



Groups & Travel Trade Meeting Notes

Tuesday 19 November 2024, 2pm – 3pm

Attendees:

Fiona Errington – VisitWiltshire; David Lane – BGAM – Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge (Chair); Elaine Falconer - Milford Hall Hotel; Lisa Kent - Bowood House & Gardens; Anna-Karin Hanson - English Heritage Stonehenge; Kate Saykook - Salisbury Cathedral; Amiee Edwards - Cholderton / Bluestone; Andrea Macmillan - Old Bell Hotel Malmesbury; Richard Spencer-Williams - Marlborough Town Council; David Dawson - Wiltshire Museum; Sofia Burfit – The Three Daggers; Sarah Tucker – Amesbury Town; Llewellyn Veenendraal – PGL; Kerry Gibson – Bishopstrow; William Bradley – Warminster TIC; James Sullivan-Tailour – Old Bell Hotel Warminster.

Meeting Notes:

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies

A brief welcome was given by David Lane and Fiona passed on Flo's apologies for her absence due to illness.

2. How's business? eg. top line trade visitor figures, forward bookings etc.

A number of attractions reported similar year on year trade visitor numbers but still not yet reaching 2019 levels. Weather and cost of living affecting businesses and a general thought that international trade visitor numbers from many countries like China and Netherlands still not reached pre-COVID levels.

There has been a recent £2.5m investment in a trade focussed Salisbury hotel, and a new Voco brand will be launched next year. The group highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnership opportunities between accommodation providers and attractions/experiences for visitors.

3. “Cracking the American student educational travel sector” by Tim Krepp, Director of Operations for Academic Expeditions, USA.

Great presentation from Tim Krepp which can be seen [here](#). Tim's contact details for anyone wanting to get in touch are included in the presentation slides.

4. VisitWiltshire and Great West Way Travel Trade Updates

Fiona gave the group an update about the recent trade shows where Wiltshire were represented and/or exhibited:

Group Leisure & Travel Show - Milton Keynes on Thursday 3 October. This exhibition included a wide range of Wiltshire stand sharers including - English Heritage, Longleat, Old Bell Hotel Warminster, Studley Grange Garden & Leisure Park, Stourhead and Woolley Grange Hotel. It was a highly productive day with data captured from 100+ group travel organisers, coach and tour operators, all of whom received information on Wiltshire. Plus, Simon Calder visited our stand and interviewed us for his Travel Podcast. You can listen to the podcast [here](#).

BETA Youth & Travel Summit - Bristol on 8 October. There were 10 x one-to-one meetings with buyers with opportunities to influence contracting accommodation and attractions/activities for future youth and educational

group business. We also showcased Salisbury, by welcoming three north American buyers on a fam trip visiting Salisbury Cathedral, Mompesson House, Stonehenge and Old Sarum.

Great West Way Marketplace – Virtual event on 22 October and at in-person networking at Blenheim Palace on 24 October. VisitWiltshire's appointment schedule included 20 x one-to-one meetings with buyers with lots of interest in Wiltshire. All buyers have received Wiltshire information in the follow up emails.

5. Travel Trade Tactical Activity Plan 2025

The Travel Trade activity plan will shortly be reviewed for 2025/2026. It is likely to include the ongoing programme of trade engagement with buyers to include Wiltshire in their itineraries.

Priorities

To continue to position Wiltshire as a trade friendly destination and continue the collaboration with businesses and towns offering a range of opportunities.

ACTION: Flo to issue a draft plan to the travel trade group in January 2025.

Opportunities:

Britain & Ireland Marketplace – 24 January 2025, London. VisitWiltshire will be attending this one-to-one meeting event organised by ETOA and in partnership with VisitBritain. We're representing Wiltshire trade businesses with the aim to grow travel trade business to the county. If you would like your business/destination specifically featured at this event and distribution of your key trade messaging and relevant email introductions costs are from **£285 +VAT**.

British Tourism & Travel Show, NEC Birmingham, 19 & 20 March 2025. This is a domestic trade show popular for coach and tour operators as well as active GTOs. It is suitable for any business/destination wanting to develop their coach or tour group business for 2025 and beyond. Data will be captured on the stand and provided to all stand sharers. If you would like to join us the stand cost is **£925+VAT** (excluding graphics) for the two days.

Group Leisure & Travel Show, Milton Keynes 2 October 2025. This trade show is popular for GTOs, coach and tour operators. It is suitable for any business/destination looking to grow your domestic trade group business. We have a large stand space allocated in a prime position and have historically had an excellent Wiltshire presence. If you would like to join us the stand cost is **£935+VAT** (excluding graphics).

ACTION: Please contact [Flo](#) to book or register an interest in these trade events.

Travel Trade Website Pages

These additional website pages are available for Wiltshire travel trade group members and they are linked in trade newsletters and specific request/follow up emails. They are extremely useful to the trade, so we want to ensure they are kept up-to-date. You can view your page at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/groups

ACTION: Please review and update your travel trade pages on the Wiltshire website with new rates, tours and experiences, new for 2025 etc. Contact [Flo](#) or [Katie](#) with amends.

New for 2025

For both consumer and trade activity please ensure the VisitWiltshire team are aware of any New for 2025 information you plan to promote. Themes for this year include Film/TV, Jane Austen 250 anniversary and sustainable travel.

ACTION: Please ensure the VisitWiltshire team have any New for 2025 information so we can help you promote it. Contact [Flo](#), [Katie](#), or [Fiona](#) with details.

Press Event 2025

We will shortly be launching a press event on 23 /24 March 2025 in Reading and wanted to highlight this to everyone so they can save the date. Further information will be released in due course.

VoltShare

[VoltShare](#) is an EV-charging solution designed for the unique needs of hospitality venues, holiday lets, B&Bs, and pubs, offering a pay-as-you-go model that eliminates subscription fees and generates a new revenue stream. There are exclusive discounts available to partners.

ACTION: Please complete this [VoltShare EV Charging Survey](#) and let [Fiona](#) know if you would like to be introduced to our Voltshare contact for an informal chat.

Meet the VisitWiltshire Team

If you want to find out more about how VisitWiltshire can help you and your business please attend our next partner networking event. It will take place at Studley Grange Garden & Leisure Park on Thursday 5 December from 1pm.

ACTION: Contact [Fiona](#), to confirm your place to attend.

6. Any Other Business

David Lane reminded the group that VisitWiltshire is always keen to receive content from businesses to include in future newsletters. Keeping sending these to the team.

7. Date of next meeting

Date of Next Meeting – spring 2025 – date tbc.