

**VISIT WALES**  
**North Wales Regional Tourism Forum**  
 19 September, Glasdir

**Present**

Name		Organisation
1. Jane Richardson	PS	Chair/ NWEAB
2. Stephen Jones	RJ	Flintshire County Council
3. Peter McDermott	PMcD	Denbighshire County Council
4. Jon Merrick	JM	Conwy County Council
5. Jim Jones	JJ	North Wales Tourism
6. Chris Owens	CO	Conwy DMP
7. Sam Regan	SR	Wrexham DMP
8. Julia Hughes Roberts	JR	Anglesey TA/DMP
9. Joe Bickerton	JB	Wrexham CBC
10. Michael Thomas	MT	Isle of Anglesey CC
11. Ian Lebbon	LG	Denbighshire DMP
12. Jo Smith	JS	Flintshire DMP
13. Sian Jones	SJ	Gwynedd Council
14. Helen Pye	AG	SNPA
15. Catrin Elis	CE	Visit Wales
16. Gerwyn Evans	GE	Visit Wales
17. Andrew Forfar	AF	Visit Wales
18. Ceri Turner	CT	Visit Wales

**Apologies**

Liz Grieves	Denbighshire CC
Anwen Jones	Gwynedd DMP
Richard Jones	Flintshire CC
Rachel Byrne	Flintshire CC

**Notes**

<p><b>1. Welcome and Introduction</b></p> <p>AF welcomed everyone to the meeting, and introduced JR as the temporary Chairperson for this meeting.</p> <p><b>2. Notes from last Meeting and Matters arising</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed with a minor amendment on page 3. JR explained that this was an additional meeting/interactive session to focus on the draft action plan and a final opportunity to feed in to the process.</p> <p><b>3. Nominations for new Chairperson</b></p> <p>JR outlined the process which as follows;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The following people have been nominated: Jo Smith, Sam Regan, Ian Lebbon, Chris Owens &amp; Michael Bewick.</li> </ul>	
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- To ensure all members have an opportunity to vote we propose to invite prospective chairs to submit a short biography (no more than 250 words) to Ceri and Andrew by 3<sup>rd</sup> October.
- Ceri & Andrew to circulate biographies to members. Members to vote via email (in confidence) to Ceri and Andrew by 10<sup>th</sup> October.
- Ceri & Andrew to notify forum by October 11<sup>th</sup>.
- It was agreed at the forum that a vice chairperson would also be selected based on number of votes.
- GE gave an outline of the commitment expected of the chairperson: 3 meetings per year (plus any additional ad hoc meetings to discuss key issues) Additional meetings twice per year with management board and deputy minister to represent the views of the region.

#### 4. Visit Wales Development Update

- Since the last meeting the MSBF has been re-opened and businesses have been re-contacted to progress projects. VW ask that members pass this message on to their networks as we are looking for projects for this year.
- VW have also identified funding to support 2 strategic HLF projects across Wales
- Following the last meeting – funding has been secured for a new Penderyn Distillery in Llandudno and for an improved visitor centre/experience at RSPB South Stack (**Please note:** embargoed as VW will be putting together PR around both of these announcements).
- VW marketing is currently doing some work in Japan around the world Cup and are in planning stage for next year's campaign.
- UK tourism sector deal – a meeting took place yesterday and Wales was represented by Jason Thomas and Stephen Jones. Feedback is that it is still at early stages of development and there is no real clarity on what the deal means for devolved nations. Important to remember there are opportunities for tourism sector in North Wales under the North Wales growth bid – which can be discussed at future date.

#### 5. Partnership for Growth review – Draft Action Plan

GE went through the 'Plan on a Page' document (circulated with minutes) and asked for feedback and views from members.

Summary of main feedback given;

- The top level ambition statement does not currently reflect value over volume. The 3 pillars do not come through strongly enough. It was suggested the OD could be around the pillars rather than products.
- Agreement that themed years are still working but that the forum want to be consulted with /involved in the decision making process.
- There is an opportunity to grow public transport offer – e.g. perhaps through rail equivalent to Wales Way and actively promoting packages. This may also go some way to towards climate change agenda/targets (for which there may be opportunities under the NW growth deal). Infrastructure and connectivity needs to be improved, particularly in rural areas. TFW will be key partners

**Action:** to invite TFW to present at future meeting.

- Suggestions that the consumer does not understand Wales cultural offer and that more clarity and consistency was needed in this area - especially for international visitors. There is huge potential in Wales with sense of place and language but this message is not as clear as the landscape and adventure offer.
- Barrier for attracting international visits to North Wales – lack of foreign language skills amongst industry, lack of branded hotels and also for some nationalities, difficulty in gaining Visas to travel to UK.
- Strong appetite to re-commission the ‘barriers to visiting Wales’ research to see why Wales’ share in international visits to UK is not increasing.
- Major concern around the Parador model mentioned in the plan. It was felt that in order for this to work there would need to be a mechanism outside of the civil service to manage operations. The members urged VW to look at lessons learnt from local and national government in this area. One suggestion was to have a specific scheme under QA for businesses who excel at sense of place.
- There was concern around a flagship contemporary arts museum as there is already one in Llandudno – Oriol Mostyn
- The plan looks like a top down approach - not engaging for partners – e.g. Parador model/prescriptive procurement
- Whether revenue funds or procurement approach – **longer term** investment needed
- Mixed view on grading around the table – but status in Gwynedd is that less than 10% of businesses are graded.
- TAIS is well received – but has limitations e.g. excludes some areas.
- Some questioned golf as a product and whether this was evidence based. It was felt that Water sports or mountain biking would be more relevant to North Wales. However Conwy felt that Golf had huge potential - should there be a regional approach?
- Retail is not reflected in the plan (key part of tourism offer).

#### **Additional information from GE around commitments going forward**

- VW will continue to commit to 4 region approach
- Destination Management will still be supported and VW hope to re-energise this area through a conference next year
- Wales Way will remain a priority
- Themed years and the 3 pillars that underpin them will continue
- The regional for a will continue and there is a will to hold one open forum per annum
- A national tourism landscape group will be developed.
- The TAs remain important partners to engage with and support, although there is no budget to fund them.
- There is a continued commitment to the tourism awards and the tourism summit – which will be mover around Wales.
- Mechanisms for feeding through to planning decisions need to be explored further and first priority is through updating the Technical advisory note.
- Social tourism and accessibility are areas that VW wants to commit to further, as well as health, wellbeing, youth summit.
- VW is unlikely to continue funding road signage, in current form at least.
- There is a lot of work to be done internally around measuring success on the new action plan – value over volume will need to be reflected here.

<p>6. NWEAB Update Due to the previous agenda item running over time – JR asked that members contact her directly for more information /update on NWEAB.</p> <p>7. RESEARCH BM gave an presentation from VW research dept. this will be circulated</p> <p>Action: where are the gaps? Please let research department know Action: members would like a discussion round STEAM at future meeting</p> <p>8. AOB JJ reminded members that there are only ten days left to apply for the NW tourism Awards and that the annual NWT conference will take place on November 23<sup>rd</sup>.</p>	
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