

Meeting (16) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday 10th July 2020

Participants:

Minister International Relations & Welsh Lang	WG	Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA
Deputy Minister, CST	WG	Stephen Jones	WLGA
Jason Thomas - Director	WG	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Rob Holt	WG	Phillipa George	SE Forum Chair
Mari Stevens	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Lucy Von Weber	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Andrew Wallace Forfrar	WG	Dave Chapman	UK Hospitality C
Jo Corke	WG	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Ian Edwards	VB Board rep	Steve Hughson	MW Forum Chair
Andrew Campbell	WTA		

Version: Final

Main points of the Meeting

1. Update from the Deputy Minister and Jason Thomas

DMfCST welcomed everybody.

Jason Thomas explains that the main purpose of this meeting was to discuss what the First Minister will be issuing at 12:30 today. All points discussed under the heavy caveat that they could change before the announcement. Good news that accommodation without shared facilities will open from tomorrow and outdoor hospitality to recommence Monday 13th July. Massive thank you to colleagues in Hospitality Cymru and internally with the Welsh guidance on hospitality launched last night. Will also be changing the guidance around outdoor activities such as sports as we will be allowing people to engage in activities of up to 30 people supervised and complying with the guidance around social distancing. Rest of the accommodation sector e.g. camping with shared facilities are to commence on the 25th July. First Minister will also signal that indoor hospitality will be able to plan for re-start on the 3rd of August. Some will have wanted this earlier, however, we have come up with this date with a 3-week period to plan and prepare. We've been working with the Trade Union and Authorities to find a date that works for everyone. Finally, indoor attractions can now also resume on Monday, other than a small list of indoor activities which will be closed e.g. underground attractions. Concerns about this, however, we are working closely with the owners and the sector.

Rob Holt wanted to make it clear as we speak we are still having discussions on dates so please be aware to not share the news.

Mari Stevens made it clear that Public Health Wales advised on opening attractions and we are deemed that it's better to allow indoor attractions to open with mitigation in place. Priority to work with the sector next week on the other indoor attractions.

2. Comments from the sector

The following comments, were made by the group in response to these developments:

Ian Edwards – Thanks the Minister and Jason as this is good news to hear and obviously helps the industry going forward as we have been in such a dire situation. In regards to indoor hospitality, where are we with social distancing?

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JT – Thanks Ian as this is a golden question, 2 meters is still the safe distance and we do not want to alter that message because that is the health message. There are instances in the sector where it will be the owners of the establishments' responsibility to adhere to the rules and if they can't comply with the 2m, other mitigations will need to be put in place. Mitigations needs to be put in place to stop the spread of the virus e.g. not sitting side by side, masks, coverings and screens. In the hospitality industry, you will inevitably need to go below 2m to make these operations viable to maximise revenue.

RH – Working around this and essentially, its public transport, hairdressing and hospitality that need to focus on mitigations where 2m not always possible. Guidance issued today on how to mitigate this.

IE – Explains that he is grateful for the news but why won't the indoor hospitality open on the weekend instead of the 3rd of August. Gives the industry 5 weekends to maximise revenue as they are crashing with revenue as it is. Could be a very important weekend. The, do not want to cause a riot in your restaurant is not good enough, it can end up being £100,000 in loss of revenue.

DMfCST – Agreed to look at this further though JT asked that expectations should not be raised and that we should plan for Aug 3rd.

JT – Understands the points raised, conscious of a super Saturday approach in Wales that was approached in England, which had mixed reports with scenes of people not adhering to the rules. Lower traffic for the Monday and then much less of a worry for the Saturday with volume. Deputy Minister re-committed to looking at this but we cannot promise anything.

IE – Appreciates the support from the Minister, and notes it would make such a different safe guarding everything with the move of date. Messaging is crucial as we are opening the hospitality industry, which is key. We now need to hear from the First Minister helping us kick start the economy by telling people to go use the hotels, coffee houses etc. Nicola Sturgeon did this and it would be very helpful if FM could say the same.

