

# CONNECTIONS

News and comment from the BVEP  
Spring 2016



CONNECTING BRITAIN'S  
EVENTS INDUSTRY

# WELCOME

We've all been that person watching the clock, wondering when or if that bus will ever turn up and then three come at once - it's always seemed like something of a cliché. As it turns out, this occurrence is also largely to do with simple maths and circumstance that make it near impossible for buses to run on an equidistant cycle which would stop them grouping together. Lewis Lehe, a postgrad in transport engineering, has built a game of sorts to demonstrate this phenomenon.

We don't need a game to demonstrate this, but over the past 10 years that I've had the pleasure of being part of the BVEP, it has felt at times a long wait for a single bus, but that is changing.

Over the last nine months, it feels the events industry has found its own private bus lane to Whitehall, with previous government report recommendations being activated, and partners getting on board, releasing people power from within their constituencies.

The first bus to arrive, was the reformation of the hugely successful APPG, formed initially by Nick de Bois, now driven ably by James Heapey, who contributes 'A view from Westminster' later in this newsletter.

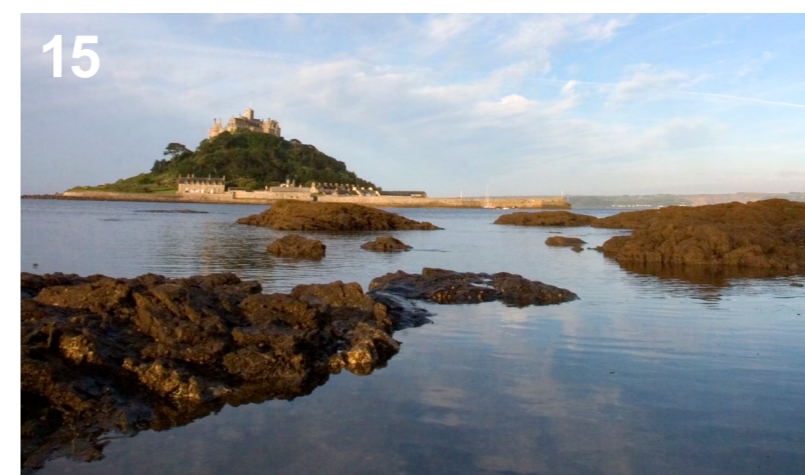
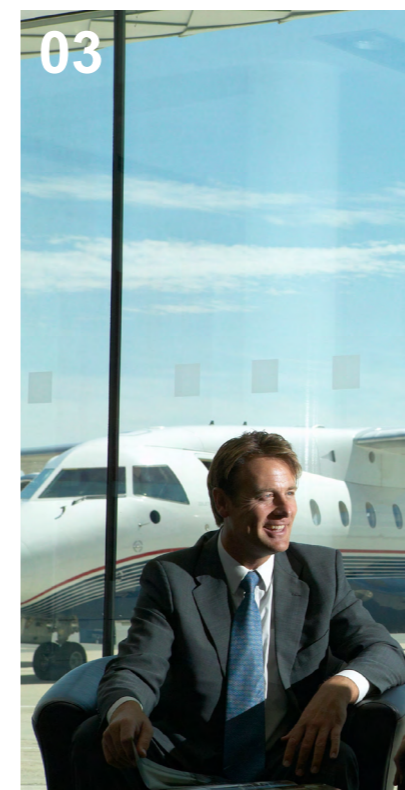
Nick has changed routes, but still drives another path within the corridors of power across government departments, by chairing the UK Events Industry Board (EIB) who met for the first time in January. The EIB conductor is DCMS, and for the first time there is resource and positive coordination across departments with common objectives – again, more on this later.

Finally, our National Events Month & Britain for Events Routemasters, have been traded in for a BorisBus, and over the next quarter these campaigns are up for a refresh and rebrand. Conducting this transformation is VisitBritain, and we await, with anticipation, for a little 'GREAT' to be added to this.

Is it a problem that three buses have all come along at once? I think not. I suggest we all get on those buses as quickly as possible to contribute and support as much as we possibly can. If we don't, who knows when the next opportunity to jump on will come along.



