



Visit Herts  
Annual Review 2018/2019

Our engaging content and partnership campaigns are designed to inspire visits to Hertfordshire and drive demand to partners. We help our partners to reach new audiences and align them with complementary products to create cross-selling opportunities.

# Building value through marketing



**30+**

Partner Events

**312**

attended networking events

**400+**

meetings with partners

**23**

partnerships meetings and forums

**Our networking**

**12**

new partners

**Business support**

**Tourism awards**

**47**

entries

**4,500**

public votes

**+250%**

Visit Herts brings together businesses to create collaborative opportunities for our partners. Developing new products and promoting them under a strong destination brand. We support the growth of the visitor economy by providing insights, intelligence, training and skills support for our businesses.

# Building value through networks

**Research and insights**

Cambridge Model and Business Barometer

**20**

research reports produced

**Travel Trade**

**9**

educational trips

**250**

trade contacts at 17 events

**8,500**

group guides distributed

**65**

B2B partner communications

**Discover England Fund**

**Gourmet Garden Trails**

**7**

B2B Insights newsletters

**Explorer's Road**

**16**

businesses participating

**7,600+**

travel trade agents engaged

**£2.2m**

invested in Gourmet Garden Trails

Hertfordshire promoted to US, Dutch and German markets



## A message from the Co-Chairs Visit Herts Partnership Group

We can all celebrate another hugely successful year for Visit Herts and its partners.

We're absolutely delighted that so many of you will be continuing your working relationship with Visit Herts for 2019/2020 - our 98% partner retention rate clearly demonstrating a high level of partner satisfaction, and the positive effects of our collaborative working. We're equally thrilled to welcome the following new partners for the coming year; Tewin Bury Farm, Clarion Collection Hotel, St Albans, Torrington Hall, Rye House Group, St Pauls Walden Bury House and Gardens, Ye Olde Fighting Cocks, Love Hoddesdon BID and North Herts District Council. We're incredibly excited to showcase your wonderful tourism businesses and everything that you have to offer our visitors.

Our brand-new innovative content strategy has been implemented this year to huge success. Focussing on the delivery of content that can really tell the story of Hertfordshire as a destination has seen a huge uplift in the performance of all the digital channels. The website had 383,059 sessions, which was an increase of 82%, with the newly introduced inspirational features accounting for 15% of all total website traffic. Since last year Instagram has seen a major increase of +124% in followers and +165% in likes, with Facebook engagements seeing a massive +1,028% increase, and Twitter followers increasing by 46%. We look forwards to continuing to grow these platforms in the coming year and using them to great effect in our on-going marketing campaigns.

In December we were delighted to celebrate Hertfordshire's finest tourism businesses at the Herts Tourism Awards, held at Hanbury Manor Marriott Hotel and Country Club. We had some really exciting winners, from wonderful food and drink providers to exciting attractions – all of whom are providing a world class service to our customers, and really helping to grow the economy in Hertfordshire. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners!

We would like to thank you for your fantastic support and for getting involved with our work with Visit Herts. We would not be able to keep growing our economy and welcoming more visitors without you.

With thanks,  
Martha Lytton Cobbold and Dan Dark

## A message from Dierdre Wells OBE Chief Executive

Firstly, a thank you...

With your collaboration and support we have seen significant growth in visitor numbers and value in recent years, with the visitor economy becoming the UK's fastest growing service sector. Currently, Hertfordshire receives 28 million visitors every year, with 2 million overnight stays. The county has experienced 11% growth in visitor numbers with a 5% increase in value. This is an incredible achievement for Hertfordshire, made possible only by collaborative working between ourselves and you, our valued partners.

With a rich and varied tourism landscape, close proximity to London, and a wonderful luxury accommodation offer, there is a real opportunity to continue to grow the Hertfordshire visitor economy. Despite the challenges we face, including the continued pressure on public and private sector budgets our aim is to secure long-term economic growth. With this in mind we are ready to meet these challenges head-on with resilience, creativity and a clear, solution-focussed strategy.

Our long-term vision is to increase the value of the visitor economy by 5% to £2.3bn and we're excited to continue working with our partners to deliver this. We'll be focussing our activity in the areas we have identified as real opportunities to increase visitor spend. Our aim is to put Hertfordshire firmly on the map as a tourist destination, and to leverage opportunities through business tourism, conferencing and events, as well as strong themes such as screen tourism and food and drink.

We will seek to increase the number of overnight stays to drive spend. We will do this by capitalising on our incredible luxury hotel stock, developing compelling 24 and 48 hour itineraries, maximising accommodation capacity, and supporting the development of new accommodation. Our marketing campaigns will prioritise the lucrative international and London markets, using innovative digital solutions in partnership with more traditional platforms.

We will also work with private sector partners across the destination to identify opportunities to increase our Meetings, Incentives, Conference and Events market. We have aligned our activity in this area with Hertfordshire's priority sectors of life sciences, advanced engineering and manufacturing, aerospace and creative industries (including film) to increase the number of corporate events to the county and showcase the destination as leaders in these industries.

We also look forward to working with the Hertfordshire LEP, Hertfordshire County Council and local authority partners to raise the profile of the Hertfordshire visitor economy locally, nationally and internationally, through innovative and engaging marketing activity and working with travel trade. We plan to provide sector-specific business support, promote wider inward investment messages and build on the tourism and hospitality skills partnership in line with the Hertfordshire skills strategy.

Thank you again for your continued support. We look forward to working with you in 2019/2020.

Deirdre Wells, OBE

