

VISIT GLOUCESTER

Tourism and Destination Marketing Review – 2022

1. Introduction

The Tourism and Destination Team (operating under the brand name of Visit Gloucester) consists of three full time officers and sit within the Culture Service. They work to an annual Strategic Marketing Plan which is written in December each year and is signed off at Cabinet level in February. The Marketing Plan is consulted on by the Tourism and Destination Marketing Steering Board and the priorities are upweighted by our businesses through a voting system. This report shows the progress of the Team in delivering the objectives outlined in the marketing plan.

Objectives

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

2. Marketing Activity

Below is a summary of the marketing campaigns and activity carried by the team in 2022.

2.1 Bright Nights (objectives 2, 6 and 7)

A series of illuminated art installations and events for the city, were in place from November 2021 until February 2022.

These light installations brought colour, light and joy to the city as the nights were longer over winter.

February saw the Breathing Room, Glow Globes and Luma, installed and enjoyed in the City.



As with all of our marketing campaigns the majority of the promotion of the program was done through

digital marketing. We engaged local and regional social influencers Igers Gloucester and GL Shooters early on and invited them to the launch and individual events to create a buzz around the events from trusted social influencers. We also promoted the event through paid social and google display media.

Organic social media

The team put out 45 social media posts across our social media channels which had the following stats:

Facebook

- number of posts – 26
- impressions - 185,809
- reach - 179,065
- engagements - 13,279

Instagram

- number of posts - 22
- impressions - 14,864
- reach - 14,082
- engagements - 934

Our best performing post was the weekend roundup post reaching over 30,000 people.

Full evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

Illuminated Swim

Held at GL1 Aspire Leisure Centre, this was the final part of the Bright Nights campaign, with a series of different illuminated swim sessions held throughout the day, across 6 days.



Visit Gloucester sold tickets for the event via TXGB, and in total ahead of the event ££9715 were sold via this platform.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Paid:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter	Engagement
5,010	4,844	0	228

Total Reach	Total Engagement
37,340	1,511

2.2 Gloucester’s Easter Eggsplorers (objectives 1,2,5,6 and 7)

This was a trail style event that ran throughout the school easter holidays, with 15 local businesses taking part. Participants had to collect 10 different stickers from a choice of 15 locations, before collecting their very own wooden Easter egg to decorate at home.



The aim of this activity was to encourage visitors to the City, to explore further, extend their dwell time, and provide a free activity for families.

Activity Summary and Stats:

Trail sheets picked up - 360

Eggs decorated - 360

Webpage views - 1,191

38% of businesses involved said people purchased from them whilst collecting a sticker

Businesses involved said 50% of the participants were new customers/visitors, and of these they believed at least 2/3 would be returning.

Verbal Feedback from Business Involved:

We thought it was a great way of bringing people back to the City Center and would love to be involved in any other events

The system worked well, good communication and implementation.

It's a great way for kids to get to know the city, they were telling me about places they had never visited before!

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Paid:

Total Impressions	Total Reach Instagram/Facebook	Potential Reach Twitter	Engagement	Total Reach	Total Engagement
47,829	41,202	190,684	947	12,821	4,899

2.3 Kings Square Launch (objectives 1,2,3,6,7)

Taking place on Saturday, April 30, the day's events will show off the newly revamped square's design based on the Severn Bore, the tidal surge along the River Severn, and its sweeping granite seating areas, water fountains and atmospheric coloured lighting.



The event celebrates 50 years after the square was first opened in 1972, and aims to showcase the square as an events space by featuring lighting displays, dance performances and a dramatic high wire walk. We promoted the launch through the website, blogs, and social media. All design work used the new Gloucester Place Branding which worked well for the event.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Paid:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	Engagement	Total Reach	Total Engagement
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter		56,528	84
43,398	37,710	51,518	2,591		

Full evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

2.4 Escape the Everyday (Objectives 1,2,3,5,6,7)

Visit Gloucester and Visit Cheltenham were successful in securing £80,000 worth of funding from Visit Britain as part of their Escape the Everyday DMO Fund Round 2.



The Escape the Everyday Campaign encourages people to escape the unique everyday and inspire consumers to book a short break across the UK by showcasing the breadth of bookable experiences available for them to escape to. This round of funding was open to cities and urban areas. The joint bid allowed Gloucester and Cheltenham to create a campaign that promoted the two centers as complementary destinations for a staycation.

The campaign consisted of Press and PR, Outdoor Media, Paid Social Media, Spotify advertising, DAX (Digital Audio Streaming Service), influencer marketing and podcast sponsorship.

