



**GREAT  
WEST WAY®**



**THE JOURNEY SO FAR  
AND THE WAY AHEAD**

**MARCH 2021**

## GREAT WEST WAY IN NUMBERS



**3**

World Heritage Sites  
– Bath, Kew, Avebury  
& Stonehenge

**500**

Miles of navigable  
route to explore

**3**

Areas of Outstanding  
Natural Beauty

**900**

One-to-one meetings with  
travel trade to promote  
Great West Way

**45**

Industry engagement  
events staged

**450**

New products  
featured

**270**

Great West Way  
Ambassadors

**26**

Ambassador  
Destinations

**82**

Official Tour Operators  
signed up

**5**

Travel industry  
awards

**107**

Travel trade attending  
fam trips

**80**

New itineraries created  
for consumers and trade

**1,800**

Businesses attending  
events

**35**

International press and  
influencer visits hosted

**300m+**

Press coverage  
reach

**1,500**

On brand images within  
the photo library

**5.25m**

Social reach since  
2018 launch

**14**

Maps and guides  
created

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## TOURISM MINISTER'S MESSAGE



**“The success of the initiative, which has already exceeded many of its initial targets, is testament to what can be achieved by working in partnership with the tourism industry. It has been a catalyst for developing innovative new itineraries, products and experiences.”**

It's a great pleasure to introduce this review, which documents the story of Great West Way since its launch in 2017.

Great West Way was one of the first initiatives to receive support from the £45m Government-funded Discover England Fund, established to offer world-class English tourism products to “the right customers, at the right time”.

Since first articulating its ambition to create one of the world's premier touring routes between London and Bristol, the initiative has captured the imagination of tourism destinations and businesses along the way. Many have risen to the challenge by working collaboratively to develop the route across sector and geographical boundaries.

The success of the initiative, which has already exceeded many of its initial targets, is testament to what can be achieved by working in partnership with the tourism industry. It has been a catalyst for developing innovative new itineraries, products and experiences such as the Great Western Railway Great West Way Discoverer pass, the UK's largest integrated rail and bus pass.

The route has been enthusiastically received by travel industry partners in the UK and overseas markets, with more than 80 companies now operating as Official Tour Operator partners, committed to developing and selling Great West Way programmes to overseas visitors.

These remain challenging times for the global tourism industry and now more than ever the UK needs a strong and appealing offer ready for those looking to visit from abroad when it is once again safe to do so.

With this in mind, I'm delighted that Great West Way was one of the initiatives chosen to receive support in this current fifth year of the Discover England Fund. This will safeguard gains made in international markets and help bring Great West Way to the attention of the domestic audience.

In the short term this will help rebuild demand and support businesses to recover from the effects of the national lockdown. In the long term, I believe Great West Way, with its established model of partnership and cooperation, has the potential to contribute to the wider economic recovery and regeneration of communities along its route.

A number of my own priorities for tourism recovery are relevant to Great West Way's continued development, including the need for continued innovative product development and contribution to the Government's wider Place agenda, in line with the Tourism Recovery Plan that we are planning to publish soon.

I look forward to seeing this work develop in the next few years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Nigel Huddleston MP**  
Minister for Sport and Tourism

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## GREAT WEST WAY MESSAGE



**“It is more important now than ever to work together in partnership, developing new bookable experiences, maximising our sustainable tourism potential and supporting destinations and businesses along Great West Way”**

It is five years since we took the first steps on our Great West Way journey. With the help of VisitEngland and the Discover England Fund, we set off to turn an original marketing campaign idea into a shared ambition to create one of the world’s premier touring routes between London and Bristol.

A touring route with real provenance and authenticity; well-travelled tourism corridor; home to many of England’s most iconic destinations – Windsor, the River Thames, Stonehenge, Bath and the Cotswolds.

Where great places rub shoulders with the best of English life – chocolate-box villages, traditional pubs and inns, five-star luxury, historic houses and gardens, and the very warmest of welcomes. A touring route that can boast an extraordinary variety of experiences that have welcomed curious travellers for hundreds of years.

**This Review presents the journey so far. Showcasing highlights that include:**

- Developing a new three-year Ambassador Network model resulting in 270 investing Ambassadors.
- More than 80 travel intermediaries signed-up to the Official Tour Operator programme.
- Some 450 bookable new products.
- High-quality Inspirational content and publications.
- A compelling brand positioning that has been and continues to be widely adopted.
- A number of awards that pay testimony to the hard work, creativity and commitment of everyone involved in bringing Great West Way to life.

In particular I would like to thank our four Title Ambassadors – Bristol Airport, Canal & River Trust, Great Western Railway and National Trust. All have made a fantastic contribution to our success.

Thanks also to the Great West Way Advisory Board and Destinations Group, who have contributed their time and energy to helping shape and support our activity. Thanks also to Ambassadors and Official Tour Operators and to DCMS and VisitEngland/VisitBritain for their support so far and that which is still to come.

When we began this journey, no one could have anticipated the circumstances in which we would be reviewing and looking forward in 2021.

It is more important now than ever to work together in partnership, developing new bookable experiences, maximising our sustainable tourism potential and supporting destinations and businesses along the Great West Way corridor to help them recover from the pandemic.

I look forward to continuing our collaboration.

**David Andrews**  
Director, Great West Way

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## VISITBRITAIN/VISITENGLAND MESSAGE



**“The bold ambition of Great West Way, creating a new world-class touring route from London to Bristol, has added an exciting new dimension to the England offer in international markets and is a great example of what can be achieved with imagination, ambition and targeted support.”**

We are delighted to have worked closely with Great West Way over the past five years as a recipient of funding through the Discover England Fund, established in 2016 to deliver world-class bookable tourism products joined up across geographies and/or themes, bringing those experiences to market, delivering new audiences and increased visitors to England.

The bold ambition of Great West Way, creating a new world-class touring route from London to Bristol, has added an exciting new dimension to the England offer in international markets and is a great example of what can be achieved with imagination, ambition and targeted support.

Placing visitor insight and research at its heart, the Great West Way proposition has been carefully crafted to appeal to both existing and new audiences and, in the short time since launch, it has made a successful stride toward achieving its undoubted potential for cut-through in the competitive international tourism market.

Our close working relationship with Great West Way has enabled us to deliver inspiring information about the route to our international travel trade partners and consumers and we have seen exceptional interest in Great West Way in VisitBritain international markets. It is fantastic to see that more than 80 Official Tour Operators from around the world have signed-up to develop new Great West Way products and tours.

Great West Way has a strong role to play in rebuilding tourism in the south of England in the wake of the covid pandemic. As an exemplar of partnership working across borders and across sectors, it is well placed to support the tourism industry and wider economic recovery in communities along the route.

We are looking forward to working closely with Great West Way on this, including ensuring that a wide range of new bookable product is available for visitors through the TXGB platform, inspiring domestic visitors to explore the route this year, and international visitors to return to discover “England concentrated” on Great West Way as soon as it is safe to do so.

I'd like to congratulate Great West Way and all of the partners involved on delivering one of the great success stories of the Discover England Fund programme and I look forward to working closely together to grow this success.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Balcombe". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

**Sally Balcombe**  
Chief Executive, VisitBritain/VisitEngland



## THE GREAT WEST WAY TROPHY CABINET

The Great West Way has won or been shortlisted for the following awards:

- Winner of the Group Travel Award 2019 for the Development of Incoming Group Visitors to the UK.
- Winner of Launch Campaign of the Year 2019, Travolution Awards.
- Awarded an International Tourism Merit Award by the British Guild of Travel Writers for Best UK and Ireland Tourism Project.
- Shortlisted for Place Brand of the Year 2019 in the City Nation Place international tourism awards, celebrating best practice in place branding and marketing.
- Rough Guide to the Great West Way – shortlisted for Best Travel Guidebook in the British Guild of Travel Writers Members' Excellence Awards.



**TRAVOLUTION AWARDS**  
2019 WINNER



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## GREAT WEST WAY®



# WELCOME TO THE GREAT WEST WAY

One of the world's premier touring routes

The Great West Way is a multi-modal touring route between London and Bristol, with options to explore by car, coach, rail, cycling, walking and canal boating. The Great West Way includes many of England's most iconic attractions - Windsor, the River Thames, Bath, Lacock, Stonehenge and The Cotswolds – and encompasses three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

At the heart of Great West Way is a brand proposition of "England Concentrated" – an extraordinary variety of attractions and experiences in an easily accessible compact area. It offers visitors the opportunity to discover the real essence of England by getting

to know the stories of the past and experiencing the authentic culture of the present.

Well connected to major air, rail, river and road routes, the Great West Way extends a compelling invitation to international visitors to travel west, stay longer and delve deeper, as well as being attractive to domestic visitors seeking to explore closer to home.

Beyond simply packaging and taking the route to market, the Great West Way initiative has been developed to be a sustainable driver of long-term economic benefit.

This publication tells the story of the development of the route and highlights what has been achieved in the short time since

launch. It also looks to the future, when continued investment in the development and promotion of the Great West Way corridor will make a significant contribution to post-Covid economic recovery.



# HIGHLIGHTS ON THE JOURNEY SO FAR



## 2016

First Great West Way industry meetings.

## NOV 2016

First meeting of the Great West Way Advisory Board.

## NOV 2016-MAR 2017

Project Initiation research and engagement including:

- case study analysis
- economic and environmental impact study
- proposition and brand positioning development
- concept testing.

## JAN 2017

Great West Way Ltd incorporated.

## MAR 2017

Inaugural Great West Way stakeholder engagement conference attended by almost 200 delegates.

Story of the Great West Way booklet launched and distributed.

## APR 2017

400 organisations have pledged support to the project.

## AUG 2017

Great West Way awarded £1m Discover England Funding.

## 2017-2018

Work underway in the four workstreams to develop the initiative in preparation for launch:

1. Developing the Great West Way Experience
2. Bringing the Great West Way to Life
3. Getting the Great West Way Talked About
4. Taking the Great West Way to Market

Travel trade engagement in domestic and international markets including attendance at World Travel Market, Vakantiebeurs Explore GB and ITB Berlin and Destination Britain Americas.

## MAR 2018

Great West Way name and marque trade mark registration.

Launch of Great West Way Discovery Programme Welcome and Development Workshops.

## APR 2018

Launch of Great West Way Ambassador Network and the Great West Way brand toolkit.

## JUNE 2018

Launch of Great West Way Official Tour Operator Programme.

## SEPT 2018

Four Great West Way Title Ambassadors signed up – Bristol Airport, Canal and River Trust, Great Western Railway and National Trust.

815 Industry partners signed up to receive Great West Way communications.



## NOV 2018

Travel trade industry and media launch at World Travel Market.

Launch of Great West Way Travel Trade Directory showcasing 350 new bookable experiences along the route.

Inaugural Great West Way Marketplace in Bath followed by familiarisation visits.

Tourism Minister spends a day travelling the Great West Way.

Launch of Great West Way website, social media channels and Consumer Map, with brand film released.

Unveiling of Great West Way-branded arrivals area at Bristol Airport by Michael Ellis MP, Tourism Minister.

## FEB 2019

Great West Way consumer launch – multi-channel digital consumer campaign reaching 7.6m in the UK, USA, Germany and the Netherlands.

Launch of Great West Way Travel Magazine (first edition, 175k print run plus 90k digital). Dutch and German language websites launched.

## JUNE 2019

2019 Group Travel Awards, winning the The Development of Incoming Group Visitors to the UK Award.

## JULY 2019

Media launch of The Rough Guide to the Great West Way and the Great West Way Discoverer pass (attended by 50 media).

## NOV 2019

Second Great West Way Marketplace and Travel Trade Directory (2nd edition).

## FEB 2020

Great West Way Travel Magazine 2nd edition

## MAR 2019

Launch of the Great West Way Food and Drink Map and integrated digital campaign.

1,100 industry partners signed up to receive regular updates.

## OCT 2020

Great West Way Travel Magazine third (digital) edition published.

