



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting

**Thursday 25 May 2017, 2-4pm
Venue: Longleat**

Attendees:

Florence Wallace, Fiona Errington & David Andrews – VisitWiltshire
Jo Atkins - National Trust
Siobhan Harrison & Dave Patton - English Heritage
Kirsty Stretton-Cox & William Grant - Stonehenge Campsite & Glamping Pods
David Lane & Vivien Westwood - Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge
Anna Walton & Sally Boyce - Longleat/Cheddar
Sarah Parker - Churches Conservation Trust
Debby Edwards - Bowood
Tim Deacon & Geoff Cain – Executive Connections
Rachel Avent – Corsham
Linda Cooper & Jenny Brownhill – Sarum College
William & Marianne Cartwright-Hignett – Iford Manor & the Peto Gardens
Stephanie Shearing & Charlotte Bruce-Kerr – Salisbury BID
Louella Curtis – Discover Wiltshire
Marie Thomas – Salisbury Cathedral

Meeting Notes:

- 1. Welcome, introductions and actions from last meeting** **Jo Atkins**

- 2. Review of activity / new itineraries or packages / how's business** **All**

General positive feedback. Most businesses are reporting same or increased number of visitors so far this year, when compared to the same period last year. Good Easter for most, but with shift of visitors to April rather than March.

Bowood has experienced lower number of group bookings due to having the Capability Brown anniversary in 2016. Shows importance of themes/hooks to entice the trade. Salisbury Cathedral group bookings up 32% so far this year – perhaps down to promotion of new tours.

Christmas bookings looking good for Longleat, Salisbury bookings for Christmas looking okay but perhaps a little slower this year. People seem to be booking later and later.

The national picture shows an increase of international visitors are up 11% in March 2017 compared to 2016. A few businesses reported an increase in seeing more far eastern visitors, although European and USA visitors still strong. Stonehenge reporting Chinese visitors continuing to increase.

- 3. Wiltshire Trade Marketing Activity Review 2017 for strategy 2018** **All**
See Activity Update for more detailed information.

- a. Familiarisation Visits 2017

Everyone seemed happy with the most recent fam visit in March. It was noted that people wanted more networking opportunities in addition to the one to one meetings. A fam visit report was circulated.

b. Exhibitions 2017:

i. Britain & Ireland Marketplace - Jan

There was a positive feeling about this event as it was beneficial to those who attended. Therefore, it was agreed that this exhibition will feature in the Groups and Travel Trade strategy 2018.

ii. Excursions - Jan

There was a discussion about this event – good for GTO's, fewer operators but seemed to be getting smaller. However, it was still deemed good and was one of the better events available to us. It was agreed that this exhibition will feature in the Groups and Travel strategy 2018.

iii. Great for Groups – April

This event generated some good contacts for businesses and as it is now being promoted to a wider database the group felt this was still worth including in the Groups and Travel Trade Strategy 2018.

iv. British Tourism and Travel Show - March

Siobhan attended and presented and felt that the speaker programme was good, but to exhibit at the show was not productive as you can get as much from being a visitor attending.

v. South West Group Travel Show – Cheltenham - Feb

This show was an additional show attended by VisitWiltshire and partners and was deemed good due to the location – an area worth targeting as new productive contacts were obtained. This will be offered as an 'add on' to the package for 2018. **ACTION: Please confirm to Flo if you wish to attend.**

vi. Go Travel Show - Feb

Sarah Parker reported that this relatively new show does not have the attendance it needs to be a good exhibition.

vii. Group Leisure & Travel Show – Oct

This show is in decline as smaller every year. A number of businesses stated that trade fairs in the autumn were not great timing as no new products/brochures were available at this time and too close to Christmas to push that.

viii. Great for Groups – Kent – (September)

Again, there was a feeling that this was not at the right time of year and it was too far South East for our Wiltshire businesses.

We can of course attend any exhibition that partners want us to assuming we have enough buy in. ACTION: Please let Flo know by 9 June, if you wish to attend [Group Leisure & Travel Show](#) 12 October NEC Birmingham or [Great for Groups – Kent](#) – 7 September.

c. Database / Enews / Sales (data protections new regulations 2018)

VisitWiltshire have a new CRM system. There are new data protection legislation that comes into force May 2018. Further research and information is required to ascertain how this will affect VisitWiltshire databases and sharing of exhibition contacts in future.

ACTION: If anyone in the group knows of a specialist in this field who can communicate the impact this will have on tourism businesses for B2B markets, and who could come to talk at a future meeting, please advise Flo.

d. Print Production and Distribution of Groups guide

Travel Trade guide will start to be produced for 2018/2019.

