



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

Thursday 16 July 2026, 2pm

MEETING RECORDING

(link expires 13 November 2026)

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Florence Wallace & Fiona Errington – VisitWiltshire; David Lane – BGAM (Chair); Jason Thorley – Holiday Inn Salisbury Stonehenge; Harriett Peacock – Corsham; Steve Horner – Milford Hall Hotel; Richard Spencer Williams – Marlborough Town Council; Kate Saykouk – Salisbury Cathedral.

1. Welcome by David Lane

2. How's business? eg. top line trade visitor figures, forward bookings etc.

Overall business performance across the sector remains stable, with visitor numbers broadly in line with last year. While some quieter trading days have been noted, these have been balanced by stronger-performing days, resulting in year-to-date figures (January–June) remaining on a par with 2025. Positively, travel trade business has increased for some businesses, providing encouragement for the remainder of the year.

Challenges during hot weather were noted but many of our heritage attractions are seen as good options for visitors to stay cool.

Delighted to hear of a new boutique hotel – Corsham House has now opened in Corsham – adding 14 bedrooms to the town's accommodation offer.

3. Wiltshire LVEP Update from David Lane

Positive news regarding the wider visitor economy as Wiltshire Council has approved funding to support Wiltshire's Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), securing continued collaboration with VisitEngland. Funding has also been agreed for the development of a new Destination Management Plan, which will set the strategic direction for promoting Wiltshire to both domestic and international visitors. Tourism businesses will be invited to contribute their expertise as the plan is developed, with further updates expected over the coming months.

4. Managing Large Group Arrivals (40 pax +) at Salisbury Cathedral by Kate Saykouk

Please see presentation slides [here](#).

5. VisitWiltshire and Great West Way Travel Trade update by Flo Wallace

Flo referenced the recently issued [Activity Update April - June 2026](#). This included the excellent response from the recent Christmas 2026 content supplied and distributed to the trade. It highlights the need for trade to have access to event information and content with a minimum of 6-month lead time.

Recent webinars with VisitBritain for both Germany and France were well received by buyers and included a number of Wiltshire suppliers. Following these and representation/attendance at 2026 events earlier this year,

we're aware of a number of businesses who have seen an increase in enquiries and bookings and even hosted buyers on subsequent fam visits. All of which help towards international and DMC contracting for 2027.

The Wiltshire LVEP is supporting VB with some forthcoming fam visits this autumn too – so Flo will reach out to relevant businesses for support, if she hasn't already.

6. Wiltshire Fam Visit and Wiltshire Showcase Discussion

Flo ran through the Fam Visit and Wiltshire Showcase proposal – highlighting its focus Wiltshire towns. Two itinerary options gives buyers a choice and suppliers the opportunity to be included.

It was highlighted that due to a large military project in the area many of the Salisbury accommodation providers will have limited availability and prices may be increased as a result.

The Wiltshire trade group confirmed they wanted the Wiltshire Showcase and fam visit trade activity to happen.

In order for this to progress please can you review the following and reply to Flo before Monday 27 July.

ACTION REQUIRED - Confirm Wiltshire Industry Support

- **All Wiltshire Travel Trade Group members** to advise any if they have any comments regarding the proposed dates, format of event, suggested itineraries, distribution, audience and delegate numbers.
- **Accommodation Providers in Wiltshire** – Please advise if you are able to offer complimentary accommodation for buyers for one night B&B (single occupancy) on Wed 14 October or Thursday 15 October. Please advise number of rooms you can supply (2 - 16 pax). If costs apply, please advise any subsidised rates. Accommodation will be considered anywhere in the county, and we will tailor the itinerary accordingly. Please also advise an option for dinner from either the hotel or nearby restaurant in town.
- **Transport providers** – Please can Wiltshire tours and transport providers confirm whether they can offer 1 or 2 complimentary 8-seater vehicles on 14 / 15 October. If costs apply, please advise subsidised rates.
- **Wiltshire towns and villages** – Based on the draft itineraries, please can you confirm whether you are able to offer a hosted meet-and-greet in your destination? Please advise where to meet, park and any suggestions/themes for a tour / visit to your town. This could include Wiltshire partner attractions, new developments/accommodation and/or filming location themes. What do you want to showcase to buyers?
- **Attractions** – based on the draft itineraries, please can you advise what bookable tour experiences can you offer on a complimentary basis? Are you able to provide complimentary refreshments, if time allows?

Please send your comments to Flo by Monday 27 July.

Next Steps...

Refine the itinerary

- VisitWiltshire will gather feedback on the above from the Wiltshire travel trade group and rejig the fam visit itinerary accordingly. A revised version will be distributed to the Wiltshire trade group and all elements secured.