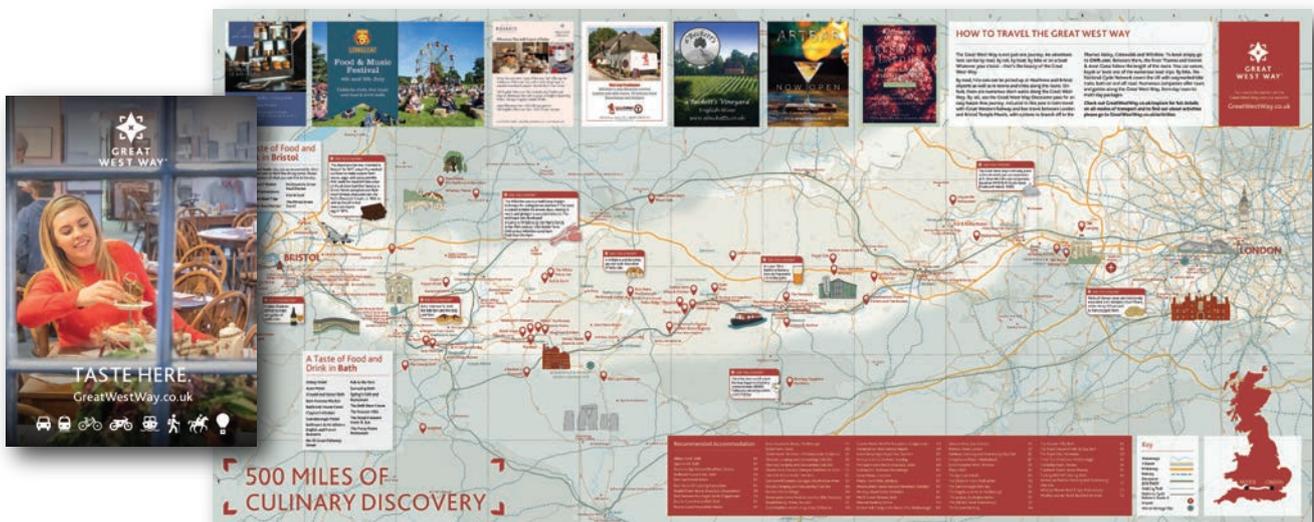
Domestic “Don’t Follow the Herd” campaign launched.

## MAR 2021

DEF-funded “Escape the Everyday” Great West Way domestic digital marketing campaign launched.

Launch of the Great West Way Guide to the Kennet & Avon Canal.

82 Great West Way Official Tour Operators signed-up.



# HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Looking back to the start of Great West Way and the ambition, strategic approach, commitment to partnership and industry engagement that have guided its development

In October 2016, the Great West Way was the first new product development initiative to secure funding from the VisitEngland Discover England Fund (DEF), established to develop the English tourism industry's international competitiveness.

This DEF investment allowed for Great West Way planning to be thoroughly evidence-based. The successes of the initiative to date and its long-term sustainability are grounded in this thorough foundation.

## AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

Long distance, multi-modal touring routes around the world have evidenced the significant impact these initiatives have on local economies, with uplifts in visitor numbers leading to economic benefits far outweighing costs.



Andrew Stokes, VisitEngland; David Andrews, Great West Way; Tracey Crouch, Minister for Tourism and Peter Jay, Cotswold Water Park at the Inaugural Great West Way Conference 2017

## OUR AMBITION

To create one of the world's premier touring routes between London and Bristol.

Stonehenge World Heritage Site

"Working with Great West Way is a fantastic way to showcase a visit to Stonehenge as part of a longer stay in the area. Working with our Great West Way partners, we have developed initiatives to encourage our international visitors to explore the World Heritage Site more widely and to experience the vibrant and historic culture of the region."

Nichola Tasker, Stonehenge Director, English Heritage



Watch footage of our partners speaking about the Great West Way at the Inaugural Great West Way Partner Conference 2017. To view the video click [here](#)

"The Swindon & Wiltshire LEP has included development of Great West Way as a strategic priority in our Local Industrial Strategy. It offers real potential in supporting our wider Place agenda, the sector's recovery and in increasing productivity. In addition, we envisage Great West Way using best-practice ideas to set a new benchmark of zero-carbon growth for tourism and hospitality businesses. We are one of six LEPs backing this initiative and support the proposal for Great West Way to be established as a Tourism Zone."

Paddy Bradley, CEO, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Economic Partnership

An extensive case study review of more than 40 such long-distance touring routes highlighted the paramount importance of the following factors which were embedded in our approach from the outset:

- A clear and compelling distinctive brand proposition, communicated to amplify "talkability".
- A brand-led approach to development, delivering meaningful new experiences for visitors through a comprehensive programme of on-the-ground product development.
- Product development based on and developed in alignment with a programme of solid research and insights into tourism trends, customer motivations and behaviour.
- An expansion of bookable product to meet the needs of international travel trade along with appropriate product packaging, commercialising and delivered to market via appropriate routes.
- Infrastructure enhancement, including developing wayfinding, signage and interpretation.
- Bottom-up building of experience through business support and mentoring.
- True partnership delivery – joining up destinations and industry to deliver the proposition.
- Acting as a catalyst for change by influencing wider infrastructure and place improvements.

"Sensible investment gives Great West Way the opportunity to be a 'game-changing' proposition."

Great West Way Case Study Analysis, TEAM Consulting, 2016

"Achieving a 13:1 Benefit Cost Ratio for DEF investment for international visitor spend activity alone is very achievable."

"Great West Way has the potential to stimulate additional investment and act as a catalyst for new development."

Great West Way Economic and Environmental Impact Study, Regeneris Consulting, Fourth Street and Waterman, 2017

"The Great West Way project has the potential to unlock significant additional and longer-term funding."

TEAM Product Development Challenges & Opportunities



economic agendas and how the route can best contribute to place building and wider investment strategies.

The Strategic Opportunity for the development of Great West Way is to:

- **Make a Difference for England** – winning market share for England from key international markets.
- **Make a Difference for the Region** – drawing visitors out of London, extending length of stay and improving seasonality.
- **Make a Difference in Perception** – being brand-led via a visitor proposition that resonates with consumers and which businesses and destinations along the route have a real affiliation for.
- **Make a Difference Beyond the icons** – promoting yet-to-be-discovered places off the beaten track as well as the icons.
- **Make a Difference as an Enabler and a Catalyst for Change** – helping to develop of place brands along the route, producing signalling effects, increasing positive perceptions, encouraging buy-in to fresh new forward visions for places and impacting inward investment decisions.



## STRATEGIC APPROACH

Core to our vision is attracting new audiences and markets to the south of England, contributing to growth in England's overall tourism receipts and delivering opportunities for businesses within the regional visitor economy.

A robust economic impact assessment identified that the Great West Way initiative also has the capacity to deliver wide-reaching economic benefits and we engage closely with regional bodies, local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to understand local

## THE CURIOUS TRAVELLER

The shared mindset of our target visitor segments informed the definition of the Great West Way target visitor:

- "For lovers of England.*
- For travellers with a desire to discover.*
- The 'what's around the corner-ers' and the 'who will I meet today-ers'. Not the 'A-to-B-ers'.*
- For travellers who believe the journey is as remarkable as the destination.*
- For those who love stories – hearing others' tales, creating and sharing their own.*
- For those who believe the everyday can be extraordinary.*
- For the curious and the inquisitive.*
- Those who like to go deeper, to see and feel and do and try and taste for themselves.*
- For seekers of the real, the authentic and the very essence of England."*

## GREAT WEST WAY DESTINATIONS GROUP

- Bradford on Avon
- Calne
- Chippenham
- Corsham
- Cotswolds
- Devizes
- Henley on Thames
- Hungerford
- Malmesbury
- Marlborough
- North Wessex Downs AONB
- Reading UK
- Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead
- Steeple Ashton
- Swindon
- Tourism South East
- Trowbridge
- Vale Of Pewsey
- Visit Bath
- Visit Bristol
- Visit Newbury
- Visit Richmond
- Visit Thames
- VisitWiltshire
- Wycombe

## GREAT WEST WAY ADVISORY BOARD

- Bristol Airport
- Brunel's SS Great Britain
- Business West
- Canal & River Trust
- Destination Bristol
- English Heritage
- Great Western Railway
- National Trust
- Tourism South East
- UK Inbound
- Visit Bath
- VisitBritain/VisitEngland
- VisitWiltshire



"The inbound tourist is seeking memorable experiences and moments that they can ideally share with loved ones and brag about back home."

"Inbound travellers talk a lot about meeting the people, seeing the country, experiencing the culture. People are seeking the freedom to have their own experiences, and to feel a level of creativity and curation that proves they are doing something different to others."

"Products that can provide the sense of an individual and authentic experience will be motivating across markets and in particular in more mature and developed markets."

Mangrove Great West Way proposition testing, March 2017

"The Great West Way team will need to produce focussed itineraries grouping sights/places and showing travel times/options between each place to help visitors visualise what they could expect to experience."

"Communications that are both educational and persuasive will be needed to encourage people away from London, both in showcasing the offer as well as demonstrating easy transport links."

"While there is a need to include iconic and historic destinations, it is important also to ensure that experiences are immersive. The journey between destinations can also add to the 'real' experience."

Discover England Fund Research Summary Report, March 2018

# THE GREAT WEST WAY: ENGLAND CONCENTRATED

A closer look at how the Great West Way brand was developed, the pillars that provide its foundation and a checklist of key ingredients for developing branded tourism experiences along the route

Based on a clear understanding of what visitors want from an English tourism experience, and tested extensively to ensure appeal to traditional markets as well as for new, younger travellers, the Great West Way brand lies at the heart of everything we do.

The brand was developed in consultation with destinations and industry partners together to create a competitive and appealing proposition which directs the development of Great West Way products and experiences. Each partner plays a vital role in delivering the brand promise.

The *Story of the Great West Way* provides a guide for partners in developing Great West Way experiences and includes a checklist to ensure that products deliver on the brand promise. This is backed up by bespoke support from the Great West Way team where requested.

The brand pillars are the recurring themes that should guide development of Great West Way experiences. These are:

## DISCOVERY

Great West Way lets travellers discover England and the English for themselves.

## AUTHENTIC

Great West Way is rooted in the highways and byways travelled by generations and commissioned by Kings.

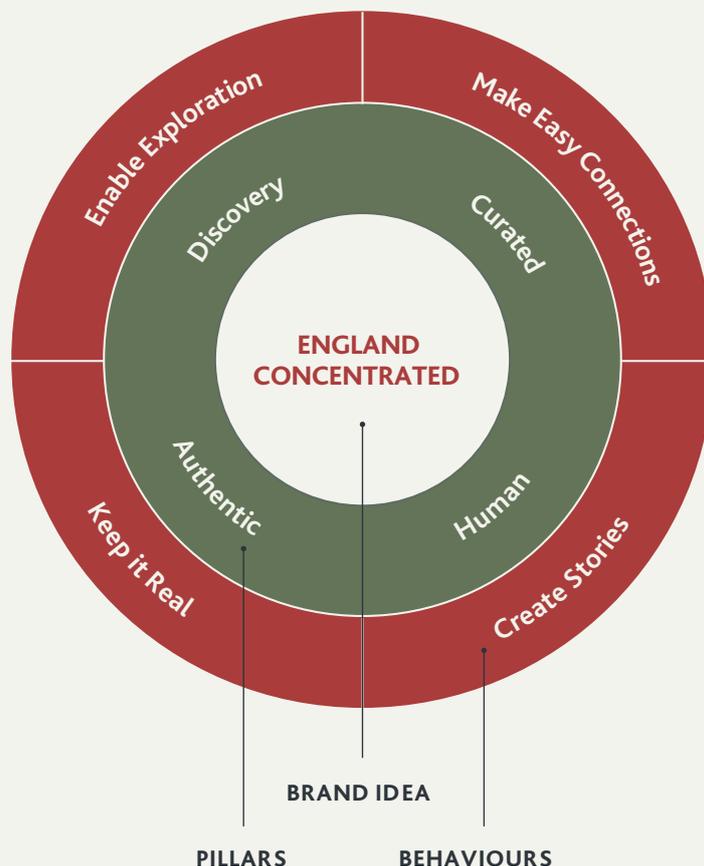
## CURATED

Great West Way points the way to a real English experience, leading visitors through England's story.

## HUMAN

Great West Way lets travellers meet England and the English, to hear our stories and create their own.

## BRAND MAP



 To view the Great West Way brand video click here

## CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPING OR COMMUNICATING FUTURE GREAT WEST WAY EXPERIENCES

To be true to the Great West Way brand idea, visitor experiences should always help reinforce these messages.

### VARIETY

A Great West Way experience should never be repetitive. The concentrated variety visitors will experience along the route is a key strength.

### NARRATIVE

The Great West Way tells an important strand of England's story, it isn't simply a collection of places to visit.

### INDEPENDENCE

We are not prescriptive about how to experience the Great West Way. It works just as well for independent travellers as for travel trade programmes.

### CONTRAST

The Great West Way connects England's icons, but it also reveals everyday England.

### AUTHENTICITY

The Great West Way is rooted in history. It follows travellers' routes used for centuries, the routes that brought druids to Stonehenge, drovers to market, Georgian society to Bath and our industrial revolution to the world.

### EXPERIENCE

The Great West Way is about much more than the places you visit. It's about the experience of England.

### ENGLISHNESS

And finally, the Great West Way delivers a concentrated essence of England and Englishness.



## GREAT WEST WAY IN A NUTSHELL

### Our brand narrative

Follow the paths taken by generations of travellers and discover an essential strand of England. Based on one of the first Great Roads commissioned by the Kings of England, the Great West Way winds its way through lush green landscapes filled with the world famous and the yet-to-be-discovered. Touch Royal Windsor, Roman Bath and timeless Stonehenge, immerse yourself in English village life and Bristol's urban energy.

