

Visit Tavistock

A Co-ordinated Destination Marketing Strategy

Introduction

Tourism and the visitor economy is one of Tavistock's key economic drivers. Its World Heritage status, proximity to Dartmoor and the Tamar Valley and its variety of independent shops and restaurants make it a very attractive place to visit.

This paper has been developed to highlight the current position regarding the marketing of Tavistock to our visitor community and the challenges and opportunities that arise following opening of Tavistock Guildhall, which is the Visitor hub for the Cornwall and West Devon mining world heritage site.

Current status

Currently there is no clear destination marketing plan in place to help grow the town's visitor footfall. Increasing this footfall will not only help local businesses but it will also help increase the revenue of Council owned premises such as the Pannier Market, Town Hall, Butchers Hall and the Guildhall as well as encouraging new traders to open shops in the town.

A number of agencies have limited budgets for marketing activities, including Tavistock Town Council, Tavistock Bid, West Devon Borough Council, Visit Tamar Valley, Visit Dartmoor and THT (Tavistock Guildhall). At present this funding is used by the individual groups based on their individual needs.

- Tavistock Town Council focuses on ensuring that they make the most of their significant property portfolio in the town (shop lets, use of the Town Hall, Butchers Hall as venues).
- Tavistock BID represents the business community with a focus on driving more trade into town so supports event-based activity like Dickensian evening alongside the Visit Tavistock website.
- Tavistock Heritage Trust has responsibility for marketing the Guildhall and increasing visitor numbers and spend via the promotion of Tavistock and its surrounds as a World Heritage site and the Guildhall as the visitor information hub for the Area.
- West Devon Borough Council wants to improve public knowledge of the area as a destination of choice for heritage and outdoor visitors, along with Visit Tamar Valley and Visit Dartmoor.

Some of these objectives are complementary and others less so. What is lacking is a multi-agency agreement on a set of objectives and the central control of a marketing budget to deliver these joint objectives.

How does Tavistock want to present itself to the public?

Building on the focus on the Guildhall since its opening in December 2021 we have the opportunity to present Tavistock and West Devon as a destination of choice for both local and non-local visitors.

For local audiences, the area offers the beautiful market town of Tavistock and its surrounding villages, independent shops, great restaurants and cafes, excellent entertainment facilities and wonderful cultural attractions including the Tavistock heritage quarter (Town Hall, Butcher's Hall, Guildhall, Museum).

For non-local audiences we have the town itself and the attractions outlined above, plus easy access to the natural beauty of Dartmoor and the Tamar Valley, proximity to Plymouth with its maritime heritage and of course the Guildhall which opens up the Cornwall and West Devon mining world heritage site for the visitor.

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In essence it is the definitive countryside break, something for everyone with the added bonus of wonderful natural surroundings and fascinating cultural heritage.

How do we increase footfall?

We need to create a destination marketing plan to grow engagement and publicity around the town and all it has to offer. To do this we need to focus attention on the following:

- 1) Consistent social and print media coverage
- 2) Focused PR Campaign
- 3) Combined print and digital advertising

Individually the three key players promoting Tavistock - BID, Tavistock Town Council and Tavistock Heritage Trust do not have the manpower or the resources to fund and run such a campaign.

West Devon Borough Council has offered support. This will not be financial, but they will be able to provide advice and officer support from their Placemaking and Comms departments. We will of course be competing with other towns across West Devon and the South Hams for their attention.

We need to focus all our attention on Tavistock and by working together with a combined marketing budget, we could start to create a clear and focussed message/voice and image for the town.

Proposal

- 1) **Formation of a town marketing board with representatives from TTC, BID, THT**
- 2) **Creation of a town marketing fund with contributions from the above organisations**
Suggested amounts would be £5000 each from BID and TTC with £3000 from THT which forms part of the NLHF funding designated for publicity
- 3) **Engagement of freelance social media assistant to develop a consistent online presence for the town**

Conclusion

If we really want to promote our town as a visitor destination and dramatically increase footfall then we need an overall destination marketing plan which integrates the messages of all these organisations. By creating a combined marketing strategy and budget we can develop a new powerful and focussed vision for promoting Tavistock.

Prepared by Tavistock Heritage Trust