

**BUCKINGHAM & THE
CHILTERNNS**
Destination Think Tank
2 May 2013

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

Objectives for the day

To agree:

- ▶ What sort of visitors you want to attract
- ▶ What you can offer those visitors now
- ▶ How you can promote the offer
- ▶ What you need to do to make it happen



**What makes your area
special and different?**

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

We asked people to work in groups to come up with words and phrases that described the special qualities of the area for visitors, what makes it special and different from other destinations. Here are the key words. The larger the word, the more times you mentioned it



**Visitors to Bucks and the
Chilterns now**

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

What we know about your visitors

- ▶ 1.38m staying visitors - 1.1m domestic visitors
- ▶ 14.43m day visitors
- ▶ £962m total spend p.a.

- ▶ Domestic visits increasing, inbound visits down
 - ▶ Milton Keynes/Aylesbury Vale 68% of domestic bednights
 - ▶ High level of VFR at 53% of overnight trips; low level of 'pure' holiday stays at 24%
-

What we know about your visitors

- ▶ 2 most popular attractions are for outdoor activities
 - ▶ 6 of 9 attractions with 100,000+ visitors are heritage/gardens
 - ▶ NT properties increased visitor nos. in 2011
-
- ▶ 2007 Chilterns Study – 2% staying overnight in Chilterns / 5% outside
 - ▶ 44% walking, 10% views/scenery, 7% attractions, 3% food and drink
 - ▶ Majority small groups and aged 24+
-

Who should we target?

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

We looked at four market segments that we think are important for Bucks and the Chilterns and have potential for growth. We discussed how the local offer could appeal to these segments, both day and night-time.

Culturally Curious

Who

Cultural couples or groups of friends
DINKYs
Empty nesters
Independent, active sightseers

Want

Art & culture
Gardens & historic properties
Good food, local produce
Find out about a place
Stimulate their thinking
Quality & value for money

Key Messages

Discover new places
Thought provoking experiences
Great places to eat
Boutique experiences



Culturally Curious – the offer

Day

Art exhibitions, contemporary art
Creative education – arts and crafts
Open Studios
National Trust houses and gardens
Market towns
Auctions, antiques
Bookshops
History
Museums, Old Gaol
Film and TV locations

Night

Gastro pubs
High end food – Hand and Flowers,
Crazy Bear
Theatre , Music, Ballet:
Waterside, Swan Theatre



Great Escapers

Who

Key age-group 16-44
Couples, groups of
friends, students.

Want

The countryside and outdoors
Active and exciting exploration
Down time to relax and bond
To be refreshed and revitalised



Key Messages

Real countryside
Plenty to do and see
Country pubs
Hotel deals
Close to London and accessible

Great Escapers – the offer

Day

Canal

Ashridge

Wendover Woods

Ashton Hill (MTB)

Walks

Water activities

Cycling/ Electric bikes

Kite flying

Geo-caching

Orienteering



Night

Historic pubs

Film/ theatre

Bat walks

More needed of:

Hotels

Self-catering +local food

Camping

Hostel

Family Focus

Who

Nesting stage children
under 5 -10
Day trips up to an hour or
so away
Value breaks



Want

Safe places
Good value
Deals, vouchers
Kids to be entertained, happy,
worn out
Parents and kids learn together
Wet weather alternatives

Key Messages

Kids rule
Play and fun
Children welcome
Good value and a full day
Time together
Learning together
Wow factor

Family Focus – the offer

Day

Roald Dahl Museum and Gallery
Bekonscot
Chiltern Open Air Museum
Odds Farm Park
National Trust properties
Go Ape and Wendover Woods
Walks, picnics
Tring Natural History Museum
Sports centres, Snow Dome MK
Indoor play areas
Hellfire Caves and W. Wycombe
Bucks County Show
Quinton Model Railway
Chinnor and Princes R Railway
Bucks Railway Museum



Night

Bowling
Cinema
NT family evening walks
Family-friendly restaurants
Kids eat free offers
BBQs e.g. at Ashridge
Hellfire Caves evening events

Pure Indulgence

Who

Independent
Girls of all ages
Groups of friends
DINKYs
Empty nesters



Want

To be pampered
Luxury places to stay
Theatre & culture
Festivals & events
Good food
Shopping
Quality & value for money

Key Messages

Discover new places &
experiences
Great places to eat
Indulgent experiences
Because you are worth it

Pure Indulgence – the offer

Day

Houses and Gardens
Golf
Wineries and wine tasting
Themed trails (Midsomer Murders)
Boutique shopping
Spa treatments
Local foods
Museums
Rural events e.g. County Show
Silverstone/ Kop Hill
'Let's just go somewhere nice!'

Night

Restaurants
Pubs
Theatres



Themes and propositions

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

In an open session, we asked you to identify strong themes or propositions for the destination that had emerged from the previous exercise. The following were identified as the strongest prospects. Then in groups we considered how to make the themes special and how we would promote them

1. Historic Houses

Create packages through coordination and cooperation

- for example between Houses and with Bicester Village
- Itineraries for groups with accommodation options
- Special added value items such as behind the scenes tours



2. Literary Connections



The literary figures and connections include:

Roald Dahl (Gt Missenden and Aylesbury), Enid Blyton (Beaconsfield, Bourne End), John Milton, Thomas Cowper (N. Bucks) GK Chesterton (Beaconsfield), Harry Potter and Midsomer Murders locations

Children's package of 'edutainment' including a Roald Dahl Trail: Gt Missenden museum and village, Aylesbury Children's Gallery, Bekonscot supported by website promotion and promotion through schools, book clubs

Murder Mystery evenings in hotels to reflect the Midsomer Murders theme, Murder/ Morse/ Lewis/ Oxford weekends; CS Lewis connections

A Literary Festival?

3. The County for Arts and Crafts



See – do – learn

- ▶ Careful packaging of opportunities and activities
 - ▶ Cascade to special interest groups and wider population
 - ▶ Convert day trips to weekend experience; link to connected places and accommodation
 - ▶ Build events to become regular and then develop a headline Event which builds reputation
-

4. Walking

Make it easy for walkers

Offer to transport luggage – man and van

Highlight and arrange places to stay

Trails – website downloads

Added value – person to talk history or information via web and mobiles



Packaging and theming

Picnic walks, Crafts, Waterways, Icknield Way

Literary history, Wildlife, Local food and drink

Pushchair walks

Promote and package

Lots of different audiences – segment and target

Use specialist media

Social media, Twitter, Mumsnet

Develop opportunities with food, drink, accommodation and transport providers

Good walks on Bucks CC website – promoted not ‘buried’

5. Children's Activities



‘Learning Together’

‘Weatherproof’ County for Children – offers for sunny day and rainy day

- ▶ Outdoors: nature, orienteering, bats, bike riding
 - ▶ Walks – themed loops around history or wildlife
 - ▶ Provide day planners with activities and cross-selling of historic properties, places to visit, food etc
 - ▶ Provide on web, mobile apps, paper
-

How will we make things happen?

We considered what actions and further skills, people and resources are needed to make a difference to the tourism economy

- ▶ Create networks around themes, developing synergies between organisations and businesses
 - ▶ Address specific market segments
 - ▶ Propositions and actions need to deliver business objectives
 - ▶ Adopt fuzzy boundaries – package by interest not lines on map
 - ▶ Be Mystery Shoppers – try out the experiences ourselves
-

BLUE SAIL ▶

VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS