

Scottish Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme

Meeting Five Report – EAST CENTRAL

Making the Correct Website Investment

**Scottish Enterprise Offices, Edinburgh – Wednesday
11th December 2019**





The fifth East Central meeting of the three-year Scottish Enterprise Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme took place on Wednesday 11th December 2019.

The meeting focused on the theme 'making the correct website investment', highlighting areas such as costs, timescale, suppliers and why it is important for a business to have a website.

25 individuals from farming/agritourism enterprises attended the event from all over Scotland with people travelling from as far north as Aberdeenshire and as far south as Dumfries.

Guest speaker for the day was Lesley Wood from [LMW Consulting](#), who has over 20 years' experience in digital projects and marketing consultancy.

Lesley previously delivered the Branding Workshop with West Central Monitor farmers, the Lennox family and has been working closely with the Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme to help develop the branding and digital presence of the two monitor farms and community groups.

The purpose of the meeting was to help individuals attending the meetings with the following;

- Buy website solutions/support with confidence
- Enable businesses to manage their own digital presence
- Help prepare businesses for future/development

GUEST SPEAKER SUMMARY

[Click here](#) to access part one of Lesley's talk which was recorded live at the meeting and explains in depth the following areas;

- What is a website and why businesses need one
- Planning a website – preparatory work

The full presentation delivered can also be seen [here](#).

Andrew Craig from [VisitScotland](#) joined Lesley to discuss the benefits of working with online booking companies to manage sales for accommodation and tickets for events. [Click here](#) to access the video of Andrew's talk.

Andrew highlighted the support VisitScotland can give to businesses setting up online booking systems. Click on the following two options below to download the documents created by VisitScotland;

- [Information on Accommodation Booking Systems](#)
- [Information on Experience Booking Systems](#)

****Please note: These are in no way a complete overview of the booking systems and OTAs available. There are many others not listed in the two documents. It's imperative that businesses do their own research when making their choice and try out as many systems as is feasible.***

VisitScotland does not endorse any of the booking systems/OTAs listed in the two documents and they should merely be used as a starting guide to introduce businesses to the opportunities available. *

Lesley also discussed with the attendees what the best buying options are for investing in a website including;

- Web based solutions – Lease



- Agency
- Planning a website

She then concluded the meeting with some top tips on marketing website - highlighting Facebook as a tool for getting started if you have not yet made the investment into a website.

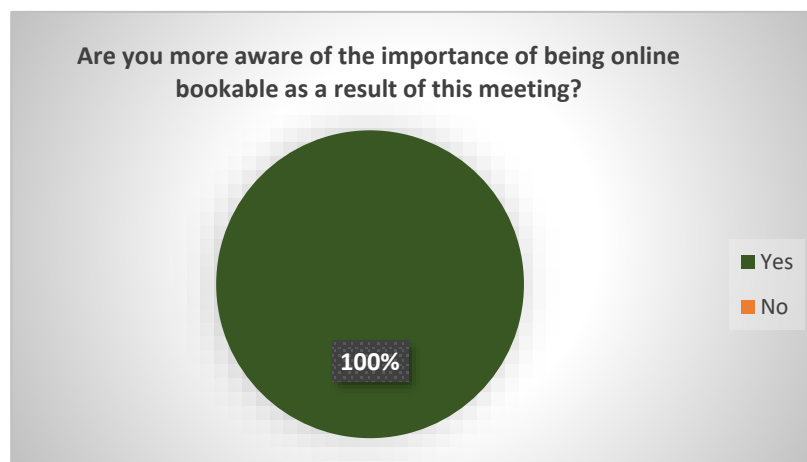
To access the second part of Lesley's talk, [click here](#).

TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFULLY INVESTING IN A WEBSITE:

- Who is your website for? Make sure you have a clear understanding of who your target audience is and what they expect to see on your website;
 - o CUSTOMERS COME FIRST.
- Customer buying decisions;
 - o 20% logic;
 - o 80% emotional.
- Sit down and take into consideration the following;
 - o Potential return on investment;
 - Will your website be a main area for people to book online or is it an area for people to find out more about the business and what's on offer?
 - o What is your budget?
 - The cheapest option isn't always best, but neither is the most expensive. Remember, good investment made at the start will reduce the chances of having to make changes to functionalities further down the line;
 - Make sure you plan any future developments into the budget as a forecast (e.g. you might not need an online booking system initially, but will it be something you need further down the line?).
 - o How much time do YOU have?
 - Keeping a website regularly updated (especially if you are doing online sales) can be time consuming;
 - Do you need to allocate a member of staff to be responsible for keep the site regularly updated?
 - Make sure you sit down and decide how much time this may take and who the best person for the role may be.
 - o It might be a steep learning curve;
 - You may need to make time for staff/yourself to learn/train/adapt to using the website. If you decide to use a freelancer, it's always good to try and have someone in the business involved with the site too. This helps with any changes further down the line (e.g. if the freelancer decides to stop).
- Minimum expenditure for a functional website;
 - o Domain name (e.g. www.mywebsite.com);
 - o The actual cost of the website - design, code, database, programming;
 - o Hosting of the website - usually an annually or monthly fee;
 - o Security - always make sure you look at the security options to ensure the safety of your site;
 - o Maintenance – this will make sure the site is automatically updating etc.
 - o Photography – good photography will help sell your story. Invest in getting someone out to take professional images;
 - Plan what images you want to capture;
 - Make sure YOU and the team are in some of the images;
 - Do a variety of shots (e.g. if you plan to have a Halloween event do Halloween shots to save getting someone out to do them again).
- Develop YOUR website. Have an idea in your head of what you want the website to look like and go to the designers/freelancer (if you use this option) with a clear plan. This will help them understand what your business is about. Remember most designers will have no knowledge/background on your business and the purpose of it;
 - o YOU help develop the design;

