

CONNECTIONS

News and comment from the BVEP
Summer 2016



CONNECTING BRITAIN'S
EVENTS INDUSTRY



WELCOME

In these uncertain times events have continued to exhibit their higher value. From the planned Battle of the Somme commemorations to more impromptu anti-racism demonstrations, people have come together to express their solidarity for peace, forgiveness and to celebrate diversity. Whether it is the outsider winning through or the inspiration of those competing at Rio's Paralympic Games, human events of many types will capture our emotions and our imaginations this summer.

The research project that has been undertaken for BVEP has brought together a compendium of studies that will aid in the evidence of how Events are GREAT. Whilst there is a natural focus towards the numerical value of events, we should be mindful of their softer powers and how we research these. We similarly need to understand the darker side of human nature and how we can stop events being used for acts of violence, abuse, crime, terrorism and corruption.

People are also our greatest asset. This is demonstrated by the piece on Glasgow, where Ambassadors from a variety of industries have had a substantial impact on the success of the conventions sector. Can we use this as an example of how the event sector can work together for the greater good and make BVEP a unified body of distinct parts? My piece on professionalisation questions what is traditionally regarded as a profession and asks whether you are prepared to support the Institute of Event Management or have alternative proposals to recognise and reward the talent that we have?

I am taken with the comment that Nick de Bois makes in his piece on the reputational standing of the UK events sector around the world and the results that can be achieved by us working together in harnessing the power of government. The reports from the Regions identify that there has already been a renewed focus on events and provision of funding to support improvements and innovative ways of winning new business. We need you to contribute to the success of the events sector – your views, ideas, bids and passion is needed to ensure Events are GREAT Britain.



Caroline Jackson
Vice Chair - BVEP
Chair - AEME



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TIME FOR THE UK EVENTS INDUSTRY TO STEP ONTO THE STAGE



Nick de Bois
Chair
UK Events Industry Board

I was recently asked why I had wanted to become a Member of Parliament before the 2010 election. Put simply, I felt it was time for me to move on from being just a cross between a commentator and an arm chair critic of government (of any persuasion), and instead try to shape and influence outcomes that mattered. Since leaving parliament in 2015 I don't take any different view now, which is one of the reasons I was happy to take on the role of chair for the new UK Events Industry Board.

Having enjoyed a long career in the events industry starting and running my own business, all too often I would lament the lack of support from government for the business tourism sector, it's lack of understanding for what we contributed in jobs, in taxes and in reputational standing through the respect that the UK events sector commands across the world. Above all, I regretted the perceived lost opportunity for Britain's wider economic benefit that could be achieved should the events sector be able to work in partnership with government. Simply lamenting this state of affairs was not enough, which is why the present opportunity we have with the

renewed commitment of this government to harness the power of the events sector, to help the UK achieve its full potential through increased inward investment and export sales, is an extraordinary one and one which I hope the events sector will grab with both hands.

For the first time that I can recall, government is now playing its part with the strategy and funding to support the sector and help it win new events and congresses for the entire UK, and support those existing ones that have the ambition and ability to become leading international events in their own right, staged here in the UK. Publication of how this will work in practice is due next month and is evidence of this renewed government commitment, encouraged and driven by the industry itself.

Since January, the Department for Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) and the new UK Events Industry Board have been working together and forging ahead with its plans. VisitBritain is back on board with business visits & events, and has launched the Events are GREAT campaign, to great acclaim, with further funding and resources. Meanwhile the BVEP and its many partners are doing great work on research into subvention and what influences international buyers into choosing event destinations. And they are not just working alone. All these groups come together on the Events Industry Board, along with industry experts and regional tourism agencies to help forge an integrated response that is focused on helping win new business events for the UK. That of course is good for Britain and good for the events sector.

Events have so much to offer UK plc. They support the industrial strategy of the UK by positioning Britain as a centre of commerce and attracting companies and industries to do business in our country. They are

also an ever-increasing export opportunity as they grow into new territories, creating inward investment opportunities, selling UK skills, expertise and products abroad. As an industry, events lead to the employment of over 570,000 people from apprenticeship level upwards. They stimulate thought leadership through the sharing of knowledge, research and intelligence that progresses scientific and technological understanding and innovation. They also bring communities together, whether they are united by a common geography, interest, cause or belief. Finally, events attract international audiences to this country. People who buy our products and services and in many cases return with their families, boosting and complimenting the UK tourism industry. To do that we must not let Britain become simply a destination for national events, but a major competitor at an international level and that is what government and industry can jointly achieve by working together.

