

Destination, Travel & Tourism Sector Forum



27/09/2022 | **12:00 - 2:00** | **Online via Zoom**

Event Overview:

An integrated, sustainable travel network is essential to prosperity and well-being, with tourism also a key economic driver for the region. We should be working collaboratively to address the challenges we face, to create flourishing local places, connected by inclusive and sustainable transport that meets the needs of businesses, serves communities, and improves well-being across the region.

The theme for this month's event is "Reporting back on the summer season." We will be sharing key insights or updates from Summer 2022, and discuss arising themes about what needs to happen before Summer 2023. We'll be hearing from Geraldine Williams from the Swansea Council Tourism Team and Llyr Roberts, founder of Cwtsh Hostel.

Updates from the Wider Group

Hugh Evans, Head of Community Rail, Transport for Wales

I'm in the early stages of developing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy for TfW across Wales. I'm at this meeting to understand people's views and find out what's happening in the industry. This strategy may be a trial for a more bespoke approach by involving more people to influence the way forward.

Peter & Eric, NEI UK

[NEI UK](#). We have had an outbound tourism business for almost 30 years specialising in holidays to India, South East Asia and South America. During our visits we get a lot of people who want to know if they can visit Wales, which we're unable to do as we're only an outbound business. With this in mind, we soft-launched a new inbound operation called [Wales Beckons](#) and we've done amazingly well. We're looking to make contact with other people we can work with to help increase the number of people coming to Wales.

Lynda James, Councillor for Pennard, Swansea Council

My ward is on the Gower and one of the biggest industries after agriculture is tourism. There's a lot of positive points but there are some negatives as well.

Sarah Morris, Partner Manager, Superfast Business Wales

[Superfast Business Wales](#) helps businesses across Wales to increase their online presence with a three stage programme fully funded by the Welsh Government. We've particularly helped tourism businesses over COVID and have had a number of tourism specific webinars in the last couple of months.

Nigel T Packer, Pelatis Online

[Pelatis Online](#) is an internet strategy and website planning consultancy. There have been many programmes from Welsh Government that have been of benefit to tourism businesses, but there's also problems as I see with this tourism tax, so I wanted to find out what's going on so I can help my clients.

Ryan Peters, Hospitality and Events Co-ordinator, John Burns Foundation

The [John Burns Foundation](#) is a charitable organisation based in Kidwelly. We are very much starting out on our tourism journey and we are launching accommodation next year. We have some glamping pods in their final stages of being prepared and some farmhouse accommodation. We're excited to find out what the year has been like for everyone and what's ahead.

Andrew Bloomfield, Business Engagement Advisor, NPTC Group of Colleges

Part of my role is to engage with businesses and seeing how we can support them with training, funding and job opportunities. I joined today to understand how we could support businesses and if there's anything I could feed back to the college to find out where else we can support.

Lee Bazalgette, Lee Bazalgette Consultancy

Over the summer, with my partner Shanti we held a 'Design meets wellbeing' retreat in Breckfa called [Embodied Spirit](#), where we invited 6 people to come and used a mixture of yoga, long walks and breathwork to draw out narrative. I think that Breckfa is one of the future wellbeing areas of Wales. Wales has so much to offer with how much space it has for this massive wellbeing story that's happening. I'm keen to smash my two interests together: design and wellbeing.

Zubdha Iftakhar, Ceira Gibbs, YMCA Swansea

We work on a YMCA Swansea project called Y-Future, which is about finding environmental solutions in rural areas of Swansea. Travel and tourism is a topic that comes up a lot for our people who live in the outskirts of Swansea.

Clare Sullivan, Development Bank of Wales

I lead the [Wales Tourism Investment Fund](#) alongside Visit Wales, which is a £50 million pound fund to support companies in the tourism sector. The new fund will provide patient capital to tourism businesses of between £100,000 to £5,000,000 for qualifying projects. There is a potential grant intervention of 20% for some qualifying projects. Please reach out for further information:
clare.sullivan@developmentbank.wales

John Davies, BayTrans & Swansea Bay Without a Car

[Swansea Bay Without a Car](#) aims to encourage everyone in the Swansea Bay area to explore and get around by walking, cycling and public transport. With the reintroduction of the [Swansea university bus](#) services, travelling around the city centre is a lot easier. The services are very frequent and are available for all to use.

