

## NW Regional Tourism Forum Notes

30.11.22

Attendees	
Michael Bewick (MB)	Chair
Sam Reagan (SR)	Vice Chair and Chair DMP Wrexham
Anwen Jones (AW)	Chair DMP Gwynedd
Sian P Jones	Cyngor Gwynedd
Richard L Jones	Flintshire CC
Jasmine Koffler	CCBC
Nigel Treacy	Chair DMP Conwy
Ian Lebbon	Chair DMP Denbighshire
Peter McDermott	DCC
Michael Thomas	IOACC
Jo Smith	Chair DMP Flintshire
Joe Bickerton	WCBC
Guests	
Berin Jones	LL HA
Mair Saunders	Nant G
Lawrence Wood	Coleg Llandrillo Menai
Eve Nichols	WCP
Sioned Humphries	WCP
Martin Green CBE	BBC Managing Director Eurovision 2023
Claire McColgan CBE	Director Culture Liverpool CC
Welsh Government	
Gwawr Price	WG
Rhidian Morgan	WG
Lucy von Weber	WG
Sue Thomas	WG
Rob Holt	WG
Julie Osmond	WG
Andrew Forfar	WG
Apologies	
Helen Pye	SNP
Catherine Williams	WATO / SA

	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>MB welcomed everyone to the Forum. MB thanked JR for all her contributions to the Forum and sector as she prepares to move on from CCBC. He reflected that forward bookings had been buoyant, but that demand was starting to look very soft and that the issues of costs, the skills shortages and the cost-of-living crisis remain a concern</p> <p>MB reminded everyone that the consultation on the visitor levy closes on the 13 December 2022 and that feedback from a series of independent meetings organised by UK Hospitality and WTA had been circulated.</p>
2	<p><b>Update from the regions</b></p> <p>PMcD gave an update from the NE:-</p> <p><b>Flintshire:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FCC has launched a business support grant that aims to assist the growth and expansion of local businesses by providing support with Carbon Reduction feasibility studies.</li> <li>• Work is ongoing to provide a new Destination Management Plan which will cover the period 2023-26. The aim is to have the new plan available by April 2023 (this will tie in with Place Making Plans).</li> <li>• FCCs Regeneration team is leading the process for the development of Place Making Plans over the next 2-3 years. In Flintshire, there is a need to develop and implement seven Place Making Plans for the towns of: Buckley, Connah’s Quay, Flint, Holywell, Mold, Shotton and Queensferry.</li> <li>• FCCs Cabinet have approved a proposal to start the development of these plans for an initial three towns i) Buckley; ii) Holywell and iii) Shotton.</li> </ul> <p>FCC has commissioned an options appraisal piece of work on the proposed development of a new visitor centre building on land adjacent to Flint Castle. The Council would, ideally, like to create: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. A small, unmanned visitor facility with interpretation of the Castle and information about the wider coast. This could be a mix of internal and external displays (to allow for out of hours operation) in both physical and electronic formats.</li> <li>II. Visitor toilets</li> <li>III. One or more small commercial units to provide a staff presence (potentially in return for a rent consideration) to oversee the visitor facilities.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with NE Wales partners to promote 2023 trails.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wrexham</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New DMP launching January 2023, with focus on city centre tourism development, visitor improvements at the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct &amp; Canal WHS (levelling-up and working with businesses in area), relaunching the This is Wrexham Partnership, building on our Placemaking work and delivering an international events programme as we head towards a further UK City of Culture bid for 2029. Report due before WCBC scrutiny on 7 December 2022.</li> <li>• Working with NE Wales partners to promote 2023 trails.</li> <li>• Hoping to launch a Wrexham Tourism Ambassador Scheme in Spring 2023 (tying in with the NW scheme)</li> <li>• New City Centre Visitor Centre now fully open Mon – Friday 10-4pm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Denbighshire</b></p>

- Ambassador Scheme Nominated in the North Wales Tourism Awards Nov 2022
- Coordinated approach to DM continues:
- Working group set up to look at the future of Rhyl (and Llangollen) TICs. Options appraisal submitted and business case in development
- Engaged with DCC teams and tourism sector with regard to the Tourism Levy consultation
- Working closely to facilitate Visit Wales and Jo Southerd of Little Wander in their production of a podcast that promotes North East Wales including Wrexham and Llangollen
- Working with NEW partners to promote Year of Trails 2023