**Chris Skeith**  
CEO - AEO  
Vice Chair - BVEP



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# BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS TO PROGRESS



**Nick de Bois**  
Chair - UK Events Industry Board

In January the new Events Industry Board met for the first time at the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). Towards the end of the last parliament the then secretary of state for Culture, Media & Sport, Sajid Javid announced the formation of the board as a working link between the thriving business events sector and the government. The board has three key goals. The first is to help deliver more valuable business visitors to Britain in an ever increasingly global competitive environment. Second, to recognise the role the events sector can play in driving long-term inward investment to the UK by attracting some of the world's leading business events to the UK. Finally, to use these platforms to boost exports, in line with government growth objectives.

This is the first time the events sector, in particular the business events industry, has had its own advisory board to breakdown the barriers which are potentially holding the sector back. It's vitally important to use the "soft power" of national and local government to help win prestigious congresses, exhibitions and events for the UK. I am confident that with a clear strategy in place

and cross government input, we are in a strong position to grow our reputation as a major events destination.

The events industry currently contributes over £42 billion to the UK economy, directly supports over 530,000 jobs and helps deliver platforms for UK exporters. Major events are also an opportunity to showcase Britain to international visitors as a potential permanent home for business investment. It is an industry that already offers much but, with the right level of support, could deliver so much more.

Fortunately, both the events industry and government now recognise we can indeed together achieve so much more. The first job of the board is to establish what existing international events could be targeted and brought to the UK. The board will also identify what events the UK currently offers which could be considered suitable to expand to an international audience. To succeed, a focus on practical outcomes delivering some early results will be important. Medium to long-term outcomes will help win business for the UK, both through the expansion of the events

sector and the wider exporting platform this will in turn create for UK PLC. Government growth objectives will ultimately drive the board's work.

This requires a cross government response, and not just the welcome support of DCMS and UKTI. It requires access to senior ministerial and embassy support to help secure international events to the UK, and ensure attendance at those events from across the relevant government departments. Where there are barriers to making Britain a destination of choice, we must be ruthless in securing cross department support in removing them, and where necessary,

embracing innovation, which may include recommending some areas of legislative reform.

We have four working groups to ensure progress in the key areas of competitiveness, the Ministerial Bid Support Initiative, removing barriers to growth and, of course, identifying the target list of events for Britain. Of course maintaining Britain's competitiveness as a destination for major international events will be the bedrock of our work.

I look forward to updating you over the coming months as this exciting new initiative gathers pace.



# EVENTS ARE GREAT BRITAIN LAUNCHES AT STAMFORD BRIDGE



From left to right: CEO of the Association of Event Organisers - Chris Skeith, deputy chair of the UK Events Industry Board and chair of the BVEP - Michael Hirst, OBE and head of business visits & events for VisitBritain - Chris Foy

Events are GREAT Britain, the brand to market Britain as a Business Visits & Events' destination, was unveiled to industry associations, stakeholders and media on 14th April at an exclusive launch event held at Stamford Bridge, Chelsea Football Club.

Events are GREAT Britain - part of the wider and hugely successful GREAT campaign - will act as the umbrella brand, working to drive more international business to the UK. Working closely with the Business Visits & Events Partnership (BVEP) and the newly created UK Events Industry Board, it will support British destinations and venues to deliver measurable economic benefits to the visitor economy from new events, enhanced delegate numbers and business extenders.

Presentations were made by heads of the major industry associations including; newly

appointed head of business visits & events for VisitBritain - Chris Foy, deputy chair of the UK Events Industry Board and chair of the BVEP - Michael Hirst, OBE and CEO of the Association of Event Organisers - Chris Skeith. In addition, representatives from many of the major UK destinations attended including VisitBritain, VisitScotland, VisitEngland, London and Partners, VisitManchester and Meet Birmingham plus representatives from exhibition and convention centres including ExCeL London, The NEC Birmingham and ACC Liverpool.

Speaking at the event, Chris Foy, head of business visits & events, VisitBritain explained; "VisitBritain's role is about adding value to the work of the UK events industry. It's about building demand for events in Britain, supporting the winning of bids, and it's about addressing aspects of welcome

that can do so much more to enhance the business visitor experience of our country."

Events are GREAT Britain will replace the current Britain for Events campaign which had run since 2010. The campaign made its international debut to the industry at IMEX Frankfurt on 19th April.

