



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig
Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
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The South Wales Tourism Marketing Hub



What are the projects aims?

The South Wales Marketing Hub aims to work across public, private and third sector organisations involved in the visitor economy across the Cardiff Capital Region to develop and distribute digital content promoting a range of bookable products to UK and overseas markets including travel trade, business events and consumer campaigns.

How were these aims achieved?

The regional destination website, content creation, travel trade campaign and business tourism campaign formed the core of the activity plan. Regional Destination Website – The Southern Wales Website was upgraded. Content Creation - Digital content including product data,

photography and film was created.

Travel Trade campaign – Worked with the private and third sector to develop itineraries and familiarisation trips along themes and routes linked to the Wales Way. Also delivered the annual Group Buyer Showcase Event in a conventional way before creating online versions due to Covid restrictions. Business Tourism campaign – Whilst a key part of the original plan this sector suffered the worst during Covid and so little work was undertaken.

Consumer campaigns – Product led digital marketing campaigns were undertaken around the restrictions of Covid. These included social media, film and photography to sell the ideas of visiting and exploring Southern Wales once Covid restrictions were lifted.

Who was involved?

The project partners are Bridgend CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Cardiff CC, Newport CC, RCT CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Vale of Glamorgan CBC, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Monmouthshire CBC and Torfaen Tourism Association and the aim was to work with a wide range of tourism businesses and related organisations across the region.

How was the project funded?

The project was funded by the partners (Bridgend CBC, Caerphilly CBC, Cardiff CC, Newport CC, RCT CBC, Merthyr Tydfil CBC, Vale of Glamorgan CBC, Blaenau Gwent CBC, Monmouthshire CBC and Torfaen Tourism Association) along with RTEF funding and trade match funding.

Where did you go for help and advice?

We worked closely with Visit Wales and the Welsh Government to ensure that activity was in line with Covid restrictions and supported other activities being undertaken.

What has been the greatest achievement so far?

The greatest achievements were being flexible and adapting plans to use various channels and media to achieve objectives that would normally have been achieved face to face.

An example of this would be the annual Travel Trade Meet the Buyer and Familiarisation Trip. This normally involves bringing travel trade buyers from across the UK to Southern Wales for 2 – 3 days; organising a trade show where buyers can meet hotels and attractions to discuss and book future trips; and then run a tour for the buyers around the area, visiting new and improved attractions. Indeed, this is what happened in March 2019, just before lockdown.

With Covid this wasn't possible to run the same in 2020. In order to show off the area a virtual farm and meet the buyer event was organised. This brought together around 40 products from across the region with 45 buyers from across the UK. Each product gave a 10-minute presentation of what they offer, prices, etc. – followed by opportunities for questions.

To support the regions attractions and hotels, rehearsals were held to refine presentations and to address technical issues. Their knowledge of the travel trade sector was also improved through the production of a [toolkit](#).

In preparing for the webinar, travel trade businesses across the UK were contacted re their views of the sector and recovery – this proved to be very important in planning the [webinar](#).

To inspire the Travel Trade buyers a video of group opportunities was created to give a taste of new and established products – this was a challenge as most was filmed when attractions were closed. This [film](#) was launched at the webinar and is available for travel trade businesses to use to sell the area. Also, a variety of local produce was sent to all buyers who registered for the webinar, to add an additional dimension to the event – things such as local gin, Welsh cakes, mead, etc.

The webinar was [recorded](#) and is available for reference on the website.

Following the webinar, various farm visits have been organised and reports of tours being booked have been received, although it is difficult to quantify the results.

And the biggest challenge?

Covid 19 restrictions meant that the tourism sector “closed down” and promotional activities had to take place within the legal restrictions. So work had to change from promotion to inspiration for future visits. Much of this focused on the creation of assets such as film and photography (for general and travel trade use) and on social media focusing on messages about what can be undertaken locally (within Covid restrictions), building on the activities of local social media activity.

An agency was engaged to undertake the consumer campaigns – the plans were impossible to achieve due to Covid and so new plans were negotiated. These used competitions and social media to extend to reach of ideas of things to do/places to visit in Southern Wales. [New films](#) were created promoting the area alongside photography.

Any tips for those setting up a similar project?

The partnership is the strength of this project. The identification of shared objectives and the realisation of the opportunities presented by working together rather than in competition are key.

This partnership has been working together for over 10 years; its membership and aims/objectives have changed

numerous times, but the strength is gained through the realisation of opportunities and successes that have been, and can be in the future, by working together.

The creation of a strong partnership and way of working is at the heart of creating a successful project such as this, particularly when major issues such as Covid and the impossibility of implementing initial plans are confronted.

What's next for your project?

The Southern Wales Tourism partnership is ongoing and runs with funds from the partner organisations. With the minimal funds available, the focus is on Travel Trade Tourism and consumer marketing, in particular through social media and the website. The partners all recognise that the visitor has little or no knowledge for local authority boundaries, and that by working together there are opportunities to extend stays and visitor spend, thus benefiting the overall tourism economy, which is even more important as we come out of Covid restrictions.