MT gave an update from the NW

### **Conwy update**

- Brilliant Basics Llandudno shelters project – work is due to start on site on 01 December. There will be an asbestos survey carried out before demolition of one of the two shelters begins early December. The two replacement shelters are expected to be fully built by the end of February 2023. A press release has been published.
- The Llandudno 10 Year Regeneration Plan has now been finalised. We are planning to take this through our democratic process along with a number of place making and kick-starter plans for other towns in the county.
- Brilliant Basics signage project – received funding to update signage in Llandudno and Conwy. Following a tender exercise, we appointed The Creative Core as the designer to work on this project. Emma Gregg is the copywriter. We have received initial designs and copy and just finalising these. Designs should be finalised in December 2022 and installed in the towns in February 2023.
- Llandudno colonnades feasibility study – conducted a feasibility study to identify potential uses for the Colonnades in Llandudno. A stakeholder consultation was held in October 2022. We have received the final report for the project and hope to be use this to attract future funding to develop the Colonnades.
- We conducted a motorhome study to identify potential sites for motorhome users in Conwy County. We are expecting a final report shortly.
- Conwy Tourism Ambassador Programme – four new modules launched around an introduction to tourism and hospitality in Conwy. Currently have over 500 bronze ambassadors, nearly 400 silver ambassadors and 300 gold ambassadors. Now an award winning course following North Wales Tourism awards last week!
- Continually adding to digital infrastructure and Cisco Meraki sensors on Mostyn Street in Llandudno. There is also now free Wi-Fi in Llandudno. This has not been formally launched as we are using this period to test the connectivity.
- Llandudno Christmas Extravaganza was held on 17 – 20 November. Had good feedback from the event.
- Published a new leaflet to promote Autumn and Winter tourism in Conwy County.

### **Gwynedd update**

- 45 businesses from the tourism and hospitality sector have registered for the Improve your Digital Platform scheme .Training on a wide range of relevant digital topics have already taken place. More workshops have been arranged for the coming months, and the scheme is still open to

businesses. Anyone wishing to join should register online Improving your Digital Platform (llyw.cymru) Cynllun gwella plattform digidol (llyw.cymru)

- The Buy Local programme looks at opportunities to promote Gwynedd businesses and communities and to encourage residents and visitors to buy locally. Gwynedd Council has undertaken many social media promotional campaigns throughout the year to highlight these opportunities. Recent activity includes creating Instagram Guides and Stories to promote places to eat, things to do over half term, Halloween, bonfire nights and Reels to promote different areas of Gwynedd such as Llŷn, Bro Peris, Nantlle and Caernarfon. Celebrating's Wales' achievement of Playing in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™ has been a key theme on creating engaging content and sharing Gwyl Cymru opportunities. Future plans include promoting Christmas events, fairs and grottos and buying local presents for family and friends.
- Our main marketing focus over the autumn and winter months is to implement our social media digital marketing campaign. Our main focus over the last few weeks has been to post original content on things to see and do in our towns and villages, promote different attractions that are open, share an iconic/amazing image and promote events. This is in addition to content we share from partners such as Visit Wales, Cadw, National Trust and businesses in the area. We've also created new content throughout the year and promoted the Wales Coast Path which included developing new video content to promote our circular routes in Aberdaron and Llangwnadl. We will continue with this programme of activity and also promote new content such as our articles on our historic towns and lake walks.
- 22 events supported through the Gwynedd Events support Programme – Work has started on planning for the 2023 Eisteddfod which is being held at Boduan on the outskirts of Pwllheli.
- Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable tourism strategy 2035 – a task and finish group has been set up with key industry and community partners to review the new strategy, work programme, Research & governance and roll out. The work is nearing completion. Aiming to launch before end of February 2023. Gwynedd and Eryri Sustainable Visitor Economy 2035 | Visit Snowdonia ([ymweldageryri.info](http://ymweldageryri.info))
- Smart towns programme 11 towns throughout the county now with community Wi-Fi. A further 7 will be rolled out before the end of March 2023.
- Gwaith Gwynedd – conducted a number of hospitality jobs fairs in 2022. A Facebook jobs notice board has been set up and proven very successful. Further fairs are planned specifically for the hospitality and tourism sectors for the new year. Information will be posted through social media and Gwynedd Council Business Bulletin
- A £1.5 million tidy towns programme being implemented across key resorts
- Wales Slate our Designation, our pride, our future - a 5 yr Heritage Lottery funded project if successful after year one a £1.2 million programme of activities and investments will be implemented
- £150k of funding secured through CADW for interpretation roll out across all main sites and awaiting on a decision on a Levelling Up Fund application for the designated area.
- Two Brilliant Basics Visit Wales funded schemes:
  - Investment in visitor infrastructure at Parc Padarn Llanberis and the Arosfan Scheme (Aires pilot) currently in development

