



Notes from the Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting Thursday 25 April 2017 at Bowood House and Gardens

Present

Lesley Andrews, Friends of the Garden Trust; James Arnold-Baker, Wilton Windmill; Kevin Ashley, Longleat; Melissa Barnett, Chippenham Museum; Jenny Butler, VisitWiltshire; Debby Edwards, Bowood House; Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Dave Gill, Treasure Trails Wessex; Jackie Guscott, Studley Grange; Gordie Howsego, Salisbury Escape Rooms; Roz Mitchell, Salisbury Cathedral & Magna Carta; Amy Nutland, Bowood House; Katinka Rieger, Bowood; Charlotte Toop, Stourhead; Rachel Wheeler, Marlborough College Summer School.

Welcome and Introductions

WAVA Chairman, Roz Mitchell, welcomed everyone to the meeting, thanked Bowood for hosting it and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

Update on the Great West Way

Fiona Errington ran through the presentation given by VisitWiltshire Chief Executive David Andrews at the Great West Way Conference on 30 March. This presentation, along with other presentations and a film from the Conference, plus background information on the Great West Way can be viewed on the VisitWiltshire website [here](#).

Update on Progress with DigiTickets

Fiona Errington gave an update on progress with DigiTickets and explained how VisitWiltshire partners can become involved – a copy of her presentation is attached.

Action: All to let [Fiona](#) know if you would like to sell your tickets via VisitWiltshire/DigiTickets

How's Business – Update on 2017 to Date

Whilst some partners were trading at similar levels of business to 2016, most reported a very positive start to 2017 and many had experienced an excellent Easter. One attraction was described as 'flying' with sales up 22-23% year on year; another had experienced the 'highest ever single day's sales'; while a third had seen visitor numbers over the Easter weekend increase by 2,000 year on year.

Top Tips and Best Practice

Partners shared the following thoughts and recommendations with the group:

- Seek out and communicate the human stories relating to your business
- When working on a big project, ensure you have a clear line of reporting by assigning a single point of contact
- Keep communications flowing in order to avoid being faced with unexpected deadlines
- Make time to work through ideas thoroughly up front, in order to avoid issues later
- Develop a strong relationship with your customer base
- Listen to your customers and act on what they tell you
- Strive to offer excellent and consistent customer service at all times
- Always ask for three quotes when awarding contracts
- Use local suppliers where possible
- Keep an eye on your suppliers' environmental credentials
- To get your press releases picked up, include images so that the media have all the information they need up front

- Engage with your regular visitors to make them feel special and valued

Action: All to email [Jenny](#) with any further top tips or best practice to share with the group

Update on VisitWiltshire Activity

Jenny Butler gave an update on VisitWiltshire activity highlighting:

- Planning is about to start on VisitWiltshire's 2018 publications and the group's input into their design and content would be very welcome – 2017 publications can be viewed [here](#)
- The 2017 Familiarisation Passport is now available for partners to use, with more offers than ever before and record potential savings. Details can be found on our website [here](#)
- In addition to our pan-Wiltshire aerial videos, VisitWiltshire has produced three shorter drone films on the themes of White Horses, Hillforts and Canals. These tie in with our timeless branding and will be available to view on the VisitWiltshire website soon
- VisitWiltshire's Late Spring Marketing Campaign has now launched and runs through to the end of June 2017 under the heading: 'It's time for Wiltshire, escape the everyday'. The key message is that Wiltshire is an ideal destination for a well-deserved short break – keep an eye out in our monthly Marketing Updates for details of how it is progressing
- VisitWiltshire's online photo library is a very useful (and free) promotional tool, both for distributing your photos to third parties and for sourcing free images for your own use
- Details of all VisitWiltshire's marketing opportunities for 2017/2018 can be found on our Marketing Opportunities Leaflet, available to view on our website [here](#)
- Keep up to date with all VisitWiltshire's marketing news via our monthly Marketing Updates which can be found on the Partners' section of our website [here](#)
- VisitWiltshire's Partner e-newsletters are our main means of communication and include important information such as marketing opportunities, meetings and events, training courses and industry news – previous versions can be found on our website [here](#)

Action: All to feedback to [Jenny](#) by **Friday 19 May** with your thoughts on the design and content of VisitWiltshire's 2018 publications

Action: All to contact [Jenny](#) if you haven't already received an email about the Fam Passport, including details of what it is, how it works and the passwords you will need to access it

Action: All to email [Jenny](#) with images of your business to be uploaded to VisitWiltshire's online photo library, or details of photos you would like us to send you for our own use

Action: All to email [Florence](#) if you are not currently receiving our fortnightly Partner newsletters, so she can add you to her mailing list

Ideas for Future Collaborative Activity

The following suggestions were made:

- Share market intelligence such as trends, visitor profile, travelling times, postcodes etc
- Pool information on the data regulation changes which come into force in May 2018
- Seek out partners with a similar visitor profile to your own for joint marketing activity

Action: All to email [Jenny](#) with details of what market intelligence you currently collect that could be made available to the group

Action: All to come to the next meeting prepare to share strategies for dealing with the changing data protection laws, including how to retain data following the changes

Action: VisitWiltshire to include the following on the July meeting agenda: data protection; social media (data, trends, analytics, best practice etc); an update on European visitor trends

Action: All to think about 'what keeps them awake at night' and come to the July meeting prepared to share this with the group, as other partners may be able to help

Dates of Next Meetings

Thursday 13 July from 2-4pm at The Merchant's House in Marlborough

Tuesday 10 October from 2-4pm at The Museum of Army Flying, Middle Wallop