

April 2020

Support for the tourism industry in East Hampshire during COVID19

In these difficult times we are looking to support all our tourism businesses in East Hampshire. Below are some hints and tips and resources to help you weather the storm and hopefully come out the other side so that we can start welcoming visitors back to the area.

Working from home: This may be a new phenomenon for many. Where possible establish a working routine that enables you to continue working as productively and normally as possible. Take regular breaks and keep in touch with colleagues that are still working. Download the means to hold meetings – Zoom etc. For those with children at home there are lots of resources for you to tap into from attractions, museums and galleries and people like the National Trust – from all over Hampshire. Checkout our factsheet on Coronavirus Good News Stories.

Cancellations: You'll more than likely have done this already, but try and offer as much flexibility as you can in order to maintain a good relationship with your customers. Offer them later dates – a postponement rather than a total cancellation, so that you have a business base for when we enter the recovery stage. Keep in touch with customers as much as possible to inform them of developments.

Ideas to keep you in the public arena. We very much hope you are not so hard hit that you cannot stage a come-back when we return to some kind of normality. In the meantime we are promoting activities that our members are engaging in during this period of lock-down and uncertainty so do keep us informed of anything you're doing.

Things you could do:

consider how you could support your local community with food/drink/other essentials from your wholesalers and suppliers that might otherwise go to waste. Some of you are doing deliveries, starting up a take-away service, or similar. One attraction is doing boxed up afternoon tea deliveries on special occasions. Some accommodation providers are offering free or discounted accommodation for self-isolating frontline staff in need of somewhere to stay between shifts. Think outside the box as to what you could do that makes you stand out.

If you have collections, exhibitions etc throw open your doors virtually so people can see what they would be seeing 'for real'. This keeps people in touch.

Make a YouTube video or similar – particularly good if you have things growing in the garden, are feeding animals, have baby animals that have just been born etc. If

you're a museum or gallery you might want to do an interview with your curator or film a 'behind the scenes' activity like conservation, the setting up of an exhibition etc. Keep it real and relevant and above all, interesting!

Create some educational/entertainment resources for children with children off school this is the ideal time to engage them and their parents/teachers with your organisation. You may already have an education officer or outreach worker who could advise you but simple activities are great. Some of you have produced Wordsearches, factsheets on things to make and do, activities that include subjects from the National Curriculum, things to look for in the garden or on a local walk, art projects etc. If you don't have knowledge of all things educational keep it simple – go down the entertainment route as kids need downtime too, so anything to keep them gainfully occupied will be appreciated! You might want to offer a competition with a prize linked to a future visit, for eg.

Something for the grown-ups if you're a pub or hotel, how about staging a pub quiz <https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/a31925493/virtual-pub-quiz-zoom-skype-house-party/> or <https://quizondemand.co.uk/how-to-host-virtual-pub-quiz/> You can buy ready-made quiz questions on line. If you've had to cancel long-awaited workshops consider doing something online instead. You might want to think about a reduced rate or offering something for free. Think about competitions or Wordsearches which have prizes linked to future visits. Also consider deals and offers for future bookings and flexibility to postpone a booking rather than having mass cancellations. These can be fed through to <https://www.visitsoutheastengland.com/offers> (this also gives you some ideas).

Rewarding frontline workers You might want to reward frontline workers with a discounted break/visit /produce etc once COVID19 is over. Or perhaps empty accommodation could be used to offer them space between shifts when going home isn't an option.

If you deal with food perhaps offer activities linked to recipes of your signature dishes or using your produce. Useful advice on cooking for a family in lock-down is very popular right now. You could do a YouTube video on how to make things – sourdough, cocktails, meals in rather than going out! The same goes for gardening tips if part of your attraction or hotel includes grounds.

Social media and other forms of promotion Keep in touch with your audiences through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc to promote all of the above. Social media is obviously cheap to update and won't become obsolete like printed media. Use excellent and novel images and video clips etc. Use blogs, news items and virtual tours etc. And keep at it to remain relevant and up-to-the minute.

Keeping in touch with media contacts Keep them updated on all you're doing. Write press releases where you have interesting news to tell – what out of the above you're doing. Remember to copy us, TSE, Hampshire County Council, Visit England and Visit Britain in so they can use, too. (see contacts below)

Join forces with other tourism attractions – for moral support, sharing of ideas and resources, joint initiatives etc.

Create a Recovery Plan Remember 'this too shall pass'. Things may take a long time to settle down again but being as ready as you can be to make a comeback will stand you in good stead.

Think about recovery themes – these are being flagged up by TSE:

Theme 1 - The Great South East England Tourism comeback begins! *We are Open for Business or The Doors are slowly opening.... As appropriate*

Theme 2 - Stay Safe/Stay Local/Eat Local/Buy Local – *promote what's on the doorstep, produce that we specialise in, places to eat and drink etc*

Theme 3 - Outdoor Space – *gardens, walks, woodland, forest, country parks etc*

Theme 4 – Thank you to the NHS and Keyworkers *Special offers that apply to just these Keyworkers. If attractions/businesses want to promote and offer why by individuals bring their ID. This theme may need to come quite early.*

Theme 5: 'The long awaiting evening out' – Date Night, Belated celebrations. *When restrictions allow small meetings with close family/When small bars and restaurants Open/parents night out when they can take advantage of babysitters/grandparents. We might add to this weddings, hen nights and stag nights etc when larger groups can meet. This could be adapted to small Multigenerational meet ups. Belated celebrations /even memorial for people that have been lost*

Theme 6: The Staycation is back! Late Summer/Autumn/Winter getaways. *When the we can start seeing and end in sight and timeline for people being able to book overdue holiday, including winter get away.*

Theme 7 - Family Fun – *planning a treat following lock-down – time as a family to do something away from the immediate environment. Somewhere we can drive to and perhaps stay on a break.*

Theme 8 - Sustainable choices *Now we are all out and about and beginning to find normality, don't forget the positives from this situation – The world has seen itself heal, we have all seen first-hand the benefits when the world stopped. Continue to make your pledge to the sustainability of the planet even the places you visit. Our businesses are very responsible.*

Theme 9 - Wellbeing - Healthy Lifestyle. *We might need to stretch ourselves following lock-down and return to some healthy choices. Trying out wellbeing*

breaks, spas, walking holidays, cycling staying close to nature and getting involved in healthy activity.

Theme 9 – Events and Festivals are back – *When Large Scale Gatherings guidance is lifted and dates are rescheduled. We might add to this any kind of event, not just large scale ones. Arts events, workshops, mini-festivals etc*

Visit these websites for some business advice which may fit with your organisation:

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/347557>

<https://timezoneone.com/news/covid-19-marketing-tourism/>

Keep your website and social media up to date with information about your closure, when you might open again (or indefinitely!) and keep reminding potential customers of why to visit in the future! Great images and graphics/videos etc make things lively and interesting. Remember that your audiences aren't in the 'booking now' phase, but they can dream about what they could be doing later in the year. Also remember that value for money could become a priority once more.

Useful sources of information:

<https://www.visitbritain.org/covid-19-new-coronavirus-latest-information-and-advice-for-businesses>

<https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/communicating-your-customers-during-covid-19>

<https://www.tourismsoutheast.com/services-and-support/business-support/government-plans/>

<https://www.easthants.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support>

Contacts:

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Hampshire County Council: Chris.Bowry@hants.gov.uk

Tourism South East: icaswell@tourismse.com

Visit England press office: press@visitengland.org

Visit Britain press office: pressandpr@visitbritain.org