



Minutes of Board Meeting

28th July 2022 – Wollen’s Board Room

Meeting commenced 2:15 pm

ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM/ BY WHEN
<p><u>1</u></p>	<p><u>PRESENT, APOLOGIES, MINUTES, MATTERS ARISING:</u></p> <p>Present: Carolyn Custerson (CC) Chair - Chief Executive, Martin Brook (MB) Vice Chair, Owner of Pilgrim’s Rest, Pippa Craddock (PC), Richard Cuming (RC) Bygones, Claire Flower (CF) Director Beverley Holidays, Jason Garside (JG) Managing Director TLH, Chris Hart (CH) Chief Executive, Wollens, Simon Jolly (SJ) Managing Director, RICC, Anthony Payne-Neale (APN) Court Prior Boutique B&B, Sheena Powe (SP), ERBID Company Secretary, Kelly Widley (KW) Food & Drink Hospitality Consultant</p> <p>Apologies – Tim Godfrey (TG) – Chairman and Partner, Bishop Fleming, Kevin Mowat (KM) – Torbay Council Director of Place</p> <p>CC welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Approval of 30th June Minutes – approved.</p>	
<p><u>2</u></p>	<p><u>Finance & Governance</u></p> <p>2022 Management Accounts – Sheena Powe Sheena attended to report on the 6 monthly accounts. The position compared to 3 months ago is much better, with 78.7% levy collected by the end of June. This means the budget to spend is currently £35K short of the collection target. Within the budget, some funds remain un-allocated: £10K for events and £50K reactive budget. Whilst we can afford all plans that have been committed to as of now, there is nothing left over to carry forward at this point, so we are breaking even. Any further funds coming in will be available to spend.</p> <p>SP highlighted that a lot may need to come out in Dec 22/Jan 23, as per previous years’ pattern of spending. In previous years, the Council has advanced funds to cover any cash flow issue.</p> <p>Conclusion – a much more positive situation than 3 months ago.</p>	

	<p>SP advised that Tim had made her aware of a situation with Scarborough Council. They charge VAT on their BID levy, which has been challenged by a levy payer. We don't do this. Will Hanbury, Audit Partner at Bishop Fleming, believes we are correct but is checking and will confirm. ACTION – CC to ask Mo.</p> <p>SP - Bank Signatoores. Two people are required to sign off bank transactions, so someone will be required in Tim's absence. CH confirmed that from a governance perspective there should be arrangements made. The board agreed for Sheena and Martin Brook to both be set up for banking.</p> <p>AGM SP – Now the Year End Accounts are complete, there has to be an AGM. CC confirmed the AGM will be on the last Thursday in September (29th), directly after the Directors' Meeting, with a start time of 4:30pm.</p> <p>Chris confirmed that the room at Wollen's can be set up for the AGM meeting, or possibly use a room at the Hilton. ACTION – CC to liaise with Jackie at Hilton to see if a suitable room is available there.</p> <p>The Board were asked to formally agree the Accounts – carried by the Board.</p> <p>Debt Collection Update CC advised that a firm email has been sent to debtors, and they were advised that their details had been removed from the ER website. CC has personally contacted the top ten debtors. £20K has been paid since the last meeting, with an additional £7K promised. The expectation is for £30K to have been generated by the next meeting. CC thinks there will be about £90K outstanding debt to be got in. Dealing with the Council's Business Rates Team is challenging, with too long a wait for copy invoices. We are working with them and they have now agreed to send a weekly payment report.</p> <p>CC presented a proposed letter to debtors, to be sent in her name, with the aim of posting it out next week. CH had already reviewed and agreed it in principle. There was a suggestion to advise in the letter that website status will be reinstated once levy paid. CH noted that it would be better that the letter advised payment required within so many days, rather than a set date in the future, as this may encourage people to put to one side for now. CC – ACTION – decide timescale to advise, probably 'within 14 days'.</p> <p>RC queried if the letters should be sent signed for, with the general consensus being not to. CH noted that professional debtors won't sign for mail.</p> <p>The Board approved the letter in principle and for CC to arrange the dispatch.</p> <p>CC noted that we aren't doing well in terms of debt collection, compared with Isle of Wight, Bournemouth and Plymouth. They all invest heavily in enforcement, whereas Torbay Council have a much smaller team. Should we budget for engaging a full time Enforcement Officer in future? CH suggested that an experienced Credit Controller should be able to carry out this volume of work within 1 day a week. APN advised the need for a properly administered debt collection service throughout the year.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
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Since the last meeting, CC has been investigating other options for a last push at debt collection. She has contacted a debt collection agency in Newton Abbot. Wollens have also provided a quote. CC is also trying to contact the Council's Debt Collection Team.
ACTION - CC to propose next steps at the August meeting.

