



Visit Gloucester Tourism and Destination Marketing Plan 2022

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1. Introduction

The Tourism and Destination Marketing Plan for Gloucester outlines the objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Tourism and Destination Marketing Team in 2022. The Destination Team will use this plan to develop marketing tactics and monitor and evaluate all marketing activity against KPIs. It is reviewed by the team quarterly, and feeds into the action plan, which outlines the activity and associated workflows needed to deliver the Marketing Plan over the next 12 months. The aims and objectives outlined in the marketing plan have been identified and prioritised in partnership with our stakeholders.

2. Situational Analysis

The Tourism and Destination Marketing Team were offered permanent employment contracts from Jan 2022 following over 18 months of operating within the City Council on a temporary basis. The team operate under the brand name Visit Gloucester and are responsible for the marketing and promotion of all facets of the tourist offer for the city. They provide regular support for the City Council's other Cultural services including the Guildhall, the Museum of Gloucester, Blackfriars, the Film Office, and the Festivals and Events team. The team also works closely with the Economic Development Team and the Heritage Team on joint projects.

The team works collaboratively with the DMOs in the region: Visit Gloucestershire, The Cotswolds Tourism Destination Management Organisation (Visit Cotswolds), Marketing Cheltenham, and the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley Tourism Association, and, further afield, Visit West. The team also works closely with national tourism bodies, Visit Britain and Visit England, through regular DMO calls and on projects like TXGB (Visit Britain's ticket selling site).

The Tourism and Destination Marketing Team

The team currently consists of 3 full-time posts and one year in industry placement:

- Rebecca Clay –Tourism and Destination Marketing Manager
- Zoe Larder – Tourism and Destination Senior Marketing Officer
- Ellie Birch –Tourism and Destination Digital Marketing Officer
- Millie Graves –Tourism and Destination Digital Marketing Assistant (until May 2022)

3. Marketing in 2021

In December 2020, the Tourism and Destination Marketing Plan for 2021 was written which set out actions against priorities for the year ahead. The priorities related to the key recommendations identified in the Future Marketing of Gloucester Report (2020).

3.1 Deliver marketing campaigns that foster strong brand saliency regionally and nationally to raise awareness of Gloucester as a city break destination.

Two major marketing campaigns were delivered in 2021. First was the Welcome Back marketing campaign which saw colourful, eye-catching designs placed in high footfall and high dwell time media location. This campaign had a reach of **627,596**.

As part of this campaign, we worked with 10 Yetis Press and PR company to raise awareness of Gloucester by creating news stories that tied in with topical news stories, such as Olympians from Gloucester to tie in with the Olympics, alongside other more traditional articles about places to visit. This campaign received **89** pieces of coverage from publications all over the UK. The reach of the campaign was huge with readership figures of **144,690,707** and highlights included coverage in **Ok Magazine!** and the **Daily Express**.

In autumn, we worked with GWR to conduct an autumn and winter campaign to target visitors and encourage them to travel to the city by rail. At the time, we were hoping to encourage sustainable travel by visitors to the Victorian Christmas Market. However, when that was cancelled, we continued with the campaign and created content that highlighted Gloucester as a city break destination for autumn and Christmastime. We wove travel by rail messaging throughout all our content during this time. The campaign has so far delivered 557,256 impressions, reaching an impressive 130,097 people (the campaign is due to end at the beginning of February when a full evaluation report will be created).

3.2 Review our brand and communications to position ourselves as one of the UK's leading visitor destinations for the domestic market in 2021.

Working with experts in their field, thinkingplace ltd, the team have led a comprehensive consultation exercise through workshops, focus groups, one-to-one conversations, and surveys with over 1,000 people. The agency is now finalising the place narrative and visual assets for Gloucester and developing feedback sessions to re-engage with the people who took part in the consultation to get them to play an active part in taking it forward. There will be a launch for the new place approach in the new year, and a new place ambassador scheme/board set up following the launch.

