

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
Rhidian Morgan	WG	Phillipa George	SE Forum Chair
Mari Stevens	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Lucy Von Weber	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Peter Kellam	WG	David Chapman	UK Hospitality C
Sharon West	WG		
Ian Edwards	VB Board rep		
Andrew Campbell	WTA		

Apologies – Rob Holt, Steve Hughson, Michael Bewick

Version – Final

Main points of the meeting.

1. Update from the Deputy Minister and Jason Thomas.

DMfCST welcomes everyone and thanks for their support.

Jason Thomas starts the meeting with discussions on last week, which was an unbelievable week ahead of the First Minister’s statement and thanks the group again for their efforts. Comments at the last meeting were very constructive and fed back in meetings this week. On Monday, we will be looking at the next formal review, which is on the 31st of July and we will be meeting with the FM to discuss potential further easements, including opening of camping with shared facilities. Other areas such as leisure centres, gyms and swimming pools will be discussed as work has progressed at pace with these sectors. The opening of outdoor hospitality seemed to have gone well and this will help inform further discussions on indoor hospitality. Lot of progress internally working with CMO colleagues in regards to mitigations and controls across the sector.

2. Discussion paper on long term funding.

Rhidian Morgan gave a detailed summary of the long-term funding with a presentation on financial support packages. Discussions on the recovery of tourism, lack of resilience across the sector with Wales being the country to benefit the most from Government support. Future funding will be limited in the current financial year, and WG continues to press UKG for additional support for this sector.

MfIR&WL thanked everyone for their efforts, noting that things are going well within areas of the sector that have been unlocked. She noted that further communications on hospitality were needed, as messages need to be clear beyond this group. **JT** mentions that Visit Wales will be ramping up our communications in the next week.

JT said the presentation covered a lot of ground and reassures everyone the Welsh Government is working hard and understanding the challenges ahead.

Andrew Campbell mentioned that BBP said 47% of people in UK are highly anxious with tourism opening up too quickly. Visit Britain’s research mentioned that 42% discussed anxiety in people, which relates to the change in people’s behaviour and the voucher

scheme is something that was introduced to stimulate demand. People's habits have changed. Is there is an opportunity to come up with a voucher scheme to change behaviour, money targeted to consumers to use with businesses. **RM** mentions that it's innovated ideas that we need in the mix.

-David Chapman discusses £50 for families to spend in Wales would be a good concept, they can't do this alone. This is about keeping our business going at highest employment. More money will be coming because of the autumn budget but we need to be ahead of the game, great opportunity to combine this.

-Anthony Rosser said the nature of the business in Wales SME's are resilient because they operate in Wales and if you give them a chance they will get back on their feet.

-Ian Edwards said there is a need for urgent review on business rates, working with pre-covid rates and they continue to charge at that rate. It will help massively, as you know we pay 2 million a year in rates, which needs urgent review. **DC** agrees with this. **JT** will raise this with the officials that lead **(ACTION)**.

-DMfCST mentions he conveys directly to the correct Minister with the news from the industry.

3. TTP requirements

Sharon West introduces herself and works for the Welsh Government on contact tracing as part of Track Trace Protect. She urged everyone to raise awareness of a webinar, which will be held on the 24th of July to provide a deeper knowledge of the procedures. TTP enables rapid testing for people with symptoms, fast tracing and protecting the community. Tested with the expertise of Public Health and other Health Boards. Purpose of this is to prevent the disease from spreading, also understanding the disease and how it is transmitted and passed to people. This rolled out on the 1st of June and is still new and learning with the outbreaks in Wales. Important to maintain until we get a vaccine. Tourism sector had guidance last week to assist with TTP. It works through conversations, which is more powerful than an app (NHS England) it's a way of making conversations with people finding out there movements and jogging their memory. All this is voluntary, confidential and crucial.

Paula Ellis thanks and discusses that the industry were advised if the guests catch Coronavirus they are asked to leave and if they were unable to do so, they would be advised to go to the nearest hospital. Guidelines have changed, guest can now self-isolate in the accommodation? This is of great concern, as businesses would have to close for two weeks. Care of duty for 55 colleagues, other/upcoming guests and the community. Why has this changed or is this only relevant to self-contained accommodation? Great confusion in the industry, would like someone to offer clarity.

-SW Isn't sure where this instruction has come from, stating the offer is to travel home if they can do so safely. If they can't, would need to refer to colleagues in this sector for clarification. **PE** mentions online that the guests have to be prepared to cover the cost, however, there is uproar in the community. **JT** said that if you develop symptoms you leave, and arrange for them to do so safely. **PE** needs a clause if the accommodation provider is prepared to accommodate this request, as there is no clarity. **Mari Stevens** discusses that we should be facilitating for the guest to go home. Has been talk for hospitals to take the individuals but this would only happen in exceptional circumstances. **PE** needs this in writing, with clear direction.

SW will pick up this point and **JT** thanks for her update and reminds everyone of the webinar.

4. Long term future of group

JT received feedback from group members about the future of the group which was helpful. Clear that the sector will need support for the foreseeable future so the last thing would be to disband this group, we are nowhere near that. Agreed to continue to meet until the end of July, though recognising that everyone is busy restarting their business so taking two hours on a Friday is difficult. **DC** asks for one more in August to discuss the repercussions of easement on the 3rd of August. **JT** mentions the first Friday of August and then reconvene the first Friday in September. These are voluntary and always an opportunity for anything ad-hoc to happen to arrange a further meeting.

5. Feedback on outdoor hospitality reopening and commercial performance.

JT mentions a meeting with FM is held on Monday and clear feedback is needed.

