

MINUTES OF THE 442nd MEETING OF BRITISH TOURIST AUTHORITY

HELD AT 10:00 ON TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2019 AT

VISITBRITAIN, 151 BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD, LONDON SW1W 9SZ

Present: Stephen Ridgway, CBE (Chairman)
Dame Judith Macgregor
Giles Smith (DCMS)
Lord Thurso
Ian McCaig
Katy Best
Denis Wormwell
Mark Taylor
Jason Thomas
Ian Edwards

In Attendance: Sally Balcombe
Patricia Yates
Hazel Cunningham
Robin Johnson
Lola Moses
Lydia Mwanzia

Agenda item 1: Chair's Update and Introduction

1. The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting.
2. The Chairman updated the Board on the following matters:
 - (i) It was noted that phase two of the Industrial Strategy was in progress, and that the Chairman would be meeting with the Secretary of State to discuss further.
 - (ii) The Board was updated on the status of the Annual Report and Accounts for the last year.
 - (iii) The Board noted that Sue Owen would finish her term at the end of March 2019, and that Sarah Healey has been appointed as the new Permanent.
 - (iv) Recruitment for Board positions across the VEAB and BTA Board would be commencing imminently.

Agenda Item 2: Apologies

3. There were no apologies.

Agenda Item 3: Declarations of interest

4. There were no new declarations of interest

Agenda Item 4: Minutes of the Last Meeting

5. The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2019 were approved.
6. There were no new matters arising from the Minutes.

Agenda 5: Review of Dashboard and Agenda 6: CEO Report- Verbal

7. Sally Balcombe provided the Board with a verbal update on recent developments with reference to the circulated paper.
8. The Board noted the progress on matters that were reported at the last Board which included:-
 - i. The trend line on the dashboard demonstrating the movement in the status of a corporate priority.
 - ii. IT Strategy and that the new HR system, Compass, had been implemented. It was noted that the enhanced functionality would include more accurate data.
 - iii. The impact of Brexit was discussed and the mitigation that the BTA had in place.
 - iv. The Board were advised that a People Task Force had been set up to support the business in delivering compliance, training, development and staff recruitment.
 - v. On compliance, the Board noted that in accordance with Business Plan, that there was an increase in resources in both HR and Legal, to ensure that there were sufficient compliance resources to support the business and to comply with requirements.

Agenda 7: State of the Market Snapshot

9. The Market Snapshot was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting and was taken as read.

Agenda 8: Political /Tourism Affairs

10. The current political situation was discussed and its impact on tourism. It was noted that DCMS were supporting the BTA's activities to mitigate any impact on tourism from the ongoing political uncertainty.
11. On England Tourism Week, the following points were noted:-
 - (i) English Tourism Week (ETW) will take place from 30 March to 7 April 2019.
 - (ii) The main campaign aim is to raise the profile of English tourism and build awareness of the value tourism brings to the economy through job creation and income generation and to the nation's quality of life.
 - (iii) ETW kick-starts the season for destinations and tourism businesses.
 - (iv) We involve the public by encouraging local residents to discover the tourism products on their doorstep.
 - (v) Key audiences include decision-makers and influencers, so we engage with politicians at national and local levels as well as the media.

Agenda 9 Industrial Strategy

12. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on the Tourism Sector Deal that was circulated prior to the meeting. It was noted that the UK Government agreed to formally negotiate a Sector Deal for Tourism in November 2018, with the following elements:-
- (i) Additional commitment and overview on future hotel investment.
 - (ii) Additional commitment on data sharing.
 - (iii) Additional commitment on the industry's work around skills; and
 - (iv) Additional commitment on making the UK more accessible for disabled and elderly visitors.

Agenda 10 Spending Review

13. The Board were advised of the request for an increase in funding. Patricia Yates referred the Board to the paper on the Spending Review that was circulated prior to the meeting. Members discussed at length the funding required for the Spending Review together with the applicable timetable.

Agenda 11: Brexit Plans

14. This item was presented by Robin Johnson who noted the market challenges being faced as a result of Brexit. Members discussed at length the implications for the tourism sector and the applicable mitigations as a result of BREXIT.

Agenda 12: Tourism Inbound Trends

15. The Tourism Trends paper was circulated to the Board prior to the meeting and was taken as read.

Agenda Item 13: England Matters

16. This item was presented by Denis Wormwell following the VisitEngland Advisory Board meeting which was held last week. The following points were noted:
- (i) Discover England Fund - Permission had been given to roll over £5.4m into the next year.
 - (ii) DEF digital platform contract has been signed.
 - (iii) English Tourism Week- The event would be held during the same period as usual.
 - (iv) The England Tourism Excellence awards were held on the 11th of March 2019. Suzanne Bond who had been on the Board for 16 years was given an award during the event.
 - (v) It was noted that John Hoy and Sarah Stewart were at the end of their second terms on the VEAB and that a request for an extension to their terms had been made of DCMS to accommodate the VEAB during the recruitment of new members.

- (vi) An update on the Quality Schemes was given as there is one year left on the three year contract

Agenda 14: Report from Audit& Risk Committee (15 March 2019)

- 17. This meeting took place on Friday and as such this paper was tabled on the day.

Agenda item 15: Approval of Annual Reports & Risk Committee

- 18. Hazel Cunningham gave an update on the qualification of the annual accounts for 2017/18. Members discussed at length the implications and the mitigations that were in place.

Agenda 16 Business Plan & Budget 19/20 paper

- 19. Sally Balcombe and Hazel Cunningham presented this item. It was noted that the priorities for 2019/20 will focus on compliance and HR to ensure that the business delivers its targets.

Agenda 17 Pensions Update Verbal

- 20. Hazel Cunningham updated members on the latest developments with the Pension. It was note that the BTA was liaising with the trustees and VisitScotland and that a further update would be provided at the June meeting.

Agenda 18 AOB

- 21. There were no other matters to be discussed. There being no further matters the Chairman closed the meeting at 14.30

Agenda 19 Date of next meeting

- 22. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 18th June 2019

Agenda 20 Papers for Information / Events Diary

- 23. These were circulated to members.