

Scottish Tourism Alliance
STA Council Meeting Note
18th January 2017, Microsoft, Edinburgh

Attending

- Fiona Bewers, The Caravan Club
- Paul Nixon, Assoc of Scottish Visitor Attractions
- Andrea Nicholas, Green Tourism (AN)
- Jon Proctor, Green Tourism (JP)
- Caroline Miller, Go Rural Scotland
- Claire Bruce, VisitAberdeenshire
- Fiona Campbell, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- David Smyth, Assoc of Scotland's Self Caterers
- Charlie Croft, Loch Lomond & Trossachs Natl Park
- Ian Fordham, Outer Hebrides Tourism
- Rob McKinnon, Outer Hebrides Tourism
- Robert Kidd, Scot Destination Management Assoc
- Rosanne Mackay, Farm Stay UK
- Willie Macleod, British Hospitality Assoc
- Sarah Troughton, Scottish Country Sports Tourism
- Marshall Bain, Scottish Licensed Trade Assoc
- Laura Cheyne, National Trust for Scotland
- Sheila Gilmore, VisitArran
- Joanna Macpherson, Discover Scotland's Gardens
- Robin Worsnop, ETAG (RW)
- Sue Gruellich, Scottish Tourist Guides Assoc
- Jeanette Wilson, Brit Holiday & Home Parks Assoc

Apologies

- Carron Tobin, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Iain Jurgensen, Argyll & Isles Tourism
- Ben Mardall, Wild Scotland
- Keith Legge, SYHA
- Daniel Steel, Sail Scotland
- Barry McCulloch, Federation of Small Businesses
- Judy Rae, Business Tourism for Scotland
- Joseph Cullis, BACTA
- Laurie Piper, Moray Speyside Tourism
- Jeremy Tinsley, Confederation of Passenger Transport
- James Stuart, Scottish Sports Assoc
- Mark Tate, Cairngorms Business Partnership
- David Weston, Scottish B&B Assoc

In Attendance

- Caroline Warburton, Scottish Tourism Alliance (CW)
Chair
- Marc Crothall, Scottish Tourism Alliance (MC) (part)
- Stephen Leckie, Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Phil Prentice, Scotland's Towns Partnership (part)

1. Welcome & Note of Last Meeting

Caroline Warburton welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular those new to the Council meetings:

- Sheila Gilmore, VisitArran
- Paul Nixon, the new ASVA representative
- Jon Proctor, Green Tourism
- Joanna Macpherson substituting for Paula Bushell, Discover Scotland's Gardens

Scotland's B&B Association and Moray Speyside Tourism has also been invited to join the Council but were unable to attend.

There was no note from the previous meeting due to the agenda comprising of consultation with the Sustainable Growth Commission.

2: Update from Scottish Tourism Alliance

MC updated the meeting on a number of items including:

2.1 Council Membership: reminder that Council members criteria are:

- Organisation to be a member of the STA, ideally an Alliance category (associations and large organisations) <http://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/page/join-us/>;
- Able to represent the views of a particular sector or destinations;
- Provide views of their sector through Council Reports, participation at meetings/events and consultation on STA issues.
- Regular attendance at Council meetings;
- Nominated representative attends Council meetings on behalf of their membership, not as an individual business.

All Council members are listed on the STA website (<http://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/page/sta-council/>). Members encouraged to check their details and if not listed, to send them to Caroline.

AP1: ALL Council members to check listing on website - <http://www.scottishtourismalliance.co.uk/page/sta-council/>. If incorrect or listing is missing to email details to Caroline Warburton.

2.2 Government & Parliamentary Issues: MC has been invited to meet the Cab Sec, together with VS, SE and HIE at beginning of February for a 'high-level' discussion about tourism; continued political engagement through Brexit, Business Rates and APD discussions. MC provided the results of a recent survey of MSPs which STA had been involved with and which showed that tourism as an issue is regarded highly by MSPs, and the Scottish Tourism Alliance has a relatively high profile.

AP2: MC to forward findings from MSP Survey.

2.3 Scottish Tourism Week 2017: 15th – 23rd March – www.scottishtourismweek.scot

Registration is now open for the main STA conference on all Council members encouraged to attend and also help promote the event to their members and colleagues.

Key Dates

Weds 15th March

- National STA Conference & Dinner, Crowne Plaza Glasgow
- ScotHot, SECC

Thurs 16th March

- ScotHot, SECC
- Mini-Destinations Conference, Crowne Plaza Glasgow (morning)
- Heritage Tourism Seminar, Glasgow Caledonian Uni (afternoon)
- Scottish Thistle Awards, Edinburgh (evening)

Fri 17th – 23rd March

- Destination & sector events – see <http://scottishtourismweek.scot/page/aroundscotland/>

Weds 23rd March

- Parliamentary Reception, Edinburgh (evening)

Details of other STW-themed events not listed on the STW website can still be added. Please send details to Ellen.Ingram@stalliance.co.uk.

