



Great West Way Connections

Virtual Meeting Tuesday 11 August 2026, 2pm

[MEETING RECORDING TO VIEW](#)

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Naomi	Grit	American Museum & Gardens
Sarah-Jayne	Beasley	Blenheim Palace (Chair)
Suzi	Branch	Bombay Sapphire Distillery
Charlotte	Clifforth	Bombay Sapphire Distillery
Lucy	Grier	Bristol Dockyards
Victoria	Mather	City Sightseeing Bath
Harriet	Peacock	Corsham Town Council
Silva	Bala	Donnington & Co
Emma	Richards	DoubleTree By Hilton Swindon
Alison	Howell	Drive and Stroll
Anna-Karin	Hanson	English Heritage
Florence	Wallace	Great West Way
Fiona	Errington	Great West Way
David	Andrew	Great West Way
Sophie	Wojtasik	Greenlands Hotel (Venue Henley)
Kiri	Baker	Hampton by Hilton Bristol Airport
Ann	Wilson	Historic Royal Palaces
Paul	Weild	Hotel Indigo Bath (Castlebridge Hospitality)
Rachel	Whitty	In & Beyond Bath
Katherine	Holmes	In & Beyond Bath
Vicki	Smith	Mary Shelley's House of Frankenstein
Ruth	Newell	National Trust - Bath Assembly Rooms
Dawn	Wilson	Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership
Alex	Brannen	Reading
Morgan	Bucher-Jones	Roseate Hotels UK

Bernie	Patry	Royal Collection Trust
Kate	Saykounk	Salisbury Cathedral
Joella	Ronchetti	Visit West
Chloe-Mae	Poland	Winchester Royal Hotel

1. How's Business eg. top line trade visitor figures, forward bookings etc.

Thanks to businesses who emailed your How's business updates in advance of the meeting. We find this information really useful and have summarised it below:

The general mood across the Great West Way Ambassadors is cautiously positive. Summer trading appears to have strengthened after a slower start to the year for some businesses, while forward demand remains broadly encouraging. The recurring themes are shorter booking lead times, improved summer performance, stable or positive forward bookings, and continued pressure against annual budgets in some cases.

2. ETOA's Latest Report: Middle East Crisis and its continued impact on Europe by Tim Fairhurst.

Tim Fairhurst was introduced and described a program of rapid surveys run for operators, suppliers and destinations with the latest wave processed in late May and presented as a fresh preview to attendees.

Operator survey findings and demand impacts

Tim highlighted operator survey outcomes showing an uptick in respondents reporting high impact—particularly long-haul operators—followed by common impacts such as decreased demand and capacity issues on desired routes, and noted that demand uncertainty and price uncertainty remain primary concerns though price uncertainty is stabilizing.

Supply-side responses and event attendance implications

Tim described supply-side responses where accommodation and other providers are adjusting pricing, marketing and terms and conditions, and he cautioned that operators are cutting in-house travel and event attendance, so organisers should ensure events reward attendee time and justify any fees.

Climate adaptation survey and contingency updates

Tim summarized contingency intelligence—briefings with EU energy officials provided reassurance on fuel and electricity supply—and introduced a climate adaptation survey aimed at operators, restaurants, destinations and travellers to identify practical adaptations and collaborations, with the survey open for the month and preliminary results due in early September.

You can view the presentation [here](#).

3. Marketplace 2026... what to expect...

Great West Way Marketplace is taking place Tues 22 & Fri 25 September 2026. There are approx. 30 buyers from 7 markets including UK, Ireland, Netherlands, Italy, USA, Belgium and Germany. There are over 37 tourism supplier businesses attending.

On the virtual day - log in at 9am with meetings starting at 09.30. The day will finish at 5.30. There are two 15-minute coffee breaks in the morning and two in the afternoon, with an hour lunch break scheduled. Note meetings are 15 minutes and you need to start and stop your own appointments. On 25 September in Bristol, there's an In-person networking day at Bristol Dockyards – home of Brunel's SS Great Britain.

Thank you to all those who have booked. Registrations close on Friday 28 August.

Those attending should have recently received an email about the virtual platform. An email to all those attending the networking day will be sent out in due course. Plus, there's additional comms going out to buyers with ongoing recruitment up until deadline date.

Pre, During and Post Event Preparation

- Research and familiarise yourself with the buyers and their companies who are attending the event – you can see these via the [attendee link](#). It highlights who is attending the virtual and/or networking event days. A delegate directory available which will give you a summary of buyers and be able to tailor your product information accordingly.
- Prepare your questions for the operators, which could include – target markets; groups and/or FIT; current programmes in market in which your product could feature or new itineraries being developed; distributed in printed brochure or online; what are their customers interested in; do they have any special requirements etc.
- Consider preparing a few PowerPoint slides which can be screen shared in the meetings. Make sure you consider the important information they need for contracting as part of new tour programmes with concise trade information, specifically for booking and contracting. They will be interested in any upcoming offers or new developments, any groups specific information, specialist tours, opening times/hours, off season reasons to visit, trade rates, room types, coach/car parking, key contacts and how to book.
- Ask questions - find out their product and contracting cycles e.g. time of year for travel and booking windows. This will help to tailor your follow up and to understand the opportunity.
- After the event we suggest you send out tailored follow up information as discussed in each meeting. Include a link to any relevant documents, slide deck or website links.