CC

Company Membership / Board Elections

Since the last meeting, CC has had two meetings with Catherine Hayden, Electoral Services Team Leader at Torbay Council. A quote has been provisionally accepted from CIVICA, for them to undertake the ballot.

CC presented the timetable to the board, which is:

Deadline for new Company Membership Applications to be received	31st August
Deadline for Election Candidates to come forward	15 th September
Deadline for Election Candidates to provide Resumes	23rd September
Deadline for Election Candidate Resumes to Printer	5th October
Ballot Period (Postal)	24th October – 18th November
Declaration	24th November (Board Meeting)

Anne-Marie Bond, Returning Officer for the Council, has been booked to make the Declaration at 2pm on 24th November.

CC explained that anyone wanting to stand for election must first be a company member, and a prerequisite of being a company member is that BID levy payment is up to date. Company membership can move forward from BID1 to BID2, because the company is a separate entity from the BID, therefore all current company members will remain and will have the right to vote and/or come forward to stand for election to the Board. CC circulated the current company membership list. She advised that the few non-payers on the list will be contacted and that company membership would be withdrawn unless payment received. The board agreed the deadline for payment to be 31st August 2022.

CC emphasised it is essential to communicate the above to all BID levy payers. As we have only approx. 700 out of 1200 email addresses for levy payers, she proposed that a postcard is sent by mail, using the Town Hall mailing system, as the best method for reaching everyone. CC presented the proposed card to the Board for their approval. The information will also be on the B2B site homepage with a link to download and complete a Company Membership Form. When applications are received, due diligence will be done to check that applicants have paid their levy. The Board were happy with the principal and the date. A decision was made to use the term ERBID going forward, rather than ERBID2.

APN queried if membership is held by the business or by the individual. CC confirmed that it is the business.

<p>3</p>	<p><u>Destination Marketing - CC</u></p> <p>Visitor Information The Visitor Information Centre is busy, with 350 – 400 people visiting a day. There has been a notable increase in overseas visitors. CH noted many overseas visitors on his recent stay in Scotland, so this seems to be a national trend. APN asked for the VIC’s opening hours, CC confirmed it is currently 7 days a week (5 hours on Sundays).</p> <p>Reactivation Marketing Campaign - PC £30K was invested in this unplanned campaign, which was reactive to market trends.</p> <p>Pippa gave a review of RH Advertising’s Summary of the campaign. The campaign had nearly 2000K clicks to the website, and 8.3 million impressions. TikTok was the only channel that didn’t perform well, with all other channels performing better than expected. Twitter was the best performing with a 22% click-through rate. Conclusion is that the campaign was worthwhile. PC highlighted that it was a very successful brand-building campaign.</p> <p>CC advised that content was impactful, featuring striking images and video, and short, sharp wording. During the 8-week run, results were monitored and the campaign was adjusted as it went along, for example by removing TikTok when it was seen to perform less well. For the 8-week campaign, website traffic grew by 47%. We saw an immediate dip in traffic when the campaign stopped on 17th July.</p> <p>It was queried how many clicks converted into bookings. CC confirmed we can’t know because the tendency is for people to use our site for research and then leave our site and go through their preferred online booking channels.</p> <p>Digital Marketing Update - CC CC recommends we continue to work with quality campaign developers. The key message is that the power of video is significant with results showing it was video content that provoked the most responses. The video on the website homepage and across other media has also proved to be very popular. We therefore need to make sure that future campaigns have a lot of 20 – 30 second videos.</p> <p>User generated content has been a game changer; it gives authenticity and we now have 800 images agreed and approved to use, outside of our current image library.</p> <p>Mobile phone traffic is huge now.</p> <p>Website traffic is 35% up on 2021.</p> <p>CC will have a meeting to review all of our Marketing activity for the year, to evaluate what we have learned and share with the Board at the next meeting our recommendations for 2023.</p> <p>Generally, the feeling is that all is going well so far this season. We have seen an increase in visitors from North Devon and Cornwall, but a decrease from Scotland and Ireland, which is put down to the increased cost of travel, particularly petrol</p>	<p>CC</p>
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	<p>MB asked if work could be done on Google Analytics. PC and CC advised that this has been done. CC advised that bookings via the site were small, although the overall value was higher. PC advised that traditionally, the most visited section was Things to Do, but now Accommodation is up 27% and Food & Drink is up 127%.</p> <p>APN emphasised a need to make more effort to show conversion into actual business. CC advised that the site is linked to many OTAs but visitors use the site for research and inspiration and then go direct to their preferred booking platform to actually book. Although we need a booking functionality, the main point is destination awareness. APN asked where we are in comparison with other areas. CC advised that through VisitDevon, we benchmark against Plymouth and Exeter, and we are happy with our position within Devon.</p> <p>APN noted that people query why we carry out national poster advertising, asking what percentage of the marketing spend is on national posters and noting that budget has to be committed earlier for national advertising. CC advised she is meeting with the Destination Marketing Group to work on this.</p> <p>CC’s key recommendation is to save money for last minute campaigns, as next year may potentially be harder than this year.</p> <p>Groups Update - RC Richard advised that the proposed Xmas FAM visit, to try to expand into the Xmas period, has proved problematic as we couldn’t reach the full commitment of rooms needed to make it cost-effective. RC therefore doesn’t think it appropriate to proceed and proposed that the Board could look at the option of holding a similar event in March instead, if there is an interest from operators. He observed that the benefit of FAM visits are that they’re more visual than meetings at exhibitions, operators can see the flexibility of a bespoke visit and the options available. It is a question of whether operators are moving away from that, is it something they are still interested in post-Covid? RC and CC both recommend the Xmas project is shelved and a decision about March is made following our attendance at the Groups Leisure Fair in October. The new Groups Guide will be ready in time for this event. CC is determined to show support for the Group market, noting the difficulties to businesses such as theatres who rely on group visits. Coach holidays are perceived as very good value.</p> <p>PC advised that the Group Travel Organisation may be worth joining. Members have access to the organisation’s mailing list. ACTION – CC to look into this.</p> <p>Autumn/Winter Campaign (additional to Agenda) Business feedback is that the winter ahead is of concern, with utility bills etc increasing. CC – we will need to allocate budget to support Autumn/Winter business. The Faces of the Riviera campaign is progressing well; Gina and Tom have been carrying out a shoot at Broadsands, as we haven’t had any new beach/family shots since 2017.</p>	<p>CC</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><u>Events Update</u></p> <p>England’s Seafood FEAST - KW Kelly updated that she has been following up interested businesses, with 3 venues paused due to non-payment of levy. The events lined up so far are good and we are getting businesses joining as Voluntary Contributors through their interest in</p>	

