

**Minutes STA Board Meeting  
Wednesday 24 May 2017  
Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow**

Present:

Stephen Leckie (SL), Henk Berits (HB), Alison McRae (AM), , David Lonsdale (DL), Gordon Dewar (GD), Martin Bennett (MB), Rebecca Brooks (RB), Calum Ross (CR), James Withers (JW)

Apologies

Marina Huggett (MH)

In attendance

Marc Crothall (MC), Caroline Warburton, Elaine Townsend (ET) - minute taker

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**1. Welcome / Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

**Note of Meeting 20 January 2017**

Note of Meeting was approved. The following matters arising were noted:

- I. Further meetings and discussions have taken place with Malcolm Roughead and Lord Thurso; including meetings held with Fiona Hyslop. The STA/VS relationship is in a strong position.
- II. Action RB / CR to provide better understanding of STA to new VS board and feedback thoughts to VS Chair – **Action ongoing.**
- III. MB in the process of amending the Articles:
  - i. To reflect a minimum number of board members of 4 as opposed to the current level of a maximum number of 12.
  - ii. Amend the 3-year term.
  - iii. Take out reference to Council members.Amendments to be sought approval at the October AGM.
- IV. It was suggested that a networking event could be held every 2 months – perhaps a dinner? / partnered events?
- V. MC has held meetings with Derek Mackay, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution and Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs & Fair Work to discuss business rates and other issues. It has been agreed to hold regular bi-monthly meetings going forward. STA board keen to have input to agenda items ahead of these meetings. **Action MC**

Important to communicate the details of business rates cap – has been communicated via the STA channels. Authorities responsible for communicating to businesses in each respective area. The submissions from the Barclays Review report will be out end of July. STA/BHA/SLTA are working as a coalition on the business rates issue. Call to Action through the Talker – reminder to all members outlining the savings etc. **Action STA Comms Team**  
Hustings not going ahead.

- VI. STA have regular dialogue with the Scottish Office; ie Pete Wishart and Lord Andrew Dunlop. Secretary of State for Scotland has been invited to speak at the October conference; to be confirmed following appointment of the new government in June.

**2. STA CEO summary of activity, membership, people update**

MC presented the CEO summary, highlighting - Membership, Political Engagement, Rising Cost Research, STA Future Event Planning, Financial Summary/Reporting, Wider Industry Engagement, Team Update.

There is likely to be increasing challenges in generating income with a tightening of belts by business on paying subscriptions and providing sponsorship. The meeting planned for the morning of 20 June is to both review and discuss options on future structure and consider avenues for other income streams. Also for discussion is nurturing relationships with public agencies. Agreed important to have a structure for these discussions in advance – GD unable to attend but would like to provide some input ahead of the meeting. **Action MC to provide bullet points for discussion**

**3. 2016/17 Year end / 2017-18 Budget / Cashflow**

2016-17 year end has predicted small profit of £1,206, subject to French Duncan review. Income was lower than anticipated; public agency monies not as expected and sponsorship wasn't as high as budgeted. Overall expenditure was tightly managed.

ILG funding now in place across all partners.

Wild Scotland activity has finished.

Profit-share agreement in place with TCMO. Other channels of commission income streams to be sought.

Changed to Xero accounting software from 1 April '17, which is supported through the French Duncan agreement.

JW/MC to explore a potential avenues for partnering with Scotland Food & Drink. **Action JW/MC**

£6.5K new membership to date in this financial year –v- £1.5K budgeted.

Discussions are ongoing with Argos regarding a working partnership/membership agreement going forward.

RBS has provided the October conference venue FOC. All catering will be charged but there is the potential to gain revenue through exhibitor space and sponsorship.

Income risk – if patrons and national associations don't renew. HB raised the possibility of implementing a direct debit payment system – this has been offered to the membership previously but no take-up.

#### 4. STA Board Recruitment process & recommendations

Board vacancy advert is on the STA website; closing date for applications is 16 June. Board to advertise on their work websites. **Action MC to forward PDF document**

Applications received to be short-listed and invited for informal **Actions: interviews with SL & MC AMc also offered to assist.**

An initial list of potential candidates are listed in the paper circulated with the meeting papers. MC emphasised for the board to feed back with contacts for other potential candidates.

MH resigning at the October AGM. Marshall Dallas will be appointed as one of up to 4 NEW Board

#### 5. STA Articles amendment update

Discussed under Matters Arising.

#### 6. Agency Quarterly reports & VisitScotland Draft Corporate Plan

SE & VS quarterly updates taken as read.

Feedback on the VS Corporate Plan:

- A concise document in what they want to achieve
- Encouraging the STA has been asked to provide feedback/input
- Need to be more specific and clear on what the offer is
- Important to remember the TLG statement – *‘our vision is that by 2020, Scotland is a destination of 1<sup>st</sup> choice for a high quality, value for money and memorable customer experience delivered by skilled and passionate people’*
- Marketing information in the Plan is relatively small compared to what is provided in the quarterly report
- ‘World-class’ used too often
- Update to reflect the ‘economic update’
- Position themselves against the tourism strategy stats.

