



MONTHLY REPORT – MAY 2020 – No 2

No	Item	Details and actions										
1	Administration	<p>The first update report (April) set out how the administration will work for the lockdown period.</p> <p>There will be no regular face to face meetings until the government advice allows and it is safe to do so taking into account the distancing measures now in place.</p> <p>There will be a monthly report on activities of the Committee including following up any issues raised by Members.</p>										
2	Finances	<p>The finances are in good order. At this time there is expenditure. The grant aid situation from each County Council is as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Council</td> <td>2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Shropshire</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Powys</td> <td>Nil</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ceredigion</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gwynedd</td> <td>£250</td> </tr> </table> <p>Invoices are being sent out for the 2020 grants.</p>	Council	2019	Shropshire	£250	Powys	Nil	Ceredigion	£250	Gwynedd	£250
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3	Main Line Report	<p>Reports are issued to Members when received from TFW.</p> <p>There have been no complaints received regarding the services on the main line from Aberystwyth and the Midlands via Shrewsbury by the Secretary.</p>										
4	Coast Line Report	<p>Reports are issued to Members when received from TFW.</p> <p>There have been no complaints received regarding the services on the Cambrian Coast Lines by the Secretary.</p>										
5	Network Rail	<p>No report. The coast line works due to be carried out at the beginning through the middle of April are delayed as are the Bow Street Station construction works – this is due to the current coronavirus situation.</p>										
6	British Transport Police	<p>The Police have reported a drop in crime mainly due to the travel restrictions.</p>										
7	Web Site	<p>The web site is being kept up to date and will also include this monthly report.</p>										



8	Tourism	<p>The most important information on Tourism in 2020 season and how it has been affected by the Coronavirus situation is listed here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">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.e) The Police are doing their best to restrict unnecessary travel into Wales with some success.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>A report issued to Welsh Tourism and Associations by Ashford Price (Chairman, The National Showcaves Centre for Wales) is attached regarding the possible effect of the coronavirus on tourism at appendix A.</p>
9	Events	<p>All events due to take place in the summer appear to have been cancelled or are likely to be in the coming months.</p>
10	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>The BBC has extensive (to say the least – nothing else much on the news) coverage for full information.</p>



11	Future plan 2020-2025	The existing policy plan for SARLC runs out in 2020. A new plan has been produced in draft for 2020-20205 and this will be circulated to everyone shortly for consultation.
12	Anything else	Please do let the secretary know if there are any issues you wish to raise or subject you wish to have discussed by email to supercommuter@mail.com



APPENDIX A

An article from 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.'



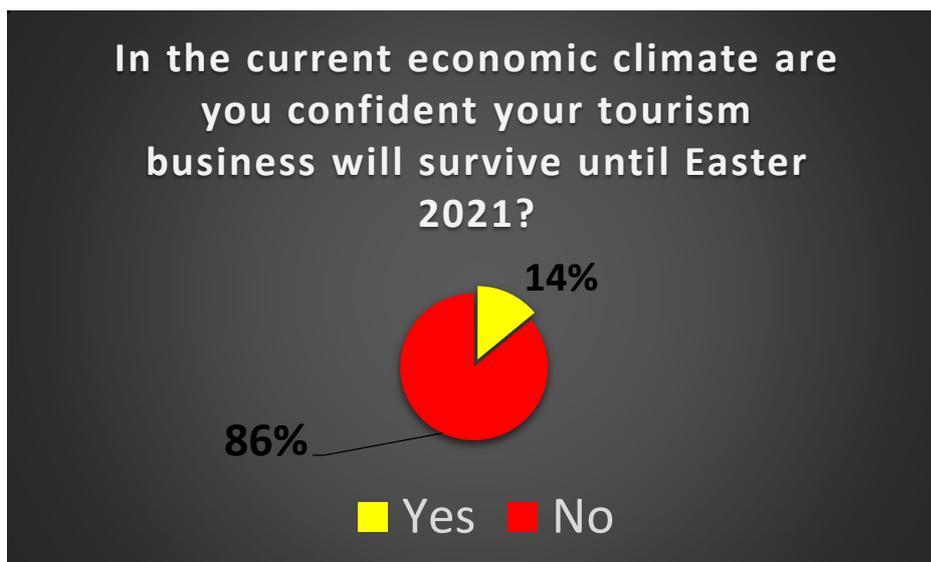
Main results from the survey.

