

Destination, Travel & Tourism Members Forum



25/05/2021



12:00 - 2:00



Online via Zoom

Attendees:

- Laurence Winmill - M4 Media, Cakes & Ale
- Laura Kerlake - Welsh Cottage Holidays -Original Cottages
- Joan - Swansea Bay Stays
- Emily Hunt - Village Hotel
- Lisa Mart - Ambassador Theatre Group
- Edward Morgan
- David Hardy - National Botanic Gardens
- Lee Bazalgette

What is happening?

- Botanic Garden: Reopened last Monday, use of track & trace.
 - Payments are separate due to social distancing rules.
 - 50 people outdoor events - incl. Handlers, trainers, talks. ~43 guests
 - Finished an opened £6.5m land restoration project, two new lakes, two new dams, bridges, cascades.
 - Based on this year's visitor numbers goals on 2018-19, running at 50%.
 - Tackling the challenge of getting visitors from honeypot destinations such as Tenby to have a day out in other areas.
- Managing a business model with restrictions is difficult; table bookings, no shows is difficult.
- Accommodation businesses such as Swansea Bay Stays, Village Hotel are beginning to become busy due to restrictions lifting.
- Developments with Ambassador Theatre Group and Digital Arena
 - First main event at the Digital Area aimed for February.
 - 100 - 160 staged events, conferences on top of that.
 - Keen for it to not be a massive commercial operation, encouraging local events.
 - 10 meeting rooms. Operable walls for flexible spaces.
 - Keys in September. Between Sep - Christmas (guidelines allowing), test events, local bands, open bars.

Promoting South West Wales as a Destination

- Cakes & Ale: Self-sufficient. Social media such as Facebook and Instagram. Paid advertising on those platforms.
- National Botanic Gardens: Accommodation page, signposting to local places to stay. Providers report that they get business from this platform.
- Organic searches mainly bring up Visit Swansea Bay, Welsh Government website, etc.
 - Existing platforms can be clunky, hard to navigate. It's important to focus on user-friendly models.
- Booking platforms such as Tripadvisor, AirBnB.
- Potential for South West Wales Connected to signpost to local hotels in the region.
- No point being affiliated with a site if there's no engagement, irrelevant content.
- Google Analytics is only relevant if the website is coded correctly. Built-in insight tool to see. Google analytics or any data traffic measurement is

important for your business. However, make sure that what you're measuring is relevant.

- Google Tag Manager.
- Build a website and launch it without engagement. It needs to be a living project.

What could we do?

- Meetings with tourism boards via South West Wales Connected are useful sources of information to keep up with what's happening.
 - Would it be useful to capture and disseminate that information to our members?
- Word of mouth is still a very reliable method of promotion. Appreciating recommendation.

Regional Transport Conference

- National Botanic Gardens have attempted a number of schemes to encourage visitors by public transport - is a constant challenge.
- A bus service circulating around places of interest.
- Promotion of car-free destinations to stay.

Resources & References

- [4theRegion: Regional Transport Conference Report & Manifesto](#)
- [Build Back Better - 4theRegion](#)
- [South West Wales Connected Community Rail Partnership](#)
- [National Botanic Gardens Accommodation Blog](#)
- [Google Digital Garage: Fundamentals Course](#)