



MONTHLY REPORT – MAY 2020 – No 2

No	Item	Details
1	Administration	The first update report (April) set out how the administration will work for the lockdown period. There will be a monthly report on activities of the Association including following up any issues raised by Members. Regular meetings can recommence when the Welsh Government confirms that it is safe to do so.
2	Financial	The finances of the Association are good. The annual accounts are attached to this report at A.
3	Health	A report from the Betsi Cadwaladr University Trust is attached at B. They are provisionally booked to attend the AGM.
4	Trains	The formation of a North Wales Coast Line Liaison format with the Rail Companies is still being assessed and discussion continue before a paper can be ready to members to approve.
4	Homeless (veterans)	The motion put forward by the President was put the vote in April – all votes received are in favour. The Association will now write to the authorities supporting the motion. Further contact with Welsh Government on the subject is being made and report will be included in the June 2020 report. <i>Also we request that you please ask your Council if they are prepared as a Town or Community Council to support the motion.</i>
7	Business Rates	The votes on this subject were not conclusive. Therefore the subject will be deferred until the Association can meet again.
8	Council Tax	The votes on this subject were not conclusive. Therefore the subject will be deferred until the Association can meet again.
9	Local Government and Elections Bill 2020	The results of the Welsh Assembly Committee and recommendations to Welsh Government have been published on the web site. The list of recommendations in the last update was those made by the Welsh Assembly Committee – not our own – and will therefore form the basis of the next stages. The bill will now progress to its next stage.
10	Tourism	The most important information on Tourism in 2020 season and how it has been affected by the Coronavirus situation is listed here: a) Substantial reduction in public transport use. b) Financial shortfall for public transport companies due to drop in passengers. c) Reduced timetables on all lines (mainly and Sunday service). d) Tourism and its long term effect on the economy.



		<p>e) The Police are doing their best to restrict unnecessary travel into Wales with some success.</p> <p>f) There is strong feeling in the towns and villages of Mid Wales towards those using second homes or visiting with a stern message of 'stay away'.</p> <p>See report issued to Welsh Tourism Associations at appendix C.</p> <p>What actions the Association should be involved in will no doubt evolve over the coming weeks and months.</p>
11	Coronavirus update	<p>The latest information that we have from Government on this subject which might affect the Cambrian Lines is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Welsh Government has proposed a traffic light system of approach to reducing the effects of the lockdown. b) The number of coronavirus cases is low in Powys, Ceredigion and Gwynedd at this time. c) The chances of any real return to anything like normal in 2020 is slim. <p>Some minor restrictions were lifted from 11/5/2020/ The BBC has extensive (to say the least – nothing else much on the news) coverage for full information.</p>
12	Business Rates for Hospitals and Schools	<p>A Welsh Government Consultation has just been released on the subject and a paper on this will be published on the Associations web site and circulated to you all.</p>
13	Anything else	<p>If any member council has an issue or idea which they would like followed up please email the secretary on supercommuter@mail.com</p>
14		<p>NOTE:</p> <p>Comments or observations etc are welcome on any of the above.</p>



APPENDIX A

NORTH & MID WALES ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS												
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS YEAR TO 31.3.2020												
	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
												OVERALL
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT												
												2019
												2020
INCOME												
Membership & Meals	276.00	16.00	0.00	96.00	194.00	96.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	693.00	280.00	607.00
Interest												
Debtors												
Other												
TOTAL	276.00	16.00	0.00	96.00	194.00	96.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	693.00	280.00	607.00
EXPENDITURE												
Meals	1130.16							366.45		528.00		448.00
Expenses												
Administration									100.00	200.00	200.00	100.00
Bank charges												
Gavel												
Web hosting												
Web site										35.00		
Translation												
Other										88.01		
TOTAL	1130.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	366.45	100.00	851.01	200.00	548.00
Wales Assembly visit												
BALANCE	-854.16	16.00	0.00	96.00	194.00	96.00	100.00	-366.45	-100.00	-158.01	280.00	327.01
BANK												
Start	6679.30	5825.14	5841.14	5841.14	5837.14	6151.14	6227.14	6227.14	5560.63	5860.63	5762.68	5562.68
End	5825.14	5841.14	5841.14	5837.14	6151.14	6227.14	6227.14	5560.63	5560.63	5762.68	5562.68	6308.63
Balance	854.16	-16.00	6.00	-96.00	-194.00	-96.00	-100.00	366.45	100.00	158.01	-280.00	-327.01
TREASURER		Robert Robinson										
AUDIT		Frank Mullen										
DATE	10.4.2020											

** Note two meal accounts (one from last year) - April column
* Note the Welsh Assembly visit was paid for by Welsh Government

BALANCE SHEET

Assets

General Funds

Income/Expend Acct

Total

Represented by

Bank account



APPENDIX B

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Introduction

Representatives from the Health Board were due to attend the Annual Meeting of the Association in July. It is not sure at this stage if this will be possible due to the current restrictions. An update will sought from the Board for the June update.

