

Destination Conwy

TIC/ Ambassador Programme Sub Group Meeting

Wednesday 12th January 2022

Present:

Hollie Harmsworth	Follow Films
Tansy Rogerson	Armadillo Events
Cai Ross	Paysanne restaurant
Caroline Somary	Sweet Snowdonia
Nigel Treacy	Llandudno Snowsports Centre
Jon Merrick (JM)	Business and Tourism Manager, CCBC
Gwen Roberts	Senior Marketing Officer (Tourism)
Kim Nicholls (KN)	Minute taker, CCBC

Apologies received

Louise Carswell	Travel & Tourism Department Coleg Llandrillo
Graham Paul Jones	Grwp Llandrillo Cymru
Tamzyn Lawrence	t-l-c, Betws y Coed

1. Introduction and Welcome

JM welcomed everyone to the first TIC / Ambassador Programme Sub Group Meeting.

2. Overview of Destination Conwy

Destination Conwy started around 2010. It was an initiative across North Wales to set up forums for tourism businesses. Conwy was one of the first counties to commence meeting.

There are four key drivers in the current Terms of Reference:

1. Provide a local contribution to the successful implementation of the Destination Conwy Management Plan.
2. Support, monitor and review the Destination Conwy Management Plan and Action Plan.
3. To provide guidance and influence to local, regional and national tourism planning
4. To provide the gateway for open communication between the trade and Public bodies

The DC group has developed well over the years and has had an influence on Conwy.

By creating the DC group, CCBC have tried to put decisions into the hands of tourism businesses. For example, the Destination Management Plan was written by DC and endorsed by CCBC.

The DC has had a restructure for 2022.

Nigel Treacy is the Chair of the main Destination Conwy Group. A Vice Chair is still to be elected but will have to be selected from the Chairs of the five sub groups.

The Five groups are:

1. Skills
2. Destination Management
3. Marketing
4. Strategy/Action Plan
5. Tourist Information /Conwy Ambassador Scheme

There are approximately 16 members in each group.

There is also a DC Board which comprises: Chair, Vice Chair, the five sub group Chairs, Visit Wales representative (Andrew Forfar), CCBC Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Leisure (Cllr Louise Emery) and CCBC Tourism Manager (Jon Merrick)

The Chair of DC will also sit on the North Wales Tourism Forum which is hosted by Visit Wales

3. Election of Chair for TIC / Ambassador Programme Sub Group

Cai Ross was elected Chair of the TIC / Ambassador Programme Sub Group

4. Terms of Reference

ACTION - JM will share the main DC Terms of Reference with this group

The TIC / Ambassador Programme Sub Group will need to develop their own ToR .

ACTION – JM and CR to develop ToR based on key areas and circulate draft to group

5. Forward Work Plan – key areas to focus on

JM's comments were:

- The scope of this group is to assist CCBC in delivery of the tourist information service. Need innovative ways to improve the service.
- The ambition of the group is the continued promotion and delivery of the Ambassador Programme

Tourist Information Service - background

- There are current two CCBC run TIC's – Llandudno and Conwy
- Footfall is – Llandudno - 110k, Conwy – 90k
- Llandudno does reasonably well commercially whilst Conwy is more seasonal

- The Llandudno TIC has moved from the library to a retail unit in the Victoria Centre. This has given it more visibility and a good shop window
- Conwy TIC is in the Muriau building on Rosehill Street. This is a listed building with no shop frontage or view into the TIC. It therefore tends to attract only tourists rather than shoppers.
- Both TIC's also receive emails and phone calls
- Over the last few years CCBC has tried to grow and develop the TIC shops. Both are now very attractive retail units
- Need to make the TIC service sustainable. It is vulnerable to CCBC cost cutting
- The TIC's direct visitors to eateries, visitor attractions and accommodation and is therefore an important service.
- The TIC's are also a good opportunity to promote local small businesses
- An online shop was launched in 2021
- There are 5 TIC staff in total. 2 in Llandudno all year round and 2 in summer and 1 in winter in Conwy. Also have casual staff to call on.

