



Somerset

Winter Newsletter 2019

Conference Success

The Visit Somerset AGM and conference took place at Brean Country Club on 21st November. Social mobility was the theme. This highlighted the importance of being able to address the demands of all visitors, catering for whatever form of disability they have. This market is worth £12 billion and 1 in 7 potential visitors has some form of disability. That means 1 in 7 people could needlessly be a non-customer, which is just not where we want Somerset to be. We want Somerset to be welcoming everyone. Wheelchair logos adorn car parking spaces yet the range of mental and physical disabilities is much more extensive, some not visually apparent to your staff, yet hugely significant for the consumer.

Response from delegates included; *Thank you so much for the amazing conference yesterday, we learned so much.*

The speakers were inspiring and the flow of the day perfect.

We found the event really informative and certainly gave us food for thought in a few areas.

Visit Somerset conference content is part of an ongoing series. We are considering the theme of Events for next year. These are a major part of many tourism destinations, both within towns and at attractions. Not only is getting footfall to attend a big issue in an occasionally crowded marketplace, but also the manipulation of it on

Visit Somerset Expertise

At the AGM, Visit Somerset Chair Giles Adams announced a new initiative that capitalises on the expertise and experience on the Visit Somerset consultative board. Promoting Somerset as a place to visit is a simple title that draws together a long list of themes.

Board members were asked to volunteer to take on portfolios for key areas of the business. This will allow more channels of contact with members in order to take on ideas or concerns. These will be taken into strategy and policy discussions with our Chief Executive John Turner by portfolio holders. This will support the management team and allow better execution of plans and more resource to follow up.

For instance, Airbnb is an increasing problem for some in the accommodation sector. We need collective action to address. Or you might have some valuable experience to share and feed in about some recent international visitors.....shared knowledge is shared power, don't lose opportunities just for the simple reason of not communicating.

Here are the new portfolio holders;

Group Travel

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site has many pitfalls and lessons to be learned.

Additionally, events pages are a major draw on many tourism websites. We can learn much

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from each other. Don't forget! There is a large events section on the Visit Somerset website. Call Carmen Goodwin at our office for more dialogue – 01749 835416.



Last week a collection of Somerset and Exmoor's finest independent brands, biggest entrepreneurs and celebrities showcased a true taste of the region in the heart of central London.

The event, which took place at the Yeo Valley Cafe near Kensington Palace, was attended by national journalists, international media, high profile influencers and celebrity Somerset chef Josh Eggleton, who sampled produce from the region's leading artisan food and drink producers. Guests were given insights into the future of food and the rise of organic farming from Yeo Valley founder Tim Mead and founder of Mulberry turned spelt farmer Roger Saul. The guest list also included Adrian Carne, Yeo Valley's Executive Chairman.

The menu, developed by Yeo Valley chef Paul Collins, featured Porlock Oysters, cheese from Cheddar Gorge Cheese Co and Godminster, Somerset Charcuterie, Sharpham Park's spelt, Thatchers cider, Wicked Wolf Gin, Exmoor Distillery gin, Exmoor Ales, and Butcombe Brewery.

Visit Somerset and Visit Exmoor worked with their award-winning London based PR and marketing agency AM+A Marketing and Media Relations, to bring together a range of producers to represent the county's diverse culinary offering. In celebration of Somerset and Exmoor's thriving independent businesses goodie bags were created, including products from Somerset Toiletry Company, Miles Tea & Coffee, Coates English Willow, Brothers Cider and Somerdale Chocolate.

The event was a huge success and continued to raise the profile of Somerset and Exmoor across the UK

and beyond, whilst supporting the growth of the area's culinary scene. The event was part of an ongoing food and drink campaign that has seen leading media visit Somerset and Exmoor including The Guardian, The Telegraph and Lonely Planet.

"I think Somerset is possibly Britain's best kept secret. We've got a wonderful array of top quality food growers and producers here and it's great to show them off. We get 50,000 visitors to the Yeo Valley each year. We run cooking demos, farm walks, garden tours, art classes and even a summer music festival. I want as many people as possible to know about it – come and pay us a visit." stated Tim Mead, Yeo Valley Owner.

"It is Visit Somerset and Visit Exmoor's intention to ensure that we are as supportive as possible to our Somerset producers. Local provenance is such a critical part of all our visitor experience and both organisations want to ensure that we are at the forefront of marketing and communicating our fabulous producers and the massive contribution they make to supporting Somerset & Exmoor's rich and diverse heritage.

The event (sponsored by Yeo Valley and Somerset Toiletry Company) signals a progressive move to start to increase awareness and recognition through producer expos in London. "The evening was a resounding success and rest-assured we are planning many more events - taking a little piece of Somerset to the Capital!" stated John Turner, Visit Somerset Chief Executive Officer.

You can view the associated booklet produced for the event at <https://en.calameo.com/read/005187180df44748e7395>

Coastal Campaign

As a follow-up to the Producer PR Campaign, Visit Somerset is co-ordinating a Coastal Initiative which will feature another London journalist event on May 11, 2020.

Meetings have been held locally with coastal stakeholders to formulate key features to attract fresh stories about how the Somerset coast can be utilised throughout the year, whether for active adventure or for restorative relaxation.

We all know that visitors need choice and ideas. Somerset has a large offer along 66 miles of coast, with large numbers of solutions for bolt-on entertainment along, and close to the coastal strip. Site specific or event-led visits need extending to longer stays by outlining our full tourism product. Awareness that Somerset actually has a coast needs further development, plus the knowledge that it is much easier to access from the Midlands and West London than some of our competitors.

