

## Board Meeting

**Venue:** Woodbourne House

**Agency Chair:** Ranald Caldwell (RC)

**Political Member:** Sarah Maltby (SM)

**In attendance:** Mark Lewin (ML) TBC, Jemima Cooper (JC) secretariat

## Apologies:

	Agenda Item	Papers	Owner	Action
VM 01-24	<p><b>Standing Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apologies - Gary Cobb, Brett Martin, David Curtis-Brignall (remote access issues)</li> <li>• Conflicts of Interest- none</li> <li>• Hospitality/Gifts - none</li> <li>• Previous Minutes - accepted, but with changes requested by CL.</li> <li>• Outstanding Actions; RC - Emily Curphy, CO DOI, advised that the PROW recommendations would be presented to the May Tynwald sitting. Given that the recommendations will overlap with Destination First the draft paper is to be forwarded to DH/RC.</li> </ul> <p>A date to visit David Morris (MP for Morecambe), Is being rescheduled for May.</p> <p>A meeting with BT,DH,RC to be arranged to agree status of Steam Packet actions</p>		<p>Chair</p> <p>DH</p> <p>BC</p>	
VM 02-24	<p><b>Updates:</b></p> <p><b>Chair</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to all, particularly introducing our new board members SM our new political member for Tourism &amp; Motorsport along with CM Director of Culture for Liverpool City Council. Our links with Liverpool are considerable and CM's position &amp; experience will be invaluable in developing that relationship further. Thanks to JC for taking the board minutes and standing in for Barbara Cobb who is the new Visit Agency Board secretary, who is currently on leave.</li> <li>• Well done to the Visit team, for the outstanding content &amp; quality itinerary for the recent BGTW visit.</li> </ul>		Chair	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair referenced the outstanding performance of Visit IOM in attracting 318K visitors during 2023 the highest level in 17 years.</li> <li>Operationally the Visit team are extremely busy and I want my thanks recorded to them for their commitment and focus on growing our economy.</li> <li>Working closely with Bus Vannin &amp; IOM Tours to find a solution to bus services to the Sound.</li> <li>Destination First Board (DFB) outline &amp; progress provided with new board to be in place by end of April.</li> <li>General discussion then took place regarding how social media/press can present a negative view of our island &amp; service provision and the new DFB will try to address.</li> <li>RC &amp; DH to meet with external investors in England &amp; Wales who are keen to bring Zip World &amp; Aqua park to the Island.</li> <li>Board composition - RF will be stepping down from the VA Board at the end of June, as it is the end of his second third year term. RC will be stepping down as VA Chair being the end of his third, two-year term. An EOI process for both roles will happen shortly.</li> <li>Great to see MWT holidays being offered for 2024, IOM Escapes &amp; IOM Event Services in charge of logistics. Will be interesting to see the uptake.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visit CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pleased to report that Melanie Allen has accepted the new marketing and communications role. Melanie lives in the Scottish borders, is involved in their local DMO and is involved in the biosphere there, as well as running a 5 star B&amp;B.</li> <li>The Travel Writers Guild was a great challenge for the team. Real team development as a result. Working with Lexington to track publications. Need to foster these relationships with an account management plan. Huge amount of political support for the event.</li> <li>Investigation to the MICE market. Team at BTTS currently, trialling it and will see what happens.</li> <li>Cruise numbers and target numbers incorrect in the operations and strategy report. Looking for 10% increase for next year, which we should achieve. BT raised health and safety issue with the recent rope snapping on ship.</li> <li>Mountain bike Trail is progressing to plan. RF Provided update on progress. Challenges around coordinating</li> </ul>		<p>DH/RC</p> <p>DH/RC</p> <p>LM</p> <p>DH</p> <p>RF</p>	
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	<p>different government departments and local community, but focus on this as visitor led initiative. Further update expected at June Board.</p> <p><b>DfE CEO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finance IOM - secured funding to invest more heavily in joint venture with FSA. Physical presence in South Africa. Strong event programme underway.</li> <li>Digital IOM - signed memorandum of understanding with Singapore Govt. Looking into AI. Nature based thinking in that space.</li> <li>Business IOM - preparing for Manx food and drink event in London. Engineering review. Local Economy Strategy. Town centre audit has come back, which will provide evidence in terms of opinions, as well as the units available in towns.</li> <li>Immigration policies - concerns raised over people who have arrived on island and have not been looked after by employers. The IOM stands out in the e-gaming space due to quality of regulators. Unemployment low, vacancies have rocketed up to 1400/1500 again. Getting good people who want to come and work and add to the community - Filipino community are an example of this. Discussion on development of links.</li> <li>Transport- focus on strategic transport. The Minister, Tim Cowsill (Business IOM) and DH asked to physically attend the Sea Services Select Committee.</li> <li>Airport- focused on delivering, a document is being brought to Tynwald for a long-term strategy in that space.</li> <li>TT- parking issue as no car parking at Nobles Park only motorbike access. In addition, we have interest from global broadcaster and will announce a multi-million pound documentary in April.</li> <li>Island plan went through this week. States the 5 issues we need to focus on as all departments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Chamber of Commerce, VEF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions with Chamber of Commerce, understanding of what the real value of tourism is. KPMG reviewed the 2032 strategy. Value is there but there needs to be a clear understanding what would need to be done to deliver it. Endorsement to commission someone to advise/recommend what we need to do to develop our stated tourism objectives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Steam Packet</b></p>			
			DH	
			BT	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common misconceptions across the Island. Tickets are cheap compared to other places, aside from last minute bookings. People book cheap fares but want them to be flexible. This causes frustration, but is not reasonable. Important to get the right messaging across as there is little criticism from actual travellers. Work underway to get the right messaging across.</li> <li>Re-launched Steam Packet Holidays.</li> <li>The Manxman is a new boat, so there are issues with bedding in, but the team are working hard to make it go every day.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion around cancellations of ferries over the year and that numbers are not high- 39 cancellations in 2022, 41 in 2023, excluding the Christmas storms.</p> <p>CM queried whether there will be a campaign around the launch of the new <b>Liverpool ferry terminal</b>. Discussion around pros and cons of this. Concerns raised around possible backlash, but benefits of raising IOM profile in Northwest England mentioned. Potential opportunities for showcasing island at new terminal. CM advised that Liverpool City Council are likely to want to highlight the opening, as with the new Everton Stadium opening, the whole route will become more prominent. RC would like a plan for the launch to be in view.</p> <p><b>Airport (written update provided by HLB to RC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loganair has a new senior management team.</li> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li>Three new airport non-executive directors in place.</li> <li>Emerald raised the issue that APD is not as competitive as others</li> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li>Blue Islands has launched a bi-weekly flight schedule from IOM to Jersey.</li> <li>[REDACTED]</li> <li>Airlines have built more time into their schedules over the summer so should not get the same issues with EasyJet cancelling flights over the summer.</li> </ul>		DH	DH - Visit IOM to take it up with external comms
VM 03-24	<p><b>Visit Performance Review (standing item) &amp; Passenger Survey</b></p> <p>DH provided visitors information and targets. Passenger survey was stopped during the pandemic but has been re-started. Started in Q2/24 so will run with the financial year, but there will be</p>		DH (Attached)	

