



## Destination Marketing Strategy 2024

### Introduction

After a turbulent few years following the coronavirus pandemic, the landscape and pattern of booking and taking holidays has changed dramatically. Coupled with the cost of living crisis, it has resulted in a decrease in staying visitors and a change in booking habits. Increasingly, people are booking last minute and travelling less distance due to the cost of fuel. It is expected this trend will continue in 2024 especially given the current crisis in the Middle East and the possible consequences, and a further negative impact on fuel prices.

This draft strategy has been compiled having listened to our LEVY Payers in the Focus Groups held in summer 2023.

### Destination marketing objectives

- To strengthen the official English Riviera branding and produce new guidelines
- To maintain and grow the value of staying visitors
- To attract new audiences to achieve being a 'year-round' destination
- To grow the 'young actives' and 'cultural explorers' audiences
- To achieve 1 million users to englishriviera.co.uk
- To align with the Destination Management Plan 2022-2030, UNESCO Global Geo-park accreditation and the Agatha Christie legacy
- To provide valued in-resort visitor information

### The English Riviera and our USP

Undoubtedly, the English Riviera's USP is its naturally inspiring coastal location (rather than seaside), and this will be the main theme running through the marketing campaigns for 2024.

In line with the ERBID2 Business Plan, the Destination Management Plan 2022-2030, Torbay Story and Visit Britain, campaigns will be centred around the following key themes:

- Nature
- Culture
- On the Water
- Food and drink
- Relaxation/wellness

In addition, we will continue to promote:

- Agatha Christie
- Our UNESCO Global Geopark
- Major events, to include our ongoing commitment to working in partnership with Torbay Council. Our own Events Development fund criteria needs updating to include a requirement to use the official English Riviera branding. Events include the Walking Festival, Pirate

Festival, Airshow, International Agatha Christie Festival, Seafood Feast and Bays of Lights. Campaigns will be built around these large events.

The messaging will also continue to centre around the 'Ready for...' strapline.

## Target audiences

- Families – extended, multi-generational with children from Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Coventry
- Empty nesters
- Solo travellers
- Young actives – 20s-30s year-round but mostly autumn to spring
- Cultural explorers – 30+ taking short breaks year-round mid-week and at weekends from Bristol, Cardiff, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire
- Business tourism
- Groups – UK and international
- Groups – national and UK international and educational
- Independent international travellers
- Cruise ships

## Themes

Naturally inspiring coastal location				
Nature	Culture	On the Water	Food & drink	Relaxation/Wellness
UNESCO Geopark	Agatha Christie	SUP	Brixham Fish Market	Spas
South West Coast Path	Cockington	Kayaking	Seafood	Golf
Local wildlife	Kents Cavern	Jet skis	Craft gin / beer / cider	Walking
Walking	Torre Abbey	Hire a boat	Farm shops	Swimming
Coast & country (Dartmoor)	Torquay Museum	Charter a yacht	Cream teas	Brixham Lido
Wild swimming	Brixham Museum	Raptor	Fine dining	Sea air
Fishing	Bygones	Scuba diving	Michelin star – The Elephant	Sailing
Wellness	Fishing community	Wild swimming	Dining with a view	Cycling
Sea air	Brixham Fish Market	Seagrass – eco tourism	Dining al fresco	Walking with dogs/dog friendly
Sholestone lido	Murals in Brixham	Rockpooling	Ice cream	
Nature reserves: Berry Head, Thatchers Point, Hopes Nose	Heritage boats/Red Sails	Snorkelling	Fish & chips	

Bookable zoo experiences	Theatre – variety, comedy, musicals	Ferry	Cocktails	
Occombe Farm		Wildlife cruises		
Dog friendly		Blue flag beaches		

## Marketing strategy

### International advertising

The main target audiences for international tourism will be groups and independent travellers from:

- Germany (including returning to ITB Travel Trade Show)
- Italy
- Switzerland
- Belgium
- Netherlands (including returning to Vakantiebeurs Dutch consumer show)

Agatha Christie is what differentiates us from other destinations, as well as our naturally inspiring coastal location. We will use Agatha Christie as a hook for some PR and digital marketing. For digital, we will identify her readership by European countries and target the largest cities.

The UNESCO Global Geopark is also a hook as we are the only UK coastal resort with the accreditation. As well as the England's Seafood Coast brand.

### National advertising

#### *Families*

For 2024, campaigns targeted at the family market will all be digital in 2024 – paid for and organic. As well as the Google 'always on campaign' that runs throughout the year to attract families during the school holidays, additional 'last minute holidays' campaigns will run prior to the Easter and summer holidays.