For further information please contact:  
[eventsaregreat@daviestanner.com](mailto:eventsaregreat@daviestanner.com)  
[www.eventsaregreat.com](http://www.eventsaregreat.com)



Michael Hirst OBE: Deputy chair - UK Events Industry Board and Chair - BVEP



## IF GOVERNMENT SMOOTHS THE WAY, BIG EVENTS WILL FOLLOW



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

It has been hugely exciting to spend the last six months getting my feet under the table as the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for the UK Events Industry. There has been the glitz and glamour of the Meetings & Incentive Travel Awards dinner and the variety and scale of Confex. But so too have I had the opportunity to meet with people involved in all parts of the industry from organising major international events to those organising homeware shows in cattle sheds.

The events, shows, conferences and exhibitions that you deliver bring huge value to our economy and I think our top priority in Parliament must be to make sure that is fully understood by those at the top of government. Nick de Bois will be a brilliant figurehead as chair of the newly formed UK Events Industry Board, but we parliamentarians must make sure that the government does empower his board in the way that was originally envisaged. If we are to compete for the biggest and most lucrative events, there is a whole sweep of government departments that will need to be willing to smooth the way. Nick must be able to get them all working together.

The same is true if we are to deliver major international events into the regions too. I've seen a little of what they do in Glasgow and Liverpool and would love to see that replicated elsewhere across the UK. That needs major support from central and local government. Facilities, language skills, flight connections and domestic transport links must be improved even further if we are to compete internationally. It won't happen overnight, but I hope we can champion that cause in Parliament too.

# THE EVENTS INDUSTRY GIVES BACK



**Jennifer Jenkins**  
Chair - Meeting Needs



I'm delighted to introduce **Meeting Needs, the Events Industry Charity.**

The charity is a way for the events industry to come together to do something positive and socially responsible.

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've supported and ask for you all to be a part of and support your industry charity.

It's 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](http://www.meetingneeds.org.uk)

I'd love to hear from you, thank you.  
[jjenkins@meetingneeds.org.uk](mailto:jjenkins@meetingneeds.org.uk)

## Re-Cycle

This UK based charity provides second hand bicycles and spare parts to developing countries.

We were pleased to provide a further grant for £2,735 to supply 150 bicycles to the Kaloko Trust in Zambia.



## Project Harar Ethiopia

This little boy is one of 11 children for whom Meetings Needs funded operations to correct facial disfigurements at a mission set up by Project Harar Ethiopia.

The total cost to change the lives of these 11 children was just £3,000.



## Happy Days

This UK based childrens' charity provides holidays for disabled or disadvantaged children.

We were pleased to provide a grant for £2,500 to fund 100 day trips and outings for children with special needs.



## Cecily's Fund

Cecily's Fund supports children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in Zambia.

We were pleased to provide a further grant of £5,000 to this charity to part-fund school fees for 104 orphans and vulnerable children to attend secondary school in Kitwe, on Zambia's Copperbelt.



## The Footsteps Foundation

This little lad is Owen, who has cerebral palsy.

