

Meeting (24) of Tourism Group – 10:30-12:30 Friday 9th October 2020

Participants:

Deputy Minister, CST	WG	Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA
Jason Thomas - Director	WG	Stephen Jones	WLGA
Mari Stevens	WG	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Rob Holt	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Lucy Von Weber	WG	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Claire Chappell	WG	Andrew Campbell	WTA
Helen Butler	WG	Dave Chapman	UK Hospitality C
David Stephens	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Fliss Bennee	WG	Steve Hughson	MW Forum Chair
		Ian Edwards	VB Board rep

Apologies; Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language & Philippa George

Version: Final

Main points of the Meeting

Jason Thomas welcomes everyone and starts the meeting by introducing Fliss Bennee from the Health directorate.

Fliss Bennee discusses her role and updated the group in detail on the devastating effects of coronavirus.

Taskforce members raised the following points:

- What indicators do you look at before bringing a county out of lockdown?

FB figures for at least 7 days of rolling average of the 25–100,000 cases, the amber setting that you've seen with PHW table and test positivity under 2.5% for a week. TTP to not be overwhelmed and comfortable, to get in touch with 80-85% of contacts that where positive and contact trace between 60-70%. If 35–40% not linked to an incident wouldn't feel comfortable as the community spread is dangerous.

- What resourcing is available to manage the whole thing?

FB explains how they look at the figures and continue to have daily assessments.

- Can there be consideration of hyper lockdowns?

FB discusses the issues around background prevalence.

- Tourism and hospitality should not be muddled up, hospitality is part of the industry and concerns mentioned in venues that don't apply to tourism businesses. 15 local authorities in lockdown areas doesn't reflect the land mass of Wales. 65% of Wales is in an unrestricted area and rural businesses are trading in safe environments. Continual balance of economy and people not making revenue, if we could get the rural businesses still making money. Many businesses are talking to infectious areas in England how dangerous are those people?

FB discusses issues around how tourism can be done safely with scientific discussions to research for evidence that causes the least harm. Need to take into account the holistic nature of tourism.

Meeting (24) of Tourism Group – 10:30-12:30 Friday 9th October 2020

- The communication of the science of the rational is essential and wise to make it now, tell people the reason behind making the decision of restrictions, to increase support and improve compliance. Comms is key. Clarity around people gathering in licenced places rather than having 100 people in the Royal Welsh showground which is open air. Clarity on the rational, logic and scientific evidence of this?

FB discusses the elements with the risk of transmitting outside and the evidence showing you are 10 times less likely to get Covid outside than inside. Australia has a good system with cubic meter volume rather than number of people. If you were to do that at an outdoor ground, question remains what are the trip points. Can you guarantee they will remain in this area? Calculations of proximity, time and the probability.

- There needs to be a degree of separation between areas and different sectors.
- Several points raised on communication with audiences in regards to local community being hostile. There needs to be better communications on mainstream media.
- Broad discussion on events. The worry is the scientific side is paper-based and not based in the practical exercise – this is the purpose of test events. Would be useful when safe and responsible to do so, request to implore the Ministers and Fliss/colleagues to visit the test events to see the practical, lab based and paper base all together. The protocols have changed to manage areas, usually would have 100's of people queuing for the toilet and things have changed.

JT said test events have just been paused, will go back hopefully soon. Discussed the hyperlocal lockdown suggestion that's on the table to be considered, but not felt like we can do that at the moment. Suggest that the Ministers and colleagues visit Celtic Manor to see it in operation as the European Tour event proved it was successful. Decision is ultimately made by Ministers and TAG, however we are the voice of the sector representatives.

Rob Holt mentions it's Fliss' team that clears or not the guidance along with lawyers and others. Hoping we can get back to testing those test events soon. Flagged up an event with 6,000 people on an Agricultural Showground in England. In the light of what's been said astonishing it's going ahead, different system in England where LA provide approval.

Members asked for more evidence of transmission, example of Rhyl and the increase on weekends was cited. Members would like to see a graph on the other side with mental health, poverty, deprivation and others significant things. Massive situation but what is the alternative going to be: locking ourselves in forever?

JT discusses the data. Discusses Scotland's procedure when they made the announcement about closing hospitality. Need to do the same in Wales this time around, publish the evidence at the same time so we don't have the questions. Points have been raised at TAG. Need to take into considerations impact on youth, employment, mental health and the unintended consequences of bringing these restrictions e.g. closing pubs at 10 then going forward to house parties.

JT updates the group on the funding elements of CRF.

Meeting (24) of Tourism Group – 10:30-12:30 Friday 9th October 2020

DMfCST discusses it made sense for the responsibility of events to fall under his portfolio. Events have been a constant issue and as far as he's concerned it's his responsibility to make events happen safely, taking full account of the public health context.

- Raised disappointment that large organisation like Celtic Manor, The Vale, Bluestone etc has zero revenue coming in and still expected to pay up to £2m a year in rates. Why do they have to pay these rates when The Ritz and Hilton in London don't pay rates? This will 100% effect jobs and livelihoods going forward.

RH commented that they pressed hard on the £690k limit but in agreement with European Union as a state aid level would be illegal for us to break it as it stands, pressed for other options but no progress yet.

- Reported on how the hospitality industry is feeling at the moment with everyone fed up and scared.

JT updates on the economic contract.

- Members raised the need to prepare for longer term as this industry is at the forefront certainly until March.
- Concerns were raised on ERF 3, stating that it is outdated already – vital for cash to keep businesses alive. Businesses aren't able to qualify such as the wedding groups. Discussion around assessing ERF on PAYE reference of 2019 as businesses haven't traded for a year can't judge businesses on October 2020. Look for additional funding such as hardship fund/bridging fund – need more money or closures and redundancies.

Mari Stevens mentions WG will continue to listen to the sector and seek to secure additional funding.

DMfCST thanks all for their continued support and closes the meeting.

Ffion Evans-Humphreys
14/10/2020