



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

Thursday 19 June 2025, 2pm

VIRTUAL MEETING LINK

(only available until 30 June 2025)

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Florence Wallace, Fiona Errington – VisitWiltshire; Robbie Kennedy -Legacy Rose & Crown / The Angel Hotel; Lisa Kent -Bowood House & Gardens; Kate Milicia & Drea Macmillan – The Old Bell Hotel Malmesbury; Charlotte King - McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon; Anna-Karin Hanson - English Heritage; Kate Saykoku – Salisbury Cathedral; Pippa Turner – Manor Estate; Sharon Thomas – Corsham; Louisa Reeves – National Trust; Anna Temple – Milford Hall Hotel; Jane Booth – Salisbury Museum; Richard Goodwin – Bishopstrow House Hotel & Spa; Charlotte Toop – Stourhead; Stephen Fox – Woolley Grange Hotel; Preet Kalsi – Stones Hotel & Holiday Inn Salisbury Stonehenge.

Apologies: David Lane, BGAM

1. Welcome

2. How's business?

eg. top line trade visitor figures, forward bookings etc.

Attractions reported strong April / good Easter and many on par or above 2024 visitor figures. One key attraction reported decline in international groups business (day visits from London) which is impacting figures, but when removed from stats, trade business is up between 10 – 13%. Increased interest in VIP experiences. Another key attraction highlighted the importance of events and the need to communicate these to the trade with 11+ month lead time to maximise bookings. Attractions have also reported retail spends are down – likely to be due to cost of living crisis.

Accommodation reporting good business Easter – May, but the trend for last minute bookings continue. One accommodation provider representing two hotels highlighted the importance of working with many DMCs/tour operators, due to a decline in business from one particular operator, to mitigate losing business altogether.

Local towns reporting seeing a few famous figures in the county and Corsham confirmed Rivals is back filming in the town for their next series.

3. Understanding the Cruise Sector by English Heritage – Anna-Karin Hanson

Please watch the [virtual meeting link](#) to hear the commentary on this and/or reference the '[Understanding the Cruise Sector](#)' slides.

ACTION: Please contact Flo if you are already actively targeting or looking to target shore excursion providers and are keen to develop a joined up strategic approach with available budget.

4. VisitWiltshire and Great West Way Travel Trade update

The [Travel Trade Activity Update for March – June 2025](#) was circulated prior to the meeting.

Flo Wallace referenced the Travel Trade Activity document and highlighted the recent launch of the new Travel Trade Guide and new website pages designed to be visible to AI. Plus Wiltshire being shortlisted for Best Destination at Group Leisure & Travel Awards and Group Travel World Awards. Flo and Fiona will be at the Group Leisure & Travel Awards dinner on 26 June.

Flo highlighted she's currently working on the new 7th edition of the Great West Way Travel Trade Directory – advertising and editorial opportunities still available.

ACTION: Please check your listings in the [Travel Trade Directory](#) and get in touch if you have any trade news for 2026 and beyond that could be used in editorial. Advertising space still available – please get in touch before 30 June to book.

5. Wiltshire Fam Visit and Wiltshire Showcase Proposal

The [Wiltshire Fam visit and Wiltshire showcase proposal](#) was distributed prior to the meeting and Flo presented this to the group. It was stressed that this could only take place with support from Wiltshire travel trade group and VisitWiltshire partners.

Jane from Salisbury Museum and Anna-Karin from English Heritage were very supportive for this to go ahead.

Flo thanked the accommodation providers for their support offering complimentary accommodation and also Longleat – who have confirmed they can host the Wiltshire Showcase event.

It was explained that buyers will be vetted by Group travel World and VisitWiltshire – having to complete an application process and an evaluation survey will be distributed to buyer attendees after the event.

Wiltshire trade group partners will be prioritised for the fam visit but all Wiltshire partners are welcome to attend the Showcase event.

ACTION: Flo to contact all relevant Wiltshire trade group partners to secure a Wiltshire itinerary for the fam visit and provide editorial copy to Group Travel World before their deadline of 3 July.

ACTION: All Wiltshire partners to register an interest to attend Wiltshire Showcase. A registration form will be developed and distributed in due course.

6. Travel Trade Opportunities & 1:1 Support

- [Group Leisure & Travel Show](#), Milton Keynes 2 October 2025. Domestic trade show for GTOs, coach and tour operators. We have confirmed stand sharers including Wiltshire, Longleat, Stourhead, DoubleTree by Hilton Swindon, English Heritage and Old Bell Hotel, Warminster. If you would like to stand share the cost is £935+VAT (excluding graphics). **Book before 30 June 2025.** Literature distribution is only £155 + VAT.

- [Great West Way Travel Trade Directory](#) and have some editorial and advertising opportunities. This resource receives over 10,000+ views online annually from domestic and international trade and is the main resource being used by 120+ Official Tour Operators. We are holding advertising prices at last year's rates. For Ambassadors, prices are from £365 + VAT for a quarter page. Please see the [advertising spec](#) and get in touch to **book before 30 June 2025**.
- **Great West Way Marketplace** has now been confirmed as 23 September – virtual event day and 25 September – networking event day at Carvers Hill, Hungerford. [REGISTER HERE](#). The website pages and further information will be distributed in due course.
- **Great West Way Connections Meeting** will take place on **Tuesday 24 June, 2pm – 3pm**. We're delighted that Ritushri Dhankher, VisitBritain's National Trade & Aviation Manager – Canada, will be giving a North American update. There will also be an update from the Great West Way team. I've attached the draft agenda and an activity update. This meeting is free of charge for Ambassadors to attend Please [REGISTER HERE](#).

ACTION: Please get in touch with Flo to book or discuss any Travel Trade Opportunities, request a meeting or to discuss any 1:1 support.

7. Any Other Business

Flo mentioned that VisitWiltshire had recently met with Coach Passenger Transport to discuss Coach Friendly Status for towns and attractions.

ACTION: If there is sufficient interest from the trade group and Wiltshire partners, we would be happy to invite him to speak at a future Wiltshire trade meeting. Please can you advise if you are interested in finding out more about Coach Friendly accreditation?

8. Date of Next Meeting

TBC.

A meeting date in the autumn and registration link will be issued in due course.