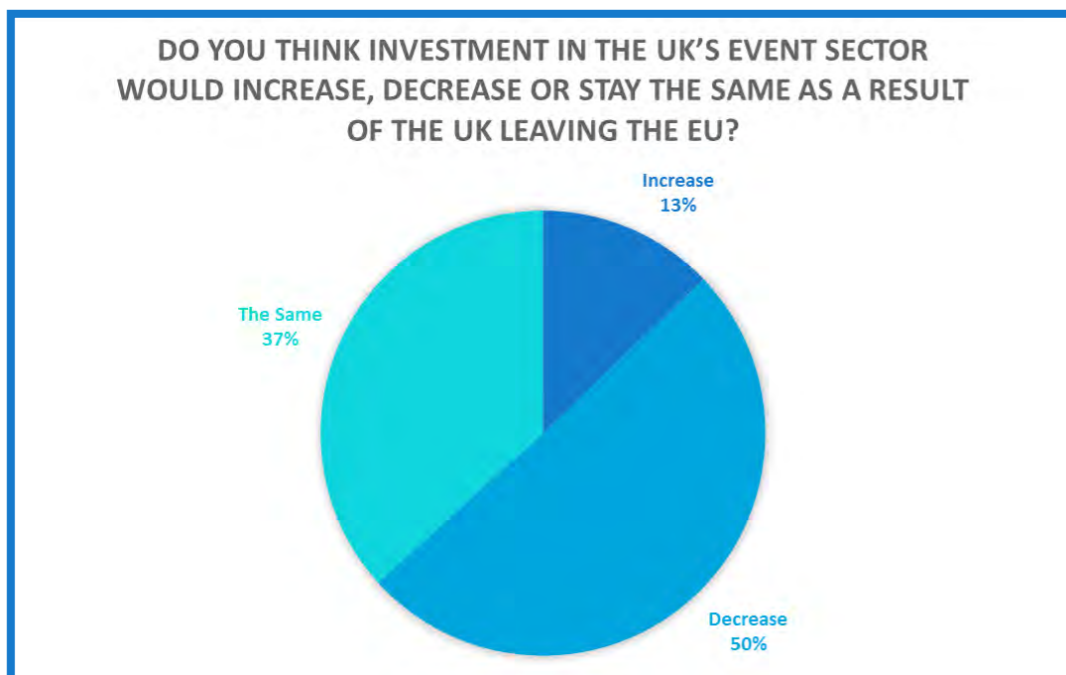
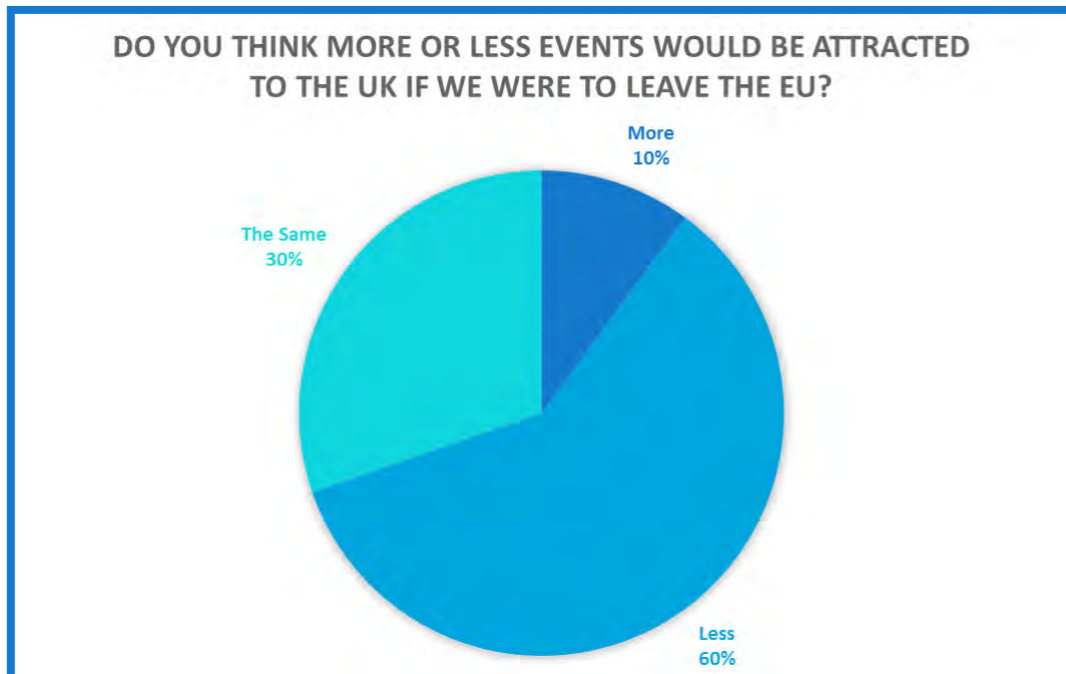
Meeting Needs funded 100 hours of physiotherapy for Owen and other children with The Footsteps Foundation where revolutionary mobility aids and treatment are working wonders.