Performance

The general performance of the Health Board is still reported as under what is expected. There are still a number of issues which need to be resolved and it is clear this will be on-going for some time.

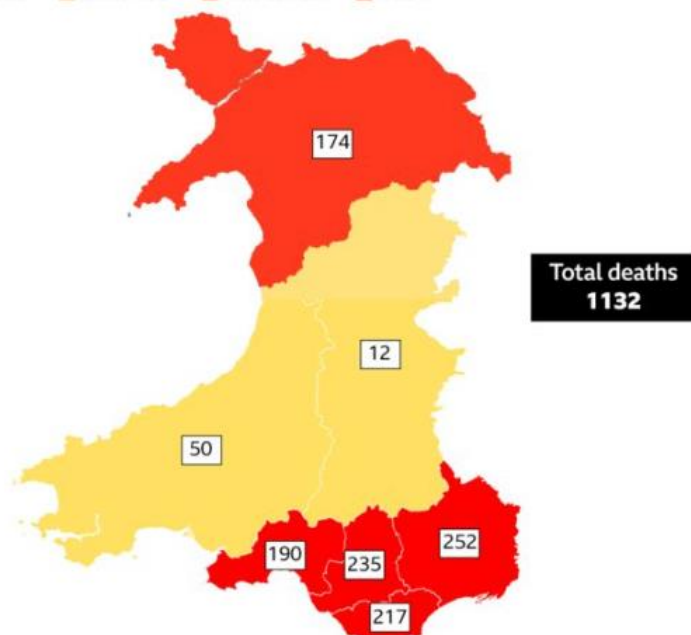
Coronavirus

There are 594 confirmed cases in Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, out of a local population of 698,369 as at 25/4/2020 – see BBC web site for up to date details.

Suspected Covid-19 deaths in lab confirmed cases

by Local Health Board

0 to 50 51 to 100 101 to 150 150+



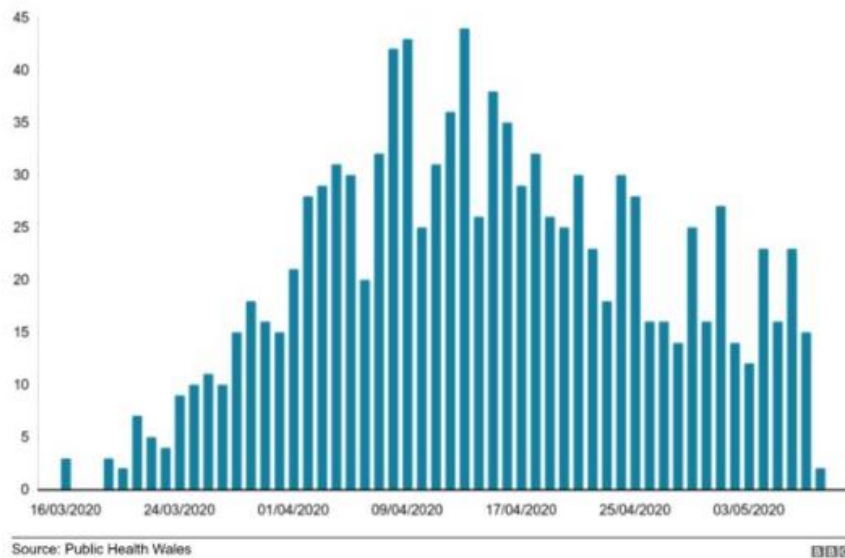
* 2 deaths where resident was outside Wales