On the the Great West Way, extraordinary history rubs shoulders with everyday life. Traditional pubs and inns with World Heritage Sites on their doorsteps, serving craft ales and local

farm food. Churches that have watched over their parishes for centuries. Independent shops and galleries filled with contemporary designs and creations. You don't have to travel far to explore further and delve deeper into England. The Great West Way links London with Bristol through 125 miles of twists and turns and new discoveries. Explore by road, by railway or by waterway. Slow right down, base yourself along the route, walk or cycle it.

**Welcome to the real England.  
It's England undiluted.  
It's England concentrated.**

**"The Great West Way was a finalist in our prestigious international Place Brand of the Year Awards for the impact it made by presenting the tourism corridor between London and Bristol under a single compelling brand proposition. Being brand-led from the start has helped the Great West Way achieve widespread brand adoption by all its stakeholders, and deliver measurable results within the context of a longer-term strategy."**

Clare Dewhirst, Director, City Nation Place

# DELIVERY WORKSTREAMS

Over the course of the initiative, work has been delivered across four intersecting workstreams. The strategies and plans within each build directly from the ambition for the Great West Way and the insights collected in the development phase on an ongoing basis. Here you can find out about the success of the four workstreams

## 1 DEVELOPING THE GREAT WEST WAY EXPERIENCE

This foundational workstream develops and defines the Great West Way experience, ensuring that it acts as a catalyst for innovation and the creation of new internationally competitive tourism products and experiences.

## 2 BRINGING THE GREAT WEST WAY TO LIFE

This workstream is about improving linkages between tourism providers, working together to ensure that every new branded product is true to the England Concentrated brand idea and in line with the Great West Way experience development checklist.

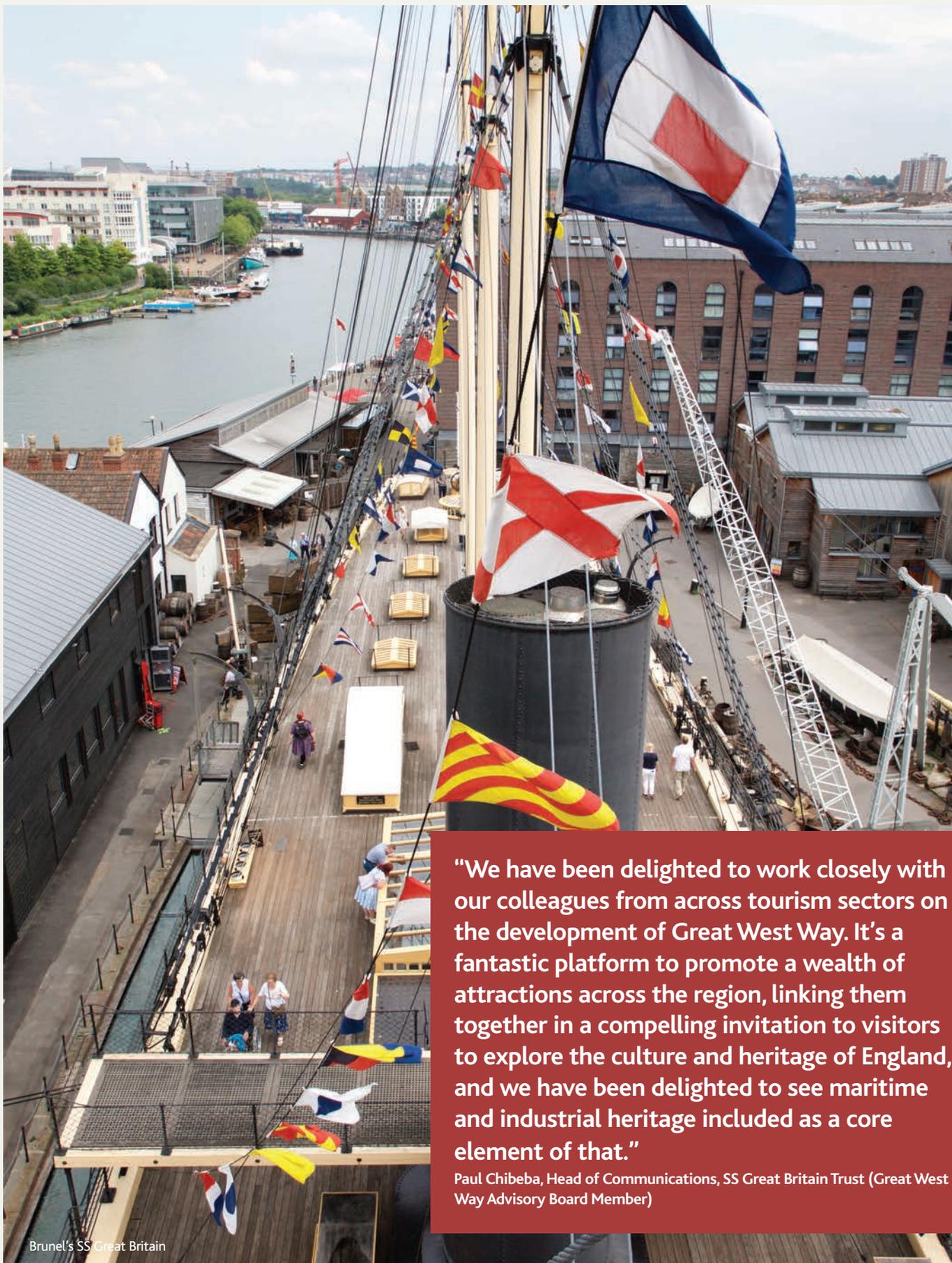
## 3 GETTING THE GREAT WEST WAY TALKED ABOUT

New brands need to create "talkability" and the Great West Way is no exception. Activity in this workstream encourages the tourism industry, travel trade intermediaries, stakeholders, partners, visitors and other intermediaries to embrace the route, talk about it and embed the Great West Way concept in their activity. It also includes a dedicated programme of media relations within the domestic market and internationally.

## 4 TAKING THE GREAT WEST WAY TO MARKET

Activity in this workstream focuses on marketing and distribution – getting the right products to the right customers and making it easy for them to plan and book.





**“We have been delighted to work closely with our colleagues from across tourism sectors on the development of Great West Way. It’s a fantastic platform to promote a wealth of attractions across the region, linking them together in a compelling invitation to visitors to explore the culture and heritage of England, and we have been delighted to see maritime and industrial heritage included as a core element of that.”**

**Paul Chibeba, Head of Communications, SS Great Britain Trust (Great West Way Advisory Board Member)**

Brunel's SS Great Britain

# DEVELOPING THE GREAT WEST WAY EXPERIENCE

Ensuring that it is a catalyst for innovation and the creation of new internationally competitive tourism products and experiences

## PRODUCT INNOVATION THROUGH INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP

The Great West Way initiative has been a catalyst for creating a large number of new Great West Way-branded bookable products and experiences, adding real substance and appeal to the proposition.

A programme of extensive industry engagement including 45 industry events have given 1,700 participants the opportunity to not only input their ideas and insights into developing the initiative, but also to learn how their businesses could capitalise on opportunities the route provided.

New Great West Way products include a Great West Way Discoverer rail pass, new tour programmes, new bookable walking and cycling

tours, new history and heritage products and unique new experiences at attractions, from farm shops to Stonehenge, along with new accommodation providers.



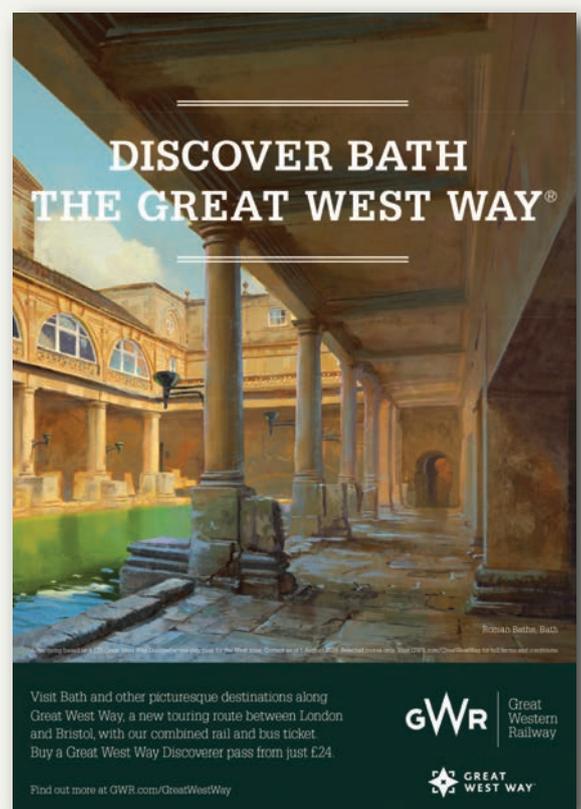
David Andrews, Great West Way, Gauthier Hardy, Great Western Railway and Michael Ellis, Tourism Minister launch the Great West Way Discoverer pass

## GREAT WEST WAY DISCOVERER RAIL PASS

The GWR Great West Way Discoverer pass was launched in June 2019 and is on sale in the UK and overseas. It is a delivery partnership involving three rail companies and 200 bus routes and is the UK's largest integrated rail and bus ticket. It has been developed in response to a preference for rail travel among international visitors beyond London and, alongside a number of new itineraries, it simplifies the planning and purchase of travel along the route. It also offers exceptional value for money for seven days of unrestricted travel.

"Great Western Railway is proud to be a Great West Way Title Ambassador, working in partnership with colleagues across the tourism sector to develop this iconic new visitor brand for the region. We're delighted to have worked with transport partners to develop and launch the Great West Way Discoverer pass – the UK's largest integrated rail and bus ticket of its kind. Working alongside Great West Way's activity programme, the Discoverer pass provides international and domestic visitors with the best way to travel and experience the spectacular beauty, history and attractions along the route, offering flexibility and convenience of travel by train and bus, all on just the one ticket."

Mark Hopwood, Managing Director at Great Western Railway



## WAYFINDING ASSETS

Recognising the importance of signage and wayfinding to the visitor experience, partners and stakeholders have invested in Great West Way signage, including Bristol Airport, where visitors are now greeted by Great West Way-branded signage in international arrivals.

The Canal & River Trust is developing new branded signage along the whole of the Kennet and Avon Canal and Wiltshire Highways has approved a Great West Way Brown Sign design for strategic locations along the route.

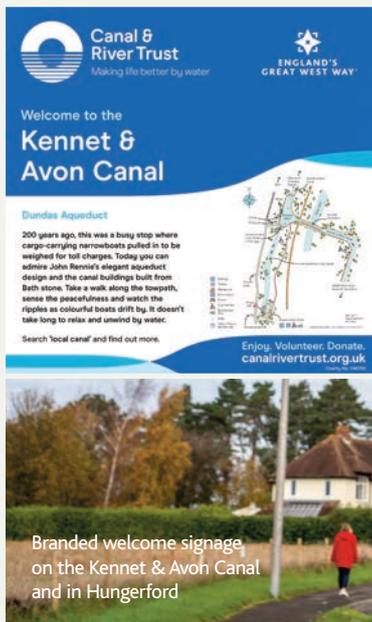
This is in addition to Great West Way-branded town welcome signage and banners developed for Calne, Hungerford, Chippenham and Malmesbury and at Reading rail station.



