

Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Place Marketing and Strategic Tourism

Tourism Campaigns

Uncover the Story

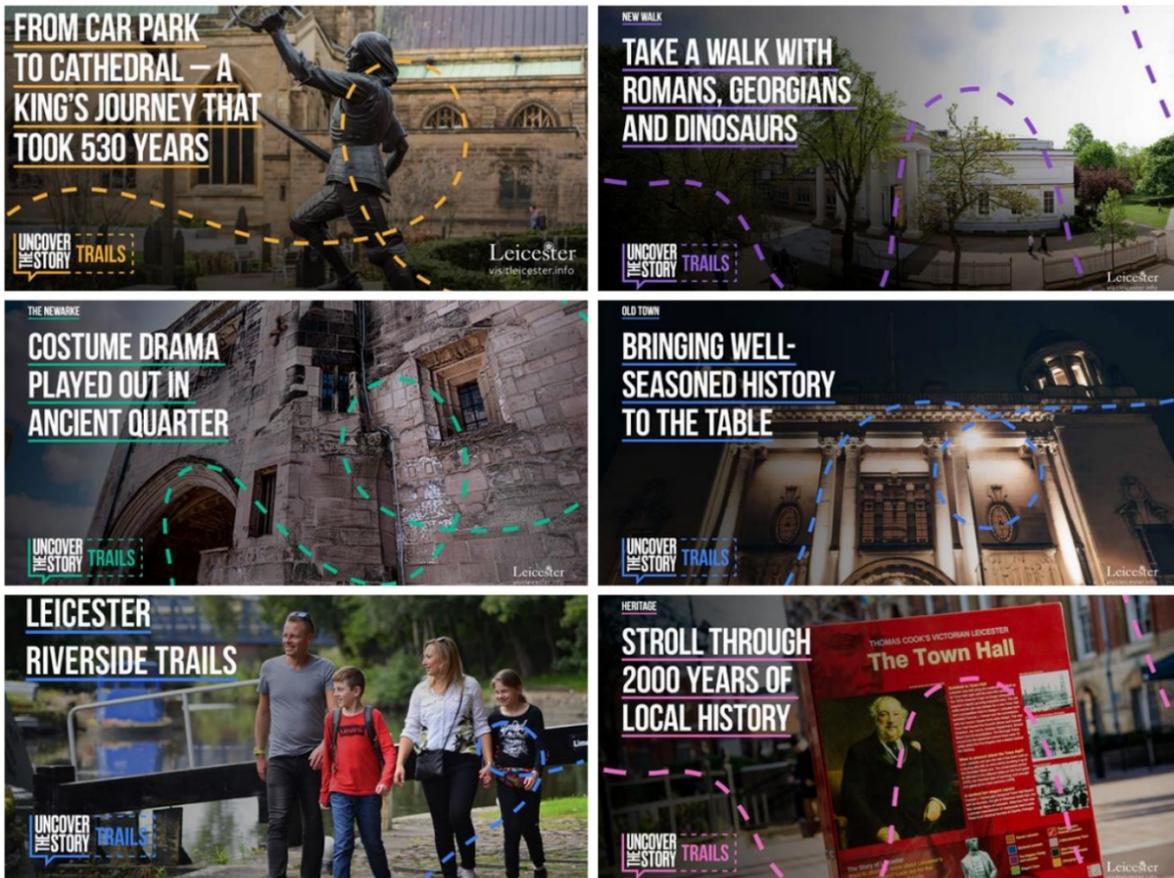
The Uncover the Story tourism marketing campaign remains an important way to create a strong, distinctive identity for Leicester and Leicestershire as a visitor destination and bring cohesion to the visitor offer.

Uncover The Story continues to be a key part of the city marketing strategy, and posts highlighting the campaign have been shared widely and regularly on social media and regularly within the fortnightly newsletter.

The Cultural Quarter Guide and Leicester Leading strategy took on the look and feel for Uncover The Story, making the brand identity for city marketing dovetail with the Uncover The Story campaign, further highlighting Visit Leicester campaigns are becoming integrated into the wider city marketing activity. World Tourism Day in September focused on resharing our major campaign videos and highlighting the Uncover The Story campaign.

