



# All Party Parliamentary Group for Hospitality and Tourism

## Meeting of the Hospitality and Tourism APPG

Room M, Portcullis House, 13.01.2025, 3-3:45pm

### Minutes of meeting

#### Attendees

##### Parliamentarians

Stephanie Peacock (Tourism Minister)	Labour	Barnsley
Chris Webb (Chair)	Labour	Blackpool South
Damian Hinds (Vice-Chair)	Conservative	East Hampshire
Steve Darling	LibDem	Torbay
Bayo Alaba	Labour	Southend East and Rochford
Joe Robertson	Conservative	Isle of Wight East
Angus MacDonald	LibDem	Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire
Manuela Perteghella	LibDem	Stratford-on-Avon
Lauren Edwards	Labour	Rochester and Strood
Ann Davies	Plaid Cymru	Caerfyrddin
Nigel Huddleston	Conservative	Droitwich and Evesham
Lord Taylor of Wawrick	Non affiliated	
Lord Clifford	Crossbench	
Adam Dance	LibDem	Yeovil
Baroness Neville Rolfe	Conservative	

##### Secretariat

Kate Nicholls	UKHospitality
Tony Sophocles	UKHospitality
Ruby Sampson	UKHospitality

##### Observers

Sam Hanford	Head of office to Stephanie Peacock
Harriet Somers	Head of Domestic Tourism at DCMS
Eddy Leviten	Tourism Alliance
Chrissy Parsons	Office of Adam Dance
Holly James	Office of Chris Webb
Imogen Stone	Office of Steve Darling

Emilia Cook	Office of Joe Robertson
Peter Hornsby	Office of Lord Bailey

## 1. Introduction and welcome

Chris Webb MP (CW), Chair, thanked everyone for attending the first session of the APPG for Hospitality and Tourism of 2026. CW introduced the Tourism Minister, Stephanie Peacock MP, and thanked her for being here with us at this meeting.

CW gave the following dates for members for their diary:

**The Apprentice Showcase, 11 February 2026, 12:30pm, Terrace Pavillion.**

**UKHospitality Parliamentary Reception, 20 October 2026, 2-4pm, Terrace Pavillion.**

CW said that this marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the apprentice showcase so encouraged members to show their support by attending the event. Members will be notified by the organisers if they have apprentices from their constituency attending.

## 2. Minister in discussion

Stephanie Peacock (SP) said that she was delighted to take over the role of Tourism Minister from Chris Bryant MP and was grateful for the opportunity to speak to members of the APPG for Hospitality and Tourism. SP said she was keen to do visits across the country, so to be in contact with her office if you wish to arrange one.

SP said she is aware that some of the policies from Government are proving to be challenging for the sector, but it is her job as Tourism Minister to make this case to Government and will be going into further details on those policies. She reiterated her commitment to making that case to Government on behalf of businesses and the entire sector when these policies are not working as intended.

SP said that as a government they are committed to a growth plan. SP discussed the work of her predecessor on the Visitor Economy Growth Strategy, which is still be worked on, and the Visitor Economy Advisory Council, which will be meeting on 14 January and continues to feed into the strategy. This meeting will be discussing the broad ideas around the growth plan, and how we can work together to deliver that in the coming months.

SP moved on to talk about Government ambitions for 50 million visitors by 2030, not just in London, but across the whole of the UK. SP reinforced that the benefits must be for the whole of the country and that major events, including sporting and cultural events are important to unlocking this.

SP met with Visit England yesterday to discuss how the upcoming Euros can be used to boost visitor numbers with cross regions working together.

SP discussed the opportunities around training and education and referenced that her first job was in a café and many people's first job is in hospitality. SP said that hospitality is a good entry level job but also a job where individuals can work their way up quickly and is a vital tool for accessing the job market if they are not in education, employment or training.

SP handed over to CW to Chair the Q&A.

### 3. Q and A session

Steve Darling MP asked about the cost of energy and how it impacts the cost crisis affecting hospitality businesses.

SP committed to making representation to the energy minister to see if they can speak to the energy companies directly.

Angus MacDonald talked about the cost burden facing hospitality businesses such as hotels affecting their profitability and viability.

SP said while most of the cumulative burden is outside her department she said she is making strong representations across government and committed to taking the points away.

Manuella Perteghella asked about transport outside London and the lack of direct trains affecting the visitor economy in Stratford-on-Avon.

SP committed to speaking to the transport minister about direct trains from Stratford-on-Avon to London and made the broader point that better connected transport, including trains and busses, is needed to enhance visitor numbers, and committed to cross Government work as well as regional Governments.

