

BID COMPANY

Marketing Report 2023



Introduction



2023 has been another challenging year for Global Tourism with the cost-of-living crisis deepening and seriously impacting holiday choices and visitor spend. Increased energy costs and staff shortages also seriously impacted business operations. As a result and like so many holiday destinations the English Riviera has not got back to precovid levels of business. Our total visitor numbers and spend for 2023 will be lower than 2022, with the exception of international visitors, for which we have seen a revival.

Market conditions continued to be very fluid with later and later booking and we worked hard to respond to these market changes investing close to £400k in professionally coordinated national, regional and local marketing activity, including a new late booking marketing campaign actively targeting couples and empty nesters who are less impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

A focus on developing signature events has continued with £100k invested by the ERBID Company, working in partnership with Torbay Council including the Bay of Lights in efforts to extend the season.

Government funded product development projects were started with the new Geopark Discovery Experiences, recognising that visitor experiences, particularly by cultural explorers wanting to visit new places are in increasing demand with the English Riviera needing to diversify its visitor base and visitor products for the future.

Results Summary

In 2023, the English Riviera brand was in front of potential visitors almost **42 million times** through a variety of digital and out of home media campaigns.

This led to **1.1 million website** users.

And over 45,000 visitors helped through the ERBID Company Visitor Information Centre.

Number of potential visitor impressions					
Newsletters (total emails)	297,964				
Instagram	155,587				
Facebook	5,635,333				
Twitter	115,195				
TikTok	93,862				
English Riviera Walking Festival social media	172,787				
England's Seafood Feast social media	182,550				
Paid Digital Campaigns	23,145,759				
OOH Campaigns	10,652,301				
TOTAL: 41,451,257					
Number of website users					
	1 075 620				
English Riviera website users	1,075,629				
English Riviera Walking Festival website users	25,218				
TOTAL: 1,100,847					
Number of visitors helped					
Visitor Information Centre visitors	37,089				
Visitor Information Centre phone calls	3,574				
Visitor Information Centre email enquiries	3,184				
Visitor Information Centre guide requests	691				
Visitor Information Centre online guide downloads	428				
TOTAL: 44,966					













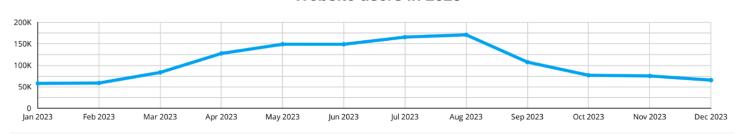






Website Summary

Website users in 2023



Users
813,911
973,551
846,054
1,193,560
1,150,402
1,075,629

Website users were 6.7% down compared to 2022, however 2022 was a still in part of the post-covid increased holiday demand. In fact, if you exclude 2022 and 2021, users in 2023 were significantly higher than any previous year (see table above).

Over the main summer months, users were up or very similar to 2022. Towards the beginning of the year, users were slightly down on 2022.

The main difference between 2022 and 2023 can be largely attributed to a spike over the 2022 Platinum Jubilee and the airshow weekend (2nd-4th June 2022). Traffic was abnormally high and produced a difference of 25,000 users over 3 days. This is likely due to many events over the jubilee weekend, plus terrible weather meant the Airshow got cancelled and many people were searching "is the airshow on?".

71% of users visited the site via mobile, 22% via desktop and 6% via tablet.

Website Acquisition & Behaviour

















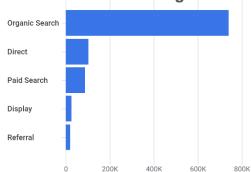
What are users looking at?

Page	Pageviews
Visit the English Riviera in 2023*	101,742
Home	690,532
Things To Do in Torquay	73,481
Explore Torquay	73,047
Bay of Lights*	51,143
Things To Do	50,548
What's On	47,284
England's Seafood FEAST*	43,049
Top 10 Beaches	40,414
English Riviera Webcams	35,823
Total pageviews on website 2023	3,009,192

The above are the top 10 viewed pages in 2023. Torquay drove a lot of traffic to the website, alongside events and things to do.