Now is the time for the whole industry to get behind everything we are doing and support this work for the benefit of the entire events sector, and help the wider UK economy by doing so. As a sector we should recognise that government is playing its part, and now it's time for us to do the same. By staying engaged in the long term process of the work that is being done to support the sector, the outcomes will inevitably be that much stronger. When the call for applications to seek government support to win the hosting of international conferences is made, I hope the industry will respond energetically at every level. Without that engagement we stand far less chance of success. Individually you can support that work by attending the growing number of events and discussions on those topics over the coming months and make your voice heard. I hope this new sense of commitment will encourage you to become a passionate advocate and champion for your industry.

The 16 members of the board are themselves ambassadors for the events sector and will always seek to meet and discuss the ongoing work of the Events Industry Board, and I hope you will not hesitate to invite us to contribute

to your events and to this vitally important work.

After all, the time for lamenting lack of government action is now past, it's time for action and we all need to step onto the stage and play our part.



BREXIT AND THE IMPACT ON AIRPORT EXPANSION



James Heapey
Member of Parliament - Wells Constituency
Chair - All Party Parliamentary Group for Events

The view from Westminster is slightly chaotic! The referendum result was not one that most of us were expecting and three of our six major political parties are in the midst of a leadership challenge. The world in Westminster is spinning at a million miles an hour and I, for one, am acutely aware that the outside world just wants everything to calm down and for some sort of plan to emerge for our post-Brexit future.

I concluded that we should remain in the EU and was disappointed with the referendum result. However, I am also clear that Parliament cannot turn its back on the democratically expressed will of the people. No matter how poor the debate beforehand, and no matter how much some who voted to leave might now regret it; the result is clear and we must now enact it.

What Brexit looks like will be the burning question for so many in the events industry and yet the reality is that we haven't got a clue. My colleague Oliver Letwin is now leading a team in the Cabinet Office to develop our negotiation strategy but uncertainty in the short term is unavoidable. He is expected to report back to Parliament in the autumn.

In the meantime, the Conservative leadership election has further delayed a decision on airport expansion. I am hugely disappointed that this is the case. Some will favour Gatwick or a new airport altogether; I think Heathrow is the only show in town and we should just get on with it. The UK is losing ground to our European neighbours at exactly the time when we need to be racing out in front to mitigate the inevitable impacts of Brexit.

If our strategy post Brexit is to trade not just with Europe but increasingly with the world beyond and we need airports with the capacity to connect with those new markets.

MAKING RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE



Tony Rogers
Managing Director
Tony Rogers Conference & Event Services

What is the value of the UK events industry? How many conferences and business events take place in the UK each year? Which are the key growth sectors within events? Which are the leading UK festivals? How much do delegates typically spend?

These are just a few of the many questions asked on a daily basis by those working in the events industry and by students preparing for a career in the sector. But where can the answers and information be found? And what are the gaps in the existing provision of research data? What do we know about the events industry at this point in time and what do we want or need to know about our industry in the future?

In order to provide a centralised library or register of events sector research and intelligence, BVEP initiated a unique project in Autumn 2015, to be undertaken jointly by Glenn Bowdin of Leeds Beckett University and Tony Rogers Conference & Event Services. The project seeks to catalogue all publicly accessible industry and academic research and related resources and make them available as a searchable database via the BVEP website. It covers industry research

reports, academic research and theses, expert articles and magazine features, white papers, books, and other materials.

By June 2016 over 250 discrete items had been added to the database, with each item including: title, author(s), year of publication, short description of content, keywords, web address or other access details, and cost to purchase or free of charge. Items cover all sectors of the events industry including business events, sporting events, cultural events, musical events and festivals. While much of the listed material has a specific UK remit, other items with a more international focus have been included where these are relevant to UK events businesses. Further items are still to be added and a mechanism needs to be established to ensure that new research items continue to be added to the database as these are published.

