

Meeting (18) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday 24th July 2020

Participants:

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

Apologies; MfIR&WL Eluned Morgan MS

Version: Final

Main points of the Meeting

1. Update from the Deputy Minister and Jason Thomas

DM starts the meeting by discussing the Common Wealth Tourism Forum with no major concerns from the meeting.

JT discusses another frantic week with underground attractions finally opening from Saturday as will accommodation with shared facilities. From Monday spas, beauty salons, amusements, arcades, museums and archives will also open. Recognise funfairs missed when theme parks opened but now all fun fairs can open. Permission from the First Minister to share the news that from the 10th August, swimming pools, gyms and leisure centres are next on the list to open. Happy for you to share this news with your shareholders and members and a written confirmation will be sent in due course.

-With weddings at present you can only get married at a church or registry office, seen to be punishing establishments. FM recognises and if you have a licenced venue, you will be able to marry people as soon as it is safe to do so.

-FM did have concerns of outdoor hospitality, understands that it's gone well but he himself has seen many instances of the public flouting the rules and gets quite upset about it. Difficult conversation, promises have been made and still content to go ahead with the indoor hospitality to open on the 3rd August, but talk of bringing it forward is a non-starter. People need to adhere to the current rules, if establishments ignore the rules, will be forced to close them down as a message to the industry. Further discussions will be made at the 2 households situation and next Friday we will know where we are with the broader measures. We recognise we are the stricter regime across the UK, trying to do everything to liberalise as soon as we can.

Rob Holt explains that individual elements of spas are to open and not as a whole e.g. treatments will operate.

-Big issue around hospitality as Dave knows, table service vs table consumption and whether this will apply for indoors as with outdoors.

-Police and Local Authorities are very clear that table service are better, the unions and representatives have concerns around viability, staff, small pubs in communities, play off matches especially this weekend with pressures of noncompliance around the team who will lose which is the biggest issue in terms of outdoor hospitality.

Meeting (18) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday 24th July 2020

-In good practise, Conwy Council representatives have gone out to 200 businesses over last week, essentially most are compliant others were guided and if not improved, will go in harder. What powers could be given to Local Authorities if businesses are not complying, we need to protect the business which are compliant by rewarding.

2. Update from sector

JT discusses that they will continue to press the UKGov for additional support and the message back is that it's unlikely that we will receive any further support as they mention it's already been delivered.

Ian Edwards mentions the good news about swimming pools. Disappointed about the date 3rd of August, feels like the headmaster beating down on the industry. This is catastrophic to the industry, no science behind this and is so disappointing with 750 people on his case, the whole supply chain is disappointed. No movement on outdoors numbers - disappointing.

-JT discussions on numbers and gathering possibly next Friday with medical advice saying it's broadly safe outdoors but can't say the specifics on it now. Points are well understood and have been giving the industry feedback.

Steve Hughson mentions the Event Wales meeting yesterday with a big issue on the 2m rule as it seems it will be around for some time. Understands that you can't give a date, however, some clarity around the 2m rule would be good e.g. until when it will exist to allow us to plan for events. Losses have been achieved from the Royal Welsh, if the Winter Fair is to run or not this is the greatest factor. Plans to be shared on timescale of this? Absence of this will present great challenges. Presume for the long term but when- 2021?

-JT discusses when the health advice changes, the FM will change the measure. Chief Medical Officer mentions the more distant you are safer it is and that's why there is a policy for 2m. There are areas to manoeuvre especially in indoor hospitality and the law does recognise this, it's about the mitigations, so for potential events it's going to be down to what's practical. One excuse is the economic justification to maximise revenue, Winter Fair as a case study for which flow you could preserve in doing that and if mitigation are strong then you do have the ability. It changed in public transport contexts 2 weeks ago, further liberalising and inevitable to restore freedoms we just don't know when yet- discussed every single week.

-SH – Scotland are keeping it until October 2021. That's why we need clarification, good source have said that and usually Wales follow.

-RT - Not heard in discussions, forming subgroups to plan for the various circumstances, when hospitality is done we will go on the events side.

JT – When relaxation comes outside with who you can meet, will the public follow this when you go indoors? Big decision to liberalise that forward or restrict indoors. May not be a problem as the disease is decreasing but if there is a second wave and the public are ignoring our guidance now when the spike comes say in November that could be dangerous and challenging.

Paula Ellis reiterates the situation in Pembrokeshire as it seems people have forgotten about the pandemic with horrific scenes. The Covid measures are good as much as we are concerned. In St David's and Fishguard it's extremely busy, an example of around 25 people queuing for a boat with no masks and no social distancing. There is a vast demand for domestic tourism, everywhere is full. Customers are scared, we need to encourage and utilise the Local Authorities with their powers. Just to highlight this, FM needs to come to the areas to see how bad it is. Would like to encourage the FM on masks, he follows the

Meeting (18) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday 24th July 2020

scientific evidence that they are not that beneficial but we should follow places like Asian countries and masks should be compulsory. We are still in the pandemic, this message to be driven back to him to reconsider mask coverings.