Please note appointments are only 15 minutes in length so be wary of time and be led by the conversation.

VisitEngland's Taking England to the World - a useful inbound tourism toolkit which offers a wealth of practical step-by-step advice, tools, knowledge and insights to help businesses work with domestic and international markets with particular helpful information about working with the Travel Trade. We recommend that suppliers take a look at this guide prior to attending the Virtual Travel Trade Marketplace workshop. More information is available [here](#).

Alasdair Stamps talked through the virtual platform and shared his screen so this could be seen by attendees. Dates to note:

- **Thursday 3 September** – the meeting platform opens when you receive an automated email with your log in details. You will be required to bookmark your (high, medium low or no priority) meeting preferences with buyers.
- **Monday 14 September** – the meeting platform closes for appointment matching. We aim to match around 80% or more of your appointment schedule
- **Thursday 17 September** – the meeting platform reopens. You will be able to see your matched appointments and make any ad hoc appointment requests to fill your schedule if you wish. You may also receive appointment requests from other delegates so please accept or decline these in the run up to the event.
- **Tuesday 22 September** – virtual event takes place. There are 24 appointment slots in the day (09.00 – 17.30 UK time) with 15-minute meetings.

Lucy Grier from Bristol Dockyards talked through the Networking Day at Bristol Dockyard

Draft Schedule for the day:

From 11.00	Buyers and all suppliers arrive at Bristol Dockyards – home of SS Great Britain
11.30	Welcome speeches –VisitEngland, David Andrews and Mr Brunel
11.45 – 13.15	Bristol Dockyards Experiences – three groups of 20 pax have the opportunity to experience: Guided tour of ship / The new SS Great Britain Experience Museum
13.15 – 14.30	Buffet Networking Lunch in the First-Class Dining Saloon
14.30 – 16.00	Bristol Dockyard Afternoon Experiences: Being Brunel Museum / The Brunel Institute Library Objects / Explore the Historic Dockyards
16.00	All depart

4. Great West Way Travel Trade Update

Flo highlighted the priorities for 2027 – continuing the focus on trade engagement and influencing programme development for domestic and international travel trade, with a focus on DMC's. Priority international markets include North America, Germany and Benelux, followed by secondary markets for Scandinavia, France, Spain and Italy.

Important thematics include experiential travel, sustainability, value for money, cultural immersion, bespoke and unique offerings and the continued interest in luxury & wellness, history, heritage, film locations, town/city and countryside.

Forthcoming Great West Way opportunities include:

- **Great West Way Marketplace, Tues 22 & Fri 25 September 2026.** Cost is £400. All costs are exclusive of VAT and a £20 booking fee will apply to each booking. View the confirmed attendees [HERE](#). [FIND OUT MORE](#) & [REGISTER TO ATTEND](#).
- **[Group Leisure & Travel Show](#), Milton Keynes, Thurs 8 October 2026.** Domestic trade show for GTOs, coach and tour operators. We have one slot left for a stand sharing opportunity for **£985 + VAT** (excluding graphics). Price includes 1m space on the stand, cabinets, plus access to data capture device. Or literature distribution for only **£155 + VAT**
- **[Global European Marketplace \(GEM\)](#), Mon 2 Nov 2026.** Great West Way will attending this ETOA event representing 4 Ambassadors – 1 hotel and 3 attractions. If you are an accommodation or tour provider we'd like to represent you. Cost is **£400 + VAT**, for inclusion in pre-and post-event comms, messaging to buyers in full days of 1:1 meetings, plus a post-event report including hot leads, meeting notes and key trade contacts.
- **[Britain & Ireland Marketplace](#), 22 Jan 2027.** Great West Way will be attending this ETOA event, partnering with UKInbound and VisitBritain. We are interested to hear from you if you'd like representation so we can get your business in front of international trade buyers, who are looking for tourism experiences to contract in Britain. Cost is **£400 + VAT**, for inclusion in pre-and post-event comms, messaging to buyers in full days of 1:1 meetings, plus a post-event report including hot leads, meeting notes and key trade contacts.
- **[British Tourism & Travel Show \(BTTS\)](#), NEC Birmingham, Thurs 11 March 2026.** Domestic trade show for GTOs, coach and tour operators. Stand share opportunity for **£1,100 + VAT** (excluding graphics). Price includes 1m space on the stand, cabinets, plus access to 1 data capture device (to share). Literature distribution for only **£170 + VAT**.
- **VisitBritain Trade Missions 2027** – Register your interest in Great West Way representation at the following international events. Representation includes pre-and post-event comms, messaging to

buyers in 1:1 meetings, plus a post-event report, hot leads, meeting notes and key trade contacts.

Please note minimum numbers are required to confirm our attendance at these events.

- France and Netherlands Roadshow, 2-3 March 2027 at Destination: Paris, The Hague (France & Netherlands) – Cost £1k. Deadline 27 August
- Germany - ITB Berlin 2027, 16-18 March 2027 – Cost £990 + VAT. Deadline 11 September
- USA & Canada 2027 – date and details tbc.

ACTION: Register for Great West Way Marketplace (if you haven't already). Please contact [Flo](#) to discuss and book any of the other travel trade opportunities.

5. Any Other Business

None

6. Date of Next meeting – tbc.