

Wight BID Report — End of Year 3 - 1st May 2024 to 31st October 2024

THEME ONE: Attracting Visitors for Life £411,800.00

Marketing - Marketing the Isle of Wight off Island with an aim to attract visitors for life. The Isle of Wight was positioned across several digital and print platforms during this period, based on a wide reaching and interest-based audience.

Placements included Sainsburys Magazine (online); That's Life and Take A Break Monthly Magazine competition (print), as well as organic social media, social media ads and Google display and search ads.

Key marketing themes for this 6-month period have included: The Spring Walking Festival, golfing breaks, eco-friendly activities, food & drink, history & heritage, attractions, water sports, summer holidays (including day trips), & fishing breaks. To encourage longer stays, messaging emphasised "Extend your stay" for major events like the Isle of Wight Festival, Round the Island Race, and Cowes Week. Straplines included: "Say Yes to getting out on the water", "Say Yes to historic family fun", "Get outdoors this summer", "SUP-erb Island adventures await" and "Say Yes to an angling paradise".

This summer, a focused marketing campaign promoted the journey to the Isle of Wight, emphasising travel options to the Island rather than on-island activities. The campaign's call to action directed visitors to the website's **travel** section, which recorded 136,670 page views — a 1394% increase from the previous period (14th February – 20th May 2024). Year-on-year, views surged by 850%, rising from 14,384 views in 2023 to 136,670 in 2024 for the same period.

Google network – Google Ads campaigns for Visit Isle of Wight (VIOW) remained highly active across search, display and video channels, including remarketing and YouTube ads. The campaigns demonstrated resilience and efficiency, achieving strong engagement and impressive results.

Over the past six months, efforts have generated 20,052,594 impressions and an impressive 361,879 clicks to the VIOW website, with YouTube ads drawing 162,804 views. Engagement rates were particularly high, with search achieving a click through rate (CTR) of 11.55% and display at 1.77%, both notably above industry averages. Cost efficiency also remained excellent, with average cost per click (CPC) of £0.32 for search and £0.03 for display.

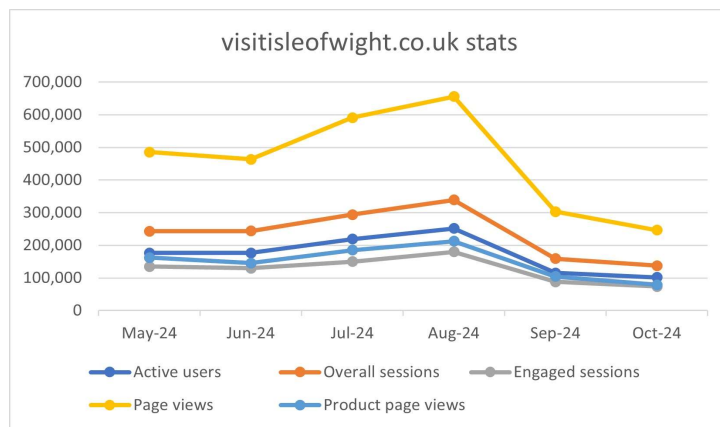
The focus on key geographical targets has driven positive outcomes. Top performing areas included London and a 45-mile radius around the Isle of Wight, where day trip campaigns continue to show strong growth. Birmingham, Manchester and other areas in the Midlands also performed well, highlighting a broad interest in the Isle of Wight.

While impressions decreased by a modest 5%, clicks rose by 52%, underscoring a highly engaged audience and strategic ad placements. Moving forward, VIOW are committed to optimising the approach to drive sustained growth, delivering tangible results for the VIOW initiative and increased interest in the Island.



PR and Travel Media

Over the last 6 months, VIOW have attended online meetings with Visit England, Tourism South East and industry professionals & represented the Island at public functions. Working with local businesses and using images and information only available as a result of the Wight BID, this has helped to generate over 150 press articles this BID year and worked with national and international TV productions including CH5, BBC, Dutch and French TV. In the last 6 months VIOW have helped to generate in excess of £14.2 million pounds worth of broadcast coverage (over £20 million in total this BID year), print and online editorial coverage locally, nationally and internationally.



visitisleofwight.co.uk: - VIOW continue to operate, search engine optimise, develop and maintain the top-ranking Island tourism visitor website. Between the 1st May 2024 and 31st October 2024 the website had 1,041,288 active users (1,724,435 in total this BID year) plus 1,415,817 overall sessions (2,299,373 in total this BID year), 756,315 engaged sessions (1,259,220 in total this BID year), 53.64% average engagement rate (55.05% over the BID year) and 2,745,470 page views (4,461,952 in total this BID year). Product web pages have had 888,091 page views (1,369,378 in total this BID year) on the website; that includes levy payer and voluntary contributor pages as well as all events and other product pages.