MC to feedback comments to VS. **Action MC**

#### 7. STA Conference / STW2017 Review & Future Thinking 2018 onward

*Review*

Overall feedback very good. Speaker feedback – best to date.

Some venue issues; Mark Beaumont session on the bike didn’t work too well; ScotHot lunch break an issue; not much networking for exhibitors.

Glasgow location worked better.

11,500 participated in the one event (ScotHot/Conference/DWAD).

Pre-event communications were good.

Lux expectations didn’t deliver; possibly manage our own PCO in the future.

Nova Scotia element was well received.

*Future Thinking*

Scottish Tourism Month for 2018. This will allow destinations breathing space to be involved and hold their signature events during the Month.

SEC has been booked for the 2018 conference 1<sup>st</sup> March - Provisionally holding similar dates for 2019.

2018 is the 'Year of Young People'; 200 students to be invited to participate at the conference. Potential scope to do something different the night before as an alternative to the 'dinner with a difference'. Possibly a political debate. Look at the possibility of inviting a delegation from New Zealand for 2018.

Scope for PR/Marketing to have more impact over a month.

Networking is the strength and very important to maximise the opportunities for participants.

Keep the same price point.

Look at new branding. Possibly a new name 'Festival of Tourism'?

How do we sell the transition?

SF&D strategy to 2030 has been launched, which includes 'Food Tourism' – how can this be incorporated into the programme?

Future thinking - 2020 is the 'Year of Scotland's Coasts and Waters' – potential idea to hold the conference on a cruise ship. MC also proposed potential of doing a global industry assoc. event incorporating same type orgs to STA such as ITIC/TIAC; seek opinions. ***To be discussed in more detail on 20<sup>th</sup> June.***

#### **8. TS2020 Progress / TLG Summary Update & Economic Narrative**

Papers were issued in advance of the meeting and CW provided a verbal update at the meeting. A New Economic Narrative for Tourism document to be published at the end of July, in agreement with all partners; Scottish Government are pushing hard for this information. Fiona Hyslop has asked for a 'wish' list of where money should be spent in the sector. Feeding back numbers to government has to be right in order for the information to be made public. Following the published document, examples will be provided at the September TLG meeting. Important the TLG keeps reins on this piece of work with input from the agencies.

Comments are welcome from STA board members who are not on the TLG. **Action non TLG board members**

#### **9. STA Advocacy Approach & Priorities for STA to Government National / Local**

Pete Wishart's seat at risk. Big deficiency in skills, which is a big concern and important to keep the issue in the public domain. KPMG research report from the BHA highlights a gap in skills in the next 2-3 years. MC tabled at the last high level tourism meeting the possibility of TV campaigns; Fiona Hyslop was warm to the idea, which will be implemented by VisitScotland if it goes ahead.

Session planned on 1 June with the lower pay commission.

Innovation – position opportunities around graduates.

Perhaps look at the possibility of a part-time Advocacy post – what are our priorities and how are these resourced over the next 12 months. Important to balance the Scottish level of priorities –v- the UK government priorities.

A group has been formed - 'Union United' looking at fair work for hospitality. 1<sup>st</sup> formal meeting on 25 May for their members, discussions to include low pay; zero hours; workers' rights.

Infrastructure – key projects for government include the A83 / A82.

Possible devolvement of local authorities has been discussed. New council groups to look at the impact of tourism in each area. Have a tourism champion/ambassador for each authority – Fiona Hyslop to encourage through SNP colleagues.

Edinburgh tourist tax ongoing – government 100% against it; this also endorsed by Derek Mackay at meetings with the STA. Glasgow tourist tax is coming to a head.

## 10. AOB

19<sup>th</sup> September board meeting – venue to be in Edinburgh.

Note the January 2018 board meeting is **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** not 26<sup>th</sup> as listed on the agenda. An outlook invite for this meeting has been sent out

### Future Meeting Dates:

#### 2017/2018 STA Board meetings and Events dates & times

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June: STA Council – Microsoft Offices, Edinburgh. 14.00-16.30 (optional for STA board to attend)**

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June: STA Future Structure Discussion – Crieff Hydro (The Earn room). 10.30-13.30**

**Teambuilding Day – Lochearn / Crieff Hydro. 14.00-22.00**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept: STA Council – Microsoft Offices, Edinburgh. 14.00-16.30 (optional for STA board to attend)**

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> Sept: Board Mtg. - venue tbc, Edinburgh. 10.30-13.00**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> October: AGM & Autumn Conference - RBS Conference Centre, Gogarburn. 09.45am-14.30**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov: STA Council – Microsoft Offices, Edinburgh. 10.30-13.00**

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov: Board Mtg. & Patrons Dinner - Edinburgh & RBS Gogarburn. 15.00-17.00 / 18.30-22.30**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan: Board Mtg. - Glasgow, Edinburgh or Stirling TBC. 10.30-13.00**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March: STA National Conference & Dinner – SEC, Glasgow. 09.30-22.30**

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March: Parliamentary Reception - Scottish Parliament. 18.00-20.00**