

Mid Wales Regional Forum

5 July 2019

Hafod a Hendre, Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells

10.00am -1.00pm

Present:

Name		Representing
Steve Hughson (Chair)	SH	Royal Welsh Agricultural Society
Wendy Abel	WA	Mid North Powys Tourism Network
Val Hawkins	VH	Mid Wales Tourism
Rowland Rees-Evans	RRE	Mid Wales Tourism
Arwyn Watkins OBE	AW	Cambrian Training Company
Aled Davies	AD	Natural Resources Wales
Carol Williams	CW	Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
Ann Eleri Thomas	AET	Ceredigion CC / Ceredigion Destination Management Partnership
Dafydd Wyn Morgan	DwM	Cambrian Mountains Initiative
Bev Dimmock	BD	RSPB
Melissa Knight	MK	Welsh Water
Mike Booth	MB	Welsh Water
Julie Lewis	JL	Powys County Council
Lisa Griffiths	LG	Powys County Council
Tom Yeo		Powys County Council
Greg Thomas	GT	Powys County Council
Dylan Roberts	DR	Salop Leisure
Eileen Kinsman	EK	Centre For Alternative Technology
		Welsh Government
Rob Holt	RH	Deputy Director Tourism Development & Major Events
Gerwyn Evans	GE	Head of Tourism Development, VW
Peter Francombe	PF	Tourism Industry Support Manager, VW
Gwawr Price	GP/WW M	Wales Way Manager, VW
Helen Jones	HJ/REM	Regional Engagement Manager, VW
Jon Munro	JM	Digital Leadership Manager, VW

Apologies

Anthony Rosser	AR	BHA Wales Chair / Lake Vyrnwy
Claire Williams	CW	Cambrian Rail Partnership
Andy Rowland	AR	Eco Dyfi / Dyfi Biosphere
Aled Rees	AR	Twristiaeth Ceredigion Tourism/Cambria Tours
Gareth Price	GP	Twristiaeth Ceredigion Tourism
Llion Pughe	LIP	Best of Wales
Eirlys Lloyd	EL	Ceredigion County Council
Ann Watkin	AnnW	Head of Regional Development and Delivery Economy, Science and Transport
Lucy Von Weber	LVW	Head of Marketing, VW
Jenni Thomas	JT	Powys CC

Minutes:

<p>Welcome and opening comments – Steve Hughson</p> <p>SH welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly new members. On behalf of the Forum, he expressed thanks to VH for MWT’s leadership and development of the Regional Awards to date and looked forward to hearing her update during the course of the meeting.</p>	
<p>Forum member updates – key highlights – Steve Hughson</p> <p>SH thanked everyone who had completed the updates and emphasised their importance. He congratulated members on their activities and the many successful events that helped to showcase the region. The Chair re-iterated the importance of completing the update forms as a way of sharing good practice and updating Welsh Government/ Visit Wales.</p>	
<p>Minutes / actions from last meeting – Steve Hughson</p> <p>It was noted that AW’s title should be amended to OBE. The Minutes of the last meeting were then approved by DWM and seconded by RRE.</p> <p>Actions from Minutes - Growing Mid Wales (GMW)</p> <p>Following his letter to GMW, SH had received a reply, stating that the proposal of the Forum providing the mechanism for the tourism theme and being formally recognised as the sub-group would be considered. LG explained that the Economic Strategy Group is currently in the process of being formalised and officer posts appointed. GE emphasised the other Regional Fora’s involvement with the South West, South East and North regional growth deals and hoped that the Mid Forum would be seen as a major tourism influencer.</p>	

Attendance at Forum meetings

SH emphasised that regular attendance at Forum meetings was essential and that it was crucial for members to represent industry sectors/stakeholder organisations in order for communication systems to operate successfully. He reminded representatives that they are members to represent their sector and not their individual businesses.

The Chair presented a new TOR that had been developed and detail discussed. RRE proposed that it should be adopted by the Forum and this was seconded by DR and agreed by all. The TOR would be continually reviewed to ensure its relevance.

VH had circulated information regarding the Regional Skills Partnership tourism representation to her members but no one had responded. RRE recognised that this was a challenge and questioned whether the local authority had the remit or skillset. AW stressed the need for tourism to be represented on this group and that regional plans inform the commissioning of funding. RH agreed that engagement was crucial. SH asked how this could be taken forward and it was agreed that he would follow this up outside the meeting, if no representative was identified in the meeting. AW said that approximately 1,200 had responded to the RLSP survey across Mid and SW regions.

Action:

- Tourism representation on the RLSP to be explored further outside the meeting.