*The Visit the English Riviera in 2023, Bay of Lights and Seafood FEAST page had paid advertising campaigns directing traffic to them, but the remainder of the pages shown here were primarily driven by organic traffic (people typing relevant keywords into a search engine).





Organic Search (Google mainly) continued to be the primary channel for people looking to visit the English Riviera website, contributing to 740k users to the website (79% of all visits in 2023 - up from 720k users & 65% of all visits in 2022).

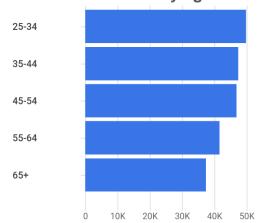
Users arriving via Organic Search had the highest engagement rate at 68%, whilst users arriving via Paid Display had the lowest at just 20%. An engaged session is a user who stayed more than 10 seconds, visited 2 or more pages or triggered a conversion event (e.g. downloading a map, ordering a guide, using Search, Plan & Book etc).

Website Demographics

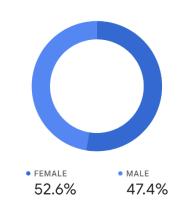




Website users by age:



Website users by gender:



Website users by location:

City	Users
London*	383,600
(not set)	103,040
Torquay	55,618
Plymouth	53,865
Birmingham	36,323
Paignton	25,703
Exeter	22,058
Wolverhampton	21,880
Milton Keynes	19,314
Cardiff	18,606

25-34 year olds were the largest age bracket to visit the website in 2023 (this was the same in 2022). Following this, 35-44 was the next largest demographic, suggesting that the primary audience is those of young family age. This was followed by 45-54 year olds, 55-64 year olds and 65 and over.

There is a fairly even split between females (52.6%) and males (47.4%). Website users from the United Kingdom represent 94% of all users, with day visitors (2 hour drivetime from the English Riviera) being a larger proportion to staying visitors. Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Milton Keynes were the most common areas where website users were based in the "staying" locations.

^{*}Always take location data with a pinch of salt – London is usually the number one location for all websites, as many servers are based there.

Newsletters





10 visitor newsletters went out in 2023, which you can view online via the archive here.

Last year, our CTR was 1.5%. We set an aim to increase out CTR and bring it up to at least the industry average (2.25%). We are pleased to say that we have doubled our CTR (now 3%) and are now way above industry average.

The newsletters predominantly highlighted major events and last minute deals/special offers.

The most opened newsletter was Agatha Christie Festival

Programme released! With an open rate of 37.5%. The newsletter with
the highest click through rate was Airshow schedule released! With
a CTR of 4.3% and over 2.5k clicks to the airshow programme on the
ER website.

Results						
Emails sent (no. of newsletters x subscribers at time of sending)	297,964					
Opens	98,875					
Open rate	33%					
Clicks	8,834					
Click through rate	3%					

Industry average open rate is 20.44%, and average click through rate is 2.25%.

Newsletters





Date sent	Time sent	Subject Line	Recipients	Open Rate	Unique Opens	Total Opens (NOT UNIQUE)	CTR	Unique Clicks	Total Clicks (NOT UNIQUE)	Most clicked link
March 9, 2023	11:00 AM	Ready for a summer holiday? 📅	29,282	30.20%	8,781	12,626	2.50%	1146	727	2023 Events (button half way down)
March 23, 2023	4:00 PM	What's On in 2023 7	29,209	32.70%	9,500	14,700	4.00%	1,147	2,095	What's On (top white link)
April 18, 2023	6:00 PM	In need of a Last Minute Getaway? 7	29,214	31.70%	9,182	12,479	2.30%	679	1,264	King's Coronation (tile half way down)
May 22, 2023	8:00 PM	Agatha Christie Festival Programme released!	30,196	37.50%	11,235	15,794	2.60%	771	1,394	Festival Programme (first blue button)
May 25, 2023	4:26 PM	Airshow schedule released!	30,092	36.50%	10,907	15,708	4.30%	1,287	2,537	Airshow Flying Schedule (first blue button)
June 30, 2023	11:49 AM	Last-minute deals	30,055	35.40%	10,553	14,657	3.90%	1,152	2,504	Special Offers (top white link)
Jul 20, 2023	10:16 AM	Summer Offers	30,038	37.10%	11,096	15,414	3.70%	1,100	2,461	Special Offers (top white link)
Aug 21, 2023	10:56 AM	Mhat's On this Autumn	30,005	36.60%	10,913	15,454	2.20%	657	1,537	What's On (top white link)
Nov 3, 2023	10:26 AM	Bay of Lights set to sparkle again	29,986	29.40%	8,741	12,608	2.40%	704	1,112	YouTube video - Bay of Lights
Dec 4, 2023	3:00 PM	A Christmas by the Coast	29,887	25.50%	7,561	10,726	1.80%	548	796	What's On - Christmas blog (top white link)
		TOTAL	297,964	33.26%	98,469	140,166	2.97%	9,191	16,427	

