



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## South East Wales Regional Tourism Forum

29 November 2022

### Minutes

#### Attendees

Chair – **Fiona Wilton** (Monmouthshire Cottages), **Rhidian Morgan**, **Rebecca Rees**, **Helen Butler**, **Julie Osmond**, **Clare Dwight** (Visit Wales), **Paul Williams** (Celtic Manor), **Martin Astley** (Bike Park Wales), **Lynfa Protheroe** (Merthyr Tydfil Council), **Alice Brown** (Bridgend CBC), **Julie Heaven** (Aneurin Leisure), **Antony Bolter** (Caerphilly CBC), **Rob Nolan** (Cardiff Airport), **Beth Meade** (WMC), **Lynne Richards** (Newport Council), **Nerys Royal** (RCT Council), **Rebecca Clay** (Visit Dean Wye Tourism Association), **Mari Lowe** (Valleys Regional Park), **Alyson Tippings** (Blaenau Gwent Council), **Nicola Edwards** (Monmouthshire Council), **Amy Doore** (RSPB), **Nia Hollins** (Vale of Glamorgan Council), **Stephen Leeke** (The Vale Resort), **Gaynor Thomas** (Cardiff Council), **Ruth Waycott** (Wye Valley AONB)

Guest presenters: **Sioned Humphreys** (Pembrokeshire Coast), **Eve Nicholson** (NRW)

Apologies: **Sally Walters** (Dwr Cymru), **Vanessa Russell** (Celtic Collection), **Tim Howell** (Parkdean Resorts), **Claire Hamer** (Museum Wales), **Paula Baggot** (Cardiff Airport), **Adrian Cole** (Caerphilly Tourism Association), **Paul Brandwood** (Royal Mint), **Stephen Davies** (Penderyn distillery), **Lynsey Handley** (Merthyr Tydfil Council), **Jo Nugent** (The Angel Abergavenny), **Hugh Murray** (Porthcawl Surf), **Paul Beddoe** (Vale Resort), **Rachel Cilliers** (Rock UK), **Kim Waters** (Abergavenny Food Festival), **Paula Warren** (The Hide at St Donats), **Kevin Hire** (Chepstow Racecourse), **Phil Sykes** (Aneurin Leisure)

### 1. Welcome & Introduction from Chair

1.1 FW welcomed attendees and introduced new members to the Forum:

- **Rebecca Clay, Head of Tourism** at Visit Dean Wye Tourism Association. The association has been an active member in previous years so pleased to welcome them back.
- **Beth Meade, Head of Brand and Marketing** at the Wales Millennium Centre replaces Elin Rees.
- **Rob Nolan and Paula Baggot** from Cardiff Airport replace Rhiannon Jenkins who is on secondment.

1.2 The minutes from the previous meeting in September were circulated after the meeting with one amendment noted. These are now finalised and have been added to the Tourism Zone on the [Business Wales website](#). The updated and agreed Terms of Reference (TOR) have also been shared with the Forum. FW explained the four regional Fora chairs have agreed a common TOR but agenda topics between the regions would differ.

- 1.3 Since the last meeting there had been two events held on the Tourism Levy within this region - one organised by Welsh Government and one by the four Fora chairs. A paper has been circulated summarising the views expressed by attendees at the Chair led session. FW said this is not an attempt to influence views but to strongly encourage members to contribute their own views to the ongoing consultation. She encouraged attendees to respond in a thoughtful manner and said there had been good feedback on this paper with some saying it had raised points they hadn't considered. However, responses needed to be drafted individually as copying and pasting someone else's views will count as one response. Views should reflect the impact on your business. England and Scotland are also discussing this matter and 13 December is the closing date: [Discretionary visitor levy for local authorities | GOV.WALES](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/discretionary-visitor-levy-for-local-authorities)
- 1.4 At the last meeting there was an update on the Reform of the School Year agenda. There is no further update for this meeting but the team will come back to us with new information as it becomes available.

## **2. Wales Coast Path: 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

- 2.1 Representatives from the Wales Coast Path shared the marketing/engagement activities that have been underway during the celebratory year. Feedback was requested by the Forum on how tourism businesses could benefit from closer connections with the Wales Coast Path and National Trails (Offa's Dyke Path/Glyndwr's Way) and explore what resources and activities could be developed in partnership. Suggestions were made around short videos that stakeholders could embed, circular routes and linking inland areas. SH and EN agreed a shorter version of the six minute video shown would be beneficial and would produce this and share with the Forum.