#### *Other audiences*

One of the objectives of this year's marketing strategy is to attract the new audiences namely 'young actives' and 'cultural explorers'. The target geographical area for this new marketing is Bristol showcasing our USP and identified themes. To that end, a cross-channel campaign will run in Bristol in mid-April. We will work with Bigwave to agree the elements of the campaign. The allocated budget will be £50k and may include OOH, radio and digital and potentially Sky AdSmart.

### Regional advertising

All regional campaigns will centre around the key themes and will be digital campaigns. See plan for more detail.

### Local advertising

We will continue to work with Clearsky Publishing to produce a year-around Visitor Guide but potentially in a different, smaller format to make it easier to carry around.

We will continue to produce the three printed pocket Visitor Directories – Things to do, Accommodation and Food & drink.

### Groups

We will continue to partner with Devon Association or Tourist Attractions (DATA) in order to attend the British Travel Trade Show.

There is no need for the Groups Directory to be re-printed this year, however, we will produce an insert to promote the new large hotels.

### **Cruise ships**

We have successfully attracted cruise ship visits in 2023 and there are more booked for 2024. We will continue to work with Glen Gardner, have a presence at Sea Trade Europe and Sea Britain. We will speak to Glen to discuss the possibility of attracting excursions from cruise visits to Dartmouth.

A separate marketing strategy will be written specifically targeting the cruise market.

### **Website**

The current website, launched in December 2021 continues to perform well. We are investing heavily in creative assets for the website and constantly updating the content. We are continually adding new pages, and every digital campaign will have its own landing page. Through evaluation, we are updating pages to ensure improved performance.

#### *User journey and content*

From January, changes will be made to the website to improve the user journey, the addition of guest blogs, and improvements to levy payers' product pages.

#### *SEO*

SEO is currently managed by Simpleview, however their reporting is poor and they are not proactive in suggesting any changes to improve the site performance. We will review as to where SEO management is contracted to.

#### *CrowdRiff*

The CrowdRiff user generated content platform has been invaluable in providing stunning images for us to use in our marketing campaigns, therefore we will continue to utilise it.

#### *Commercial income*

The website will continue to be a value source of income mainly through the sale of banner adverts.

### **Social media**

A separate organic social media strategy will be written by Steve Pearce for 2024 including Meta, Tik Tok and You Tube. Consideration will be given to finding influencers, and commercialising our social media channels, as well as increasing our activity on TikTok to target the 'young actives'.

### **Photography and videography**

#### *Photographer*

Whilst we have a strong image library from professional photographers and from CrowdRiff, we continually need to invest in quality photography and videography year round and from events.

#### *Photographic policy*

An updated photographic policy is required which includes permissions, credits, usage, and our requirement to use the official English Riviera branding.

### **Research**

Research and evaluation is key to ensure that our campaigns are performing well and produce ROI. The industry research is also critical for planning activity. We will continue with the following research elements:

- Monthly How's Business
- Annual Torbay Value and Volume Statistics
- Visitor survey – both online and face to face
- Airshow economic and social impact evaluation

### **Visitor information**

As we are promoting the English Riviera as an all year-round destination, the Visitor Information service will be operational 7 days a week, year-round in 2024 on reduced hours in the winter. We will continue to sell merchandise for income generation and raising the profile of the Agatha Christie legacy.

### **Business tourism**

We will continue to work with the team at Meet Devon and Meet English Riviera to attract business tourism. In addition, we will work with the RICC and large hotels to partner with them where possible to promote conferencing on the English Riviera.

### **Bookable visitor experiences**

We will proactively encourage Levy Payers to develop new and extraordinary bookable Visitor Experiences that really showcase the very special things we have. The new Geopark Discovery Experiences currently being developed with UKSPF will kick off this process.

### **Blue flags**

It is imperative that the blue flags and seaside awards are maintained as part of our naturally inspiring theme. Torbay Council will continue to fund the scheme, and we will continue to promote the beaches.

### **Green Tourism**

We will look to introduce a Green Tourism Scheme by the end of ERBID2 that supports Levy Payers to align to, and strengthen, our Naturally Inspiring aspirations, including carbon reduction.

### **Visit Devon partnership**

We will continue to work with Visit Devon to promote the region as a whole and align to the development of the Devon LVEP that should be in place in 2024. The formation of the Devon LVEP will be the route to any funding via Visit England/Visit Britain that may become available.

### **Newsletters**

We will continue to send out regular consumer newsletters to the database as part of our marketing campaigns. We will trail commercialising the newsletters by selling one opportunity per newsletter.

### **Reactive marketing budget**

A budget will be retained for any reactive marketing campaigns that might be necessary during the year. This should be at least £10k.

### **B2B buy-in**

A separate Levy Engagement strategy will be written, which will include encouraging businesses to come forward as marketing ambassadors e.g. promoting official logos, using our hero images.

## **Budget**