- Parc Gwledig Padarn, Llanberis. The project will make improvements to the car park at Glyn area and include EV charging points, cycle shelters, outdoor equipment washing area and groundworks.
- £2.9m boost for Wales' Brilliant Basics - the little things which make a big difference to a holiday experience (gov.wales)

### **Ynys Mon update**

- Ynys Mon Destination Management Plan 2023-2028 will start early next year and working with Ramboll for additional support. Looking at priorities and partnerships going forward.
- 'Our future' consultation - the Council has just completed its eight week consultation asking the public for their views on the proposed priorities in terms of council service delivery, how these should be funded and how life on Anglesey can be improved.
- Brilliant Basics - £248,000 secured from Welsh Government to update a number of public conveniences. Investment include new infrastructure including digital displays, electric bike charging and solar at Treaddur Bay, Benllech, Porth Swtan and Porth Dafarch. Contractors have been appointed and have started on site this
- Menai Suspension bridge closure is having an impact on business locally, and we have been undertaking a business survey to ascertain the impact and effects on businesses.
- CRF funding secured and completed
- White badge guides trained to assist with Cruise in Holyhead and have been instrumental in the welcome for 2022
- Ambassador Wales online portal for Anglesey to go live early 2023 with 3 initial modules focusing on Place, Past and culture
- New Augmented reality app to go live early 2023 focusing on our 5 main towns
- Undertaken a report to Anglesey icons, with a view of securing future funding for developing these assets
- Smart towns - Patrwm system being rolled out within our towns with free Wi-Fi and greater intelligence. Fully operational within Llangefni and nearing completion in Menai Bridge, other towns closely behind. Work progressing with other smart town initiatives across the County
- Holyhead Visitor Gateway (Tourism Attractor Destination TAD)
  - Jointly with Holyhead landscape partnership work is progressing on new visitor centre and wildlife centre in Holyhead Breakwater with new roof and extension now in place along with new play park early in 2022. Centre due to open March 2023
  - New street signposts (totems) for 2023
- Cruise
  - 56 cruise ships scheduled for 2023
  - New partnership approach being developed to welcome
- Marketing focus is shifting toward shop local/stay local driven through social media and key elements around what's on, what to do and unique ideas #angleseyxmas. Redesigning Visitanglesey website for launch early 2023
- Anglesey progressing and bid has been submitted for Freeport status jointly with Stena. Bid is aimed at creating up to 13,500 jobs and raising GVA up by £1 Billion. Bangor University, Msparc and Grwp Llandrillo are also playing a key part in ensuring education and support for research. Outcome of bid due March 2023.
- Countryside Services – general update on funding/grants

Cross Cutting (all 3 Authorities are bidding and or submitting bids):

- Arfor funding - £11 million Arfor 2 programme to boost economic prosperity in Welsh speaking communities | GOV.WALES
- Working towards presenting a number of bids for funding through numerous grant sources
- Levelling up Fund
- Regional Bid Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF)

MB asked about the situation surrounding the closure of the Menai Suspension and timings for re-opening. MT sated that Lee Waters was visiting the site today and would be making an announcement. The situation of long delays appeared to be a perception and in reality, hold ups were minimal. MT added that Cyngor Mon were getting the message out that the Island is open for business and are promoting a shop local campaign for locals.

