



Destination First Board Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 30 June 2026, 14:00 to 17:00
Venue: DEFA Board Room, Thie Slieau Whallian, Foxdale Road, St. Johns IM4 3AS
Board Chair: Ranald Caldwell, Chair (RC)
Board Members: Deborah Heather (DH); Charles Guard (CG); Pauline Wall (PW); Jason Roberts (JR); Kathy Rice (KR); Jamie Smith (JS); Steve Curphey (SC)
In attendance: Amanda Noble (AN)
Apologies: Mrs Sarah Maltby MHK (SM); Mr Jason Moorhouse MHK (JM); Andrew Lees (AL); Ross Phillips (RP); Jo Davies (JD); Jeffrey Robinson (JRo); Phil Gawne (PG); Gary Saunders DOI - optional (GS)
Absent:

Ref	Agenda Item	Papers	Owner	Actions
	Thanks - Chair thanked AL for the use of the DEFA Boardroom and for the refreshments provided. Welcome - The Chair welcomed Amanda Noble to the team who joined as Destination First Co-ordinator on 17 May 2026. Amanda's appointment will mean that we will be able to accelerate the Destination First agenda. Standing items - Apologies: as above. JRo invited GS to attend in his absence, but he was unable to. JM arrived late as previously notified but unfortunately could not access the DEFA Boardroom - Conflicts of interest: none - Hospitality: DH attended the TT – estimated value £350 - Minutes of Board meeting 16 April 2026 – PW had some small amends to make to the MNH update which were duly noted and accepted: - Strong Easter 227K visitors welcomed in the visitor season 2025-26 - Laxey visitor hub was erected within 6 days but internal fit out will delay opening until early July. - Outstanding Actions - actions discussed and updated - Redacted DF Minutes are now visible on the DF website			
	Board Member Updates VISIT ISLE OF MAN - Visit Report 2025 to be published w/c 20 July. - Visitor Economy Strategy target of £200m additional visitor spend by 2032 achieved ahead of schedule; Destination First Board noted as contributing. - Performance remains strong; incremental growth expected to stabilise. - Members noted that Destination First delivers strong outcomes relative to its budget. The Board discussed potential opportunities associated with increased funding, including high net worth (HNW) engagement, philanthropic funding models and support for project-led destination initiatives.		DH	DH

	Strategic & Operational Updates • Visitor Strategy update to be presented at Visit IOM Board meeting on 15 July. • SC raised that the Dublin seasonal ferry cancellation (from 23 July) might impact projections. DH assured this was not expected to impact projections; Larne service remains year-round, with potential additional winter Dublin flights. Other Matters • SC voiced concerns about limited Sunday newspaper availability due to Steam Packet scheduling – this is noted. • Confirmation by DH that Ben-my-Chree will have no cabins post-refurbishment; potential public concern noted. DOI • Horse Tram Extension – due in Tynwald next week (14 July 2026) for approval. • Summerland – the Department has submitted an appeal to the planning application refusal. The planning inspector is due to visit later in July. • Douglas Promenade Sea Wall Defences Ph2 – work is currently ongoing to finalise the Bill of Quantities which is the last element required before the project can be tendered. Once complete the tender package will be issued to Procurement Services to issue as a full tender with an anticipated construction commencing in March 2027. • Douglas Promenade Wall Art Installation - DCC are submitting a Local Economy Fund application which will fund the manufacture of all of the metal panels and pay for installation of all 15, including the ceramic tiles. DOI have funded manufacture of some of the ceramic tiles and will fund the remainder once manufactured. DEFA • Forestry and land management activity has focused on both operational delivery and strengthening standards. Work has included the development of conifer mulching and heathland restoration specifications and associated tender documentation. Operational activity across the estate has been extensive, including invasive species treatment (knotweed, balsam, montbretia and rhododendron), spraying around newly planted trees to support establishment, windblown tree clearance and continued wider storm recovery works, and the removal of deadwood to maintain public safety. Failed trees have also been repurposed to create dead hedging, contributing to habitat enhancement. • Estate maintenance and infrastructure works have continued at pace, with fenceline installations and repairs, boardwalk repairs, path maintenance and access improvements, river clearance works, and roadside vegetation management all undertaken. • This has been supported by routine grounds maintenance, including strimming, grass cutting and hedge cutting. In addition, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC®) certification has been achieved, confirming compliance with internationally recognised forestry standards. • Separately, DEFA has agreed, in principle, that any development of the Snaefell footpath should initially be managed by the Destination First Board. This includes the PIN, responses to the PIN, and any associated financial		GS provided written update 09 07 26 AL provided written update 22 06 26	
--	---	--	---	--