Source: Public Health Wales, Updated: 12 May 14:00 BST

BBC



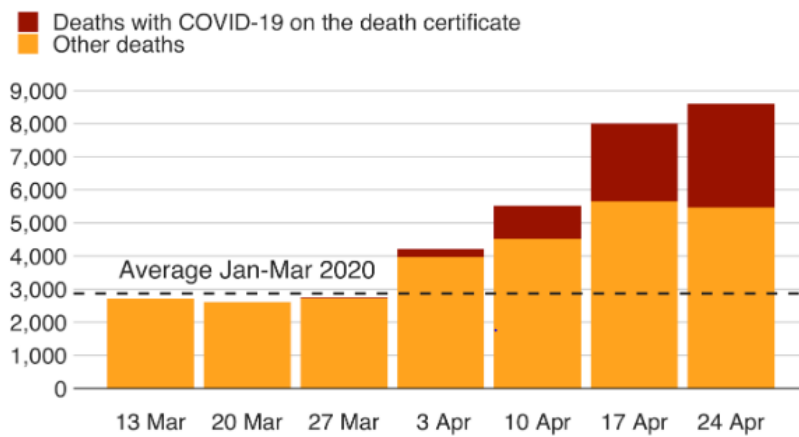
Number of deaths of individuals who tested positive for Covid-19 in Wales by date



The hospital service in North Wales appears to be coping with the numbers requiring care. The main issue was the late reporting of 84 cases where people had died and a report on why it happened which has been reported as being due to the use of different computers!.

Care home deaths continue to rise

Weekly death registrations in care homes in Great Britain



Source: ONS, NRS

BBC



Appendix C

Report by Ashford Price (Chairman, The National Showcaves Centre for Wales).

Tourism Survey reveals that 86% of Welsh tourism businesses will not survive a long closure.

The largest ever 'grass roots' survey into the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and its consequences for the Welsh tourism industry has been carried out with responses coming from Tourism Associations, businesses, and individuals across Wales. 525 responses were received within 24 hours, an unprecedented number for such a survey which was sent out to over 1,000 tourism businesses.

Welsh tourism fully understands and agrees with the decision to close down tourism in Wales, however, listed below are the consequences for Welsh tourism following this decision. Operators also acknowledge with gratitude the removal of business rates, and for the 'Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.'

Main results from the survey.

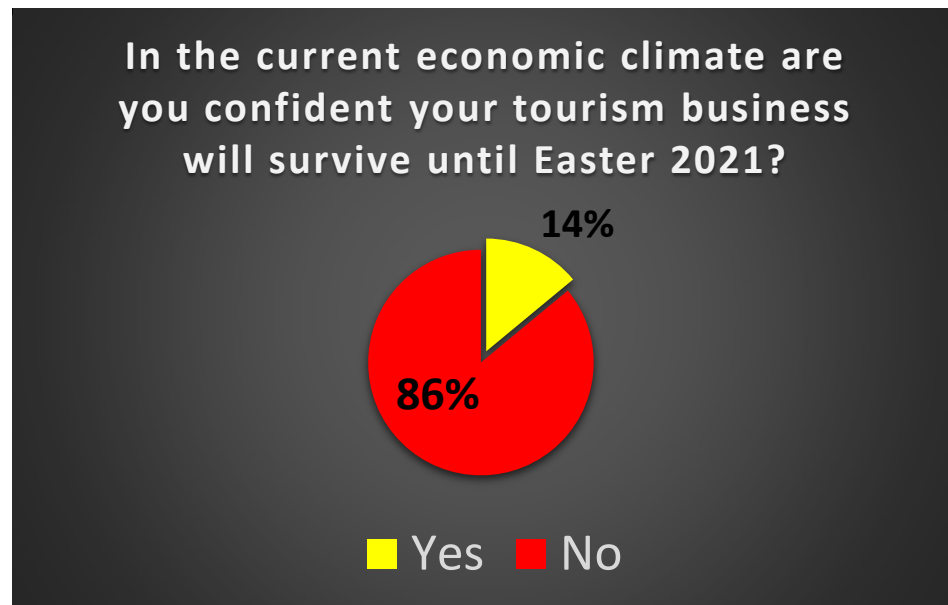
The recipients were asked the following questions –

In the current economic climate how confident are you that your business can survive until September. **82% said NO.** 18% said YES.