	<p>monthly reports going forwards. There were 318,000 visitors in 2023. £183.2m spend was £21m above target for the year. Just under 400 extra jobs in hospitality. Cruise ships bringing in great trade, 'better than Christmas' for retailers. Reach the same as readership, benchmarking against ourselves. 250k in June 5.8bn reach by YE.</p> <p>Discussion around shoulder season growth - strong performance in Q4 and Q1 Ferry traffic much higher than expected. Suggestion that reach and change in strategy around PR, awareness, and perception has increased sentiment.</p> <p>CM queried whether attracting more cruises is an objective for the IOM. Discussion around recent benchmarking and fee change in line with other destinations. Cruises welcomed as they help to drive revenue into local community. Shared initiative that benefits the whole Island. Comment that money would need to be spent on infrastructure in Peel for them to welcome ships. CM recommended connecting with Liverpool as there is a big announcement around cruises due with a private company taking over the cruise operation from the council.</p> <p>Discussion on segmentation around reason for visiting island. Discussion on pros and cons of surveying passengers on what they did on the island, or why they came. CM advised Liverpool did a lot of work on segmentation initially, though this has now reduced.</p>			
VM O4-24	<p><b>CEO Visit Board &amp; 2024 Targets</b></p> <p>DH advised on restructure within the team, moving to 3 key areas, Business Development, Marketing &amp; Destination Development. There is an issue with office space in St George's Court, but there is potential for relocating to the Welcome Centre. There are ongoing discussions around this.</p> <p>DH presented Strategy Update Paper and discussed key points.</p> <p>330,000 visitor target is not a stretch from 2023, but if the board are content, this will remain.</p> <p>£540 spend is what was actually achieved Q4 last year.</p> <p>Influencer strategy worked well in 2023 Q4.</p> <p>Monty Hall to take an ambassador role with project he wants to pilot here around biosphere experiments. JK agreed to put these in his properties. LM helping us with this project, which will generate data and involves people in the biosphere.</p> <p>Interest from Lisa Goodwin Allen from Morecambe as a result of Morecambe Eden Project. Potential food tourism piece filming with local producers and BT suggested Steam Packet chef could work with her as well. Focus on local people and influencers, alongside people rediscovering the IOM. CM recommended making it part of campaign to get these individuals involved, built into the programme rather than piecemeal.</p>		DH Paper Attached	