- Physically draw on a piece of paper what you want your site to look like and go through the pages/areas you want;
- Your website must be easy for you to understand and follow even if you are not going to be managing it day to day.
- MOBILE FIRST;
 - Many people do their shopping/web browsing on a mobile/tablet device;
 - Remember this when building your website and make sure it's easy to use on a smaller device.
- SEVEN SECOND RULE;
 - People will engage with your website in the first seven seconds. If they do not see what they are looking for in this time (the purpose of your website), they are likely to leave;
 - Make it eye catching – good photography that helps sell your business/service;
 - Short/sharp text on the homepage.

BUSINESS FEEDBACK



If you have a website, when did you first invest in one? (year)

- 2005;
- 2016;
- 2019 (x2);
- Currently being built;
- 2009 but refreshed 2014;
- Unknown (x2);
- 1998;
- 2002/03;
- Not got a website (x4);
- 2012;
- 1990's.

Cost of investment to date?

- £500;
- £170 (graphic logo design);
- £2,000;
- Unknown (x5);
- £1,600;
- £900;
- £3,000;
- Not got a website (x4);
- £1,200.

How is your website working for you?

- Good start but needs to be able to take online bookings, be mobile friendly and requires SEO;
- Not great – only 5,000 views in total since 2016. Can't be found;
- Good – awaiting first month of analytics;
- Ok, but looking to refresh soon;
- Just launched so ok at the moment;
- Well enough but needs updating;
- It is very informative, and people really enjoy, but it lacks interactive functionality;
- Not got a website (x4);
- Very well;
- Used to work well but has been left behind and now dated.

What did you learn from the meeting on 11th December?

- The need for online bookings;
- Importance of SEO (x4);
- Google analytics (x3);
- Facebook business page – manage better;
- Options for new website – what to look for;
- Importance to attention to detail;
- Different online booking platforms available;
- Do your research and ask for quotes/reviews (x2) before making investment;
- Tips from Andrew re speed tests etc.;
- Process of engaging with a new developer;
- Learnt lots! Need time to process everything;
- I need a website for our business;
- Importance of Google listings;
- To improve Google key words;
- Importance of website layout – make sure they work (x2);
- Use friends to check/test the website functionalities;
- Website planning (x3);
- Be focused about what I'm selling;
- Importance of book now/buy now buttons;
- Do a proper plan/draft an idea of how you want the website to look;
- Photography key;
- Check online profile;
- The value of making the correct choice with design;
- Update website more regularly;
- Get the correct information on website/social media (e.g. contact details);
- Add events calendar for tours/experiences to website;
- Reply to all reviews where possible (good and bad).

What are the main issues you have around improving your website/online experience or starting your website/online journey?

- Knowledge (or lack of) for WordPress;
- How to integrate online bookings;
- Funds;
- Time – I know I could create something but don't have the time;
- Booking – is it efficient;
- Time (x2);
- Is our current builder/supplier correct?
- Too much wording on the website;
- Lack of good imagery;
- Clearer navigation;
- Deciding what exactly we are offering to decide what we are marketing;
- Product or logo or website – which comes first?;
- Correct wording;
- Been getting bogged down in detail. Need to get website live for agritourism offer before January 2020;
- We have learnt from others, but we can still do more;
- Lack of knowledge/time;
- Don't currently have a sight but want to make sure we develop one that has the correct services;

- Developing knowledge/skills to get the preparation right;
- Digital marketing;
- Website speed test;
- SEO.

What will you change as a result of what you have learned at the meeting on 11th December?