WARNING! Please don't contact us this time next year when it's all happened and say you didn't know about it! Feed in now, your chance to shape. Contact either our new portfolio holder Richard House, or direct to the Visit Somerset office – info@visitsomerset.co.uk, or 01749 835416.



Visit Somerset SEO Upward

The last two weeks of November have seen record-breaking growth not seen for 5 years as +32% is recorded, with 15,000 people having visited the site in less than two weeks.

The Visit Somerset team continues to work hard re-establishing our current excellent SEO records, which our members expect of the Visit Somerset web platform.

We are also seeing staggering increases in direct and social traffic increase along with referral traffic increase rapidly due to excellent PR reference strategy. Overall an excellent result considering we are only 5 months in from our new website and platform build, with more developments coming online.



Successful Familiarisation Trip

As part of Visit Somerset's drive to create greater awareness of the county to international markets, the Visit Somerset team hosted their second familiarisation trip into the county this year supporting Japan's Mikki Travel, who have aspirations to find out more about Somerset.

Tsutomu Hasegawa of Miki Travel wrote afterward: Thank you very much for giving us this great opportunity. Your team's arrangement was perfect and your itineraries have been covered lots of important areas, places, sightseeing spots, hotels etc in Somerset. Of course, time was limited but we knew how Somerset can attract all kinds of tourists to visit all year round

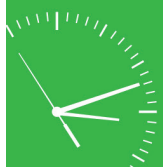
Moreover, we really felt this time that key persons composing Somerset tourism like local guides, hotel managers, coach drivers, gardeners, visitor centre members, etc etc everyone we met was so wonderful, had very professional skills and proud of their jobs. We had a very good time during our trip.

We will be discussing how to promote Somerset more internally in our office and then externally with our agents for FIT as well as group.

And Another! China's biggest tour operator, Ctrip, will be visiting the county early in 2020, again hosted by Visit Somerset.

Timetable changes are coming.

From 15 December 2019



Check before you travel

The Great Western Railway timetable changes 15 December 2019. Times of trains across the GWR network will change to provide faster, more frequent services and thousands more seats every day.

It is GWR's biggest timetable change in more than 40 years, so if you or your customers travel regularly by train visit GWR.com/Timetable2019 to check how journeys are changing.

Five Steps to Create a Workplace Wellbeing Strategy

Unhealthy and disengaged workforces can impact your bottom line. But a successful workplace wellbeing strategy can increase productivity by up to 12%. Here's how you can create yours:

1. Create a wellbeing team
Consider a range of team members from all levels of your business.
2. Focus your efforts
Review your current offering, identify gaps where additional strategies could be implemented.
3. Develop an action plan
Which staff, resources and

materials do to need to make it happen, and in what time-frame?

4. Embrace social media
Facebook groups are great, low-cost solutions to help people get involved and motivated.

5. Evaluate your programme
Frequently measure whether your employees' attitudes, behaviours and health has improved.

For more guidance and tools on how to create a workplace wellbeing strategy, contact Lisa Tucker at Jelf on lisa.tucker@jelf.com or call 0117 2402012

The cost of Christmas

As Businesses within Retail, Tourism and Hospitality, it is vital to capitalise on the peak season opportunities when they arrive, after the summer season, Christmas is the next big seasonal business boost.

With 20-40% of yearly sales for SME sized retail businesses occurring within the last two months of the year.

On average 12 million Brits will be preparing to take a Christmas or New Year break within the UK. This is likely to generate a spend of £2.1bn within the tourism and hospitality sector.

Planning, preparation and spending to meet the customer needs and demands over this period will have been well underway long before the Summer season was over, but this relies on cashflow, especially if you are subject to late payments by customers or suppliers and have outstanding invoices the need paying.

This can have a detrimental impact on any business and can often be the time when business owners revert to using credit cards to help make payments. The key is to manage the festive knock on effect rather than struggle with the increased overheads and rates in the new year when your business is at its quietest.



2020 Guide online, check in coming days.
www.visitsomerset.co.uk

Brookfield Finance can offer cost effective financial solutions to help manage your businesses cashflow and financial overheads to reduce the high interest charges and make Monthly your payments more manageable.

- Invoice finance: can offer flexibility and a facility to draw down from as and when required.
- A commercial re finance: can help your business with additional money borrowed and offer lower interest rates making the monthly repayments more manageable.

• Invoice finance: can offer flexibility and a facility to draw down from as and when required.

For a free consultation or to find out more please contact us on: 01934 756 717 or 0117 230 9950

Or visit our web site: www.brookfieldfinance.com



What is Open Banking?

PSD2, or the Revised Directive on Payment Services is a new set of rules which aims to ensure that consumers are better protected when using online banking and payment services, and to promote development and innovation within that industry. So, what is open banking? Open Banking is the resulting technology from these aims.

Open Banking improves the accessibility and security of how bank customers can access or share their banking information. The regulations require banks to maintain an open API system, to which any software developer can build a connection.

These connections could be for a variety of purposes – whether that's collating and reviewing your income and expenditure from multiple different sources; streamlining your payment processes from information in other systems not currently linked to you bank; gaining access to alternative funding sources such as invoice factoring providers outside of the normal high-street lenders; or perhaps just giving you better oversight in to the inside-outs of your bank account.



- Chris Lewis, Partner at Albert Goodman



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