

Scottish Tourism Alliance  
**STA Council Meeting Note**

5<sup>TH</sup> September 2018, Apex Hotel, Waterloo Street, Edinburgh EH1 3BG

**Attending**

- Kat Brogan, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- Claire Bruce, VisitAberdeenshire
- Fiona Campbell, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- Laura Cheyne, National Trust for Scotland
- Abigail Coia, Ayrshire & Arran Tourism
- Catherine Erskine, Discover Scotland's Gardens
- Sheila Gilmore, VisitArran
- Iain Jurgensen, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Robert Kidd, Scot Destination Management Assoc
- Kate Lewington, Orkney Tourism Group
- Donald Macarthur, Outer Hebrides Tourism
- Willie Macleod, British Hospitality Assoc (WM)
- Margo Paterson, Hostelling Scotland
- Carron Tobin, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Jeanette Wilson, Brit Holiday & Home Parks Assoc
- Colin Wilkinson, Scottish Licensed Trade Assoc
- Robin Worsnop, ETAG

**In Attendance**

- David Cannon, CalMac
- Elaine Carmichael, East Lothian Council
- Karen Christie, Scottish Tourism Alliance (KC)
- Marc Crothall, Scottish Tourism Alliance (MC) (Chair)
- Suzanne Cumiskey, Perth & Kinross Council
- John Henderson, Born in the Borders
- Stephen Leckie, Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Karen McGregor, CalMac
- Philippa Park, Arnold Clark
- Alasdair Smart, Scotrail

**Apologies**

- Fiona Bewers, Caravan & Motorhome Club
- Ken Bramham, Scottish Tourist Guides Assoc
- Paula Bushell, Discover Scottish Gardens
- Joseph Cullis, BACTA
- Rosanne Mackay, Farm Stay UK
- Ben Mardall, Wild Scotland
- Barry McCulloch, Federation of Small Businesses
- Rob McKinnon, Outer Hebrides Tourism
- Caroline Millar, Go Rural Scotland
- Gordon Morrison, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- Andrea Nicholas, Green Tourism
- Laurie Piper, Moray Speyside Tourism
- Daniel Steel, Sail Scotland
- Mark Tate, Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Jeremy Tinsley, Confederation of Passenger Transport
- Paul Togneri, Scottish Beer & Pub Assoc
- Sarah Troughton, Scottish Country Sports Tourism
- David Weston, Scottish Bed & Breakfast Assoc

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

Marc Crothall (MC) welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular those joining the meeting for the Transport Scotland workshop in the afternoon. The note of the last meeting was approved.

**2: Scottish Tourism Alliance Update**

- **Political Engagement:** MC and WM updated members on the recent meet with Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP.

**Tourist Tax:** Ms Hyslop remains sympathetic to the case against a tourist tax and while she can't at this point say that there will never be TT at some point, it is unlikely to happen in the near future. She has agreed to the STA Council request for SG to coordinate a national discussion about tourism priorities including a tourist tax and will make an announcement about this in the next two weeks or so. This will include research, analysis of impacts, options etc and will involve the STA as well as local authorities, COSLA.

**Hotel Sector Research:** A recent research study conducted by STA was shared with Ms Hyslop. The report highlighted that although there is positive top line growth, profit is being eroded due to rising costs. The report was well received and she will digest it further.

**Economic Contribution of Tourism:** There are ministers who understand the tourism industry but many don't – there is an ask therefore to industry to engage with local MSPs and talk more about the economic contribution Tourism makes to Scotland's economy. [Tourism in Scotland: The](#)

[Economic Contribution of the Sector](#) can provide further detail.

MC advised that a meeting with the Minister for Finance and the Digital Economy, Kate Forbes MSP would take place on 6<sup>th</sup> September.

- **Food Tourism Action Plan:** [The Food Tourism Action Plan](#) was launched by the First Minister on 27<sup>th</sup> August. This industry led plan to develop food and drink tourism in Scotland, aims to deliver an additional £1 billion to Scotland's economy by 2030 by encouraging more Scottish businesses to source and use Scottish produce.
- **STA Autumn Conference & AGM:** [The STA Autumn Conference and AGM](#) will take place on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> October. MC encouraged members to promote the conference within their organisations. The First Minister will open the conference and will be followed by, Kate Nicholls CEO, UKHospitality, Marc Crothall, CEO, The Scottish Tourism Alliance, Dr Richard Swannell Director, WRAP GLOBAL, James Withers, Chief Executive, Scotland Food & Drink, Ross Carter, Portfolio Director, Fresh Montgomery and Will Whitehorn, Former President, Virgin Galactic.
- **Tourism Industry Sector Deal:** MC advised that the Tourism Sector Deal is due to go before the Star Chamber in October. MC outlined 3 strands to the Sector Deal:
  1. Skills: Changing the perception of what a job in tourism/hospitality is about.
  2. Business Visits & Events: Boosting UK's overall BV+E capacity and ability to attract events to help change seasonality
  3. Tourism Zones: Building product and encouraging the widest possible regional and national spread of international and domestic visitors

**AP1: KC to include links to the following documents:**

**Tourism in Scotland: The Economic Contribution of the Sector in the Note of Meeting  
Food Tourism Action Plan**

**AP2: KC to include VisitBritain update on the Sector Deal with Note of Meeting**

### **3. TS2020 Update & Refresh Process**

MC gave a short update on TS2020.

KC presented an update on the strategy refresh process. This included details of timing, the delivery model which has been put in place, the immediate focus – Building the Evidence Base and the importance of Stakeholder engagement throughout the process in particular the STA Council.

### **4. Strategy Refresh Input Session**

KC and MC led a short 'What's On Your Mind?' session to capture members thoughts on the opportunities and challenges facing Scotland's Tourism sector in the future.

The key themes which came out across both Opportunities and Challenges were:

- People, particularly young people (availability of labour, recruitment and retention of staff, skills development)
- Connectivity (broadband & mobile)
- Visitor management - managing the flow of visitors across the country
- Infrastructure investment
- Brexit

## **5: Round Table Updates & AOB**

- **Assoc of Scottish Self-Caterers:** Short term rental businesses are currently facing serious issues. Many properties are being shut down as a result of planning issues. ASSC currently in the process of crowd funding to support an appeal against a CEC enforcement notice issued to a short term rental business.
- **Visit Arran:** Arran has significant issues attracting people into the industry, encouraged to see that the SG is recognising this issue in hospitality.
- **Discover Scotland's Gardens:** A new Scotland map is being launched. A new Business Development person will be promoting this new tool.
- **British Hospitality Association:** Continued engagement on Business Rates. WM advised that the Obesity strategy from SG is coming to establishments that serve food e.g. portion control, calorie content, content of children's menus. This is an FSS an SG initiative. WM also highlighted that a deposit return scheme is currently under consultation.
- **Scottish Licensed Trade Association:** Concern raised that the window in which to renew a personal License may be too short and could result in licenses not being issued in time.
- **ASVA:** New CEO in place from 16<sup>th</sup> July, Gordon Morrison. Unfortunately Gordon was unable to attend today. The ASVA annual conference will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> November, celebrating 30 years of ASVA.