



VISIT HERTS

ANNUAL REVIEW

2023



Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership

Recognised by



VisitEngland

Harpenden

A MESSAGE FROM MARTHA LYTTON-COBOLD & GEOFF SPOONER CO-CHAIRS VISIT HERTS

Welcome to the Visit Herts Annual Review for 2023.

After an extremely challenging few years, it feels like our industry is finally starting to turn a corner and the most recent Hertfordshire figures on the visitor economy support this. We are delighted that the tourism and hospitality industry in our beautiful county appears to be back on track and the number of jobs being supported by the visitor economy are almost at the levels seen before the pandemic. We are particularly pleased that business travel is bouncing back and this is due primarily to many accommodation providers in the county adapting their offer as the nature of business travel has changed substantially.

There are still many challenges facing our sector, not least the cost of living crisis which continues to impact consumer behaviour, but it has been exciting to see the return of our international visitors - particularly those from the United States and the lifting of restrictions for our Chinese visitors.

The Government has improved the ability for schoolchildren from France to enter the UK using their passports rather than ID cards. Many Europeans do not own passports so being able to use ID cards once again to enter the UK will make a huge difference to many of our top attractions and destinations. Visit Herts will continue to press the case with Government to allow schoolchildren from other EU countries access to the UK on the same basis.

Last year saw the Visit Herts team continue their excellent work to support screen tourism as a continuing unique selling point for the county, and to harness the potential and opportunities provided by the extensive, and growing, film and production facilities in the county. This was recognised by VisitEngland last April who awarded Visit Herts the new accolade of Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) – one of only 15 destination management organisations to be awarded this status in the first cohort.

We thank Deirdre, the executive team, and our investment partners for unwavering support and constructive engagement over the last 12 months. This has enabled us to continue to deliver an exciting and ambitious programme of activity as well as continue to drive and increase footfall and business throughout Hertfordshire.

On behalf of the Partnership Group, and all of the team at Visit Herts, we thank you and wish you and your colleagues a successful year ahead.



**MARTHA LYTTON-COBOLD &
GEOFF SPOONER
CO-CHAIRS**

A MESSAGE FROM DEIRDRE WELLS OBE CHIEF EXECUTIVE VISIT HERTS



I am delighted to share our 2023 Annual Review with you all.

This past year has been an extremely exciting one for Hertfordshire with national recognition for our amazing county. Our film industry continues to go from strength to strength, with major blockbusters such as Wonka and Barbie adding to our impressive back catalogue, alongside the much anticipated final series of Netflix's The Crown. Film will continue to play a key role in our destination offer, and working closely with the Herts Film Office, we will ensure that Herts remains the destination of choice for producers and screen tourists alike.

Plus, the announcement of the collaboration between VisitBritain and the British Film Commission to make Screen Tourism a priority for 2024 gives us an excellent opportunity to put Herts front and centre of the UK screen tourism offer.

Securing brand recognition and "cut through" is so vital for the promotion of our destination and in addition to our growing pedigree as the UK's screen tourism destination, we were also thrilled to see Hertfordshire ranked at number three in [Expedia's list of top 10 UK Hidden Gems](#). This at a time when escaping to the road less travelled is set to be a major global travel trend in 2024.

It wasn't just our destination picking up awards last year. We were delighted, following a rigorous national process, to be one of the first English destinations to be awarded Local Visitor Economy Partnership status from VisitEngland. It is testament to the strong collaboration and support from a wide range of partners, aligned to our strategic and research-based approach, that we, a relatively young DMO, were in the first cohort. This recognition has already reaped huge rewards, from hosting the national VisitEngland awards, to working with VisitBritain on their international Showcase Britain event – all helping to get the message out loud and clear about the amazing Hertfordshire tourism offer.

Finally, the release of our 2022 Cambridge model data, showed that all this hard work is paying off. With visits now at 25 million and spend at a whopping £2.2 billion, nearly back to pre-pandemic levels, our vital sector, which supports 6% of all jobs in the county, is well on the road to recovery.