Nicky Bright, Nicky Bright Holidays

I've got a number of [holiday lets across South Wales](#). I also work with councils to help assist families who need emergency accommodation. I want to find out more information about the increase of prices and to find other revenue sources without relying on AirBnB and Booking.com.

Laura Webley, Tourism Officer, Neath Port Talbot Council

We've recently rebranded from Visit Neath Port Talbot to Dramatic Heart of Wales, which has been officially operating for 12 months.

Marten Lewis, Bluestone

Bluestone are in the process of building 80 new lodges. [Black Pool Mill](#) is currently undergoing restoration and will be reopening close to April 2023 as a heritage restaurant, with all produce being locally sourced. The restaurant will be open to the public.

Bluestone became the first hospitality business to switch all of their gas to biogas, which has wiped approximately 150 tonnes of emissions by making this change. In 2014, Bluestone became the first business to recycle nappies by using [Nappicycle](#) and will also be a world first in using tarmac from these recycled nappies for commercial purposes. Bluestone are also 'carbon footprinting' their menus so consumers can make decisions on their meals based on the emissions.

Llyr Roberts, Cwtsh Hostel



[Cwtsh Hostel](#) is South Wales' only 5* rated hostel by Visit Wales. They opened in November and have 50 single beds, 4 private rooms.

The hostel has no onsite parking and 90% of visitors to the hostel get there by public transport. 80% of visitors are from UK, but the hostel is seeing more demand from international visitors who want to explore Swansea and the Gower.

Cwtsh Hostel has seen steady growth since COVID restrictions were relaxed, with July and August being the hostel's busiest time, with 33% of their bookings taking place on the same day. Events see the hostel become fully booked

The hostel makes it as easy as possible for visitors to explore the surrounding area by promoting events, walking and cycling routes and public transport in the building. The free bus weekends are very well received by visitors.

Geraldine Williams, Tourism Development Officer Swansea Council



Visit Swansea Bay have been busy with a range of successful campaigns this year, with many of them running during winter, spring and autumn in order to encourage visitors outside of the peak summer season.

February saw the [Dark Skies Campaign](#) run in partnership with Visit Wales was very successful, with Gower being an ideal place for stargazing. February and March also saw a campaign to target [dog friendly holidays](#).

Using recovery money from COVID, Visit Swansea Bay launched a series of TV ads via Sky Ad smart, reaching 148k households as a result. They have also used outdoor advertising in key transport hubs across London, Birmingham, Reading and Bristol, which will run until February 2023.

In March and April, Visit Swansea Bay launched a cross platform TikTok and Instagram campaign aimed at 18 - 34 year olds in an attempt to target the audience that no longer interacts with Facebook. In May, they worked with Iolo Williams to encourage visitors to engage with nature and wildlife, while promoting sustainable tourism.

In June, Visit Swansea Bay launched their last piece of print media. The change was made after numbers who picked up the visitor guide dwindled over each year.

The Autumn campaign aims to extend the season to support recovery and uses the #HappyPlace rolling theme.

Looking back at 2022, occupancy figures for hotels are encouraging and seem to be almost back to pre-pandemic levels.

Business Support

To continue to support local tourism businesses, Swansea Council have announced that there is no cost to becoming a Visit Swansea Bay Partner at entry level up to the end of March 2023. This package aims to support businesses through COVID and recovery.

Swansea Council's Tourism Support Fund is currently underway, with 15 projects aimed at improving tourism businesses in rural areas receiving the funding.

Next Steps

Please feel free to reach out to any of the organisations involved in today's sector forum if you have any information or projects to collaborate on. We will be continuing the conversation surrounding the Destination, Travel and Tourism sector..

Follow our Eventbrite page to stay updated with future sector forums. Our sector forums highlight the work of 4theRegion members and partners, their social purpose, and their ambitions for the future and emerging opportunities to collaborate and support each other across South West Wales!

Resources & References

[4theRegion | Destination, Travel & Tourism](#)