



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

Thursday 18 January 2018, 2-4pm
Venue: The Swan at Stoford

Attendees:

Florence Wallace, David Andrews and Theresa Hopwood – VisitWiltshire; Karen Roebuck - Great West Way; Aby Cooper and Hayley Bell - Trowbridge Town Council; Stephanie Szakalo – Corsham; Liz Page - Swan Hospitality; David Patton and Siobhan Harrison - English Heritage; Rachel Wheeler - Marlborough College Summer School; Bethan Seymour- Bowood House & Gardens; Claire Thompson- Norman Allen Group Travel; Hannah Paye - Salisbury Cathedral; Geoff Cain - Executive Connection / Value Cars Group; Anna Walton – Longleat; Naomi Christiansen - McArthurGlen Designer Outlet; David Lane- Holiday Inn Salisbury Stonehenge

Meeting Notes:

1. Welcome, introductions and actions from last meeting

2. Review of activity / 2018 goals or objectives / how's business

For most businesses 2017 was a successful year showing similar or increased group visitors numbers / revenue when compared to 2016. Forward group bookings are also looking promising for 2018. Norman Allen Group Travel communicated that their UK sales are growing.

David communicated the national picture in respect to inbound and domestic visitors. VisitBritain are reporting a record year for inbound tourism in 2017 and growth is expected to continue into 2018. Further info can be found [here](#). Domestic visitors are flat overall but with Wiltshire outperforming the national trend.

VisitWiltshire updated the group with their recent activity. Further information can be found in the Travel Trade Group Activity Update [here](#).

3. Wiltshire's Trade Marketing Activity Update and 2018 plan

a. New printed publications

Flo spoke about and passed around VisitWiltshire's new Visitor Guide, Visitor Map and Travel Trade Guide.

b. Exhibitions – Excursions (27 Jan), BIM (30 Jan) and SW Group Travel Show (3 Feb).

The group discussed these forthcoming exhibitions and Flo reiterated the importance of group partners supplying relevant literature to her before the deadline dates for these events.

BTTs was raised as an event that had been good in the past. This year's event will be at NEC Birmingham on 21 & 22 March and it was decided that as a number of people were attending this as visitors – someone would be able to report back at the next meeting.

There was no interest in attending the GO travel Show being run by GTO Mag at Kempton Park on 17 April. However, Claire from Norman Allen said that they would be going as a visitor and would report back for future reference.

- c. Familiarisation Visits – forthcoming; Great West Way (25 – 28 Feb), VisitWiltshire (18 – 20 March), AGTO (15 June).

Fam visits were discussed and Flo agreed to share the draft VisitWiltshire fam visit 18 – 20 March to relevant group members as this was starting to be promoted – already with interest from two people from an USA tour operator. This has subsequently been issued and is being pulled together.

- d. Showcase South West event

Many businesses commented positively about the recent Showcase South West event in Bristol, seeing return business starting to come through.

Action: If you have any feedback on Showcase by way of bookings coming through your business please let Flo know so we can evaluate it. Please also advise if you feel strongly about specific dates as to when we should look to run another/similar event?

- e. Other

4. The Great West Way

- a. Project update

David updated the group about this project:

Further info available at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/greatwestway

Karen Roebuck has been recruited to support the Great West Way Travel Trade Programme in conjunction with Flo.

- b. Travel Trade Programme

Karen presented her powerpoint to the group, explaining the Travel Trade audit on tourism businesses which will shortly go out. The presentation can be seen [here](#).

Subsequently the industry audit has gone out and can be completed [here](#).

5. VisitWiltshire Training

Theresa reminded everyone about the forthcoming training – see [here](#).

6. Any Other Business

A new Residents Week is being launched by VisitWiltshire in English Tourism Week (17 – 25 March). It's a pilot campaign to encourage residents to explore what is on their doorstep, by offering free or discounted entry. The pilot is being run in Salisbury this year, and if successful will be rolled out to the rest of Wiltshire next year.

Date of Next meeting:

Thursday 17 May, 2pm – 4pm at Corsham Town Hall