



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

Thursday 13 February 2020, 2-4pm
Venue: Lydiard Park, Swindon

Attendees:

Florence Wallace, Fiona Errington, Tristan Holland – VisitWiltshire; Sadie Deveraux – TXGB; Marie Thomas – Salisbury Cathedral; Roy Hayward – Bridge Tea Rooms; Belinda Richardson – Marlborough; Rachel Wheeler – Marlborough College Summer School; Sharon Thomas – Corsham; Rick Henderson – REME Museum; Geoff Cain – Salisbury, Stonehenge & Sarum Tours; Lynn Harman – Stones Hotels; David Lane – Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge

Meeting Notes:

- 1. Welcome, introductions and actions from last meeting**
- 2. How's business eg. top line trade visitor figures, forward bookings and China impacts**

A number of people reported on the impact of the Coronavirus in reference to China enquiries/bookings. One transport provider who offer airport transfers have had 9 cancelled booking up to May. Some have seen China enquiries drop off. One hotel reported no China cancellations yet but would waive charges for individual bookings if cancellations occur. However, trade bookings will still be held to contracted cancellation policies.

Trade enquiries/bookings for many destinations and businesses are looking good – primarily within domestic market.

- 3. Find out how TXGB can help grow your business**

Presentation by Sadie Deveraux, TXGB. Sadie's presentation can be seen [here](#).

A discussion about the pros and cons of working with OTAs took place. The hotel providers explained that their business was reliant on them and attractions felt that often their business models made working with OTAs very difficult.

All agreed that online reviews on platforms such as Trip Advisor were critical to manage and respond to.

- 4. Reviewing the Terms of Reference of the Travel Trade Group**

Emails from members of the Travel Trade Group who were unable to attend the meeting were read. Bowood stated that they felt it was important for the group to continue to 'share best practice'. McArthurGlen Designer Outlet felt that there should be something about working with or inputting to the work / plans of GWW and maximising the link between the two.

Salisbury Cathedral asked for clarity on what our overarching mission and vision is and what are we trying to achieve with our message and approach as we are a disparate group all with a very different audience.

It was explained that the Terms of Reference is the overarching document that details what the VisitWiltshire Travel Trade group is trying to achieve. The Tactical Activity Plan is the annual activity document (put together with input from the group), detailing the key objectives, markets and activity that will take place each year.

Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge explained that it is important for us to work in the best interest of 'Wiltshire' as a whole. How individual businesses and destinations consider their fit into this, should be reflected in their input into the activity.

A discussion about evaluation followed. This is difficult as often buyers do not have reporting mechanisms to report on increases in 'Wiltshire' business. We'd encourage individual businesses and destinations to monitor bookings and report to the group of any that can be attributed to any 'Wiltshire' activity. The activity updates are a way of VisitWiltshire reporting what has been focussed on and forthcoming activity. **ACTION: Please do feedback any ideas as to how we can improve on reporting activity to you.**

After some discussion, it was clear that what has changed is that Wiltshire is now firmly on the radar with both domestic and international buyers. The group still needs to consider activity as 'Wiltshire' to keep consistent message for the industry buyers and group organisers.

ACTION: Please can all those on the Travel Trade group review and feedback any comments or amendments you'd like to see on the Terms of Reference document. This is also an opportunity to review the key strategic objectives and key target markets from the Tactical Activity Trade Plan. Please feedback to Flo before Friday 28 February 2020.

You may wish to review the previous Travel Trade Activity Updates in [Meeting Notes](#) and B2B Activity on the [VisitWiltshire Business Plan](#) – see page 13.

VisitWiltshire will issue a revised and updated Terms of Reference document following feedback and after the deadline date of 28 February.

5. VisitWiltshire and Great West Way trade update and forthcoming activity

The most recent Travel Trade Activity Update September 2019 – February 2020 was distributed at the meeting. This details the events and exhibitions that have recently been attended with some key points to note.

The recent [VisitWiltshire Travel Trade guide](#) is now available for all businesses and destinations to distribute via your own digital channels or if hard copies are required for any events you are attending please request copies from Flo.

Some forthcoming events and fam visits including Explore GB fam trips in May, Group Leisure fam trip 2/3 April etc. Further details will be released shortly.

6. Agree priorities for future trade activity for 2020/2021, including distribution of print, targeted campaigns, exhibitions etc.

VisitWiltshire introduced a new idea to target Nadfas, WI groups and U3A's via advertising on Facebook groups. This was well received by the attendees and will look to be included in the 2021 plan.

There was a discussion regarding exhibitions, particularly in reference to the recent Excursions event which seemed rather quiet in comparison to previous years.

ACTION: Please can Travel Trade group members rank in order of preference their top travel trade domestic exhibitions which you would like 'Wiltshire' to consider attending in 2020/2021 (irrespective of whether you can stand share or not). Please copy and paste this in an email and reply to Flo by 31 March 2020.

Please rank from 1 – 5 (with 1 being the most important to attend and 5 least important)

Excursions , Alexandra Palace, London, January	
South West Group Travel Show , Somerset, Wilts or Glos, Jan/Feb	
Go Travel Show , Kempton Park, April	

Group Leisure & Travel Show , Milton Keynes, October	
British Tourism and Travel Show , NEC Birmingham, March	

OTHERS

ACTION: If you are interested in stand sharing please can you detail the ones which you may be interested in?

7. Any Other Business

Corsham shared information about a booking from National Tandem Club staying for a week in May with at least 200 people with 100 bikes!

Distribution

Flo asked for input on distribution of Group Travel Trade Guide for 2021. We have previously distributed this with TSE for the last two years but could consider distributing 4,000 copies via Group Travel Organisers Magazine (Landor Travel) in Nov/ Dec issue (2020). This would require us to shift the production schedule a few weeks earlier. We would target a 2-hour drivetime and their readership consists of the following:

- 19% Retirement Associations,
- 19% sports and social clubs,
- 14% tour operators/wholesalers/coach operators,
- 13% special interest groups,
- 8% educational/youth groups,
- 8% Womens Organisations
- 19% Other/ miscellaneous groups and trade professionals etc.

ACTION: Please can you let Flo know if you have any objections to us proceeding with this option for 2021 or advise any other suggestions by 31 March 2020.

ENewsletters - Call outs for content

The following newsletters will be sent out to the trade in 2020 – assuming VisitWiltshire receive enough content to make these viable.

ACTION: Travel Trade group members – please supply content to fit with the following themes by the deadlines detailed below:

- ‘What’s Hot this Summer for Trade’ (to include events, exhibitions, news etc.) – supply content by end of Feb for issue in March.
- ‘Christmas in Wiltshire’ – supply content by end of June for issue in July/August
- ‘New for 2021’ – supply content by end of October for issue in Nov/Dec.

2020 meetings

We are interested in securing speakers for our meetings. These could be anyone who has an understanding of the travel trade and who can speak on a topic that we feel would be useful to the group.

ACTION: Do you have anyone in mind who could be asked to speak at one of our travel trade meetings? Would you or someone from your businesses be interested to speak on any a particular topic relevant to trade?

Date of next meetings

- Tuesday 2 June 2020 – Mid Wiltshire – (NOTE – change of date from 21 May)
- Tuesday 15 September – South Wiltshire

We are looking for venues for these meetings, if you are on the trade group and would like to host a meeting for approximately 20 people, plus tea/coffee/biscuits please let Flo know.