Michael Ellis, Tourism Minister unveiling Great West Way branding at Bristol Airport

**“We are delighted to support The Great West Way as Title Ambassador. Our involvement will encourage even more tourists to the South West and we want Bristol Airport to be a preferred point of entry. By providing a friendly welcome and fast and efficient service we can create positive first impressions for visitors en route to explore the region’s wealth of historic and cultural attractions.”**

Dave Lees, CEO, Bristol Airport



Branded welcome signage on the Kennet & Avon Canal and in Hungerford



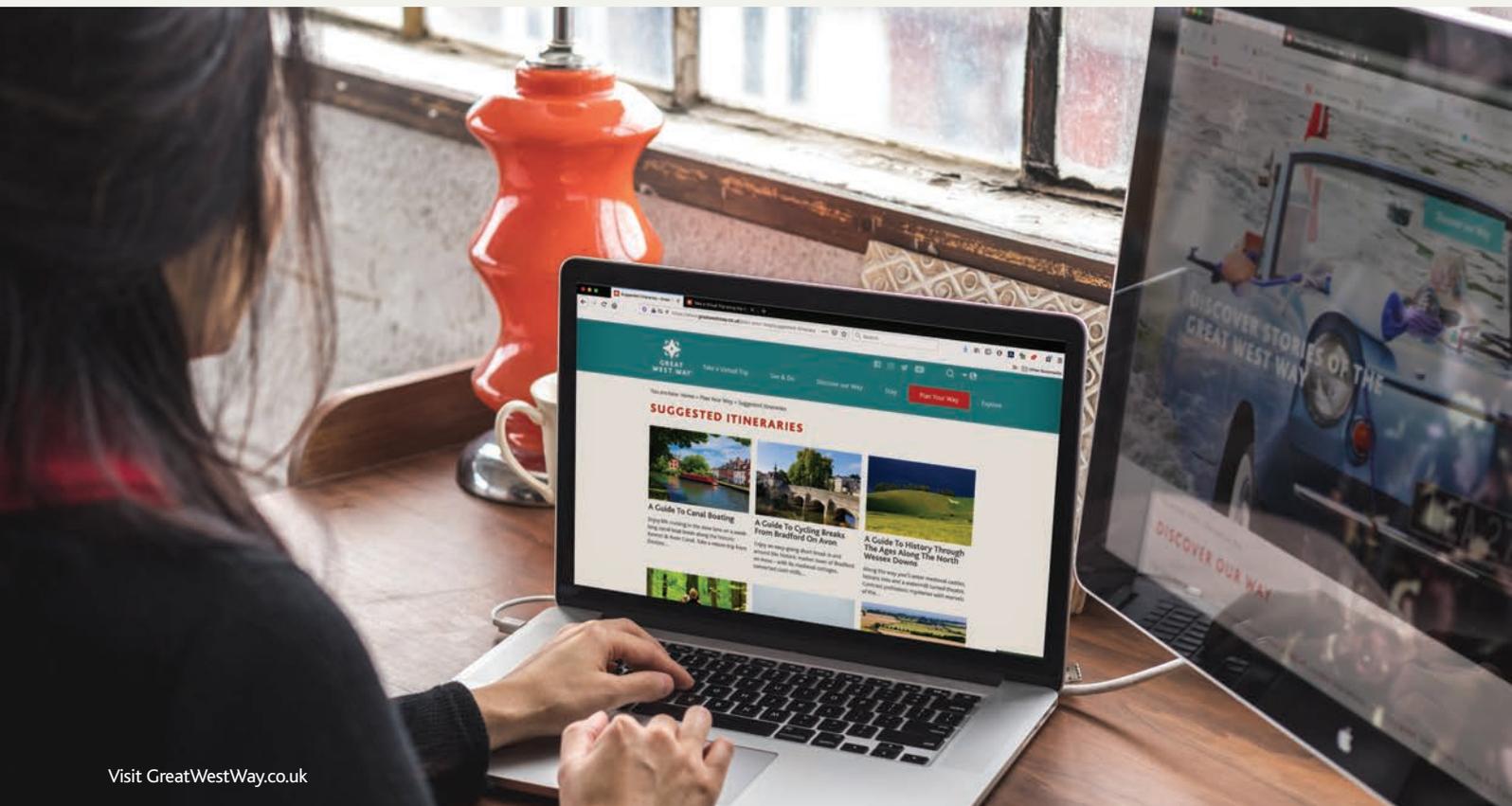
## ITINERARIES AND MAPPING

A total of 80 brand-new Great West Way itineraries have been created to inspire and aid trip planning. This includes a selection of downloadable consumer and travel trade itineraries.

They encompass themes that appeal to key visitor segments from international and domestic markets and allow the route to be presented to the widest possible audiences. From walking in the North Wessex Downs to canal boating, from industrial heritage to food and drink, the itineraries showcase how visitors can tailor a trip along Great West Way to their own interests.



To view a selection of downloadable itineraries click here



Visit [GreatWestWay.co.uk](http://GreatWestWay.co.uk)

An online itinerary planner that allows visitors to create customised itineraries has been very well received by site visitors, with usage six-times higher than the industry standard for such tools.

A Great West Way map (100,000 copies), featuring 125 things to do along the route, was launched in November 2018, with English, Dutch and German language versions, and in spring 2020 a Great West Way Food and Drink Guide was produced (75,000 copies). The Great West Way Kennet and Avon Canal Map (100,000 copies) was launched in March 2021, with support from the Canal & River Trust.



Great West Way Kennet & Avon Canal Map

## GREAT WEST WAY CONTENT

The digital content strategy has centred on creating visually appealing assets and content hosted on a new Great West Way website, providing a hub of inspiration and information for consumers and travel trade, while distributed across partner sites. Video content has proved particularly popular with almost 200k views on our YouTube channel.

Working closely with VisitBritain/VisitEngland has meant that content could be closely aligned with their marketing themes and used within their

**“As destinations, Bath and Bristol are delighted to support Great West Way. It can support new visitor routes into the region, enabling us to reach visitors discovering England as an alternative to more traditional itineraries. The messages to ‘slow down and enjoy the journey, take time to explore the destinations’ complement our own development.”**

Kathryn Davis, Head of Tourism at Destination Bristol and Interim CEO, Visit Bath



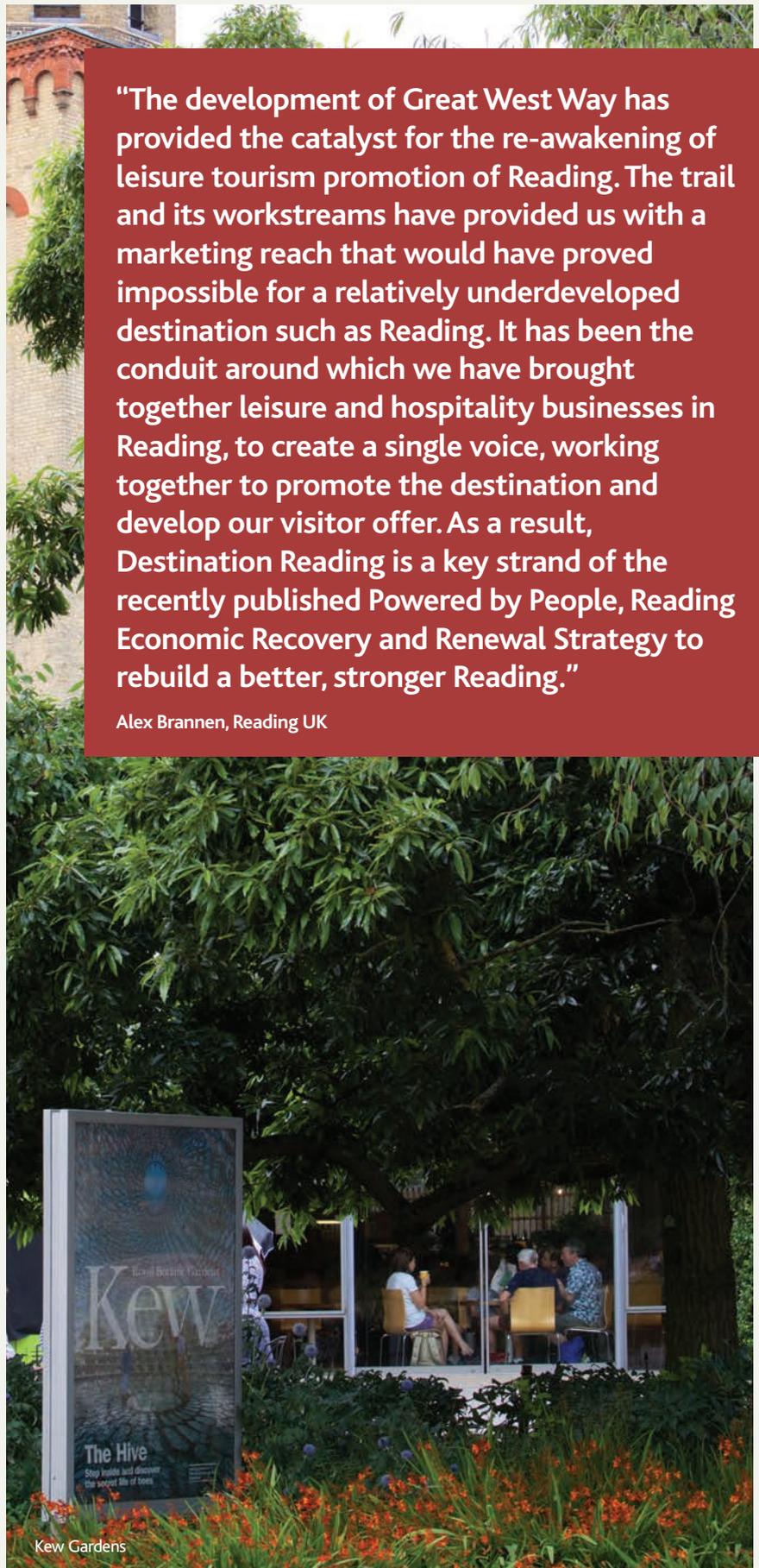
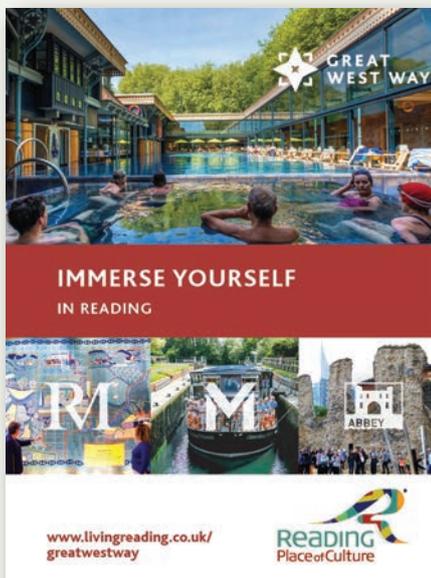
The Travel the Great West Way video is a great example of the power of video to take our visitors on an immersive journey, showcasing Great West Way partners the length of the route. To view the video [click here](#)

website, social media and marketing campaigns. This has ensured maximum reach for the Great West Way, not only in international markets and activity, but it has also enabled messages focused on the domestic market to be amplified throughout the UK-focused Covid-19 recovery marketing campaigns of 2020/21.

A Great West Way photo library now contains more than 1,600 on-brand images with photographs available for use by partners and ambassadors and there has been a focus on creation of video content, because consumers increasingly want to view richer moving imagery.

## DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP

The Great West Way works with 26 Ambassador destinations along the length of the route and brings this group together to work collaboratively on route development. Included are large tourism city destinations such as Bath and Bristol, but also smaller towns and local authorities. This has been a catalyst for a number of towns to adopt the brand and develop their own local tourism plans.



**“The development of Great West Way has provided the catalyst for the re-awakening of leisure tourism promotion of Reading. The trail and its workstreams have provided us with a marketing reach that would have proved impossible for a relatively underdeveloped destination such as Reading. It has been the conduit around which we have brought together leisure and hospitality businesses in Reading, to create a single voice, working together to promote the destination and develop our visitor offer. As a result, Destination Reading is a key strand of the recently published Powered by People, Reading Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy to rebuild a better, stronger Reading.”**

Alex Brannen, Reading UK

Kew Gardens

# BRINGING THE GREAT WEST WAY TO LIFE

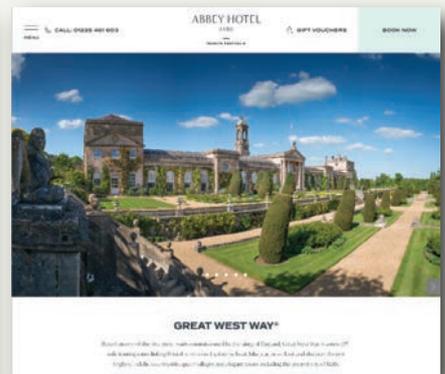
Ensuring that all new product is true to the England Concentrated brand idea and the Great West Way experience development checklist

## GREAT WEST WAY AMBASSADOR NETWORK

The Great West Way Ambassador Network was launched in April 2018 and is central to our success because it joins-up bookable product, inspirational experiences and extraordinary places along the route.

It is unique among destination schemes because businesses must make a three-year funding commitment, which helps to maximise return on investment and contributes to the route's long-term sustainability.

Membership gives access to business support and development opportunities, as well as marketing opportunities and Ambassadors are encouraged to use Great West Way branding. Response has far outstripped original goals. By March 2020, 270 Great West Way Ambassadors, including four Great West Way Title Ambassadors – Bristol Airport, Great Western Railway, National Trust and Canal & River Trust – and 26 destination ambassadors, had been secured.



**"We're delighted to partner with Great West Way and to have become part of the Ambassador Network. As a group with hotels in London, Reading and Bath, the Great West Way brand works beautifully for us, allowing us to offer a meaningful new visitor proposition to our visitors and to attract new business. The opportunities to participate in Marketplace events have been particularly valuable in providing access to new commercial opportunities and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the coming years."**

Vicky Punchaye, General Manager, The Roseate Reading



It is testament to the confidence in which the industry has embraced the brand that despite the impact of the Covid pandemic, there is a strong desire among Ambassadors to remain engaged with the network and at this stage we are planning for a relatively high retention rate.



**Take your time on the K&A**

The beautiful Kennet & Avon Canal (or K&A as its known) flows along 87 miles of the Great West Way®. From Bath to Reading, it winds through quintessential rolling Wiltshire hills, bustling towns and even a World Heritage Site.

Since 1810, narrowboats have drifted along at four miles an hour, plying their trade from Bristol to London. Today, you'll find a mixture of holiday and live-aboard boaters, all seeking the calm and tranquillity that comes from life on or by the water.