Themed trails promote over 70 different local attractions, including hospitality businesses. Find out more at www.visitleicester.info/ideas-and-inspiration/trails. The trails were designed to encourage exploration of the wider area, celebrate lesser-known attractions, and increase visitor dwell time in the city. Themes include:

- KRIII Trail
- New Walk Trail
- Newarke Trail
- Old Town Restaurants Trail
- Riverside Trails
- Heritage Trail



Taste the Place

The campaign launched in March 2023 to promote the area's food and drink reputation by highlighting food and drink to consume, buy, see in production, and experience through events and activities. The campaign is divided into four themes:

- **A Taste of England:** Explores traditional food and drink from the county, including pies, cheese, ales, and ciders, as well as pubs and venues for afternoon tea.
- **Food for Thought:** Explores fighting climate change from the kitchen by looking at environmentally sustainable food consumption that reduces food miles and promotes a farm-to-fork approach.
- **The Home of Veganism:** Looks at the origins of veganism in Leicester and the founding of the Vegan Society in the city.
- **The World on a Plate:** Explores Leicester and Leicestershire's world food offer and the communities that make it.

As the Taste the Place campaign entered its second year, the place marketing team were able to work to expand the partnerships with local businesses, food influencers and chefs.

A partnership with About Leicester/About Festivals and Humongous Hospitality led to the first ever Leicester Food Festival, a major summer event held in Abbey Park on 10-11 August 2024, which attracted thousands of people over two days and will be returning in 2025. The Visit Leicester team were key partners in the planning and organisation of the event and Taste the Place banners, bunting and imagery were displayed prominently on the site and in the marketing.

Visit Leicester also supported the campaign by Pukaar Media to bring the title of England's Curry Capital back to Leicester. Support came with the campaign being run under the banner of Taste

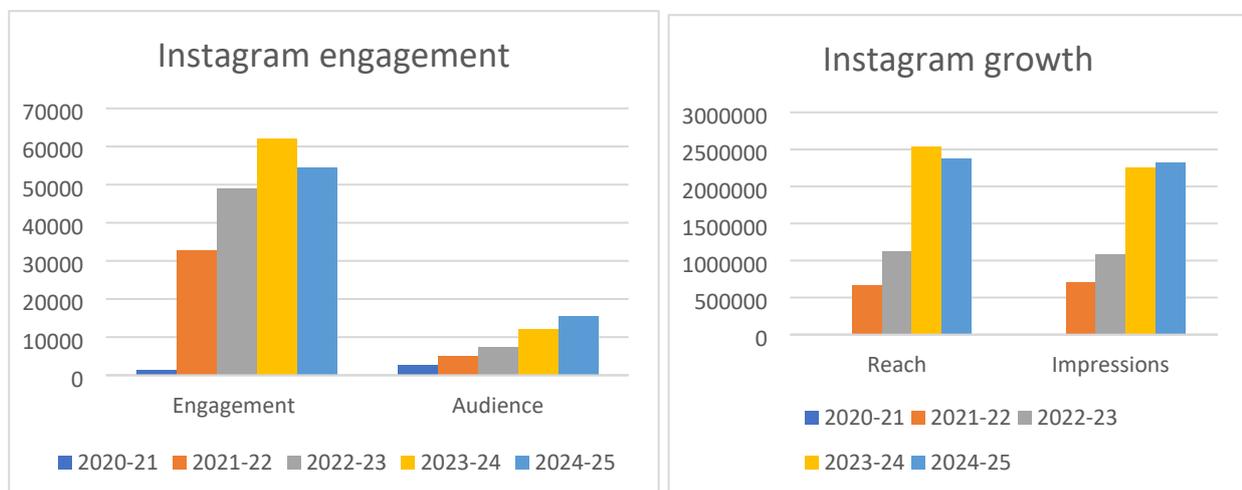
the Place and World on a Plate, with online voting supported alongside PR and online promotion. The team spoke at the announcement of the winner and were presented with the official Curry Capital certificate.