# THE IMPACT OF BREXIT ON THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

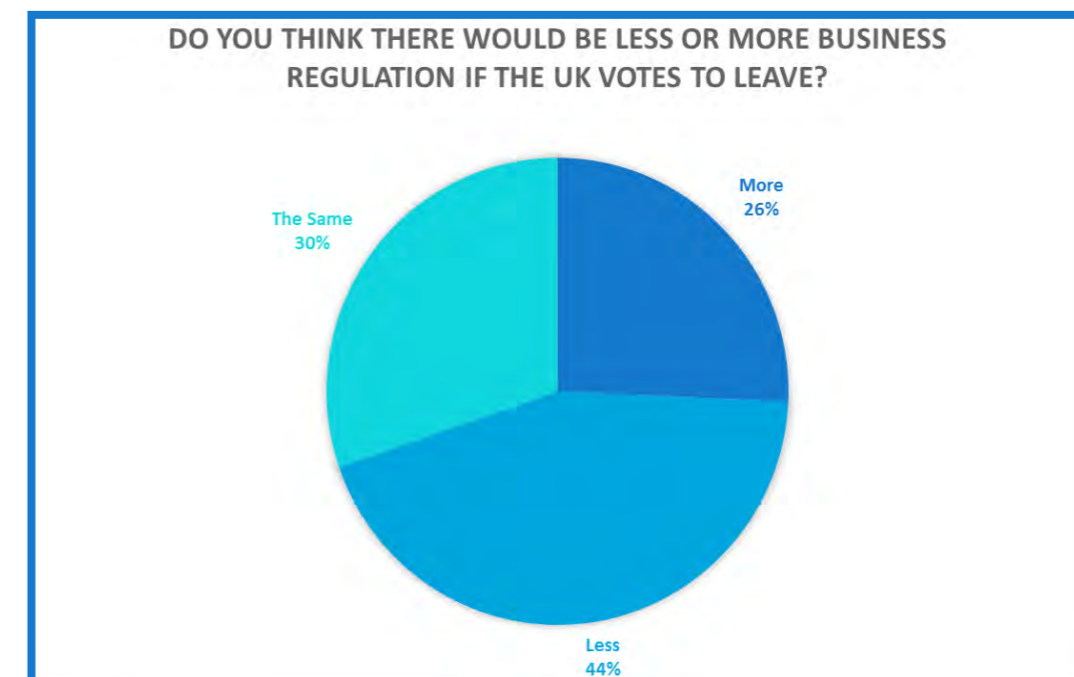
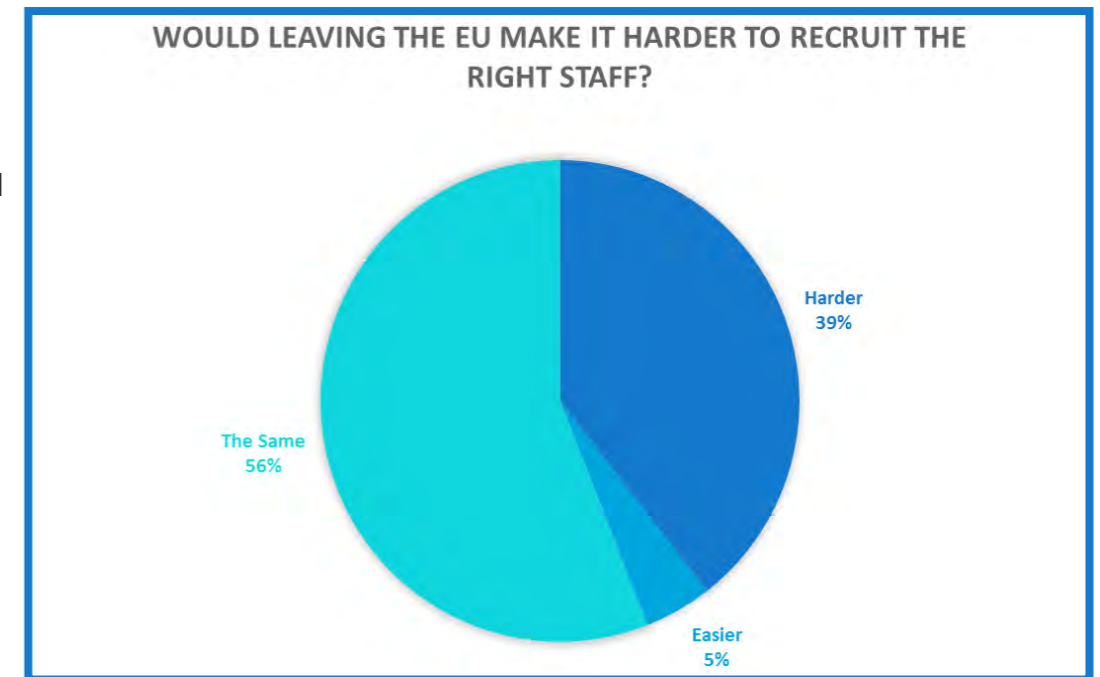
As the umbrella body for the UK events industry, the BVEP has surveyed members of our partner organisations to ask how 'Brexit' might affect events in the UK. The overall results show the industry to have concerns about the level of events that would be attracted to the UK and the amount of investment that would be made in the industry, if there is a vote to leave.