In fact, research by the Canal & River Trust, the charity that looks after the K&A, suggests spending time next to water is good for your wellbeing. So take a wander along the towpath, paddle away on a canal, jump aboard a boat trip from one of the many wharves along the way, or discover one of the best canal-side cycling routes criss-crossing Bath, Stone aqueducts and bridges. Or simply stop, stare and take it all in. And the best bit? The K&A is free and open for everyone to use and enjoy every day.



**Canal & River Trust**  
Making life better by water



**GREAT WEST WAY**  
Great West Way® Waterways Ambassador

Registered Charity Number 1148792    [canalrivertrust.org.uk/GreatWestWay](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/GreatWestWay)

**“The Canal & River Trust is delighted to be a Great West Way Title Ambassador, as it supports our objectives to promote the Kennet & Avon Canal. The popular waterway is a key element of the Great West Way - a ‘slow travel’ mode of exploration, offering all the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time on, or by, water, taking people to the many attractions along its length. We’ve worked closely on a number of specific initiatives including development of Great West Way branded signage and more recently a Great West Way Guide to the Kennet & Avon Canal. We look forward to the further development of the Great West Way and to working together to realise its potential benefits, secure further investment and welcome more visitors.”**

Richard Parry, Chief Executive, Canal & River Trust



**National Trust**

**Moments to remember**

**made with the National Trust**

Visit the National Trust places along the Great West Way® for spaces to relax, gardens and countryside to explore and stories to discover.

These are the places that make us.  
[nationaltrust.org.uk/south-west](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/south-west)

© National Trust 2019. Registered Charity No. 205596. © National Trust Images / Adam Wright

**Explore the Great West Way from Bristol Airport**

**We're proud to be the Official Airport Ambassador for the Great West Way®.**

Bristol Airport is the perfect place for you to start your Great West Way journey. We're just **8 miles from Bristol city centre** and **19 miles from the city of Bath**.

We've invested **£225m** in developments that have transformed the airport experience and now offer **more than 125 destinations** to our **8.6 million loyal passengers**.





**Bristol Airport**    **GREAT WEST WAY**

[www.bristolairport.co.uk](http://www.bristolairport.co.uk)

 To view a full list of the Great West Way Ambassadors click here.



"I love the fact that Great West Way re-connects all of those places that people used to know about when they travelled by horse or stage coach. The places people hurtling along at 80mph along the M4 miss."

Johnathon Mansfield, Pound Arts Centre, Corsham

## BRAND DISSEMINATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The Great West Way visual identity helps bring the brand positioning to life and has been widely adopted by Ambassadors and partners.

Great West Way and England's Great West Way have been successfully trade marked and this has helped to ensure that new products are developed in line with the brand.

The *Story of the Great West Way* is a guide for businesses, destinations and Official Tour Operator partners produced to support them in positioning themselves and their products as part of the Great West Way brand. It includes a



To view the *Story of the Great West Way* click here



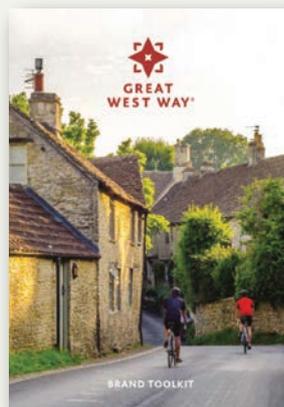
To view the Great West Way Brand Toolkit click here

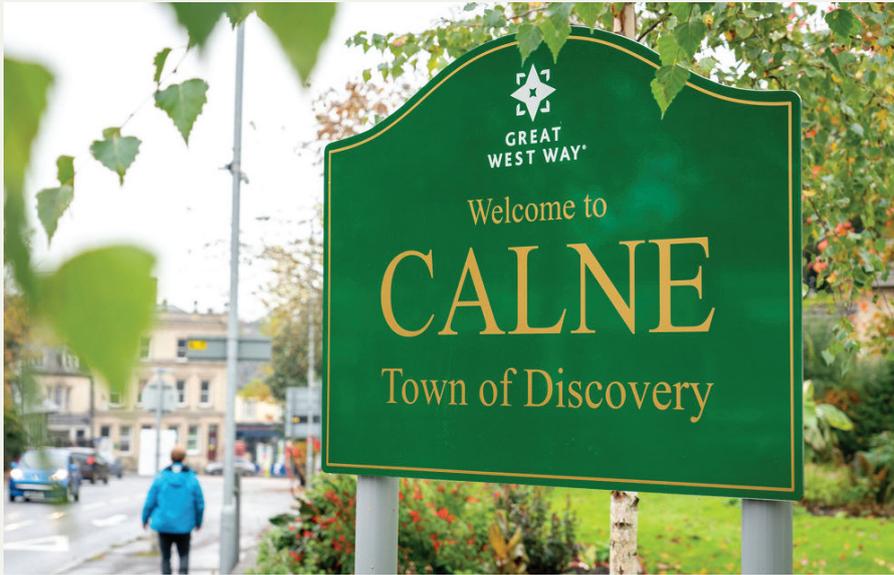
Great West Way experience checklist to guide development of products and experiences.

Support is provided to all partners in using these, including the opportunity for face-to-face training through a series of Great West Way Welcome and Experience Workshops. A series of 21 bespoke workshops have delivered training to almost 300 industry participants.

## UNLOCKING DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

Great West Way has a strong synergy with government strategic priorities. This has allowed for the unlocking of destination development funding from DEFRA's LEADER Programme.

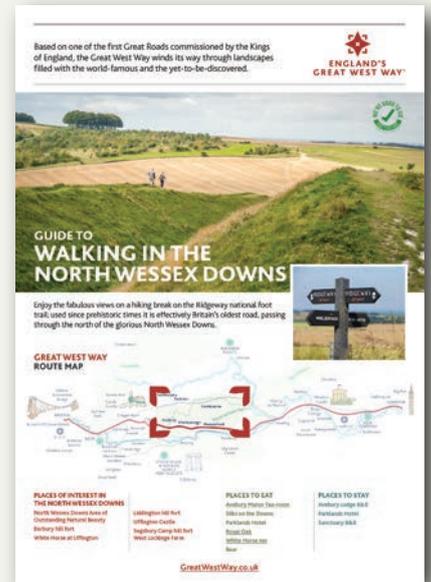




In 2018 the Calne Great West Way Tourism Group successfully applied for LEADER Grants to fund a dedicated Great West Way programme, including signage, website development and local marketing materials and in 2019/20, the Great West Way secured a £94k DEFRA LEADER programme grant to develop Great West Way content for the Plain Action, Vale Action and North Wessex Downs Local Action Group areas. A range of new

consumer and travel trade itineraries and photography were produced for the project, which highlights our commitment to using the route to bring investment and create economic benefit beyond current tourism destinations.

 To view voxpops created for the LEADER project [click here](#)



Examples of product development made possible by LEADER programme funding



Great West Way Welcome and Experience Workshop attendees, Bristol Aerospace

**"I think what's so great about Great West Way is that it is really trying to draw people out of London, to come and see what else there is to explore in the south of England."**  
 Alison Howell, Foot Trails

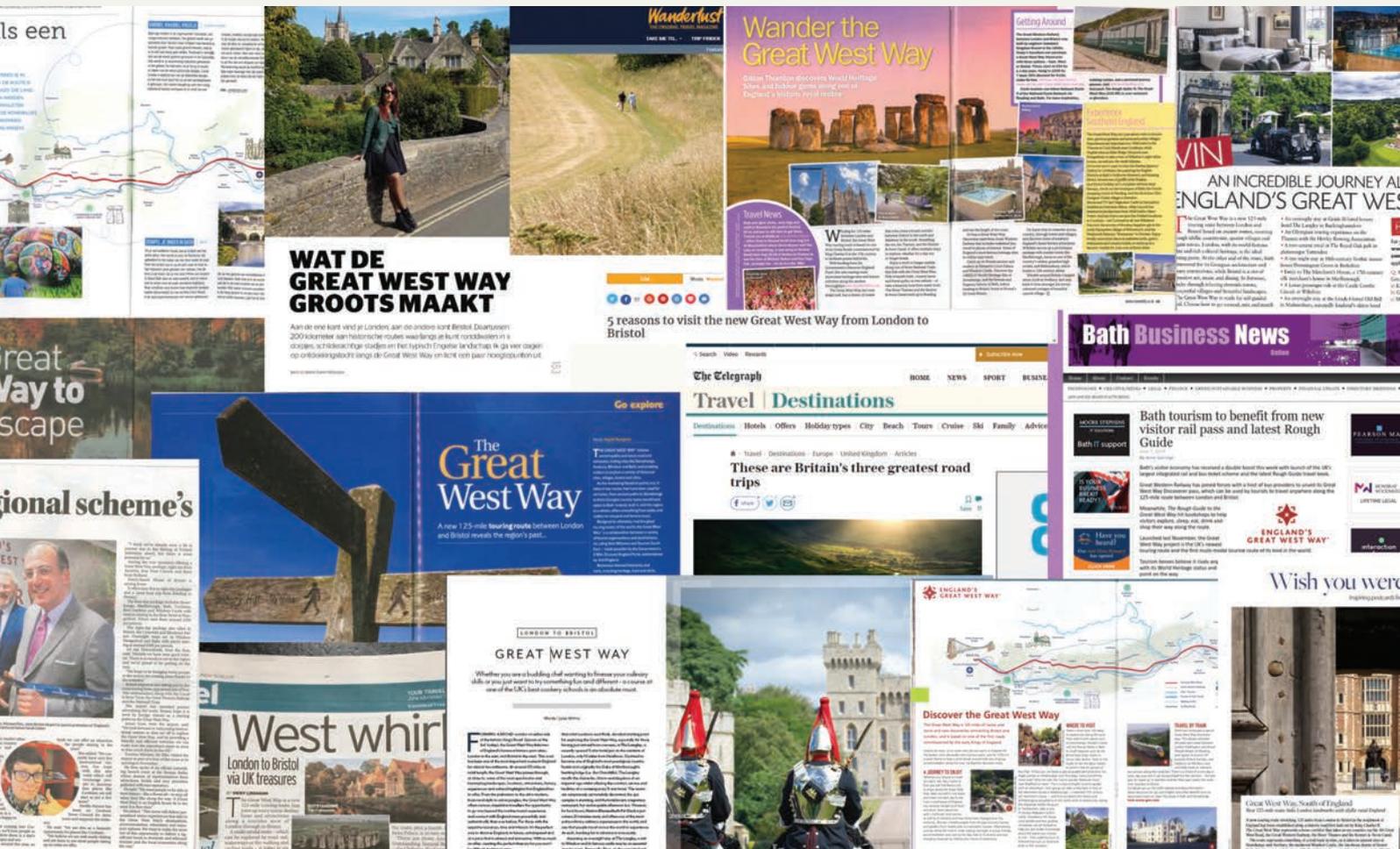
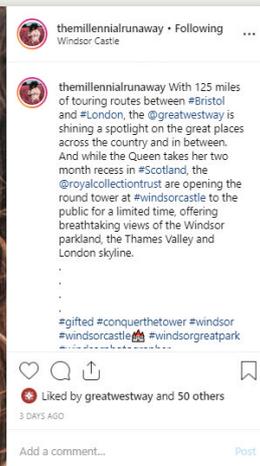
# GETTING THE GREAT WEST WAY TALKED ABOUT

Hitting the headlines and starting conversations with the tourism industry, travel trade, partners, potential visitors and other stakeholders

## MEDIA AND INFLUENCER ENGAGEMENT

Media interest has been strong since launch, reflecting the strength of the proposition and the appetite to bring new experiences to media audiences. More than 50 media representatives attended a launch press event in July 2019.

We have hosted 35 international press and influencer visits and two instameets. As a result, Great West Way has achieved strong coverage in numerous national programmes and titles, including the *BBC Travel Show*, the *Daily Telegraph's* Three Greatest Road Trips in Britain, *Sunday People* and *My Weekly* and titles



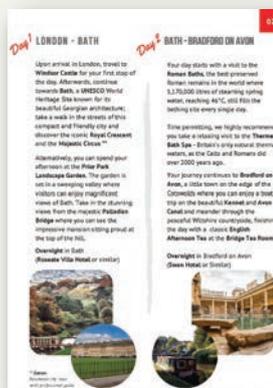
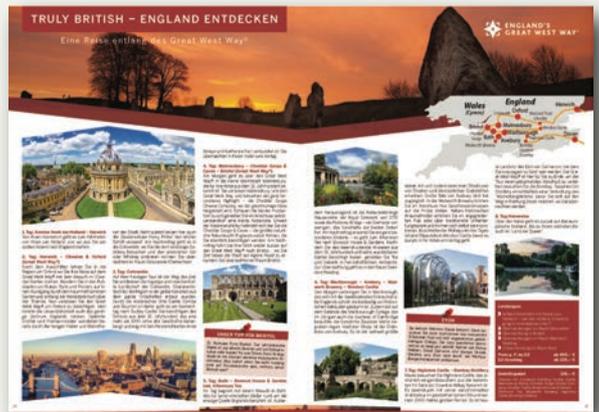
in Australia, Canada, USA, France, Italy, Spain, Scandinavia, Netherlands, Belgium, China, Japan, Russia, Eastern Europe and Germany. Press coverage has achieved a reach of +300m against an initial target of 100m.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Great West Way social channels have reached 5.25m people since the dedicated Twitter, Facebook and Instagram channels launched in November 2018 and there has been a strong interest in content. By September 2019, the channels had more than 17,000 followers, reaching approximately 50,000 people a week. Engagement on social channels was strong throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with content continuing to reach 30,000 people a week, thanks to a successful strategy to develop and push out inspirational content to maintain visibility.

