

## Board Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025, 09:30am – 12:30pm

**Venue:** Isle of Man Airport, Castletown.

**Attendees:-**

**Agency Chair:** Andrew Mackness (AM)

**Agency CEO:** Deborah Heather (DH)

**Board Members:** John Keggin (JK), Connie Lovel (CL), Leigh Morris (LM), Brian Thomson (BT), Claire McColgan (CM), Andrew Jamieson (AJ), Steven Taylor (ST).

**In attendance:** Hannah Lo Bao (HL), Vikram Sahdev (VS), Secretariat (AQ).

**Apologies:** Mrs. Sarah Maltby, MHK (SM), Andrew Stewart (AS)

	Agenda Item	Owner	Action
VM 01-25	<b>Standing Items:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apologies – SM and AS.</li> <li>Conflicts of Interest (Other than those declared) – none</li> <li>Hospitality/Gifts (by exception) - none</li> <li>Approval of Previous Minutes – accepted</li> <li>Outstanding Actions – work has been done on these but all are ongoing, no further comment.</li> </ul>	Chair	
VM 02-25	<b>Updates:</b>  <b>Chair</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AM welcome's everyone and introduces the board to guest attendees.</li> <li>AM informs the attendees that he has conducted an annual review of the board's composition, confirming the reappointment of continuing members. He gives thanks to Florida Clements who sat on the board last year and for the work she did, however, she has now departed.</li> <li>ML has taken on a new interim role as Chief Executive Officer and Andrew Stewart is now interim CO. AM looks forward to continuing to work with DfE CO.</li> <li>AM congratulates LM on his new role as Director of International Nature and Climate at TWT and extends his gratitude for LM's continued dedication to the board.</li> <li>Celebrates recent success' including the unanimous support for the Visit updated model as well as the recent yearend figures.</li> <li>AM commends the work of Natasha Johnson who has led visit's marketing team on an interim basis and Stuart Clague for his contribution to the marketing material. Along with, Mike Doherty for his work on the TEDS scheme and the success of the darts event. Hannah Wylde for work on PM3 and developing our data platforms.</li> <li>Note that more work needs to be done on ensuring events such as the darts have opportunity for visitors to explore Manx hospitality outside of event time.</li> </ul>		

**Action:** Future consideration for the opportunities that events can offer the hospitality sector.

DH

### Steam Packet

- Summer season has started with great success.
- BT highlighted issues with Manxman grounding - work needs to be done to fix it – potential for more negative PR.
- There is work that needs to be done in the SP departures lounge, such as new seating and re-considering the toilets.
- Passenger numbers are good for recent sailings.
- There has been a recent trend in TT bookings where visitors are booking later and looking for last minute deals.
- No concern in regards to overall visitor numbers for TT sailings.
- Noted that within the sector all are seeing common trends over TT where first weekend of TT and last weekend of TT is quieter than the middle weekend. Visit board could work in collaboration with TT to publicise events to encourage extended / enhanced stays.
- Noted that all agree there is an opportunity to utilise TT fan base to encourage visitors beyond the event itself.
- BT celebrates the success of Steam Packet and Alt Lodge on their video collaboration with Vagabonds Ladies Rugby Club, noting that it has been shortlisted for prestigious Brand Film Award.
- CM suggested that Liverpool has had success with Netflix and wonders if a similar model could be adapted by the IOM.

### Airport

- The airport has also started the summer season, noting they are down 8 percent capacity for the year. However, visitor numbers are predicted to remain static.
- 'On-time performance' is improving all the time.
- Only 3 cancellation in March 2025 vs. 49 in March 2023.
- HL and DH attended the Routes Conference this week. HL gives thanks to Visit for support to attend.
- HL had positive conversations but notes that more needs to be done to account manage current airlines who operate to and from the island.

### Hospitality Update

- 3 percent down over winter period despite a good Christmas. Further making the industry reliant on a good summer.
- There is concern amongst some of the hospitality sector that Weatherspoon's will negatively impact local business.
- ST updates the board on the Hospitality Board's interim chair, Steve Pickett.
- There are ongoing concerns over the potential minimum wage increase.
- Hospitality agree that an increase in visitors is the most viable solution.

### Destination First

- Facing issues with [REDACTED]
- Notes that there is great work going on with local authorities working collaboratively and adopting a center of excellence approach.
- The board discuss the possibility of the terminal buildings for both Steam Packet and Airport not be owned by government.

