

A Guide to Organising Meetings and Events in Guernsey

The aim of this guide is to assist conference and event organisers seeking to hold an event in the Channel Islands of Guernsey, Alderney, Sark or Herm (the Islands of Guernsey).

Guernsey is not part of the United Kingdom or the EU and as such has its own unique character and environment. We believe it is important to have some local knowledge of the islands when planning the event and would recommend using local event organisers, whenever possible, or on-island contacts within your commerce, social group or charitable organisation.

VisitGuernsey is pleased to provide as much assistance as possible in familiarising organisers with the Island and providing contacts on-island to provide venue and logistical advice, but we regret that we cannot act as event organisers.

Location

Guernsey is located in the Bay of St Malo. English speaking and with its own currency, based on the English pound, it is an ideal venue for those seeking to “get away” but still seeking a British atmosphere. Ideally suited for small conferences whilst larger events can be accommodated according to the time of year and the style of event being sought.

The islands have a long history of tourism with a range of hotel accommodation and over seventy restaurants. The Beau Sejour Leisure and Conference centre is the islands’ largest venue and can host as many as 800 delegates and locals, in its largest hall. There are several smaller halls at Beau Sejour and in other locations around the island.

Guernsey has a population of 60,000 living on its 24 square miles. No venue is ever a long way from anywhere on the island. The island has retained a pleasant, friendly and safe feel. Thanks to its vibrant economy the island is also fully up to speed with modern technology. As such, any type of presentation can be accommodated in most venues. Above all your delegates should be guaranteed a pleasant visit and we like to think that they will leave Guernsey wanting to come back.

Your meeting or event in the Islands of Guernsey

Travel

With flights from Gatwick taking as little as 35 minutes to get to the island, Guernsey is easily accessible from many places in the UK & Ireland. Other airports offering regular flights into the island include Southampton, Exeter, Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham, Stansted, Bournemouth, Isle Of Man, Plymouth and East Midlands. Getting to and from the island by Air or Sea is easy, with regular flights from a

number of UK airports and a fast ferry service from Weymouth and Poole on the South Coast. You can bring your car with you by sea and the trip takes a little over two hours.

The main operators for transport are:

Air:

Aurigny Air Services --- **www.aurigny.com**

Flybe --- **www.flybe.com**

Blue Islands --- **www.blueislands.com**

Air Southwest --- **www.airsouthwest.com**

Sea:

Condor Ferries --- **www.condorferries.com**

Manche Iles Express --- **www.manche-isles-express.com**

Although the island is small by comparison to most locations, transport is still essential to get delegates to and from their accommodation, venue and any external locations/excursions you might wish to incorporate in the conference schedule.

On Island

There are on-island coach companies and taxi firms, some of the later have larger vehicles for moving groups of delegates. Please refer to the contact section

A good map of Guernsey is essential, both for organisers and for delegates, if they are required to travel around. The island has retained many French road names and road signs are noticeable by their absence so a clear map is vital.

It is always worth checking with the Traffic Division of the local Environment Committee on 717000 (or visit their web site on **www.iris.gov.gg**) to establish if there are any road closures due at the time of the event to ensure the directions you give are the best for the time of your event.

Inter Island

One of the potential excursions for delegates during a conference is a visit to one of our sister islands. Between Easter and the end of October there are frequent ferries to Herm and Sark and if you want to go slightly further, year round regular flights or the ferry to Alderney during the summer season.

Day trips are also possible to our close neighbour, Jersey, and even to France by air to Dinard or by sea to St Malo. However if you offer the French option to your delegates don't forget to remind them to bring a current passport.

For small numbers you could also charter a boat and either just enjoy an hour or two out at sea or for those who like some sport try their hand at fishing for some of the local salt water species readily available in Guernsey restaurants.

A boat trip or short flight can make for a memorable conference, which your delegates will never forget. Contact the trade and media team for further information

Venues

For small conferences of less than 100 delegates, there are many options for Conference organisers. Several of the local hotels have large rooms that can accommodate that number of delegates and there are other options such as the Beau Sejour Leisure and Conference Centre, St James Concert and Assembly Hall, The Guernsey Performing Arts Centre, Les Cotils Christian Centre as well as more exotic locations such as the Candie Museum Lecture Theatre, Castle Cornet and Sausmarez Manor.

