

**Minutes STA Board Meeting
Wednesday 22 February 2016
The Island Suite, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow**

Present:

Stephen Leckie (SL), Rebecca Brooks (RB), Alison McRae (AM), Gordon Dewar (GD), Martin Bennett (MB), Marina Huggett (MH), Calum Ross (CR)

Apologies

James Withers (JW), Henk Berits (HB), David Lonsdale (DL)

In attendance

Marc Crothall (MC), Caroline Warburton (CW), Elaine Townsend – minute taker

1. Welcome / Apologies

Apologies were noted.

Matters Arising

MC confirmed that HB will remain on the STA board.

Stagecoach has confirmed they will not be renewing their Patron membership. MC to target First Group. Virgin Trains are also warm to joining.

It is challenging times – small businesses in particular are questioning should they remain a direct member, due to budget constraints; increasing the need to emphasise the benefits to ensure they remain in membership.

A survey has been sent out from VisitScotland to collate views on the ‘Themed Years’. Following a discussion it was decided the board would complete the survey as individuals, and also submit comments to Marc for him to produce a response paper on behalf of the STA for submission separately to Malcolm Roughead.

Action: MC to forward survey onto the board. Actioned post meeting.

Action: MC to produce a response paper. 24th Feb Note: Not actioned as VS has asked for individual responses not to be submitted.

MC asked for the Board to continue forwarding any potential membership or Patron / sponsorship leads. ***Action ongoing.***

DL has provided the contact @PA Advocacy – Roger Cumming. His basic fee for a survey is £750.

A TS2020 summary document has been produced.

A new STA website has been commissioned; aiming for it to be live by April. It will have the same style as the STW site.

MC has a meeting set up with Stephen Jardine to discuss the messaging around the 4 strands.

The China breakfast has been cancelled as per emails circulated. Future workshops are planned in conjunction with SDI.

The Tourism Council minutes have been issued. They will also be uploaded onto the website.

The APD is in the process of being drafted. Fergus Ewing has provided his comments. Virgin Trains has issued a response. A joint letter has been produced from the airports.

There was a discussion around the EU referendum and should the STA declare a position. Although this is different from the Independence referendum it was decided that we should articulate the concerns around what should be protected, but as a membership organisation we can't take a position. The SLTA has confirmed it will not be taking a position. Businesses will take a position.

There was a discussion around the potential Tourist Tax. DL has posed the question to the First Minister 'Would a Tourist Tax be imposed'? - The response was no. This leaves the question would Councils be allowed to impose a tax levy?

The BHA has resigned its membership from the STA, having given a 1 year notice. They see the Tourism Council as the model going forward. For the 2016-2017 membership year a reduced fee of £2K has been agreed, with the balance being provided via a contra for the consultancy services of Willie Macleod (WMacL).

Martin Couchman retires next week.

WMacL has produced a Tourist/Bed Taxes briefing on behalf of the BHA and STA. This was discussed and whilst there was agreement it was an excellent paper the following points were noted.

The STA does not support the statement at the end of the 1st paragraph. The STA to be taken off that particular statement and a lesser version to be produced built around the bullets below (which the STA fully supports) and in line with the statement in the STA manifesto document. MC to go back to WMacL. **Action MC.**

HOTREC advocates the abolition of, and is opposed to the introduction of new, tourist taxes. If such taxes are introduced:

- *They should be applied equitably across all enterprises which benefit from tourism;*
- *Tourism stakeholders must actively be involved in decisions on how revenues raised should be used in support of tourism development;*
- *Revenues gathered should be 'additional' and not simply used to reduce existing local expenditure on supporting tourism.*

2. STW Programme

Roadshow & Programme – finalised; full details are on the website.

3. STW Headlines

i. Bookings & Sponsorship – Bookings currently stand at Conf. Day 1 – 170; Reception – 300; Conf. Day 2 – 180.

Sponsorship continues to come in.

ii. Green agenda incentive to book – Arnold Clark has donated a prize to win a car for a month; those booked by 1st March will be entered into the draw. They are also providing CW and MC with a 'green' car to travel around some of the regional events they are attending.

iii. Communications media plan – STW to be launched with a press release and photograph shoot at Crieff Hydro.

There will be lots of messaging around Digital.

iv. Additional Notes –

What is the uptake on the travel tickets? - **Action ET to ask Lux. 29th Feb Update – 26 Rail and 2 Rail & Sail booked.**

Possible sponsorship opportunity - MEAD sponsorship of 'selfie sticks'?

4. STW – Key Messages – Doc's for board to ref

- i.* TS2020 Messages. CW has produced a quick reference guide. The rocket has been updated using the original format. The provisional Tourism 2015 figures are ahead of 2011 for the first time. We need to focus on the 4 priorities to close the gap. Any comments/questions to CW. The board commented it was a very good summary.
- ii.* Policy Agenda – paper produced on the current hot topics. Available in hard copy.

5. Matters Arising & Future Agenda Items

- i.* **STA Vice-chair** – There was a discussion as to whether a vice-chair should be appointed. 3 of the STA board members sit on the VS board – does this preclude from them becoming a future STA chair? Careful consideration is needed and the Articles to be checked re a vice-chair/appointment of chair successor. In the meantime, should SL not be available, any director can assume chair of a meeting. **Action MC/ET to check Articles.**
- ii.* **Advocacy & Measurement** – already discussed.
- iii.* **UK TIC Minutes** – Already discussed.
- iv.* **STA TS2020 Funding Support** – Discussions have commenced re future funding for CW's post. Sue Crossman's post will end on 6th March 2016 and will not be continued.
- v.* **VS Board & Chair** – the announcement of the new VS Chair will be very soon.
- vi.* **Wild Scotland** – Wild Scotland has lost quite a few members. The current contract with the STA ends on 30th June 2016, and there is a question as to how/if this will be funded going forward. MC attending the WS board meeting to discuss the issue. **Action MC to provide update.**
- vii.* **Heritage Tourism post** – funded by a grant from Historic Environment Scotland and will be employed by Glasgow Caledonian University.

6. Evening Reception – guest list produced of who is attending.

Future 2016 Board Meetings, STA Event Dates & Times

April 27th – Board Meeting: Microsoft Offices, Waverley Gate, Edinburgh – 09.30-12.00

June 21st – Board Meeting with Dinner: Aviemore – 16.00-22.00

June 22nd – STA Midsummer Conference, Aviemore – 10.00-16.00

Sept 21st - Board Meeting: Microsoft Offices, Waverley Gate, Edinburgh – 09.30-12.00

Oct 5th – STA AGM & Autumn Conference: Glasgow Royal Concert Hall – 10.00-16.00

Nov 30th – Board Meeting: Location TBC – 15.00-17.30

Nov 30th – Patrons & Business Leaders Dinner: Location TBC – 18.45-22.00