



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

Thursday 21 April, 2-4pm

Venue: Bradford on Avon Town Council Offices

Meeting Notes

Attendees

Florence Wallace, VisitWiltshire; Fiona Errington VisitWiltshire; Helen Masters, American Museum in Britain; Siobhan Harrison English Heritage; Louella Curtis, Bradford on Avon; Steve Plummer, Discover Wiltshire; Anna Walton, Longleat; Roy Haywood (from 3.30pm), Bridge Tea Rooms; Marie Thomas, Salisbury Cathedral & Thomas; James Sullivan-Tailyour, The Swan, BOA; Stephanie Shearing, Salisbury BID; David Dawson, Wiltshire/Salisbury Museum; Jackie Guscott, Studley Grange Butterfly World & Craft Village; James Dwyer, Salisbury Plain Safaris.

1. Welcome, Apologies & Introductions

FE

Round the table introductions

2. Actions from January Meeting

FE

Action: Contact Flo if you are interested in targeting specific international markets so these can be considered

Action: Contact Flo if you have any ideas for your product to be included in joint packages with any other Wiltshire group partners

3. 'Travel Trade Group Activity' & 'How's Business' Update

All

For partners offering Christmas product advance bookings look positive at this stage in the year. A mix of positive reports from some businesses seeing good forward bookings and others more average.

Action: VisitWiltshire suggest that all leads from Exhibition data is followed up by businesses to maximise bookings.

4. Review of Groups & Travel Trade 2016 Activity

VW/All

a. Print

Discussion about how the Groups & Travel Trade brochure can be improved for 2017.

- Reduce size of brochure and drive to website for further information
- Add Fun Facts/ did you know? To make it different
- Keep itineraries and top tips
- Consider the use of inspirational editorial for group partners
- Consider group partners use advertorial rather than adverts

b. Exhibitions & Events

Discussion about all exhibitions attended (so far) in 2016. Refer to Activity Report for stats and further info.

- British Travel & Tourism Show, NEC Birmingham, now a consumer and trade show – not exclusively trade.
- Too many sales
- Difficult identification of type of visitor via badges
- No overriding support from the group to repeat this show for 2017
- Excursions, Alexandra Palace, London, was generally still a very good show and support from the group was given to attend in 2017
- South West Travel Trade Show, Bristol, smaller groups – mainly GTO's but the value of these should not be underestimated. There was support to repeat this show assuming a new venue was found as SS Great Britain was small and had split areas for exhibitors which did not work as well.

General discussion about support for GTO's and their importance. GTOA now AGTO – interested to see what additional benefits they can provide their members.

New Go Travel Show run by Group Travel Organiser – date changed to now take place on 25 February 2017. Mixed feedback.

Great for Groups exhibition took place on Wed 27 April – 63 bags given away with lots of GTO interest in Wiltshire. 79 competition entries. Good reports on the day from stand sharers.

Action: Please can partners let Flo know your thoughts as to which exhibitions you would like to see VisitWiltshire attend for 2017 before the next meeting.

c. Advertising/PR

General discussion – Good trade PR coverage surrounding New for 2016 pre-promotion for exhibitions.

Action: Please ensure you forward any new for 2017 information to Flo as early as possible – even if detail is not known – because including something is better than nothing!

d. Website

New VisitWiltshire website pages are being developed – 'Book a Wiltshire Tour' – which will include our Discover Wiltshire packages (linked from consumer and trade pages) and Trade Operator Contacts to assist GTO's etc. to find a suitable ground handler.

Action: Any new ideas for Wiltshire packages should be featured so please let Flo know any ideas.

The VisitWiltshire website www.visitwiltshire.co.uk has been voted by GTO readers as a finalist in the **2016 Group Travel Awards**, category **Best Information Product for Groups Website or Printed**.

e. Databases/E-news

All data from Exhibitions has now been added to Mail Chimp in preparation to e-shot. See activity report for stats.

f. Familiarisation Visits

General discussion.

It maybe that VisitWiltshire will run another Showcase South West in November 2017 to include suppliers and both domestic and international operators.

Next Wiltshire fam visit is proposed as Sunday 2, Monday 3 and Tuesday 4 October 2016 with one to one meetings scheduled. VisitWiltshire propose that the one to one meetings will take place and we'll aim for a coach load of mixed GTO's and tour operators.

Action: Please can travel trade partners advise Flo by Wed 4 May, if for any reason, these dates are not suitable? After this date we will promote the fam visit and liaise with businesses accordingly.

Action: Please can any accommodation providers, coach operators and any business willing to **host** dinners, lunch or provide a venue for one to one meetings, please contact Flo by the end of May. Draft itinerary to be available for next meeting.

g. Partnerships & Packages

Viator – proving a good contact as a couple of partners have set up tickets to sell on their website. Katja will be presenting at the next Wiltshire Associated of Visitor Attractions, 12 May in Marlborough – recommend attractions attend.

Lots of work with VisitBritain and VisitEngland has taken place due to the SWTGF – really positive for Wiltshire partners.

h. Other

VisitBritain contacts from the Activity Report:

Kevin Jones - Kevin.Jones@visitbritain.org

Matthew Cuckston - Matthew.Cuckston@visitbritain.org

Cheryl Bristow - Cheryl.Bristow@visitbritain.org

5. South Tourism Growth Fund Activity Update/Report

FW / FE

See Activity Update

6. Development of 2017 Groups and Travel Trade Strategy

ALL

Discussion about what else we could do / who else we could be targeting in 2017 strategy.

There is likely to be more of an international trade element – due to the SW travel trade legacy group.

Discussion about targeting Youth Groups - all types e.g. Girl Guiding, Scouting, Brownies, cadets and military. To encourage visits, partners could offer badge requirements, special rates and events etc.

Educational groups of interest to some.

Continue to target GTO's / Tour & Coach Operators

New VisitWiltshire promotional video will be available for partners to use – currently raw footage but will be edited in due course.

Bradford on Avon keen to promote more events and invite group partners to come and promote their products to visitors

Action: Please advise any strategy ideas to Flo before the next meeting.

7. Any Other Business

ALL

Date of next meeting:

Thursday 14 July 2016, Studley Grange Butterfly World & Craft Centre