



## ENGLAND'S GREAT WEST WAY®

### Great West Way Connections

Virtual Meeting Tuesday 17 February 2026, 2pm

### Meeting Notes

### [Great West Way Connections Meeting Recording](#)

#### Attendees:

Florence Wallace	Great West Way
Sarah-Jayne Beasley	Blenheim Palace (Chair)
Birthe Pohlmeier	VisitBritain Germany
Kate Saykour	Salisbury Cathedral
Kiri Baker	Hampton by Hilton Bristol Airport
Bernie Patry	Royal Collection Trust
Sophie Wojtasik	Greenlands Hotel / Venue Henley
Vivianne Rocha	Stones Hotel / Holiday Inn Salisbury Stonehenge
Joella Ronchetti	Visit West
Kathryn Davis	Visit West
Naomi Grit	American Museum & Gardens
Vicki Smith	Mary Shelley's House Of Frankenstein
Rebecca Seear	Windsor Carriages
Birendra Kumara	The Old Bell Hotel, Malmesbury
Lucy Grier	Brunel's SS Great Britain
Sharon Jeffreys	Corsham
Hattie Peacock	Corsham
Anna-Karin Hanson	English Heritage
Julia White	Visit Windsor
James Sullivan-Tailyour	Old Bell Hotel, Warminster
Rick Henderson	REME
Anna Temple	Milford Hall Hotel
Steve Horner	Milford Hall Hotel
Claire McNicol	Courtyard by Marriott Oxford South
Ellie Waring	Bristol Cathedral
Michelle Brown	English Heritage
Bethany Colley	Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Robert Keddle	Hampton by Hilton Bath
Morgan Bucher-Jones	Roseate Hotels
Robbie Kennedy	Legacy Rose & Crown / Angel Hotel
Charlotte King	Designer Outlet Swindon
Carla Brooks	Brooks Guesthouse Bath & Bristol

## 1. Welcome / How's Business

A mixed bag for attractions with some reporting flat or fewer visitors at the beginning of 2026. Weather affecting everyone but especially outdoor attractions. Bookings for Feb half term look good and forward booking figures for groups look promising for 2026. London day visitor business and OTAs still experiencing fewer bookings into those large-scale attractions.

Accommodation reporting small rises in occupancy for 2025 and domestic groups showing a downward trend.

## 2. VisitBritain Germany – Market Update

Birthe Pohlmeier, Visit Britain's Travel Trade Manager for Central Europe. Birthe outlined German market metrics and trends, citing 3.3 million German visitors in 2024, concentration in southern England and Scotland, high spend per visit, common transport modes (about 80% fly; ferries used in 26% of holidays), and strong interest in walking, coasts, history, food and culture. She described the decentralized German media landscape and introduced Andrea Hetzel as Central Europe communications manager.

You can see Birthe's presentation [here](#). She also referred to the [VisitBritain Germany & Nordic Market Webinar](#) for further information.

Q & A's followed.

Birthe & Flo will work to secure a Great West Way webinar for the German Market and look at possible future fam visits for buyers.

**ACTION: If you are interested in hosting German buyers or press on fam trips or for product inclusion in a webinar, please get in touch with [Flo](#), who will coordinate a response to Birthe and Andrea.**

## 3. Great West Way Travel Trade Update

- Tactical Activity Plan & Priorities 2026
- Events & Exhibitions
- Great West Way Opportunities & 1:1 Support

Flo issued the Travel Trade Activity Update prior to the meeting, of which she highlighted the following:

Recently launched a new Official Distribution Partnership in addition to the Official Tour Operator scheme – now known as Official Tour Operators & Distribution Partnership scheme.

There are a number of new Official Tour Operator bookable programmes now available for sale, including Adeo Travel's Great West Way by Rail programme and new German programme from Dr Seick Kultur-und Gartenreisen.

The recently revised [Great West Way Travel Trade Tactical Activity Plan 2026](#) highlights the priority and continued focus for the year. This includes Engagement & distribution, support for itinerary development but also new product info and introductions for Ambassadors to buyers and vice versa.

**Action: Please ensure you keep the Great West Way team up to date with your latest news and product development information, so this can be shared with relevant buyers.**

Great West Way has recently attended a number of exhibitions and events, the most recent one was the England Destination Showcase in Amsterdam, where we partnered with GWR and met with 16 buyers and VisitBritain staff. We are looking forward to attending ITB, BTTS and Group Leisure later this year.

There are opportunities to stand share and/or have your business represented by us at the following events:

- [ITB Berlin](#) (3-5 March) – distribution and representation of your business (would be good for Historic House & Gardens). Contact Flo asap if you're interested. We have so far secured 10+

meetings with press and buyers and continue to influence German operators to develop new programmes.

- [British Tourism & Travel Show](#), NEC Birmingham (19 March)– literature distribution still available – only £170 + VAT
- [Group Leisure & Travel Show](#), Milton Keynes (8 October) – stand sharing cost from £985 + VAT or literature distribution only £150 + VAT.
- [Global European Marketplace](#), London (2 November) – this is an ETOA member only event, and Great West Way could attend to represent your business. We have some interest from businesses who were represented at BIM earlier this year, so we'd like to hear from you if you'd like us to promote & distribute your business/destination information to buyers looking to contract Europe. We will provide you a report and hot lead contacts following the event. See buyer (& supplier) profiles from the 2025 event [here](#). Rates tbc – but please register your interest with Flo.

Other Travel Trade Opportunities include:

- Travel Trade Directory advertising and editorial inclusion
- Solus / sponsored trade newsletters – database approx. 2,200 buyers
- 1:1 support for representation at events, trade strategy development and/or collateral

Please take a look at all the [2026 Travel Trade Opportunities](#), including [Travel Trade Directory Advertising](#).

**ACTION:** Contact [Flo](#) if you're interested in booking any of the above

Finally, Flo informed the meeting that Marketplace 2026 will go ahead as a hybrid event as in previous years and the networking day is looking likely to be in the Bristol area. Details are still tbc – but it's possible to run the end of September (as per 2025). Further information will be released in due course.

**ACTION:** If you're interested in sponsoring elements of Marketplace 2026 - this could include buyers meals or accommodation and attraction tickets for buyer fam visits - please get in touch with [Flo](#).

#### 4. Any Other Business

None

#### 5. Date of Next meeting - tbc