



ENGLAND'S GREAT WEST WAY®

Great West Way Connections

Virtual Meeting Tuesday 1 October 2024, 3pm

Meeting Notes

[View the Virtual Connections Meeting Recording](#)

ATTENDEES:

Florence Wallace	Great West Way
Fiona Errington	Great West Way
Sarah-Jayne Beasley	Blenheim Palace
Stuart Heath	VisitBritain
Alasdair Stamps	Meeting Mojo
Anna-Karin Hanson	English Heritage
Kate Saykook	Salisbury Cathedral
Jon Chamberlain	Visit West
Marcia Clements	RHS Garden Wisley
Joana Ferreira	Roseate Hotels & Resorts UK
Chris Harris	Mary Shelley's House of Frankenstein
Stella Coulthurst	Hungerford Town Council
Andrew Bateman	Visit Hampshire
Amiee Thomas	Longleat / Cheddar
Charlotte Toop	National Trust - Stourhead
Charlotte King	McArthurGlen Swindon Designer Outlet
William Davy	In & Beyond Bath
Emma Richards	DoubleTree by Hilton Swindon
Shannen Downey	DoubleTree by Hilton Swindon
Lisa Kent	Bowood House & Gardens
Clare Hammond	Woolley Grange Hotel

1. Welcome / Introduction /How's Business

There was a general consensus that summer trade visitor numbers were good reporting similar or increases to visitor figures for the same period last year. However, many individual businesses reported that their visitor number targets were slightly down, indicating ambitious projections.

Many businesses reported that they are keen to target inbound markets for travel trade, strengthening the need for partnership working and joined up activity across the route.

2. VisitBritain/VisitEngland's Europe & US Market Update

Stuart Heath, Head of Engagement presented with a few slides that can be seen [here](#).

Stuart expressed his support for Great West Way and discussed the competitive landscape in Europe, emphasizing the necessity for unique experiences and flexible accommodation options. He also addressed

the significance of local languages, perceptions of pricing, and the integration of sustainability into business offerings, particularly in the context of the US market, where multi-generational trips and a focus on local economies are becoming increasingly popular.

Stuart further elaborated on Visit Britain's market update webinar program, highlighting available recordings for the Americas and Germany Nordics, with upcoming sessions planned for France and the Netherlands.

There were a few questions for Stuart where he added information about Taking England to the World - VisitEngland's Trade Education Programme, which includes a useful inbound tourism toolkit'. It offers a wealth of practical step-by-step advice, tools, knowledge and insights to help businesses work with domestic and international markets with particular helpful information about working with the Travel Trade. More information is available [here](#).

3. Marketplace 2024... what to expect...

Alasdair Stamps from Meeting Mojo, presented the new virtual Marketplace platform and how it works so supplier delegates can be familiar with it prior to the event.

Anna-Karin Hanson from English Heritage delivered her Top Tips for meetings. These include the following:

Preparing for Meetings:

- Review reports to get an understanding of performance YTD and check previous meeting notes
- If there is a meeting with a new buyer, research the company and the person attending the meeting, including type of business, source markets, further opportunities within the company
- If you are giving a sales presentation, get to know your audience so you can personalise your presentation to their requirements and interests. In addition to facts, try to include some stories and /or fun facts.
- Set a clear plan with key topics, helps to prepare and to add your own key points
- Set internal goals- what you want to achieve with this meeting.
- Prepare key questions in order to steer the conversation

Meeting

- Start on time- dial in a couple of minutes early to ensure that there are no technical issues
- Restate the agenda points of the meeting
- Active listening
- Ask questions and allow time for the buyer's feedback and questions
- Take notes
- At end of call/meeting, summarize decisions made, next steps/follow ups with clear deadlines

Follow up

- Always do the follow up in a timely manner- it helps keeping the momentum going after the meeting
- Try to personalise follow ups and avoid only doing copy and paste
- Suggest a date for another meeting/ presentation if applicable

Sarah-Jayne Beasley from Blenheim Palace talked about the Networking Day at Blenheim Palace and Flo Wallace highlighted the three Discovery Visits from a French, UK and German buyer.

4. Great West Way Travel Trade Update

Please see [Great West Way Activity Update July – September 2024](#).

In addition to Marketplace, Flo mentioned the two forthcoming trade shows - heading to Milton Keynes for the Group Leisure Show (3 October) – which included 10 stand sharers; Plus attending BETA's Youth and Student Travel Summit in Bristol (8 October).

a. Priorities 2025

Our priority and focus for 2025 is to continue the programme of trade engagement and distribution of useful Great West Way resources to the trade – highlighting Jane Austen 250 as a key theme. The new edition of the Great West Way Travel Trade Directory will be launched a few hard copies available at Marketplace.

b. Forthcoming Trade Opportunities

[Britain & Ireland Marketplace](#) – 24 January 2025, London. Great West Way will be attending this 1:1 meeting event organised by ETOA and in partnership with VisitBritain. We'll be highlighting Jane Austen 250 anniversary to buyers and distributing our new travel Trade Directory. If you would like representation at this event which will include 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. Domestic trade show for GTOs, coach and tour operators. We have a 4m x 2m stand booked with stand sharers confirmed as Bodleian Libraries, Stourhead and Blenheim Palace. If you would like to join our Great West Way stand the cost is **£925+VAT** (excluding graphics) for the two days.

North American Sales Mission - Great West Way are investigating opportunities for Ambassadors to be able to promote their products and destinations to the North American buyer audience. This may include 1:1 engagement via webinars/product training in conjunction with VisitBritain and/or could include a bespoke North American trip. In addition, representation by Great West Way at DBNA 2025 could also be possible. If you have a budget to target this market and are interested in partnering for this activity, please contact Flo.

[Group Leisure & Travel Show](#), Milton Keynes 2 October 2025. Domestic trade show for GTOs, coach and tour operators. Costs tbc but following this years show, Longleat, Stourhead and English Heritage have registered an interest to stand share again. Please let Flo know if you are interested and costs will be available in due course.

For additional trade opportunities please take a look at the annual [Great West Way Travel Trade Opportunities](#).

ACTION: Please contact [Flo](#) if you'd like to discuss or book any of these events/exhibitions or for any travel trade promotional partnership opportunities.

5. Any Other Business

Following the sustainable focus mentioned by Stuart, Fiona highlighted one of Great West Way's newer supplier partners – [VoltShare](#) – 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. Exclusive discounts available to Ambassadors.

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.

6. Date of next meeting

Date of Next Meeting – Spring – date tbc.