3.3 Develop our online presence to include a mixture of digital marketing campaigns and 'always on' activity.

In March 2020 we launched the new Visit Gloucester website which had a new sleek clean design, new branding, and a friendlier more approachable tone of voice. The website has outperformed its targets, achieving 220,000 visitors in 2021 which is a 5.6% increase on the 2019 website figures, which was a record-breaking year for visits to Gloucester and for the UK. This is an incredible achievement by the team. In July, Google finally announced that its algorithms are set up to favour changing content on websites; since then, we have created blogs for the website twice weekly to encourage Google to rank the website well for organic traffic. Alongside this, we have been working with our digital marketing company to create Google Display and social media marketing campaigns designed to raise awareness of all that Gloucester has to offer for visitors.

In November, we became one of the first DMOs in the UK to have a TikTok account. TikTok is the fastest growing social media channel among 18–25-year-olds, which will remain one of our key target audiences in the years to come. By adding TikTok, we have also diversified our social media channels which is important as Facebook is experiencing a decline, especially in younger audiences. While user counts are still high, engagement is at an all-time low. This year, we have put more emphasis on creating video content for Instagram reels and TikTok with outstanding engagement rates (our Hogwarts Reel reached 3,880 people).

3.4 To cultivate and grow our inbound audiences in 2021.

The Tourism and Destination Marketing Manager attended three world-class travel trade shows in 2021 to maintain the excellent relationships with trade contacts and present Gloucester to the global stage. Working with our other regional DMOs on projects like US Connections and Uncover the Cotswolds gave us access to several international trade organisations through creating joint itineraries, creating joint content, and attending travel trade shows together.

3.5 Set up a city-wide data project that sources and collects data on the city and from our partners and disseminates it to stakeholders.

One of the strengths of our service sitting within the council is that we have access to a lot of data and research that our partners might like to use to help with funding bids and informing plans and strategies. Following our latest round of stakeholder feedback where all our partners asked for access to our data, we created the Tourism and Destination Marketing Data Dashboard (Data Dashboard) which can be found in the business advice section of our website (<https://www.visitgloucester.co.uk/business-support/gloucester-tourism-and-destination-marketing-data-dashboard>). This gives them real-time website and social media data to allow them to benchmark against our social media audiences. It also gives them 24hr access to all our reports, perfect for that last-minute dash when writing funding bids late at night.

3.6 Strengthen audience development and community engagement initiatives to diversify audiences and address brand perceptual barriers.

As part of the branding project, one of the things that has been continually mentioned is that we need to represent and serve our communities more. This is a move away from traditional DMO marketing which is only interested in marketing to visitors in favour of a model that serves our residents too. We have done a lot of community consultation this year and have started to work closely with the Community and Wellbeing Team, attending meetings with them to understand how we can better serve the community. We have just published our first local area guide for Barnwood written by resident and local historian Richard Auckland (<https://www.visitgloucester.co.uk/blog/read/2021/12/local-gloucester-the-history-of-barnwood-b144>)

3.7 Build a robust network of partners in the city from a variety of businesses operating to serve the visitor economy.

The team dedicate a week a month to interacting with the businesses in the city. We have monthly meetings with the major players in the city such as the cathedral, and the retail centres. We work closely with Gloucester BID on joint marketing activity and summer holiday campaigns. We set up our Business-to-Business newsletter which we issue on the last day of every month. This gives people the latest news from the team and a round-up of our activity, evaluation reports, and funding opportunities, and has enjoyed great engagement rates this year (avg open rate 43%, avg industry open rate 26%). We are proud of the networks we have made and the feedback we have received from our stakeholders as evidenced through the Stakeholder Engagement Report.

3.8 Lead the tourism recovery in the city by supporting partners in their activity.

In March 2021, we completed the Gloucester Tourism and Destination Marketing Covid Recovery Plan for the city. This plan set out the steps we would take to help our partners recover in the short to medium terms (1-2 years). The plan looked at audiences that were still visiting in 2020 when restrictions were in place to allow us to identify some quick win audiences for 2021. We then came up with a plan for positioning Gloucester as a destination, using

channels appropriate for the audiences we had identified. We secured some Reopening the High Street and Welcome Back Funding to allow us to support our activity.