	Destination First Board Strategic Priorities - Positive feedback noted from 2024 Strategy Workshop (facilitated by Ste Stanley). - Agreement to hold a further facilitated session, proposed w/c 14 September 2026, aligned with the next Board meeting. - SWOT and previous workshop outputs to be recirculated in advance. - AN to advise Strategy Workshop details, with an emphasis that outcomes will reflect level of input and engagement.		RC	AN AN
	Destination First Place Development <u>Developing a design code for special places</u> - The design code for special places is progressing. Betty Laurincova (BL) is developing a resource which it is hoped will evolve into a formal framework, with a focus on establishing high-quality, best practice standards to ensure consistent application. <u>Meayll Peninsular signage and interpretation boards</u> - Interpretation signage approach discussed, including alignment with the Extraordinary Isle brand and partners. - Proposal for a standardised design set (with adaptable sizing) supported. - Langness (Pooil Vaaish quarry) interpretation board referenced as a positive example. - Board artwork concept to be prepared by the end of July in alignment with the below actions to progress signage and interpretation boards. <u>Actions to progress signage and interpretation boards</u> - RC to engage with [REDACTED] Close Ny Chollagh, to ask for permission to erect a proposed area interpretation board. - CG to issue draft permissions letter to PW for feedback to ensure suggested best practice. - CG to meet with Visit IOM designer to develop a visual concept for interpretation boards, with potential use of QR codes for additional content. - Noted that this work will inform development of a Destination First Board Design Code. <u>Code for the use of Manx language on signage</u> - The code has been briefed to the designer with a draft due imminently. - Code to be launched as a resource by the end of August. <u>Countryside and Litter Codes</u> - The Countryside Code is visible on Visit IOM's website and key messaging will be used on replacement signs ongoing. - The Litter Code forms part of the Countryside Code and will be incorporated into future Destination First signage projects.		AN / DH / RC / BL	DH / RC / AN RC CG / PW DH / CG / AN DH / RC / AN DH / AN
	IOM Community Rangers 6-month Pilot Report Positive feedback on pilot delivery and recruitment, including appointment of interim DOI PROW Manager - [REDACTED].		RC	

	• Acknowledgement of contributions and ongoing support from partners and stakeholders. • Additional volunteers are required to support expansion of the programme in the south. An action was agreed to promote volunteer opportunities through Port St Mary Commissioners. Consideration should be given to extending through Arbory & Rushen and Port Erin Commissioners. • Meeting with PW on volunteer management and National Park / Fix the Fells alignment. • Exploration of opportunities to expand engagement with young people (16 to 18 years) highlighted. • Importance of demonstrating value to Local Authorities and strengthening access to Ranger support noted. • Coastal path alignment and landowner engagement raised for further consideration. • Destination First Board alignment with ESG and regenerative tourism principles recognised. • The Board approved the recommendations of the report and the establishment of a working group to come back with a set of firm recommendations for approval.			AN / RC PW / AN / RC AN DH / RC / AN
	Local Authority Review & Update • Phil Gawne not in attendance. • PG / AN to progress the Local Authority Review by establishing local authority engagement groups to explore opportunities for joint working, resource sharing and co-ordinated support through Destination First.			PG / AN
	Review of other Destination First activities Horse Tram Track Reinstatement • Treasury has been asked to return to Tynwald on 14 July 2026 with a capital funding request to finish reinstating the horse tram tracks. The reason being that Treasury approval is required under Financial Regulations before Tynwald can approve a motion with financial implications. Summerland • An appeal has been lodged against the refusal of the proposed temporary car park at the Summerland site. Douglas City Council has submitted representations supporting the original refusal and requesting that the appeal be dismissed. The appeal process is ongoing. Douglas Sea Wall Defences • Douglas City Council (DCC) has confirmed that redevelopment of the Marine Gardens has been paused pending the provision of adequate long-term sea defences. • DCC has been advised that there are currently no plans to extend continuous coastal defences along the full length of Douglas Promenade, creating uncertainty around the future resilience of the site. • Given the gardens' vulnerability to flooding, storm damage and coastal erosion, the Council considers it inappropriate to proceed with significant investment until a sustainable flood protection solution is identified. However, DCC remains committed to the long-term gardens' regeneration and is		CG / KR / JRo / GS KR / JRo / GS KR / JRo / GS	