## AMPLIFYING THE BRAND

Over 200 Ambassadors and Official Tour Operators have adopted the Great West Way branding in print publications, websites, advertising, video content, editorial, wayfinding and products. The tourism industry is updated on developments and opportunities to align with the brand via the Great West Way monthly industry newsletter, *The Way Forward*, and demand has far exceeded initial targets, with 1,500 contacts receiving it.



**"I'm delighted to support Great West Way, which I see as a significant positive example of collaborative working, paying dividends for the development of the visitor economy across the region."**

Tim Bowles, Mayor of the West of England Combined Authority

**i** Comprehensive dedicated press materials including press packs, releases and content have been produced and are available at [GreatWestWay.co.uk/media](http://GreatWestWay.co.uk/media)



Bailbrook House Hotel, Bath



## NEW CONSUMER MEDIA CHANNELS

The Great West Way Travel Magazine was first published in March 2019 and distributed nationally and internationally. Distribution outlets include Eurostar, Eurotunnel and railway lounges, via Ambassadors and Official Tour Operators, and at airports in Berlin, New York, Chicago, Atlanta, London.

A second edition was published in February 2020 and an additional digital version was published in October 2020, featuring Covid-19 reassurance messaging and content throughout, aligned with VisitEngland's Escape the Everyday campaign.

**"What inspires me about Great West Way is that it is businesses coming together to promote a part of England that a lot of people don't normally see."**

Katie Fairfax-Ross, The Merchant's House, Marlborough



Follow the paths taken by generations of travellers through England's idyllic countryside, quaint villages and elegant towns.

Great West Way Travel Magazine



## THE ROUGH GUIDE TO THE GREAT WEST WAY

In 2019, Great West Way partnered with Rough Guides to produce *The Rough Guide to the Great West Way*. The global brand reach of Rough Guides, together with its mission to share insider travel knowledge with readers, made the title a strong fit for the Great West Way brand. Written by travel journalist, Helen Ochyra, *The Rough Guide to the Great West Way* was launched in June 2019 and it is available to buy online and in stores, with Ambassadors and Official Tour Operators able to sell copies at a discount on cover price.



Travel writer, editor and broadcaster, Helen Ochyra, who was born in Devizes, explains what visitors can find in *The Rough Guide to the Great West Way*

**"*The Rough Guide to the Great West Way* is here to help international visitors to enjoy the region and domestic travellers to slow down and explore. Of course, it lists the well-known highlights. It reveals how to get inside the stone circle at Stonehenge and how to spot a Banksy in Bristol. It tells you the best place to bathe in Bath and what to wear to Royal Ascot. It lists the best places to stay in the Cotswolds, the paintings to look out for at Windsor Castle, and the highlights of Kew Gardens.**

**But above all, it puts the spotlight on more unsung places – tiny tearooms, microbreweries and walled gardens. You'll find walking routes only the locals know, places to see the bluebells, spot red kites, have afternoon tea. There are wonderful, ancient towns that have never even been in a guidebook before and, of course, there are plenty of my personal recommendations, discovered over years of family days out."**

# 4 TAKING THE GREAT WEST WAY TO MARKET

Making sure the right products get to the right customers and making it easy for them to plan and book

Activity in this workstream focuses on international marketing and distribution. It includes a programme of travel trade marketing and distribution; consumer marketing: digital/online and social; encouraging and facilitating businesses to work with international trade; and developing bookable new product.

Great West Way has concentrated primarily on the priority markets of Germany, the Netherlands and North America, as well as the UK domestic market.

support to enable them to develop, market and distribute their Great West Way programmes to their customers.

## OFFICIAL TOUR OPERATOR PROGRAMME

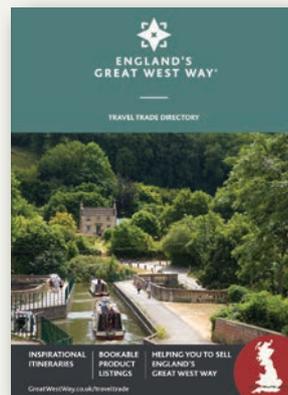
The Great West Way Official Tour Operator programme was launched in June 2018 as a key element of the travel trade strategy. This

partnership approach supports an ongoing commitment from tour operators to develop, market and distribute programmes. It includes the ability to use the exclusive Great West Way name and visual identity in line with brand guidelines, access to photography, videography, travel trade toolkit, familiarisation visits, networking events, one-to-one itinerary planning support and, B2B and B2C distribution via Great West Way channels such as featuring

## TRAVEL TRADE ENGAGEMENT

The travel trade is an important route to market for Great West Way and we work closely with VisitBritain, Ambassador destinations and inbound trade organisations to promote Great West Way to the international travel trade.

A strong focus of activity is establishing direct contact and ongoing engagement with domestic and international travel trade, creating a partnership approach and providing them with tools, training, and one-to-one



“Great West Way has already proved to be an exceptionally strong proposition in our international markets and has been particularly successful at delivering the right package of support to inspire and enable the international travel trade to develop and sell brand new packages and tours. It’s great to see more than 80 operators joining the Official Tour Operator Network and, based on continued interest throughout the Covid pandemic, I expect to see that number grow, as international traveller demand returns and visitors once again seek out authentic immersive travel experiences.”

Robin Johnson, VisitBritain Director Europe





Great West Way Marketplace 2018

in the travel trade directory and on relevant pages of the website.

There are currently agreements in place with 82 Great West Way Official Tour Operators against an initial target of twenty, with new operators continuing to come onboard during 2020/21 despite the global covid pandemic. These cover a wide range of intermediary types across primary markets, and some secondary markets, with many distributing several Great West Way programmes or tailor made tours.

Every newly developed programme is approved by the Great West Way team prior to distribution to ensure usage of brand guidelines, geographic reference and messaging is accurate. By working with a range of intermediaries, from in-market tour operators to UK based



The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

## TRAVEL TRADE ACHIEVEMENTS

# 900+

One-to-one meetings with trade contacts since launch.



# 60%

Trade contacts who wanted to develop Great West Way programmes or itineraries.

Annual Great West Way Marketplace events have taken place in 2018 and 2019 with more than 200 attendees, facilitating 2,500+ buyer and supplier meetings and six themed familiarisation visits.



Great West Way Travel Trade website portal and Travel Trade Toolkit support the trade with helping to sell, suggested itineraries, branding, narrative, images etc.

# 1,500+

Subscribers receive a regular Great West Way travel trade e-newsletter, updating them on new product and available collateral to help them to sell their programmes.



The annual Great West Way Travel Trade Directory features bookable product and gives intermediaries detailed information on 450+ businesses that want to work with the trade. Two editions (Nov 2018 and Nov 2019) with a third edition being finalised.



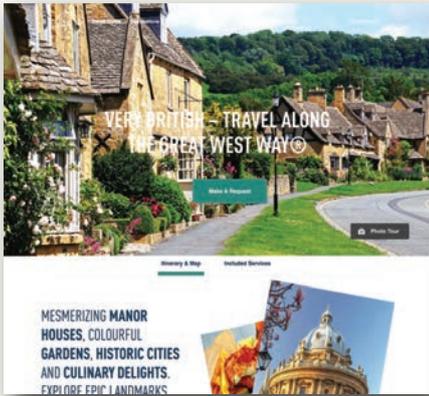
Attending key international and domestic travel trade events including World Travel Market, ITB Berlin, Vakantibeurs, Excursions, Britain and Ireland Marketplace, Group Travel and Leisure Show, Destination Britain North America and Explore GB.

# 107

Tour operators have attended Great West Way familiarisation visits covering a range of themes.



A series of Great West Way podcasts has been produced and distributed to more than 1,000 travel agencies in the US to encourage future travel.



**"It's nice to be involved in an exciting new initiative. I'm delighted to be able to say that Abbey UK and Ireland have booked a group to stay with us next year."**

Angel Hotel Chippenham



Official Tour Operator branded programmes

wholesalers, the strategic approach has been to penetrate the distribution chain at all levels to join up intermediaries with each other and maximise distribution.



A full list of current Official Tour Operators and their B2B bookable programmes that are currently available in market, can be seen at [GreatWestWay.co.uk/traveltrade](http://GreatWestWay.co.uk/traveltrade)

While the trade have had to cancel 2020 bookings because of to the Covid-19 pandemic, many are revisiting their programmes for later in 2021 and 2022 and operators have continued to show a strong interest in Great West Way information and support.

Although the main focus is on priority markets, interest has been received much more widely, with Great West Way now on sale in Canada, Russia, Italy, Spain, Australia and New Zealand.



Stonar Park Gardens, Henley-on-Thames

**"It has been wonderful to see Great West Way develop over the past five years, bringing together destinations and industry under an exciting new destination brand for the South West. The initiative provides an exceptional platform to develop new commercial opportunities with international travel trade and enables inbound visitors to venture beyond tourism hotspots and spread the economic and social benefit of inbound tourism throughout local and regional communities."**

Joss Croft, CEO, UK Inbound



Outdoor advertising on Highway 101, San Francisco

“Working with the Great West Way team has been a pleasure over the past few years. Together we’ve developed different products for various source markets, including Italy, Germany, France and the US. The Great West Way team has been amazing in keeping us informed and updated about the latest developments, whether by call, meeting, email or WhatsApp message. Through joint webinars and trade events, we’ve established a long-lasting partnership. We’re very grateful to have such a strong resourceful partner on our side.”

Vera Lett, Group Marketing & People Strategy Director, Tour Partner Group Ltd



## CONSUMER MARKETING

Consumer marketing has focused on digital marketing and lead generation, raising awareness of the Great West Way and driving interest in and demand for Great West Way content, such as the Travel Magazine and maps.

### Great West Way Consumer Launch Campaign

A multi-channel digital marketing campaign marked the consumer launch in February 2019. The campaign more than doubled expected audience reach, achieving a reach of 7.6 million consumers across UK, Germany, USA and the Netherlands. It performed particularly well on social media, outperforming engagement targets by over 150% and achieving over 5,000 competition entries. In recognition of the campaigns innovative approach and effectiveness it won Travolution Magazine’s Launch Campaign of the Year.

### Consumer Marketing 2020/21

Following an early spring 2020 food and drink themed campaign, the focus of consumer activity moved to content sharing and social engagement on the theme of “Escape the Everyday at Home”.

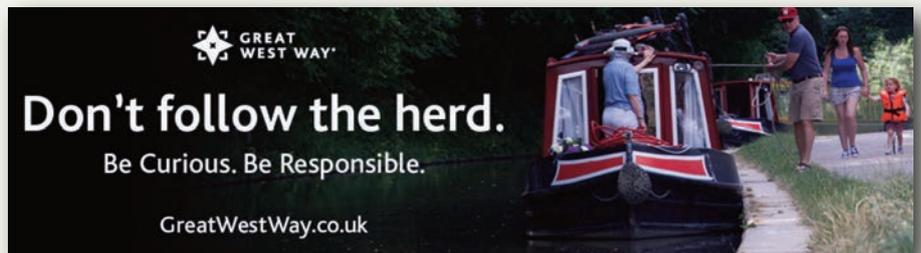
In June 2020 a domestic tactical “Don’t Follow The Herd” campaign on outdoor media and social media encouraged responsible travel to the Great West Way during the lifting of Covid-19 travel restrictions.

Response to a domestic lead generation

campaign in late 2020 showed that interest in Great West Way remains high.

### Escape the Everyday 2021

Great West Way received DEF Round 5 funding to implement domestic marketing activity in spring 2021, to generate demand for domestic breaks in advance of anticipated summer travel. The campaign, launching in March, will seek to replicate the success of previous digital and social campaigns, inspiring visitors to ‘Escape the Everyday’ on the Great West Way.



Don't Follow The Herd Campaign June 2020

# COVID-19 RESPONSE

A summary of the steps we've taken and the key adjustments we've had to make following the major impact of Covid-19



Great West Way Travel Magazine October 2020

The Teashop by the Canal, Newbury

The Covid-19 pandemic began to impact the world's travel industry in early 2020 and what looked set to be an exciting year of growth for the initiative was, of course, significantly impacted. Throughout the year, Great West Way adjusted plans and priorities to take account of the changing situation and the need to support destinations and businesses.

