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Sent: 06 May 2016 22:41
To: Tourism Trade (CSP - Generic) <tourism.trade@powys.gov.uk>
Cc: Steve Boyd (CSP - Board Business) <steve.boyd@powys.gov.uk>
Subject: Threat to motorsport activity in Wales - please read

Hello,

I hope you don't mind me contacting you but I'm currently running a campaign to raise awareness of an issue that potentially has huge consequences to the Welsh tourism industry in rural areas, and Powys in particular.

In short, there is a very real chance from June 2016 onwards that car rallying in the Welsh forests will cease to exist. The reason for this is because Natural Resources Wales propose to double the costs they currently charge to competitors for using the forest roads. To give you a factual comparison, the Forestry Commission in England and Scotland have just renegotiated their contract with the Motor Sports Association and their increase was just 0.7% from the previous rate. NRW want to double the cost outright – an astonishing increase.

The net result of this would mean that the entry fees for car rallies in Wales would be so high that the events themselves would become unviable and will have no option but to cease. As a campaign group, #Rally4Wales has been set up to campaign against these proposed charges to bring them in line with England and Scotland.

A key part of our message is the value that rallying brings to the rural tourism industry in Wales. The MSA have researched this extensively, and the overall value to the rural Welsh economy from rallying is approximately £15 million pounds a year, including Wales Rally GB, the FIA World Rally Championship event that covers much of Mid Wales and has an extensive following.

All I ask of you is to please raise awareness of this issue to your many contacts who have benefited from rallying trade over the years. For decades, people have come from across Wales, the UK, Europe and the World to rally in Powys, staying at so many rural local hotels and eating in local pubs, restaurants and cafés. It all adds up, year after year.

If you can, please direct your contacts to our Facebook page where they can find more details of how to support our campaign. It can be found at www.facebook.com/rallyingmeansbusiness. We are shortly petitioning the Welsh Assembly over this matter – so awareness of the importance to rural economies is vital.

As a final indication of the seriousness of this issue to Powys as a whole – next weekend the Plains Rally will run from Welshpool. 150 confirmed entries, so 300 people in the competing cars, with an average support crew of around 3-4. Over 1,000 people attending the area just to compete! That figure doesn't include organisers, marshals, recovery crews and of course, spectators. As a round of major UK national rally championship, teams are attending from all across the UK to compete on the event. This time next year, if the proposed charges go through – instead of Welshpool/Newtown area hotels being booked to full capacity – there will be no bookings at all on that weekend as the event will not run. It won't be financially viable under the proposed cost increases.

The issue really is that serious. Any support or awareness raising you can offer our campaign would be greatly appreciated at this time.

Thank you / Diolch yn fawr.

Jamie

Jamie Edwards

#Rally4Wales Campaign

www.facebook.com/rallyingmeansbusiness