

## Notes from the UKEVENTS Advocacy and Government Relations Meeting.

8<sup>th</sup> June 2023, 11.00 – 12.30

**In attendance:** Michael Hirst UKEVENTS; Paul Black, VisitBritain; Neil Brownlee, VisitScotland; Martin Fullard, Business of Events; Peter Heath, PLASA; Simon Hughes, UKEVENTS; Rachel Parker, EIA; Susan Tanner, NOEA; Clive Wratten, BTA;

**Apologies:** Nick Morgan, UKEVENTS; Kerrin MacPhie, mia; Heledd Williams, Visit Wales.

### **1. Communication & Engagement with Ministers and Government Departments.**

- a) UKEVENTS letter to the **Rt. Hon. Michelle Donelan**, Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology indicating the importance of events in knowledge sharing, research and scientific innovation and highlighting a number of existing conference and trade shows that could be trailblazers in this regard. Response from **Chloe Smith, MP**, acting Secretary of State regretting a meeting not possible.
- b) UKEVENTS letter of response from the **Rt. Hon Kemi Badenoch**, Secretary of State for Business & Trade, highlighting the importance of trade to UK's long term growth and economic security but no mention of the role of events in business and trade..
- c) UKEVENTS letter to **Sir John Whittingdale** on his appointment as interim Minister at DCMS for Tourism & SIT seeking a meeting. Noted immediate interests are International Competitiveness; youth travel and the requirement for passports-not ID cards; tax-free shopping; introduction and cost of ETAs, roll out of LVEPS..
- d) Meeting with DCMS Officials on 22<sup>nd</sup> February to discuss current active issues. Next meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> June.
- e) EIA reported on invitation to **Sir John Whittingdale** to a meeting in September.. Contact made with **Dame Caroline Dinenage**, Chair of DCMS Select Committee. Meeting with **Holly Lynch**, MP, Shadow Minister for Security to discuss Protect Duty and will have a follow up in September. Lucy Powell MP will host the EIA Parliament Reception in October
- f) BTA reported meeting with **Kevin Hollinrake** MP, Business Minister to discuss payment terms for small businesses. Meeting with APPG for Business Travel Chair, **Stephen Hammond**, MP. An invitation to **Huw Merriman**, MP, Minister of State at the Department of Transport to their Parliamentary dinner.
- g) LIVE and PLASA had invited **Lucy Powell**, Shadow Minister for Culture to the PLAZA Show.
- h) NOEA are intending on inviting **Lucy Powell**, MP to the Showmans Show.
- i) Mia has met with DCMS & DBT Officials and had invited **Sir John Whittingdale** to open their Summit in October. Planning to meet with Steve Rotheram, Liverpool Region Metro Mayor.

### **2. Updates from committee members on current business activity and sentiment.**

- a) VisitBritain reported the **steep curve of recovery seemed to be flattening but values are higher**. IMEX enquiries increased by 34%.. Efforts to elevate the importance of trade shows across Government Departments continues. Eight new applications being considered by the BEGP.
- b) EIA **indicated business busy with no sign of the usual summer lull**. Margins still tight but improving..
- c) BTA reported business travel as **"robust"**, but to be expected disruption from several Bank Holidays in May. However cost of fares continually rising and situation therefore remains fragile. Rail strikes had affected journeys by up to 60%. Currently survey members. Concern now over impact of further strikes at UK at Heathrow giving perception of UK closed for business.
- d) NOEA reported several new events but **smaller shows suffering from considerable cost increases**.

- e) PLASA reported **manufacturers not being able to fulfil orders on time**. We Make Events campaign working with the night Life Economy Association to highlight sector issues. Restrictions and access issues remain for touring in the EU.
- f) VisitScotland reported that events remain split under the Economic Directorate (business events) and the Culture Directorate (Music and cultural events). The Deposit Return Scheme delayed until October 2025. **A strategic review of the Events Strategy was being carried out with business events now to be included.**
- g) Mia indicated key issues are **supply chain challenges; staffing; rail strikes; flow of enquiries and increasing costs**. Recent members' survey shows a more confident response with lead times shortening. Focus still on domestic business Staff vacancies remain big challenge. Catering supplies biggest part of supply chain issues..
- h) LIVE. **Greater access to EU for touring; VAT reduction to 5% on ticket sales; Talent pipeline.**
- i) AIF: **Impact of COVID on young audience attendance; rise in supply chain issues; cost of living affecting ability to pay for tickets thus introduction of payment plans.**

