

# Fforwm Twristiaeth Rhanbarthol De Orllewin Cymru South West Wales Tourism Forum

Minutes, Tuesday 8 February 2022

## Present

GR, Chair: Glangwili Mansion  
JP, Vice Chair: PCNPA  
KD, NPT Council  
DO, Visit Pembrokeshire  
HP, Carmarthenshire CC  
JD, Clydey Cottages  
FK, Oakwood  
SB, Carmarthenshire TA  
TF, The Seren Collection  
ZW, Folly Farm  
SC, Tourism Swansea Bay  
HJ, Bluestone  
RR, Bluestone  
AC, University of Wales Trinity St David's

SH, Swansea Council  
MH, Dwr Cymru  
MS, Call of the Wild  
ML, Valleys Regional Park  
PE, Retreats Group  
GG, WTSWW  
PR, WATO/PCF

## Visit Wales / Welsh Government

Steffan Roberts – Deputy Director – Tourism Development  
Heledd Owen, Deputy Director - Marketing  
Lucy Von Weber, Head of Marketing  
Rhidian Morgan, Head of Tourism Development  
Jen Velu, Tourism Research  
Kerry Thatcher, Partnerships Manager  
Sue Thomas, Head of Business Development & Cruise Wales  
Jane Donald, Regional Engagement Team  
Ceri Jones, SW Regional Engagement Manager

Tom Cleaver, Welsh Treasury  
Elin Morgan, Welsh Treasury  
David Greenhough, Welsh Treasury  
Yasmin Reid-Linfoot, Welsh Treasury

<b>Welcome, Introductions and Opening Remarks</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>GR welcomed forum members to the meeting and thanked them for attending. He started the meeting by thanking PE for all her work as Chair of the South West Wales Forum over the past two years.</p> <p>SR also thanked PE on behalf of Welsh Government for her invaluable contribution and leadership during the most challenging of times.</p>	

GR emphasised the business expertise that members of the Forum hold and that he wishes for the Forum to continue to work closely to support Welsh Government. A discussion on Forum Terms of Reference to be held later in the meeting.

## **LA & TA/DMO updates**

### **Swansea Council – SH**

- Opening of the new Swansea Arena will take place 2<sup>nd</sup> week of March.
- As well as their traditional activity, Swansea are providing private sector support through their Economic Recovery plan.
- They have recently launched a TikTok platform.

### **NPT Council – KD**

- Conditional Planning received by the Wildfox development at Afan Forrest which will see approx. 900 jobs created.
- Valleys Regional Park have provided funding for developments at Afan Forrest as part of their Discovery Gateways;
- Dramatic Heart of Wales Marketing Campaign is ongoing and has been adopted across Council;
- Leisure Services for NPT will now be delivered in house;
- Changing places facility currently being built at Aberavan with funding provided through Brilliant Basics.

### **Carmarthenshire Council - HP**

- HP added that Carmarthenshire Council have also received funding through the Valleys Regional Park Discovery Gateways for Llyn Llech Owain;
- Carmarthenshire Council was successful in securing significant tourism funding through the Levelling Up fund;
- Some delays with the Pendine TAD project due to storm damage;
- Carmarthenshire Council have weekly hotspot meeting with teams across the LA to manage problem areas/hotspots;

### **Visit Pembrokeshire - DO**

- Membership numbers with Visit Pembrokeshire have increased;
- Currently undertaking a number of Community engagement events on the Pembrokeshire Destination Management Plan;
- DO also highlighted the 'Pembrokeshire – Open to All' project aiming to make Pembrokeshire an exemplary destination offering great service and facilities to disabled visitors.

### **Tourism Swansea Bay - SC**

- Tourism Swansea Bay are in the process of opening a TIC in the Gower Heritage Centre. The Centre will showcase local produce;
- SC emphasised the feedback he is getting from a number of members is that they are finding it difficult to pay bills with increased costs in a number of areas.

<p><b>Carmarthenshire Tourism Association – SB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recently very busy period – Involved in the consultation on Statutory Registration and highlighting the support available to businesses as a result of latest restrictions.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Visit Wales updates</u></b></p> <p>Steffan Roberts, Heledd Owen, Lucy von Weber &amp; Rhidian Morgan presented on 'Let's Shape the Future' Recovery Plan and the Visit Wales draft Business Plan 2022-23 (Copies of Slides circulated with the Minutes).</p> <p><b>Steffan Roberts – Deputy Director Tourism Development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SR emphasised that it has been a challenging period for everyone. We have had the recovery plan steering us through the pandemic. We are currently at Alert Level 0 and the exit strategy will be released on Friday of this week;</li> <li>This meeting and other Regional Fora meetings are an opportunity to share at an early stage the business plan for 2022-2023 and to listen and take on board feedback;</li> <li>The Welsh Government draft budget has been announced.</li> <li>The new financial year is an opportunity to press the 'reset button';</li> <li>For the first time in a long time we have also been provided with a 3 year budget (2022-2025) which allows us to look longer term;</li> <li>Annual budget of £5m Capital and £10.7m Revenue funding confirmed for Tourism Development &amp; Marketing;</li> <li>RM provided details on some of the Funding Streams being developed for this financial year;</li> <li>Due to time constraints, SR emphasised that VW are eager to hear the views of Forum members and encouraged them to e-mail any feedback to CJ or JD.</li> </ul> <p><b>Heledd Owen – Deputy Director, Marketing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total annual revenue budget for the Wales Cymru Brand is £9.62m;</li> <li>The mission remains 'To inspire audiences around the world to choose Wales';</li> <li>HO provided an overview on the direction and marketing priorities in going forward;</li> <li>LvW provided details on the review undertaken of the recovery plan 'Let's Shape the Future'.</li> </ul>	CJ
<p><b>Tourism Levy Update – DG (Copies of presentation slides sent with minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivery of discretionary tourism levy powers for LAs included as part of the Programme for Government to enable re-investment back into local infrastructure and services;</li> <li>Consultation to take place this Autumn;</li> <li>The team would like to meet/engage with a range of partners. DG asked for any questions/queries to be emailed to <a href="mailto:TourismLevy@gov.wales">TourismLevy@gov.wales</a></li> </ul> <p>JP asked if there would be any restrictions in terms of how the Levy is spent by LAs. DG responded that the intention is that the tax will be re-invested back into tourism.</p>	