**Action:** the board would like to explore opportunities for the commercialisation of the ferry and airport terminals. [REDACTED]

DH

VM 03-25 VM 04-25	<b>Visit Performance Review Dashboard (Standing item) &amp; Visit IOM Visitor Report 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DH presents findings from TSE passenger survey.</li> <li>330,000k target was reached (including 21k cruise).</li> <li>Revenue was just shy of £20m ahead of target.</li> <li>Visitor satisfaction scores at 98.7% for the year.</li> </ul>	<b>DH (Board Pack)</b>	
VM 05-25	<b>CEO Visit Board Report</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the first quarter the Visit team have participated in eight industry shows/events/exhibitions, hosted one travel trade fam trip for six companies, all of whom will be adding the IoM to their travel programs. We hosted six journalists for a wellness weekend resulting in PR in The I, The Liverpool Echo, and The Sun amongst others.</li> <li>Completed the annual customer service training open for all businesses across the Visitor economy, welcoming circa 150 representatives. The training included a presentation from the Police on Safeguarding Awareness for front facing staff, and the team are working on a Customer Training qualification in conjunction with the Airport, MNH, Destination First, Hospitality Board and UCM with the second phase due to take place after the season in the autumn.</li> <li>Regarding the mountain bike trails, we will potentially be impacted by the issues with the storms, however DEFA are working on a Treasury submission to speed up the work to rectify the impact.</li> <li>DH commended the success of recent 50 pieces of coverage with over 500 million reach on socials.</li> </ul>	<b>DH (Board Pack)</b>	
VM 06-25	<b>Budget and Targets 2025</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DH presented the yearly budget against previous years and predicted forthcoming year pressures.</li> <li>Considering this year's minimal budget, allocating resources effectively to targeted strategies will maximize the impact and ensure that expenditures are outcome orientated.</li> <li>Same position as last year with [REDACTED]</li> <li>Some of the payroll increase is due to maternity cover for members of the team.</li> <li>Our targets this year will be focused on BAU, whilst we work towards developing and embedding the TOM.</li> <li>Overarching targets will remain as 330,000 visitors and £231M in revenue.</li> </ul>	<b>DH (Presentation)</b>	
VM 07-25	<b>Strategic Development for Visit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DH thanks the board for unanimous support of the updated models.</li> <li>DH carried out a skills audit as part of the ongoing commitment to aligning with new strategic direction and to ensure the team can support the goals moving forward.</li> <li>The outcome of this audit showed that additional expertise will need to be brought in to help with specialised areas of the plan.</li> <li>Additionally, there is a need to simplify layers within the team to enable more agile, responsive decision making. The end goal is to produce a matrix management approach to delivery.</li> </ul>	<b>DH/AM/V (Update)</b>	
	<b>Decision:</b> [REDACTED]		

VM 08-25	<b>Registration Paper - for decision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DH highlights key take-a-ways from paper.</li> <li>Paper suggests an increase in fees in line with inflation for the past 20 years.</li> <li>The board discuss that it is a sharp increase but agree that it is needed. They suggested considering a staggered approach over two years.</li> <li>The board discuss the possible issues that raising the price may cause – potential for accommodation owners to operate illegally and without registering.</li> <li>The group agree the need for an enforcement solution.</li> </ul> <b>Decision:</b> The board gives unanimous support for the paper and the potential suggested compromises but note that there will be a need for an enforcement solution to ensure owners do not operate illegally.	<b>DH (Board Pack)</b>	
	<b>AOB (Any Other Business)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LM has expressed interest in having 'Biosphere' included as a standing item for future meetings.</li> </ul> <b>Decision:</b> This is agreed by the board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>JK suggests conversations regarding seasonality be discussed sooner to allow for development of a plan/actions.</li> <li>BT agrees that the SP is happy to work collaboratively to develop and support the off-season.</li> <li>HL re-affirms that the airport is becoming more data rich and if the board members would like to utilise this then to reach out.</li> <li>CM notes that there are more meetings and connections stemming from the board and the work visit does collaboratively. She suggests building on the unity of MOU and proposes more similar events to develop this.</li> </ul>	<b>ALL</b>	
	<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future consideration for the opportunities that events can offer the hospitality sector.</li> <li>Explore opportunities for the commercialisation of the ferry and airport terminals, [REDACTED]</li> <li>DH will have initial meetings [REDACTED]</li> <li>DH will prepare a Department paper proposing increased registration fees.</li> <li>Add Biosphere as a standing item for future agendas.</li> </ul>		<b>DH</b>  <b>DH/AM</b>  <b>DH</b> <b>DH</b> <b>AQ</b>
	<b>Proposed Future Dates:</b> Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2025 Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2025 Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2025		
	<b>Close</b>		