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an electronic bulletin from
Tourism Partnership North Wales

Silver lining for tourism amid economic gloom

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The weak pound could provide a big boost for tourism in North Wales in 2009.

That's the view of Neil Rowlands, the newly-elected chairman of Tourism Partnership North Wales which is responsible for the strategic development of the region's visitor economy.

Mr Rowlands, who runs the four star Tre-Ysgawen Hall, on the outskirts of Llangefni, on Anglesey, believes the economic downturn can also provide opportunities for tourism operators.

He said: "The relative weakness of Sterling against the Euro is a mixed blessing but on the upside is the fact that, in a number of important respects, it is going to be good for tourism.

"For one thing it means that it is going to be more expensive for UK people to go abroad on holiday.

"At the same time, it's going to make the UK a more attractive destination for European visitors because they will get more pounds for their Euros."

A former Chairman of the Anglesey Tourism Association, Mr Rowlands was delighted to be elected to his new role leading Tourism Partnership.

He added: "Tourism is a crucial component of the economy and I feel, as one of the bigger hotels, we need to be involved and lending our weight to help drive the industry forward.

"It's imperative that everybody involved in the visitor economy, both in the private and public sectors, works together and pulls in the same direction.

"Nothing is achieved by trying to go it alone and North Wales must present a united front.

"It's about creating a shared vision and being able to compromise as well so that people buy into the vision.

"We are living in tough times but I feel it is an opportunity – there could be a silver lining for us in the cloud of the current economic gloom.

"People will still want to get away and because of improved transport links we're now closer than ever.

"With the increasing cost of flying both in terms of price and the environmental impact, we have got to go all out to promote our home market.

"If we do that, I believe that we have every chance of having a really good summer.

"The quality of the offering in North Wales is becoming increasingly important.

"Customers are far better travelled and have a greater understanding of the standards they want and expect.



“People are very demanding and if you don’t provide the quality they want they have every right to be disappointed.

“At the moment, people’s pounds are worth even more to them and, at the same time, expectations are higher than ever.

“We have got to rise to the challenge so that people keep coming back to North Wales.”

“The way forward for me is not about reducing costs or reducing prices, it is about adding value.”

The new Vice Chairman of Tourism Partnership is Darryl Shaw, who runs the Rossett Hall Hotel, in Rossett, near Wrexham.

Mr Shaw said: “In Wales the two icon areas are Snowdonia and Cardiff but tourism is also incredibly important to an area like the North Wales Borderlands.

“We have a whole host of fabulous places for people to visit in this area.

“Because of the development of business tourism in the North Wales Borderlands over the last 20 years, we have seen a growth in the infrastructure of three and four star hotels.

“The existence of a quality infrastructure enables us to offer a great leisure product as well.

“In addition, we have an outstanding environment and customers find it an outstanding area to visit as well.

“One of the keys to the success of attracting more visitors to the North Wales Borderlands is access into that environment through things like walking, golf and cultural tourism.

“Anybody who has lived in a major city would absolutely welcome a few days in this area because we have so much to offer.

“We’re living in challenging times which presents us with weaknesses and opportunities.

“The information we are getting from research done by the likes of Visit Wales and Tourism Partnership North Wales is suggesting that people will still take a two – week holiday which may still be abroad.

“But the other two or three short break holidays are forecast to be spent in the UK so it is vital that we are in good shape to make sure we get our share of that market.

“Quality is essential. Research has shown that the businesses that have invested in quality get their fair share of the business.

“Even though we are in difficult times, I would encourage everybody involved in tourism in the area to maintain the quality of what we offer.

“We know we are in for a difficult year but we will be working hard to reduce the business overheads whilst maintaining the quality of our product in order to move forward when the economy improves.”

Dewi Davies, the Regional Strategy Director of Tourism Partnership, said: “I am delighted that the Board was able to elect people of Neil and Darryl’s calibre as Chairman and Vice Chairman.

“Their drive, dedication and in-depth knowledge about the tourism product will be invaluable as we negotiate a challenging 2009.”



Darryl Shaw