Priorities have been to:

- Continue to engage with and support the destinations and businesses within the Ambassador Network and the wider industry.
- Maintain contact with travel trade partners, sustaining their interest in the initiative and

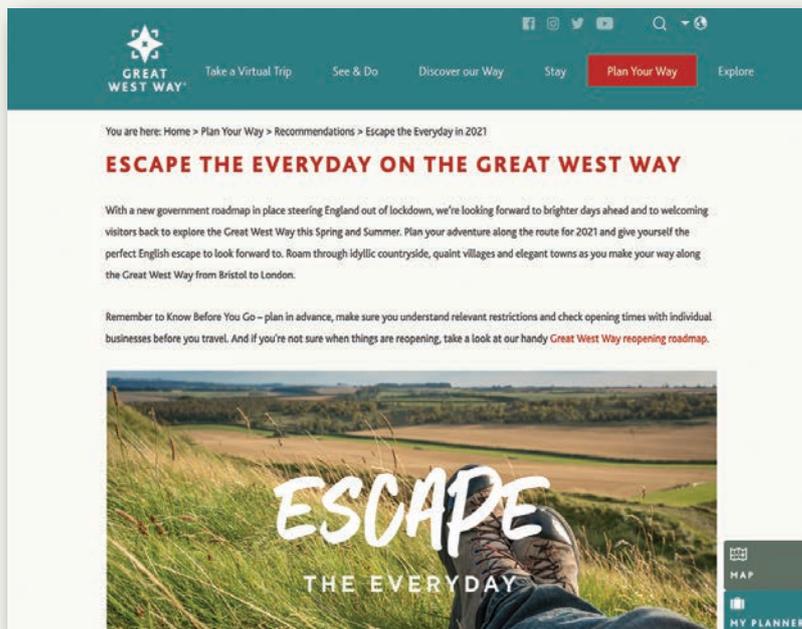
supporting their development of new Great West Way programmes.

- Continue to develop and deliver new content to sustain interest across all audiences.
- Provide accurate up-to-date information on the website and owned channels to reflect the changing Covid restrictions and messaging.
- Promote Ambassadors, share stories and push out inspirational imagery and content to inspire future travel.
- Align with VisitBritain and VisitEngland content strategy to widen reach.
- Maintain media interest in Great West Way.

**"The Great West Way celebrates the vibrant culture and history of this crucial route across England and Strawberry Hill House & Garden is delighted to be a featured destination partner."**

Bethan Wood, Strawberry Hill House & Garden

As a result of this sustained activity, interest has been maintained across Great West Way audiences and support from the Ambassador Network remains strong. Official Tour Operators continue to adopt Great West Way branding in print, websites, video and new products.



Escape the Everyday Campaign March 2021

**“There are seven National Trust places on Great West Way and eight more within easy reach. The initiative works beautifully for us, linking our places together as part of a compelling and exciting new visitor offer. Great West Way offers people new ways to explore the wonderful landscapes and history of this fascinating part of England. It gives us the opportunity to attract new visitors and to invest more in looking after the heritage, archaeology and countryside sites that are the jewels of Great West Way. National Trust is delighted to be playing its part in Great West Way. We see this as a great example of partnership working.”**

Rebecca Burton, Director for the South West, National Trust

We continue to receive a strong level of interest from Official Tour Operators requiring help to source product, one-to-one itinerary support, and requests for online product training/webinars and positive feedback from the international trade about future prospects for selling the Great West Way Discoverer pass.

A number of VisitBritain offices are committed to promoting Great West Way activity once restrictions are lifted, including in Italy, Spain, Australia, Scandinavia and Russia.

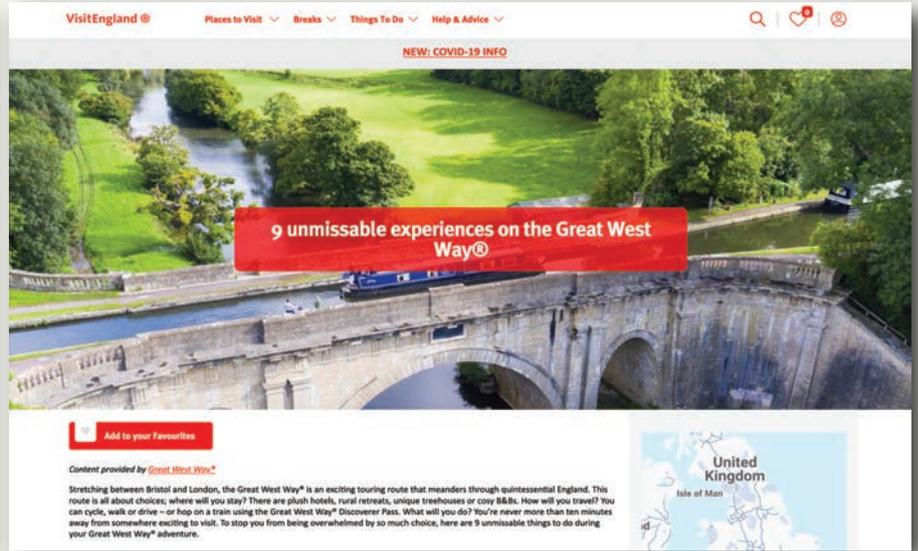
In 2020, we saw a 10% year-on-year increase in web traffic coming from organic sources, with social media channels reaching an organic reach of more than one million.



To watch the Explore the Great West Way Episode of the Curious Traveller TV Programme, aired on PBS in the USA in 2020, [click here](#)



2021 advertising featuring VisitEngland Good to Go Accreditation



Great West Way on VisitEngland.com



A selection of tours created by Official Tour Operators for the domestic market

## SPOTLIGHT ON GREAT WEST WAY AND THE DOMESTIC MARKET

As well as attracting new international business to the region, Great West Way aims to inspire domestic visitors to stay longer and explore more. All work streams have included a focus on the domestic market, which has resulted in strong interest among domestic consumers and travel trade.

UK tour operators have joined the Great West Way Official Tour Operator Programme and have produced innovative new domestic market tours including:

- The Carter Company – England's Great West Way Cycling Holiday
- Ardour Tours – England's Great West Way
- Wanderlust Camper Tours – Encounter England Self Drive Tour, History and Heritage Self-drive Tour and "Houses & Gardens: Film, TV & Royalty".

There has been strong UK media coverage, including a feature on the *BBC Travel Show* and in *The Daily Telegraph* as one of the Three Greatest Road Trips in Britain. Lonely Planet named Great West Way one of Britain's Greatest Road Trips.

Consumer campaign activity within the domestic market has produced excellent

results, generating particularly strong engagement on social channels.

This focus on the domestic market has laid a solid foundation to enable Great West Way to position itself successfully to domestic visitors in the wake of Covid-19. Current forecasts predict that the domestic market will be the first to show recovery, with domestic visits set to be strong in 2021.

Great West Way is working closely with VisitEngland and our domestic partners to promote the route to "staycation" visitors in this challenging year, while supporting our partners to meet new consumer travel-safety expectations.

A DEF-funded Great West Way domestic digital marketing campaign was launched in March 2021, including a social campaign, display advertising and lead generation to further raise awareness of the Great West Way brand, increase website and social media engagement.



**“We’ve found the scale and scope of things to discover under the Great West Way brand incredibly useful in developing new campervan tours for our customers. With so much choice, we’ve created three fantastic themed tour guides: the Encounter England tour is a ‘best of’ the Great West Way itinerary, encompassing iconic attractions, off-the-beaten-track ideas and hidden gems, and two themed tours based on history and heritage and on houses and gardens with film, TV and royal links. We’ve found the support of the Great West Way team invaluable and look forward to capitalising on exposure to international markets under the Great West Way brand.”**

**Annah Todman, Owner of Wanderlust Camper Co**

# THE WAY AHEAD

This review tells just the beginning of the Great West Way story, coming as it does at a time of global shock to the tourism industry brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic

This review demonstrates that Great West Way has become a proven model for working collaboratively with destinations to develop and market tourism along a tourism corridor. Great West Way has an important contribution to make to England's tourism recovery and spreading the benefits throughout our partner communities.

#### In the short term we will:

- Evolve our product and stories to meet changing consumer travel habits.
- Continue to work in partnership with tourism and destinations along the route through our Ambassador Network.
- Continue to offer a three-year model of investment to ensure medium and longer-term commitments and to ensure the route's future sustainability.
- Offer Ambassador investment rate reductions in 2021/22 to help businesses and destinations through recovery.
- Up-weight our focus on the domestic market, delivering inspiring content through our own and partners' channels to generate demand through a targeted integrated digital and social marketing campaign in spring 2021.
- Work with VisitEngland/VisitBritain to distribute content through their domestic and international campaigns to consumer, press and travel trade audiences.
- Work with Ambassador destinations and businesses to publish and distribute the 2021 digital edition of the Great West Way Travel Magazine.
- Continue to service and expand our reach and distribution to the domestic and international travel trade, through a dedicated programme of travel trade activity.
- Continue digital and social content creation and distribution in partnership with Ambassadors.
- Establish a Great West Way Travel Trade group to maximise bookings through the travel trade.
- Publish and distribute the third edition of the Great West Way Travel Trade Directory.
- Create and rollout virtual media trips to maximise press and PR potential.
- Work with Ambassadors to send out joint Great West Way-themed press releases to domestic and international media.
- Develop online and offline delivery of Great West Way Discovery Training .
- Work in partnership with VisitEngland/VisitBritain to promote TXGB and increase bookable bookable product along the route.



Marlborough High Street

"It's all too easy to think of defining tourism by buildings, attractions and venues rather than environments, natural experiences and the recognition of just being in places for their unique stories, peoples and cultures. It takes hard work to present and promote these more complex themes. Great West Way is a wonderful example of what can be done."

Peter Stonham, Editorial Director, Landor Travel Publications

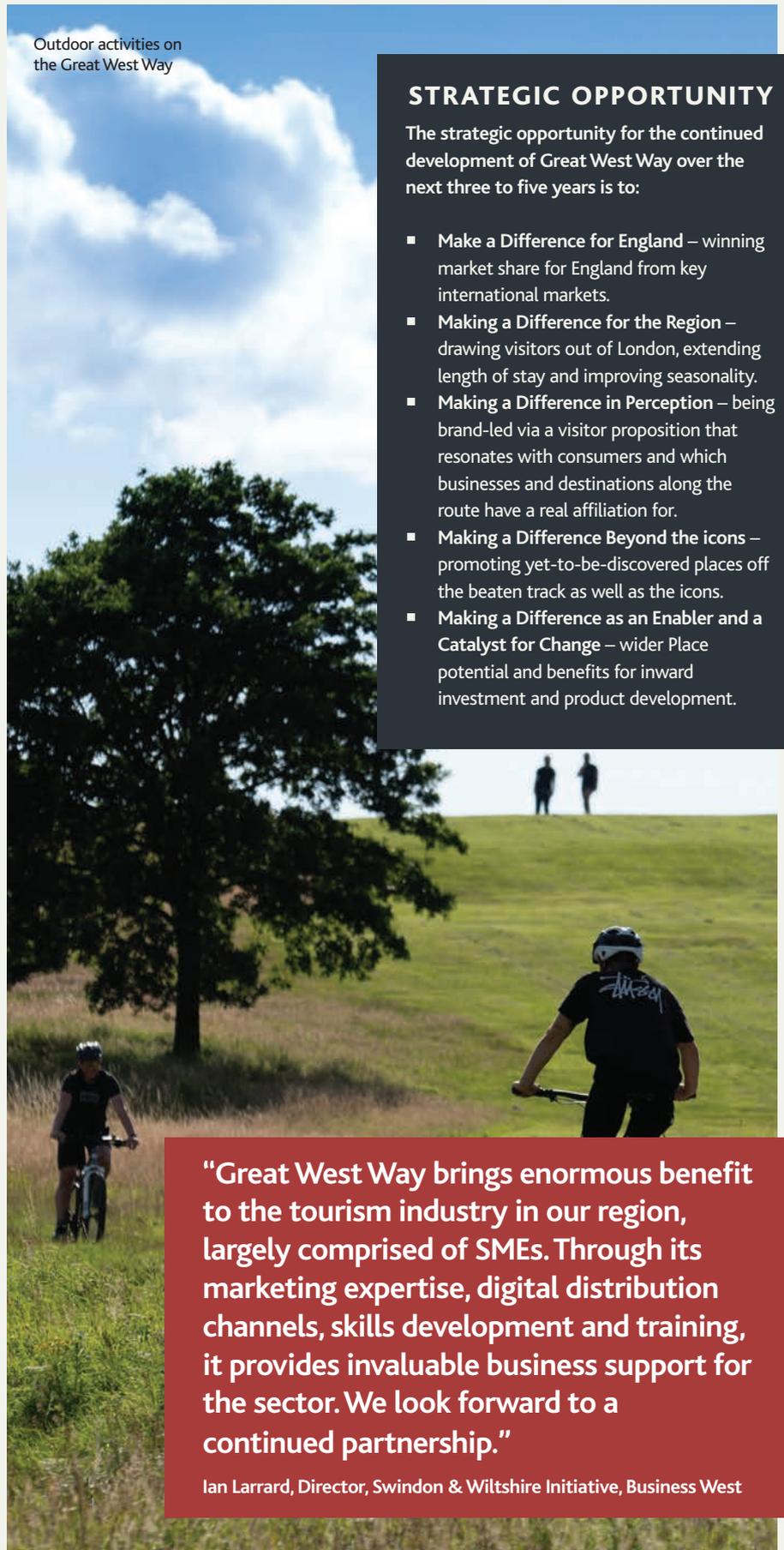


- Continue to work with Ambassadors on local tourism strategies and wayfinding initiatives.
- Create and launch a series of new consumer and travel trade itineraries.
- Undertake ongoing brand development to continue to get Great West Way talked about.