This partnership with Pukaar extended to the Leicestershire Curry Awards in September, with Taste the Place and England Curry Capital being centre stage, and through into the launch of National Thali Week in January, with coverage online and in the media, including a feature on New Delhi TV.

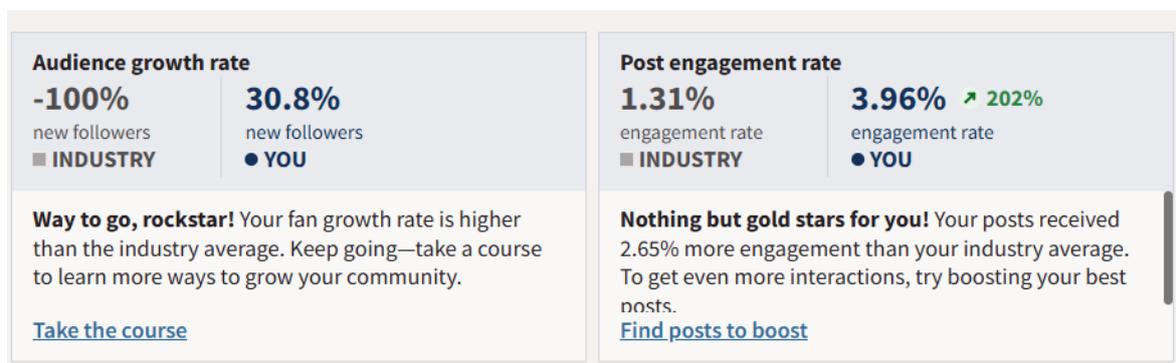
The Taste the Place campaign is an excellent example of the Place Marketing Team working with multiple delivery and media partners across the city of Leicester to build on the profile of the city's food and drink offer celebrating the distinctive city identity, aligned to a wider sub-regional campaign for maximum national impact.

Social Media

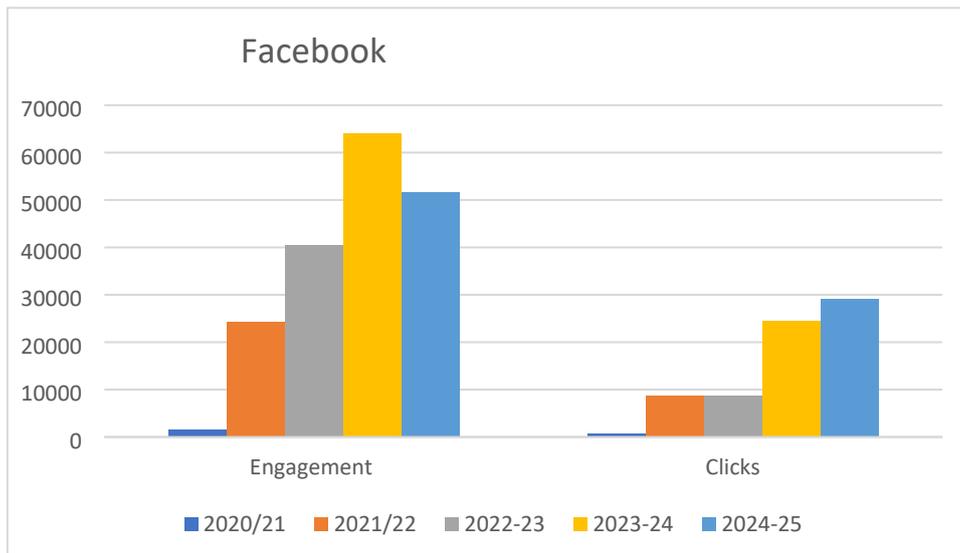
Instagram followers have grown by 31.4% to 15,448, with a reach of 2.6 million users (up by 2.6% from last year).



Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester's Instagram 202% above the industry average post engagement rate. 2024/25 figures are based on budget year reporting.