The next steps are for the research and resources register to be uploaded to the BVEP website and then made available and promoted as a searchable tool for events professionals, academics and students to use. BVEP's Research Group, chaired by John Gallery, will also be using the register to identify gaps in existing research and thus the priorities for new research activity and potential funding sources for these.

The continuing challenge for all industry research is that we are always reliant on people taking part in interviews, surveys and other forms of research so that, collectively, we have a more robust set of data and deeper insights into the characteristics and trends of the events sector, enabling us to move forward from what is happening (descriptive facts and stats) to why things happen and what we can learn from this.



WINNING BUSINESS EVENTS FOR BRITAIN



Chris Foy
Head of Business Visits & Events
VisitBritain

The formation of the Event Industry Board (EIB) and the re-adoption of VisitBritain's remit for Business Visits & Events (BV&E) were the first stages in renewed support and commitment to the sector.

The emerging priorities at a nation-wide level are to:

- Build and sustain demand for Britain as a BV&E destination
- Support the winning of targeted bids and add value to those events already won

Work has already begun on both fronts.

One of the EIB's priority objectives is to enhance the non-financial "soft power" support available to secure events for Britain. Achieving this level of cross-Government support and co-ordination will be led by VisitBritain, DCMS and other partners across Whitehall as part of an Event Support Programme.

Funding from the Government's GREAT Britain campaign will also be made available through the Event Support Programme to provide direct financial support for campaigns to secure events and boost the value of international business events in Britain. Full criteria for applications to the Event Support Programme will be published shortly. However, it is important to note that only business events with, or with potential for a significant international dimension will be considered.

In addition, VisitBritain are developing a marketing plan to build and sustain demand for Britain as a business events destination. This is designed to add value to the work being delivered in market by UK partners, and bring a new dynamic to the way that Britain is positioned in the events sector.

EVENT INDUSTRY LEADERS GATHER AT FARNBOROUGH INTERNATIONAL



From left to right: Michael Hirst, OBE - deputy chair of the UK Events Industry Board and chair of the BVEP, Michael Watton - venue director at Farnborough International, Chris Foy - head of business visits & events for VisitBritain, Chris Skeith - CEO of the Association of Event Organisers and James Heapey MP - MP for Wells and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events

Event industry leaders gathered on the 12th July to experience and celebrate one of Britain's most successful major events - the Farnborough International Airshow 2016.

In attendance were representatives from the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events, VisitBritain, the UK Events Industry Board, UK Trade & Industry, the Business Visits & Events Partnership, the Events Industry Alliance, VisitEngland, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events, the International Live Events Association, London & Partners and MPI UK & Ireland Chapter.

Held at the venue since 1948, the Farnborough International Airshow takes place every two years and attracts up to 200,000 visitors over the five trade days and public weekend. In 2014, the show saw over

\$200 billion of aircraft and engine orders announced.

During the event, guests were also briefed on the new Hall 1 facility which is due to open in 2018. The purpose-built space will be flexible enough to cater for almost any kind of exhibition, conference, meeting, dinner or launch event thanks to 12,500sqm of exhibition space, 2,500 conference seats and 14 multiple purpose-built function rooms. Alongside its existing facilities, including the permanent 3,000 sqm Hall 5, the new Hall 1 will make Farnborough International Exhibition & Conference Centre the pre-eminent events venue in South East England.

The 2016 airshow will be the last ever event to utilise the current temporary Hall 1 facility, one of several temporary structures that the

entire event space can accommodate. As soon as the structures come down after the show closes, contractors will move in to begin work on the new permanent Hall 1 which is due for completion in 2018.

James Heapey, MP for Wells and chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events, commented; "It has been great to not only hear about one of Britain's greatest event success stories, but to experience it in all its glory. It is also very exciting to hear the plans for the future expansion of the show and additional events taking place on the site, with the development of the Hall 1 facility."

Michael Watton, venue director added; "We have been delighted to host such an important group of event industry figures today, hearing their insights and different perspectives on the value of major events. We look forward to welcoming them back to the airshow in two years' time when the build of our new venue is completed, boasting the first class facilities that will make us the premier event space in the South East."



Michael Watton - venue director at Farnborough International



GLASGOW'S CONVENTIONS SUCCESS



Aileen Crawford
Head of Conventions
Glasgow City Marketing Bureau

Glasgow's capability and credibility in the global meetings marketplace is stronger than ever before.