Just 10% felt more events would be attracted here after Brexit, with 60% predicting there would be less.



Industry investment was predicted to decrease by half of our respondents. The other half said it would stay the same or increase - just 13% expected investment in events to increase.

Just over half the respondents believed the ability to recruit the right staff would be the same after leaving the EU, but 39% felt it would be harder to recruit with just 5% saying recruitment would be easier.



Business regulation was the topic that most divided the industry's opinion. While the EU is often cited as hindering business with bureaucracy and red tape, 56% felt this would stay the same or increase, with 44% believing a leave vote would lead to less regulation.

Many of the specific respondents' comments on possible post-Brexit issues for UK events businesses, highlighted increased regulation on events held in Europe as one of the largest concerns.

Other issues raised were the potential loss of work to European contractors and destinations; additional transport and other operational costs and the possible perception of Britain as an "outsider" destination for European events.

On the plus side the possible weakening of the pound could make Britain more competitive; there might be greater flexibility and ability to win more global events and trade outside Europe, with more opportunity for government to support events without breaching State aid rules.

The BVEP presents the findings of its Survey without prejudice to either point of view. With the EU referendum now just weeks away, no matter what the UK decides, the BVEP will continue to raise sector awareness and work with its stakeholders to support its future growth.

# VISITBRITAIN APPOINTS CHRIS FOY AS HEAD OF BUSINESS VISITS & EVENTS



**Chris Foy**  
Head of Business Visits & Events - VisitBritain

VisitBritain and VisitEngland have appointed a new head of business visits & events, Chris Foy.

Chris joined VisitBritain in 2003 and has held a variety of senior roles within the organisation including most recently as head of nations and regions. Prior to this he spent time on secondment to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office reporting to the central GREAT Britain campaign team at 10 Downing Street – a role that has given him profile, strong contacts at high level in parts of FCO, UKTI and DCMS, and knowledge of key government partners at director and ministerial level.

In his new role Chris will lead the Business Visits & Events strategy to contribute to the overall growth of business tourism in Britain.

VisitBritain director of marketing Joss Croft said:

“I’m delighted to appoint Chris as the new head of business visits & events. He brings a wealth of experience and industry contacts to the role as well as a proven track-record

of project management, negotiation and diplomacy that will be a real asset as we work towards growing and spreading the economic benefits of business tourism across all of Britain’s nations and regions.”

Chris Foy said:

“This is an exciting opportunity to work with Britain’s world class destinations and venues to drive more business tourism and generate export platforms for British industry. I’ve seen the positive impact that major events can bring first hand through my work on the 2012 Games and look forward to working on other successful projects over the coming years.”

Chris’ career at VisitBritain also includes four years as head of VisitBritain’s 2012 Games Unit which provided insight into the priorities of key destinations beyond mainstream tourism.

Chris’ key focus will be working with UK destinations to win international business events. He will focus on national priority industry sectors, maximising the visitor spend from business events through increased delegate numbers and extended stays. He will also support the wider England priorities on Business Visits & Events.

As part of VisitBritain’s new strategy for Business Visits & Events, the current Britain for Events campaign, which has run since 2010, will be replaced in 2016 by Events are GREAT Britain and will form part of the government’s wider GREAT campaign.

Events are GREAT Britain will act as the umbrella brand for the UK’s drive to deliver more international business to the UK, working closely with the Business Visits & Events Partnership and newly created UK Events Industry Board.





## EVENT SUSTAINABILITY: ARE YOU READY?



**Alex Lepingwell**  
Managing Director - Green Stewards Ltd  
NOEA Council Member

The concept of sustainability is both very simple and very complicated. Simply put; sustainable means able to endure. However, when we hear sustainable in a sentence these days, it is more likely to be illustrating how one product or service is better than the rest because it is more sustainable. How that sustainability is measured and why it is important is more complicated.

