



visit

DEVON

BUSINESS PLAN 2017/ 2018

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Visit Devon CIC (Visit Devon) was formed in March 2016. The board first met in June 2016, and the full transfer of assets from Devon County Council was completed in November 2016. In this time Visit Devon has made significant strides in establishing itself, including but not limited to:

- The creation of a new website and new partnership packages
- The appointment of Ignyte to sell membership packages and generate income to support the continued growth of Visit Devon
- Between March 2016 and January 2017, Visit Devon has significantly increased social media followers:
 - Facebook followers have risen from 12,000 to over 17,600 (47% increase)
 - Twitter followers have risen from 21,600 to over 39,000 (81% increase)
- Attendance at various exhibitions including VIBE, ITB Berlin and Explore GB
- The formation of a group of sub-committees with membership drawn from the board. These committees focus on finance, marketing, partnership and strategy groups. Each subcommittee is tasked to develop strategies, business plans, marketing plans and partnership products and their work is vital in delivering on our objectives
- A substantial library of marketing collateral has been organised
- We have begun to accrue financial assets and have agreed a limited recruitment program to move the activity forward.
- The appointment of accountants and lawyers to represent the company
- Visit Devon have been named partners in two Discover England marketing programmes – Seafood Coast and South West Coast Path
- We are also active partners in the Mayflower 400 initiative
- Visit Devon has been recognised as the official DMO for Devon by VisitBritain and Visit England and has represented Devon at two Destination Management Forums
- We are regularly contacted by the media for comment on tourism trends and other issues

Aims and Objectives

Tourism is the largest revenue generator in Devon. 90% of visitors to the county are domestic visitors, with the majority being independent and not coming through the travel trade. More than 465,000 visits were made to Devon by international visitors alone in 2015 – more than a 5% rise over 2014. This resulted in a total expenditure of nearly £164m, with an average spend per visit of £352. Around 25% of the workforce in the county relies on tourism in some way. Tourism is crucial to the economy and prosperity of Devon. Visit Devon CIC exists as the destination marketing organization for Devon, with the aim of *making Devon the place to visit*. In line with our statutes, we have following objectives:

1. To support tourism businesses, increase their sustainable profits by enabling long term growth for the industry through active marketing and the promotion of Devon both domestically and internationally.
2. To represent the Devon tourism industry to other bodies both within and external to Devon with the aim of nurturing partnerships or associations to the benefit of Devon
3. To work with the tourism industry to increase the effectiveness and quality of their businesses with the aim of enhancing the reputation of Devon as a quality product
4. To act as the voice for the tourism industry ensuring that key decisions at County and National level are made with input from the industry
5. To ensure that all funding opportunities are explored with the aim of maximising the funds available to achieve our vision.

To summarise, we aim to establish ourselves as the authoritative voice for Devon Tourism locally, nationally and internationally.

BUSINESS PLAN

1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, a retrospective look

Operating Budget: £100,000

Overarching Activity:

1. Developed and launched the new website
2. Built relationships with ATP's
3. Expected social media increase of 50% on Facebook and 85% on Twitter.
4. Produced the Visit Devon rolling Business Plan to 2020 and defined a strategy for implementation
5. Defined priority markets and audiences and relevance
 - i. UK market
 - Family
 - Activity
 - Relaxation
 - Food and drink
 - Accommodation choice
 - City breaks
 - History
 - Culture
 - Myths & legends
 - Two national parks
 - Two coastlines
 - ii. North America
 - iii. Germany/Netherlands/France
 - iv. China
6. Attendance at:
 - i. VIBE
 - ii. Explore GB
 - iii. ITB Berlin
 - iv. Destination Britain China
 - v. US sales mission to NY, NY and LA
7. Representation for:
 - i. Mayflower 400
 - ii. South West Growth Fund
 - iii. South West Coast Path
 - iv. South West Food Hub
 - v. England's Seafood Coast
 - vi. Heart of the South West LEP
 - vii. Rural SIG
8. National and local launch of Visit Devon
9. Developed Visit Devon CIC as a company:
 - i. Appointment of a board of Directors
 - ii. Appointment of Company Secretary

