

**Scottish Tourism Alliance
Annual General Meeting
held on 26 September 2013
at 16.30**

Macrobert, University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA

Present: 67 Members

In attendance: Elaine Townsend (ET); Marc Crothall (MC); John Mauchline (JM); Manuela Calchini, VisitScotland; Simon Dessain, The List.

Welcome and introduction:

Marc Crothall welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MC noted it had been commented the P&L figures referred to in the Directors' Report weren't able to be cross referenced, it was explained this was because it an abbreviated set of accounts that had been circulated. The P&L will be made available to the membership in the Members' Lounge area of the website.

MC expressed thanks to the Patron members, Scottish Enterprise, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, VisitScotland, Xpress Recruitment, Institute of Hospitality, Tourism Intelligence Scotland, The POSH Agency for their support during the year. He also expressed a particular thanks to the STA board for their support.

MC handed over to Stephen Leckie, STA Chair.

Apologies: 22 apologies received; taken as read.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 9th October 2012.

Minutes were agreed as an accurate record.

Proposed – Gordon Dewar, Seconded – Judy Rae

Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

Annual Report 2012-2013

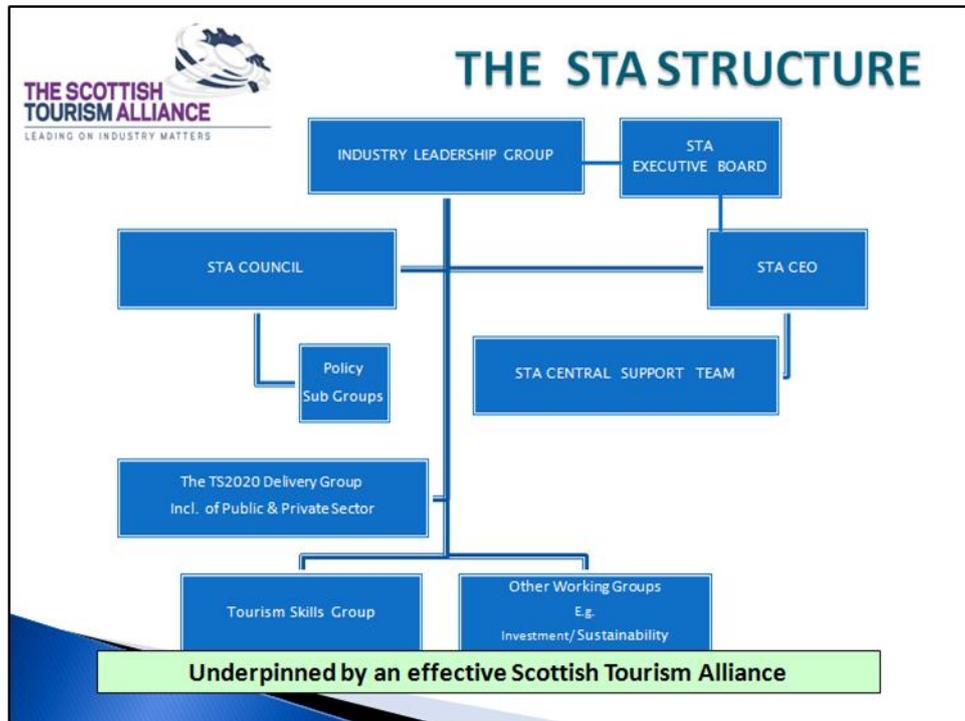
The Headlines

- 1st Year Objective has been to build strength in numbers that would firmly establish the STA as a credible representative.
- To be the voice of the industry and to become self sustainable.
- Membership has grown from 90 organisations/businesses to 225. We believe that through this level of membership the STA and our members now connect with over 70% of businesses in our industry.
- 4 new board members & a Council of 24 was established in January 2013.
- A highlight of the past year was the Scottish Tourism Week "Signature" conference and dinner to which 360 delegates and 240 dinner guests attended respectively.
- The Accounts Report for the 12 month trading period ended 30 June 2013 a net profit on par with last year of £28,333, (2012: £28,969). This has been achieved through growth in membership, 97% retention of membership and careful and focused Profit & Loss management by Marc & Elaine . The overall inherited negative STF balance of (£85,133) now

being reduced further to (£26,925).

- The STA is recognised by many as an organisation with strong leadership and great potential
FIT TO LEAD – VS /SE /HIE – Scottish Government.

The STA Structure



- This is our structure – where everyone fits in.
- We are pleased to have been able to appoint Sue Crossman into the Business Tourism Project Manager role and are currently recruiting for a full time Strategy Delivery Co-ordinator as part of the Central Support team.
- Welcome to Morvern who joined in August and is your contact for submitting any member to member offers you wish to promote or stories for onward sharing via our web news feed.
- Jean Kilpatrick will be moving on at the end of October - thanks to Jean for the year she has given us and we wish her well.