JT Explains that there will be a significant shift with the FM visiting South Wales to launch our pledge tomorrow, with the MfIR&WL and DMfCST also visiting tourist areas over the next few weeks. Our new Addo – Promise Pledge supports everything that you have just said, getting people out there and doing it safely.

Lucy Von Weber– In addition to what you will see online there will also be an industry tool kit going out next week, it will reflect the thinking behind and substance of the promise. Addo (to promise) will be a core part of our consumer communications and campaign work over the next 12 weeks online, social media and in PR.

Sean Taylor – Reiterates what others have said with the great news, just 2 things to note; Firstly the indoors caves mines, the closure is going to discredit the industry which is very sensitive in Gwynedd. He also provided an update on WAVA.

JT – If any indoor attractions operators decide to open, despite being on the list of premises that must be closed (such as underground attractions) they will quickly be closed down. He cited an example of some outdoors gyms which have been flouting the rules and trading standards have been closing them down.

Anthony Rosser – Supporting Ian's comments, when speaking to people there will be significant disappointed that the date will be Monday and not the Friday. Usually can make up to £300,000 in August in a good year with 60% of that revenue on weekends that's £30,000 gone which is a massive difference. If we could move the date that would be a

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staggering win. Our market place have put their holidays on hold, making decision on where to go which means they will go elsewhere. Guests have been supporting the B&B stage but if we could get that extra weekend it would be a huge win for the industry. **JT** – We do understand the points raised about the additional weekend. We have 3 weeks now to assess the outdoor hospitality. **AR** – Understand the sentiment, but from a business perspective I genuine worry our market place will decide to go elsewhere.

The **Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language** joined the meeting and **JT** summarised the discussion so far.

The Minister firstly thanks everyone so much for everything that has been done to get to this point. Officials working hard on guidance all night, we understand the UK Hospitality guidance is out, however, it's more specific in the outdoors section from Monday onwards. Still a lot of nervousness in communities, anxious to open but we need to make the first stage a success to move on to the other areas. If operators try do so illegally – measures in place to stop that happening. Thanks to the DM and rest of the team for the huge amount of work with a significant move this weekend, still a long way to go and next week will be a good test. **JT** - Thanks both Ministers, as they have been working literally around the clock and without their support we would not be where we are today.

Michael Bewick – Thanks Minister for their words, everyone on this call are disappointed at underground attractions not opening. Attractions over the boarder are opening. We will be working this week to get the mitigations sorted. Helpful to try identify the time line to the review. Meeting with organisations in NW, they are expressing anxiety level of community concern. Anything by the Minister to calm this would be helpful.

JT –Working closely with operators and if they have protocols in place as soon as medical advice say they can resume, we will be opening. Continue to prepare, less notice is better than having to wait another 3 weeks.

Dave Chapman – Supports what others have said. Could we have more details on outdoors sports, up to 30 what does it involve? Last 72hrs all of us have put a lot of work in to get the guidelines over the line. Hostile reaction to the 3rd August, major financial hit. Understands super Saturday, but it's been a mixed review in the industry in England with only 30% opening on the Saturday in central London and not many people going out. If we don't want the super Saturday why don't you think of opening on the Monday before and having a full August. Lot more positive outcome and presents balance. The next two weeks trail period is enough time to see the reaction.

JT –The virus is still here, still cases in Wales. We should focus on 3rd August, not bringing date forward. Crowded pubs in England puts nervousness for us in Wales. Let's use the next 2 weeks to assess everything and feedback the sectors view internally to hear them loud and clear.

DMfCST – I understand the logic, do it in a way were people will take advantages of booking windows, resolve all these issues by the end of July, fully support it.

JT – Thanks for the monumental effort with the guidance it's robust and hope people adheres to it.

Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language leaves the meeting to attend another and wishes everyone all the best with re-opening, anxious for this to be a success for moving forward in a positive way. **Rob Holt** also leaves to attend another meeting.