Instagram Top Posts



Highest Reach

UGC and superb aerial shots like this one, always achieves a good reach.



(o) myriviera

Wed 5/17/2023 4:35 pm BST

Torquay Harbour looks absolutely spectacular, especially from above. #torquay #torquayharbour...



Highest Engagement

UGC and superb aerial shots like this one, always achieves a good engagement.



myriviera

Wed 5/17/2023 4:35 pm BST

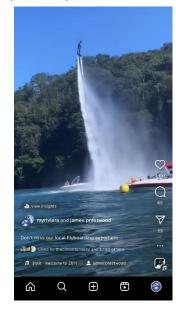
Torquay Harbour looks absolutely spectacular, especially from above. #torquay #torquayharbour...



462

Most Viewed Reel

Reached over 14k views to date, we collaborated with James who has a big following.



Total Engagements Reach 5,213







Our organic Instagram activity and the seasonal and tactical digital marketing campaigns continues to improve with growth across all areas which is really positive.

The most engaging posts have been posts based around beautiful user-generated content that we've been able to utilise through our CrowdRiff platform.

The introduction of user-generated content (via the Crowdriff platform) has provided the English Riviera with an extensive and ever-growing library of images and videos that we gain full rights to use for all future marketing and is an integral part of our ongoing social media activity.

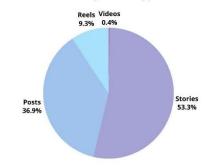
In recent years Instagram has made significant changes to its design, features and algorithms, all of which seem to be affecting Instagram engagement levels (i.e., post likes, shares, comments, video views etc.) so this explains why our engagement rate is slightly down from 2.6% to 2.2%. The industry engagement rate is between 1-5%

Our objectives for 2024 will be to increase our engagement by 3% and grow our following by 5%.

To also win more engagement we plan to create and post more reels (full-screen vertical videos) as they tend to earn more views and higher engagement rates. Additionally, reels exist indefinitely on our feed, while stories will disappear after 24 hours.

	2023	2022	Percentage change
Number of posts	423	228	+85%
Impressions	1,155,587	891,367	+29%
Engagements	25,882	23,306	+11%
Engagement rate	2.2%	2.6%	-15%
Followers Change	6,982	6,119	+14%

Reach by content type



Facebook Top Posts





Highest Reach

Information on our exciting key events tend to get high reach on Facebook



The English Riviera
Tue 5/23/2023 6:33 pm BST

The English Riviera Airshow 2023
Flying Programme Revealed. 🎇 🖺
The full air display lineup for the...



Highest Engagement

Information on our exciting key events tend to get high engagement on Facebook



The English Riviera
Tue 5/23/2023 6:33 pm BST

The English Riviera Airshow 2023
Flying Programme Revealed.
The full air display lineup for the...



Reach 284,168 **Total Engagements 12,495** 11

Facebook Summary





Our Facebook impressions and engagements are down compared to 2022, however our engagement rate is up by 17% which is really great to see. The industry engagement rate is between 1-5% so with a rate of 5.3% and growth of 17%, this is really positive.