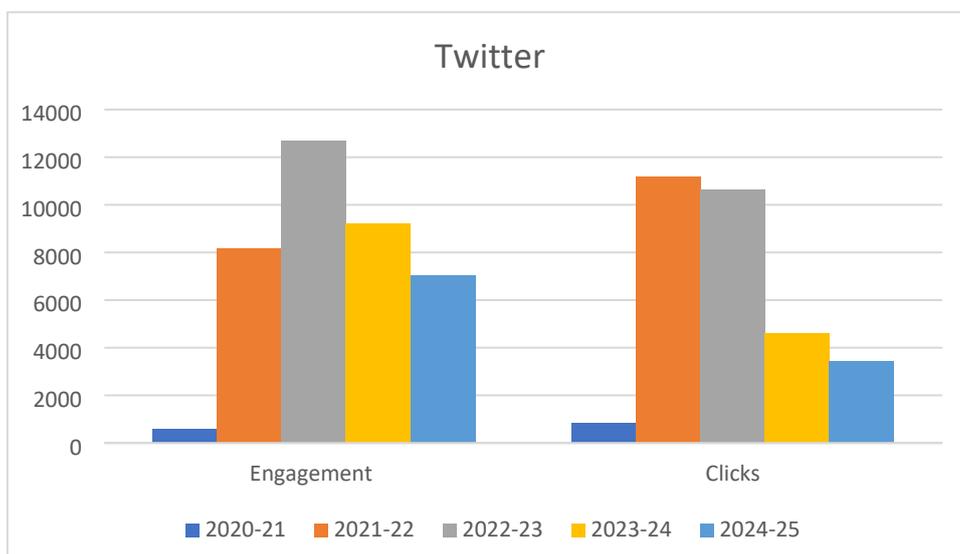
Facebook likes and reactions are keeping pace with last year's record high (with one month of measurement to go). Facebook has proved to be an excellent way to drive customers to the website, with traffic increasing by 19% to 29,179 inbound clicks (again, with a month of measurement to go). 2024/25 figures are based on budget year reporting.

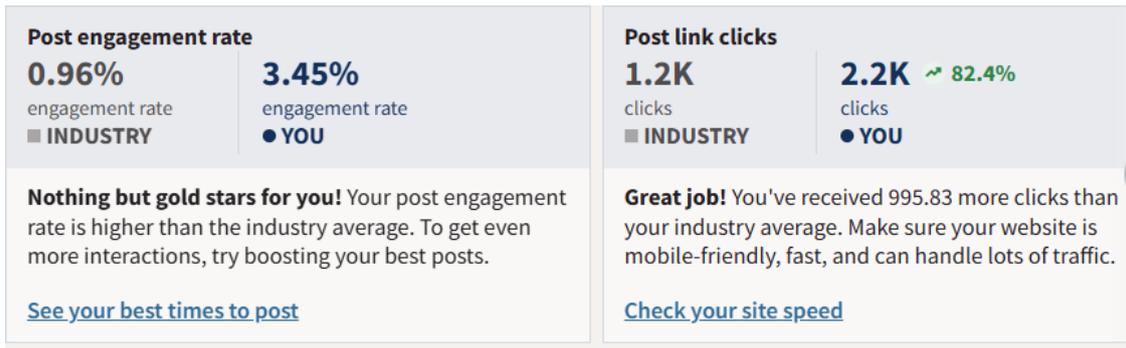


Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester's Facebook page far above the industry average, on growth rate, Page impressions and Post engagement rate. The Facebook page has maintained its audience growth rate of 11% while the sector as a whole has declined by 100%. Visit Leicester has also increased its post engagement rate from 3% to 3.97%, again outstripping the sector increase.



X (Twitter) continues to decrease in importance as changes to the algorithm and a focus on paid-for accounts affect engagement and click rate. While it remains an important part of Visit Leicester promotional channels (with an audience over 18,000), it is decreasing in effectiveness at reaching new people. The post engagement rate is still above the industry average and link clicks are 82% above the industry average but have fallen as a whole.





