



Travel Trade Activity Update

September – December 2021

The following report details trade activity from 1 September 2021 – 31 December 2021.

Travel Trade Business Support

In support of VisitBritain's national strategy, offering one-to-one business support to help people understand how to work with the travel trade has been a key focus this autumn/winter. We have had a number of Wiltshire businesses attend the recent Foundation Course: an introduction to working with the travel trade; Taking England to the World; Sharing Best Practice and Sustainable Tourism. The final session, solely for accommodation providers, is Accommodation: Working with the travel trade & OTA's to build back better, and it will take place on Tuesday 18 January at 2pm.

Individual members of the travel trade group have also received bespoke support in relation to their levels of investment. This has included regular industry meetings for development of packages for 2022, USA buyer targeting for specialist tours plus solus newsletter comms etc.

Familiarisation Visits

The self-drive familiarisation visits to Wiltshire which ran from 6 – 30 September 2021, were attended by 10 Group Travel Organisers and tour operator prospects. Although the main benefit is longer-term, initial responses from attendees indicate bookings secured for short-term trips as a result will generate £50,000 in additional visitor spend. It is also worth noting the following:

- 71% rated the overall itinerary as 9 or 10 (above/very much above average)
- On a scale of 1 – 10 (taking an average from all surveys), how likely are attractions/destinations included in future Wiltshire itineraries. The top 5 answers were - Salisbury Cathedral (10), The Merchant's House (9.4), STEAM Museum (9), Bowood House & Gardens (8.8) and Marlborough (8.5). Please note that not everyone visited everywhere so these are based on small sample sizes.
- 43% preferred the self-drive itinerary and 14% would've preferred a set group itinerary with 43% stating they had no preference and either was fine.

Digital Trade Communication

There were two trade newsletters distributed via the Wiltshire trade database:

- [Christmas in Wiltshire](#) (Sept 2021) 1,406 subscribers 31.5% OR & 2% CTR
- [What's New for you in 2022](#) (Nov 2021) 2,067 subscribers 30.8% OR & 1.9% CTR

Website Development

We have been updating the key product travel trade pages to ensure the information that is being distribute to the trade is accurate. You can see all these listed [here](#).

We also listed all the updated pages in the recent What's New for 2022 trade newsletter. These are [Bowood House & Gardens](#), [Salisbury Cathedral & Magna Carta](#), [Studley Grange Butterfly Garden & Leisure Park](#), [REME Museum](#), [Caboose](#), [Tinga](#), [Marlborough College Summer School](#) and [The Old Bell Hotel](#). If you have a travel trade page and haven't yet updated it, please get in touch with 2022 information and details.

PR & Awards

Wiltshire was voted by readers as a finalist in the Best UK Destination category at the recent Group Leisure & Travel Awards. Together with Bournemouth, Devon, Liverpool and London and with York taking the title. Details can be seen [here](#).

We secured a fabulous editorial Wiltshire feature in Group Leisure & Travel Magazine's (November edition) called [The Wonders of Wiltshire](#) as part of the Reader Offer and fam trip. A teaser was also published in their October edition – [Wiltshire Reader Club Trip](#).

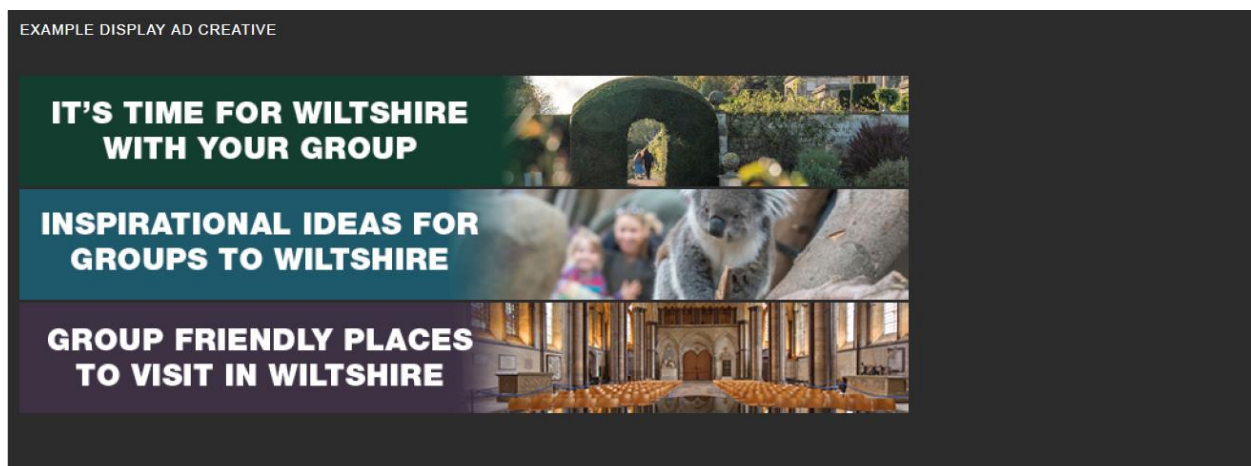
A trade press release was written and distributed – [What's New for trade in 2022](#) and subsequent trade PR generated from includes Group Leisure & Travel Magazine's [VisitWiltshire unveils group packages for 2022](#) and WeWantGroups.com featured [What's New for the Trade in 2022](#).

