



## **Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting Thursday 30 April 2020**

### **Present;**

Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Roz Mitchell, Salisbury Cathedral; Susie Brew, Pewsey Tourism Partnership & Wilton Windmill; Judy Dain, Vaughan's Cookery School; Belinda Richardson, Marlborough; Rachel Wheeler, Marlborough College Summer School; David Dawson, Wiltshire Museum; Katie Fairfox-Ross, Merchants House; Nikki Rowe, Vintage Classic; Fiona Spear, Wilton Shopping Village; Rick Henderson, REME Museum; Jen Edmondson, Bowood House and Gardens; Alana Wright, National Trust – Lacock; William Cartwright-Hignett, Iford Manor; Emma Peters, English Heritage – Old Sarum; Karen Marshallsay, Castle Combe Circuit.

### **Introductions**

Fiona Errington welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked Roz, for her service as Chairman and introduced the group's new Chairman, Rick Henderson from REME Museum.

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

#### **Support**

- VisitWiltshire are currently sending out fortnightly e-newsletters that are providing updates on government, tourism industry and local authority activity and their current marketing strategy. You can see the latest newsletter [here](#) and if you aren't already subscribed, you can do so [here](#).
- VisitWiltshire has set up an [advice page](#) on the website, which details all the latest government advice and support available, along with useful information and links from various tourism authorities.
- VisitWiltshire have recently sent out their second survey to businesses to gauge the impact of the outbreak. This survey focused on identifying any issues businesses are having with accessing support, and asking for their views on priorities for the national tourism recovery plan. You can see a summary of the key findings [here](#).
- VisitWiltshire have been actively supporting the #ProtectTourismJobs campaign. The aim of the campaign is to lobby Government to make sure coronavirus support packages fairly protect tourism jobs.

#### **Activity**

- We have recently created a [Take a Virtual Trip to Wiltshire](#) web page in which we are attempting to bring Wiltshire to the public. The page contains videos, virtual tours, and activities that people can watch and interact with during the lockdown. We have also created Virtual Trip pages for both [Salisbury](#) and [Great West Way](#).
- We have recently added a new '[Open Businesses in Wiltshire](#)' page on the website. This details businesses that are still running in some capacity, whether offering take-away and food delivery or available for online orders.

- We are also highlighting businesses who are engaging with consumers digitally during lockdown by sharing recipes, arts and crafts, home schooling ideas, gardening, online events and other digital activities. We have recently released a couple of [blogs](#) showcasing some of these.
- Monthly consumer newsletters have continued highlighting our new pages and content. You can see the latest newsletter [here](#).
- A new social media campaign has been launched on Instagram. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of businesses in Wiltshire during the pandemic and to help drive people to their social media pages. In the latest social media post we're asking people to tag the accounts of their favourite shopping destination, museum, festival or event, and theatre.
- We are using our social media accounts to promote the #TravelTomorrow message, encouraging our followers to stay at home today and plan a trip for the future.
- Early stages of recovery planning have begun, focussing on digital activity and prioritising which areas we can start promoting first, ie walking, attractions with open space etc
- If anyone has any content that will be suitable for any of our new pages, blogs or social media, please send them to our Digital and Online Executive, [Helen](#).

#### Great West Way

- The latest addition of the Great West Way Travel Magazine is now available. You can download the Travel Magazine [here](#). It would be great for Ambassadors to link to it within their Great West Way content on their website and in their social posts to help distribute the magazine.
- On Wednesday 6 May we are going to launch a virtual trip along the Great West Way via our [Twitter account](#). Consumers will be able to take part in a 'holiday from home', journeying along the route via a Twitter thread on our account.
- Similar to VisitWiltshire we have also been producing blogs and content, and have also starting planning for recovery.

#### Update from Businesses

Each of the meetings attendees offered a brief update on their current status and their initial plans for recovery. Here are the key points that arose during the discussion;

- As expected all businesses are now closed and events have been cancelled or postponed. It appears that cancellation of bookings and events have been made up to between late-May and August. Some decisions on big events will be made after the next government update on 7 May.
- Generally, bookings seemed to have been happy to postpone to a later date rather than cancel and demand refunds
- Most businesses have taken advantage of the Job Retention Scheme and have placed the majority of staff on furlough
- Unsurprisingly there has been a big shift towards increasing the output of digital activity. Even though there has been a general downturn in web traffic, most reported a huge increase in social media activity.
- Most will be focusing on attracting local and 'doorstep'
- Most are now starting to plan for re-opening and assessing ways that this can be done successfully. These include;

- Opening outside, open spaces first
- Limiting the number visitors at one time by introducing timed ticketing and limiting car parking spaces
- Operating with smaller groups, more often
- Reducing contact points wherever possible and introducing a one way system for system
- General concern over Volunteers. A number of attractions rely on volunteers, however many are over retirement age and therefore more at risk and may be less willing to return to work.

### **Useful links and advice**

There were a number of recommendations and pieces of advice offered. Here are some useful links. Thanks everyone who has shared.

- BDRC Weekly Report – I have attached the latest report to this email. The report tracks consumer sentiment on the impact of COVID-19.
- ALVA Attractions Recovery Tracker – you can see the report [here](#).
- Hootsuite Seminars – Hootsuite are offering a number of free webinars on how to make the most of social media. You can see the various topics [here](#). You may have to create an account to access, but this also free.
- Mailchimp is giving free .coms for 5 years. See more [here](#).
- Cleaning and signage – thanks to Rick for providing the links for the cleaning and signage companies he has been researching;
  - Social Distancing signage - <https://weareleach-socialdistancing.com/>
  - Workplace sanitisation - <https://www.premiersupportservices.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PSS-Sanitisation-Brochure.pdf>
  - Hand Sanitiser supplier - <https://www.firstaid.co.uk/hand-sanitiser/>

### **Looking Ahead**

- Attendees agreed that it would be useful for VisitWiltshire to set up a self-assessment scheme to certify that partners are safe to visit and adhering to government outlines
- Once attractions are re-open VisitWiltshire would need content for their product page summarising the cleaning and social distancing measures in place
- We will also require similar content for next year's print publications
- Once lockdown is lifted VisitWiltshire will focus marketing to a more local doorstep audience, then expand to domestic and finally international markets

### **Next Meeting**

It was agreed that it would be useful to have another meeting after the next government announcement on May 7. The next will take place;

Thursday 14 May @ 14:30.