



**Notes from the Online Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions Meeting  
Tuesday 7 February 2023**

**Present;**

Fiona Errington, VisitWiltshire; Billy Grimes, VisitWiltshire; Rick Henderson, REME Museum (Chair); Lauren Collins, Hawk Conservancy Trust; Christopher Gale, The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum; Maisie Anderson, Salisbury Escape Rooms; Matthias Kurth, Galahad Tours; Natalie Waters, Calne; Aimee Edwards, Cholderton Rare Breeds Farm; Tracey-Ann Walpole, Corsham Town Council; Amanda Stinton, Kelmscott Manor; Alex Bradbury, Iford Manor; David Walker, Salisbury Plain Arts; Amanda Stallard, Army Flying Museum; Yvonne, Malmesbury TIC; Anke Monestel, VisitEngland (Guest Speaker)

**Introductions & Apologies**

Chair Rick Henderson welcomed everyone to the meeting, offered apologies on behalf of those who couldn't make it and outlined how the meeting will be structured.

**Anke Monestel, VisitBritain/VisitEngland – Guest Speaker**

Anke Monestel gave a presentation outlining the plans for this year's English Tourism Week (16-26 March), and also brought attention to this year's Tourism Superstar which Stone Circle experience hosts, Rihanna Harris, and Chris Burden, are amongst those shortlisted for this year's awards! [Vote Stonehenge now!](#)

I have included Anke's presentation with these notes.

**Update from Businesses**

After going around the room for an update from attendees, here are the key points;

- Due to staffing most businesses have decided not to run specific Coronation events.
- Business who close for the winter months are now preparing to re-open or start up operations for the 2023
- Many events being planned for the year – confidence and appetite for them appears to be growing
- Generally a good Christmas and start to the year to those who were open
- An increased presence in overseas visitors, especially from the US market

**Update on VisitWiltshire/Great West Way Activity**

Website

For 2022 we had 1.1 million visitors for the year. Things to Do and What's On are regularly the top content pages – which emphasises the importance to uploading your events onto the website – we

publish a What's On this month blog every month and this is shared across all our digital channels. You can do this via the [event form](#).

Spotlight On Blogs – these are a great opportunity to increase your presence on the website and to drive traffic to your product. They take the form of an interview with a member of your team, it could be a chef, a gardener, a volunteer or even a business owner. You can see a couple of examples of Spotlight On blogs below;

[A Spotlight on Helen Browning](#)

[A Spotlight On: Charlie Pitcher, Owner of Live Escape Rooms Salisbury](#)

If you are interested in doing a Spotlight On blog please get in touch with [Katie](#).

### Social Media

Our Social Media followers stand at just under 69.2k. Followers are split - Facebook 23.7k, Twitter 27.8k and Instagram 17.2k.

A great opportunity to reach our audience is by doing an Instagram takeover. This gives partners the chance to post from our Instagram account over a weekend. Check out our [Instagram account](#) to see what other partners have done. If anyone is interested, please contact [Fiona](#) or [Katie](#) and we can schedule you in.

### Campaign

TimeForWiltshire Autumn & Winter Campaign - the first phase of paid for activity generated a total of 16,024 clicks and 1.1 million Impressions. Second phase of Winter promotion is currently running.

### Digital Publications

We are currently working on final stages of the annual digital publications the Wiltshire Visitor Guide and the Visitor Map. There is still a chance to get involved and advertise. You can find information and costs [here](#). If anyone would like to advertise contact [Billy](#) can send details. We aim for these to be online and distributed by Easter.

We have also just completed the new 2023 Wiltshire Towns and Villages map – this will be printed and will be out in March to coincide with English Tourism Week.

### **Travel Trade and Great West Way Update**

- We partnered with Wiltshire towns and businesses and secured new interest and bookings for Wiltshire and partners at the following trade events:
  - **Britain & Ireland Marketplace**, London, Friday 27 Jan – ETOA event. Wiltshire was represented with 30+ one-to-one meetings with buyers
  - **Excursions**, Twickenham, Saturday 28 January. Wiltshire attended and met with over 70 domestic tour/coach operators and group travel organisers. Stand sharers included Bowood House & Gardens and others as part of the wider Great West Way offer.
  - **Showcase Britain**, Jan/Feb. VisitBritain welcomed more than 120 international travel trade buyers to Britain, for a series of educational fam visits. We were invited to meet and update them with news from our destinations at an event in London. In addition, there were 13 buyers from the VisitBritain Canadian fam trip that visited Wiltshire on the Great West Way. We influenced the programme, secured accommodation at the Old Bell Hotel, Malmesbury and arranged a champagne

reception to maximise networking for the Malmesbury town team and other stakeholders. We also attended and networked with the 6 buyers from the Scandinavian fam trip.

- **Explore GB**, 27 February – 3 March, Wiltshire will be represented at this virtual event with in-market VisitBritain teams and trade buyers from all over the world.
- **VisitBritain Nordics Workshop**, Copenhagen, 15 & 16 February 2023. Flo will be attending this to meet and networking with Nordic/Scandinavian buyers.

### **Consumer opportunities**

The next issue of the Great West Way Travel magazine will be Spring/Summer 2023.

The issue specific features are as follows:

- Don't miss sporting events
- Summer Music Festivals
- Best activities for kids on the Great West Way
- Picnic Spots on the Great West Way
- Best Tea Shops
- Behind the scenes at our museums

The regular features are:

- My Great West Way – Interview
- The Way Forward – Travel News
- Arts & Events Cultural Calendar
- Gourmet Guide to Food & Drink
- Where to Stay on the Great West Way

if you are interested in getting involved and advertising in the next edition of the Magazine you can see the prices and relevant information [here](#).

### Training

VisitWiltshire has been delivering their programme of training courses for 2022/23 since the Autumn. These usually take place between October and March, and cover a variety of subjects. This year's courses have included;

- Introduction to Podcasts
- First Aid at Work
- Introduction to Google Analytics 4
- Mighty Marketing Messages
- Headlines & Deadlines: double the impact and halve the cost of advertising
- Good times, Bad Times: recession proof your business
- Filling the Gaps and Extend the Season

Upcoming confirmed courses;

- The Most Powerful Marketing Method: Direct Mail on Wednesday 1 March from 2-4pm
- First Aid at Work – Thursday 16 March at Best Western Angel Hotel, Chippenham

ACTION - If there are any subjects in particular you would like us to cover in our training programme, please contact [Billy](#).

### **Any Other Business**

- A question was put to the group on what they hoped to get from the WAVA group and what they hope the group to achieve
  - o One suggestion was a focus on the 'bigger picture'. Increased access to larger organisations like VB/VE, and information on a wider scale than just locally. This will allow a wider cross pollination of ideas
  - o One topic suggested was - What more can businesses get out of online resources like Viator and Trip Advisor. Another was on advertising and social media.
  - o If any members had any ideas or suggestions for future guest speakers, please send them to [Billy](#) or [Fiona](#).
- ACTION - It was agreed to take a vote on whether to host the next meeting online as per usual – or to host in person to allow a better opportunity to network.
- VisitWiltshire highlighted that it is still possible to sell tickets through the VisitWiltshire website via their DigiTickets platform

**Dates of Future meetings;**

May 2023