

Meet the team

Welcome to Tourism News, the new newsletter from the tourism team at Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils.

There have been lots of changes recently in tourism and we thought we'd try and explain them and give you a very brief rundown of the often confusing world of tourism!

Nationally

VisitBritain and VisitEngland manage tourism nationally, with the aim of attracting more international visitors to Great Britain/England, and trying to get more UK residents to holiday in the UK rather than abroad.

Regionally

To keep the organisations that they deal with regularly down to a manageable number, the national tourism body, VisitEngland, deals directly only with Destination Management Organisations (DMOs); these are private/public sector partnerships, led by the private sector that represent England's leading destinations.

Cotswold Tourism Partnership has recently been established as the new DMO for the Cotswolds, co-ordinating tourism activity and marketing over the wider Cotswolds. West Oxfordshire is also covered by the Oxfordshire DMO, Experience Oxfordshire. Both DMOs are membership organisations, and local tourism businesses are strongly encouraged to join them; the more members they have the better they represent the area and the more they are able to achieve.

Locally

Most importantly to you, there is us, your local authority tourism team - the tourism services at Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils were joined together in Autumn last year, with one team now covering the two districts.

In a nutshell, DMOs are primarily involved in enticing visitors to the area, while our job is to help ensure that those visitors get the most from their visit, spending as much time and money in the area as possible, and choosing to come back again and again! In short, our aim is to help maximise the benefits of tourism to the local area, while minimising any adverse effects.

We are not a membership organisation and we work with the wider visitor economy - not just overtly 'tourism' businesses like accommodation providers and visitor attractions but also shops and restaurants, towns and villages.

Areas of work that we are involved in, include:

- Acting as the local experts, feeding information to the DMOs
- Being the first point of call for local tourism businesses, offering help, advice and signposting to other opportunities
- Information provision including: the production of a local bedroom browser and other promotional literature; working with the local visitor information centres; and collecting and disseminating information on local events
- Working closely with local towns to help them promote themselves and co-ordinate their efforts
- Product development, working to identify new themes and opportunities for cross promotion
- Helping drive quality improvements by facilitating workshops, training and networking opportunities for local businesses



Chris Jackson



Sally Graff



Diane Blackwell



Natasha Stein



Wendy Dancer

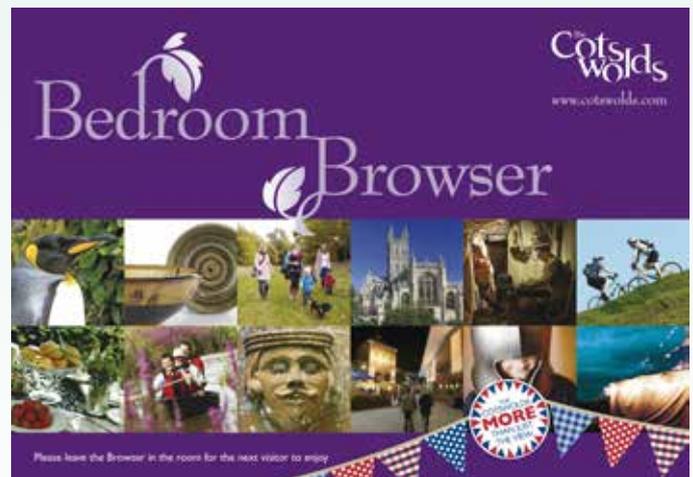


Information on 2016 browser

Each year the area produces a hardcopy browser as an important marketing guide for visitors who have already arrived and are staying in the area. We encourage local accommodation providers to display copies in their establishments, allowing visitors to browse the publication for things to do or places to visit. In addition, for 2016, we will also be offering copies for places with a captive audience such as doctors, dentists, leisure centres and libraries.

We will be sending the relevant rate card to attractions shortly with a deadline for entries to the browser by the middle of February. The browser will then be published in the spring and will be offered free of charge to all tourism businesses in the Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Council areas and to Cotswolds Tourism Partnership members beyond.

For the first time, the browser will combine entries for the whole of Cotswold and West Oxfordshire areas, offering an increased print run. The publication offers excellent value of money with a 10% early bird discount for businesses that book their space by 22 January 2016. Look out for details shortly or click here now: <https://r1.dotmailer-surveys.com/e8qjv6f-531kxk8c>



Explore your local attractions – residents' Welcome Open Weekend

Cotswold and West Oxfordshire council areas have a wide range of wonderful visitor attractions, all set against a background of outstanding natural beauty that is criss-crossed by footpaths, cycle routes, bridleways and byways. No wonder that it is so popular with visitors locally, nationally and internationally - tourism is worth over £549 million each year to the local economy.