### 3. Active issues

- a) **Changes to Shortage Occupation List** – Review of categories, salary and educational qualifications. Consultation closed.
- b) **Changes to business traveller rules and permitted activities**. Proposals discussed with DCMS and Department of Business & Trade for onward submission to the Home Office.
- c) **Registration of short term lettings consultation**. Beam made submission on behalf of UKEVENTS.
- d) **Caravan & tenting permitted developments**. EIF, AFO and ASAO response. Concerns over the 28day rule and impact on licensed Festival sites.
- e) **Deposit Return Scheme** – Greater clarification of proposals sought by NOEA.
- f) **Protect Duty Bill** to be subject to Home Affairs Select Committee. Issues around duplication for large scale events, regulator and who is a responsible person. Industry concerns relating to clarity of enforcement and duplication with existing licensing provisions and issues around insurance. LIVE submitting objections to Select Committee with the support from EIA..
- g) **Film & TV Restart Scheme** – Awaiting information from DCMS to enable evidence to be collated so Events can lobby for similar concessions.
- h) Mia suggests the £22m **government campaign to support the over 50's** needs to include opportunities within our sector and that current visa rules to attract workers from Europe to support deficit in current workforce.

### 4. Business of Events Policy Forum update

- a) Publication of Event Economy Tracker – Quarter 1.
- b) Analysing submissions for policy issues to be developed. Programme of work to be determined.

### 5. Post Brexit issues

- a) Still require any evidence of lost or reduced business as a result of leaving the EU. – for submission to DCMS
- b) CAMS Survey due to be published imminently has attempted to capture relevant data.

### 6. Tourism Industry Council update.

- a) DCMS has published, the Tourism Recovery Plan Progress Report.
- b) The Report states that the government has made good progress against the Plan's objective for business events, which is focussed on further improving the UK's reputation to attract more high-profile events here and champion UK industries on the global stage.

- I. In terms of next steps, the government will continue to enhance the Ministerial Advocacy Programme, including
  - II. increasing Ministerial attendance at business events and letters of support for event bids.
  - III. The government will continue at appropriate fiscal moments to evaluate the case for expanding the VisitBritain Business Events Growth Programme.
  - IV. The government, working with the Tourism Industry Council Working Group, will produce a strategy for sustainable business events in line with the broader Sustainable Tourism Plan.
  - V. The government will work to ensure the business events sector is fit for the future, including working with the sector to identify skills gaps, capacity gaps and potential improvements to accessibility
- c) At the Tourism Industry Council meeting and the VisitBritain Annual Review, UKEVENTS urged government to consider the role events play in improving productivity in the visitor economy **filling existing spare capacity as well as driving visitor traffic to create greater placemaking opportunities, helping with seasonality and geographical dispersal.** It was suggested that there be greater co-ordination with events and the creative and cultural industries to produce future event programming, responding to the productive needs of the visitor economy, filling spare capacity in the right places at the right times.
- d) A meeting was subsequently held with the TIC Working Group on Sustainability, led by VisitBritain, to discuss how events can be better programmed into future planning of tourism marketing and provide content where and when needed to optimize the performance of the visitor economy.

## 7. APPG activity update

- a) To note the creation of an **APPG for Festivals** led by AIF and chaired by Giles Watling, MP for Clacton On Sea.

## 8. Tourism Alliance update

- a) **To note election of Susan Tanner to the Board of Directors representing UKEVENTS** in place of Michael Hirst.
- b) Issues discussed at last Board meeting:
- I. Establishment of Policy working Groups
  - II. 19<sup>th</sup> September Tourism Policy Conference.
  - III. Statutory Registration of short term lets. Issue of guidance on completing the consultation.
  - IV. Introduction of a use class order for short term lets and associated permitted development rights. Issue of guidance notes.
  - V. Defunding tourism education.
  - VI. Protect Duty.
  - VII. Changes in business traveller rules and permitted activities.

## 9. Other Matters.

- a) **Power of Events** priority delivery of app, currently in development to be launched at partner Universities Spetember/October.  
 Development of a Careers Hub to promote careers in the Industry.  
 Taking the message into secondary schools.  
 AEV working with University of Greenwich as lead academic advisor on venue event management degree via a new Academic Working Group. Hoping to have modules confirmed for the September 2023 intake

**10. Dates of next meeting in 2023 (Online):** 27<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2023 11:30-13:00 | 6<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2023 11:30-13:00