



**Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting
Thursday 19 May 2022**

Present;

Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Flo Wallace, VisitWiltshire; Katie Brown, VisitWiltshire; Kelly Ballard; Guest Speaker; Rick Henderson, REME Museum (Chair); Judy Dain, Vaughan's Cookery School; Jane Thomas, Stonehenge; Hannah Grigson; Army Flying Museum; Helen Trim, Text Quest; Sarah Heys, English Heritage; Louise Cox, Hawk Conservancy; Rachel Farr, Marlborough College Summer School; Jo Atkins, National Trust; Sally Edwards, Salisbury Art Scene

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;

- Generally a positive start of the year with visitor numbers picking up
- Events have been successful
- Membership organisations e.g. National Trust and English Heritage have seen that less members are visiting, but paying visitors are up
- International visitors are starting to return – starting with the US and now more European
- Despite continued encouragement to pre-book attractions are seeing more and more walk ups
- Groups are starting to return slowly but surely
- Not much planned for Jubilee – smaller local fee events will be more popular

Guest Speaker – Kelly Ballard from Elves of the Visitor Podcast Find

- Kelly Ballard from Elves of the Visitor Podcast spoke to the group about the benefits of using podcasts, best practise, what content works, how to get started and some tips on which software and hardware to use.
- You can see Kelly's PowerPoint presentation alongside these notes.

Update on VisitWiltshire/Great West Way Activity

- The value of Wiltshire's visitor economy in 2021 is estimated to have been just 70% of pre-pandemic levels. With total visitor spend in 2021 falling from £1.5bn to £1.05bn.
- Overall businesses reported good bookings for Easter. Forward bookings for summer holidays are particularly strong for rural product but there is concern about prospects for larger urban areas.

- Prospects for inbound travel continue to improve with the easing of restrictions. US demand is particularly strong.
- Our websites attracted just under 1.3 million unique visits in 2021, almost at the record 1.3million level achieved in 2019.
- We have developed and refreshed the design of our Wiltshire and Salisbury website navigation, giving it a more modern design and improved functionality. Key changes include improved highlighting of Things To Do, Accommodation and What's On; and new 'Don't Miss' image links to improve seasonal, thematic and campaign content
- Our Wiltshire Escape the Everyday campaign that ended in March generated over 1.75 million reach and 21k clicks through to the website. We will be running an Autumn campaign – look out for details in upcoming partner newsletters
- We are discussing options for an autumn 2022 and 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 – however, if we did it during Autumn one how would that work for you? Please let [Billy](#) or [Fiona](#) know your thoughts.
- Our social media followers stand at just under 68k. Followers are facebook 23.5k, Twitter 27.4k and Instagram 16.9k. A great opportunity to reach our audience is by doing an Instagram takeover. If anyone is interested, please contact [Fiona](#) or [Katie](#) and we can schedule you in.
- We have a new member of the team, Katie Brown. Katie is our new Digital and Online Executive, and she will be taking care of all things digital, from the website, blogs, social media and our consumer newsletters. If your product page needs updating, or you would like us to post about something on social media please contact [Katie](#).

Digital Publications

- Our new [2022 digital Visitor Map and Visitor Guide](#) were published and distributed in March. Please add links to these within your own content – website – social channels
- To help generate downloads of the new digital guides we have produced a series of new inspirational printed postcards for distribution with QR codes directing visitors to the digital maps and publications. If you would like to order some of these please contact <https://www.peardistribution.co.uk/great-west-way---this-way-for-a-journey-through-time-a6-postcard>

Great West Way

- Great West Way has received funding for a Escape the Everyday campaign over the summer. This will be running until the beginning of July targeting domestic audience. The promotional activity consists of a website campaign page, (including bookable experiences) distribution of itineraries and the new travel magazine, consumer newsletter, blogs, paid for social media, display adverts and paid digital promotion. As part of this campaign, we will be working with TXGB to load bookable experiences that will be promoted throughout the campaign messaging. There is still a chance to get involved, so if you would like to take part in the campaign or would like more information on how be part of TXGB please contact [Fiona](#).

Training

- VisitWiltshire training programme will now take a short break over the summer months and re-start again in September/October time. Over the last few months, we have delivered courses on Data and Research, Google Analytics, LinkedIn, Creating Engaging Content, Spring Clean Your Marketing, First Aid, Instagram 101 and Brand Development. If any members have any ideas for future topics that we can deliver training on please let [Billy](#) know.

Familiarisation Passport & Partner Experience

- The 2022/23 [Familiarisation Passport](#) is now online and available for partners to download and use. There are 27 offers from attractions, activities and other businesses are featured in the Passport this year
- We are also pleased to announce that on 14 September, VisitWiltshire partners will have the chance to join us for an inner access experience at Stonehenge. More details on how to book etc, will follow in the coming weeks
- If you are interested in offering an experience like this to VisitWiltshire partners, please get in touch with [Billy](#) with the information.

Any Other Business

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

Dates of next meeting;

Thursday 29 September 2022