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Adrian Greason-Walker – Agrees with David on his points. Raised a point from last week in regards to research, which needs to be discussed at length. How do you justify making these points and giving the scientific reasoning behind it? Scientific cases needs to be behind why we need to make these actions and don't see them coming through. Need to be clear of the facts why these decisions are being made.

JT – Everything we do is based on advice from the WHO and we unlock things incrementally to assess impact.

Steve Hughson – Thanks and supports the date being earlier as it would maximise the opportunity for customers and businesses to take advantage of the Chancellors incentive with up to £10 off each meal which runs through August and hopefully it applies in Wales. Mentions it makes sense to have consistent definitions across border with the 1 meter and 2 meter. Picking up feedback that people are welcoming the guidance but not giving people sufficient time. Ceredigion Coastal path not opening until the 17th July. Presenting a virtual Royal Welsh Show and offering Visit Wales the opportunity to put content to thousands of people who will be visiting the site over the 4 days. Put the message out there that Wales is safe to visit.

JT – 3rd of August fits perfectly with the UK Gov food voucher scheme which kicks off on the 3rd also. Welcomes the virtual show as a very good idea. Colleagues to look into the closure of Ceredigion coastal path.

MB– Natural Resources Wales are not opening Newborough beach. Issue of sector specific support for the winter months, which needs to stay on the agenda moving forward.

JT - £1.5 billion has been allocated for culture and will press the UKG for support on tourism.

SH– £59 million has been allocated to Wales, will events be on the agenda as there are uncertainty for cultural events?

JT - £59 million comes to Wales and then goes to the Welsh Treasury and Welsh Ministers decide where that money goes.

JT – We are looking at a phased return to Cadw at opening monuments and opening the wider sector. First weekend in August all the Cadw monuments will be open supporting the winter economy.

DC – Said looking beyond the Chancellor budget and likely hold any expectation that the budget in autumn with VAT moving to January. Hopefully, looking at further support packages for Easter. Wales is behind so we are losing out and this needs to be addressed with support packages. Furlough, we as an industry are different with TATA steel and Airbus - not going away we'll be back on our feet and WG needs to be the help in hand giving extra resources to show we are so reliant on Tourism. Come back quicker with less redundancies. Need a discussion on business rates review.

JT – WG will continue to press the UKG to support this industry, as done with culture.

DMfCST - Mentions a joint Ministerial meeting takes place in two weeks with England, Scotland and NI. Pleasantly surprised on the nature of the Ministerial meetings previously with the fairness of support towards tourism.

Jo Corke – Gives a summery on the latest on-going research activity on economic impact forecasts for Tourism based on various scenarios with a 5 week study.

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MS – The message from Wales is to convey when you are visiting to encourage to do so as safely as possible inspiring the message for the long term. Agree with Ian as we move through this period now looking at the message in the lead up to the autumn. Sustain businesses through those months. Information is live on the website and pushing that tomorrow the FM visit is all about launching tourism and opening the sector.

Phillipa George – Well covered and totally endorsed what everyone said about dates. Holidays start on Saturday so makes sense for this to reflect with opening dates. Not going to allow anyone to come for one night, too much of an effect on the community and they are glad of that. Considering track and trace, the less people were dealing with will be an advantage. All staff in the sites are learning new things to make sure they are comfortable. It will be new for guests too and gradually things are going to feel comfortable in time.

JT – Small ask before next week with a run up to opening the industry, moving into August with everything up and running, what flow would you prefer for these meetings to take place? Ideas ahead of next meeting appreciated.

Last comment from the **DMfCST** thanking everyone for their honesty and expressing their views. You are the representatives of the industry and it is good for me to see this and take matters forward.

3. **Next Meeting:** Friday 17th July 10:30am. Group asked to provide sector updates by 5pm on Thursday 16th July.

Ffion Evans-Humphreys
14th July 2020