The most engaging posts have been based around our featured key events such as Bay of Lights Illumination Trail and English Riviera Airshow, plus beautiful user-generated content that we've been able to utilise through our CrowdRiff platform.

The introduction of user-generated content (via the Crowdriff platform) has provided the English Riviera with an extensive and ever-growing library of images and videos that we gain full rights to use for all future marketing and is an integral part of our ongoing social media activity.

Our objectives for 2024 are to increase our engagements by 3% to 530,000 and grow our following by 5% to 62,164 followers on Facebook.

	2023	2022	Percentage change
Number of posts	187	164	+14%
Organic Impressions	5,633,002	6,595,467	-14%
Organic & paid Engagements	516,820	658,802	-21%
Engagement rate	5.3%	4.5%	+17%
Followers Change	59,204	53,097	+11.5%

- Algorithm updates have prioritised content from friends and family over public posts, resulting in decreased organic reach for business pages.
- 2022 was a post covid boom for staycations. Key events performed really well in 2022 (due to certain events being cancelled/postponed) plus the
 introduction of a brand new event Bay of Lights this meant that our engagements during 2023 would naturally be affected.
- The industry engagement rate is between 1-5%

Twitter Top Posts



Highest Reach

Events tend to get higher reach on Twitter



The <u>#Englishriviera</u> will play host to a feast for all the senses and delighted to welcome #englandsseafoodfeast back this autumn fro...



Highest Engagement

Captivating coastal imagery tends to get the best engagement on Twitter



13

Potential Reach 53,417 Total Engagements 253

Twitter Summary





Our organic Twitter activity continues to improve with growth across all areas which is really positive.

The most engaging posts have been posts based around our featured key events and also beautiful user-generated content that we've been able to utilise through our CrowdRiff platform.

The introduction of user-generated content (via the Crowdriff platform) has provided the English Riviera with an extensive and ever-growing library of images and videos that we gain full rights to use for all future marketing and is an integral part of our ongoing social media activity.

Our objectives for 2024 is to increase our engagement by 3% and grow our following by 5%.

	2023	2022	Percentage Change
Number of posts	138	101	+36%
Impressions	123,744	102,686	+20%
Engagement rate	4.7%	4.7%	
Followers Change	17,203	17,128	+0.3%

TikTok Summary





TikTok is a social media platform for creating, sharing and
discovering short videos. The app has around 1 billion monthly
active users and is used mainly by a younger audience and is an
outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy,
and lip-syncing, and allows users to create videos and share them
across a community.

We launched our new TikTok account in 2021 but the platform wasn't used until June 2022. Our organic TikTok activity slowly continues to improve its following and we will continue to promote the English Riviera using user generated content to inspire prospective visitors.

Our objectives for 2024 is to increase our engagement by 3% and grow our following by 5%.

	2023	2022	Percentage Change
Number of posts	53	28	+89%
Reach	95,625	8,883	+976%
Engagements	2,242	217	+933%
Followers Change	557	105	+430%

Social Benchmarking

We currently benchmark the English Riviera against other leading Destination Management Organisations (DMO's) which allows us to analyse their social media performance and identify opportunities for the English Riviera BID Company to grow its audience.

Facebook

We have performed well and have achieved the number 2 spot for highest competitor average engagement of 74,040, achieving 60,164 Reactions, 6,048 comments and 7,808 shares. (See graph)

Instagram

Many of our DMO competitors have a well-established Instagram profiles that have been active for much longer than ours. This means that due to their large following (E.g @ilovecornwalluk 129,000 followers vs @myriviera 6,979 followers), they will naturally perform better across all areas.

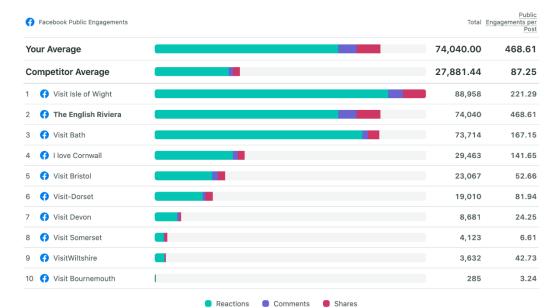
Twitter

Our DMO competitor's Twitter profiles have a much larger following which means they naturally perform better across all areas.















