

# COTSWOLD EDGE AND SEVERN VALE TOURISM NETWORK

## The Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Tourism Network

Tourism in Gloucestershire is worth an estimated £1 billion annually to the local economy and attracts in excess of 16 million visitors.

Established in 2016 in response to the growing need to provide a focus for all tourism related organisations in the area, create a specific marketable tourism product to support and reach new markets and broaden the range of opportunities for tourist businesses to attract more visitors to the area and extend the visitor season, the Network now has over 50 members.

### Who are we?

Membership is open to any organisation with a role in developing or promoting tourism including local businesses, local councils and individuals involved in running, supporting, training and marketing the tourism offering.



Dursley Town Council kindly provide admin support for the Network.



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## BRING ME SUNSHINE

Just when we thought it was safe to come out of the lockdown bunker, it all starts again. Looking on the bright side we understand that the late summer provided a much needed boost for the struggling visitor economy. With foreign travel all but totally impossible, the rush of UK based customers was a welcome relief.

Behind the scenes, the development of **Visit Gloucestershire** as the new Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the County continues, despite the ban on face to face contact. Zoom meetings online have become the new norm for us all and we have been taking part in monthly sessions with Gloucestershire First Local Economic Partnership's (GFirstLEP) Tourism and Visitor Economy Group and the *Visit Gloucestershire* Staycation Campaign planning group.

You can catch up with the progress of the *Visit Gloucestershire* Group at <https://visit-gloucestershire.uk/discover/> which also gives an insight into the huge scale of the task ahead.

In these harrowing times, the greatest challenge for us all has been in keeping up with the blossoming amount of regulation, advice and information

emanating from Central and Local Government and numerous other sources, such as trade bodies. We've struggled to ensure that the key information is shared but it has become more difficult daily and we've taken a conscious decision not to overburden your inbox with the plethora of mail we receive daily.

Instead we recommend you subscribe to the sources of information most appropriate to you and your business or organisation. In this way you can access what you need directly.

The **GFirstLEP Growth Hub** provides constantly updated and relevant information on grants, financial support, direct links to your local Council and hosts a comprehensive programme of FREE webinars and training sessions relevant both to development of your business and surviving the current stresses and strains of COVID.

<https://www.thegrowthhub.biz/covid-19>

**Visit Britain** <https://www.visitbritain.org/> is also a valuable source of current information, news and support.

Mike Studden, Chairman  
Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Tourism Network



Driving Tourism and  
Economic Development

**The Cotswold Edge  
& Severn Vale  
Tourism Network  
NEWS UPDATE  
Adapt to Survive**

How have you coped with the strictures of the seemingly endless and complex publications giving advice and support on how to interpret the ever changing regulations imposed by Government?

In this issue we share a few stories from members of our Network Steering Group on how they have fared in the pandemic era.

We invite you to put pen to paper or fingers on the keyboard and let us know what has helped you to survive, how diversification has saved things or especially how and why the support from Government has worked for or against you.

Let's hear from you, drop us a line to let us know what's happening in your area.  
[michael.studden@gmail.com](mailto:michael.studden@gmail.com)

**The Stroud & District Chamber of Trade** have published a very useful Recovery Toolkit with resources which can be adapted to suit your circumstances:

<http://www.stroudchamber.org.uk/coronavirus>

The latest **tourism-related news** and information on COVID-19 is available at:  
<https://www.visitbritain.org/covid-19-new-coronavirus-latest-information-and-advice-for-businesses>

Finally, for all the latest detailed Government advice:  
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

## Carry on Regardless

**Some of our Network members share their experiences during the Covid -19 pandemic**

**Tony Cullimore, Managing Director of Cattle Country shares his dilemma as the business embarks on a long planned capital investment in the midst of lockdown.**

### Update from Cattle Country and The Barn at Berkeley

In March we laid out the tables in GRAZE, our new restaurant, ready for our Easter opening and then, bang, everything went wrong. We had the truly horrible task of making many of our long standing park and wedding venue staff redundant, but on July 4th we finally opened the park with pre-booked limited numbers, and limited activities. I apologised to our visitors for not being completely open, but everyone said "Don't worry, we're just happy to be out doing something!"

With tremendous support from our visitors we managed to cover our costs through the summer, but don't have the usual nest egg that we usually accumulate to tide us over the winter period. Instead, we're hoping to get through using the one year interest free loan we've had from the government.

As I write this we're now in our second lockdown, but are using the time to renovate The Barn ready for weddings next year which we plan to start in March, if we can. We're also decorating the park ready for re-opening with socially distanced Christmas activities.