<p>VM 05-24</p>	<p><b>Destination First Board</b></p> <p>Destination First Board to be introduced. Board will be built and focus on what the destination should be and what it should have, knocking down silos and encouraging people to work together. RC will be chairing the board and we will be investigating an ongoing piece of technology to support.</p> <p>RC noted importance of gathering insights from residents, visitors and colleagues. Are we really solving the issues? What can be done within budget? Political representation from SM and Mr Moorhouse. EOIs going out this week for members of public. Self-assessment audits to feed back into a programme of work, DH concluding on who the programme director will be.</p> <p>RC would like the new board to talk up the good things, and to identify &amp; deal with service deficiencies. Visitors love ships and airport. Work in progress which will take at least a year to prove that we can make a real difference.</p>		<p>RC/DH</p> <p>DH</p>	<p>DH - to issue EOIs for members of public.</p>
<p>VM 06-24</p>	<p><b>AI/Website Presentation</b></p> <p>Presentation on digitalisation and AI. Digitalisation is a hurdle on the island, with 70% of self-catering businesses using only the VIOM site as their distribution tool. Potential for AI to plug some of the gaps, with a booking system held behind an AI system so that people can book restaurants, experiences, and attractions online and immediately. In process of building minimal viable product with Heritage Rail, view to launch it this summer.</p> <div data-bbox="191 1178 1038 1321" style="background-color: black; height: 75px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>ML advised there is work ongoing with Digital IOM on using AI to reduce costs and queried CM about AI and digital assistance in Liverpool. Local government only gets involved in very large events, however DH concerned that government will need to drive digitisation forward on IOM.</p> <p>Discussion around training on this, and what the advantages of an AI tool over traditional booking websites could be; whole itinerary in one place, moving away from large corporates, biosphere friendly etc.</p> <p>Initial costs are £12k for first stage and £50k for next stage. We hope to get everyone to use less of booking.com etc. A multi-faceted approach is needed for winter as we need big providers, but we do not need this in summer. Clever distribution would use a bit of both. ML added he thought the pricing wouldn't be anywhere near the £50k. LM asked if the software could be used to include a Tourism Levy. CL advised that at the House of Manannan a donation price is being trialled in an attempt to copy the UK's gift aid.</p>			