Our Role and Purpose

- To be the overarching “Voice of the Industry” for the Industry to government and public sector agencies.
- To collaborate with government on policy matters that potentially impact growth in tourism.
- To co-ordinate and support the industry to engage and deliver the National Tourism Strategy- (Tourism Scotland 2020).
- Be a signpost to advice and help enable industry to become better informed on industry matters that can impact or aid growth.
- To organise and promote a variety of networking opportunities throughout the year; Scottish Tourism Week being the flagship event.

Government listen to us – We are recognised as the Industry Leadership Group more and more often, and asked for opinion and input to national issues – most recently we fed thoughts to Sir Ian Wood on The Wood Commission & Future Marketing to the Bric’s. MC sits at the Joint Skills Committee table for the industry as well as provides an STA voice to the Homecoming Programme Group.

We were asked to take a lead role in the Tourism Innovation Centre bid by the 8 Universities- Although not successful with the bid to be invited to be there just one year into our life time is something we should acknowledge as a positive. Feedback from the Funding Council was also positive and we remain hopeful of a revised bid being able to be put forward at a later date.

We have significantly influenced the Tourism Development plan that was led by VisitScotland.

There has been regular discussion about Bank Funding - there is a need for banks to look beyond national level and more at a local level. Look at each business on a 'case by case' basis. Lloyds have the attitude they are not interested in tourism. RBS and Clydesdale are not interested. BoS are good at the moment. There is a lack of local knowledge - too much head office engagement/influence. Procedures are different with every bank.

SS commented there is an improvement of infrastructure needed in the North and West to be able to move on - STA to tag.

Important for a big investment in Digital - at least 3G, if not 4G, broadband connection across the country. 30% of Scotland don't even have 2G connection.

Government should be asked to look at grant funding.

TS2020 engagement continues with all in the sector. There are a great many examples of industry taking the ownership that was committed to, and developing and delivering the actions that align to TS2020. Argyll – Deeside – Ayrshire and the Loch Lomond National Park being some. MC and SL have spoken at 60 events in the last 12months.

The media are increasingly seeking comment from the STA. The intention in the coming year is to have a louder voice and do more PR to raise the STA profile even higher. The Communications Strategy being advanced – NEW LOOK Communications coming soon. SL encouraged members to feedback to the STA team any issues that are tourism related.

A website to be developed in the coming year with the objective it becomes the 'GO TO PLACE' for industry for sign-posting to advice.

We continue to lobby on the cutting of Tourism VAT & APD.

We have responded to several consultations –such as the NPF 3; Licensing Rural Commission.

Willie Macleod commented that the licensing measure regulation is taking things too far - voluntary 125ml coming into place.

The STA Executive Board



The STA Executive Board structure diagram shows Stephen Leckie as the Chair and CEO of Crieff Hydro. Below him is a row of nine board members, each with their name and current role. The roles are: Chair BHA Dept Chair AITP, Director SRC, Director Tourism Excellency, MD Abbey Tours Scotland, CEO Edinburgh Airport, CEO Scotland Food & Drink, Head of BT Public Affairs, Associate Shoosmiths, and Vacant.

The STA Executive Board								
STEPHEN LECKIE CHAIR CEO CRIEFF HYDRO								
Calum Ross	Fiona Moriarty	Marina Huggett	Rebecca Brooks	Gordon Dewar	James Withers	Louise Humphrey	Martin Bennett	Vacant
Chair BHA Dept Chair AITP	Director SRC	Director Tourism Excellency	MD Abbey Tours Scotland	CEO Edinburgh Airport	CEO Scotland Food & Drink	Head of BT Public Affairs	Associate Shoosmiths	

- Existing Board has met 4 times this year.
- Minutes available on the STA website
- Next Board meetings November & January

We welcomed Gordon Dewar, James Withers & Fiona Moriarty in January 2013 and then Louise Humphrey in April 2013; all provide real strength to the STA.

Congratulations to Calum Ross and Gordon Dewar on their recent appointment to the VS Board.

JW commented that £1 in £5 of the tourism economy is spent on Food & Drink.

SL made the members aware that the current board will remain in post.

The STA Council

The STA Council									
BHA	SDMA	SYHA	RYA (Marine)	ASSC	CARAVAN CLUB	BH&HPA	ETAG	SCOTTISH SPORTS ASSOC	SLTA
SCOTLANDS BEST B&B's	STGA	OHTIA	OBAN & LORN	CBTP	LOCH LOMOND & TROSSACHS	ABERDEEN & ROYAL DEESIDE	ARGYLL & ISLES	ASVA	WILD SCOTLAND
CHAIR STA	NTS	FARM STAY	GTS	FSB	CYCLING FORUM	ZERO WASTE	GLASGOW	TRANSPORT SCOTLAND PENDING	CEO STA

- Has met 3 times this year January, May & Sept
- The Council will meet 4- 5 times per year

- The Council has met 3 times – Fergus Ewing MSP attended the May meeting – recognising the value and caliber of the Council.

THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL

- To consider the effectiveness of Government, public agency and local authority policy as it influences / supports delivery of the strategy and challenge, from an authoritative perspective, Government agencies where it does not.
- To act as a respected and informed sounding-board for the Leadership Group in terms of future direction of travel re:TS2020 development of actions and means of delivery.
- To influence thinking and monitor future strategy and actions as it evolves.
- To stimulate action & TS2020 /STA engagement – with own member/organisation base.
- To provide a platform for high level interface with Government.
- To allow scope to create sub-groups to deal with particular issues.
- To provide visible and meaningful representation of wider industry interests.
- To support STA response to consultation on Government / Public agency policy.
- To act as a conduit of industry communications with industry.
- Council members consulted on emerging Digital & Sustainability strategy.

SL commented that only 7 of 32 local authorities is a direct member of the STA. How do we persuade the remainder to become engaged? Tourism is everyone's business! What stats are available that tourism is worth in each local authority area? The BHA has stats specifically relevant to the Hospitality Industry. Ann Camus through SLAED is our best contact to spread the message and get the others engaged. The STA has been working with Ann but there is a need to up the anti - **ACTION STA to take forward.**

Some local authorities have become disengaged and others invest into VS, which is not great. MC commented that some do engage indirectly.

Our focus for 2013/14

- To continue to grow and engage and retain industry through membership both to ensure long term financial sustainability and credibility of voice.

The STA is now recognised as an organisation with High Levels of potential , as a result has been invited to be an SE account business.

- To continue to develop the STA into a high performing, well regarded Industry Leadership Group- that both influences and offers real value to the wider Scotland agenda.

- To develop our communications & establish the STA as the “Go To Site” for industry. We will look to 'up weight' our communications with all stakeholders. Although to be as effective as possible the communications need to be two-way, with this in mind we will be introducing monthly pulse check surveys in the near future.

How do we get industry more engaged via communications?

- responsibility on associations to pass onto their members
- tight messages
- short to the point
- clear/targeted

SS commented there is not enough done through facebook/twitter. Businesses are busy and don't have enough time to communicate. Make small businesses feel they are a professional business.

Jennifer Medcalf commented perhaps use a 'buddy' system; use ambassadors; a series of webinars around the country - brings people together.

- To continue to challenge and contribute to future policy thinking that has impact on growth in the visitor economy through tourism activity. We will look to host a new style bigger and better STW, which will include a 2 day Conference and will have something for all. The dates are 11-13 March 2014.
- To prioritise TS2020 actions for delivery by industry that will enable growth.
- To promote the Industry as a credible and attractive career choice to all.

Motions

To receive the Director's Report and Annual Accounts to 30th June 2013.

SL asked the members present to accept the Directors Report to 30th June 2013.

The Report was accepted by a 'Show of Hands' from the members present.

SL asked the members present to accept the Accounts to 30th June 2013.

The Accounts were accepted by a 'Show of Hands' from the members present.

Re-appointment of Auditors

SL asked for approval to re-appoint French Duncan as auditors for the coming year.

The Auditors were appointed for a further 12months by a 'Show of Hands' from the members present.

Any other competent business

SL commented that 18 questions have been submitted ahead of Question Time with Fergus Ewing

MSP this evening. There will not be time to cover all of the questions tonight, however, the Minister has committed to providing answers to those not covered and all of the Q & A's will be available on the STA website.

We need to radically do things differently if we are to move on and reshape things.

Caroline Warburton asked how do we get engagement from the whole of industry?

Should we run with those who are engaging?

MC - some don't know how to engage. We have a responsibility to include everyone.

Industry should identify the market failures - government has a responsibility to listen, take action and get specific items on budget agendas. Government has to take the lead; it won't happen if it doesn't come from the top and fed down.

Gordon Dewar (GD) commented that industry has to be proactive.

Rebecca Brooks (RB)- supported the views. However, some battles we won't win - pick the 'big hitters', get appetite from the Government and ask what support they are prepared to give.

The Minister has other industries in his portfolio - what can tourism learn from them? Pose the question to him this evening. When are Government going to put money where their mouth is?

GD - we need to sort what we want money for and then go to government with a proposal.

WM - we can identify issues and negotiate with government. However, how will the negotiations be affected after the Independence vote? What will happen then? Will we join Europe? Will we move to the euro? What are the alternatives?

The politicians don't know what will happen.

There was a comment that nothing had been discussed about education.

RB commented that education is a key strand in the Strategy and the commission correctly being headed up by Sir Ian Wood (The Wood Commission) will address this.

Shirley Spear commented there has been an improvement in the Skills/Training/Education side.

Education and Food & Drink are not seen as part of Tourism. There is a need for a 'Minister for Tourism'.

Where does Tourism feature in the Curriculum for Excellence?.

The meeting closed at 17.30.