

## VISIT WALES

### South East Wales Regional Tourism Forum

21<sup>st</sup> February 2019

Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff

#### Present:

Name		Representing
Philippa George	PG	Heritage Tourism & Events Ltd (Chair)
Cerys Davey	CD	ICC Wales
Gaynor Thomas	GT	Visit Cardiff / Meet Cardiff
Kerry Jennings	KJ	Parkway Hotel
Sarah Higgs	SH	Parkway Hotel
Alyson Tippings	AT	Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council
Nia Hollins	NH	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Jo Nugent	JN	Angel Hotel, Abergavenny
Alice Brown	AB	Bridgend County Borough Council
Stephen Leeke	SL	Vale Resort / Cardiff Hoteliers
Paul Williams	PW	Celtic Manor
Jennifer Collins	JC	Celtic Manor
Kevin Hire	KH	Chepstow Racecourse
Vicky Jones	VJ	Bridgend County Borough Council
Nia Elias	NE	Wales Millennium Centre
Nicola Edwards	NE	Monmouthshire County Council
Kate Clark	KC	Deputy Director, Culture, Sport & Tourism
Phil Lewis	PL	Valleys Regional Park, Welsh Government
Karen Matthews	KM	Cardiff Hoteliers
Lauren Reed	LR	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Ian Christopher	IC	Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council
Paul Rees	PR	Coleg y Cymoedd
Tracey Morris	TM	The Royal Mint Experience
Claire Dwight	CD	Senior Marketing Manager, Visit Wales
Gerwyn Evans	GE	Head of Tourism Development, VW
Peter Francombe	PF	Tourism Industry Support Manager, VW
Jason Thomas	JT	Director for Culture, Sport & Tourism
Louisa Giles	LG	Regional Engagement Manager, VW
Catrin Taylor	CT	National Museum Wales
Claire Hamer	CH	National Museum Wales
David Rees	DR	Cadw

#### Apologies

Ieuan Sherwood	Bridgend County Borough Council
Bob Guy	Vale of Glamorgan Council
Emily Beaumont	National Trust

Francesca Bowen	Severn Hills Hideaway
Rachel Allen	Rock UK Summit Centre
Ken Smith	The National Trust
Kate Blewitt	Torfaen County Council
Lynne Richards	Newport City Council

<p><b><u>Welcome &amp; Introductions</u></b></p> <p><b>Phillipa George (PG) introduced herself as the new Chair of the Forum and would like her chairmanship to focus on achieving better private sector representation, leading to clarity of what the region would like to feedback to Welsh Government and the Deputy Minister</b></p> <p><b>She outlined she looks forward to getting to know everybody and working with them over her time a Chair.</b></p> <p><b>Minutes &amp; Actions:</b> Minutes were agreed and actions discussed.</p> <p><b>Actions carried forward:</b> 1, DMG to provide an update to members on Destination Investment Plan regional projects at the next meeting following a presentation to City Deal Board will be taking place in March.</p> <p>2, Kellie Beirne is the new City Deal contact who will re- contacted and invited to the next Forum meeting in June.</p>	<p><b>DMG</b></p> <p><b>VW</b></p>
<p><b><u>Visit Wales Regional Update, Gerwyn Evans</u></b></p> <p>GE thanked members for submitting their Regional Updates. These are extremely useful for all members and a key communication tool for VW to get an understanding of the activities taking place across the region.</p> <p>Visit Wales is about to launch a conversation around the new strategic direction at the Tourism Summit in March for what will replace the Partnership for Growth Strategy. The Forums will continue to act as the key conduit to the industry to disseminate messages to trade body representatives and Destination Management groups.</p> <p>Visit Wales Tourism Summit is taking place at the end of March that will coincide with the launch of new investment funds in conjunction with Development Bank for Wales.</p> <p>RTEF &amp; TPIF applications are in the appraisal process. Applicants to be informed of the decision by end of March.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> There will be an update on successful projects at the next June Forum meeting.</p> <p>GE confirmed that the UK Treasury have committed to honouring the</p>	<p><b>VW</b></p>

<p>funding for current EU funded projects until 2020.</p> <p>GE informed members that Scotland has recently began talks to legislate Tourism Tax / Visitor Levy, which would undoubtedly have an impact on the discussion in Wales</p> <p>A meeting has been arranged with key stakeholders to discuss the UK Tourism Sector deal, PG has been invited to represent the Forum.</p> <p><b><u>Visit Wales Marketing Update, Claire Dwight</u></b></p> <p>CD informed members that Lucy Von Weber has been appointed Head of Tourism Marketing and will be attending Forum meetings going forward.</p> <p>CD updated members of St David's Day activities, Year of Discovery work and ongoing marketing work.</p> <p>SL thanked Claire for the update but was concerned there was too much information to take in, in such a short space of time.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> CD to produce a marketing summary paper along with VW Newsletter sign up link and Year of Discover industry guidelines to be circulated.</p> <p>Members are encouraged to promote VW marketing campaigns through use of the hashtag #findyourepic and follow us on social media.</p> <p>Members discussed Trade Shows and highlighted the success Twr y Felin Hotel in St Davids.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Invite to present to next Forum meeting.</p> <p>The Royal Mint Experience informed members of their new tour with Llanerch Vineyard and Welsh Mining Museum entitled 'Mint, Mine &amp; Vine'. As a collective, they have been proactive in attending trade shows and have seen positive results.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> TM agreed to feedback to members after their next Trade show.</p> <p>GE asked for a show of hands for Forum members as to who had seen the Year of Discovery industry guidebook. There were limited numbers so he reinforced the remit of the Forum is to share and disseminate information to their organisations</p> <p><b>Action:</b> All forum members to share the information from the meeting.</p>	<p></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>VW</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>TM</b></p> <p></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p><b><u>Partnership for Growth Workshop – Kate Clark</u></b></p>	<p></p>

KC stated that these workshops are the beginning of a process being repeated at each Forum meeting pan Wales to understand the industries opinions in terms of the delivery of the Partnership for Growth and the shape of future strategy.