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.



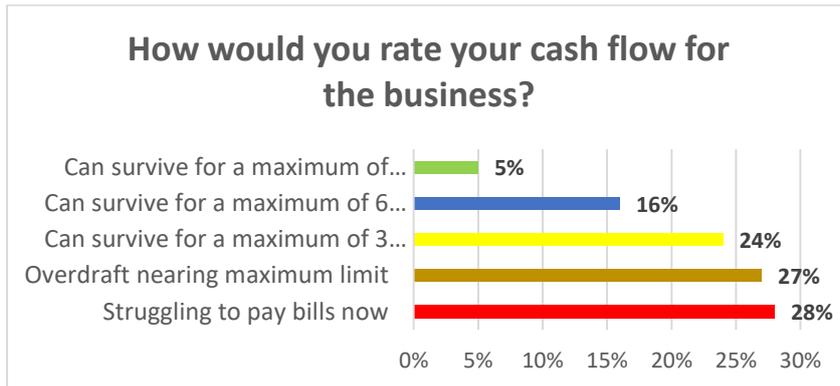
In the current economic climate how confident are you that your business can survive until Easter 2021. **86% said NO.** 14% said YES.





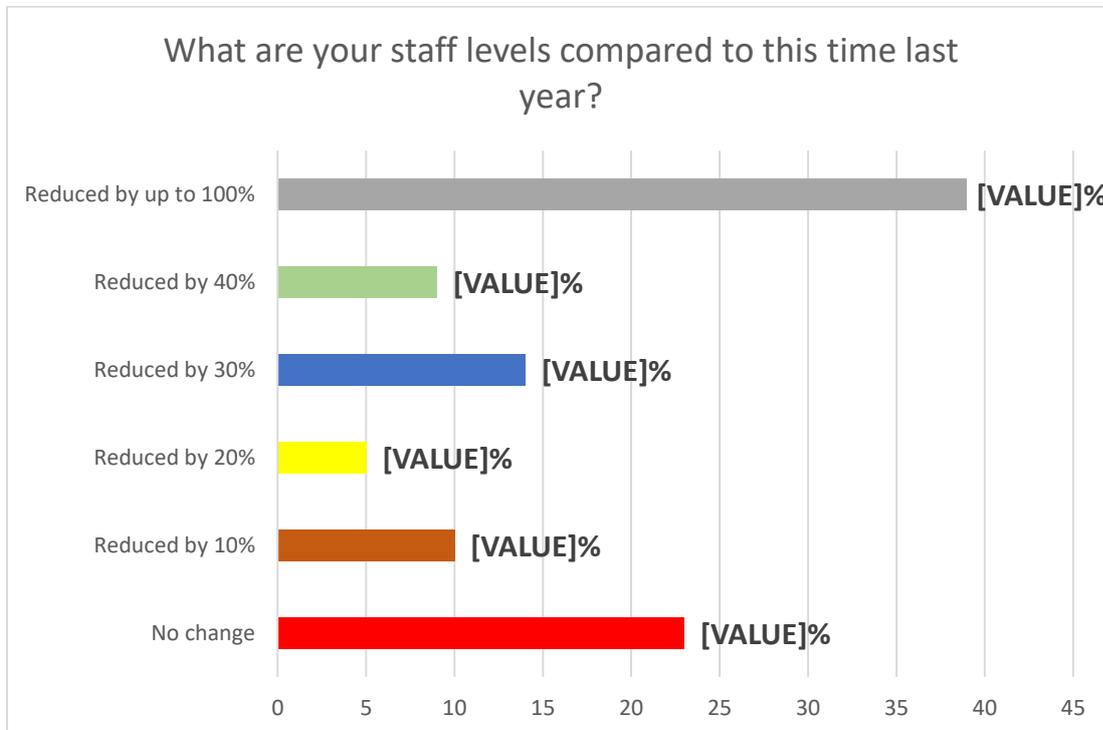
How would you rate your cash flow for your business?

- 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.*

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).