- iii. Development of Board Committees
 - iv. Appointment of Interim General Manager (examples of her activity report are shown in the appendix)
 - v. Appointment of Accountants
 - vi. Appointment of Auditors
 - vii. Appointment of Solicitors
 - viii. Appointment of Insurance Brokers
 - ix. ATP representation at sub-committee meetings
10. Marketing and Commercial:
- i. Appointment of Ignyte and agreement of increased commercial activity in January 2017 across the county
 - ii. Initial recruitment program for Interim GM to ensure sufficient capacity to:
 - *Input with writing the business plan/strategy and delivering immediate action points*
 - *Develop, set and manage agreed performance KPI's with Ignyte*
 - *Set up internal communication channels to ensure that all relevant communication is visible to the whole board. i.e.: Sub-group documents and communication*
 - *Be the central point for feeding out information to rest of the board*
 - *Develop external communication channels and ensure that we are visible and easily contactable*
 - *Manage external communication to the wider world - locally, nationally and internationally, including increased social media involvement*
 - *Liaise closely with the company secretary to deliver the above*
 - *Liaise closely with other partners – including ATP's and industry partners*
 - *Continue working with the SW groups that have been set up post SWTGF campaign*
 - *Ensure all tasks linked to the SWTGF groups are actioned on time*
 - *Writing Visit Devon profile and linking to business portals available to us on Visit Britain/Visit England sites to ensure we are clearly visible and open for business*
 - *Familiarisation visits - press and trade*
 - *Continue to raise awareness in key international markets*
 - *Represent Visit Devon at trade events*

1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

ALL

Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
All	Establishment of an effective Board derived from the private sector responsible for the governance and running of the company	To maintain the effectiveness of the board structure	The task of the delivery of the Business Plan and the Budget	Annual Report
All	To have an effective governance function within the Board	Set up a governance committee incorporating the chairs of each committee	Meet regularly to review the discharge of company responsibilities	Chairman to report regularly to the Board
All	To provide effective leadership for Visit Devon CIC	Development of a full working board under the leadership of a chairman	Meet regularly to review company performance	The strategic and business plans
All	To develop a structure to enable Visit Devon to be able to deliver its aims and objectives	To develop board committees under the leadership of a chairperson to develop, review and monitor various company activities	Regular meeting of the board committees as agreed by the full board	The strategic and business plans
All	Complete VD rolling Strategic Plan for the following three years	Each VD Committee to develop the rolling strategic plan for their area of oversight	Regular meeting of the board committees as agreed by the full board	The board approval of the strategic plan

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Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
All	Complete VD Business Plan for the following three years	Each VD Committee to develop rolling business plan for their area of oversight	Regular meeting of the board committees as agreed by the full board	The board approval of the business plan
All	The development of Visit Devon CIC to become a profitable company in its own right	Development of coherent business plan	Regular scrutiny by Finance Committee	Monthly profit and loss accounts
All	To represent the Devon Tourism Industry and become the authoritative voice for tourism in the region	Building brand recognition, presence in key tourism activities throughout the region and attendance at trade shows	To have a coordinated sales and marketing plan in line with the business plan	Regular board review
All	To support tourism businesses in the region	Development of the sales and marketing plan	Review by the Partnership and Marketing committees	The Business Plan
All	Develop a constructive working partnership with the regions ATP's	Each VD committee to work constructively with the ATP's	Regular Communications and meetings	Business Plan
All	To have an effective public relations activity for the company	Develop an effective PR activity plan	To recognise the internal and external stakeholders; board, employees, ATP's, visitors,	Regular review by the marketing committee and the board