The questions discussed were as follows:

- what have been the highlights for the sector over the past 6 years and what should Wales be most proud of?
- where do you feel that Visit Wales and the sector have best made a difference and what have the biggest challenges been?
- how is tourism changing and what do you see as the biggest challenges over the next few years?
- If you were Deputy Minister where would you allocate budget?

Feedback from the workshops included:

What has VW done well?

- branding – the new brand has been well received, the fresh new campaigns have been a step forward and have united the industry behind what the brand is trying to achieve
- thematic years have been great, and the associated joined up marketing
- International and National visibility is improved
- lots of effort going into engagement with industry partners
- good start on digital in a fast moving area and lots of assistance and clarity around what Wales is trying to achieve and how partners can contribute
- leadership – VW has set the scene and a vision for what we are trying to do
- tourism investment – especially TISS

What could we have done better:

- Communication and engagement
- Helping the sector to engage with events and opportunities earlier
- Spell out outputs – case studies and the benefits of investing
- Tourism needs to go beyond hospitality to wider sector
- Need to clarify VW role – they can't do everything
- Better insight into trends
- Better VW ambassadors in the region – regional teams need more support
- Industry needs more familiarity with product
- Big businesses engaged but SMEs struggle
- Budgets too small (obvious at exhibitions)
- Maximise opportunities from RTEF etc by linking to marketing
- Good news that website is being refreshed
- Next strategy needs to focus on people and less on landscapes – don't want to repeat old messages
- The sector is a resource – use us!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do visitors think?</li> </ul> <p>Challenges ahead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills shortages</li> <li>• Long term planning is difficult</li> <li>• Perceptions of Wales and regions not always positive (expensive)</li> <li>• Changing travel behaviour</li> <li>• Connectivity and Public transport in Wales, car dependence, difficulty of getting around</li> <li>• Changes post Brexit</li> <li>• Funding and investment</li> <li>• Competition from UK domestic locations</li> <li>• New generations</li> <li>• Lifestyle businesses – do they have the capability and ambition?</li> <li>• Changing High streets – people want destination shopping experiences</li> </ul> <p>You are the Deputy Minister – what are your priorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look outwards to Ireland not just Wales</li> <li>• Develop business events</li> <li>• Make sure any funding benefits more than one organisation</li> <li>• Build better links across government and share knowledge</li> <li>• Invest more in iconic products</li> <li>• Meet new trends – veganism for example?</li> <li>• Debate over how to respond to tourism tax</li> <li>• Sustainable tourism – we should be driving this forward</li> <li>• Raise profile of tourism and continue to engage with sector</li> </ul> <p>The group also debated the length of the new strategy, how many years should it be focussed over</p> <p>JT noted the importance of a very simple strategy, and aligning structures and functions.</p>	
<p><b><u>Valleys Regional Park, Phil Lewis</u></b></p> <p><b>PL gave an update presentation on the work of the Valleys Taskforce, focusing on the Regional Landscape Park element.</b></p> <p>Valleys Regional Park Prospectus  <a href="https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/181203-valleys-regional-park-prospectus.pdf">https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/181203-valleys-regional-park-prospectus.pdf</a></p>	
<p><b><u>Brexit Update</u></b></p> <p>JT informed members that preparations were underway for a No Deal Brexit. The message is still clear that Wales is open for business and VW will continue to promote Wales as a destination.</p>	

<p>Some members had noticed a slight decrease in number of overseas visitors but nothing remarkable. Others suggested that guests were not willing to spend as much on additional activities.</p> <p>PR strongly encouraged members to review the current training and skills for staff under the terms of Upskilling@Work, EU Funding will continue through the transition of March 29th 2019 until 31st Dec 2020, and, as funding has already been agreed, the project can continue until July 2023, but it is unclear under which legislative body this will continue <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/skills-and-training-programmes/workplace-skills/upskillingwork">https://businesswales.gov.wales/skillsgateway/skills-and-training-programmes/workplace-skills/upskillingwork</a></p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Business Wales Brexit tool to be circulated which includes a useful FAQ section for visitors. <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/">https://businesswales.gov.wales/brexit/</a></p>	<b>VW</b>
<p><b><u>AOB / Closing Remarks</u></b></p> <p>Chair re-emphasised that the Forum requires a greater trade presence along with regular attendance, participation and agenda points suggestions.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Members to send through suggestions for new members from their respective areas.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> Future invites will be sent out via Outlook to assist with meeting arrangements. If members do not reply or fail to attend meetings there will be a 'two strikes and out' procedure implemented. A trail to start meetings earlier by half hour will be put into action from the June Forum meeting.</p> <p>PF requested members to assist in the delivery of South East Tourism Awards as judging panel members for the region and will feed into the National Tourism Awards in November 2019. There will be 13 categories in total. Businesses across Wales have found winning these awards extremely beneficial.</p> <p>The following representatives agreed to act as judging panel members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chair</li> <li>• Chepstow Racecourse</li> <li>• Parkway Hotel</li> <li>• Stephen Leeke, Vale Resort</li> <li>• Vicky Jones, Southern Wales Travel Trade</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> PF to facilitate this group coming together with the information developed in the Mid Wales region</p>	<p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>ALL</b></p> <p><b>PF</b></p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting: 27<sup>th</sup> June – Angel Hotel, Abergavenny, 9.30am</b></p>	