Wiltshire Showcase

- VisitWiltshire will meet with Longleat to discuss the details and logistics of this day, including:
 - Longleat House Tours

- Catering
 - Long House venue layout/ requirements
 - Arrival and departure timings
 - Transport to and from Warminster station for buyers
 - Marketing & Distribution
- **Confirm supplier participation** – Wiltshire tourism businesses and destinations are invited to attend to exhibit at the Wiltshire Showcase Day on Thursday 15 October. Assuming we use the same low-cost commitment fee as last year to encourage attendance eg:
 - **Travel Trade Sponsors** - £70 + VAT
 - **Travel Trade Partners** - £175 + VAT
 - **Wiltshire Partners** - £225 + VAT
 - **Wiltshire non-partners** - £250 + VAT.

Attendance costs can be negotiated based on complimentary accommodation / food & drink offers.

ACTION: Please advise if you would attend based on the costs above.

- **Finalise the Longleat programme** – Once the Wiltshire Showcase day hosted by Longleat has been confirmed and agreed, the details will be distributed to all Wiltshire partners.
- **Promote the event** – All Wiltshire partners will receive details of attending this event and VisitWiltshire encourages major attractions and other businesses with buyer databases, to promote the event via newsletters / emails etc, through their own channels.

ACTION: Please advise if you can help with distribution of fam visit and Wiltshire showcase day messaging to buyers. Eg. advise database size, audience and timings of newsletter/ emails etc.

- **Registrations** – All buyer and supplier registrations will be coordinated via VisitWiltshire. Further details will be released in due course.

7. Travel Trade Opportunities & 1:1 Support

2026/2027 Events/Exhibition Attendance & Representation Opportunities

- **Great West Way Marketplace 22 & 25 September 2026** - The annual Marketplace event is a great event for businesses and destinations to attend if you're interested in targeting the travel trade. You can attend both days or just the 1:1 meetings, as you wish. Buyers are keen to meet with you. You can now see all [registered attendees](#). If you haven't already booked please [FIND OUT MORE](#) and [REGISTER HERE](#).

Why attend as a Supplier?

- Meet face-to-face and virtually with UK destination management companies (DMCs) and international tour operators actively seeking new products and experiences for future itineraries.
- Strengthen existing travel trade relationships while developing valuable new business connections.
- Create opportunities for new contracts and inclusion in future tour programmes.
- Increase your business profile and showcase your tourism product to a targeted audience of key buyers.
- Maximise your return by taking part in both the virtual appointments and in-person networking event.
- Generate quality sales leads and build long-term partnerships.
- Position your business to grow domestic and international travel trade business for the 2027 season and beyond.

Ambassador rate £400 + VAT for the virtual day and £40 + VAT for the networking day + £20 booking fee.

- [Group Leisure & Travel Show](#), Milton Keynes, Thursday 8 October 2026. We have 1 stand sharing space left @ £985 + VAT (excluding graphics) or literature distribution for £155 + VAT.
- [Global European Marketplace \(GEM\)](#), London, Monday 2 Nov 2026 – Representation £400 + VAT
- [Britain & Ireland Marketplace](#), London, Friday 22 Jan 2027 – Representation £400 + VAT.

These ETOA events are a great way to launch any new products, tours and experiences and build your trade contacts. Businesses will receive inclusion in pre-and post-event comms, messaging to buyers in full days of 1:1 meetings, plus a post-event report including hot leads, meeting notes and key trade contacts.

- [British Tourism & Travel Show](#), NEC Birmingham, Thursday 11 March 2027. Stand sharing opportunity from £1,100 + VAT (excluding graphics). Literature distribution for only £170 + VAT. (Minimum of 4 stand sharers required to confirm).

International Trade Events 2027 – Register Your Interest

VisitBritain have just released their programme of international trade missions for 2027, these include:

- **France and Netherlands Roadshow**, 2-3 March 2027, (Paris & The Hague) – representation at pre-scheduled appointments with French and Dutch B2B trade buyers. Cost £1k + VAT (min of 3 businesses/destinations).
- **Germany, ITB Berlin 2027**, 16-18 March 2027, (Messe Berlin) – shared table – representation at the event. We will create our own appointment schedule with buyers from Germany (and other markets) who are attending. Cost £1,250 + Vat (min of 3 businesses/destinations).

VisitBritain events in USA /Canada are tbc for 2027. We will go out with this information when available.

ACTION: Contact [Flo](#) to discuss, register your interest and/or book any of the above.

8. Any Other Business

David Lane – highlighted the constant need for latest trade news, new specialist tours and experiences, so we can promote these can be promoted to encourage more buyers to contract Wiltshire.

ACTION: Please send any latest news, specialist tours and experience information or New for 2027 information to Flo, so these can be included in future trade newsletters and communication to buyers.

Flo Wallace - The new 8th edition of the Great West Way Travel Trade Directory is in its final stages of production and has now been issued to the Connections group and destinations for comment. If you haven't received this but would like to, please contact Flo.

ACTION: Please ensure you have informed Flo of any updates to your Great West Way Travel Trade Directory listing for this new 8th edition.

9. Date of Next meeting

TBC – a new date and meeting invitation will be sent out in due course.