

Scottish Tourism Alliance
STA Council Meeting Note
13th September, The Place, Edinburgh

Attending

- Carron Tobin, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Iain Jurgensen, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Linda Battison, Assoc. of Scotland's Self-Caterers
- Paul Nixon, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- Colin Smith, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- John Codona, BACTA
- Joseph Cullis, BACTA
- Catherine Erskine, Discover Scottish Gardens
- Paula Bushell, Discover Scottish Gardens
- Andrea Nicholas, Green Tourism
- Claire Bruce, VisitAberdeenshire
- Charlie Croft, Loch Lomond & Trossachs Natl Park
- Rob McKinnon, Outer Hebrides Tourism
- Robert Kidd, Scot Destination Management Assoc
- Willie Macleod, British Hospitality Assoc
- Marshall Bain, Scottish Licensed Trade Assoc
- Robin Worsnop, ETAG (RW)
- Clare Willis, National Trust for Scotland

Apologies

- Ben Mardall, Wild Scotland
- Fiona Bewers, The Caravan Club
- Fiona Campbell, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- David Smyth, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- Sarah Troughton, Scottish Country Sports Tourism
- Laura Cheyne, National Trust for Scotland
- Sue Gruellich, Scottish Tourist Guides Assoc
- Jeanette Wilson, Brit Holiday & Home Parks Assoc
- Caroline Miller, Go Rural Scotland
- Margo Paterson, SYHA
- Daniel Steel, Sail Scotland
- Barry McCulloch, Federation of Small Businesses
- Laurie Piper, Moray Speyside Tourism
- Jeremy Tinsley, Confederation of Passenger Transport
- David Weston, Scottish B&B Assoc
- Sheila Gilmore, VisitArran

In Attendance

- Marc Crothall, Scottish Tourism Alliance (MC) (chair)
- Caroline Warburton, Scottish Tourism Alliance (CW)
- Mhairi Clark, Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Mhairi Smith, Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Jonathan Pryce, Scottish Government
- Fiona Cook, Scottish Government

1. Welcome & Note of Last Meeting

Marc Crothall welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular those new to the Council. MC also thanked The Place for hosting the meeting.

2: Brexit & Scottish Tourism: a Discussion with Scottish Government Officials

Jonathan Pryce, Director for Culture, Tourism and Major Events at the Scottish Government provided a brief introduction and the discussion was opened to the floor.

Regarding regulations and key issues, the discussion fell into three broad areas:

People

- Essential to retain free movement of people. If not retained, then serious concern over whether work permits will only be granted to 'high skilled' jobs. Also if visas required then essential that process is easy to complete, cheap and a decision granted quickly.
- Impact on migration: many rural areas need to attract people (particularly families) to work and stay. Will curbs on immigration affect that?
- Reputation of Scotland to both live and visit is negatively affected.
- Reputation of Scotland leads to impact on business, business events and ultimately likelihood to invest.

Funding

- Many areas, particularly rural or more deprived areas, have benefited greatly from EU funding and concerns that this funding will be lost. Funding have been used for infrastructure, rural business development and support and regeneration and skills development (ESF). Is there a guarantee that rural, coastal and/or deprived areas will continue to have access to equivalent funds?
- There was some discussion of LEADER and potential applicants being put off by the high level of reporting.

Regulations

A number of EU regulations and agreements were mentioned and the importance of maintaining them in line with, if not better than, EU regulations. These included:

- Open Skies Agreement
- Environment Protection

- EU Package Travel Directive
- Tour Operators Margin Scheme

3: STA Research: Rising Costs of Doing Business

Over the summer, the STA has been conducting research to better understand which costs are of most concern to tourism businesses. Initial findings were received by STA two days before the Council meeting and MC presenting the initial findings.

4: STA Policy Issue

Over the next 4 months, the STA is looking to update their key policy issues. MC outlined the six key themes which are being proposed. These were:

1. Minimise the burden of regulation and the associated costs of doing business.
2. Support continued investment in Scotland's digital infrastructure to accelerate growth.
3. Support the growth and availability of a skilled, professional, and inclusive tourism workforce.
4. Influence the Brexit negotiations to ensure the best possible outcome for the tourism sector
5. Influence sustainable support for tourism marketing, destination and sectoral organisations
6. Support a more integrated transport system with policies and taxation that will enable the tourism sector to grow.

There was general agreement on the six themes, with a couple of suggestions to strengthen and clarify the wording. The next stage is to agree the details under each theme, namely what is it that the industry is asking for in order to achieve the policy issue. This work will be undertaken over the next couple of months.

5: AOB

There were no additional items.

Dates of Next Meeting:

- 29th Nov, tbc, Edinburgh, 11am – 1.30pm