Visitor e-newsletters: - VIOW send the visitor e-newsletter programme to a list of over 39,000 subscribers. Between May 2024 and October 2024, 24 e-newsletters have been sent with an average open rate of 30% (above industry norms) and an average click through rate of 1.5% (50 sent in total for this BID year).

Social Media Activity: - The social media accounts grew from 1st May to 31st October 2024 with 18,898,696 accounts reached, 233,802 post engagements and 73,338 link clicks on Facebook. Instagram saw 16,250,883 reached, 156,350 likes and 4,130 comments. Twitter saw 399,400 impressions, 4,600 likes and 1,300 reposts.

VIOW continued to share informative content to followers through blogs, reels, event information, event attendance, business promotion, competitions and key social media dates including World Tourism Day and World Car Free Day. VIOW also invited and hosted a number of influencers who shared their experience of the Island through their eyes. This included collaborative content with some influencers sharing their assets with us (and the businesses who hosted them) to use across social platforms for future promotion.

This period saw a number of digital adverts promoted across both Facebook and Instagram including: events, sailing & yachting, Isle of Wight Walking Festival (spring & autumn events), summer & autumn bookings (split into three targets - general travel, over 50s & families), retargeting, a transport campaign (in association with the Island's travel providers), day trips, food & drink, golfing holidays, wellness breaks, paddleboarding spots, October Half Term & Christmas breaks.

A collage of promotional images for the Isle of Wight. It includes a boat deck with people, a festival scene, and a graphic of a boarding pass. The boarding pass graphic says "YOUR HOLIDAY STARTS THE MOMENT YOU STEP ON BOARD" and "BOARDING PASS MAINLAND IOW". It also mentions "DEPARTURE 160 times a day" and "TERMINAL 6 mainland ports". A pink banner at the bottom says "Window seats don't get much better than this" and "Explore".

THEME TWO: Delivering the Experience - £35,000.00

Walking festival: - The Multi Award Winning Isle of Wight Walking Festival has had a positive increase in numbers since last year. Compared to 2023 figures there has been a 27% increase in the number of registered walkers with a 118% increase in mainland and overseas visitors year-on-year.

The Spring Isle of Wight Festival took place from 11th to 19th May 2024 with 74 walks, 1307 registered walkers, 72% from mainland UK and overseas.

The Autumn Walking Festival took place from 5th to 13th October 2024 with 104 walks, 1382 registered walkers, 72% from mainland UK and overseas.

THEME THREE: Working Together & BID Administration - £39,500.00

Communications to the industry: -

Communications to the industry: - The PR and Travel Media Manager has sent 26 (53 in total for this BID year) industry newsletters to Wight BID Levy payers and Voluntary Contributors via email (avg. one per week), highlighting opportunities and potential issues to local businesses, as well as celebrating successes – the open-up rate averages approx. 51.5% (national average approximately 17%).

The BID Administrator is employed to monitor and update the Wight BID Levy payer database. They are the VIOW point of contact for enquiries, appeals and setting up Levy payer web pages. They also deal with other Wight BID administration including managing VIOW's role in all the operating processes with their collection agency.

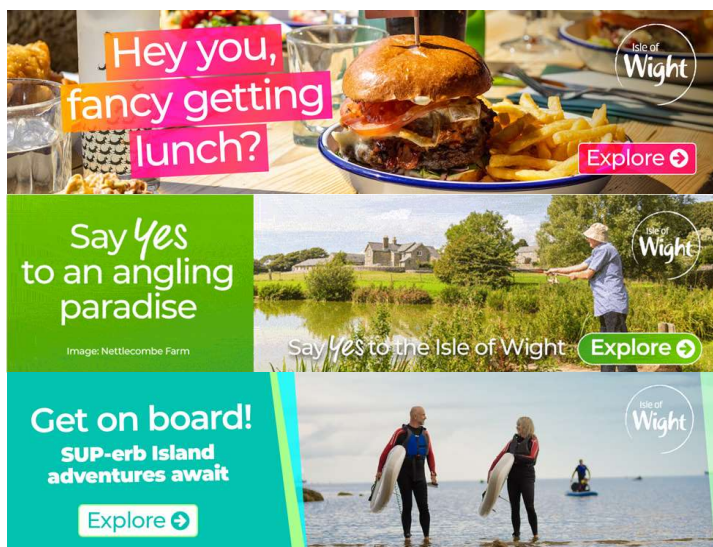
The Financial Controller is employed to manage expenditure and income receipts, make electronic payments and record all Wight BID financial activities over the course of the BID. Financial records and management accounts are scrutinised quarterly by the Finance & Remuneration sub-committee.