VM 07-24	<p><b>2022- 2032 Strategy</b> RC advised that COC visitor economy forum is being split into two areas given it size and scope. We need to establish what the true value of the visitor economy is. We as a board believe that we need to better understand the value of tourism. Are the component parts there to support us in delivery of our aspirations?</p> <p>DH confirmed there are ongoing conversations being had about investment and the ten-year strategy, how do we get from beginning to end? What are the economic drivers that need to happen in the meantime? RC commented that infrastructure development is needed to support our growth.</p> <p>Discussion around business cases and whether these are based on gross added value (such as UK), value of income that flows back to government (IOM), business rates statistics (such as Liverpool City Council use).</p> <p>Discussion on piece of work on how we grow visitor numbers, such as link between shoulder season growth and MNH growth. CL advised business case is waiting for approval on this.</p>			
VM 08-24	<b>Visit Infrastructure</b>		F.I. Paper Attached	
VM 09-24	<p><b>PR Strategy</b></p> <p>Covered in 03-24</p>		F.I. Attached	
VM 10-24	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Accommodation Strategy</b> RC advised Business agency approved. ML confirmed the document only tracks big developments.</li> <li><b>HiT Scotland</b> Reconnect people in the industry to go and train in different places, this would be run by a local trust set up by Hospitality providers. It is worth exploring with the Business Agency it should be viewed as a resource/opportunity within the hospitality association; we need to be realistic about what we can deliver in the short and medium term. Tim Cowsill to establish a HiT IOM</li> <li><b>RNLI</b> Discussion around RNLI anniversary and potential social media campaign.</li> </ul>		RC	RC/TC - Business Agency to advise of decision
	<b>Next Meeting Date: All future dates do not suit SM to doodle meeting survey to be sent out</b>		DH/BC	
	<b>Close</b>			



## Action Summary

Ref	Description	Owner	Due Date	Status
<b>Brought forward</b>				
VM-33-22-4	<b>Bee Gees and possible exhibition on Island MNH</b> to liaise with Liverpool City Council and explore ways in which they promote their links to the Beatles and possible opportunities for MNH and links to the Bee Gees	CL/CM	JUN 2024	Ongoing
VM-25-23-1	<b>Current condition of public rights of way</b> The Public Rights of Way Group will be providing a report and recommendations to Tynwald in May 2024. Expectation that this will be shared with RC and DH.	DFB (Destination First Board)	MAY 2024	Ongoing
VM-34-23-1	<b>Heysham ferry terminal upgrade &amp; Morecambe Eden Project discussion</b> Meeting with David Morris (Morecambe MP) to be rearranged in May	RC/DH	MAY 2024	Ongoing
VM 36-23-1	<b>Steam Packet business and marketing plan</b> Action combined with VM- 38-23-1/ VM-39-23-2/ VM-39-23-3. Meeting to be scheduled with BT/Steam Packet in order to discuss overarching business & marketing plans.	DH/BC	JUN 2024	Ongoing
VM-38-23-1	Post political direction (COMIN/Tynwald), discussions will take place with Steam Packet. DOI have agreed to review the Sea Services agreement. <b>Combined with VM 36-23-1</b>	DH/BT	JAN 2024	CLOSED
WS-2	<b>Accommodation and events strategy</b> Request to create a graph similar to the ones shown in the meeting to show the curve for types of visitor including groups. NB please note segmentation will be varied across the industry. Information received from BM & JK. Graphs to inform the Event strategy and Travel Trade targets.	DH	JUN 2024	Ongoing
VM-39-23	<b>Board autonomy</b> Board members were requested to provide their input on what the desired autonomy should entail. Decision that this will be the focus of a future workshop.	RC	MAR 24	CLOSED
VM-39-23-1	<b>Destination Day feedback</b> Respond to the Slido questions and share feedback from Destination Day. Presentations uploaded to website.	DH/LA	YE 2023	CLOSED
VM-39-23-2	DH/RC to schedule a meeting with BT and CL to gain a deeper understanding of Steam Packets' rates and timetable. <b>Combined with VM 36-23-1</b>	DH/RC	JAN 2024	CLOSED
VM-39-23-3	BT to provide a marketing plan for Steam Packet. <b>Combined with VM 36-23-1</b>	BT	DEC 2023	CLOSED
<b>New</b>				
VM-02-24-1	<b>Liverpool ferry terminal opening</b> Visit IOM to discuss plan for the new ferry terminal launch with external comms.	DH	JUN 2024	NEW
VM-02-24-2	<b>Destination First Board</b> EOI to be issued to members of public in next week	DH	MAR 2024	NEW
VM-02-24-3	<b>HiT Scotland</b> Business Agency to advise of decision	RC/TC	JUN 2024	NEW