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FINANCE

Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Finance	Development of an annualised operating budget	Finance Committee to coordinate budget	Formal board approval	Review P&L and balance sheet quarterly by Finance Committee
Finance	To review performance of the company against the Business Plan and budget	Regular review at Finance Committee meetings	Produce a P&L report for the board	Business plan and budget
Finance	Establishing a quarterly sales and expenditure forecast report	Request that committee chairs forecast quarterly expenditure in advance	Establishment of the required forecasting system	The Budget and P&L account
Finance	Establish an effective purchasing and approvals system	Ensure a robust yet efficient system for purchasing and approvals	Establishment of the required purchasing guidelines	Board approval
Finance	Establish a capital plan	Ensure that provision is made for the required capital for the operation of Visit Devon	Produce a capital plan in liaison with all functional areas	Board approval and budget
Finance	Appoint and review auditors	Ensure accounts are filed on time	Appoint auditors and have regular meetings throughout the year	Submitted final accounts in keeping with regulatory deadlines
Finance	Establish a tender process for critical services to Visit Devon	Ensure a robust, fair and transparent tender process	Establishment of the required tender process guidelines	Board approval

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Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Finance	Identification of and application for grant funding to bolster operating expenditure and provide a better offering for partners	Ensure that Simon and Sally liaise with relevant organisations/grant giving bodies	Regular contact with relevant organisations	Develop a spreadsheet as a coordinating document
Finance	Recruitment of appropriate levels of staff for the effective running of the company	Measure need against budget	Develop recruitment policy	Board and Annual Reports

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MARKETING

Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Marketing	To increase the number of tourist visitors to Devon	Promote and support tourism businesses in Devon	Deliver on Sales and Marketing Plan	The Visit Britain ranking measure
Marketing	Improve Devon's brand recognition	Promote the county nationally and internationally	Deliver on the Sales and Marketing Plan	The Visit Britain ranking measure
Marketing	Raise awareness to targeted UK markets for Devon	Ensure that we have a presence at trade shows/events and that we fully utilise our online presence	Marketing Plan	Google Analytics, Visit Britain ranking measure and GM report
Marketing	Raise awareness to targeted international markets for Devon	Ensure that we have a presence at trade shows/events and that we fully utilise our online presence	Marketing Plan	Google Analytics, Visit Britain ranking measure and GM report
Marketing	Develop an effective online presence to promote and sell Devon products to all of its target markets	Online booking tool on the website	Engage a third party to help with this project	Business plan
Marketing	Develop the Website to be the leading tourism website in the region	Relevant content (itineraries, images etc.) and booking functionality,	Engage with ATP's and other organisations to assist with website content, recognising that Visit Devon still retains ownership of the website.	Website hits and content views. Booking numbers through website.

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Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Marketing	Increase our social media presence and brand recognition	To drive Facebook likes beyond 35,000 and engagement toward 16,000 per month. To build Twitter reach beyond 100,000 per month and to create an Instagram account	To drive those targets through Sally and Steph	Analytics and numbers
Marketing	Increase Visit Devon's presence in printed collateral	Create a portfolio of printed collateral for domestic and international markets, members/ATP's and attractions	For the Marketing Committee to coordinate this activity	Board and Annual Reports
Marketing	To have an effective and coordinated PR activity working on behalf of VD	Engage a PR agency to manage on ongoing relationship with all stakeholders	To coordinate that through the marketing committee	Board and Annual Reports
Marketing	To develop a photographic library of relevant regional content (video and images)	Develop a range of video and photographic images to be made available for our partners to use	Coordinate through the Visit Britain website	Board and Annual Reports
Marketing	Promote user generated content to improve our online presence	Utilising social media accounts to capture content submitted to the organisation	Create centralised library of content	Board and Annual Reports
Marketing	Produce brand guideline plan to use in all communications.	Agree brand guidelines (i.e. font, logo etc.)	Incorporate within the Marketing Plan	Board and Annual Reports