<p>participating in the festival. Some participants are really getting behind the FEAST, an example is the Brasserie at Meadfoot Bay Hotel, who have offerings including a 7-day tester menu and who have really captured the spirit of it. KW observed that visiting businesses has been effective in helping people understand the project and for relationship building, which will help in future projects.</p> <p>KW noted that some venues are having staffing issues, particularly with getting chefs.</p> <p>CC updated on FEAST marketing – an A5 flyer, stickers and posters have been produced. A press release went out locally last week. KW – DevonLive want to talk to us, plus others.</p> <p>£10K was put in by the Council to match the ERBID £10K.</p> <p>CC – there was a digital campaign by RH for 2 weeks. CC hopes that businesses will now market their own events. KW has sent them links to the Image Library and videos as further support.</p> <p>Walking Festival – CC Bookings are approx. 20% full. An A5 leaflet and bus stop posters are being produced. CC expects there will be a lot of last-minute bookings, as per the accommodation trend this season. The price point seems right. For this 1st year of the Walking Festival, we need other ways to nudge it along and make it happen. A positive is that all the set-up work has been done, e.g., the festival website and passing Torbay Council Health & Safety checks, which means that future years will be low maintenance and low cost. It could even be held twice a year in future, perhaps Spring and Autumn.</p> <p>Electric Bay – CC CC reported that she attended the event on one of the evenings. The organiser advised that 6K attended on the Saturday night. They have already reserved the location for next year, with big names expected. The event went well with no reported disturbances and SWISCo did a good job of clearing up afterwards. PC noted the value of the event attracting a different demographic - a lot of younger attendees who wouldn't usually visit the area, having travelled in from surrounding areas such as Exeter and South Hams, many by train. CC highlighted the knock-on benefit to businesses such as the English Riviera Wheel, who reported having a busy weekend with festival attendees also visiting them.</p> <p>International Agatha Christie Festival – CC The programme has been produced and is available. Bookings are looking strong. PC noted that The Mousetrap is due to be performed at the Princess Theatre next year – ACTION – CC to check if it coincides with next year's IAGF.</p> <p>Bay of Lights / Torbay Illuminations – MB Martin reported that Torbay Council are spending £120K on a 6-week Trail of Lights in Torquay. The plans have been approved and gone to tender. MB advised that the plans look good, but noting that as everything is on a hire basis, the sustainability of the project is questionable.</p> <p>MB and CC recommend that the Board supports the project, but for next year to try and encourage the Council to buy rather than rent.</p> <p>Harbour of Lights – MB advised that we have been in communication with interested groups at each harbour, such as Brixham Chamber of Commerce who may be interested in joint-funding. MB will arrange meeting. Working with the Council has at times felt</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>MB</p>
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	<p>There is a long lead-in time required, and MB hopes to be able to update with further progress at the next meeting.</p> <p>APN asked for the proposed dates, which are mid Nov – 1st week in Jan.</p> <p>CC advised the council are putting in £50K and ERBID are supporting with £20K. As this is for Torquay, and the vision is for a Harbour of Lights spectacle, perhaps some budget that would have been used for a Food Festival this year, could be used for lighting in Paignton and Brixham also? The Council had raised potential issues with Paignton and Brixham, that lighting could interfere with navigation, and also issues with plugging lighting in at the harbour areas.</p> <p>CC supported the view that infrastructure should be purchased and stored. The Board agreed there should be investment in infrastructure and proposed that our future investment is subject to the buying and storing of infrastructure. CC noted that the Council should be encouraged to look at other area's success with Xmas Lighting, for example Bournemouth have purchased and stored, and add to their lighting each year. ACTION – CC will look into what Plymouth do about this.</p> <p>Food & Drink Festival 2023 - MB The Council have decided to go out on the tender system for the Food Festival. Deadline for submission is 8th August. We have a good vision for it, for April '23 at Torre Abbey. CC advised that Torre Abbey are holding the Spanish Barn for this time. She has met with Lucinda and Anna. The Council will put in £30K. ERBID would be the lead organisation, outsourcing to Anna to deliver the project. CF questioned where we stand on liability; CC advised we would take out insurance. KW has worked with Torre Abbey previously, and confirms it is a good location.</p>	<p>MB/KM</p> <p>MB</p> <p>CC</p>
	<p><u>Key Communications</u></p> <p>DMO review CC advised that the ERBID Company won't be receiving any meaningful funds. The plans are for VisitDevon to try and get Plymouth, Exeter and ourselves to work together as a collaboration, thereby making a more robust proposition.</p> <p>Business Feedback Business feedback summary is that business is erratic and challenging. Rising costs are a concern.</p> <p>DCMS - Call for Evidence Developing a Tourist Accommodation Registration Scheme in England ACTION – CC – will forward link to the Board. CC to prepare response on behalf of ERBID Company.</p> <p>Cruise Torquay This is ongoing, but slowly.</p> <p>Appointment of Director of Place CC advised that she was on the Partners Panel and part of the interview process but is yet to hear the result.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>