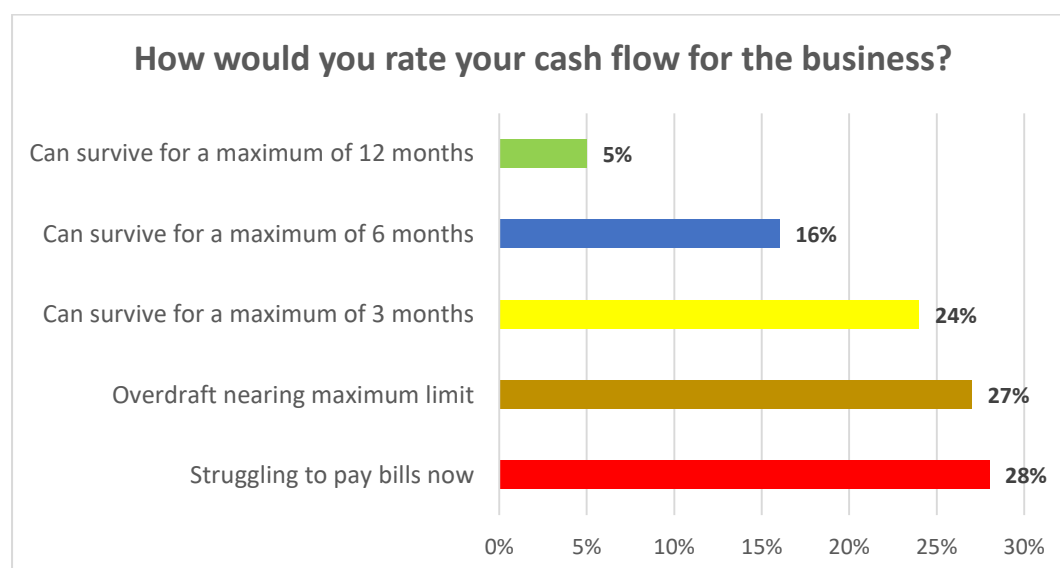


In the current economic climate how confident are you that your business can survive until Easter 2021. **86% said NO.** **14% said YES.**



How would you rate your cash flow for your business?

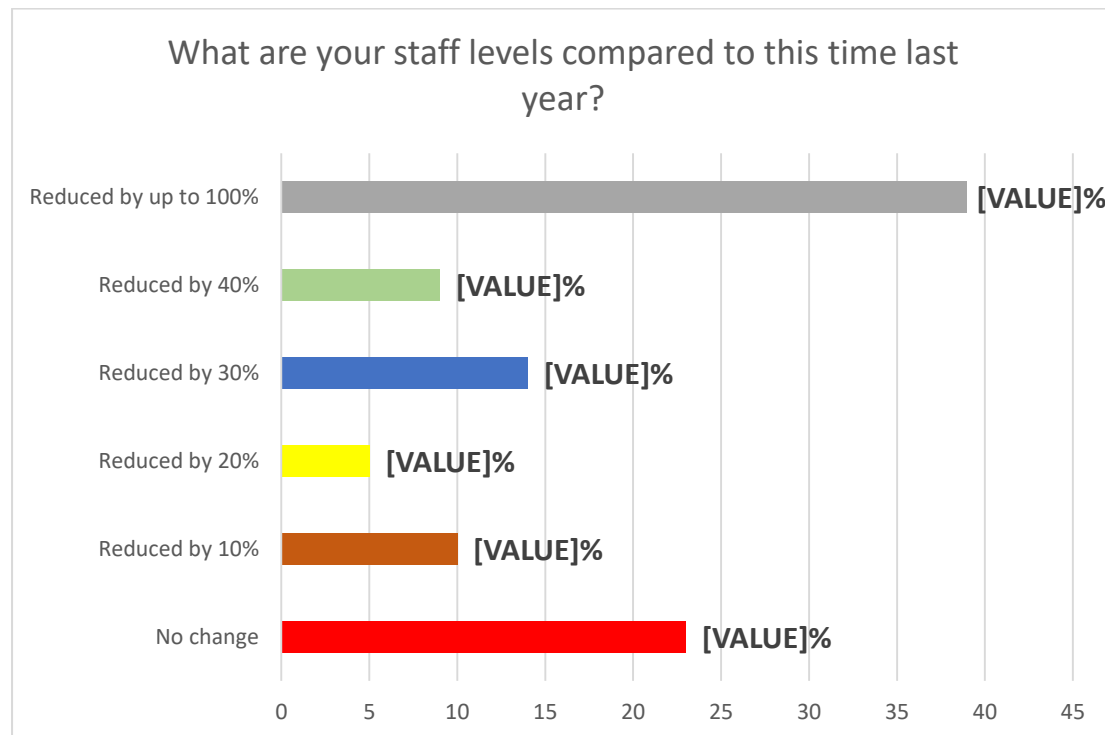
- 28%** struggling to pay bills now.
- 27%** overdraft nearing maximum limit.
- 24%** can survive for 3 months.
- 16%** can survive for 6 months.
- 5%** can survive for a maximum of 12 months.