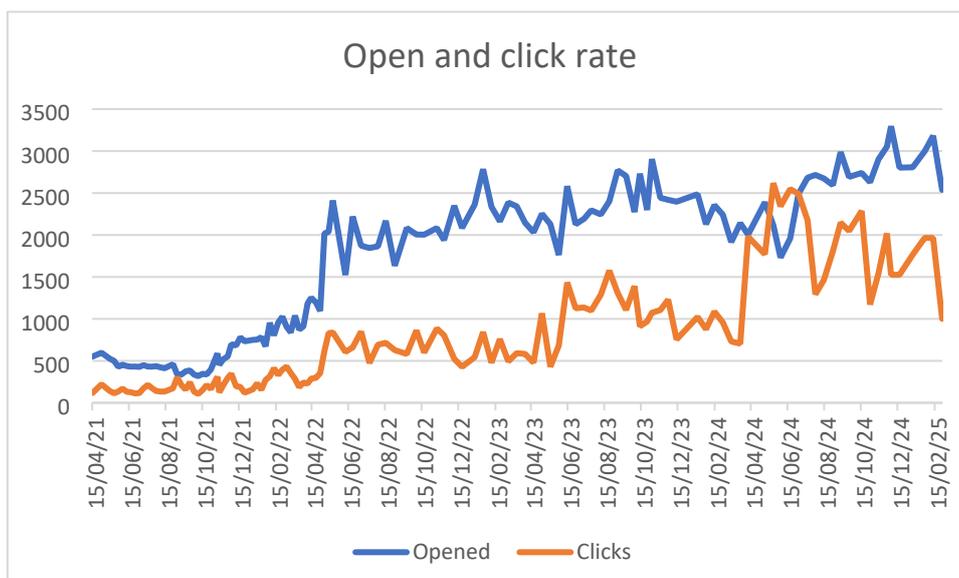
Social media engagement with influencers

The Place Marketing Team works in partnership with a range of influencers on Instagram, particularly using the "partner posts" feature, which displays posts on both the Visit Leicester and the influencer's feed. This brings additional people to the Visit Leicester Instagram page, as they "discover" the page through the influencer's Instagram.

Since partnering with food and lifestyle bloggers, the Visit Leicester Instagram has seen a marked increase in both engagement rate and new followers, demonstrating a "long tail" effect that benefits its Instagram presence. New partnerships with large accounts such as About Leicester (a key promotional partner for Leicester Food Festival) mean an even wider reach. The team will continue to engage new influencers and partners to benefit organic social reach and engagement.

Visit Leicester Newsletter

The Visit Leicester newsletter remains a valuable tool for engaging with and communicating to a long-term interested audience. To maintain a high engagement rate, changes have been implemented that have resulted in excellent open and click rates, well above the industry standard of 20% and 2%, respectively.



Visit Leicester Website

The Visit Leicester website has continued to expand, with a focus on adding updated content, as well as optimising existing content to improve search engine performance. Over the past year, the site was visited by 830,070 users and viewed 2,210,264 times. Over 75% of the Visit Leicester website users are on mobile or tablet devices. This ever-increasing figure has meant that new campaigns and webpages have been optimised for these devices, such as reduction of image size, formatting alterations and regular testing of pages on those devices.

Due to changes in tracking and privacy settings, it is becoming increasingly difficult to track the location of users, and most captured user data has no information on where they are from. However, there are indicators of which city regions some of the users originate. Excluding Leicester & Leicestershire, the top 10 comprises of:

- London
- Birmingham
- Loughborough
- Wolverhampton
- Milton Keynes
- Norwich
- Sheffield
- Coventry
- Cardiff
- Edinburgh

Visit Leicester Website - Campaign Performance

Each campaign on the Visit Leicester website has several landing pages which display campaign content such as videos, introductory text, and links to discover more. The rest of the campaign content on the website comprises of venue listing pages, with information, copy and imagery specific to each business involved in the campaign.

Over the past year, views to the campaign pages are as follows:

- Uncover the Story – 172,361 views
- Taste the Place – 257,217 views
- Fitcation - 28,498 views

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status

As part of the new portfolio of nationally supported, strategic, and high-performing LVEPs, Visit Leicester has agreed an Action Plan with Visit England to build a shared ambition for growth in Leicester and Leicestershire.