DC discussed conversations, which took place over the week. Couple of instances raised from Trade Unions in kitchens, needs reminding of the social distances element. Not a problem just a new system getting used to it. Encouragement of the week is to empower the next stage, so a bigger launch to the opening of the indoor hospitality.

JT said Mari will be looking at specific campaigns around this, wrapping up the communications over the next few weeks.

PE asks is there guidance on the legalities of VAT, is it legal to retain the percentage that we have, on the bookings that were made before the guidance was created?

-Folly farm very distressed, on their knees having to close for the rest of season because the FM made the announcement on underground attractions with no mention of fun fairs. Great reassurance from Eluned and Mari that this will be announced on Monday. Ian Wesley not answering any calls, EHO refusing to go out to the site, very disappointing.

-Need guidance on 2 meter to understand the mitigations on table service vs bar service.

-**JT** said guidance on 2 meters and on hospitality where published last week.

-**Lucy Von Weber** reiterates that guidance went out on Friday night since the new regulations were in place, big piece on guidance, some have been enhanced as well.

Regulations are key, everything was listed and always have been, we do appreciate there is a lot of information to read. So important to read and check the Business Wales/Visit Wales page as it changes rapidly.

-**JT** discusses how frustrating it is to hear, as guidance has been published, members still saying they have not seen the guidance. Everyone has a duty to comply with the law and take it upon themselves to familiarise with the detail on the WG Coronavirus landing pages – they should just not sit and wait and expect Visit Wales to do everything for them.

-**IE** understands, however there are pages and pages of information and it would be useful for something infographic that could help as a page of glance. It is our jobs as members to relay this back but would be useful for briefer description.

-**JT** the duty with businesses to check on regulations, we cover the important bits in our newsletters, but there is always more.

PE presents notes from Michael Bewick with issues arising at the North Wales Forum:

-Guidance requested regarding opening of: Wedding venues & bowling alleys.

-What is going to happen with Christmas Events.

-Underground Attractions: Progress at agreeing mitigation with the CMO so hopeful that this issue will be resolved.

-Debate around funding this winter - where should the focus be: Helping businesses develop and grow, protecting businesses, investing in destinations.

-Pressure on resorts: With no hospitality available and poor weather there is nowhere for anyone to go, they are going to leave Wales having had a poor experience.

Sean discusses that bookings have been remarkable; 2 of the 3 sites open, 6 out of 13 activities open, 7th opening on Monday. Sales have gone up 10% same as 2019. 400 bookings a day for July and 300 a day currently for August. Communications with protocols in place, doing the right thing with the team and community. People bring lunch, then litter.

-Discussed a lot with Mari and we can open 25% occupancy of the underground attractions, which will still be profitable with 30 people instead of around 120 – 150. Positive at the moment but a big cloud of what will happen in the winter.

- **JT** shares how encouraging this is to hear, credit to you and the team for the numbers.

IE discusses the excitement that 100 rooms sold for this evening in the resort with 200 sleeping tomorrow night too. Lodges are flying off and the revenue for August is high. Golf is coming back, challenges but very positive. Not many families booking, more couples, with about 15 children here this weekend and normally around 200. Will be changing tactics on how to market for families. People are seeing that Wales is open and looking forward to the future.

AR said they've been open for B&B and it's been a good response. Guests are confused and worried that Wales isn't open properly. Expensive to deliver but sticking to the processes. Guest compliance have been great and the staff also. Behaviour has been exceptional, bit of wild camping but always had that. If we could bring the date back a week to gives us the extra week of trading that would be great. There is confidence amongst the sector that we can do it right and very well. Great to be open, phone is busy turning business away until August.

-**JT** discusses that the FM has said headroom is limited and expectations should be low. Will say with assurance that opening outdoor hospitality has been successful and the industry are prepared to move quicker if we can open quicker.

-**AR** said it would be useful for small printed forms, branded in the correct way with track and trace so that guest can read and understand what's expected of them.

-**JT** Lucy to look at this as it's the second time that it has been brought up. Nice if we could include 'addo' and the personal details in one. **(ACTION)**

Phillipa George agrees with most of the comments stating that confidence is strong. We haven't experienced major difficulties apart for the fact with the social bubbles. Remind WG that some of us aren't opening until the end of July, to consider there is a lot of seasonality across Wales. Lot of bookings but short season, due to planning constraints with closing. Third winter scenario.

-**JT** mentions we do understand further need for this sector and will be relentless on this, can't let this industry fail. UKG they have stepped up when industry have been on the brink e.g. the 1.5 billion package.

Stephen Jones firstly says that the amount of work that your team has done is phenomenal and praise is due! Recapped on his week and positive meetings with the Local Authority, did get some push back from a small number of operators. Continuing good partnership.

-Working closely on planning guidance to help the tourism sector with optimism for the future.

-**DMfCST** discuss the good news on the planning side with the Minister for Housing and Local Government on the case. In the meantime will send Ministerial letters to planning

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authorities to try and overcome primarily legislation. Take this back to the Minister with pressure from colleagues and support of WLGA to liberate planning.

-JT thanks the WLGA and LA which have been incredible. Long overdue to look at this.

Adrian Greason Walker referenced the planning and third winter issue. Raised a point to Rhidian regarding the future generations act. There was also a discussion on survival mode with rising debts, brexit, value of sterling and looking at the future.

-JT mentions need to revisit priorities for the Visitor Economy as soon as practical. We will invite someone from the HM Treasury to have a discussion on VAT (**ACTION**).

DMfCST thanks again for a positive meeting. Makes our jobs easier, grateful to have this forum and further meetings to assess the impact on the industry. Appreciate the patience and personal support.

6. Next Meeting: Friday 24th July 10:30am. *Group asked to provide sector updates by 17:00 on Thursday 23rd July.*

Ffion Evans-Humphreys

20th July 2020.