

**Scottish Tourism Alliance**  
**STA Council Meeting Note**  
**12<sup>th</sup> January 2016, Microsoft, Edinburgh**

**Attending**

- Alasdair Smart, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- Fiona Campbell, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- Fiona Bewers, The Caravan Club
- Lee Cousins, Scottish Sports Assoc
- Jane Ali-Knight Scottish Events & Festival Assoc
- Robin Worsnop, ETAG
- Andrea Nicholas, Green Tourism (AN)
- Jeanette Wilson, British Holiday & Home Parks Assoc
- Iain Jurgensen, Argyll & Isles Tourism (IJ)
- Sarah Troughton, Scottish Country Sports Tourism
- Willie Macleod, British Hospitality Assoc (WM)
- Sue Gruellich, Scottish Tourist Guides Assoc
- Caroline Miller, Go Rural Scotland
- Ben Mardall, Wild Scotland
- Jeremy Tinsley, Confederation of Passenger Transport UK
- David Smythe, Assoc of Scottish Self Caterers (DS)
- Mairi Bell, Loch Lomond & Trossachs Natl Park

**Apologies**

- Claire Bruce, Deeside & the Cairngorms Ltd
- Keith Legge, SYHA
- Daniel Steel, Sail Scotland
- Laura Cheyne, National Trust from Scotland
- Robert Kidd, Scottish Destination Management Assoc
- Judy Rae, Business Tourism for Scotland
- Fiona Thomson, Scottish Tourist Guides Assoc
- Paul Waterson, Scottish Licensed Traders Assoc
- Max Thorne, CL Serviced Apartments
- Ros Halley, Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Assoc
- Mark Tate, Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Barry McCulloch, Federation of Small Businesses
- Ian Fordham, Outer Hebrides Tourism Assoc
- Rosanne Mackay, Farm Stay UK
- Denise Connelly, Zero Waste Scotland
- Mike Dennison, Cycle Tourism Forum
- *Gareth Crichton, Discover Orkney (standing down)*

**In Attendance**

- Marc Crothall, Scottish Tourism Alliance (Chair)
- Caroline Warburton, Scottish Tourism Alliance

---

**1. Welcome & Note of Last Meeting**

Marc Crothall welcomed everyone to the meeting. On review of the note of the last meeting, all action points were discharged. The following additional remarks were made from the floor:

- **National Living Wage:** there was a general feeling that the industry, having made its views known, had adopted a pragmatic approach to introduction. Need to continue to highlight the increasing costs of regulation to businesses which, with the exception of business rates, are mainly reserved matters.
- **Productivity:** the tourism sector's relatively (to other sectors) poor productivity rates were mentioned. CW/WM highlighted that SE had commissioned research into the issue and which highlighted that, as a service sector, tourism employed a significant number of part-time/seasonal people.
- **Scot Parliamentary Elections:** with a significant number of MSPs stepping down, there is an opportunity to highlight the importance of tourism to Scotland to new MSPs and Ministers. STA to invite relevant new MSPs and Ministers to STA events.

**AP1: ALL to consider dates when available to host politicians and forward to STA.**

**2: STA Update**

MC updated the meeting on a number of items including:

1. **UK Tourism Council:** MC has been invited to join the UK Tourism Council (information previously circulated) which meets in London four times a year. MC asked for thoughts from group on relevance of attending. Group felt that would be interesting to be part of the discussions, bearing in mind that not all issues will relate to Scotland, and agreed that MC should attend initially to consider relevance.
2. **Tourism Cross Party Group (23<sup>rd</sup> February 2016):** the topic is tourism skills (led by Skills Development Scotland). Mike Cantlay, VS Chair, who is ending his term in March will also speak. There was a brief discussion about the effectiveness of the group. It was agreed this should be reviewed after the election.
3. **Tourism Tax Discussion:** recent news articles relating to Edinburgh has sparked debate amongst the industry and politicians. STA currently advocates against any additional tax on businesses and visitors that will reduce Scotland's competitiveness as a destination. STA members have recently been asked for their views. Council members were asked to provide their views directly to MC.