We recently published our 2015/16 fiscal data and we had an incredible year, reporting £141 million in conference revenue secured for future years – that equates to 513 new international and UK conventions and some 420,000 delegate days through to 2022; reflecting our best ever annual return.

Those results demonstrate the continuing importance of our city partnerships, with the likes of the SECC, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, the private sector and the city's universities – for example, nearly 80% of all overseas delegates visiting Glasgow in 2015 came through the SECC.

It also shows the strength of the Glasgow Conference Ambassador Programme – almost half (49%) of all the business booked last year was led by an ambassador compared to just 30% two years previous.

Managed by GCMB, the programme supports in excess of 1,700 active ambassadors – drawn from the city's academic, scientific, medical and business communities –

enabling them to persuade their own sectors and associations to host a conference in Glasgow.

Glasgow is a great example of a city that understands the relevance of its knowledge hub economy.

In 2015/16, nearly half (48%) of all conference business confirmed to Glasgow for future years was in our key economic sectors of life sciences, medical, energy, sustainability, low carbon industries, engineering, financial and business services – which represents 10% growth on the previous year.

The importance of our ambassadors in that cannot be understated. They are experts within their specific industries and working closely with them ensures that we are aware of the trends and latest research developing in their fields. As our year-end figures show, understanding the value of those developments for conference planners is driving Glasgow's – and Scotland's – competitive advantage.



WHAT'S GOING ON



Earlier this month **VisitEngland** began a consultation with tourism destination organisations across the country on its new Business Visits & Events (BV&E) strategy. The results will feed into the development of the final strategy due to be published in early autumn 2016 to build demand, win bids and increase the value of England's BV&E industry.

To find out more please visit:
www.visitengland.com/conventions



Belfast Waterfront is seeing a welcome rise in the number of national and international conferences. Over the coming months Belfast Waterfront will welcome the World Credit Union Conference, the 67th Annual Meeting of the European Federation of Animal Science, The British Orthopaedic Association Annual Congress and the BBC Good Food Show.

To find out more please visit:
www.waterfront.co.uk



A revitalised **Scottish Cities & Centres Forum** has brought together the main business events "movers and shakers" in Scotland, with an ambition to fine tune and recalibrate Scotland's reach to the global events market. Scotland's national ambassador programme will also be relaunched later this year, aiming to encourage potential corporate clients to embrace the "Think Scotland, Think Conference" initiative.

To find out more please visit:
www.thinkscotlandconference.co.uk



VisitWales has piloted an "improving perceptions of a career in tourism" programme. During spring 2016 events were organised with hotels and schools across Wales to raise the profile and awareness of the industry. This new "careers consortium", an umbrella of all players involved, also now provides for the exchange of key information and sustained contact between industry centres, schools and providers.

To find out more please visit:
www.traveltrade.visitwales.com



THE EVENTS INDUSTRY GIVES BACK



Jennifer Jenkins
Chair
Meeting Needs



I am so pleased to share with you some news and update you on a number of recent projects we have supported over the last few months.

We have been striving to support our beneficiaries for over 12 years via our network of key event industry partners, which help us support children and communities worldwide. This network is mostly comprised of our Charity Partners who pay £50 per month, and we are so appreciative to them all for their support.

Our objective is to help causes, directly at the point of need that do not have the resources to raise sufficient funds to complete projects. I wanted to share with you

some of the recent projects we have supported and ask for you all to be a part of and support your industry charity.

It is really very easy, you can approach your company to become a Charity Partner or take part in a fundraising event for Meeting Needs.

Much more information can be found on www.meetingneeds.org.uk

I'd love to hear from you, thank you.
jjenkins@meetingneeds.org.uk

The Hotel Booking Agents Association (HBAA) presented Meeting Needs with a cheque for £20,000 at The Meetings Show in June as a result of the dedicated fundraising effort by HBAA members. Jacqui Kavanagh, HBAA Board Member and CEO of Trinity Event Solutions, said: "On behalf of the HBAA I am just so thrilled to be passing on this fantastic cheque for £20,000 which represents 12 months of collaborative fundraising activities by our agent and venue members and will result in positive impacts for the unique projects supported by Meeting Needs."



