

Notes from the Hotels sector meeting

Tuesday 6th July 2021

Key findings/comments from attendees:

- Recruitment proving the biggest issue. Affecting front of house, catering, spa and cleaning staff mainly with many other staff having to help in areas they wouldn't normally be involved with.
- Pandemic forcing businesses to rethink how they work and what they can offer. Most now reducing capacity as can't 'staff' business when more visitors. Coping mechanisms include closing F&B offer to non-residents and becoming B&B only several days a week. Very frustrating as the demand is there but they're unable to service it.
- Weddings particularly badly affected. One hotel stopped doing them all together. All now focussing on doing less but doing it really well.
- Occupancy rates holding up well for the summer months and expecting a longer season.
- Big shift in visitor profile and demographic – not always good and missing the overseas visitors. Cotswolds Tourism looking at new software system which will help us see where visitors are coming from.
- People are staying for longer – traditionally a night or two – now 4 nights +.
- Big desire and need to protect and nurture existing staff by not overworking them.
- American travel agents very optimistic about demand for Europe as soon as there's an easy route and many already saying they're definitely coming this year.
- Need to keep an eye on the business mix particularly as uncertain what the domestic market will do next year. Potential for a further staycation boom but equally people may all decide to go abroad.
- Track and trace causing huge issues both for staff who get pinged but also guests having to cancel at the last minute. Just one person being pinged and forced to self-isolate has a massive knock on effect on the remaining team.
- Guests seem to be more understanding of the need to book things like restaurants and attractions in advance of their visit. Need to continue spoon-feeding them with information before they visit and manage expectations.
- Guest behaviour – seen a deterioration in courtesy and manners. Suspect people have had more time to think about what their trip away will be like and have too high expectations.

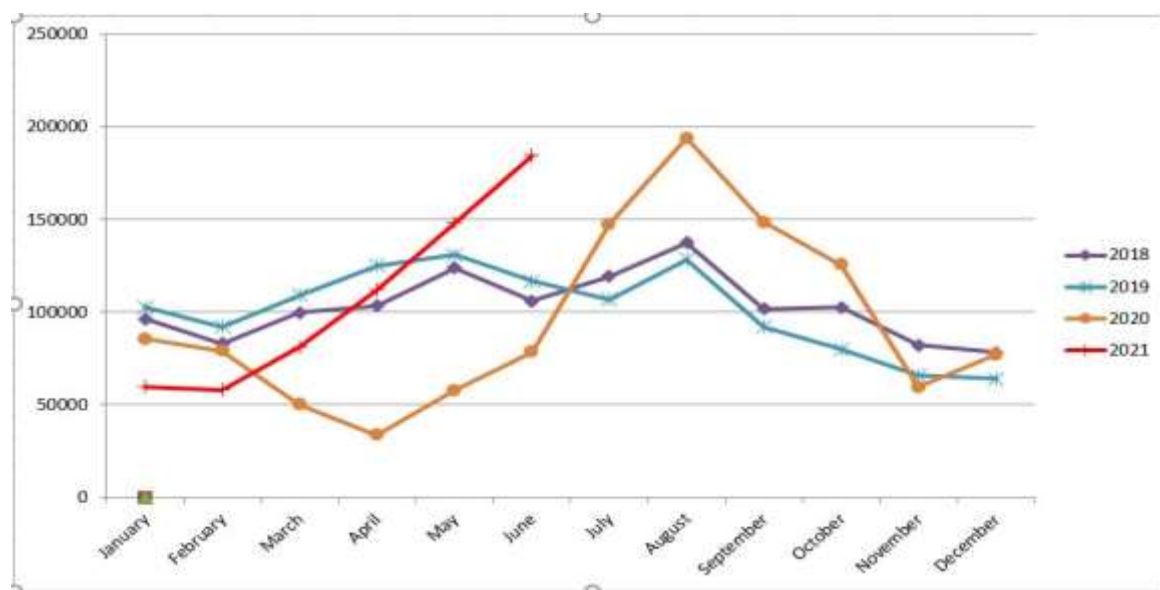
Updates from Cotswolds Tourism

Free training courses: Cotswolds Tourism have produced a series of training courses which are at www.cotswolds.com/partnership/training. They cover a wide range of subjects and range from bitesize to longer sessions.

Digital guides: Digital guides to Cotswold towns are also available at www.cotswolds.com/digital-guides and are great pointers for your guests to get a feel for the different areas.

Cotswold browsers: We have repurposed some VisitEngland funding to produce brand new bedroom browsers which are available free of charge to all accommodation providers via local TIC's. Please call before turning up to check they're there. Work in progress! They have laminated covers making them cleanable.

Google analytics for the Cotswolds.com website clearly demonstrate the effects of the pandemic: lockdowns indicated by huge drops in interest, the approaching end of each lockdown a renewed surge of interest. The first six months of 2021 show unique visitors down just over 7% on 2019 but this masks huge differences: January to February down 30% or more but the busiest June ever 58% up on 2019!



Within the overall numbers there are also huge differences between different sectors:

- Self-catering – up **90%**
- Gardens – up **88%**
- Food & drink – up **69%**
- Camping/Glamping – up **50%**
- Activities – up **41%**
- Family fun – up **46%**
- Hotels – up **14%**
- Shopping – down **20%**
- Historic houses – down **35%**
- B&Bs – down **36%**
- Tours – down **37%**
- Museums – down **40%**

Membership currently free until September 2021 and currently looking at what happens then.

Keep up to date via our **B2B social media channels**: Twitter @cotstourismbiz; Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/851272778718986; Linked-in www.linkedin.com/company/cotswoldstourism

T-Stats & data Really good input from the tours sector to [Tstats](https://www.cotswolds.com/tstats) – please enter 0 for months closed and in notes state Covid restrictions. If you are not yet signed up please contact us at cotswoldstourism@cotswold.gov.uk or review www.cotswolds.com/tstats

We have sent out a [survey link](#) to help South West Tourism Research Company's work compiling our annual economic impact study. This data is used by LEPs, local authorities and businesses so your input is valuable.

Keep an eye on **consumer sentiment** with www.visitbritain.org/covid-19-consumer-sentiment-tracker and VisitEngland's **business advice hub** www.visitbritain.org/business-advice

Visit England are running a domestic campaign Escape the Everyday www.visitbritain.org/be-part-our-domestic-marketing-campaign-escape-everyday and we are running Escape to the Cotswolds. Funded by our successful bid to the DMO recovery marketing fund, this entirely digital campaign is linked to bookable experiences in the Cotswolds www.cotswolds.com/escape.

DCMS launched a [tourism recovery plan](#) recently.

Being bookable on Cotswolds.com Our website is now fully connected to Visit England's TXGB platform & several other polling channels including Free to Book, Supercontrol & Eviivo. For more information on **TXGB** www.txgb.co.uk/ & polling options or get in touch with Sally Graff