**AP2: STA to share results of industry feedback when available.**

**AP3: ALL to provide organisations' views on the principles of tourism taxation (or transient visitor levy).**

4. **Scottish Ratepayers Forum:** David Smyth provided a brief update (which is circulated with this note).
5. **Digital Tourism Scotland:** CW reminded the group of the launch of DTS – [www.digitaltourismscotland.com](http://www.digitaltourismscotland.com). The group felt that further work needed to be done on the website content and the digital roadmap in particular. There was also discussion about the need for digital skills to include back-office skills as well as digital marketing. CW to feed comments to the DTS working group.

**AP4: CW to feed comments from DTS discussion to DTS working group (done)**

6. **Tourism Intelligence Scotland:** this initiative has now finished and the website is closed. There has been a commitment from relevant agencies to continue to share plans for intelligence and ensure joined up approach.
7. **Year of Innovation, Architecture & Design:** MC encouraged all Council members to provide information about industry activities via the Council Report. VisitScotland on behalf of the Tourism Minister, is about to consult on the future of the themed years programme and a survey will be sent to all Council members shortly.
8. **Scottish Tourism Week (11-18 March):** online bookings are now available and this year's programme will be launched this week via a special edition of The Talker and on [www.scottishtourismweek.scot](http://www.scottishtourismweek.scot). Full week of events starting on 11<sup>th</sup> March and concluding on 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> at EICC with Signature Programme, Dinner with a Difference and Thistle Awards. All encouraged to attend and asked to promote widely to members.

**AP5: ALL to help promote Scottish Tourism Week – [www.scottishtourismweek.scot](http://www.scottishtourismweek.scot)**

**3: Tourism Scotland 2020 – Mid Term Review**

CW presented the current key findings from the mid term review of the national tourism strategy. The emerging draft priorities are:

1. Strengthen Industry Leadership:
  - a. Strengthen leadership in the industry to enhance the quality of the visitor experience
  - b. Develop the quality of leadership across the sector to deliver the TS2020 growth ambition – locally, nationally, in urban and rural settings
2. Strengthen Digital Capability:
  - a. Accelerate progress in increasing the number of digitally connected businesses
  - b. Increase the number of digitally enabled businesses to enhance the visitor experience and improve competitiveness
3. Enhance the Quality of Visitor Experience:
  - a. Enable businesses to develop people skills to enhance the quality of the visitor experience
  - b. Enable businesses to develop people skills to attract international visitors
4. Influence Investment in:
  - a. Built infrastructure
  - b. Digital connectivity
  - c. Flight access and transport connectivity
  - d. Business growth finance

There was limited time for discussion. CW to forward the presentation to Council members and any comments or observations would be welcome.

**AP6: CW to circulate TS2020 Mid Term Review presentation and Council members welcome to provide comments/observations.**

**4: Council Members Update / AOB**

**4.1: Council Report:** report to be circulated with note of meeting.

**4.2: Transport: Rest & Be Thankful:** IJ raised the issue of the impact which road closures are having on businesses, in particular the closure/disruption at Rest & Be Thankful (A83).

**4.3: Women in Tourism:** JAL highlighted the launch of Women in Tourism initiative ([www.womenintourism.co.uk](http://www.womenintourism.co.uk); #WITScotland; <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8300941>), and asked Council members to help promote it and in particular a survey about tourism professionals' (male & female) views on careers in tourism.

**4.4: UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development:** AN informed the meeting that the UNWTO has announced that 2017 is to be the Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development (<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2015-12-07/united-nations-declares-2017-international-year-sustainable-tourism-develop>).

**4.5 Flooding:** FB asked whether they had been any response to Government or from Government about the impact of flooding on tourism sector. No specific tourism discussion has been however there has been considerable discussion of the impact on communities and local businesses with the offer of support from Scottish Government provided (<http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Financial-help-for-flooded-communities-2125.aspx>).

**Date of Next Meeting:** 19<sup>th</sup> April, Edinburgh (2pm – 4.30pm).