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A MESSAGE FROM DEIRDRE WELLS OBE CHIEF EXECUTIVE VISIT HERTS

There are many challenges still facing our industry – from labour shortages and overhead costs, to the cost of living crisis and concerns about our planet. But with a collaborative approach, there is much we can do to support our sector - working with industry to develop a more sustainable approach to their business and promote local produce, and continuing to demonstrate Hertfordshire as a high quality destination, offering great value and great experiences to both visitors and local communities.



TMy thanks to our co-Chairs, Martha Lytton-Cobbold and Geoff Spooner for their continued support and to all the members of the Herts Partnership group for their wise counsel. Thanks too to my wonderful team who work so hard year round and put the heart in Herts! And finally, my thanks to you, our investors, for your fantastic support.

We look forward to another exciting year ahead.



**DEIRDRE WELLS OBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

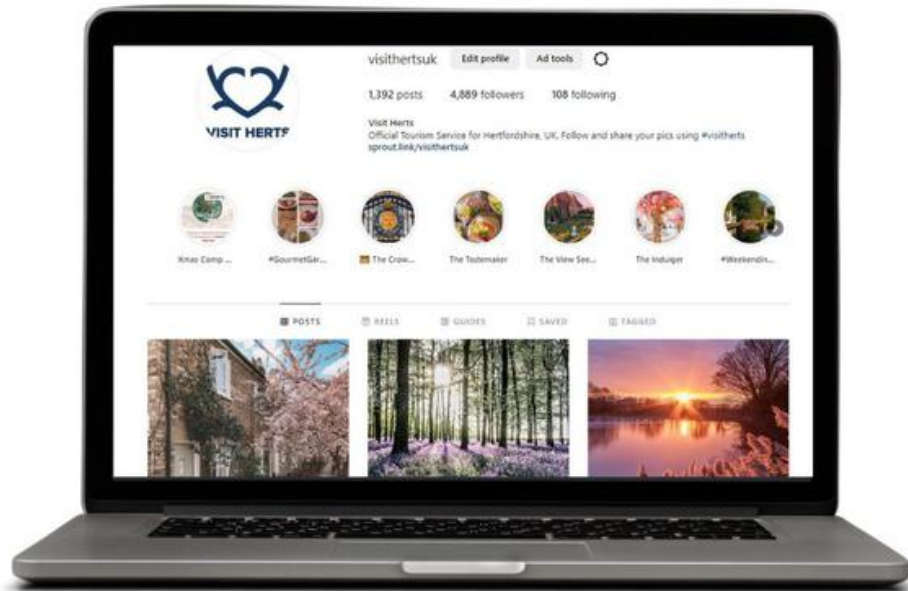
**Expedia travel trend report
included Hertfordshire
in the top 10 UK
Hidden Gem's**