3: Discussion: Scotland's Towns Partnership

Phil Prentice, Chief Officer of Scotland's Town Partnership outlined the work of the partnership and the importance of viable towns to Scotland as a nation, the Scottish people, our economy and also the tourism industry. He highlighted a number of relevant resources and initiatives:

- Understanding Scottish Places: <http://www.usp.scot/>
- Funding Directory: http://www.scotlandstowns.org/funding_support
- Town Centre Toolkit: http://www.scotlandstowns.org/town_centre_toolkit
- Place Standard: http://www.scotlandstowns.org/place_standard

PP encouraged the tourism sector to get involved with debates and activities relating to towns and cities where relevant and also reminded the Council that as STA and STP have reciprocal membership that STP events and activities are available to STA members at STP member rates.

AP3: CW to circulate presentation with Note of Meeting - DONE

4: Council Members Update

CW thanked those who had completed the Council Report which will be circulated with the note of the meeting, noting that the results showed that the 2016 season appears to have been a good one. She reminded the meeting that contributing to the report is expected of all Council members.

AP4: CW to circulate updated Council Report with Note of Meeting – DONE.

4.1: Rising Costs of Doing Business

- **Business Rates:** Willie Macleod (BHA), Marshall Bain (SLTA) and David Smythe (ASSC) highlighted the serious situation for many hospitality and licensed trade businesses with regard to the significant increase in their Business Rates. Sarah Troughton noted that **Sporting Rates** had also been reintroduced and were of adding further costs to sporting estates.
- **Event Licensing:** Claire Bruce commented that events in Aberdeenshire had experienced a significant increase in the costs of events licences. CW said that this issue is being considered by the Events & Festivals Industry Group (linked to TS2020) at the moment and will be able to report back.

- **Insurance Premium Tax:** In the 2015 Budget the Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) was increased from **6%** to **9.5%**. Then, in October 2016 there was a further increase, taking the rate to **10%** and on 1 June 2017 there is a further increase of 2% - taking insurance premium tax to 12%.
- **Road Tax:** the changes, announced by the Chancellor in the 2015 budget, set out that, from next year, the first vehicle licence will be calculated on the vehicle's CO₂ emissions. The majority of vehicles will then move to a standard rate of £140 annually from the second licence. Cars with zero emissions will not pay the standard rate of vehicle tax. However, if a car's list price is over £40,000 at first registration, the customer will pay the additional rate for five years after the end of the first licence.
- **Apprenticeship Levy:** from April 2017, all UK employers with annual salary bills of more than £3 million will pay an apprenticeship levy (0.5% of their wage bill)
<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/take-on-an-apprentice/apprenticeship-levy/>.
- **National Living Wage:** the rates increase from April 2017 <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

4.2 Collaborative Economy: Sue Gruellich raised recent discussion within the international tourist guides network on the sharing economy, and in particular AirBnB's plans to widen their services from accommodation to guided experiences.

4.3 Employment Figures: Ian Fordham highlighted the recent VS press release on the regional tourism employment figures.

4.4 City Deals: CM asked to what extent the STA has been involved with the development of plans. CW replied that there had been no formal involvement in the process, with the STA leaving the key activities to the destinations, however they had been kept abreast of plans (to a lesser or greater extent) from Stirling, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness and Tay City Region.

4.5 Tourism Tax: what was STA's current view on this issue? Stephen Leckie replied that STA's current view aligned with the BHA's, namely that opposed to any additional tax on businesses or visitors until there is a drop in other taxation, such as VAT, on tourism businesses in order to keep the sector competitive.

4.6 Movement of People & Brexit: RW asked that during discussions relating to Brexit and the introduction of conditions for entry that continued emphasis should be on the importance of the need for soft skills, specifically language skills.

4.7 Rural Broadband: the sector needs to continue to ensure that Government and providers remain focussed on the importance of the roll-out of quality broadband in rural areas.

5: AOB

There were no additional items.

Dates of Next Meeting:

Provisional dates (i.e. to be confirmed):

- **7th June, 2.00pm – 4.30pm, Microsoft Office, Edinburgh**
- **13th Sept, tbc, Edinburgh, 11am – 1.30pm**
- **29th Nov, tbc, Edinburgh, 11am – 1.30pm**

AP5: STA to send out Outlook Invites for the future Council meetings.