The exciting Welcome Open Weekend (WOW) is a voucher scheme aimed at enticing our local residents to get out and explore the local area and attractions. This event has already proved to be popular in West Oxfordshire where it has previously been held but it will now take place across the shared council areas, allowing both sets of residents to explore further afield. Residents will be able to pick up a discounted voucher sheet from their local Visitor Information Centre which will also enable locals to see what a valuable service these friendly centres provide to promote the area. We are now encouraging as many attractions and heritage centres to register and **provide a 2 for 1 deal for the long weekend of Friday 15 April – Sunday 17 April 2016**. If you have not already confirmed your attraction as part of the scheme please email tourism@cotswold.gov.uk or tourism@westoxon.gov.uk now. A media campaign to highlight the weekend to locals will start in March prior to the vouchers being made available in the information centres from the end of March.

Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Council tourism team

Email: tourism@cotswold.gov.uk. Tel: 01285 623000 Email: tourism@westoxon.gov.uk Tel 01993 861080

Produced by Cotswold & West Oxfordshire District Council tourism team & designed by Cotswold District Council

We need your content – help us to help promote you!

We need your photos!

We're currently reviewing our image library and are aiming to improve our stock of photos. Not only do we use images from our library in our own website and publications, but we also get requests from all sorts of external organisations and print publications for photos to promote the area.

If you have good quality, high resolution photos of local towns, villages, countryside or events please send them to:
natasha.stein@westoxon.gov.uk



Give us a like!

Social media has become increasingly important for attracting visitors to our area and engaging with local residents about events and attractions. We're always looking for quirky stories and news items from you to share on our social media channels, so please get in touch with Natasha.Stein@westoxon.gov.uk if you have anything you'd like to share.

We thought it would be useful to give you an overview of our social media channels:

Facebook www.facebook.com/OxCots

The Oxfordshire Cotswolds Facebook page has a growing following and is achieving great levels of engagement. Visual campaigns have been very successful, for example photos of towns and villages, as well as fun facts and quirky stories. We also regularly post items about our accommodation partners, attractions and events.

Twitter  <https://twitter.com/OxCots>  <https://twitter.com/CDCTourism>

We're busy tweeting to our businesses about everything that's going on in our districts so make sure you follow us:

Our Visitor Information Centres are also on Twitter, giving a local flavour to their tweets. Give them a follow:

[@moreWitney](https://twitter.com/moreWitney) [@moreBurford](https://twitter.com/moreBurford) [@moreBourton](https://twitter.com/moreBourton) [@CirencesterVIC](https://twitter.com/CirencesterVIC) [@Campdenonline](https://twitter.com/Campdenonline) [@TetburyTIC](https://twitter.com/TetburyTIC) [@Stowinfo](https://twitter.com/Stowinfo)

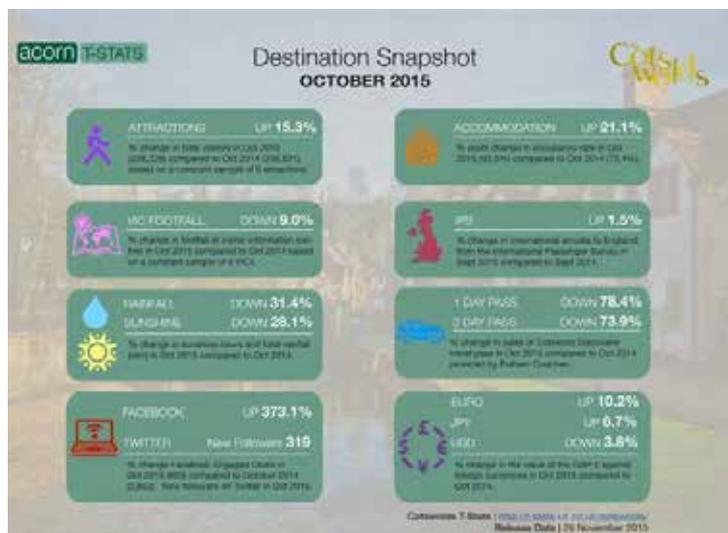


Tourism data – TSTATS

T-Stats is a tourism data system for reporting bed occupancy and attraction footfall in the Cotswolds. The council team are managing the TStats data system on behalf of Cotswolds Tourism Partnership and want to encourage as many businesses as possible to enter information into the system. The findings will provide a valuable tool for gauging the number of people coming to the Cotswolds, and which attractions they're visiting. It also allows businesses to benchmark how they are doing against similar firms in the area.