	seeking greater collaboration with the DOI to secure a co-ordinated approach. Consideration should be given to DOI access to Climate Change Fund. <u>Douglas Sea Wall Art Installation</u> - Jane Hall (Business IOM) has offered guidance and support for a Local Economy Fund (LEF) application and Douglas City Council will seek Executive Committee approval on 23 July 2026 before applying to Enterprise Support for the LEF or Town and Village Regeneration Scheme (TVRS). - DCC has already paid £40K to install lighting for the artwork. - It is hoped that the application for funding will be supported at July's meeting and applied for before the end of August. <u>Snaefell Path Upgrade Prior Information Notice Paper</u> - DF Board approved that we support the recommendation of DEFA and front the PIN/Expressions of Interest for the creation of a path up Snaefell. - In addition: - PW suggested it might be possible to access funding for the path upgrade through a Deep Peat initiative. - The Board may wish to explore whether this work might support peatland restoration and could be part or fully funded through the ability of Department for Enterprise to access the Climate Change Fund, recognising its climate, biodiversity and landscape benefits. <u>Bungalow (base of Snaefell)</u> - CG commented that the aspect from Victory Café down to the Bungalow is a disgrace. - Action required: CG to forward photographs and AN will contact DOI Estates to highlight issues and resolve. <u>Camera Obscura</u> - KR confirmed the railings have been assessed as safe and will be stripped and repainted. - CG commented further repairs are needed with the building itself after the last condition survey as issues were found with the joists and decking.		KR KR AN / RC PW / DH / AN / RC CG CG	CG / AN KR
	Next Meeting Date: w/c 14 September 2026 to include Strategy Workshop			
	AOB / Close: Jamie reported on a recent visit to the Smithsonian, including a live discussion with a NASA rep, who advised that he intends to visit the Isle of Man later this year and has a particular interest in visiting Cregneash.			16:50

Actions

Description	Owner	Due Date	Status
Destination First Annual Report signed off by DF Board to be printed/set and forwarded to Government CEO and made publically available	DH	Delayed from February	DH to advise
Recirculate SWOT analysis and outputs from the 2024 Strategy Workshop in advance of the September Strategy Workshop	AN	beginning August 2026	On track
Confirm date, arrangements and agenda for September Strategy Workshop taking place at DF Board meeting	AN	beginning August 2026	On track
Betty Laurincova to circulate Design Code update to the Destination First Board	BL / AN / DH / RC	next Board meeting	Due
Meet with Visit IOM designer to develop visual concept for interpretation boards, including possible QR codes	CG / DH / AN	17/07/2026	Completed
Produce visuals for interpretation boards for use on the Meayll Peninsula with MNH	DH / AN	beginning August 2026	Due
Seek permission from ██████████ Close Ny Chollagh, for erection of interpretation board & specific Countryside Code signage and obtain signed permissions letter	RC	mid July 2026	RC has verbal permission as long as Mr Watterson has sight of the artwork
Confirm permissions letter is suitable for use by DF when seeking permissions to erect signage on land that is not publically owned	RC / CG / PW	beginning August 2026	CG has sent draft to PW for review
Code for the use of Manx Language on IOM Signage. ██████████	AN / DH	beginning August 2026	First draft produced
Countryside Code and Litter Code to be incorporated into future Destination First signage projects	AN / DH	Ongoing	Ongoing
Develop volunteer recruitment campaign to increase Ranger numbers, including engagement with Port St Mary initially	AN / RC	31/07/2026	Completed
Meet with MNH to explore alignment between Community Rangers, National Parks and Fix the Fells volunteer activity	PW / AN / RC	13/07/2026	Completed
Working Group to be established to produce recommendations following pilot evaluation and return to Board for approval	DH / RC / AN	mid August 2026	Due
Establish Local Authority engagement groups to explore joint working, shared resources and co-ordinated support through Destination First	PG / AN	Ongoing	To commence September 2026
Douglas Sea Wall Art Installation funding application – seek Exec Committee approval to apply	KR	23/07/2026	Exec Committee meeting being held on 23 07 26
Progress LEF / TVRS funding application for Douglas Sea Wall Art Installation, subject to approval	KR	31/08/2026	Awaiting Exec Committee decision
Continue engagement with DOI regarding Douglas sea wall defences / Marine Gardens position	KR / JRo / GS	Ongoing	Ongoing
Fairy Bridge maintenance assessment	AN	02/07/2026	Completed
Issue Prior Information Notice (PIN) for Snaefell path upgrade project	AN / RC / AL	31/08/2026	On track
Explore potential funding opportunities for Snaefell Path Upgrade through peatland restoration / Climate Change Fund	AN / PW / RC / DH	31/08/2026	Ongoing
CG to forward photographs to AN highlighting issues between Victory Café and the Bungalow. AN to raise identified issues with DOI Estates and seek resolution	CG / AN	31/07/2026	AN emailed 02 07 26, 09 07 26 & 29 07 26
IOM Man public toilets onto Government Manngis Mapping system and look at the possibility of adding to Google maps	AN	30/09/2026	Manngis mapping project agreed to start by 31 08 26