The question of direct train services form Holyhead to London was also asked and MT said he would check. MB would also check

Shared prosperity meeting recently on communication and encourage partnerships

SPF bidding in from January

3

### **Update from VW**

RM gave an update on development activity, key points included:-

- [Consultation](#) on the Visitor Levy closes on 13 December 2022 and encouraged all to input.
- The oral statement on Statutory Licencing scheme was made on the 15 November and the consultation will open in mid-December. GP confirmed this and shared the [link to the Oral consultation](#). GP also stated that news of the consultation would be included in the VW Newsletter and invited any questions.
- The aim is launch BB3 as soon as we have the Ministerial approval, hopefully in December. Again, it will be announced in the Newsletter. It is not going to be vastly different from BB2 i.e. aimed at LAs and NPs but open for third sector (who have good strategic projects) to work through LAs. Grants values may well increase subject to approval. The challenge is the 12-month timescales for delivery and we understand the issues this causes.
- There will be a pilot of a Sustainable Tourism Wales scheme being launched through Business Wales, with 5 initial themes of this web based campaign: water, waste, energy, supply chain and transport. We are looking to develop a marketing master class to help businesses maximise on their sustainable activity. The activity will be peer to peer lead through Ambassadors in the field.
- Despite the cost of living crisis there does seem to be an optimism in the sector and there has been a take up of the WIFIT scheme which demonstrates that businesses are still investing in Welsh products and this has positive impacts on the local supply chains and jobs.
- SPJ asked for consideration of extending the BB3 scheme over 2 years, it was very difficult to deliver these capital schemes with a 12 month period. RM understood but VW were tied to grant expenditure within the annual budget cycle.

LVW updated on VW marketing – presentation circulated. Key points included:-

- Update on the recent stakeholder webinar
- Links to research
- Pushing local spend to generate cashflow
- Business barometer helps VW and stakeholders to plan. Last undertaken in October with a repeat in December / January

- Audience tool kit – refreshed and open to all – last minute bookers audience being targeted. Sharing with industry what we use internally
- Update on the above the line marketing
- Working with the World Cup and putting Wales on an international stage
- Lwybrau - Year of Trails with a link to industry toolkits in the VW newsletter later this week. First time, for a themed year (we have done it with Addo) that we will be providing a logo download for stakeholders to use in conjunction with the activity

ST Updated on Cruise. Key points included: -

- After a difficult past 2 years with Covid and loss of the jetty, Stena now have control of the jetty at the port.
- Attended Sea Trade Malaga in September and we have booked in 60 calls for 2023 and possibly an additional 8 calls
- 75k passengers with 35k crew which equates to a day spend of £7.5m (Cruise Line Int Association figures) this excludes associated spend.
- New Cruise Partnership in Holyhead has been established
- From January a new NW Strategic Cruise meeting will be held to bring together cruise stakeholders.
- Working with Llandrillo Menai Tourism students
- Working with ground handlers on new tours and there has been a recent Pan Wales familiarization trip with 10 cruise executives which has been a great success.
- New guides are currently being trained.
- Overall in Wales there have been 105 calls resulting in 100k passengers and 50k crew. Majority of calls coming into Holyhead.
- Pleased to report that Cunard Queen Victoria is calling in June 2023

MB invited Berin Jones Chair of Llandudno Hospitality to share any information

- Times are difficult, increasing costs for business and visitors keeping 'The purse strings tight'. Some hotels closing for a longer period over the winter because of costs. Concerns around hotel accommodation for non-holiday guest. Great to hear about the sustainability programme and Llandudno Hospitality are currently working on these issues with members.

4

#### **Update on the Tourism Talent Network**

LW updated on the TTN, part of the NW Growth Deal.

- The project stems from stakeholder conversations identifying the appropriate skills to deliver tourism in the region
- It is 4.5m project, the aim is to raise the profile of careers in this sector and sell NW as a 'campus', and emulate the Swiss Hotel School model
- Current partners are Portmeirion, Snowdonia Hospitality & Leisure, Zip World and the NT. With plans to invest in training facilities at these sites and then become a hub for local businesses to up-skill their employees and develop a shared apprentice scheme.
- Also, developing a £17m capital scheme, a centre of excellence at Llandrillo-yn-Rhos campus
- In terms of the Growth Deal a strategic outline case has been submitted and this has just been reviewed. This will enable progression to an outline business case by March 2023 and a final business case by the end of 2023.
- The plan is to involve as many stakeholders as possible as things progress

PMcD welcomed the commitment to engage widely across the region but asked that the project include sites in the north east which seemed to be underrepresented. LW agreed and stated that he had met with senior executives at the LAs in NEW, discussions were in place and that the NT in Wrexham were on board.