## **3. Visit Wales update**

- 3.1 JO said the Events team are working with the events advisory group on a plan. A bid will soon go in for the Euros and it's hoped the legacy of this will carry across Wales. The final event for 2022 has been delivered and activity will recommence in the New Year.
- 3.2 RM said the Minister made an oral statement on the Statutory Licensing scheme (previously described as Registration) on 15 November, no date has been set for the consultation but this is likely to go live next month. The Forum will be updated on progress. FW encouraged members to look carefully at the detail of the consultation when published and to read about and consider what has happened already in Scotland as lessons could possibly be learned from the Scot's experience.
- 3.3 Next month Visit Wales are running a pilot efficiency campaign Sustainable Tourism Wales until the end of the financial year. This will be based on the Tourism Zone and will focus on five themes: water, waste, energy, supply chains and travel. Marketing packs are also being developed and we're working in conjunction with Business News Wales as they have a large stakeholder database and platform. The campaign will also feature live events, podcasts and showcase examples from Businesses across Wales. RM explained the campaign would

feature both SMEs and large businesses sharing best practice. If members had a good story to share, please get in touch with Visit Wales.

- 3.4 Visit Wales are now considering the third round of Brilliant Basics funding for FY 23-24. It's likely that the criteria will remain the same as last year but with an increased grant rate. There will be a pot of funding of £2.5m and EOIs will be available in January. AD asked if BB would only be available to Local Authorities again. RM said consideration was being given to support for third sector organisations although applications would probably need to be made via the local authorities.
- 3.5 Another pot of funding available for businesses is the Wales Tourism Investment Fund (WTIF). This is a £50m fund delivered by the Development Bank of Wales (DBW). This is currently a mix of loan and grant. There is a strong pipeline of products coming through and this will have a positive impact on the market place. RM encouraged any potential projects to contact DBW.
- 3.6 RM added that Welsh Government understands the pressures businesses are facing with the rise in costs. We are listening to the concerns raised by the sector and will take into account from a policy perspective. The Visitor Economy Forum provides a direct route for the Fora Chairs to feed back to the Minister and Ministers are aware of the pressures the sector is facing. Welsh Government is reviewing its budget position following the Chancellor's Autumn statement.
- 3.7 FW said abandoning or deferring the pressure of the 182 nights sold target demand of the Non-Domestic rate would decrease pressure on businesses which is not brought about by any inadequacy on their part but by the recession and inability of customers to pay for holidays. Even previously successful businesses may struggle to meet this target during the cost of living crisis and there could be unintended consequences if too many good businesses are forced to close by the new rules. AB said there is a business in Caerphilly County Borough who only complies with the 182 day requirement by dramatically reducing overnight stay prices – this is not good business practice (and may not be accepted as valid commercial letting by HMRC). A link was shared in the chat to a Welsh Government press release: Additional flexibility in the application of council tax premiums and letting criteria
- 3.8 CD said Visit Wales changed marketing approaches in the last year and ran above the line with campaign spend and advertising. The Croeso campaign ran from June – August following feedback from industry. From January the focus of campaign activity will be for the Year of Trails. TXGB has been licensed and made available to businesses in Wales with a regional contract now in place. Mid Wales Tourism have been appointed and this information would be cascaded across the region. The presentation will be circulated with the minutes.

#### **4. Sector updates / AOB**

- 4.1 A number of sector updates have been received in written format and will be circulated after the meeting. The Chair asked for any Wales wide updates or further sector updates to be brought to the attention of the Forum.

- 4.2 FW alerted the forum to the council tax premiums consultation which includes long term vacant properties and the issues building delays and property sale delays are causing businesses.
- 4.3 FW asked Local Authorities to check the number of nights which were available for legal sale in their own local area. During covid, lockdowns providers couldn't legally operate and there were both national and local closure dates applicable. There is no standard national number of closed nights and when deciding whether operators did or did not achieve the (then) necessary 70 nights, or whether what they did achieve was fair and reasonable, the local situation applicable to the address of the property should be considered. Some Local Authorities are still penalising owners unreasonably by not including local lockdowns in their calculations.
- 4.4 FW concluded the meeting by thanking attendees for their input and reminding attendees they were advocates for their sector, so messages should be taken back from today and shared with colleagues and attendees should proactively bring forward thoughts from stakeholders. Messages from today will be taken forward to the Visitor Economy Forum.
- 4.5 FW reminded all to make every effort to attend or to send a deputy if this was not possible, and said attendance will be monitored moving forward in accordance with the TOR of the Forum.
- 4.6 The next meeting will take place on 28 February.