

eden project

A summer holiday in Cornwall is never complete without walking in the humid conditions of the Rain Forest or the beautiful Mediterranean Gardens contained within the Biomes of the Eden Project.

Typically on a non-beach day, visitors flock to the disused quarry at Par, sometimes a family trip, often a coach party or perhaps bookings made through hotels or B&B establishments. With around 1m annual visitors, Eden Project is Cornwall's most popular attraction particularly with today's ecological awareness.

Of course, the Covid-19 outbreak has changed everything, and as Eden plans for a July 4th reopening, it was clear that many operational changes would be needed to allow them to reopen whilst maintaining social distancing protocols.

In the past more than 60% of visitors would typically purchase tickets on the day of their visit, simply arriving at the car parks and walking down to the Visitor Centre. However, Eden was already familiar with advanced booking technology due to their hugely popular Eden Sessions. The concert series would typically sell out within hours of going on sale, using the Green 4 online booking system, with their queuing technology, electronic tickets and most importantly their ability to manage capacity at concerts limited to 6,000 people.

In conjunction with the changes made to the booking process itself, visitor information relating to safety and wellbeing has been added to the website, and also to their automated pre-visit communications. More than ever the capture of customer data and preferences has become essential to ensuring a happy and safe visit this summer.

Undoubtedly, the pent up demand for 'staycation' holidays in the UK will ensure demand for tickets is high, but visitors can rest assured that Eden Project have pulled out all the stops in their preparations and consideration of visitors and staff welfare.

GREEN 4

GREEN 4 UPDATES TO ENABLE A SAFE REOPENING AT EDEN PROJECT

Prior to reopening, Eden Project have focused on planning and agreeing "tweaks" Green 4 could make to their software and processes in order to accommodate a wider use of time scheduled visits and capacity management.

ONLINE TICKET BOOKINGS

A simplified online booking process has been agreed, using Widget technology to embed ticket sales within Eden's home page, thus simplifying navigation across the website.

Most importantly, Eden's ticket selling process has been amended to allow time scheduled visits only, allowing Eden to control the capacity and visitor flow within the venue. This will not only apply to the public website but also Trade portals aimed at coach parties and hotel bookings. These configurable steps within the Green 4 system will not only allow Eden to manage visitor volumes, but will remove pressure from the call centre and staff at the venue.

ONLINE RESTAURANT BOOKINGS

Although the issue of scheduling capacity within the Biomes has been resolved, concern remained over queuing at the hugely popular restaurant. Again, the Green 4 software will come to Eden's aid, allowing the visitor not only to book their visit online and receive an eTicket for entry, but also as an option during the same booking journey, will offer the ability to add a purchase of food and drink, including a simple Q&A section that captures any dietary requirements. By offering a limited range of 'picnics', Eden Project will be able to avoid queues in the restaurant and simply deliver food outdoors at a prearranged time and collection point.

SELF SCAN ENTRY

The planning has been thorough, but the remaining bottleneck seemed to be on entry and that the "meet and greet" scanning of tickets would still create, a (albeit short) queue. The solution was found in equipment purchased but not used for another project. Apple iPad's have been modified with Bar Code Scanning Jackets and mounting stands to allow visitors to self-scan their QR coded tickets on entry, alleviating a certain pinch point.