Eight paid digital campaigns were undertaken throughout 2023, resulting in **23 million impressions and over 250,000 clicks at a cost of £56,000.** These were shown across a variety of platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest and TikTok. The "at a glance" results of the campaigns are below.

	Campaign budget (inc agency fees)	Actual Ad Spend (minus agency fees)	Clicks	Impressions	CPC	CTR	Notes
Spring Walking Festival	£5,000	£3,620	9,295	742,314	£0.33	1.25%	48+ bookings
Ready for the Riviera	£10,000	£7,400	39,890	4,303,917	£0.23	0.93%	
Web Boost	£10,000	£8,500	106,224	11,109,443	£0.08	6.85%	
Couples	£10,000	£6,810	28,392	2,313,162	£0.31	5.96%	
Last-minute deals	£10,000	£6,810	15,176	1,644,409	£0.48	7.84%	
Autumn Walking Festival	£3,000	£2,460	10,075	895,656	£0.36	2.08%	17 bookings
England's Seafood FEAST	£5,000	£3,000	19,268	823,335	£0.32	5%	
Bay of Lights	£3,000	£2,220	22,160	1,313,523	£0.09	1.69%	
TOTAL	£56,000	£40,820	250,480	23,145,759	£0.30	3.95%	

Out Of Home Campaigns





Two waves of Out Of Home (OOH) Campaigns using large format digital panels were undertaken in 2023.

The first were displayed from 27th Feb – 12th March in 32 sites in Birmingham, Coventry, Nottingham, Cardiff and Leeds at a cost of £75,000. The adverts were played 512,783 times with an estimated 7.5 million people seeing these ads.

The second wave was from 27th March – 9th April in 8 digital screens in Birmingham at a cost of £10,000. These ads were played 150,850 times with an estimated 3 million people seeing the ads.

From these two campaigns, 10.5 million impressions were achieved to potential visitors to the English Riviera.



Photography





2023 saw us undertake an extensive refresh of our coastal and seafront image bank including re-shoots in Babbacombe, Torquay, Brixham and around the South West Coast Path including many of our lesser known coves and beaches.

We have continued working relationships with partners in The Bay including the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust and the English Riviera Attractions Partnership allowing us to address and fill more niche gaps within the image library including a selection of seasonal holiday and activity shots.

We have continued to support levy payers and media associates with image library queries and searches delivering a wide range of still and video assets for use by national and international publications both in print and online.lesser-known

	2022	2023	Comparison
Image library signups	68	58	-10
Image library photo downloads	3355	4465	+1110









Visitor Information Centre



The English Riviera Visitor Information Centre on Torquay Harbourside had over 37,000 people visiting the centre.

We were open 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Saturday & 10am to 2pm on Sunday between Easter to October, the hours reduced to 9.30am to 1.30pm from November.

We increased our retail sales by offering a lovely range of Agatha Christie gifts.

We employed 1 full time Visitor Information Manager who was supported by 4 part-time members of staff.

We won Gold at the Devon Tourism Awards for Visitor Information Service of the Year 2023/24.

	2023	2022	Comparison to last year
No of visitors	37,089	36,897	+0.5%
No of phone calls	3,529	4,413	-4%
No of emails	3,259	3,380	-4%
Income	£34,663	£29,009	+19%
Net Income	£11,048	£9,771	+13%

Top FAQ's for 2023:

- 1. Attraction opening days/times inc. Greenway House, AC Exhibition (Torquay Museum) & Potent Plants (Torre Abbey
- 2. Public transport information.
- 3. Firework displays and Bay of Lights.
- 4. Events, ER Air Show, ACF, ESFF.
- 5. Directions to toilets, attractions, town centre etc. 20