Some of our Wiltshire towns and products were featured in our recent Things to Do in 2022 Great West way press release and subsequently picked up by UKinbound and distributed to members – [Explore the Great West Way in 2022](#).

Advertising – Digital Targeted Trade Campaigns

During 11 October – 30 November 2021 we ran a targeted Wiltshire digital trade advertising campaign. This targeted the following:

- Facebook image carousel adverts targeting UK wide Group Leaders, aged 50+ who are running travel/social groups and likely to be organising excursions
- Facebook carousel adverts targeting Mature Mainstreams aged 65+ from a 2-hour drivetime
- Google Responsive Display adverts targeting Mature Mainstreams aged 65+ with matching interests and affinities who are likely to travel.



Visitors were driven to a trade [landing page](#) with an enquiry form. The ads successfully generated awareness reaching 80k Users and 9,300 visits to the landing page. Results showed the following:

- The Facebook and Instagram activity secured a total of 3,214 Clicks, with the Mature Main stream audience accounting for 72.2% (2,321) of these.
- The Group Leaders advert secured 893 Clicks, a strong number as the ad was targeting a particularly refined audience.
- The ads successfully generated wide-scale awareness, serving over 463K Impressions and reaching more than 80K Users - we anticipate this awareness-driving activity facilitated several enquiries.
- All of the 93 Reactions received were either ' Like' or ' Love' responses, which suggests there was a keen interest in visiting Wiltshire.
- The Responsive Display ads provided considerable awareness for Wiltshire, serving over 1.3 million Impressions. There were 8,937 Clicks secured, via a CTR of 0.67% which

exceeds the average CTR on this channel (0.46%) and shows Users were receptive to the ads.

- Traffic to the enquiry page was good, around 9,300 visits between mid-October and the end of November. Time spent on the page was also high: 3 minute 18 seconds (compared to around 2 minutes per page across the site in general for the same time frame).

In addition to the above campaign – we have supplied the same creative banner ads to wewantgroups.com where they've been added to the home page (temporarily) and also on the the South West section of the site in which Wiltshire is featured. These can be seen at <https://wewantgroups.com/>. These have been featured free of charge on this site for 6 months December 20210 – June 2022 (normally £750). We will evaluate referrals from these and report back accordingly as if we feel these is good traffic, we may want to consider future activity with them.

Exhibitions & Events

We have represented Wiltshire and our partners at the following recent exhibitions and events:

- **Global European Marketplace** – 29 October, in-person in London – 21 meetings with buyers.
- **Relaunch 2022** – 30 November, virtual – 19 meetings with buyers

The above events were also attended as England's Historic Cities 'England Originals' promoting Salisbury in over 40 1:1 meetings.

Forthcoming Events include:

Britain & Ireland Marketplace – 28 January (in-person) and 1 February (virtual) 2022. This event has been subsidized by VisitEngland and is available at a rate at £190 plus VAT for ETOA and UKinbound members. If you would like to attend at this rate please [BOOK HERE](#) and apply discount code 'BIM22ENG'.

Excursions – 19 March 2022, Twickenham Stadium. Date change from 22 January due to COVID. This is an important domestic event for winning new trade business, and as well as distributing partner information at the event. Wiltshire partners include Bowood, Longleat, Wessex Museums and Marlborough. Others include Visit West, Reading, MERL, Visit Thames, Thames Rivercruise and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. There is an opportunity for leaflet distribution at this show for a cost of £75 plus VAT.

Explore GB – 21 – 24 March 2022. This virtual event is free of charge and as we have had our application confirmed by VisitBritain, we will be representing Wiltshire at this event.

Great West Way Travel Trade

Trade Engagement - During this period, we have continued our engagement with buyers, in particular DMC's.

We have secured a least three new Official Tour Operators who are committed to developing and distributing future Great West Way/ Wiltshire programmes – these include the UK's first carbon neutral coach tour operator Toureasy (secured following GEM), plus Avanti Ventures and the large USA distributor Avanti Destinations.

There still continues to be significant pent-up demand from international operators and UK-based DMCs, however, the whole supply chain is under considerable strain with the governments ever changing travel regulations and testing requirements. This makes it difficult to plan and execute marketing and distribution strategies. Regular communication with our key contacts is critical to ensure we are front of mind for future joint activity.

Trade PR - We were delighted to read in a recent Group Leisure & Travel Magazine interview with Simon Calder that he was quoted saying 'I also love the Great West Way between London and Bristol'. You can read the article [here](#).

For the full Great West Way Travel Trade update please refer to the Connections meeting Activity Update

If you have any queries or would like to get involved in the Travel Trade activity for Wiltshire and/or Great West Way please contact [Flo](#) to discuss.