We've recently trialled opening GRAZE for evening meals, and also during the week for "GRAZE and Play." Here visitors can either just call in to use the cafe during certain days, or also visit part of the park including the animals. Both of these ideas have been successful, so we plan to open for Christmas evening meals during December.

We feel very confident that things will get better soon, and look forward to a new beginning next year.

For full details of our activities please visit our website [www.cattlecountry.co.uk](http://www.cattlecountry.co.uk)."



## Carry on Regardless continued.....

One of the most significant aspects of lockdown was the public rediscovery of the great outdoors.

Dursley Walking Festival has been established in the local and national calendar of events for many years and John Roberts shares an update below on how we are adapting to our new found freedom.

### This is walking country ...

... offering visitors an almost infinite choice of routes based on terrain, views, length and strenuousness. Every year the Dursley Walking Festival attracts walkers from around the country. The 2020 Walking Festival, one of the few to take place, attracted nearly 250 walkers from throughout this region and as far away as Essex.

Dursley Welcomes Walkers' website is the one-stop information point for everything walking-related in this area. Interested visitors should be directed here, for route descriptions from 3 to 14 miles, Health Walk routes, local history, railway and bus walks. The 14 mile walk is the waymarked Lantern Way, which will soon be joined by a waymarked Cotswold Gateway Walk of 16 miles. There are contact details for Dursley Rambling Club which welcomes visitors on its walks.

Access to walking is being improved continuously by replacing many of the stiles with kissing gates. <http://www.dursleywelcomeswalkers.btck.co.uk/>

**As well as walking and outdoor activity, rediscovering the great outdoors often goes hand in hand with camping. David and Julie Orchard of Ashen Plains Campsite also share their experience operating during the pandemic.**

### Carry on Camping

As our 2020 camping season started, so did lockdown.

The weather was perfect, Easter being extremely warm. People were calling for bookings to be refunded or rearranged and ask when they can come. The daily coronavirus update was religiously watched, looking for a clue as to when we could reopen.

On the 23rd June it was announced that 4th July campsites could reopen. We took the opportunity to make our campsite Covid safe making individual plots in the long grass, by cutting driveways to large pitch areas to give social distancing from others, with a tap and hand sanitiser, giving an extra dimension to camping in a meadow. We set up an outdoor notice board giving people updated information on places for food, drink and local attractions. Recommending people to book in advance.



Local takeaways were delivering on a regular basis. People were staying longer many campers were self contained and for the first time campers bringing toilet tents. We noted lockdown has encouraged additional people to invest in tents and campervans, when they might not have before.

Going forward, Ashen Plains look forward to embracing the challenges ahead and creating a new normal.

## The Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Tourism Network NEWS UPDATE



## Stroud District Council – Grants for Businesses Impacted by Covid-19 Restrictions

For full details and timescales related to current support for businesses, please go to:

[www.stroud.gov.uk/businessrates](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/businessrates)

### Christmas Support Payment for Wet-Led Pubs

Stroud District Council have received guidance from central government regarding the new £1000 support payment for wet-led pubs, please see the link above to access the guidance. The Council are currently awaiting new software to enable them to process and pay the new grant, please keep an eye on their website.

# Working Together

A recurring theme of opening our stall for visitors to the area is that we are not very good at working together to share what we have to offer. In addition to what's happening behind the scenes with tourism at the Gloucestershire First Local Economic Partnership (GFirstLEP) level, there are steps being taken in the right direction within our own area.....

## New Visitor Information Points

Last year, Stroud District Council bowed out of tourism marketing by offering grants of £2,000 to each of the five market towns to stimulate local action. We report back on how the money has been used in Berkeley and Dursley.

Berkeley Town Council took up the offer and in partnership with Berkeley Books, helped to establish a visitor information point at Berkeley Library, sadly currently closed due to COVID restrictions.

Alongside the physical presence, a group of enterprising volunteers took on the task of creating a new website to showcase the delights for visitors to the Berkeley Vale.

The website is at <https://berkeleyvalextraveltourism.co.uk/> and the official launch will be announced in the New Year, in time hopefully for the opening up of restrictions on visitors. The site also has links to Twitter and Facebook pages and has the capability for businesses and local organisations to list upcoming events through the Facebook link.



To spread the word more widely, the site is enabled for smart phone access and QR code signs are being distributed to accommodation providers, hospitality venues, visitor information points and local businesses to allow visitors to find out about what's on offer when they arrive in the area.

Dursley Town Council have invested the District Council grant into a joint venture, again with the local Library, to provide an open door Visitor Information Centre in the Town, initially on a trial basis. This includes a dedicated area within Dursley Library (on the Cotswold Way), a dedicated email address [dursleyvic@Gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:dursleyvic@Gloucestershire.gov.uk) and Facebook page 'Dursley Visitor Information Centre', which will be developed over the coming months. Please have a look and 'follow'.