Visit Gloucester's Sales of Bookable Products that were part of the Campaign:

- Online Products Available 10
- Online Tickets Sold 4,789
- Online Bookings 1,619
- Value £25,972.50

Digital Marketing Results:

- Organic Social Media Impressions **242,909**
- Homepage page views **78,408**
- Visit Gloucester campaign page views **22,283**
- Visit Gloucester blog content page views **4,671**
- Google Display Impressions 2.11M, Clicks - **21,727**
- Facebook Advertising Impressions - 2.38M, Clicks - **6,790**

Full evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

2.5 Gloucester’s Tall Ships Festival (Objectives 2, 7)

Gloucester Tall Ships was back for 2022 with a jam-packed schedule of family fun and entertainment, setting sail over Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee Weekend, Friday 3rd - Sunday 5th June.



Visit Gloucester used our TXGB ticketing platform to sell Boarding Passes for the event selling £31k worth of Boarding Passes ahead of the event weekend. We also worked closely with Plaster Communications to help promote the event through City Dressing, press trips, paid social media advertising and engaging social influencers to visit and share.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Total Impressions	Total Reach Instagram/Facebook	Potential Reach Twitter	Engagement
212,269	199,149	80,971	10,812

Paid:

Total Reach	Total Engagement
32,656	1,917

Footfall – 109,250 over the course of the weekend +34% compared to the weekend before.

2.6 TXGB Trailblazer Award (Objective 4)

We are thrilled to announce that Visit Gloucester, won a silver Visit Britain Awards for Excellence in the TXGB Trailblazer category, coming a very close second to Rugby League World Cup who took the Gold

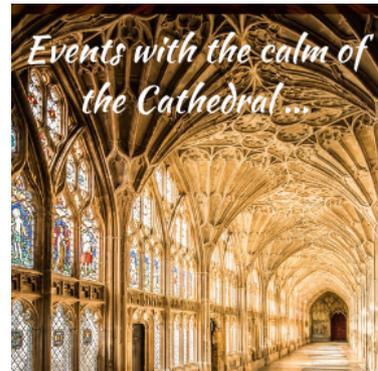


2. 7 Serenity in the City (Objectives 1,3,7)

Serenity in the City was our summer campaign that aimed to directly contribute to the wellbeing of our visitors and residents. Connecting people to the built environment and each other.

The campaign aimed to increase footfall to our Visitor Economy businesses, encouraging them to then upsell to visitors, the campaign also aims to encourage repeat visits into the City, by releasing different activities through the summer.

The activities and associated marketing campaign ran from early July until 30 September 2022.



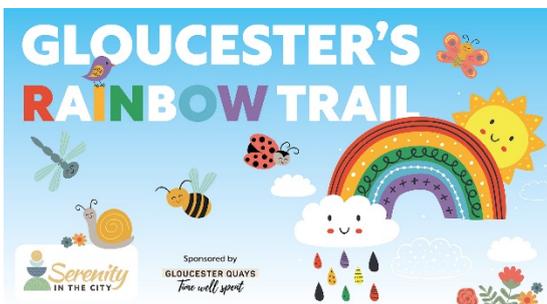
- Activity included:
- Poetry in the Pories
- Mindfulness Audio Walk
- Imagination Stations
- Children’s Rainbow Trail

Social Statistics:

	Total Reach
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook
9,660	9,150

Gloucester’s Rainbow Trail

From the 12 August, there was a rainbow trail throughout Gloucester. Sponsored by Gloucester Quays, it was part of the wider Serenity in the City campaign, specifically aimed at children.



7 local businesses and attractions were sticker destinations, to which participants had to visit to complete their rainbow, in exchange for their completed rainbow, they received a prize.

Event Evaluation is still underway, however initial feedback is that this trail did not have the uptake as previous trails have had.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Paid:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter	Engagement
24,816	22,999	12,926	662

Total Reach	Total Engagement
40,924	939

2. 8 Luminarium (Objectives 2, 6, 7)

Kings Square saw a giant inflatable structure positioned within for 12 days during August, from the 12-21 August, the Luminarium was the Arboria II.



We promoted Luminarium through press releases, blogs engaging Igers Glos and GL Shooters and through paid social media advertising. Unfortunately, unprecedented weather conditions resulted in the Sculpture being closed for much of the first weekend it was open to the public, however despite this, visitors loved it, booking tickets either online via the TXGB platform, or in person at the event.

Visit Gloucester sold £17k worth of tickets, however a large number of refunds were made due to the unforeseen closure.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

Paid:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter	Engagement
85,800	79,850	41,065	7,706

Total Reach	Total Engagement
47,867	1,664

Full evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

2.9 Gloucester Goes Retro (Objectives 2,6,7)

Gloucester Goes Retro was back for 2022 with more vehicles, music, dance, and entertainment! Gloucester's feel-good festival is a multigenerational delight.



Visit Gloucester managed all of the marketing activity for the event including press releases, radio interviews, paid social media and blogs.