- Online bookings;
- Book now button;
- Look at freelancer options;
- Update Facebook;
- More planning;
- Will aim to have a website up and running soon;
- Go to Business Gateway for help;
- Key wording;
- Better photography (x3);
- Sign up with OTAs;
- Work on site map;
- Add functionality buttons;
- Use channel managers;
- Check business contact details;
- Keep branding consistent across all channels (social media, website);
- Start research to develop a website (x2);
- Get feedback on website (friends/family);
- Knowing where to base the starting point of the research;
- Updating website more frequently;
- Update SEO;
- Update FB tabs + services;
- Google analytics;
- Business Gateway opportunities.

What further help/support do you need?

- Selecting online booking system;
- Possible funding;
- Ideas on what's best for us;
- New branding;
- Not sure as I don't do/use our website (need to have discussion with boss);
- Pulling together and building a website;
- Using data effectively;
- What's the return on the investment;
- Build our own 'site map' and get the correct platform that we have 'control' over;
- Everything;
- Marketing;
- Not sure at the moment – need to plan;
- Nearly ready to get website up and running so hopefully no other help need to get set up;
- Website is still a project to be reviewed;
- Will sign up with digital boost help from SE as mentioned at the end of meeting;
- Should we link all social channels to website?
- Signing up to Business Gateway courses (x2).
- Finding where the support is;
- SEO optimization.

What did you enjoy about the meeting on 11th December?

- A good insight into websites;
- Lesley (speaker) is fun, informative and engaging;
- Andrew (speaker) delivered useful content;
- Great venue with lots of interacting;
- Hearing of other experiences (x3);
- Getting good advice about becoming more focused (x2);
- The around the room discussions;
- Very informative;
- Made me much more aware of the varieties of website designs;
- The conversation;
- Interaction with speakers and other attendees (x2);

- Presentations were practical – number of action points;
- Hearing from other experiences;
- Subject matter;
- Delivery – speakers were great;
- Warmth of attendees;
- Sharing experiences;
- Great speakers;
- Information available;

EAST MEETING FOUR ATTENDEES

There were 25 attendees at the meeting on 11th December 2019. A full list is detailed along with links to their websites/social media channels.

No.	First Name	Surname	Ticket Type	Company	Website
1	Stuart	McNicol	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	DRIFT./Castleton Events	https://www.facebook.com/DRIFTeatdrinkrelax/
2	Jo	McNicol	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	DRIFT./Castleton Events	https://www.facebook.com/DRIFTeatdrinkrelax/
3	Bobby	Lennox	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	Lennox of Lomond	https://www.shemoreonlochlomond.com/
4	Anne	Lennox	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	Lennox of Lomond	https://www.shemoreonlochlomond.com/
5	Kay	Wilson	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	Lennox of Lomond	https://www.shemoreonlochlomond.com/
6	Dougie	Wilson	Agritourism/Monitor Farmer	Lennox of Lomond	https://www.shemoreonlochlomond.com/
7	Robin	Austin	Agritourism business	Barstobrick and Fellend Farm	https://www.barstobrick.co.uk/
8	Ellen	Austin	Agritourism business	Barstobrick and Fellend Farm	https://www.barstobrick.co.uk/
9	Balfour	Stewart	Agritourism business	The Busstop	https://www.thebusstop.scot/
10	Chris	Scott-Park	Agritourism business	Portnellan Farm LLP	http://portnellanfarm.co.uk/
11	Freda	Scott-Park	Agritourism business	Portnellan Farm LLP	http://portnellanfarm.co.uk/
12	David	Scott-Park	Agritourism business	Portnellan Farm LLP	http://portnellanfarm.co.uk/
13	Jasmine	Jackson	Agritourism business	Kersheugh	https://www.facebook.com/jacksonsfarmventure/
14	Trudi	Cueto	Agritourism Business	G Gibsons & Sons	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Carfrae-Farm-Cottages/483528365174952
15	Grant	Turnbull	Agritourism business	Carr's Hill	http://www.carrshill.co.uk/
16	Vicky	Gardiner	Agritourism business	The Scottish Goat Meat Company	https://www.scottishgoatmeat.co.uk/
17	Alison	Younger	Agritourism business	F&A younger	http://www.oldleckie.co.uk/index.php/farm-tours/
18	Sascha	Grierson	Agritourism business	J A C Grierson Ltd	http://www.hughgrierson.co.uk/
19	Johnathon	Sloan	Agritourism business	Pod Camping Scotland	
20	Eric	Linklater	Agritourism business	G Gibsons & Sons	https://www.facebook.com/pages/Carfrae-Farm-Cottages/483528365174952
21	Shona	Duncan	Agritourism business	Duncan Family Farms	https://www.facebook.com/Duncan-Family-Farms-330252160999100/
22	Sheila	Bannerman	Farmer looking to diversify	The Old Manse Farm	
23	Gordon	Murray	Farmer looking to diversify	Craigmaddie Muir Farm	
24	John	Auld	Farmer looking to diversify	The Firm of Elizabeth Auld	
25	Nicholas	Poett	Farmer looking to diversify	Harviestoun Home Farm	