<p>MS asked if any of the other devolved nations are looking at introducing a levy. DG responded by confirming that Scotland have done some work in this area however this was put on hold due to the pandemic. Some concerns by Forum members that this could fuel the anti-English messages being pushed by some of the English media during the pandemic.</p> <p>GR concluded by adding that he could see pros and cons to the introduction of the levy and thanked DG and his colleagues for the update.</p>	
<p><b>Research Update - Jen Velu</b> (Copy of the presentation slides sent with the minutes)</p>	CJ
<p><b>Discussion on Terms of Reference</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GR informed members that the 4 Regional Tourism Fora Chairs had recently met to update the Terms of Reference. The draft updated ToR being proposed by the Chairs had been circulated in advance of the meeting;</li> <li>• Due to time constraints GR invited comments on the ToR to be emailed to him;</li> <li>• Following the series of regional meetings the chairs will send a final version to Welsh Government for consideration;</li> <li>• GR will update forum Members on ToR at the next meeting.</li> </ul> <p>PE emphasised that consideration must be given to Diversity and Inclusivity. Gender balance is currently missing from the ToR.</p>	GR
<p><b>Skills &amp; Recruitment</b></p> <p><b>Tourism &amp; Hospitality Recruitment Campaign</b> - Kerry Thatcher (slides sent out with the minutes).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two new case studies recently produced – Folly Farm &amp; Bluestone highlighting variety of roles within the industry;</li> <li>• Filming currently taking place at Trewythen Hall, Llanidloes focussing on Apprentices;</li> <li>• Need as many stakeholders as possible to use the #theexperiencemakers in their recruitment adverts and PR/marketing;</li> <li>• Apprenticeship week being held 7-13 February – a toolkit with further information available here <a href="#">App Week 2022 Toolkit ENGLISH.pdf (gov.wales)</a>.</li> <li>• Please share your examples of those providing Best Practice in recruitment &amp; working practices;</li> <li>• For up to date information on support available on skills and recruitment visit <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/skills">https://businesswales.gov.wales/tourism/skills</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Marriott Hotels training programme</b> - Andrew Campbell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AC wished to officially thank PE for her support as Chair of the Forum over the past 2 years;</li> <li>• AC is Professor of Practice at University of Wales Trinity Saint David and shared the success they have had with a work based learning programme they have delivered with the Marriott Group;</li> <li>• When they originally approached the global brand they were sceptical for fear of damage to the brand, however they managed to get them on board which</li> </ul>	CJ

<p>resulted in a £10m programme with over 1050 students participating. The programme has now also been opened up to 50 hotels in England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The image of the industry is an issue, however the Marriott programme is an example of what can be achieved when we think a little differently;</li> <li>• University of Wales Trinity Saint David's are currently developing a Gastronomy degree in collaboration with Marco Pierre White.</li> </ul> <p><b>Bluestone Academy</b> - Helen John</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bluestone Academy Mission Statement is 'To Transform the perception of careers in the Tourism Industry';</li> <li>• HJ highlighted that around 60% of Welsh businesses say there is a skills shortage in their organisation and 59% say that their business has suffered as a result. 80% however believe that providing training is preferable to hiring externally;</li> <li>• Bluestone is currently working with 10 trainees through the Kick-Start programme, a number of which are staying with the company into fulltime employment;</li> <li>• Bluestone Academy aims to showcase that there are a number of options in addition to further education;</li> <li>• They are working closely with schools and colleges;</li> <li>• HJ emphasised that transport is a barrier to recruitment in an area like Pembrokeshire and this has been made worse as a result of Covid with a number of young people who have not received driving lessons over the past 2 years.</li> </ul> <p>GR thanked AC &amp; HJ for presenting.</p>	
<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>ZW raised, on behalf of WAVA, their concerns regarding the recent engagement events on the Reform of the school year. A number of visitor attractions would be significantly impacted by some of the options put forward at the events. ZW also emphasised that due to the number of different stakeholders at the event it was difficult to put forward some of the concerns from the perspective of a tourism business.</p> <p>JP and JD echoed the comments made by ZW.</p> <p>LvW responded by thanking members for getting involved in the events and encouraged members to respond to the consultation.</p> <p>HO confirmed that she would go back to the policy lead with the feedback from the meeting and the 4 Regional Chairs will also flag concerns on behalf of the Forum.</p> <p>GR ended the meeting by thanking members for all their contributions.</p>	<p>HO GR</p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting:</b> To be confirmed</p>	