Accessibility Support: -

VIOW developed a fully accessible on-line visitor guide and are currently working together with Visit England and AccessAble to ensure that the Island is best placed to attract the Accessible travel market which is worth £15.5 billion annually. VIOW has also delivered on-line webinars around Hidden Disabilities to ensure the industry is ready and aware of the Sunflower Scheme. VIOW was a key partner alongside Ryde Town Council and Hovertravel in the development and delivery of a fully accessible beach area in Ryde including equipment and temporary changing places toilet facilities.

LVEP Accreditation: -

VIOW is one of only 34 VisitEngland accredited LVEP's (Local Visitor Economy Partnerships) in England. As such VIOW feed into the overall brand and strategy development for England and have recently delivered a Visit England "Taking England to the World" seminar targeting Island businesses to be ready to welcome international business. VIOW also received an LVEP content creation grant to deliver images for the Visit Britain image library, some of which are already being used across the world.



Income and Expenditure

Income

BID Levy Income £501,200.00

Expenditure

Theme One £411,800.00

Theme Two £35,000

Theme Three £39,500.00

Theme Four £3,900.00

Research £30,200.00

Total BID Expenditure £550,400.00

Without the funding Wight BID brings, the vast majority of this activity throughout the year would not take place



Event Support: -

As part of Wight BID, Visit Isle of Wight continues to support "fledgling" events on the Island with "seed-funding" to attract off-island visitors, thus offering the reason to travel as events play a key part in that journey. Events that have been supported during 2023 / 24 are IW Ukelele Event, Island Steampunk Festival, Cowes Fringe, Isle of Wight Literary Festival, IW Story Telling Festival, The Great Wight Bite, Isle of Wight Running Festival, Chilly Hilly Running event, IW Pride and the new Beachcomber Weekender. Moving into 2025 VIOW will begin with support for the 2025 Isle of Wight Chess Festival.

Exhibition Partnership:

The Exhibitions Partnership continues to represent the Island at a range of trade and consumer exhibitions and events. In the past 6 months, VIOW has attended the Coach Tourism Association spring networking event in Oxford, Isle of Wight County Show where 11 businesses joined the tourism pavilion free of charge, the New Forest Show (supported by Wightlink), UKinbound AGM, exploring the Newbury Show for possible future attendance, UKinbound annual Convention in Liverpool, and the Group Leisure and Travel Show in Milton Keynes.

In June, the Island won Best UK Destination for Group Travel at the Annual Group Leisure & Travel Awards, for the second year in a row and in October the Isle of Wight was ranked third in the "Top Ten Best Islands in the UK" as part of the Condé Nast travel readers' choice awards 2024.

THEME FOUR: Sustainability - £3,900.00

In September VIOW completed the Destination Climate Champions programme delivered by Expedia and The Travel Foundation. This was part of an EU pilot programme where the Isle of Wight was selected to participate.

The online walking and cycling maps have had a positive number of pageviews, totalling over 41,000 pageviews, 15,246 people used the online versions with 1,347 people downloading the maps. The round-the-Island cycle map is the most popular and the Niton to Sandown coastal path walk closely follows that.

The Isle of Wight Green Tourism Award has awarded 29 businesses a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award in total. Gold recipients have been promoting the Green Bus pass, a rover ticket provided to a group of up to 5 people, for £1 to travel with Southern Vectis, which has seen 0.26 tonnes of CO2 saved, resulting in 1,858 car km off our roads.

RESEARCH: - £30,200.00

The Island Visitor Research takes place quarterly across all 6 of our transport routes to / from the Island. It is based on 15,000 face to face interviews that feed into the tried and tested research model. The results are published quarterly in the research section of <https://visitwightpro.com/research-development/> and show visitor numbers, spend and trends. During 2024 the research model was peer-reviewed by an eminent research and tourism Professor at Bournemouth University ensuring that the model was robust and relevant. This research is used in marketing decision making and is arguably the most robust piece of visitor research in the UK.

The Visitor Economy of the Isle of Wight is 38% of whole Island's economy and produces an overall direct and indirect economic impact of almost half a billion pounds.

Wight BID Opportunities

As part of the Wight BID, Levy payers are entitled to a standard web page on the Visit Isle of Wight website, www.visitisleofwight.co.uk. Please contact the Wight BID Administrator for further details: email amanda@visitwight.org or call 01983 554954.

If you're wondering what opportunities there are to get YOUR business seen by a wider audience, or tips and advice from industry professionals, send us your email address to receive our industry newsletter. It arrives in your mailbox weekly with news and information that could help your business grow even more... email amanda@visitwight.org. Also head over to VisitWightPro.com for tourism industry news and information.

In order for Visit Isle of Wight to avoid unnecessary costs which could be better used to continue to market the Isle of Wight off-Island, please send a contact email address to bid@visitwight.org so we can send future BID reports and information via email, which saves on printing and postage costs.