JT said the FM is in West Wales right now and will rely this feedback, he is science lead and relies on this and CMO has said that masks are more risks so he is striving on the decisions that he's made. Public mood is powerful thing, FM will see that.

Adrian refers back to the wedding venue discussion and they are now writing off the summer season. Stating, that you need 12 weeks running time before the weddings take place and are really worried about support as it's likely to run out in October. If they can make it through to March without a spike, hoping for a bumper year next year. Making the case about hub business as weddings bring customers that wouldn't usually visit Wales and they usually always end up being repeat customers - asking for a special case to be made for support. Is it possible to shed more light on support on that's available?

JT had a call with DCMS, good news on culture but what about tourism and other areas e.g. sport- need to manage expectations to understand pressure. UKG has been unlocking support e.g. food vouchers and will see what it's like in September. More lobbying the better. We don't have the funds to support the industry we need UKG support.

-Compelling point on weddings and will look at this as until the full party package is available this is an issue and currently looking with Julie Osmond on putting advice around nightclub to the Minister. Make the case to open, will have ripple effect to support this.

-The unlocking of society 80 – 85 % have been within the DM portfolio pushing at the door and it's been relentless and the feedback from the sector has been put out there.

Michael Bewick thanks Mari and Julie around underground attractions, it was rigorous clear process with Medical Officers staff making it clear and transparent. Have to mention the negative press around North Wales that has been in Llandudno and especially Snowdon, the National Park, LA and Police working together to move things forwards. Important to look at the management of destinations to identify some positive actions.

JT – Snowdon example, the role of traffic is under transport management and needs a better offer.

Anthony Rosser reiterate Ian's comment about the 3rd Aug. The customer behaviour has been a proactive approach to the Covid journey and reflected in guest reviews. Guidance coming out on meters, around further mitigations? Hopefully the guidance comes quickly. With 2m we can run 55–60% and with 1m we can breakeven. Legislation through 22 authorities, getting proper understanding to the mitigations is critical with huge financial implications especially for the small businesses.

-**RH** mentions can't issue the final one until the review. Hospitality group have one big issue which is the table service. Guidance is up with UK Hospitality and we are basing ours on that one and will amend as soon as we can get direction from the 21 day review. Guidance on social distancing and how you mitigate has been up for a while, down to the business to look at the risk assessment and how they will mitigate this.

-Shout out to the LA who have been hugely proactive, fully engaged in discussion on hospitality opening.

-**AR** discusses if you are a small business, it's much more difficult to understand e.g. do I release another 10 rooms today. It's a judgement call and understands but every penny counts. Senior management of staff and I have different views on things. Do you risk it or not? This is the challenge.

Meeting (18) of Tourism Group – 10:30am, Friday 24th July 2020

-**JT** discusses that it's your call, if you feel the mitigations are strong enough and compliant with our guidance.

Andrew Campbell discusses the WTA meetings yesterday, very positive on discussions with a different story to Paula with a positive community. People have been adhering and trying to keep out of the way. Visitors don't want to get Covid and doing everything they can to ensure this. Example of a couple that paid £500 to take the whole boat instead of sharing with other passengers. Need a balanced approach going to the FM. Agree with Ian and Anthony with the date of indoor hospitality. Mirroring intelligence across boarder on outdoor hospitality and attractions and customers not turning up, lack of spontaneity. This is causing problems and if this information could be in the campaign about keeping people safe and flag the issue on people booking and not turning up. This is a problem in England too.

Dave Chapman said that it's a crisis for the industry with the 2m in place and the fact we are 5 weeks behind. Faced with more legislation to deal with in a crisis, solid dynamic approach and not recognising that the social implications are being missed in the industry. Marge to nail down the straight message to the public, everyone is clear with what's happening in a positive light. I do need to say in regards to Paula's point it's not helpful what the FM commented about face masks. If it goes wrong on 3rd August it's our last shot at this.

Sean Taylor conveyed the huge demand for the attractions with the 3rd opening and up to 13,000 bookings a day. One thing, an underground attraction in the area has been open all week and is very angry about this. Need support for business planning for growth. What are we doing to pressure Julie James MS to relax planning?

-**JT** said to the operator who has been open anyway some establishments been closed down, we will have long memories in VW and will remember this in the recovery.

Lucy Von Weber updates on the comms for the weekend. Relays that the 'Promise/Addo' has been successful without any current paid media behind it. Toolkit and downloadable posters for establishments to use. Discussion around the downloadable leaflet for customers to sign in establishments with the T&T that doesn't have GDPR implications. Effective to breathe consistency in Wales with imagery without the branding.

-**AR** points out that as part of the risk assessment to lessen the chance of contamination to not hand out pieces of papers.

-**PE** mentions the use of guest app or Ipad to over-come the paper issue.

JT said HMRC not able to attend the meeting, if you have any further questions on funding please send them to Ffion.

-Meet again next Friday, big announcement. We have one more meeting the Friday after to discuss the outdoor hospitality with the immediate feedback. Thanks for attending the meeting.

Closing remarks from the DM thanking everyone.

3. Next Meeting:

Friday 31st July 10:30am. Group asked to provide sector updates by 5pm on Thursday 30th July.

Ffion Evans-Humphreys
27th July 2020