**"40% increase in demand
for Hertfordshire on Vrbo"**

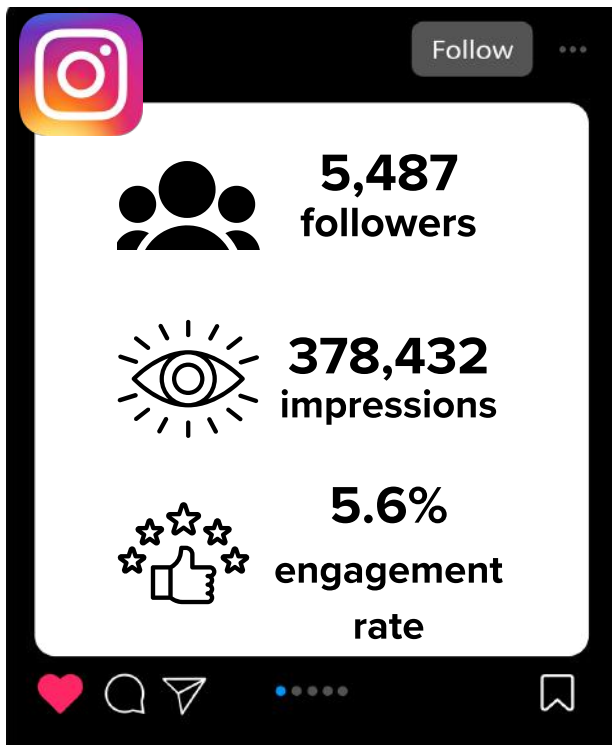



VISIT HERTS

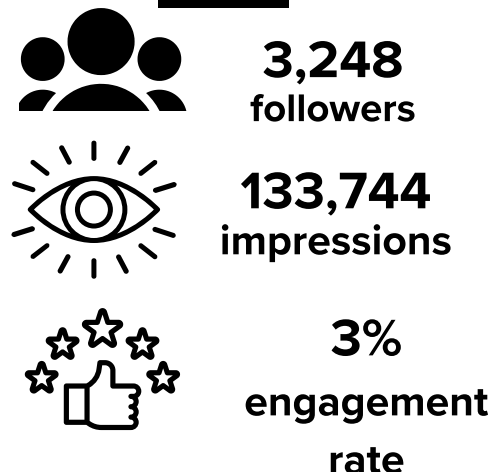
DESTINATION MARKETING



WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA



 **1,179 organic social media posts in 2023**



195,423 website users

537,408 website page views



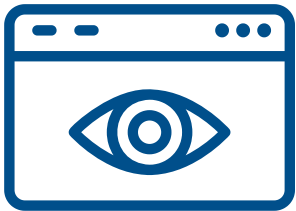
605,433
total minutes
spent on site by users





Hertford

DESTINATION FEATURE CONTENT



9,662
page views



00:40s
average
engagement
time



72
features written

25%
of total
website traffic



“Christmas Trails in Hertfordshire”