Footfall – **34,495**, **+32%** on the weekend before

Organic Social Statistics:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter	Engagement
93,613	83,536	57,585	8,432

Paid Social Media

Total Impressions	Total Reach	Cost per Click	Budget
139,957	13,274	£0.06	£600

Full evaluation report can be accessed [here](#).

2.10 History Festival

This year's Gloucester History Festival saw for the first time, Visit Gloucester selling tickets for all of the talks, combined with a range of online marketing to promote this and drive sales.



Unfortunately, as with many events, due to the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, all but one of these events was postponed.

Prior to postponing and subsequent refunds, Visit Gloucester had sold £21,600 worth of tickets.

Social Statistics:

Organic:

	Total Reach	Potential Reach	
Total Impressions	Instagram/Facebook	Twitter	Engagement
15,505	13,499	47,406	529

Paid:

Total Reach	Total Engagement
36,492	1,472

3. Always On Activity

Here is a summary of our always on activity including website, social media and e-newsletter performance.

3.1 B2B Newsletter Summary (Objectives 1,4)

Every month we send a B2B newsletter to our partners and stakeholders, with current news, events, what's on and industry insights and information. Below is a summary of analytics by month. We have an average read rate of 33% which is high in comparison with other local DMOs and higher than the industry average of 26%.

	No. Sent	No. Del	No. Read	%Read
January	174	173	49	28.32
February	174	171	53	30.99
March	174	170	55	32.35
April	176	171	53	30.99
May	180	178	68	38.20
June	179	178	57	32.02
July	180	178	62	34.83
August	170	177	64	36.16

3.2 B2C Newsletter Summary (Objectives 2,7)

Every month we send a B2C newsletter to people who have subscribed to it. Since January 2022, we have increased our number of subscribers by 94%, and we have an average read rate of 53%. Pentana KPI was to grow the newsletter by 100 subscribers per month which we are well on track to deliver and it is really encouraging to see our open rate growing too showing that people are liking the content we are putting out.

Month	No.Sent	No. Del	No. Open*	% Open Rate
January	902	884	786	47%
February	0	0	0	
March	1098	1077	1025	51%
April	1175	1149	1204	50%
May	1255	1229	1497	54%
June	1368	1342	1443	56%
July	1477	1445	1756	57%
August	1749	1708	1944	56%

*GovDelivery measures multiple opens of the email which is why they can be bigger than the distribution number.

3.3 Website Improvements (Objectives, 1,2, 3, 4 5, 6)

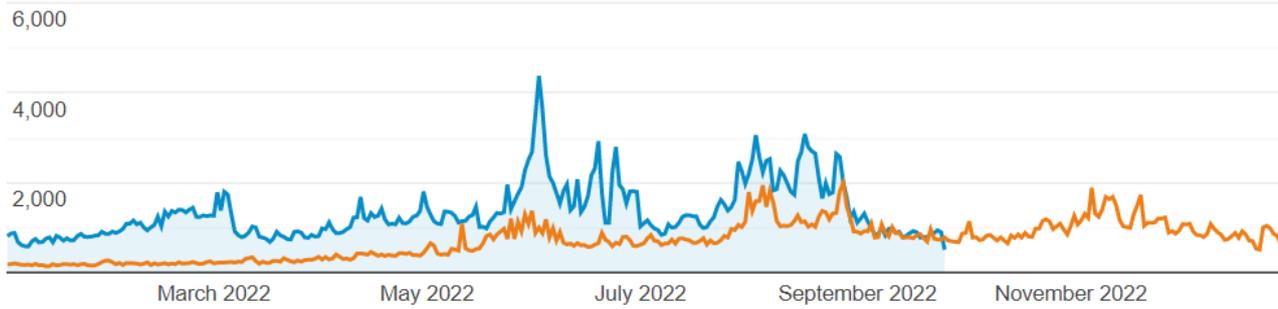
A number of improvements have been made to our website in 2022 including crafting bespoke content for the homepage so it reflects the seasons and the introduction of a new Book Now button to improve the TXGB user experience.

Since 1 January 2022 we have created 72 Blogs, that's an impressive average of 8 a month. We have had 13 guest bloggers beating our Pentana target of one per month. All these changes have paid off as our website user figures have skyrocketed up 40% on this time last year (318,000 vs 226,000 which was a record-breaking year for website figures). Our Pentana target was to match our record breaking year but it is likely that we will exceed this target by over 100,000 users which is incredible growth mainly delivered by our engaging content and successful campaigns.

In March this year we created our Tourism and Destination Data Dashboard following recommendations from last year's business case to keep the service. To this end we have made all of our data readily available to our businesses for them to access and benchmark against but also to help with writing funding bids. This has been very well received and can be seen here Gloucester Tourism and Destination Marketing Data Dashboard - Visit Gloucester. We put our citywide data on here as soon as we get it and regularly share our marketing campaigns evaluation. The Pentana KPI for this is to share 1 piece of data a month but in reality we share thousands of pieces of data daily through the dashboard.

