

## Meeting (40) of Tourism Group – 17:00, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### **Participants:**

Deputy Minister, CST	WG	Adrian Greason-Walker	WTA
Jason Thomas - Director	WG	Paula Ellis	SW Forum Chair
Rob Holt	WG	Ian Edwards	VB Board rep
Claire Chappell	WG	Steve Hughson	MW Forum Chair
Claire Carew	WG	Philippa George	SE Forum Chair
Rhidian Morgan	WG	Michael Bewick	North Forum Chair
Lucy Von Weber	WG	Andrew Campbell	WTA
Helen Butler	WG	Dave Chapman	UK Hospitality C
Tara Croxton	WG	Anthony Rosser	UK Hospitality C
Kelly Lovell	WG	Sean Taylor	UK TIC Rep
Peter Kellem	WG		

*Apologies; Minister for Mental Health, Wellbeing and Welsh Language & Steven Jones*

Version - Final

### **Main points of the meeting**

#### **1. Welcome & Updates**

Jason Thomas welcomes all and discusses the week ahead with the First Ministers (FM) announcement. The conversation was heavily caveated and confidential due to the sensitivity of the discussion.

#### **2. Taskforce members raised the following points:**

- Question to see if the meetings with Airbnb had been set up? If possible to forge new relationships with the agency going forward? Currently, with agencies you can't tell where visitors are coming from and causes concern.

Officials discuss that they haven't set the meeting up yet, Airbnb are meeting Ministers on statutory registration and will return to this. Airbnb, second homes, wild camping and the legal position on taking bookings needs to be clarified. Officials met with the Chief Executives of the Northern/Western counties and National Parks to brief them on the plans and to ensure continuity.

- Does the *potential 22<sup>nd</sup> April* date for outdoor attractions mean attractions would be in level 2 instead of level 3? Where will indoor activities stand? Huge responsibility with Local Authorities (LA) etc to make sure toilets, car parks are open otherwise it will be chaotic for the re-opening.

Official confirms that we will be in tier 4 until the *22<sup>nd</sup> April*. Had many discussions around outdoor attractions based on feedback to try and get them open as soon as possible. Not all details have been agreed, there are anomalies and certain things in consideration and will continue to press for test events. Signalling outdoor attraction and outdoor hospitality will depend on the position post Easter. The intention is to follow same path as last year. The official mentions further investment to support LA for the opening.

- Grateful for the longer-term view, as it's helpful for organisations with leading time.
- Steer on when test events will happen, CRF future funding is sector critical.

## **Meeting (40) of Tourism Group – 17:00, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

- Want to see more about safety and responsibility in the comms/campaigns, around adventure smart and mountain rescue to minimise injuries and further impacts on the emergency services.

RH said he will continue to press for this to get agreement with test events. Getting the detail in the guidance on the approval process, discussion with PHW on mitigations and still collecting data as this is the key. He continues stating as well as SSF 2, WG in talks for CRF 2 and ERF or SSF post 1<sup>st</sup> April.

Deputy Minister emphasise that there will be continuity of financial support. DM explains that as long as there are legal restrictions on Welsh business, it's the obligations for WG, provided appropriate funding is received from UK Government (UKG) to make the case for the sector to be compensated even in a Public Health (PH) crisis.

- Some voiced that they were slightly disappointed that Wales are behind England in terms of the alfresco dining. They raised the question on when the phasing of welcoming people to indoor establishments with social distancing will take place? It was echoed that Welsh Government (WG) had done an incredible job getting in control of the virus, however, still has a massive impact.
- State aid is still in place and gives business owners concern. Businesses have been closed for 4 months, if there is headroom, important to keep pushing for the 12<sup>th</sup> of April not the 22<sup>nd</sup> April.

JT explains that the priority is to get everyone back to full time education. He explains that there is concern the opening could risk education and on balance Chief Medical Officer (CMO) is content to progress with easements. Will make the case for the larger companies and all sizes of businesses.

DM said that the next Ministerial meeting is tomorrow and cabinet on Monday, will hopefully discuss these issues then.

- Inevitably the industry is going to be asking questions about outdoor hospitality in the press conference with the FM on Friday and the journalists will put pressure on this topic. There is confusion on non-alignment with England and Wales opening.
- There was a discussion on the risks of non-essential retail vs outdoor hospitality and which is most risk. Argument that outdoor hospitality could open as a safe environment.
- Members made a further point on state aid, following hearing feedback form London. This problem will affect the revenue of businesses.

The officials discuss the issues with state aid as there are so many different aspects to it, initially will be the UKG that will set the thresholds. Working with colleagues to try and make this crystal clear to the industry. Wales' support for the industry has been very strong compared to England and can prove this, WG have engaged throughout and will provide support when it's needed.

- Cardiff hoteliers are grateful of SSF and recognised the position they were in to protect the businesses and jobs.
- Request to pursue the idea of re-introducing the voucher system into next year and could be a competition buster at the end of the season.

## **Meeting (40) of Tourism Group – 17:00, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

- Concerns that paid attractions will have to wait another 4-5 weeks before opening with National Trust and CADW sites opening as they can offer outdoor experience.

JT confirms that Cadw and National Trust sites will open for recreation – these sites does not include Castell Coch etc. RH discusses it would be good to revisit the definitions around this, to what constitutes as ‘outdoor experience’ which isn’t an attraction (**Action**).

- Verification on 12<sup>th</sup> April will Wales be doing anything to stop cross border travel?

Official discusses the complexity of the law and explains that it's not the Welsh restrictions that are stopping English people crossing the border as they are in restrictions to the 12<sup>th</sup> April. Let's hope that everything continues to improve drastically and hopefully by April 22<sup>nd</sup> would have vaccinated everyone in the top 9 cohorts.

- Local discussions and planning should be happening throughout Wales and emphasis on the money going to LA should be used at community level.
- Huge thanks to the Deputy Ministers, WG team for the wonderful position the industry is in. As the Deputy Minister steps off, steering the ship to harbour, wonderful flourish to your career and a fitting conclusion to his efforts.

DM said that he can only achieve this through the determination of officials to implement decisions in these meetings. DM said that the imaginative programme for restoration is going to be special and better than anything else in the UK.

RH highlighting that the media will be ready and it will be easy for them to run stories. He emphasised the need to be aware of the issues around this on opening safely and the preparedness. When the industry opened last year there were 2,500 vulnerable people in accommodation, the figure now is up to 6,000 and must ensure that these people are safeguarded.

JT summarises the meeting as a heads up ahead of Fridays' announcement. He discusses that there is optimism but the importance of caution merging out of this lockdown.

### **3. Next meeting – TBC**

Ffion Evans-Humphreys  
15<sup>th</sup> March