	<p>Other Business Communications</p> <p>CC has been asked to meet with Boston Tea Party in relation to them becoming a Voluntary Contributor. They have worked with other BID companies.</p> <p>CF noted that she will be on Radio Devon tomorrow.CC</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Thursday 25th August 2022 @ 2pm.</p>	
	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>RICC</p> <p>SJ advised that he is leaving the RICC on 29th July 2022. Regarding his future position on the Board, CH suggested that SJ is co-opted to stay, due to his expertise in Business and Conferencing, if he is happy to remain involved. SJ to consider and let the Board know. ACTION – CC to look into how many co-opted members are allowed.</p> <p>CC proposed an action point – as the RICC is the main Events venue in the area, there is a need to meet with Darren, Assistant Area Director of Parkwood Leisure, regarding plans for the RICC in terms of Events in the future. ACTION - It was proposed that CC and JG could arrange a meeting with Parkwood and the Council (possibly Phil).</p> <p>Great Big Paddle Parade</p> <p>MB updated that he has been in communication with Sean at WeSup regarding the Paddleboarding world record attempt event in aid of the RNLI, that they are planning. It is a 1-day event in September. Discussion regarding ER sponsorship, thoughts that it is good PR and could develop into future years. CC suggested a £3K budget. APN observed that paddleboarding is a massive international market. General consensus that future events would need to involve collaboration across various levy-paying businesses and that support for this year is on the basis that the event includes ER branding. ACTION – CC to meet with Sean to discuss his marketing plans.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>MB/CC</p>

Meeting closed at 5 pm