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PARTNERSHIP

Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Partnership	To engage with tourism businesses across the county	Develop a communications plan	Attendance at regional and local events and regular communications to interested parties	Produce a partnership plan
Partnership	Develop a constructive working relationship with the regions tourism organisations	To produce a coordinated communications plan	Effective and regular communication both online and offline	Partnership plan
Partnership	To develop a range of products to support tourism businesses in the region	To work alongside ATP's to enhance their current offering	Regular liaison with the region's ATP's	Board and Annual Reports
Partnership	Develop a range of enhanced benefits for partnership organisations	Produce a plan for implementation	Developed within the partnership committee	Board approval of the plan
Partnership	Develop and oversee third parties to support the sales function of the brand	Regular communication with ATP's and Ignyte	Coordinate with the General Manager	Board and Annual Reports
Partnership	Develop a sales budget	To produce a budget for the Finance Committee	To work with the Finance Committee	Board and Annual Reports
Partnership	Explore an accreditation scheme	Produce a feasibility report	Be discussed within the Partnership Committee	Board approval of the report
Partnership	Explore B2B opportunities within the tourism sector	Produce a plan for implementation	Developed within the partnership committee	Board approval of the plan

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STRATEGY

Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Strategy	Helping to deliver the vision of making Devon the destination to visit	Developing a rolling three-year strategic plan	Development of the plan within the strategy committee	Board approval of the strategic plan
Strategy	Coordinate the development of the rolling three-year business plan	Work with board committees on the development of this plan	Development within the strategy committee	Board approval of the business plan
Strategy	The regular reviews of the company performance against its strategic and business plans	To establish a committed and regular timescale for meetings with board committees	Supervision by the strategy committee	Performance against agreed strategy and business plans
Strategy	Update the strategic plan on an annual basis	Review and assess new strategies	Produced by the strategy committee	Board approval
Strategy	Update the business plan on an annual basis	Review and assess new strategies	Produced by the strategy committee	Board approval
Strategy	Ensure that we maximise our resources to share best practice with all interested parties	Regular communication with all stakeholders	To work alongside board committees to deliver this strategic aim	Regular review by the Strategy Committee
Strategy	To offer an opportunity for tourism businesses to access best advice	Develop a secondary website to offer advice on tourism matters	Take on the existing Devon Tourism Advice website	Review by the Partnership Committee

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Responsible Functional Area	Strategic Aim	Action	Tactics	Measure
Strategy	To establish Visit Devon as the key strategic partner with national and regional organisations with an interest in tourism	Establishing links with companies including FlyBe and GWR to explore mutual opportunities	Ongoing regular meetings with the GM and Company Secretary	Review by the board

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: January Activity Report from the Interim GM, Sally Everton

- Meetings with all the Area Tourism Partnerships. Moving forward, keep in regular contact, informing them of activities that we as VisitDevon are participating, such as UKInbound and ExploreGB. Informing them of key meetings and outcomes, for example with ETOA, VisitBritain/VisitEngland and GWR. BVE and international are key market segments of importance to them, as individually they haven't got the resource or budgets. Collectively and area we can develop. Put together a calendar with dates of trade shows and sales missions which VisitDevon can have a presence and where budgets allow. Possible partnership opportunities here.
- Meetings with Ignyte. Tina Veater. Build on partnership planning, working with the ATP's to develop VisitDevon membership going forward.
- Meeting with Exeter Airport who are keen to develop more routes into Exeter from Europe and potentially from the US and Canada via interline routes. Work with VisitDevon (and Somerset and Cornwall) to help develop economic growth to the South West. Looking at current inbound visitor numbers to the region and drilling down further by county, and where possible Exeter, Plymouth and Torbay. Also work with Exeter City Council to look at inward investment business enquiries to assist with targeting specific markets.
- Write itineraries for VisitBritain business portal – uploading 3, 5 and 7-day itineraries around Devon. Obtain suggested itineraries from the ATP's, which I'm uploading on an ongoing basis.
- Design 2-day itinerary for 4 Japanese journalists in association with VisitBritain. Focus areas for this one – Dartmoor, South Devon, the English Riviera and the Agatha Christie trail. 17-19 February 2017
- Design 3 day itinerary for 21 US buyers post ExploreGB covering Devon and Cornwall. *Michael Caines hosting and personally cooking 4-course lunch Lymstone Manor pre opening. 3rd – 5th March 2017
- Attendance of SW Tourism Alliance dinner with the a number of the local LEP's, Kurt Janson from the Tourism Alliance, Sally Balcombe – CEO VisitBritain
- Meeting with Devon County Council with regards to Devon discovers funding which we secured last year to enable us to attend VIBE last October and ExploreGB in March. Feedback to them, and further opportunities to develop. For example sponsorship of our postcard collateral, which we have now designed and printed for trade show participation.
- Meetings with DATA – with both Anne Blackham and then last week with Chris Murray - chair. Collaborating and stand share at ExploreGB to give a real presence from the county and the attractions.
- Research and request appointments for ExploreGB. 62 came back and requests from the buyers to meet us.
- Book VisitDevon stand to exhibit at UKInbound Conference in Plymouth on 9th February.

