

VISIT WALES
North Wales Regional Tourism Forum
February 20, 2018, Zip World, Bethesda

Present

Name		Organisation
1. Phil Scott	PS	Chair/ /DAP
2. Emma Edwards Jones	EJ	Snowdonia Active
3. Richard Jones	RJ	Flintshire CC
4. Ian Lebbon	IL	Denbighshire DMP
5. Peter McDermott	PMcD	Denbighshire CC
6. Chris Owens	CO	Destination Conwy
7. Dafydd Roberts	DR	Museums Wales
8. Sam Regan	SR	Wrexham DMP
9. Joe Bickerton	JB	Wrexham CBC
10. Deborah Wood	DW	National Trust
11. Laurence Smith	LS	Cadw
12. John Merrick	JM	Conwy CBC
13. Mike Thomas	MT	Isle of Anglesey CC
14. Anwen Jones	AJ	PEG
15. Sian Jones	SJ	Gwynedd CC
16. Jane Richardson	JR	Conwy CBC
17. Neil Rowlands	NR	
18. Gerwyn Evans	GE	Visit Wales
19. Andrew Forfar	AF	Visit Wales
20. Rob Lewis	RL	Visit Wales
21. Mari Stevens	MS	Visit Wales
22. Ceri Turner	CT	Visit Wales

Apologies

Catrin Elis		Cadw
Ashley Rogers		North Wales Business Council
Naomi Jones		Snowdonia National Park Authority
Rob Holt		Visit Wales
Jim Jones		NW Tourism

Notes

	<p>1. Welcome PS welcomed all to the meeting</p> <p>2. Minutes from last meeting & matters arising The previous minutes were agreed.</p> <p>*Presentations will be circulated on request only</p> <p>3. North Wales Growth Bid – Hospitality Hub - Jane Richardson</p>	
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JR gave an overview of the proposed tourism and hospitality hub, which will form part of the north Wales bid to be completed by the end of 2018.

The 'hub' element of the bid is being developed to answer the current skills and skills development shortage in the north Wales tourism and hospitality sector.

The 4 themes within the proposal are;

- Skills development- accreditation based apprenticeships to post graduate qualifications.
- Employment agency- including a job matching service.
- Business support- to include product innovation and mentoring service/opportunities.
- Business hub- offering commercial opportunities for businesses.

There is opportunity for partners to feed in to this bid to ensure it is fit for the needs of learners and businesses in the region. There is also opportunity for private sector businesses to become delivery partners.

Action: Forum members to disseminate info through DMPs/networks.

Action: Partners to engage with JR to inform the bid and identify delivery partners.

4. Research – ‘ Measuring our Success’ - Rob Lewis

RL presented the most recent results (Jan-Sept 2017) from the main tourism surveys. All statistics are available through RL.

There was a discussion around whether WG uses the right indicators to measure success. Although overall results for Wales show a slight decline in spend, feedback from businesses in north Wales is positive. Some partners reported a change in visitor behaviours and spending habits at certain destinations (perhaps resulting in mixed messages) but it was also reported that many businesses are expanding, suggesting confidence and 'buoyancy' within the region.

Action: DMPs to feed back to VW on performance within the industry and encourage businesses to contribute to relevant surveys to increase sample size and accuracy of results.

5. Adventure Smart Wales – Emma Edwards Jones

EEJ presented the ASW campaign, developed in response to concerns around the thematic years messages, specifically the YOA.

The purpose of the campaign is to communicate a consistent and positive safety message to visitors wishing to enjoy Wales' outdoors. The campaign brings together key partners and has produced a suite of (free to use) tools to inform and educate visitors. Tools include videos (available for any organisation to embed), social media, pop up events and a website.

EEJ asked the forum to get behind the campaign, which launches on March 15th. Snowdonia Active (or available partners) offered to present at upcoming DMP meetings and asked forum members to get in touch should

they wish to host a 'pop up day' to help promote the campaign.

6. Themed years going forward – Mari Stevens

MS gave an update on the themed years and asked for feedback on whether the approach was effective or not.

Feedback was that the benefits have been wider than expected, and reached further audiences than the visitor /tourism sector. The campaign has reinvigorated a sense of pride within communities and engaged schools, as well as giving tourism businesses a focus, sense of place and an opportunity to access and utilise national marketing messages. There was unanimous support for the themed years approach.

MS introduced the YOD as an opportunity to promote new experiences and products under existing 3 themes of landscape, Culture and Adventure. It is likely that as part of YOD there will be opportunity to promote specific places and destinations.

MS asked for ideas for future themes. There was agreement that a new theme every year didn't leave enough lead in time. Introducing a new theme every two years was preferable.

MS confirmed that the Wales Way (WW) is a long term strategy. It will compliment, rather than replace the themed years approach, depending on the audience.

Future themes must support and address Wales' strategic priorities, seasonality being one.

Use of a Welsh word was suggested as a future theme e.g. Hiraeth.

7. Welsh Government Update – Gerwyn Evans

GE gave an update, summarised below;

- Jason Thomas is the new Director of Culture Tourism and Sport.
- Dafydd Elis Thomas AM, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Sport.
- TAB has been dissolved and an internal board has been set up to make key decisions. It will be important for the forum to feed in to WG. In order to strengthen links, a meeting has been set up between the minister and the four regional chairs on March 8th.
- The WG economic action plan has been launched. Tourism is a foundation sector within the strategy. WG is currently discussing the detail of the plan including the economic contract and economic fund. VW is working internally to understand what this will mean for the tourism sector specifically.
- Tourism tax- overwhelming response from the industry is that it would have a negative impact on tourism. It has been confirmed that WG will not be taking this forward for this term at least. Discussions with Local Authorities may take place in the meantime.
- Pipeline tourism Investment and development projects are looking positive through the current VW funding schemes.

NR expressed concern about the inconsistent message over the proposed

tourism tax and the disbandment of TAB leading to destinations competing against each other.

8. Strengthening Regional Structures - Chair

The chair thanked NR officially for his contribution to TAB on behalf of north Wales.

PS introduced this item by giving some context. The terms of reference for the forum are now out of date and need to be revisited. The demise of the TAB means that the forum should be THE mechanism to inform and advise WG and the new minister on key issues affecting the tourism sector. The chair felt the expertise of the forum had not been utilised enough to date and the forum should be an influencer of decisions.

Following a pre meeting of the private sector chairs PS set out a proposal to change the structure of the forum going forward. The purpose of the new structure is to reinvigorate the forum and address some of the issues set out above.

In summary the new structure will be made up of the 6 DMP leads (or most senior officer available with decision making powers) and the private sector chairs. Each chair will invite an additional representative (relevant to the agenda).

DMP chairs will be responsible for submitting themes, issues and agenda items.

There was some concern from EEJ about representation of the activity sector. It was suggested that the approach was trialled and that DMP chairs could be lobbied to submit specific themes or issues.

Action: Terms of Reference to be updated.

Action: Jason Thomas to be invited to next meeting in June tbc.

9. AOB

Date of next meeting scheduled for June (date and venue to be confirmed asap).