What are your staff levels compared to this time last year?

39% replied - reduced by up to 100%.



In the survey we asked them to list their concerns, and these are highlighted below.

One of the main concerns operators reported back to the survey was that during the winter they had spent tens of thousands of pounds getting their tourism businesses ready for the 2020 season.

Then with no warning, and just before they were about to open the tourist season was cancelled, along with all their bookings. The grim reality for many is that they now have massive overdrafts, no potential income, and a requirement to repay back their overdrafts. Many also stated that they were already paying mortgages or rent for their businesses, and questioned whether it was prudent to take on even more debt?

Operators appreciate that there are loans available from banks but when they contacted their bank many found them far from helpful. Some banks even want operators to put their own homes up as security for any loan.



What the survey further revealed was that for the majority of tourism operators the last time they had generated any income was in **October 2019**, some 6 months ago.

The present pandemic situation in Wales means no one knows when, or even if tourism can restart in 2020. Respondents reported increased levels of anxiety, stress, and depression with concerns for their future mental health.

If the entire 2020 season is lost due to the possibility of the Covid-19 pandemic lingering on, many operators stated they would be bankrupt.

The Welsh Government are promising cash grant aid soon, but the criteria for this grant has yet to be disclosed.

Survey respondents reported back that when the tourist season ends in October operators normally have bank accounts that are in credit, and it is this money that tides them over to the following April when tourism restarts in Wales.

However, many are questioning if tourism will be allowed to reopen this year. Should the above be the case, many asked how will they get through the coming winter?

If tourism cannot reopen during the latter part of this summer many operators stated that they would be unable to open for Easter 2021, as by then they would have accrued enormous debts, and were fearful of being forced into bankruptcy.

Many operators also reported to the survey that they feared they would eventually be forced to put their businesses up for sale as this might be the only way of repaying their debts. However, many also doubted if there would be many buyers for their tourism businesses in the short term.

The survey revealed that a great many operators had thought that their business interruption insurance policy would cover them for this pandemic. However, insurance companies are refusing to pay out. This decision has caused great anger and resentment to many in tourism.

The survey went on to reveal that many operators are suggesting that when tourism is finally allowed to reopen, that the British tourism rates for VAT are immediately reduced in line with the lower VAT levels for tourism found in other European countries.

Finally, many operators were very disappointed with the lack of initial leadership by Visit Wales and the Welsh Government. **Many also felt that few AM's, MP's, or industry leaders had stood up and offered any help, support, or comfort for a tourist industry that is now on its knees.**

Press release ends.



Additional information.

Not many in Welsh political circles really appreciate the enormous value of tourism to Wales. (Wales spends less on marketing tourism than the other devolved governments.)

Hence, it is fair to make comparisons highlighting the immediate concerns shown by AM's and MP's to the potential threat of closure for the Port Talbot steel works about a year ago, which at that time was threatening 4000 jobs, and losing a £1million pounds per day.

*Compare the above to the Welsh tourism industry, which at that time was employing **120,000** people, and bringing in **£6.32bn** a year to Wales. For every day the tourism industry operates in Wales it produces approximately **£17m** in revenue for the Welsh economy.*



Finally, –

The author having spent over 45 years in Welsh tourism I feel I must also answer one of the questions that I asked privately of others in the tourism survey.

‘In the current economic climate how confident are you that your tourism business can survive until Easter 2021.

‘Dan Yr Ogof’ The National Showcaves Centre for Wales, has already informed National Resources Wales, (NRW) that if we cannot reopen this year then we would find it impossible to fund the £80,000+ needed to mothball and keep maintained all the essential electrical and mechanical equipment routinely used to keep the caves open to the public.

Hence, we would be forced to close the caves permanently.

This report has been compiled from a survey sent to various Welsh Tourism Associations, businesses, and individuals across the length and breadth of Wales by Ashford Price (Chairman, The National Showcaves Centre for Wales.