Ambassador Programme

- [Conwy Tourism Ambassador Course – Ambassador Wales](#)
- Launched online in 2021 following 18 months of development
- Comprises three stages – bronze, silver and gold. Each stage comprises modules of around 30-35 minutes
- There are currently 350 bronze, 266 silver and 178 gold ambassadors
- The programme has recently obtained a grant to develop four more modules. This group should have input into the development
- The programme needs to be promoted as widely as possible
- The Ambassador Programme is also promoted on the Visit Conwy website

Comments from the group

Tourist Information Centres

- need to look for solutions for TIC sustainability
- is there any best practice from other TICs?
- JM noted that there has been a decline in TIC's due to local authority budget cuts.
- Need to look at ways to promote the online shop.
- Llandudno is one of the most commercially successful TICs. NW Tourism manage Llangollen TIC. It is in an art gallery space and also sells artwork. Betws y Coed do have some retail. The National Park is planning to invest in the ByC TIC using Llandudno as a model. JM noted that Wrexham are planning a TIC in the town centre

Conwy TIC

- one of the issues with Conwy TIC is the lack of signage. It is easy to miss and tourists assume that the TIC is the Conwy Visitor Centre further along the same road.

- The main challenge with Conwy TIC is the physical building as it is listed and changes are restricted. As part of the refurbishment of the Conwy TIC, the front wall was knocked down and a ramp installed. There is also an events space to the side of the building. This was developed with the intention to help the evening offer
- The police are taking the upper floor of the Conwy TIC building and a room at the back. This is office space not a police station. There are also public toilets in the building.

Ambassador Programme

- need to identify gaps and how to target and engage
- The Ambassador Programme is promoted on the Visit Conwy website
- Physical information boards at the gateways to towns already exist but need updating. The Ambassador programme could be promoted on these boards
- could we have an idea of what promotional campaigns have already taken place?
- there is more we can do with social media, comms through newsletters etc.
- we have a business database of 5000 who we message including 800 tourism businesses. The tourism website gets 1.2 million visitors per year. The Facebook page has 40k followers. The tourism visitor database has 50-60k contacts
- There is currently no Facebook page for the Ambassador programme.
- Visit Conwy website and Facebook page is managed by CCBC with regular postings and good engagement. Instagram is also improving. Twitter has 9k followers. Need to identify if there is anything putting people off
- the structure, look and feel of the Ambassador website is limited as it is part of a North Wales scheme
- JM noted that it is more difficult to complete the modules on a mobile phone than on a laptop. Feedback has shown that this is off putting
- Modules are 30-35 minutes each and need dedicated time rather than casual drop ins. However, you can do the programme at your own pace.
- Feedback is asked for when the completion certificates are sent out. So far it has been generally positive
- there were pop up banners in Coleg Llandrillo and a sub group for stakeholders. Graham Jones was part of the development for going forward at the college. Were hoping for face to face learning but this has been affected by Covid. Have also tried to promote through Conwy contacts e.g. ByC TA.
- we need more promotion and to highlight the time each module takes.
- now would be a good time to promote as businesses are quieter now
- we have got some exciting webinars in Feb/March to remind people about out of the way destinations. These also need to be promoted
- we should have a relaunch as there are now additional modules available

The following was also agreed.

- **Flexibility** - the group should be flexible in order to invite guests to the meetings if relevant to agenda
- **Email addresses** - the members were happy to share their email addresses

- **Language** – it was agreed that the minutes would be acceptable in English only, unless being shared publicly
- **Confidentiality** – meetings are confidential to enable members to air their thoughts safely
- **Promote DC work** to a wider audience through CCBC business database, website and social media.
- **Meeting frequency** – to be agreed
- **CCBC representatives** – will always be available to coordinate, facilitate and take notes at meetings. Amy (TIC Manager) will attend future meetings. She is currently on maternity leave.
- **Members unable to attend** – can contribute by email or possibly meet with Chair individually.

KN

13.01.22.