



PORLOCK VALE TOURIST ASSOCIATION

Porlock Vale – The Heart of Exmoor

PORLOCK VALE BUSINESS SUPPORT PLAN 5th June 2020 V1

Aim

The survival and recovery of businesses in Porlock Vale

Duration

Until the establishment of a new stability following the pandemic.

Porlock Vale Business Survey

All businesses in Porlock Vale were contacted by phone and then sent a short online survey asking how the pandemic had impacted them and soliciting suggestions and comments. About half responded and the results are attached in a separate document.

Phase 1: Response – Surviving the Shutdown

Messaging

- To general public: “Porlock is Currently Closed - Please Visit Later”
- To local businesses: Follow the “Stay Alert” directives from the government
- To local residents: “Shop Local”, “Support Local Businesses”, “Volunteer with Us”

Social Media

- Use PVTA social media to maintain interest in how Porlock is coping
- Signpost businesses in accessing online courses on marketing and social media
- Guide businesses to information and ideas available online to further promote their business and attract visitors back to our area once it is safe to do so

Government Assistance

- Collect and pass on up to date info on assistance packages as they become known
- Direct businesses to government funding and grants

Prepare for Reopening

- Disseminate guidelines for opening as soon as available from official bodies such as the Government, Visit England, Visit Britain, Defra, ENPA and Somerset West and Taunton Council
- Encourage businesses in following the recommended actions
- Advocate that businesses publicise actions taken to bolster public confidence in safety and procedures

Phase 2: Recovery – Bringing Economic Life Back to Porlock Vale

Marketing

Develop a marketing/publicity brief to attract visitors to Porlock Vale which forms the basis of an ongoing effort that:

- Expands on the uniqueness of Porlock Vale and develops the Porlock Vale brand
- Promotes attractions and events across Porlock, Porlock Weir, Bossington, Allerford, Selworthy, Wootton Courtenay, Luccombe, Horner and West Luccombe
- Presents Porlock as a day destination as well as a holiday destination
- Focuses on Porlock as “An English Holiday”
- Uses contacts in the media and works with ENPA to promote Porlock Vale in relevant publications, the press, radio, TV, social media and on partner organisations’ websites
- Coordinates with our partner organisations, ENPA, Somerset West & Taunton Council, Dunster, Lynton and Lynmouth, Minehead, Dulverton and Watchet in promoting Exmoor as a wider area

Events Calendar

Create a calendar of events with the following considerations:

- One new activity or attraction for every month in addition to those planned by other organisations
- Focus on activities which can be done outside and with social distancing - indoor events can be added as restrictions are eased
- Support existing event organisers within Porlock Vale
- Promote events further afield to capture wider audiences
- Expand current PVTA events (Wassail, Easter Egg Trail, Open Gardens, Apple Day and Late Night Shopping) to attract new visitors and encourage visitors to stay longer

Extend the Season

Encourage all businesses to extend their season. Ensure these changes are circulated to customers via social media, businesses own websites and existing email lists.

“Shop Local” Campaign

Encourage residents and visitors to “Shop Local” – to support businesses in this community, especially in this time of need.

- Promote businesses who participate via social media and on Porlock website
- Innovate new ways that accommodation providers and traders can work together
- Ask shops to provide discount cards to accommodation providers to encourage visitors to stay local / shop local
- Mutually support each other by signposting to fellow businesses

Walking

Develop further this year-round activity

- Use existing mapped walks, ENPA and VC led walks
- Promote the lesser visited parts of the Vale
- Organize walking weekends
- Build on the South West Coast path and the Coleridge Way links

Commercial Activity Providers

Promote Porlock Vale as a holiday destination, providing a variety of activity experiences and encourage commercial activity businesses to work alongside the PVTA.

Partnership Organisations

Partner with external organisations on events being held within the area e.g. actively promote and support Porlock organisations to publicise their events. Work collaboratively with wider organisations e.g. Dunster by Candlelight to promote Porlock Vale to day visitors, outside of the Dunster by Candlelight hours.

Circular Driving Route

Design and promote a Porlock Vale circular driving route

- Promote PVTA members who are activity providers, experiences, walks, pubs, cafes, tea rooms
- Work with ENPA and key partners, who are already looking to provide circular driving routes which will include stops in the significant tourist towns and villages

Leaflets

The Visitor Centre to produce additional local information directing visitors to all local facilities, shops and catering establishments, with opening hours.

Outdoor Music/ Theatre Events

Work with Porlock Recreation Ground committee or other venues and organisations to explore holding a significant outdoor music event in 2021. This could be in addition to the hugely successful Weirfest, which is organised by The Bottom Ship. Other low-key outdoor music events to be considered later this summer.

Produce a History of Porlock Vale

Highlight historic events and individuals of Porlock Vale to create an attractive narrative for our visitors. Partner with external organisations, where applicable, to create historical celebrations and events e.g. S T Coleridge, R D Blackmore, Ada Lovelace

Porlock Website

The current Porlock website is in the process of being updated and becoming more informative and detailed. The PVTA have invested in search engine optimisation and are now pro-actively working with a specialist consultant to maximise the information which is available on our website. Members of the PVTA will receive additional exposure on the Porlock website.

Planned new features will include a weekly blog, highlighting a current business or event, which will automatically upload to social media. Greatly increase content on website event calendar.

Social Media

Since January 1st, there has been substantial presence of Porlock Visitor Centre on Facebook. Porlock Visitor Centre has a post reach to over 13,000 Facebook users. This is a significant marketing tool for Porlock Vale and will be fully utilised. Facebook has been currently focused on a "Keeping Porlock Connected" campaign, this focus will change to support and actively promote members of the PVTA.

The new Porlock Visitor Centre Instagram page has nearly 500 followers and grows daily. It provides a snapshot of all things pictorial in connection with Porlock and this will continue to be used to its full potential. The PVTA will actively encourage all businesses to use the "tag" to #Porlockvisitorcentre option on IG to be proactive in mutually supporting each other. Currently there is no Porlock Visitor Centre presence on Twitter. Time constraints prohibit this and it was decided to focus on the two platforms which would ensure maximum exposure.