Jan 1, 2022 - Sep 26, 2022: ● Users

Jan 1, 2021 - Dec 31, 2021: ● Users



3.4 Social Media Performance (Objective 6)

We manage 5 social media channels four for Visit Gloucester and 1 for Gloucester Goes Retro. All of our channels apart from Twitter have experienced growth this year.

Facebook and Instagram have both achieved big gains in reach up 129% and 202% respectively.

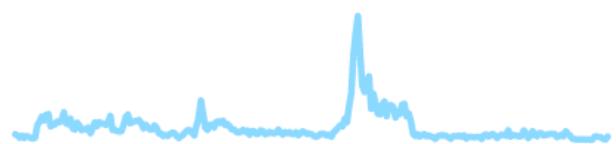
Facebook Page reach ⓘ

1,746,923 ↑ 129.8%



Instagram reach ⓘ

267,786 ↑ 202.4%



The most popular content being cheese rolling, Tall Ships Festival and the Titanic exhibition. TikTok continues to be a slow burn but an excellent tool for communicating the quirky nature of our city to a younger audience. We are considering the future of our Twitter channel and are researching how other DMOs are using it. We have started to use it to post jobs from our jobs page on.

3.5 Attendance at Tourism and Travel Trade Events (Objectives 2 and 4)

This year is the first year following the pandemic that in-person travel trade and tourism events are all taking place. It is also recognised that this year is crucial in bringing back inbound audiences and groups to the city for the next few years. They also provide the perfect opportunity to engage with travel trade organisations and make them aware of new products coming online including the Cathedral's Flower Show and new tours as well as the two new 4* hotels due to open in the city centre in the next two years.

Rebecca attended the Visit Britain Sales Mission in Washington in September, Destination Britain North America. America remains the number one inbound market for Gloucester especially due to its ancestry and religious connections (more information here [Gloucester's American Connections - Visit Gloucester](#)). The event was a huge success with 42 quality appointments all of which were very interested in Gloucester especially the Cathedral's tours, new hotels and event programme. The majority of the operators were seeing strong demand especially from high net-worth multigeneration family travelers who are looking for

unique experiences. We have had follow up conversation with 6 organisations so far and will send a reminder email in the next two weeks to other organisations.

Rebecca also attended UKInbound Convention 27-30 September consisting of a day of seminars and a day of B2B appointments with networking opportunities and familiarisation visits. The last event she will attend is Group Leisure on 6 October in Milton Keynes which is perfect for Gloucester as its attracts groups of all sizes from U3As and Rotary's up to big Group Travel Organisers like Kuoni and AC Travel.

3.6 City Branding Roll Out (Objective 2)



Following a robust procurement exercise Thinking Place Ltd were appointed in May 2021 and work on the Place Branding Project started soon after. A Place Steering Board was set up to oversee the development of the place branding and ensure the brand was representative of the city not just the council. The board had the following members:

Emma Smith - Communications Manager for University of Gloucestershire

Rupert Waters -The Race Commission

Esther Croft – Reef

David Jackson – Marketing Cheltenham

A big thank you to everyone who participated in the numerous consultation and feedback sessions on the Gloucester Place Branding Project. The project is winding up now, here are a few things we have in the pipeline for the roll out of the new brand.

We have created an online portal for everyone to access all the assets which also includes videos of the masterclass we ran earlier this year which some of you attended. Everything can be accessed here <https://www.visitgloucester.co.uk/business-support/gloucester-tourism-and-destination-marketing-data-dashboard/place-branding>. We are delighted to see that so many businesses and organisations are already weaving the branding into their designs. The recently updated windows in GL are a great example.

I have been working with our communities' teams to update everyone who fed into the project on the outcomes.

We have had some canvas bags made for our partners to start using – attached are some images. If you would like some of these please do not hesitate to get in touch and I can arrange for some to be dropped off to you.

3.7 A note on the DMO Review

As part of the regional DMO meeting we have been looking at delivery methods for the future following the [DMO Review](#). The DMO Review will look to create larger umbrella organisations (Local Visitor Economy Partnerships LVEPs) which smaller DMOs like Visit Gloucester will sit underneath. This will

minimize the number of organisations that Visit Britain will support. We are in an incredibly strong position in our region in that the 6 DMOs already work closely together undertaking joint campaigns and joint initiatives that allow us to pilot future models of working together. It is likely that we will continue to work this way where we divide up the different functions of the DMO between us – for example Visit Cotswolds and Visit Gloucester will undertake the majority of the Travel Trade work whilst Visit Cheltenham deliver the MICE (Meetings, Incentives and Events) work for the region. All playing to our strengths and skills.