

**STA Board Meeting**  
**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017**  
**VisitScotland, Ocean Terminal, Edinburgh**  
**Minute of Meeting**

Present:

Stephen Leckie (SL), Marina Huggett, Calum Ross (CR), Rebecca Brooks (RB), Gordon Dewar (GD)

Apologies:

Martin Bennett, Henk Berits, David Lonsdale, Alison McRae, James Withers

In Attendance:

Marc Crothall (MC), Caroline Warburton (CW)

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**1. Welcome by Chair**

Apologies were noted.

Marina Huggett is stepping down from the Board at the AGM in October. SL thanked Marina for all her work and support of the STA (and STF) since joining the board in October 2010.

**2. CEO Report (Paper 1)**

- **The 'Rising Costs' Research** (see agenda item 10) has been the significant focus of the summer.
- **STA Conference** on 3<sup>rd</sup> October is already sold out (305 delegates).
- **Overtourism** has been a theme in the media over the summer and Board keen that the STA maintains a balanced response to the issue.
- **Scottish Tourism Month 2018:** announcement of month rather than week will be made at the STA Autumn Conference. Also 15 year old Marcus Hyka is to co-host the conference with Stephen Jardine, who will mentor Marcus up to March 2018.
- **Year of Young People (YOYP):** following on from the previous topic, there was a discussion about what else STA Board & team are doing to contribute to YOYP.  
**Action: MC to work up possible ways STA contributes to YOYP.**
  
- **Membership & sponsorship:** Graham Maclennan, Membership & Commercial Business Development is stepping down from the post in October to pursue his self-catering business; Graham has worked for the STA since September 2015. MC asked all Board members to continue to provide introductions, contacts and leads to MC to ensure income continues to grow.

**Action: ALL Board members to offer sponsor and member introductions and contacts to MC.**

**3. STA Financials; 2017/18 YTD & Cashflow (Papers 2 & 3)**

The STA Financials were approved.

**4. Directors' Report and Audited Accounts 2016/17 (Papers 4 & 5)**

All present applauded the STA team for the Directors' Report, both its content and design. The STA Accounts were approved.

**5. AGM & Autumn Conference Programme Update & Final Delegate list (Papers 6 & 7)**

MC outlined the conference programme, adding that voting buttons (on loan from Scottish Enterprise) will be used to encourage greater audience engagement.

**6. Agency & STA Council Member Updates (Paper 8, 9 & 10)**

In addition to the information provided in the papers, MC informed the group that Anna Miller is now Head of Tourism at HIE, taking over from Chris Taylor.

**7. Ministerial Engagement & Future Proposed STA Policy Agenda**

STA has had a number of ministerial and MSP engagements, with more scheduled for the autumn. MC showed the six draft STA policy agenda themes (shown below). The Board asked that STA had a short (2 sides) position statement on Brexit.

*STA Top Policy Issues*

1. *Minimise the burden of regulation, taxation 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, destinations and sectoral organisations*
6. *Support a more integrated transport system that will enable the tourism sector to grow*

**Action: MC to draft short paper on STA 'asks' for Brexit.**

**8. First Minister Letter & Response – thoughts & next steps**

All Board members had received a letter from the First Minister highlighting how the Scottish Government is supporting the tourism sector. MC & SL had both emailed Stewart Maxwell, FM's Special Advisor to ask for a meeting. No response had been received yet.

**9. Tourism Leadership Group (TLG) & Tourism Working Group (TWG)**

SL updated the group on TLG activities, including the new approach to TLG meetings which will focus each meeting on a key theme, invite experts to present and option to invite additional industry representatives to join the meeting. CW highlighted the 2016 visitor spend figures which have been made available to the TLG. They show a significant drop in spend.

**10. Presentation of Rising Costs Research Findings (Paper 11)**

MC presented the findings which has had responses from almost 400 tourism businesses. The research will be formally launched at STA Autumn Conference and will be presented to Cabinet Secretaries Hyslop and Mackay prior to the conference. The Board discussed the findings and what the industry is asking for as a result.

**11. AOB**

There was no other business.

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## **Future Meeting Dates**

**2017 Board meetings & other Key STA event dates & times**

- **Oct 3rd AGM & Autumn Conference:** RBS Gogarburn – Edinburgh – 09.30-16.30
- **Oct 25th Board Bonding Drinks & Dinner:** Howard Hotel Edinburgh -18.00 – 23.00
- **Nov 29th Board Meeting:** Edinburgh venue TBC 15.00 -17.00
- **Nov 29th Patrons & Business Leaders Dinner:** RBS Gogarburn 18.30-22.30

**2018 STA Board meeting & other Key STA event dates & times**

- **Jan. 24th Board Meeting:** location TBC 10.30 -13.00
- **Feb 28th Pre-conference Reception/ Dinner TBC:** Glasgow venue tbc 18.00-21.30
- **March 1st STM2018 Signature Conference / Dinner:** Glasgow SEC -10.00-21.00
- **March 27th STM Parliamentary Reception:** Holyrood - 18.00-20.00