



PRESS RELEASE

New Executive Director of the Tourism Alliance announced

31 October 2022

The Tourism Alliance is pleased to announce that Richard Toomer has today (Monday 31 October) taken over as Executive Director of the organisation following the retirement of Kurt Janson OBE.

The Tourism Alliance is the umbrella trade association representing more than 65 organisations in every part of the tourism industry, including inbound, outbound and the domestic sector. The Alliance's main roles are to provide a unified tourism industry view to government, parliament, and other stakeholders, and to provide a forum for policy debate and discussion amongst our members.

Richard will work with the board and executive, headed by Chairman Tom Jenkins of ETOA. His task will be to ensure that policymakers and the tourism industry continue to fully understand each other's priorities and concerns for their joint benefit.

Richard joins the Alliance from the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) where he was Head of External Affairs. He also has experience working in parliament and for the British Airline Pilots' Association (BALPA) in policy and communications roles.

Tom Jenkins, Tourism Alliance Chairman, said:

"Kurt has been with us for 17 years. In that time, he has built up the organisation into a body of 60 members representing 200,000 businesses in every area of this vast sector. It is courtesy of Kurt that Richard takes over a strong Alliance. And this strength is necessary.

"The industry is facing numerous problems. Recruitment is a major difficulty across the sector. Energy costs are threatening the viability of many hospitality businesses, just as consumers are facing a cost-of-living crisis. For inbound tourism, the prospect of a weak

pound is helpful, but restrictions on school groups coming from Europe deprive the UK of vital export earnings. The UK visa offering is not internationally competitive, both in price and bureaucratic burden. And after the reversal of the Chancellor's VAT decision, high-value customers are now going to be shopping elsewhere. Richard has full in-tray; to tackle it, courtesy of Kurt, he has the backing of the whole tourism sector."

Kurt Janson OBE said:

"Tourism is a very large and very diverse component of the UK economy that is often not fully understood and recognised in government policy. The importance of the Alliance in bringing together all the components of this highly successful industry to co-ordinate issues and messaging to government was highlighted during the Covid pandemic when tourism was the first industry to be hit and the last to recover. Government support was vital to the survival of many businesses.

"In standing down, I know that our tourism industry is well positioned to work with government to provide much needed economic growth and I wish Richard all the best in taking forward this work."

Richard Toomer said:

"I am looking forward to getting stuck into the tourism policy agenda and ensuring our members' voices are heard in government and beyond.

"There are huge policy challenges for the sector especially around energy costs and the associated cost-of-living crisis which will affect all companies in tourism directly but will also have an effect on the public's ability and willingness to travel for leisure in the coming months.

"There are also ongoing policy debates on issues such as mandatory registration of short-term holiday rental accommodation and proposed changes to Destination Management Organisations. These and so many other issues are both exciting and important in ensuring that the UK tourism industry continues to drive economic growth, prosperity and levelling-up right across the country."

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