SH

Action:

- TOR to be circulated to members
- TOR to be read and clauses noted
- "Role Model" presentation to be invited to future meeting

**REM
ALL
REM**

Welsh Government update – Gerwyn Evans

Capital funding across the region had increased and there was no further capacity for the remainder of this financial year. Discussions were underway to re-launch the MSBF when possible. Two large capital schemes were also in the pipeline in Ceredigion and Powys; details would be shared when further progress had been made.

Revenue funding across Mid Wales had been utilised successfully once again this year; the award of funding process was currently underway and details of projects would be communicated as soon as possible. New options are being

explored e.g. procurement, rather than grant funding. Views would be welcomed around taking this forward.

There had been 370 pan-Wales responses to the Action Plan. Wavehill Consultancy is currently analysing the information and the Draft Action Plan would be presented at the next Forum meeting.

The First Minister plans a call for evidence around Tourism Tax, with some local authorities in discussion around this issue at the moment.

The “Years of” approach remains successful and The Wales Way continues to gather momentum.

With health and wellbeing and social tourism continuing to be a focus across all of the Welsh Government’s activities, a Youth Summit is planned to explore sustainability and future tourism trends.

Members agreed that sustainability and climate change is a major consideration for the industry and that a balance is needed. GE said that a document around this would be brought before the Forum at the next meeting.

Regarding the UK Sector Deal, RH said that a meeting is planned for the end of July to look at implications for Wales. Following this, further information would be shared at the next Forum meeting if possible. The Tourism Action Zone finance appears to be mainly available in England only, however certain areas, such as Skills, features within the deal and the Wales Skills Board Chair would be involved with the UK Skills Board.

DR raised the issue of grading, which had been discussed at the Caravan and Camping Forum. There are issues around businesses operating outside the present system, without the necessary standards. RH said that the number of graded businesses had decreased and this needed to be improved, along with an increased emphasis on business support and guidance.

Action:

- Both Ceredigion and Powys capital projects to be invited to present at future Forum meetings

REM

Presentation: Product Database - Jon Munro

Presentation can be forwarded to members on request.

JM gave Lucy Von Weber's apology for not attending the meeting as planned. There would be a full marketing update at the next Forum meeting.

JM explained the new processes around inclusion on VW's website. "Best Practice" guidelines are currently being developed and would be shared with the industry as soon as possible. VH outlined MWT's role and support available to assist businesses with these changes.

JM also highlighted the importance of everyone receiving the Industry Newsletter to receive up to date information and opportunities for involvement with new initiatives [VW Newsletter](#).

More information can also be found here <https://www.visitwales.com/working-with-us>

Current support with welsh translation is available from [Welsh in Business on](#)

Tourism Awards: Val Hawkins, Mid Wales Tourism

The website had been well received by businesses and contained all the necessary information for entering the awards. The closing date was the end of July. VH thanked AW for Cambrian Training's financial support and said that further sponsorship was still being sought. AET asked for clarity around grading criteria. VH said that only graded businesses would be eligible to go forward for the national awards. Both SH and PF thanked MWT for taking this forward on behalf of the Forum and VW and encouraged all to support and promote the Awards at every opportunity.

Presentation: Jo Starkey - Research

Presentation can be forwarded to members on request.

A presentation on June 2019 Wales Tourism Statistics was given: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSFzKVSli9k&feature=youtu.be>

JS asked members to feedback on what data they would find useful, to identify any gaps and how VW can help.

Action:

- JS's contact email address to be circulated to members:

Joanne.Starkey@gov.wales / tourismresearch@gov.wales

AW raised the matter of delivering training programmes at the appropriate time for the industry. JS will be discussing this with the RLSPs.

Presentation: Lisa Griffiths - Growing Mid Wales

Presentation can be forwarded to members on request.

LG gave a presentation on GMW, which was followed by discussion among members. EK asked when the key themes would be launched and felt that “zero carbon” was a cross cutting theme to come out of the workshops previously held in Ceredigion and Powys. LG said that this would be done as soon as possible following the bi-election in Brecon and Radnor, which was delaying the process. She emphasised that the projects needed to be ambitious and innovative and welcomed engagement from the Forum members. The Forum’s involvement would be ongoing and GT as a Forum member, would be the conduit for two-way information.

AOB

DR expressed concern around the growth in wild camping activities and felt it presented an issue for the caravan and camping sector.

DWM highlighted the six dark sky sites in the Cambrian Mountains and his current work, exploring a brand mark for Cambrian Mountains local produce.

Closing remarks

SH expressed his thanks to all the speakers and Forum members for their attendance and contributions.

Dates:

- Next Forum meeting to be held on **September 30th, 10am – 1pm, Y Talbot, Tregaron, Ceredigion**
- **Action:** Forum updates to be returned by **Friday September 13th**