3.9 To consider the ethical and environmental impact of all marketing activities.

At the beginning of the year, the team outlined several actions it would undertake in order to be as ethical as possible in its activity, including sourcing local providers and services as much as possible to support the local economy, minimising print as much as possible, and using recycled materials for print when print was deemed necessary.

4. Market Conditions

This year continued to provide a tough and unpredictable landscape for the Tourism Industry due to the COVID19 pandemic, and with new variants and the increasing threat of re-introducing restrictions, it is likely that 2022 will follow in a similarly unpredictable manner to 2021. A full list of the Market Conditions for Tourism in 2022 can be found at appendix 2. These market conditions.

5. Current Audiences

The team use various sources to understand visitation to the city and Gloucester's audiences, as well as benchmarking how well the city is performing against other cities and against previous years. The data below provides a useful starting point for understanding the current visitors. However, there are significant gaps, which makes close analysis in this area difficult. In particular, the lack of substantial consistent qualitative information means that insight into the motivations, needs and barriers to visiting must be drawn from small pockets of information. A motivations survey could be carried in 2022, working with hotels in the city to understand people's motivations for overnighting in the city.

Great Britain Tourism Survey 2020

In 2021 we worked with the other DMOs in the region to commission the South West Research Company to undertake an Economic Impact Study for the Visitor Economy of Gloucestershire for 2020. As with most tourism data sets, the data is for the last full year so 2020, and we will get 2021's data at the end of 2022. The data shows the impact the pandemic had on trips to Gloucester in 2020 vs 2019:

- In 2020, Gloucester had 135,900 domestic overnight trips, which was 57% down on 2019
- In 2020, the domestic overnight spend in the city was £24,699,00 which was 51% down on 2019
- There were 10,800 inbound overnight trips in 2020 compared to 50,100 in 2019, a reduction of 75%
- Inbound spend from overnight visitors decreased to £4,554,000 from £23,001,000 in 2019, a reduction of 80%
- There were 1,680,000-day visits to Gloucester in 2020, compared to 3,483,000 in 2019 (2019 was a Tall Ships Festival Year) a 51% decrease
- The day visitor spend in 2020 was £68,404,000 compared to £140,722,000, which is 51% reduction against 2019.

Mobile Phone Visitation Data

In 2021, the team with the Economic Development Team procured a visitation data system called Town and Place AI. This platform uses mobile phone locator data and sophisticated algorithms to look at who is visiting and when. It is also able to look at footfall for the city vs 2020 and 2021. This data showed that in 2021:

- For the first time on record, October was the busiest month for the city with 895,710 visitors 2% higher than September the second busiest month with 871,351 visitors. Bright Nights, half-term and the Cheltenham Showcase will have played their part in driving visitors to the city in October, however September outperforming the summer months is somewhat of an anomaly. In 2020, there were 312,000 visitors in October, showing what a huge increase 2021 was in comparison (a 65% increase).
- Visitors typically spent 00:54:38 (h:m:s) in the city and visited 3.68 times per month.
- The top postcodes were all GL postcodes from Gloucester and its immediate surroundings. When we look a bit further afield, we can see Hereford, Ross on Wye, Swindon, Newport, and West Oxford as key visitor locations for the city. These are similar results to 2020, with one notable omission of visitors from Bristol this year.

For more information on Gloucester's audiences including target audiences in 2022, the population data, online audiences please see appendix 3.

6. Marketing Priorities in 2022

The marketing priorities for 2022 were created with our partners in the latter half of 2021. They were either identified as part of the business case and stakeholder engagement report which was presented to Cabinet in November, or they were discussed at various meetings. A survey was created which allowed our members to upweight each of the priorities according to how they match with their organisation's priorities in 2021. The order below is how the priorities were weighted by our partners.

- 6.1** Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.
- 6.2** Promote all relevant festivals and events and engagement activities across the city.
- 6.3** Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the new Gloucester narrative and brand assets.
- 6.4** Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking, seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletter.
- 6.5** Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options).
- 6.6** Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating in particular on Instagram and TikTok in 2022.
- 6.7** Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.