We will also seek to contribute to post-Covid economic recovery and long-term development by:

- Continuing to work through the Ambassador Network to innovate and adapt the visitor experience in response to changing patterns of demand and tourism behaviour.
- Engaging with stakeholders along the route to develop the role of Great West Way in facilitating and delivering wider Place and economic growth objectives.
- Exploring opportunities for working with the tourism sector to encourage new low-carbon eco-friendly and sustainability solutions.
- Presenting the benefits to key influencers and decision makers of Great West Way operating as a tourism corridor/zone.
- Reviewing opportunities for creating new themed Ambassador sector groups and initiatives.
- Developing and support new tourism initiatives along the route in partnership with Ambassador destinations.

Outdoor activities on the Great West Way



## STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

The strategic opportunity for the continued development of Great West Way over the next three to five years is to:

- **Make a Difference for England** – winning market share for England from key international markets.
- **Making a Difference for the Region** – drawing visitors out of London, extending length of stay and improving seasonality.
- **Making a Difference in Perception** – being brand-led via a visitor proposition that resonates with consumers and which businesses and destinations along the route have a real affiliation for.
- **Making a Difference Beyond the icons** – promoting yet-to-be-discovered places off the beaten track as well as the icons.
- **Making a Difference as an Enabler and a Catalyst for Change** – wider Place potential and benefits for inward investment and product development.

**“Great West Way brings enormous benefit to the tourism industry in our region, largely comprised of SMEs. Through its marketing expertise, digital distribution channels, skills development and training, it provides invaluable business support for the sector. We look forward to a continued partnership.”**

Ian Larrard, Director, Swindon & Wiltshire Initiative, Business West

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# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY 2017-2021

Income	£
Discover England Fund Grant	1,626,000
Ambassador Network	575,231
DEFRA LEADER Grant	96,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,297,231</b>

Expenditure	£
Project management	459,446
Business support and engagement	91,889
Brand development	183,778
Product development	137,834
Content development and distribution	183,778
Consumer marketing, digital and social	735,114
Travel trade	275,668
Press and PR	68,917
Research and evaluation	114,862
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,251,286</b>



To find out more about Great West Way contact:

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Director, Great West Way

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# THANK YOU TO OUR AMBASSADORS



## Title Ambassadors

Bristol Airport  
Canal & River Trust  
Great Western Railway  
National Trust

## Destination Ambassadors

Bath Business Improvement District  
Bradford on Avon Town  
Calne Town  
Chippenham Town  
Corsham Town  
Cotswolds Tourism  
Devizes Town  
Henley on Thames Town  
Hungerford Town  
Malmesbury Town  
Marlborough Town  
Marlow Town  
North Wessex Downs AONB  
Reading UK  
Royal Borough of  
Windsor & Maidenhead  
Steeple Ashton Village  
Stonehenge & Avebury World  
Heritage Site  
Swindon Town  
Tourism South East  
Trowbridge Town  
Vale of Pewsey  
Visit Bath  
Visit Bristol  
Visit Thames  
VisitNewbury  
VisitRichmond  
VisitWiltshire

## Designated Attraction & Hotel Ambassadors

Aerospace Bristol  
Bowood House & Garden, Calne  
Cheddar Gorge & Caves  
Cobbs Farm Shop & Kitchen,  
Hungerford  
Longleat, Warminster  
McArthurGlen Designer Outlet,  
Swindon  
The Old Bell Hotel, Malmesbury  
The Roman Baths, Bath  
The Royal Crescent Hotel & Spa,  
Bath  
Stonehenge  
Thermae Bath Spa, Bath  
Wadworth Brewery & Tours, Devizes  
West Berkshire Brewery, Yattendon  
Westonbirt, The National  
Arboretum, Tetbury  
Whatley Manor Hotel & Spa,  
Malmesbury  
Windsor Castle

Discover more about  
our Ambassadors at:  
[GreatWestWay.co.uk](http://GreatWestWay.co.uk)

## Gateway Ambassadors

American Museum & Gardens  
A Taste of England  
a'Beckett's Vineyard, Devizes  
Abbey Hotel, Bath  
The Abbey Quarter, Reading  
Active England  
Alder Ridge Vineyard, Hungerford  
Aldermaston Tea Rooms, Reading  
Aldwick Estate, Bristol  
Alison Howell's Foottrails  
All Saints Church, Alton Priors  
The Apartment Bath  
Apex Hotel, Bath  
Apsley House, London  
Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol  
Atwell-Wilson Motor Museum, Calne  
Avalon Lodge Bed and Breakfast, Devizes  
Avebury Landscape  
Avon Valley Adventure & Wildlife Park, Bristol  
Baillbrook House Hotel, Bath  
Bailey Balloons, Bristol  
The Barn Theatre, Cirencester  
Barrington Court, Ilminster  
Bath Apartment Breaks  
Bath Area Self Catering  
Beanhill Farm B&B, Chippenham  
Bozedown Alpacas, Reading  
The Bridge Tea Rooms, Bradford on Avon  
Bristol Blue Glass  
Bristol Cathedral  
Bristol Community Ferry Boats  
Bristol Insight  
Bristol Nordic Walking  
Bristol Packet Boats  
Bristol Tandem Hire  
The Bristol Wing  
Bristol Zoo Gardens  
Brooks Guest House B&B, Bath  
Brooks Guest House B&B, Bristol  
Bruce Branch Boats, Marlborough  
Brunel's SS Great Britain, Bristol  
Buttle Farm, Compton Bassett  
Crop Circle Visitors Centre & Exhibition  
Canal Trust Café,  
Bradford on Avon  
Castle Combe Circuit, Chippenham  
Castle Hotel, Windsor  
Cheddar Camping and Caravanning Club Site  
Cheddar Gorge  
Chertsey Camping and Caravanning Club Site  
The Chilterns View, Wallingford  
Chippenham Museum and Heritage Centre  
Cholderton Rare Breeds Farm, Salisbury  
Church Farm Country Cottages, Bradford on Avon  
Clayton's Kitchen, Bath  
Cliffe Farm Dairy, West Lavington  
Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol  
Cobbs Farm Shop & Kitchen, Englefield  
Compass Holidays, Cheltenham  
Cotswold Water Park, South Cerney  
The Courts Garden, Trowbridge  
Cricklade House Hotel, Swindon  
Crofton Beam Engines, Crofton  
The Crown & Anchor, Ham  
The Crown, Toll-down  
Cumberwell Country Cottages, Bradford on Avon  
Devizes Camping and Caravanning Club Site

## Devizes Wharf Tea room

Didcot Railway Centre  
Donnington Grove, Newbury  
DoubleTree by Hilton, Swindon  
Dukes Hotel, Bath  
Dyrham Park, Chippenham  
The Engineman's Rest Café, Crofton  
Fashion Museum, Bath  
French Brothers, Windsor  
The Gainsborough Bath Spa  
The George Inn,  
Norton St Philip  
Glenside Hospital Museum, Bristol  
Guyers House Hotel, Corsham  
Hampton by Hilton Bristol Airport  
Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey  
Helen Browning's Royal Oak, Bishopstone  
Henley Greenlands Hotel  
Henley Rowing Association  
Heritage Bed & Breakfast, Calne  
Herongate Fitness & Wellbeing, Hungerford  
The Hidden Gardens of Bath  
Hobbs of Henley  
The Holburne Museum, Bath  
Holiday Inn, Salisbury – Stonehenge  
Honey Street Mill Café  
Hotel Novotel Reading Centre  
Hungerford Wharf  
Iford Manor Gardens, Bradford on Avon  
The Jane Austen Centre, Bath  
The Kingsbury @ No.8, Marlborough  
Koffmann & Mr White's English French  
Brasserie, Bath  
Lacock Abbey, Fox Talbot Museum and Village  
The Langley, Slough  
Liberty Car Tours, Bath  
Lido Spa & Restaurant, Bristol  
Lorne House, Corsham  
Lytes Cary Manor  
Maidenhead Heritage Centre  
Manor Farm Courtyard Cottages, Thatcham  
The Manor House, Castle Combe  
Marlborough College Summer School  
The Matthew of Bristol  
The Merchant's House, Marlborough  
Mill Farm Glamping, Poulshot  
Mompesson House, Salisbury  
Monkey Island Estate, Bray  
Montacute House  
Museum of East Asian Art, Bath  
The Museum of English Rural Life, Reading  
MV Barbara McLellan, Bradford on Avon  
MV Jubilee, Newbury  
MV Kenavon Venture, Devizes  
National Garden Scheme  
Newark Park, Ozleworth  
The Newbury Pub  
Newbury Racecourse  
No. 1 Royal Crescent, Bath  
No.15 Great Pulteney, Bath  
Noah's Ark Zoo Farm, Wraxall  
Old Sarum, Salisbury  
Oldbury Tours  
Original Wild, Bath  
Parkway Shopping Centre, Newbury  
Pennyhill Park, Bagsshot  
Postern Hill Campsite, Marlborough  
The Pound Arts Centre, Corsham  
Practical Car & Van Hire, Chippenham  
The Prince Street Social, Bristol  
Prior Park Landscape Garden, Bath  
The Queens Arms Hotel, East Garston  
Reading Museum  
Red Lion Freehouse, East Chisenbury  
REME Museum, Lyneham  
Rick Stein, Marlborough

River & Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames  
Roman Bath Private Hire  
The Rose of Hungerford  
Roseate House London, Tyburnia  
The Roseate Reading  
The Roseate Villa Bath  
Roves Farm, Sevenhampton  
Royal Berkshire, Sunninghill  
The Royal Oak, Yattendon  
The Royal Windsor Pub  
Salisbury Camping and Caravanning Club Site  
Salisbury Cathedral  
Salisbury, Stonehenge and Sarum Tours  
Sally Narrowboats, Bradford on Avon  
Salters Steamers, Reading  
Savouring Bath  
Shaw House  
Sheephouse Manor Cottages, Maidenhead  
Sir Christopher Wren Hotel & Spa, Windsor  
Skydive Netheravon  
South West Heritage Tours  
South Western Railway  
Stay in Bath  
Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site  
Stonehenge Landscape  
Stonor Park, Henley on Thames  
Stourhead, Stourton  
Strawberry Hill House & Garden, Twickenham  
Sulis Guides  
The Swan Hotel, Bradford on Avon  
Swinley Bike Hub Swinley Forest's Trail Centre,  
Bracknell  
Teashop By The Canal, Newbury  
Thames Lido, Reading  
Thames Rivercruise, Reading  
Three Tuns Freehouse, Great Bedwyn  
Tintinhull Garden  
Totteridge Farm Camping Pods, Pewsey  
Tour and Explore  
Tours 2 Order  
TransWilts Community Rail Partner  
Troutbeck Guest House, East Chisenbury  
Tucking Mill View, Midford  
Turner's House, Twickenham  
The Tutti Pole, Hungerford  
Tyntesfield, Wraxall  
University of Bristol Botanic Garden  
Vaughan's Kitchen, Devizes  
Vintage Classics, Melksham  
Visit Hillbrush, Mere  
Waddesdon Manor  
Walton on Thames Camping and  
Caravanning Club Site  
Wanderlust Camper Co  
The Watermill Theatre, Baginor  
The Wave, Bristol  
We The Curious, Bristol  
Wellington Arch, London  
West Berkshire Museum, Newbury  
Whitchurch Silk Mill  
White Horse Inn, Compton Bassett  
Wild Swim Bike Run  
Wilton Windmill  
Wiltshire Museum, Devizes  
Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford on Avon  
Windsor Carriages  
Windsor Duck Tours  
Woolley Grange Hotel, Bradford on Avon  
WWT Blakehill Farm Nature Reserve,  
Swindon  
WWT Jones's Mill at the Vera Jeans Reserve,  
Pewsey  
WWT London Wetland Centre, Barnes  
WWT Lower Moor Farm  
Wyvern Theatre, Swindon  
YMCA, Bath



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