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- Meeting with RICC – Nicky Harding. Work together to specifically grow the BVE market segment to both the RICC and the county with VisitEngland. A continuation of the work we did last year with the SWTGF BVE group led by Destination Bristol.
- Contact with numerous organisations such as RHS, National Trust as well as attractions across the counties – arrange meetings throughout February and March.
- Contact with Exeter University – Sarah Snow. Keen to develop BVE
- Talking to VisitBritain and planning future Destination Britain trade shows such as DB America in September.
- Meeting with GWR – Magali Kennedy and David Gardner assisting with rail tickets for Japanese Journalists and other events going forward *attending UKInbound
- Finalise ITB attendance for March for VisitDevon.

Appendix 2: February Activity Report from the Interim GM, Sally Everton

- Meeting with Anne Blackham from DATA re ExploreGB and other possibilities for joint sales initiatives. DCC offering to fund second delegate to ExploreGB. DATA now sharing with us – strengthening the Devon message
- Separate meeting with Chris Murray, Chair of DATA, update on VisitDevon and our vision and strategy moving forward. Emphasis on working together – for example, offering the second delegate place to DATA
- Attendance of the SW Awards evening in Bristol with Simon and strong contingent from Devon tourism businesses.
- Attend UKinbound Conference in Plymouth as an exhibitor – courtesy of Destination Plymouth. Excellent day, follow up on numerous buyers and tour operators. ***3 enquiries from Kuoni as an immediate result, and following up with itineraries, images etc.*
- Devon Hotel Association – Derek Phillips. Met with June and have had contact with Derek. I am waiting for him to give me a date to meet.
- Working on numerous press and familiarization trips to Devon (and some joint initiatives with Cornwall) Have already hosted 4 Japanese journalists from Tokyo (RSVP, Aera, CREA + food photographer) gastro tour incorporating Dartmoor, South Devon and Torbay. Features on various aspects of Devon food and drink, Cream teas; the story of Clotted Cream, Michelin Stars, amongst others. ***The interpreter who is London based and an agent in her own right, has booked her first group of 8 pax for May 2017.* Next one post ExploreGB hosting 20 US buyers and journalists to Devon and Cornwall, the finale of the Devon leg, a lunch prepared by Michael Caines at Lymstone Manor pre-opening.
- Working with ETOA, VisitBritain, VisitEngland – meetings with them all in London.
- GWR and Flybe – meetings with their marketing teams to work together to attract more visitors to the county. GWR including Exeter as an example of a ‘day trip’ as just a little over 2 hrs travel time.
- Exploring all funding opportunities
- Attend the Business Travel Show at Olympia in London. Avenues to develop business tourism and inward investment to the region.
- Presentation with Simon Fishwick, to the DATA members – again presenting the vision and strategy moving forward.
- Working with various London based journalists, the Evening Standard – travel section ‘Reasons to visit Devon’; Martin Randall Travel, various gastro writers and also IMF in London on 12th March.
- Cycling World Magazine...
- Meeting with a Chinese Doctor (academic) from Exeter University looking to bring various groups /families to Devon from China.
- Research and request ExploreGB appointments – 60 appointments. Plymouth including Mayflower project, English Riviera are also in attendance.
- Regular contact with the ATP’s re press trips, familiarization trips, itineraries, sharing image libraries and best practice