

# Visit Wales

## South West Wales Regional Forum

Minutes from Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018  
National Botanic Garden of Wales

### **Present**

George Reid (GR)	Carmarthenshire Tourism Association
Jacqui Davies (JDa)	Clydey Cottages
<b>Vicky Martin (VM)*</b>	Dwr Cymru / Welsh Water
Tim Brace (TB)	FBM Holidays and Pembrokeshire Tourism Association
Zoe Wright(ZW)	Head of Marketing, Folly Farm
Nic Beggs (NB)	General Manager, Bay Leisure Ltd, LC, Swansea
<b>Clare Stowell (CS)*</b>	Milford Waterfront
<b>Huw Francis (HF)*</b>	National Botanic Garden of Wales
<b>Emily Beaumont (EB)*</b>	National Trust
Paul Stone (PS)	Oakwood Theme Park
James Parkin (JP)	Director of Delivery and Discovery, PCNPA
Paula Ellis (PE)	Group General Manager, Retreats Group
Stephen Crocker (SC)	Tourism Swansea Bay
Adam Smith (AS)	Village Hotel Club
Gina Gavigan (GG)	WTSSW
Alan Turner (AT)	Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)
Sarah Owen (SO)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Tonia Thomas (TT)	Swansea Council
Sarah Fowler (SF)	Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC)
Philip Abraham (PA)	Regional Engagement Manager, VW
Jane Donald (JD)	Regional Engagement Team, VW
Rob Holt (RH)	Deputy Director Tourism Development & Major Events
Mari Stevens (MS)	Deputy Director Marketing
Peter Francombe (PF)	Tourism Industry Support Manager, VW

### **Apologies**

Glenn Hewer	Bluestone Resorts Ltd
Nia Ball	Carmarthenshire Tourism Association
Sue Thomas	WG, Visit Wales
Kevin Davies	Gwesty'r Emlyn Hotel
Hannah Worrall	Oakwood Theme Park
Jane Lewis	Regional Learning Partnership
Nigel Morgan	Swansea University
Mark Bulson	Scamperholidays Ltd
Neil Kedward	The Grove and Seren Collection
Andrew Campbell	WATO / POOG
Paul Renfro	PCC
Martin White	CCC
Huw Parsons	CCC
Deina Hockenhull	NPT CBC
Karleigh Davies	Head of Programme Development, VW
Gerwyn Evans	

### **1 Chair Introduction**

NB welcomed new attendees and gave brief introduction on format of meeting including an amendment to the agenda with Rob Holt Deputy Director Tourism Development & Major Events to deliver item 2.

- Quick intro of new representatives to Forum as highlighted above\*
- NB congratulated everyone involved in the National Tourism Awards and those shortlist / winners. Very positive event and thanked Visit Wales for leading on this.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exciting news to see Qatar Airways launching this week</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2 Welsh Government update including National Development Framework (NDF)</b></p> <p>Rob Holt briefed the group on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inaugural flight and official launch of Qatar Airways into Cardiff (a representative has agreed to discuss opportunities at the next meeting).</li> <li>• the success of the National Tourism Awards (NTA) offering congratulations to the 4 regional category winners in the SW</li> <li>• the proposed 2019 Tourism Summit</li> <li>• the successful meeting the Chairs had had with Lord Elis Thomas resulting in a continued 3 regional approach for tourism (as opposed to the 4 in other sectors in the Economic Action Plan (EAP))</li> <li>• the ongoing work covering the EAP and the appointment of the x3 Regional Directors with Rhodri Griffiths being appointed covering Mid and West – links to be forged, invite to future meeting</li> <li>• the Business Barometer- Easter - and the movement towards stat collection on a quarterly basis</li> <li>• the appointment of Heledd Williams as Head of Business Events</li> <li>• the position re funding and the new TAIS round open (until 25<sup>th</sup> May)</li> <li>• the National Development Framework (NDF) and its just released consultation</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Action:</b> invite Cardiff Airport representative</p>	RH
<p><b>Action:</b> invite Rhodri Griffiths, Mid and West Regional Director to future meeting</p>	VW
<p><b>Action:</b> invite to Head of Business Events</p>	RH
<p><b>Action:</b> link to NDF (<i>attached</i>)</p>	RH
<p><a href="https://beta.gov.wales/national-development-framework-issues-options-and-preferred-option">https://beta.gov.wales/national-development-framework-issues-options-and-preferred-option</a></p>	
<p><b>3 Prince's Trust – Skills development and partnerships that works</b></p> <p>Nic Beggs introduced Philip Jones (PJ), Director in Wales of the Prince's Trust.</p> <p>PJ gave an informative brief on the history and role of the Trust. Their focus on giving vulnerable young people the opportunity to thrive and to support them in building skills and confidence. The opportunities from a 'business point of view' including filling vacancies with eager, bright, motivated apprentices and trainees.</p> <p>They have 8 programmes offered via 6 units in the UK and work in partnership with educators and employers to fulfil their 5yr vision to help 6000 young people to get their lives back on track, to live, learn and earn. They liaise with organisations including housing associations and the probation service, colleges, uniformed services, employers delivering sector-specific employability courses and sporting organisations to deliver practical and financial support helping to develop self-esteem and skills for work.</p> <p>He suggested that businesses and organisations consider partnering and described the benefits of working with the Prince's Trust and asked that his details be shared so that members could get in touch.</p>	
<p><b>Action:</b> forward PJ details to Forum Members</p>	VW / NB
<p><b>4 TA Regional Updates</b></p> <p>Tim Brace described Pembrokeshire Tourism (PT) activity as including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ having held very successful Tourism Awards</li> <li>○ the continuing struggle to grow membership particularly in light of staff resources</li> </ul>	

- the continued additional marketing push predominantly via social media
- the launch of future Dog Friendly Awards
- the comments that Easter had supplied fewer visitors with forward booking not being as good as previous years – with this appearing to be an on-going trend
- their continued training packages (including those in conjunction with the other regional TA's)
- the Pembrokeshire Tourism TPIF bid and work ongoing relating to that application
- the Destination Pembrokeshire Partnership meetings moving forward (with draft plan from 2019 onwards about to come to consultation phase) and
- the continuing aspiration for Saundersfoot to achieve World Host Destination status

Stephen Crocker, representing Tourism Swansea Bay covered, as mentioned by TB, the continued training offers both regionally and at their base on Gower, the Gower Ambassador training courses and their continuing to strive to achieve member expectations with limited resource – reiterating the issues faced by the other Associations.