The Green Movement beginning in the 1960s was initially ridiculed and vilified as it wanted us all to stop polluting, reduce our dependence on oil, save whales and ban bombs. All laudable and mainly environmentally led notions of preserving life for future generations. Big business pushed back and painted these groups as yoghurt weaving luddites who stood in the way of human progress and the creation of wealth for all.

Sustainability in the 21st century is an evolution and expansion of the Green movement of the last century. Along with the rebrand has come an acceptance of most of the issues raised by the early Greens and more importantly a shift in the attitudes

of big business. These days it is hard to find a large company that doesn't have a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy (CSR), or more recently a sustainable procurement policy. However along with this unarguably good move in the right direction has come a considerable amount of added complexity to almost every layer of the business world.

The sheer range of issues that come under the sustainability banner is overwhelming for the vast majority of businesses. It is no longer sufficient to not pour our engine oil down the drain, not burn the plastic packaging and recycle our glass bottles. These days we are expected to have an integrated sustainable management system that covers every aspect of our business activities. In fact, it doesn't even stop there; we are also expected to have at least an interest in the up and downstream activities that either affect our business or we affect in others.

If you are BP or Coca Cola it is not too hard to devote the resources to deliver a slick, media friendly full spectrum integrated suite of Sustainability Policies. If you are a three man band of exhibition fitters it is almost impossible. There lies the problem. For sustainable initiatives to work, everybody has to get on board. It has to be accessible and fair to all involved, and that is nigh on impossible to achieve. This has been shown on a macro scale by the length of time it has taken for the international agreement on climate change to be agreed.

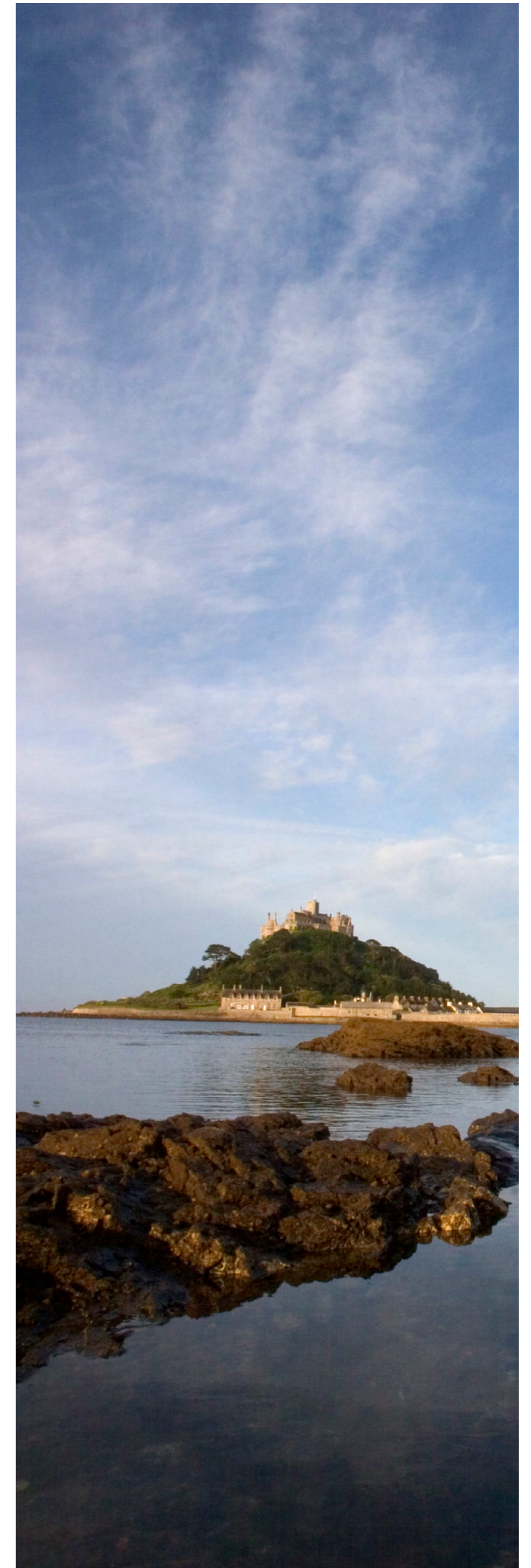
In our industry there has been an attempt to standardise sustainable management practices through firstly BS8901 and then ISO2012. Both of these standards have a place in taking forward sustainable management but both are vastly overcomplicated for most SMEs in our industry. The amount of work involved in achieving certification is immense and

again only really a viable option for larger companies with sufficient resources available to throw at the project.