Several locations also provide a full catering service but if not, a selection of outside caterers is on hand ready to cater for every size and type of event.

If your delegates are driving their own cars, car parking can be an issue at some venues, so that is also something to consider as is the local Health and Safety and Building Control regulations which will often dictate the number of people that can be accommodated and how the hall is laid out.

A quick call to the VisitGuernsey office or a discussion with your event organiser can soon establish the right environment to meet your needs.

As always you should consider disabled access to the venue of choice as some such as Castle Cornet, may be more difficult for wheelchair delegates than others such as Beau Sejour, with its modern access arrangements.

For further information on venues please refer to the Venues section.

Audio Visual Support

Many venues will have their own equipment for simple presentations using PowerPoint, screens, microphones and podiums, but for anything out of the ordinary or for a more controlled presentation we do have equipment suppliers and event organisers who can provide anything from a small mixing deck for sound, to a screen used for the 2005 Labour Party Conference. Technology is also available to link into Internet presentations from around the globe.

Even High Tech requirements for the Media or Games industries can be provided as the island has an excellent infrastructure in technology and high bandwidth capabilities to support on line activities.

Our main Telecommunications supplier is Cable and Wireless and along with Wave Telecom and Newtel they have the ability to provide all types of communication support for your event.

General Support

The island boasts the full range of reputable service providers you would expect in any large town in the UK. They can also be closer to hand and more accessible than in other locations.

So if you forget your laptop, need stationery, printing or anything else you may have forgotten to bring with you then you should find what you need close to hand in the local yellow pages.

Hotels

Most conferences will require their delegates to stay at or close to the main venue for the event.

For small conferences it may be possible to achieve a venue/hotel combination in the same building but inevitably there will be times of year or sizes of event where several hotels might be needed for the same Conference.

Hotels and guest houses vary in size, age and quality in the same way as any other tourism location, so again it is essential to have on-island support when planning and choosing the right accommodation for your delegates and your budget.

A full list of hotels on the island is available from the VisitGuernsey offices.

It is worth noting that not all hotels are open all year round and many like to retain rooms for regular visitors, so it is worth checking well in advance as to the availability of a particular hotel before committing yourself to print and informing your delegates of your preferred location.

Some hotels will provide travel packages for your delegates, inclusive of flights, room costs and transfers.

There is also a range of self-catering accommodation available, which may be of particular interest to delegates seeking to bring their families with them for an extended stay.

Conference Organisers

There are companies that will offer to organise your Conference for you, or any part that you need help with.

Local Participation

There are many ways you can incorporate Guernsey into your event and add value for the delegates.

Guernsey is host to a wide range of businesses with global expertise and, if it is appropriate to your delegates a speaker from a local business could be added to your itinerary to explain more about the island and what made them choose to establish their business on Guernsey.

Business tours could be arranged, as well as sight seeing tours and off island excursions as mentioned earlier. These excursions could also be tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of your delegates.

For example Guernsey is an excellent location to establish an International HQ for a franchise operation. With many well-known businesses in that field already here, a speaker from that industry could be arranged to explain what makes Guernsey such a good place for that type of business.

Delegates might also be interested in Finance and what role Guernsey can play in the fields of corporate and personal financial planning – again an appropriate speaker might be found to talk on those topics.

Also visits to Horticulture, such as the world-renowned Guernsey Clematis nursery or to a working farm with the famous Guernsey Cattle could also be included on a tour.

Guernsey also has companies which can create team building exercises for delegates and arrange a wide range of recreational and leisure activities.

Conclusion

Guernsey offers diverse number of opportunities as the location of choice for your meeting, event or incentive programme.

The trade and media team can help with contacts and familiarisation with Guernsey and would welcome meeting with your event planners, on-island, and introducing them to anyone they need to meet to make the event a success.

In order to achieve a smooth run up and successful event a checklist has been provided to assist you with your event planning. Please contact the trade and media team to receive specific information, advice or contacts tailor made to your enquiry.

Good luck and we look forward to welcoming your delegates to the islands soon.