Visitor Guides





- New Things to Do Directory in a DL-sized format, to match the Food & Drink and also the Accommodation Directories. It has 160 listings for attractions, entertainment, activities on land and sea, transport, beaches, parks and more. Over 100 BID levy-paying businesses are included. Also included are Annual Events and featured items including Dog Friendly, Agatha Christie, Year-Round and more.
- Spring/Summer 2023 Visitor Guide A4 guide produced in partnership with Clear Sky Publishing, in response to a demand from levy payers for a 'coffee-table' publication. Showcases the area with features, seasonal inspiration and What's On listings. Distributed free of charge to local levy paying businesses and available from the Visitor Information Centre. Also online as a digital flipbook.
- Group Operators Directory updated with insert New Hotels. A new A5 flyer, featuring the newly built hotels on Paignton seafront, was produced to insert into existing copies of the Group Operators Directory. The Directory was produced to help attract, and rebuild, the Groups market post-Covid. The Groups Directory is aimed at group operators and tour organisers, providing helpful information and listings for 70+ hotels and attractions that welcome groups. A valuable marketing tool, particularly at exhibitions, the Directory has been distributed at the British Travel and Tourism Show 2023 and at DATA events and showcases. Also available online as a digital flipbook.
- Existing guides Accommodation Directory and Food & Drink Directory these continued in use throughout the year. All are available to visitors from the VIC or online. The Accommodation Directories were also sent by post (see figures opposite). Directories are free to levy payers on request or can be collected from the VIC. In December 2023, the team began work on producing updates for reprints due early 2024.
- The English Riviera Map (A2) was updated and reprinted in 2023.

	2023
Number of Accommodation Directory requests	691
Number of Travel Directories online downloads	428
Number of Visitor Guide page views	4500+

Groups & Business Marketing



Based on levy-payers' feedback, a key target of ERBID marketing is to attract the Groups market. Some highlights of ERBID's work in this area in 2023 are:

- Cruise English Riviera 2023 has seen a revival in the English Riviera's cruise liner business and the English Riviera has welcomed three individual cruise ships this year. ERBID, in partnership with Tor Bay Harbour Authority, recruited Cruise Business Development Advisor Glen Gardner to help review our local cruise strategy, working particularly on an improved welcome for cruise guests and enhancing the local excursion programme. Glen attended SeaTrade Cruise Europe to represent and promote the new Cruise English Riviera brand and has secured new cruise ship business.
- British Travel and Tourism Exhibition, NEC Birmingham ERBID partnered with DATA (Devon Association of Tourist Attractions) on a prominent stand, with the team meeting many group operators and tour organisers across the two day event.
- Riviera Connect EXPO a new joint venture, uniting the annual exhibitions of ERBID and the Torbay Business Forum. Business, hospitality and tourism came together for an expo day with over 200 exhibitors, a packed schedule of talks and workshops and exciting networking opportunities for English Riviera businesses and organisations.
- ERBID also had exhibition spaces at events including ERA Attractions Showcase, DATA Fam Attractions Showcases, Bridge Group Exhibition,
 Coach Tourism Association Showcase.
- ERBID's publication the English Riviera Group Organisers Directory was distributed on our behalf via Steve Reed Tourism at exhibitions and showcases around the country.
- Advertising ERBID invested in advertising opportunities aimed at Group organisers. These included:
 - Bespoke Guide to Devon for UK Groups 2023/24
 - England's Coast promotional brochure produced by National Coastal Tourism Academy specifically for the Dutch Vakantiebeurs consumer travel show (Jan 2024)
- Visit Devon Guide 2023
- DATA Guide 2023

Levy Payer Communications



Email Communications

- Monthly e-newsletters
- Monthly 'How's Business' survey requests and reminders
- Forthcoming event information with marketing materials and how to get involved: Agatha Christie Festival,
 Walking Festival, Seafood FEAST, Bay of Lights
- Updates on what's happening in the bay and issues affecting levy payers, including local funding and climate initiatives
- Tourism and hospitality Industry updates

BID Levy Letters and Emails

- Postal letters and emails were sent regarding outstanding BID levy payments which resulted in issues being rectified and increased debt collection levels.
- Postal letters and emails regarding opportunities to become a Voluntary Contributor to the BID