Currently there is no legislation in our industry demanding sustainable business practices, but it is not inconceivable that there will be in the near future. For most of us, that will be a serious challenge. Imagine health and safety regulations on steroids. What we need to do is start preparing now. Small, incremental, achievable steps across a range of areas that will allow us all to build in sustainable management practices over time. Much in the same way as we take sensible health and safety practice for granted these days, companies who don't have sustainable procurement, closed loop product life cycle and energy efficiency policies will stick out like sore thumbs.

To help our members with the building blocks of sustainable management systems, The National Outdoor Events Association is proud to announce that it will be working with Powerful Thinking. The industry led think tank that produced The Power Behind Festivals, an incredibly detailed and well researched paper on energy use in the industry with practical advice on how best to manage energy sustainably. The Show Must Go On is its latest report looking at a much wider range of sustainability issues faced by the event industry. This report also launches The Festival Vision 2025 Pledge, aiming to get all festivals to halve their green house gas emissions by 2025.

Our industry has to take sustainability seriously, not for fear of legislation, loss of market share or even the increased efficiencies it will show. We have to do it because we owe it to our children, their children and the generations to come. It really is that serious.



## WHAT'S GOING ON



The International Special Events Society has officially changed its name to the International Live Events Association (ILEA). The name change reflects the now fully global nature of the association and the more relevant term of 'live' used by its members to describe the wide range of events delivered. It was announced via the ILEA [YouTube channel](#). [www.ileahub.com](http://www.ileahub.com)



Mark Chambers was appointed as the new mia Chairman at the AGM in March. Chambers heads up a newly restructured Executive, Development and Operations Board. The mia also announced the launch of its subsidiary company, Membership Support Services (MSS) who recently signed its first contract, assuming responsibility for managing the day-to-day operation for the HBAA. [www.mia-uk.org](http://www.mia-uk.org)



MPI Connects was held in April 2016 to coincide with Global Meetings Industry Day on 14 April. MPI Connects North took place at Manchester Metropolitan University on 13 April and MPI Connects South took place at University of Greenwich on 14 April. MPI Connects provides opportunities for events industry employers to meet with prospective graduates of event management degrees. [www.mpiuki.org/mpi-connects/](http://www.mpiuki.org/mpi-connects/)



The Events Industry Forum has agreed to expand the guidance it offers alongside the Purple Guide. In the coming months it plans to develop a new 'mini purple guide' for organisers of small events as well as new guidance on crime, police charging and disability provision at events. The Forum is also to make more grant funds available from sales of the Purple Guide and is inviting applications from the industry for support. Projects must have a wide benefit for the events industry.

Further information and details of how to apply can be obtained from: [jim@tesa.org.uk](mailto:jim@tesa.org.uk)



The 25th annual Meetings Market Survey demonstrates an economic rebound in the U.S., with continued improvement in the meetings industry's benchmarking categories. More than 440 North American-based meeting professionals indicated that the size of their 2015 convention/meeting budget increased almost 3% compared to their 2014 budget, and attendance at their largest 2015 event grew 5.3% compared to the prior year. Respondents anticipated continued improvements in 2016, expecting attendance to grow by more than 3%. Full results can be found at [www.pcmaconvene.org/features/meetings-market-survey/convenes-25th-annual-meetings-market-survey/](http://www.pcmaconvene.org/features/meetings-market-survey/convenes-25th-annual-meetings-market-survey/)



ABPCO continues to build on its work to dovetail University research with practical applications for conference professionals with a forthcoming roundtable event, hosted by the University of Surrey's Professor Leo Jago. The event, 'The True Value of Business Events and Their Capacity to be Leveraged', will take place at The Royal Berkshire Hotel (12th May).

Visit [www.abpco.org/abpco-roundtable/](http://www.abpco.org/abpco-roundtable/) to book your place.





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

[www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com](http://www.businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com)  
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