213
Hertfordshire
businesses
featured

Letchworth



E-NEWSLETTERS



24.44%

average
open rate



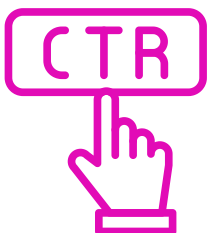
65,469

total opens



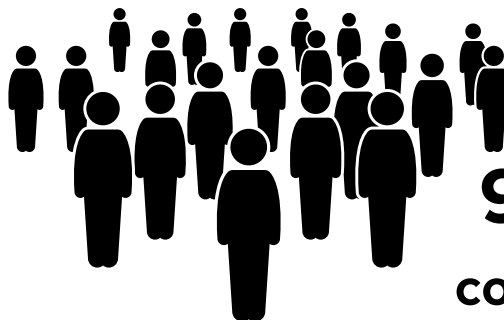
30

newsletters
sent to
consumers



5.50%

average
click-through-rate



9,568

consumers
on our database



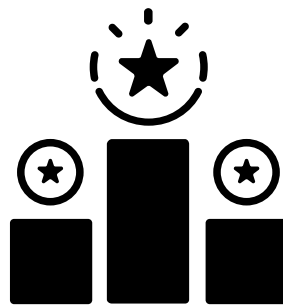
COMPETITIONS



131,300
total
impressions



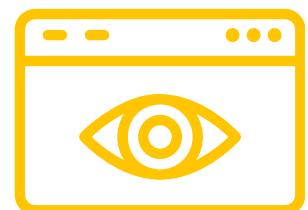
15,077
competition entries



2
consumer
competitions



49%
average opt in rate



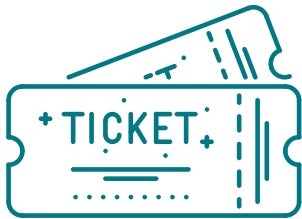
31,900
total page views



HERTS BIG WEEKEND

Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th June 2023

HERTS BIG WEEKEND



238
available



35%
data opt in rate



165,000
website
page views



30,569
applications from
Hertfordshire residents



25
businesses
registered



Stevenage

PRESS AND PR



£677,399

PR AVE



10

**Herts Life
features**



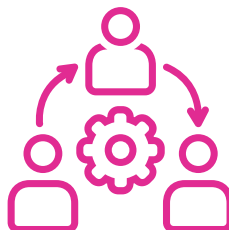
23,779,526

PR reach



2

**broadcast
interviews**



8

**press
assists**



4

**press
releases**



VISIT HERTS

DEVELOPING THE DESTINATION



BUSINESS SUPPORT & ENGAGEMENT



728

B2B

**newsletter
subscribers**



75

B2B

newsletters



18.04%

**average
open rate**

14

**events/
webinars**



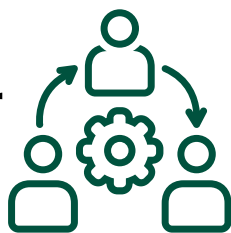
4522

**B2B website
page views**



5

**partner
forums
hosted**



55

**1:1 meetings with
Herts businesses**



3.56%

**average click-
through-rate**



228

**attendees at
events /
webinars**



475

**LinkedIn
followers**

19,199

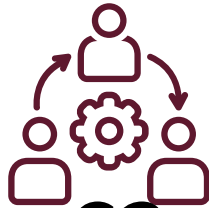
**LinkedIn
impressions**



173

subscribers to
trade newsletter

TRAVEL TRADE



62

Hertfordshire
businesses
recommended



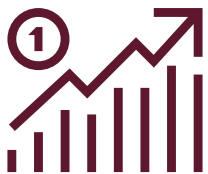
3

trade
newsletters



105

appointments
with buyers



6%

click-through-rate



10

events
attended



31%

average
open rate

**1 familiarisation
trip**

Showcase Herts

VisitHerts own travel
trade event
Hosted at
Knebworth House
15 Herts businesses
met with
20+ tour operators

I am so impressed by what is on offer to our clients, that from now on, in our own small contribution to British Tourism, Knebworth House and Hertfordshire will feature greatly in our itineraries." Prestigious Travel UK



RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Volume and value of the Hertfordshire visitor economy from
our Cambridge **Economic Impact Model 2023**
25 million visitors, £2.2bn value, 38,936 jobs supported



840
residents
engaged
in research



1
resident
research
report



25
research
reports
produced



9
research
and insights
newsletters
sent



SCREEN TOURISM

Off the back of our successful Herts, Camera, Action project funded through CRF, we've continued to work with Hertfordshire-based product to develop film and screen experiences for visitors to enjoy.

Looking ahead to 2024, we're pleased to see VisitBritain focusing on film and TV tourism for their major international campaign and we look forward to working with them on this as an LVEP



Continued strong partnership working with Hertfordshire Film Office on industry events and collaboration

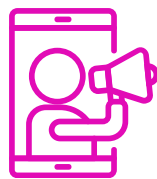
We've introduced 11 Hertfordshire businesses to Hertfordshire Film Office/ Creative England



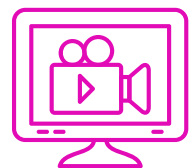
New film tour launched at Knebworth House, with VH providing press assistance to BBC online coverage



3+ businesses receiving 1:1 business support in developing screen product



Film location influencer on panel at Visit Herts summer networking event



3500 delegates including Visit Herts attended FOCUS - leading creative screen production event



REPRESENTING THE SECTOR



9

Tourism

Alliance meetings



4

**speaking
opportunities
for CEO**



42

**meetings
related to
lobbying**



Visit Herts awarded the new enhanced status 'Local Visitor Economy Partnership' by VisitEngland - one of 15 destinations across the country forming part of the Government's strategy to better support and grow the visitor economy in England



5

**VisitEngland
meetings**



EAST OF ENGLAND TOURISM AWARDS

15

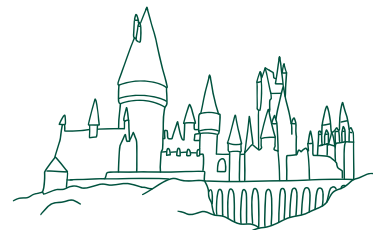
businesses entered



**Tewinbury Farm Hotel won
Bronze for Large Hotel of the Year**



**VisitEngland's Awards for Excellence
held at Warner Bros. Studio Tour
London The Making of Harry Potter
with 200+ attendees**



**Warner Bros. Studio Tour London - The
Making of Harry Potter won Large
Visitor Attraction of the Year**



Hitchin

LOOKING FORWARD



As a fully accredited Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) we're looking forward to creating engaging campaigns that drive footfall to Hertfordshire. Your support will help us leverage external funding and rebuild back better, together.

Speak to your account manager about how to make the most of your partnership with Visit Herts.

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