ACTION: If you have any comments on the existing guide, what to include/exclude etc. please contact Fiona/Jenny.

We will be looking at the production of the new travel trade guide to be in a more user friendly digital format.

There was a discussion about distribution of trade guide – some businesses only distribute electronic copies and others are still sending out guides but all now seem to be restricting these to UK based addresses only. VisitWiltshire is looking into the viability of reducing the quantity of direct mail but considering other distribution channels for the travel trade guide 2018.

e. PR / Advertising /Website / Photo Library / Film

PR – two magazines were passed around – GTO Mag and Tourism and Travel Mag (previously Coach Monthly) which showed some great coverage from the March fam visit.

Advertising /Website – Fiona will soon be sending a note out to partners regarding an opportunity for booking a VisitWiltshire Christmas trade advert. We are reviewing the online and offline trade advertising opportunities and are keen to push for more online advertising to drive visitors to www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/groups page. There seemed to be a consensus that www.travelweekly.co.uk is the best platform for us to trial some additional online advertising. VisitWiltshire will research the best options for this as part of the strategy 2018.

Photo Library – **ACTION: Please forward Flo any trade/group images you may have for us to add to our photo library?**

Film – Do people want us to create a Wiltshire trade film to use for promotional purposes?
ACTION: Please contact Flo if you would be interested to financially contribute to this project and/or advise whether you have any existing footage that could be used.

ACTION: VisitWiltshire to send out revised 2018 strategy in due course. We would like all travel trade partners to feedback any comments.

4. VisitEngland / VisitBritain update

See activity report – new VisitBritain contacts.

5. The Great West Way & South West England Update

See activity report – we are waiting to hear from VisitEngland regarding our phase 2 Great West Way Bid – hopefully by the end of June.

The South West England Trade Group are running a Showcase South West event 27 – 29 November 2017 in conjunction with SWE destinations and ETOA. The one to one meeting day will be on Tuesday 28 November. The buyer and supplier booking websites are being worked on and will be live very soon. **ACTION: Keep Tuesday 28 November free as I will be issuing the link for you to book in due course. The event has been confirmed in Bristol and the cost £125 per attendee.**

ACTION: Please contact Flo if you have any key domestic or international trade contacts that you think should be invited to this event.

6. Ideas for speakers for future meetings

- CPT – Coach Friendly status – **ACTION: Flo to make contact**
- Digital Marketing to trade – **ACTION: Any contacts please advise Flo**
- ETOA or UKinbound – **ACTION: Flo to make contact**
- Lisa Bissett – Trafalgar – **ACTION: Sarah Parker to make contact**
- Christine Burke – DFDS – **ACTION: Please advise Flo if cruise is a focus for your business?**
- Tourconnect – new online trade platform – **ACTION: Please advise Flo if this is a platform you want to find out more about?**

- Sylvia Saxon – Group Travel Organiser and new GTO membership organisation Meridian – **ACTION: Flo to make contact**
- Database specialist – **ACTION: Any contacts please advise Flo**

ACTION: If you have any trade contacts that you feel would be useful to this group please contact Flo

7. Any other business

VisitBritain focussing on bookable product as is VisitWiltshire.

ACTION: Any ticketed businesses there is an opportunity to get your tickets being sold through the new VisitWiltshire online shop. Please contact Fiona with details.

Discover Wiltshire and VisitWiltshire are keen to know about your events – no matter how big or small. **ACTION: Please fill out the VisitWiltshire event form www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/event-form as all events in Wiltshire are then able to be viewed here - www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on**

2018 – Year of European Culture of Heritage – was suggested as a ‘hook’ to get people interested in Wiltshire. **ACTION: If you have any other hooks or any product that would fit with this theme for trade for 2018 please contact Flo.**

Experiential /immersive and memorable product – the travel trade are always looking for this type of thing. **ACTION: Please contact Flo if you have any product or plan to develop any product like this.**

Cheddar Gorge Caves are having a revamp and will be finished in time for the summer. If anyone from the travel trade group is interested in seeing the new developments there please contact Anna.walton@longleat.co.uk

The group agreed that as it was so close to the summer and everyone gets busier we won't have a pre-summer meeting but will meet again in October. Meanwhile, Flo suggested that this time was used for her to make bespoke meetings with individual travel trade partner business to discuss strategy 2018.

Suggested Meeting Dates:

- Thursday 5 October 2017
- Thursday 18 January 2018
- Thursday 19 April 2018
- Tuesday 10 July 2018