7. The Plan

The Marketing Plan provides a high-level plan that forms the basis of the team's action plan. The team action plan is reviewed monthly. The plan also feeds the Gloucester City Tourism and Destination Marketing Service Plan for 2022-23.

Aim/Objective	Campaign Action	Channels	Timescales	Who	Evaluation
1. Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.	Continue to update our image library, working where possible with student(s) from University of Gloucester capturing all attractions and business types	Website, Online Image Library Social Channels	On-going	ZL	A well-curated and easily searchable image bank is online and accessible by all our partners for use.
Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.	Continue creation of a Monthly What's On, to include events of all sizes	Website Social Channels Digital Totems Display Screens in Quays B2C newsletter	Throughout 2022	MG until May 2022 then ZL and EB	Increased clicks through to the things to do section of the website. Increased attendance at events (mainly measured through GCC events)
Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.	Encourage all businesses to write blogs, submit events, send updated web content for their products, and partake in Instagram takeovers	Website Social Channels	On going	Team	A 2% increase in events submitted to the website in 2022 vs 2021. Blog content created by 3 partners in 2022. 4 Instagram or Instagram story takeovers in 2022. 1 TikTok takeover in 2022.
Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.	Monthly Spotlight on Gloucester's different offerings – Retail, Open Spaces, Heritage, Architecture, Food and Drink	Blogs Website Social Channels TikTok	On going	Team	6 blogs created in 2022 focusing on the different aspects of the visitor economy.

2. Promote all relevant festivals and events and engagement activities.	Create calendar of events taking place outside of our immediate geographical area, such as Cheltenham festival, the Commonwealth Games and build a marketing strategy to capitalise on opportunities for visitors to these to extend their visits into Gloucester.	Blogs Website Social Channels TikTok	January 2022	MG	Increased footfall and overnights in the city during March (Cheltenham Festival) and July and August (Commonwealth Games) as measured through Town and Place AI visitation data.
Promote all relevant festivals and events and engagement activities.	Continue to maintain and grow our excellent relationships with the IGers, ensuring they are invited to attend all VIP engagements and events. Look to develop new relationships with Igers groups from further afield such as Herefordshire and Worcestershire.	Social channels	Ongoing	EB	Increased social sharing as measured through use of event specific hashtags.
Promote all relevant festivals and events and engagement activities.	Work with REM and the Festivals and Events Team to deliver the Tall Ships Marketing Campaign.	Blogs Web Content SEO Google Ads and Display Ads	March – June 2022	RC	Increased visitors to the website. Bookings and income measured through the ticketing site. Attendance recorded through Town and Place AI visitation data.
3. Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the	Create standardised assets such as power point template, to be used in all presentations, re-enforcing the narrative always and with consistency	Website for asset bank and in events.	Jan and Feb	ZL, RC, EB	3 partners are using the narrative by the end of 2022.

new Gloucester narrative and brand assets.					
Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the new Gloucester narrative and brand assets.	Create portal on Business Support Pages of website for businesses to download brand assets.	Website	Ongoing	Team	3 partners are using the narrative by the end of 2022.
Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the new Gloucester narrative and brand assets.	Ongoing activity to update all web pages embedding the brand and narrative throughout.	Website	Ongoing	Team	All the main website pages have been altered to reflect the brand by the end of 2022. We use the watermarks on 20% of our social media images by the end of 2022.
Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the new Gloucester narrative and brand assets.	Source funding and secure sponsorship opportunities to enable 'out of the box' marketing activity such as City Dressing and Pop-Up events for visitors and residents.	Various channels such as outdoor media and city centre locations.	On going	Team	Opportunities for added value marketing above and beyond the always activity.
4. Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking,	Host quarterly training events, based on topics voted by our stakeholders.	In person events held at one of our City Council owned	Quarterly and ad Hoc	Team & Guest	4 tourism training events held in 2022 and one buyer/supplier networking event held in 2022.

seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletter.	Host speed networking event helping to broker business relations between the businesses within the city.	venues if restrictions permit		Speakers	
Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking, seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletter.	Update the Business Support Pages monthly with relevant content and current industry news.	Online B2B E-newsletter	Monthly	RC & ZL	Open rate increases by 2% in 2022 to 45%
Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking, seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletter.	Continue to work collaboratively with Gloucester BID and support the BID re-ballot by creating content that re-enforces the positive work the BID does for businesses in the city.	B2B E-newsletter	Ongoing	Team	Gloucester BID are re-elected in July 2022 with a majority vote.
Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking, seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletter.	Attend relevant industry events such as those run by Visit Britain.	Physical Presence	Dates TBC	RC	3 Key Travel Trade Shows are attended in 2022. 60 new leads are created for various partners in the city through travel trade shows.

5. Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options)	Ongoing activity to update all web pages embedding the sustainability narrative and theme throughout.	Website Social Channels	Ongoing	Team	GWR ticket sales improve in 2022 in line with their sales targets.
Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options)	Campaign spotlighting businesses offering sustainable services/products - itineraries for sustainable stays and days in Gloucester	Website Social Channels Blog	Jan – March '22	ZL	Website pages using distinct creative created to support sustainable options in Gloucester.
Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options)	Promoting/embedding links for visitors such as Trainhugger.com and refillable apps.	Website Social	Jan – Mar '22	ZL and EB	65% of blogs written by the team will have a sustainability message in them.

Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options)	Campaign highlighting eat local, stay local, shop local, embrace local options created and used on the website and throughout imagery in 2022.	Website Social Tik Tok Blogs Totems	Jan – Mar '22	ZL	Campaign reach measured through Google Analytics and Social Engagements.
6. Audience Development for our digital marketing channels concentrating on Instagram and TikTok	Source prizes from our partners to offer more competitions on our social channels to increase engagement and new users.	Social Channels	Throughout 2022	ZL EB	3 Social Media Giveaways created in 2022 with over 100 people taking part.
Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating in particular on Instagram and TikTok	Increase our number of web users by 2% across the year. Through website improvements, creating blog content and changing the homepage monthly.	Website	Throughout 2022	Team	Website users increase to 224,400 in 2022
Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating in particular on Instagram and TikTok	Identify options for growing our YouTube audiences through creating engaging video content which can also be shared across social. - a summer 2022 trailer - Did you know videos - Campaign similar to Love to Work	Website Social Media YouTube	June-September 2022	ZL & RC	5 high quality engaging videos created and shared on our Visit Gloucester YouTube channel. A YouTube campaign working with Big Wave Media to gain more subscribers to our channel.

Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating in particular on Instagram and TikTok	Start to use the Visit Gloucester website as a ticket selling site through embracing the TXGB functionality. Move old ticket shop products onto the TXGB platform.	Website	March - October 2022	EB and ZL	3 partners selling products on the Visit Gloucester website by 2023.
Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating in particular on Instagram and TikTok	A focus on short (>60 sec) video-based content, converting listicle type information into genuine, relatable content.	TikTok Instagram	January-December 2022	EB	Collaborate with 6 businesses to create video content.
7. Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.	Create a campaign targeting intergenerational families for Easter/Spring using our new images.	Outdoor media, press and PR, social media	February-May 2022	RC	Increased footfall over February Half Term and increased website visitors.
Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.	Summer Holiday Campaign – create a Summer Activity growing on the successes of the My Gloucester Passport Campaign which draws on the themes of sustainability and/or community	Blogs Web Content SEO Google Ads and Display Ads	May-August 2022	Team	Participation figures, increased footfall, partner feedback.

Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.	Winter Campaign – positioning Gloucester as the perfect break to shop and visit in the lead up to Christmas. Tie in with Victorian Christmas Market and Ice Rink.	Competitions Blogs Web Content SEO Google Ads and Display Ads	September 2022 – January 2023.	RC	Increased website visitors during the shoulder season and increased overnight visitors.
Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.	Create a campaign that celebrates Gloucester's communities and people. The thing that sets the city apart. Building on the My Gloucester content created in 2021. Look for funding to support this campaign.	Blogs Web Content SEO Google Ads and Display Ads	May-September 2022	RC	4 pieces of co-curated content on the website. Creative created that represents the different facets of Gloucester's communities.