Bayo Alaba MP asked how the Government will support the hospitality sector in a fair and equitable way over the visitor levy.

SP said she appreciated that there is a mixture of opinions on this topic especially among metro mayors. SP strongly encouraged feeding into the consultation which is closing on 18 February. The Local Government Association welcomed the levy but said it wants funds to go into marketing. SP is meeting with stakeholders and there is a mixed reception and broad voice on the levy, and she is making these points across Government.

SP gave the example of the Mayor of the West Midlands, Richard Parker, saying he was in favour in principle in favour but before it is implemented there are a number of changes needed so that it helps and doesn't hinder the sector. SP committed to coming back to Bayo Alaba with more details.

Lauren Edwards MP asked about the cost of energy for businesses referencing that hospitality businesses are energy intensive and whether there is a possibility of target support to ease the burden of this.

Lauren Edwards MP also asked about business rates support, not just for pubs, empathising how town centre sustainability and regeneration efforts will be negatively affected if just some of the sector is support with the changes to business rates. Lauren Edwards asked if representations could be made to the Treasury on this issue.

SP said she has heard the challenges and concerns around business rates and communicated with her department and the Treasury on this issue but said she did not want to give false hope that this would change but very aware of points being made across the House.

Joe Roberston MP said that 38% of local economy in his constituency is tourism dependent and this has a huge impact on young people, youth employment, summer jobs and first jobs for young people.

SP said there is a real opportunity with the skills agenda especially with the number of vacancies in the visitor economy. The former Tourism Minister started some work with the new Centre for Excellence in the north east and this is a model which can be replicated. SP identified perception as part of the problem and an opportunity to shift with the Government's jobs guarantee.

Nigel Hudleston MP asked what data MPs, Lords and the hospitality industry can give to the Minister to help the Minister to best make the case to Treasury.

SP said it's helpful to hear tangible examples on Government policies that are bringing unanticipated challenges to businesses and communities. SP is particularly keen to hear of opportunities to see best practice in terms of training and education for young people. SP encouraged members to raise these via CW as Chair of the APPG.

Ann Davies MP asked about work with devolved Government on the visitor economy.

SP said she recently chaired a meeting with all sport ministers across the UK. This is an opportunity to think about the legacy of major events and a long-term output is encouraging people to get active as well as revive the local economy.

Baroness Neville Rooffe asked about the impact of business rates on pubs, especially pubs with rooms.

SP assured members that she is making representations to Treasury but ultimately it is a decision outside her department.

Damian Hinds asked about whether there had been a debate in Westminster Hall or a backbench debate on the visitor levy.

The APPG agreed to work on formalising this debate.

Lord Taylor asked about the impact of the new drink drive white paper.

UKHospitality will be responding to this consultation.

#### **4. Kate Nicholls, Chair, gave an industry update**

KN started by explaining that we have an inbound tourism target for the strategy and we're pushing for one for domestic tourists. 70% of overnights stays in the UK are domestic overnight stays, whether that is for work, visiting family or friends, it all counts as domestic tourism.

KN looked back at trading patterns over the festive period, which should be one of the busiest times of year for businesses. Wet led pubs and pub restaurants enjoyed growth of 4-5%, while bars and experiential venue's growth declined by 15-17%. Competitive socialising and experiential venues have been typically, in recent years, been more resilient, showing the impact of low consumer confidence and cost of living, which is hitting people's liberty to spend. KN said price rises are impacting people's ability to spend and growth of 4% is not growth in real terms. Volume is still below pre covid levels and there is undoubtedly a consumer confidence crisis and good Christmas trading cannot carry businesses through the next few months.

KN moved onto business rates, stating that business in coastal communities which operate seasonally have to pay business rates all year around. While transitional relief is welcome, it only

defers the bill, which is unstable. We're waiting for an announcement around pubs. UKHospitality's analysis shows by year 3 a pub faces an increase of 76% in business rates and a hotel 115%. It is still not clear whether a pub with rooms will be classed as pub or hotel under any new relief scheme. They are hit so badly as their rateable value is calculated on hypothetical turnover and businesses are operating in a high inflationary environment and are still recovering post covid.

KN made the point that any solution needs to be hospitality wide and include hotels and Government should implement the maximum possible 20p discount to the multiplier for all hospitality properties.

KN summed up saying that there needs to be work to review the valuation methodology and put pressure on VOA for those appealing their rates.

KN said that UKHospitality holds constituency level data on what the bills rises for the average hospitality business in each constituency and members can request this by writing to [policy@ukhospitality.org.uk](mailto:policy@ukhospitality.org.uk).

CW closed the meeting.

**The meeting closed.**