We are encouraging local businesses to sign up and use the system, enabling us to provide a monthly snapshot. Specific business information will be kept confidential but the underlying statistics will help us evaluate trends in tourism in the Cotswolds and strengthen the case for increasing the money spent on this hugely important industry.

To find out more, including how you can get involved, please contact Sally Graff on sally.graff@cotswold.gov.uk or use your personal log on <http://www.t-stats-uk.co.uk/cotswolds>



Group Fairs

In 2016 Cotswolds Tourism Partnership will be representing the Cotswolds at four key travel shows;

- **Excursions 2016.** The prestigious one day group travel show at Alexandra Palace.
- **Travmedia.** A day of meetings with key travel journalists and market specialists.
- **The British Tourism and Travel Show.** A two day event, showcasing the best UK destinations.
- **ExploreGB.** Two days of meetings with 300 hosted international buyers.

The partnership are still looking at attending more of these types of events to showcase the area to the groups market. If you have any suggestions of events you would like to attend, or feel the partnership should be present at, please let us know.



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The Cotswolds LEADER Programme is Open for Business

A grants programme to boost jobs and growth for rural businesses and communities in the Cotswolds with nearly £2m of funding, is now open for business. The Cotswolds LEADER programme is funded by the European Union initiative which forms part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

The Cotswolds LEADER programme will launch business 'call outs' for applications and will provide grants to small businesses, farmers, foresters and communities for projects that create and grow the rural economy.

LEADER is a competitive demand-led grant programme, and all applications must include a strong business case for investment with evidence of market rationale, need for grant, project plan, accounts, like-for-like quotations and technical information. Grants from £10,000 to £50,000 are potentially available. The grant intervention rate will be typically limited to 40% of total eligible project cost, although some not-for-profit projects could receive a higher amount. All applicant businesses and suggested projects must be located within the Cotswolds LEADER eligible area, and all applicants must read the essential eligibility criteria in the applicant's handbook.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board's Director Martin Lane said: "The launch of the Cotswolds LEADER programme is a significant milestone. This new five year funding stream provides a wonderful opportunity to grow sustainable rural businesses and jobs."

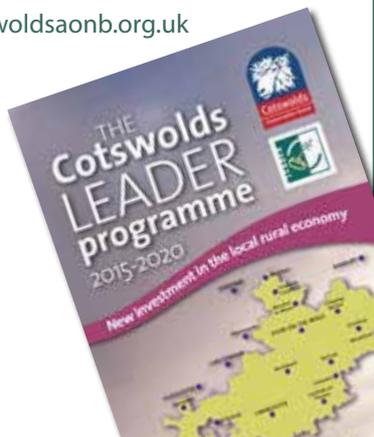
This first call out for applications has just concluded. However, there will be additional rounds throughout 2016 and in future years, so there is plenty of time to develop a suitable project.

To find out more about the Cotswolds LEADER programme visit:

www.cotswoldsleader.org.uk

Email: cotswoldsleader@cotswoldsaonb.org.uk

Tel: 01451 862033



Google My Business workshop

We are planning a workshop in February focusing on a free tool called "Google My Business". Learn how to control the information Google displays about your business, boost your Search Engine Optimisation, manage reviews and enhance your web presence with photos, videos and virtual tours.

Please contact natasha.stein@westoxon.gov.uk if you are interested in attending.

Did you know?

Visit England website has a wide range of useful information for tourism businesses.

www.visitengland.com/biz/advice-and-support/businesses

During 2016 Visit England is running a campaign – Year of the Garden - In celebration of some of England's greatest attractions and to mark the 300th anniversary of 'Capability' Brown.

www.visitengland.com/biz/about-us/campaigns-and-opportunities/year-english-garden-2016



As this is a new team newsletter we welcome your feedback and suggestions for future editions. We plan to have a regular town focus in future to ensure you, as tourism providers, are aware of what is happening locally and can inform your visitors. Please email tourism@cotswold.gov.uk or tourism@westoxon.gov.uk with your suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you and working with you in 2016.

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