Travel, Accommodation, Events, Attractions, Business

The Stroud & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce [@in\\_stroud\\_glos](https://www.in-stroud-glos.co.uk) has developed a new online directory aimed at helping people find businesses, food, accommodation, places to go and local events across the Stroud District. To have a look and find out more go online at [www.visitstroud.uk](http://www.visitstroud.uk), the 'About Us' page gives information on how it works. There are sections for each of the Market Towns in the district.

Businesses across the district can take up the offer of a standard FREE listing on the site, while it offers other benefits if you become a member of the Chamber of Trade (£25 per year). Please go online and have a look.

## Cotswold Edge and Severn Vale Tourism Network Contacting us.

Find Network information and documents at:

<http://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/documents.html?tag=tourism>

To join the Network or comment on issues raised ring Dursley Town Council on 01453 547758 or Email: [deputy@dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:deputy@dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## The Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Tourism Network

## Cotswold Tourism

Many of you are already signed up to Cotswold Tourism which covers an area of almost 800 square miles and runs through five counties including Gloucestershire.

Whilst this is a huge area to promote it does have an amazing brand name, developed over the years, and instantly recognised across the globe.

Membership comes in several grades to suit all sizes of businesses and it is well worth considering signing up to get your business onto the international stage.

Why not have a look at what's on offer online: <https://www.cotswolds.com/partnership>

## Free Workshops

Just some of the free workshops on offer during January 2021 from The Growth Hub:

How to Market Your Business on Social Media

How to Broadcast Your Business Through Podcasting

How to Discover the 7 Steps of Action Planning

Book these & more at <https://www.thegrowthhub.biz/covid-19>

# Marketing on a Budget – Part 2

It seems like an age since we started on the first part of this simple guide to getting your presence out to the big wide world. So much has happened which has changed the face of the visitor and tourism economy world, out of all recognition.

All the more important therefore for us to pick up the reins, while things are in limbo, and have a thorough review of how we approach the potential hoards about to be released when the current lockdown ends.

In our first article we talked about the mechanisms for sharing our organisations' offering to the marketplace, at little or no cost. Hopefully you've had the opportunity in lockdown to have a look at these mechanisms and perhaps explore how you might use them.

## Turning Our Attention to 'USPs'

We turn now to a little exploration of how to attract visitors through "unique selling points" or USPs, a much abused term in marketing. What is it that makes your business or organisation more attractive to potential customers?

With an eye to the "staycation" trend in the UK market, occasioned by the difficulty for potential foreign travel, there are new opportunities to bring our own population rushing to your door.

Going abroad for spring or summer breaks usually means that pet owners have to find kennels or "pet hotels" for their constant domestic companions. What if they can bring the dog with them?

One such enterprise which has focused on this sector is the Swan Hotel at Wotton under Edge, a dog friendly establishment. See: <https://swanhotelwotton.com/>

Not only does the Hotel welcome pets but it provides lots of information on dog walks in the area, especially around the Cotswold Way. Double bonus for dog and owner.

## What else can we develop as a USP?

Food and hospitality is a wide ranging and under recognised attraction in our area. We can boast a rainbow spectrum of country pubs, restaurants, eateries and take aways all offering unique culinary experiences.

Try a signature dish! One of our favourites is the "Shu Pie" served daily at the beautifully situated Three Horseshoes on the longest village green in England. Frampton on Severn of course.

Frampton attracts many walkers doing the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal path and hungry travellers have thronged to this delightful location to sample the Shu Pie.

What makes it different? Well. Think of an old fashioned treat, baked in an enamel pie dish with vegetables, choice of filling and a potato topping all together side by side. Yum!

Sadly this small and cosy country pub is temporarily closed due to the current COVID restrictions.

On a post lockdown 1 break, to the Isle of Wight we were pleasantly surprised to find that our hotel hosts offered to provide a 10% discount on ferry travel and to include tickets in our "staycation" package. Integrated ticketing and booking arrangements such as this are becoming extremely popular.

Why not think about working with other businesses locally to offer a package with say access to a round of golf or something a little different.

Across at Woodchester Valley Vineyard, CE&SV Network Members, the Shiner Family, offer Winery and Vineyard tours and a popular vineyard tour and dog walks at certain times of the year.

See: <https://www.woodchestervalleyvineyard.co.uk/>

**Get involved now. Give us your Feedback. We're here to bring you together with other Tourism and Visitor Businesses and share our collective experience and expertise.**