

Building relationships to sell Wales to the world

The aim is to build relationships with the travel trade in key markets and show what Wales has to offer as a holiday destination for 2020 and beyond:

- International presence more important than ever
- Announcing 2020 as Year of Outdoors

During the event, Visit Wales will announce that its next themed year from 2020 will be Year of Outdoors – which will reinforce Wales’ strengths of adventure, culture and the outdoors.

Year of Outdoors will follow on from Year of Discovery 2019, when visitors are being invited to discover something new about Wales. 2019 has got off to a great start, with the Sunday Times Magazine choosing Wales as one of the rising stars of 2019. Wales has also been placed 10th in a list by the Rough Guides of the most beautiful places in the world and has been named as the ‘Next Big Thing’ in the Delta Sky magazine which reaches six million travellers and last week TripAdvisor named three Welsh beaches in a list of Top 10 UK Beaches:- Barafundle; Rhossili; Newborough.

In response to industry feedback, there will be a shift to a two-year cycle for themes from 2020. The themed years have been supported by the industry, and are providing a clear focus for collaboration, joint-working and product change across Wales – with a longer cycle allowing more opportunities for bigger projects and ideas.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, Lord Elis-Thomas, said:

“Our research shows that Wales is famous for its scenery and nature – and the theme will build on this strength by showcasing our outstanding natural landscapes.

Wales is now well-known for its world-leading adventure, and the Year of Outdoors will provide a platform for showing that our stunning, vibrant landscape is alive with activities and things to do. We know that taking part in outdoor activities has significant health benefits and we’ll be encouraging the people of Wales and our visitors to take part in activities to enrich their wellbeing.

It isn’t just about wide empty spaces either – our landscape is shaped by our people and communities, and celebrating the relationship between culture, heritage, language and place will be a major part of the year.”

New developments which have been funded through the EU programme, Tourism Attractor Destination scheme, will open during 2020 including, the Dŵr Cymru's Llys y Frân site in West Wales. Llys y Frân will become a must visit park offering land and water-themed outdoor activities and an education recreational site.

In addition to this, Porthcawl and Saundersfoot will enhance their existing experiences with the investment of a maritime and coastal centre providing more things for the visitors to do and see. And Pendine will see the opening of the new Speeds of Sand Visitor Centre and Eco accommodation.

Year of Outdoors will celebrate Wales' outstanding natural landscapes which are alive with world-leading adventure and a distinctive, contemporary culture. The 870 mile Coastal Path; three National Parks; 600 Castles; Outstanding Areas of Natural Beauty and Dark Sky Reserves – are all set to be enjoyed in 2020.

Presence at ITB Berlin follows a successful visit to Vakantiebeurs in Utrecht during January, as well as a successful UK Inbound Convention. Visit Wales' work with international partners and attendance at key events plays an important part in building relationships and showcasing what Wales has to offer.

Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism Lord Elis-Thomas, continued:

“Never has it been more important to bridge Wales culturally, digitally and physically to the world. The travel trade is extremely important in our bid to grow tourism to Wales, especially our share of international visits – building relationships with tour operators for Wales is a key focus for us.

As well as growing the volume and value of visitors to Wales, the travel trade can help us with addressing particular challenges – such as spreading visitors throughout the year, all-across Wales and increasing the time visitors stay in Wales – resulting in higher spend.”

Research shows the long term benefits of Visit Wales' work with the Travel Trade. Figures show that the value of business in 2017 delivered by the top 100 international operators influenced by Visit Wales was up 24% at £11.2 million (from £9 million in 2016). The total value of business to Wales delivered by this group in 2017 was £18.1 million.