



Assembly Members

18 July 2017

Dear Member

During Plenary on 4 July, the Leader of the House stated that I would provide you with an update on Year of Legends.

The series of thematic tourism years were developed as a focus for industry to initiate and celebrate product development and marketing initiatives across Wales, as well as providing a focal point for Visit Wales' own marketing led campaigns. The themes were strategically selected to highlight core product strengths where Wales has an established or evolving credibility.

Year of Legends 2017 is already building on the success of Year of Adventure 2016, which focused on everything from adrenalin fuelled adventure to literary and culinary adventure. The first thematic year was embraced by the tourism industry and in-Wales partners; there was 58% campaign recall within Wales itself; and the Adventure theme secured real media traction. The year saw a 12% increase in international visitors to Wales and a 44% increase in day visitor expenditure. Visit Wales' campaign during 2016 secured 5m unique web-site visitors and 1m followers on social media.

Year of Legends is about old infused with new, the past interweaving with the present. It is about confidently showcasing the real Wales: a place with an ancient and authentic culture, language, heritage and landscape but in a way that is alive and fresh with talent and ideas. Transformation is at the core of our country's story. The year is about combining pride in our history with brand new ideas to produce new experiences in order to present a modern reading of the idea of 'Legends' - re-imagining our past stories, playing a part in writing the next and championing our emerging legends like never before.

Year of Legends is being celebrated by a Visit Wales driven consumer facing multi-media international marketing campaign – with increased emphasis on overseas markets, alongside an ambitious B2B programme with the travel trade and online operators.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

A summary of key campaign activity to date is provided below:

- The start of the year was marked with a burst of campaign activity (e.g. print advertising, PR, social media and refreshed website content) and this activity will continue throughout the year. Singer and broadcaster Cerys Matthews and actor Iwan Rheon were also revealed as Year of Legends ambassadors.
- To mark St David's Day celebrations on March 1<sup>st</sup>, a cutting-edge television and cinema advert featuring actor Luke Evans was launched - a focal point of a major multi-market, multi-channel campaign approach celebrating the themed year with activity in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Germany and the USA.
- The spring included an innovative travelling 'EPIC' experiential sign - previously used during Year of Adventure but refreshed and recovered with illustrations of our most popular and well known legends. The sign was located at Margam Park and Zip World Fforest Coaster for the official opening in May 2017.
- The focus then moved towards a celebration of 'Legendary' Sport' with a marketing activation campaign around the UEFA Champions League Final which took place in Cardiff in June 2017. Business boomed for many during this time, with 41% in the South East reporting more visitors over the bank holiday – 47% of these said the football matches contributed to the lift. The summer of sports continued into July with the successful staging of the Velothon and the Seniors Open later this month. These events present opportunities for Wales to demonstrate our capabilities in hosting world class sporting events, and allow us to celebrate a real "summer of sporting legends".

During July, a multi-media campaign is running in London to encourage and inspire new visitors to consider Wales as a holiday destination. A key highlight is a takeover of the huge motion screen at Waterloo which is being used to showcase Wales at its best with a specially edited film. The next stage of the campaign will include a new experiential installation that will appear at key festivals and events in Wales over the Summer. The Autumn will see a celebration of Legendary Food and Drink and the year will end with a focus on Legendary Journeys and the consumer launch of a new internationally focused tourism route, the Wales Way.

In terms of supporting industry participation in Year of Legends, Visit Wales is investing in a series of products and experiences that chime with Year of Legends. Funding has been awarded via two schemes for projects in support of the year. In total £871,224 has been awarded to 16 projects in 2016/17 via the Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF) and £409,515.00 to 19 projects via the Tourism Product Innovation Fund (TPIF). A further £2 million has been approved for a total of 38 projects across Wales under these schemes for two years 2017-19. This funding will enable the private and public sectors to develop innovative projects that will stimulate demand and improve the visitor offer, not only in supporting Year of Legends, but going forward as we move towards Year of the Sea 2018 and Year of Discovery 2019.

These annual themes are proving to work well for Wales, not only for our tourism industry, but also in making an impression outside of Wales on our target audiences, influencers and partners. The approach is helping to carve out a stronger, clearer and more distinctive proposition for Wales and is driving results from our campaigns, and broader performance of Wales' tourism economy.

In relation to the Gold Cape, my officials are meeting with Flintshire Council on 23 August to discuss the potential display of the Cape which needs to meet specific standards required by the British Museum. In addition to this my officials are considering a funding application from the Council relating to the Gold Cape.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken', written in a cursive style.

**Ken Skates AM/AC**

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi a'r Seilwaith  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure