will be a mixture of theory, and practical activities, to help you plan your activity, shoot photographs on your phone in the most effective way, both indoors and outdoors, and then review and use the images. It is suitable for those with a sound understanding of social media, and with existing accounts. The session will also look at free and easy ways to edit your photography, to get the most out of the images you post.

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

Any Other Business

Next WAVA meeting is planned for September, and is likely to be in person with some optional 'extra elements' details of the next meeting will follow in due course

Dates of Future meetings;

September 2023