George Reid, on behalf of Carmarthenshire Tourism Association (CTA) explained:

- the appointment of 5 new, voluntary Directors
- the improvements to the Visit Carmarthenshire web site
- the membership drive with 15 new members since the beginning of the year
- the work moving toward the Awards (June) and the 580 entrants with 50 finalists in 15 categories (the encouragement of businesses to enter producing 'warm' membership leads)
- the continuing development of the Hwyl offer and the scheme launch at the Awards
- the significant achievement of having trained 134 Ambassadors over the past few years
- and their continuing struggle to achieve sustainability – again – with the same issues as the other two regional TA's

## **5 Funding 'a new way of working'**

Stephen Crocker (SC) gave a brief presentation outlining the issues he felt were facing Tourism Associations (TA's) at the moment and opportunities to achieve sustainability going forward. The key points raised were as follows:

- 1) The industry was experiencing financial pressures in a globally competitive market place and this was reflecting on TA's membership numbers and incomes
- 2) Tourism Swansea Bay are reviewing the services it provides to members to see if it is 'fit for purpose' and to build a sustainable business model going forward. This includes entering into a MOU with Swansea Council to eliminate duplication
- 3) Applying for projects which are not part of the TA's core business in order to gain funding was unsustainable
- 4) Was there a requirement for formal regional working to reduce 'backroom' costs?
- 5) Do TA's need to become strong lobbying bodies to remain relevant?
- 6) Should TA's provide a TIC function?
- 7) The potential that the Forum could provide guidance in terms of future direction

Much discussion ensued including: how to work more closely together and is there an argument for working as a region, ways of raising funds, how best to liaise with government and creating a forward plan as a group and not individuals. To look at other business models that work elsewhere (even those within Wales ie NWT and MWT). Whether looking at the BID process could work effectively, whether there should be a 'retainer' paid for certain functions ie communication with and feeding back from the industry and the fact that creating and maintaining links to the LA and DMP's would be crucial – that the TA's, LA's and NP's working properly and effectively together would be a powerful resource particularly if political boundaries could be obscured whilst destination marketing be retained.

## **6 Year of Discovery and the Digital Gateway**

Mari Stevens (MS) explained the proposed way forward for Year of Discovery (YoD) whilst acknowledging the work focussing on the x2 marketing campaign phases still to come for Year of Sea and the learnings from previous themed years – that they may have been too different from

each other to encourage real legacy and sustainability but that have galvanised partnership working and gained media attention.

She emphasised the hopes for YoD will encompass the 3 pillar messages adventure, culture and landscape using the theme to focus activity. She concentrated on: the shift in perceptions, the change of approach recognising the importance of social media, the need to build product, experiences and experiential holidays that are unique and enriching too (well being benefits being increasingly expected and acknowledged) linking actions to destinations, regions and the Wales Way. She suggested that she would be talking directly to partners possibly via stakeholder engagement or the Autumn Roadshow.

Forum comment included: using the Wales Coastal Path more effectively as a key product, focussing 'outdoor' marketing in Spring not Autumn and focussing on the well being aspects. Also the concern that Brand Wales is not seen in the region and the local market place ie there is some disconnect at operator, consumer level.

MS went on to brief the Forum on the new Digital Gateway which sees a portfolio of sites coming together having re-purposed, improved content published across all segments. The build and content being managed over the summer and the look to have interactive content ie along weekend magazine type features and contributor strands ie insider guides with a beta site live in 2019.

She, briefly, discussed suggestions on how industry could get involved in redeveloping content via regional content planners ie one person contact – again – a possible item for small workshops or Autumn Roadshow discussion.

**ACTION:** Presentations to be made available upon request

**VW / MS**

## **7 AOB (including previous Minutes and Actions)**

Minutes from previous meeting considered to be correct, actions achieved bar one – to invite Minister. NB suggested that next Forum date not yet be confirmed but that a range of dates be offered end Sept / early Oct. for consideration to Minister's diary.

Acknowledgement that the representative from Cardiff Airport (unable to attend this meeting) had agreed to present at the next – to be pursued.

NB raised comment and concerns from Jane Lewis, RLP, that there had been very little interaction with the skills survey within the region, this following the last Forum where skills had been an emotive and heavily discussed topic – only 13 operators had completed. He agreed to forward the link again and reiterated the importance of the industry making representation to government re the skills agenda.

Other items raised included:  
congratulations to Pembrokeshire Coast being Countryfile Destination of the Year  
NPT upcoming event focussing on the possible reinstatement of the tourism function and the 'packaging' legislations being strengthened in July

**Action:** pursue inviting Minister to next meeting

**VW / NB**

**Action:** invite Cardiff Airport to present

**VW / NB**

**Action:** re-circulate Skills Consultation link (*achieved, 4<sup>th</sup> May*)

**NB**

## **Date of next meeting: to be decided (Sept/Oct)**

**Important diary date** to all involved in tourism in the region – **13<sup>th</sup> September** Visit Wales industry Roadshow, venue Folly Farm.