SPJ asked how the other Llandrillo Menai sites were included i.e. Glynllifon and Pwllheli as they don't offer tourism courses. LW stated that the businesses involved would provide the local communities opportunities for educational opportunities as well as work-based learning. As a college where they don't have a critical mass of students, they would be able to enable smaller groups in Gwynedd to work in this way and then integrate with the centre of excellence at Llandrillo. Students will be less college based but embedded into communities.

#### 5 **Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Wales Coast Path**

EN & SH gave a presentation on the WCP 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They are looking for feedback on the marketing and promotion and encourage Forum members to get in touch with any suggestions.

The path has now been open for ten years and Wales is one of the few countries to have a national trail that follows the whole of its coastline. It is the flagship of public rights of way and has opened up access to many coastal environments linking communities and bringing economic benefit on this iconic internationally recognised path.

Eve encouraged members to access use the toolkit which could be found at

<https://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk/working-with-us/business-toolkit/?lang=en>

<https://www.walescoastpath.gov.uk/working-with-us/business-toolkit/?lang=cy>

Key points :-

- A sustainable product free at point of use
- Generating rating £18m of GAV to the Welsh economy
- Average spend per person is £33 per person day spend with £70 per night accommodation spend
- Disabled users account for 15% of visitors and that is something that needs to increase.

#### 6 **Eurovision 2023 opportunities for N Wales**

Martin Green CBE, Managing Director Eurovision 2023 & Claire McColgan CBE Director Culture Liverpool CC presented on the opportunities for the region with the forthcoming Eurovision Song Contest

Key points:-

- The event will include 12 shows in all, 2 semi-finals, the final and 9 dress rehearsals. 9 of the shows will be ticketed.
- Apart from the visitors who come to watch the event and the national delegations & participants there will 14k press attending.
- TV viewing figures are likely to be 160m for the final and this figure excludes the digital reach the show has. One of the sponsors in 2023 will be Tik Tok
- The primary focus will be on the Ukraine who are technically the host country followed by the UK and Liverpool
- The BBC are currently in the middle of planning the event with the first associated event taking place in January 2023 – the official handover from the last host city Turin to Liverpool and the draw to allocate the running order of



nationalities in each of the semi-finals. An announcement on ticketing is also expected in January

- CB noted that Liverpool is geographically close to NW and as close to NW as Leeds, Manchester. This obviously opens up opportunities for the hospitality sector in north Wales. With attendees traveling for extended stays. They will come to experience not only the Eurovision Song Contest but the culture and wider offer of the surrounding area.
- Links to NW are sometime better than to north Wales than the NW of England.
- The ambition of the BBC is to get the whole of the UK involved – different place will treat it differently and with the Coronation a week later it may be advantageous to put up any planned large public screen a week early and link into the Eurovision
- On a community level Liverpool will be encouraging its communities to host events and parties

MB thanked the presenters and asked how VW were going to interact. LvW stated that VW were in close discussion with VB colleagues and looking at the extended day market and VW will closely with VB on any joint marketing activity.

MG encouraged stakeholders here in north Wales to ‘do things that make sense to them’ and that they should check in with himself.

JANE R pointed out the need to engage Transport for Wales to ensure connectivity and get more services on. CMcC stated that they do have a transport group associated with the events and LvW would facilitate an introduction from TfW.

IL state stated that there were links between the Ukraine and the Int Eisteddfod with the pavilion seats 2k people – so would make a great live link.

MB suggested we set up a separate meeting with NWT and Llandudno Hospitality to explore opportunities.

A positive presentation from the MD of Eurovision 2023 and Claire, of which the key points are

- Eurovision and Liverpool keen to work with North Wales
- Happy for the sector here to capitalise on the event and to reach out to them with any ideas. Opportunities for NWT and others (Llandudno Hospitality) need to keep MG aware of plans
- Links to the music and cultural sector are encouraged – Focus Wales
- Set up a link with Liverpool and TfW to ensure transport is coordinated and available post shows

**DATE OF NEXT FORUM: TBC**