The Mermaid conference centre in London has ditched client goody bags in favour of charity badges – and has urged other venues to do the same. The venue has announced that 30 per cent of its marketing spend will be donated to Meeting Needs in 2016. The decision was prompted after the venue recently became an official charity partner for the organisation, which works to raise funds for worthy causes relevant to the events industry all across the world.



Project Harar is a fantastic charity Meeting Needs has supported for many years. It provides life-changing operations for those with serious facial disfigurements in Ethiopia and this year will perform more than 1200 such operations. Meeting Needs executive committee member Martin Lewis (pictured centre) visited Project Harar in June to see the work at first hand and meet the doctors who fly in as volunteers to perform the operations – in many cases taking holiday to return each year.



Sixty formerly destitute women from 10 villages in the district of Manikganj in Bangladesh have had their lives transformed by the Poverty Alleviation Program for the Vulnerable Women co-funded by Meeting Needs. The latest update from the Social Education & Economic Development Organization for the Needy (SEEDON) reports that these women – either widowed or left by their husbands – are now successfully raising goats, running grocery shops and cultivating vegetables. Some are even paying for their children's education for the first time.



Meeting Needs would like to say a huge thank you to Kate Conway of Hyundai (and board member of Meeting Needs) and Paul Hussey of Conference Doctor for running the Virgin London Marathon for Meeting Needs, finishing in 6:21 and 4:06 respectively. They raised a phenomenal £2,930.64 for the charity, £1,900 of which has already been given to Champion Chanzige to provide tables and chairs for a community centre in rural Tanzania that hosts learning opportunities and community activities for around 7,000 people.



FINDINGS REVEALED

The Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) has revealed the findings of its **UK Subvention Policy and Bid Support Practices for International Conferences and Events Report**, highlighting an increase in the request for funding and in-kind support, particularly amongst association and charity organisations. Crucially, it also cited a significant amount of business being lost to overseas destinations, due to better subvention offering and support provision outside of the UK.

The research was commissioned with the aim of updating the information contained in the previous report from 2011 into subvention and bid support practices as well as to inform and guide the work of the newly formed Events Industry Board and its objective of identifying and winning more major international events to the UK.

Research was collated with feedback from largely UK based direct and professional conference organisers as well as UK and international convention bureaus and destination marketing organisations.

Findings also highlighted the real importance organisers place on having the

right combination of subvention including infrastructure, welcome and convention bureau support, quoting; *'The most important thing is that all stakeholders in the destination need to be on board with the bid and critically 'want' the business.... a joined up approach will undoubtedly win the confidence of the event buyer who is placing the business.'*

The UK destination that was identified by organisers as leading the way in the provision of subvention funding was Glasgow, followed by Liverpool and to a lesser extent Belfast.

Speaking of the results, Michael Hirst OBE, Chair of the BVEP says; "The report gives a clear and insightful look at the state of subvention funding practice in the global marketplace. The areas that it has identified, not only give some guidance to where the focuses need to be for the Events Industry Board but also some key learnings for the wider industry as a whole."

The research for the UK Subvention Policy and Bid Support Practices for International Conferences and Events Report was undertaken by The Right Solution and Tony Rogers Conference and Event Solutions. The report is available to view [here](#).



Glasgow identified in report as leading the way in the provision of subvention funding



The Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) is the umbrella organisation representing leading trade and professional organisations, government agencies and other significant influencers in the business visits and events sector.

Partners of the BVEP include:

- ABPCO - Association of British Professional Conference Organisers
- ACE - Association for Conferences and Events
- AEME - Association for Events Management Education
- Core Cities (represented by Marketing Liverpool)
- EIA - Events Industry Alliance
- EIF - Event Industry Forum
- EMA - Event Marketing Association
- EVCOM - Event & Visual Communication Association
- HBAA - Hotel Booking Agents Association
- ICCA - International Congress & Convention Association
- ILEA - International Live Events Association, UK Chapter
- London & Partners
- Meet in Ireland
- MIA - Meetings Industry Association
- NITB - Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- NOEA - National Outdoor Events Association
- PCMA - Professional Convention Management Association
- PSA - Production Services Association
- Site Great Britain
- VisitBritain
- VisitWales
- VisitEngland
- VisitScotland Business Events

Supporting government bodies:

- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- UK Trade & Investment

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