To ensure well-informed decision making, a robust governance will oversee the LVEP including the LVEP Advisory Board (formally Tourism Advisory Board) which will assume accountability for the LVEP and the agreed actions in the plan. The Place Marketing Coordination Group (PMCG) includes senior representatives from upper tier local authorities, district council representation, Business Skills Partnership and LVEP Advisory Board Chair. The structure will prioritise the inclusion of diverse viewpoints, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the local tourism landscape. Quarterly meetings take place with the PMCG and LVEP Advisory Board to track LVEP progress towards achieving its agreed objectives.

The overarching priorities for 2024/5 are the following:

- To continue delivering the Tourism Growth Plan 2020–25 and Tourism Action Plan 2020-25, including the continuation and delivery of the three key destination campaigns: Uncover the Story, Fitcation and Taste the Place

- Commence engagement on the Destination Management Plan (2026 –2030) and refreshed Tourism Action Plan 2026-30, to launch in January 2026
- To leverage annual tourism data and insights to refine priorities within the plans
- Implement city sustainable and regenerative tourism initiatives in preparation for a dedicated section for both sustainability and accessibility on the website, highlighting innovation and best practice amongst local tourism businesses
- Implement an accessible online business support directory and skills information hub for tourism businesses
- Establish and deliver a commercial strategy, providing paid consultancy services to tourism businesses
- Bid for tourism funding in partnership with district tourism leads, exploring opportunities linked to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Sustainable Tourism

As a key priority area, a sustainable and regenerative tourism action plan will be developed with a focus on business support and a recognition of best practice locally. Businesses will be encouraged to participate in a sustainable tourism accreditation programme and case studies will be featured on the Visit Leicester site. By highlighting businesses that are leading the way in sustainable practices, a dedicated website feature will inspire visitors to make environmentally conscious choices during their visits. It will also be a way of recognising and celebrating local businesses that are championing sustainability within the tourism industry.

There is both a Business to Consumer and a Business-to-Business focus in the campaign, and messaging will be aimed at both. In building awareness and storytelling, Visit Leicester hope to encourage more businesses around the city to gain accreditation and become part of the wider campaign.



Group Travel

The Group Travel Guide for Leicester and Leicestershire was refreshed in 2024 ready to take to the Group Leisure and Travel Show in Milton Keynes. The guide features over 50 unique bookable group experiences, 13 of which are located in the city and the majority of accommodation offers are in the city, with a choice of 7 different options.



Visit Leicester partnered with private sector group travel attractions (Including Curve, KRIII Visitor Centre) and districts to take a large stand to the Group Leisure & Travel Show in Milton Keynes. The partner contributions to the booking costs enabled Visit Leicester to be represented at zero cost to the city council and we made a small surplus of £439.00. We added another 80 new contacts to our database. Attendance at group travel shows since 2022 has enabled us to build a database of over 600 group travel organisers to which we send quarterly newsletters. The audience is engaged and over the last year the newsletter has achieved an average open rate of 24.4% and click rate 5.91%.

We also worked with Group Travel World to send copies of the guide to the Excursions Group Travel Show in London where KRIII Visitor Centre and Belvoir Castle booked a stand. The Place Marketing Manager attended the show as a delegate and confirmed that all 50 guides were given out and also spoke to group travel organisations about bringing some group travel fam trips to Leicester.

Attendance at events has led to group travel bookings as detailed in this scrutiny report summary. Visit Leicester is also working with the Coach Tours Association who are interested to bring a large group travel event to Leicester in February 2027.



For the third year running Visit Leicester (Leicester and Leicestershire) has been shortlisted as a finalist for the Group Leisure and Travel Awards in the category Best UK Destination for Groups, which will be announced in June 2025.

Visit Leicester recently shared some group travel itinerary ideas with group travel press and organisations. This has been picked up by:

- Blue Print Guide to Group Travel [Bring your group to the birthplace of UK tourism](#)
- AGTO Group Travel Newsletter
- Group Leisure and Travel Magazine
- Group Travel World

It has also resulted in a request to run a competition with the Group Leisure and Travel magazine readers to win a visit to Leicester.

