



**Minutes of Board Meeting**

**2.00pm on Wednesday 22 May 2019, at the Riviera International Conference Centre**

Present: **Tim Godfrey** (TG) – Partner, Bishop Fleming; **Helen Brenton** (HB) – Sales & Marketing Executive, Osborne Club; **Martin Brook** (MB) – Owner, Pilgrims Rest Cottages; **Pippa Craddock** (PC) – Marketing & Development Director, Paignton Zoo & Living Coasts; **Richard Cuming** (RC) – General Manager, Bygones; **Carolyn Custerson** (CC) – Chief Executive, ERBID Company; **Clare Flower** (CF) – Director, Beverley Holidays; **Chris Hart** (CH) – Chief Executive, Wollen Michelmores; **Simon Jolly** (SJ) – Managing Director, Riviera International Conference Centre; **Nigel Makin** (NM) – Co-Owner, Beacon House B&B in Brixham; **Kevin Mowat** (KM) – Director of Place, Torbay Council; **Anthony Payne-Neale** (APN) – Owner, Court Prior; **Kelly Widley** (KW) – Pier Point

ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM/ BY WHEN
1	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES, MINUTES, MATTERS ARISING:</u></b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b> None</p> <p><b>Minutes</b> Minutes from the last meeting were approved by the Board</p> <p><b>Matters arising</b> No matters arising</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Destination Marketing:</u></b></p> <p><b>2019/20 Activity Update</b></p> <p><b>National Marketing TV/Digital Campaigns</b> – CC advised that all national media activity was complete now that the ITV central and London Waterloo Digital Screens campaigns had finished and feedback from levy payers has been positive. Social media comments following the London Waterloo campaign have been positive and encouraging and there is no doubt the campaign has increased the English Riviera’s profile. This will have contributed to the notable increase in direct visits to the English Riviera website (a recorded 115% increase versus last year), so a good return on investment in terms of website traffic.</p> <p><b>Groups Marketing</b> – CC proposed 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 for the 2020 Groups Showcase and Exhibition. SJ confirmed that the RICC Arena is available for this event and it was agreed that CC will go ahead and book these dates. CC confirmed that the exhibition will take place in the Spring, alongside the AGM, with a new ERBID Conference taking place in the Autumn.</p>	CC

	<p><b>Food &amp; Drink Marketing</b> – CC reported that Food &amp; Drink businesses in the Bay are becoming increasingly engaged and active in events/marketing initiatives. Uploading of <a href="#">Seafood Feast</a> events is going well. Very positive feedback has been received on the new Sea to Plate, <a href="#">Fish and Chips video</a> that we are now positioning as a ‘Taste of the English Riviera’ which will be promoted on all our Digital Marketing Channels. An ice-cream theme is being considered as a central theme for 2020.</p> <p><b>Business Tourism Marketing</b> – CC has allocated an additional £500 for the English Riviera to be represented in partnership with Visit Devon at the new Global Meeting Summit being organised by VisitEngland. CC highlighted that the value to the Bay of national and international conferences is high in terms of total delegate spend on hotel accommodation, restaurants, etc. SJ reported that Nicky Harding, Conference English Riviera Manager, has been working tirelessly over the last few months to maintain the Bay’s high profile and mitigate potential damage within the industry caused by the negative press coverage around the uncertainty of the future of the Riviera Centre. The ERBID Board recognised the need for investment in facilities such as the Riviera Centre in order to attract business tourism.</p> <p><b>English Riviera Website</b> – CC confirmed that the website is performing well, largely due to the continued investment in refreshed and new content including copy and images, with visits to the site in April up by 55% YOY. The website has seen a significant increase in international visitors, with US visitors up 105% YOY, largely due to the ERBID’s involvement in the US Connections/Mayflower 400 project. Many US tourists come to the Bay to visit Greenway, although there are current issues with transport to get there if visitors do not have a car, of which the National Trust are aware. The Mayflower 400 event is expected to bring in significant number of international visitors in 2020.</p> <p>There are continued concerns regarding the thin content of many of the product pages on the website. Google are changing their rankings process and any pages linked to the ER website which have low word counts and a poor-quality image will start to drop in rankings. This will mean fewer click throughs to individual product pages and this could damage the overall performance of the ER website. Visit Devon have offered to help with rewriting these pages and CC proposed that the ERBID invest in additional copy writing resources to address this issue. The Board gave their approval that, if the cost is within budget, CC can proceed with enlisting someone to provide copy writing services.</p> <p><b>Social Media</b> –NH has asked CC to consider taking on additional resources to work on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram leaving more time to focus on the website, whilst still overseeing social media activity. The ERBID recognised that the website has improved significantly since NH joined the team and gave their agreement for CC to review resources and taking on an additional person to work on social media if required. A specific Facebook workshop for levy payers will be considered for later in the year.</p> <p>In order to provide a clearer and more realistic comparison of website visitor numbers, CC will arrange for March and April figures to be combined on the reports for both this year and last year to take into consideration the change in Easter dates.</p> <p><b>Visitor Centre</b> – CC is waiting to hear whether there will be financial sponsorship from Stagecoach. CC reported that the Visitor Centre has been receiving some negative feedback about both the payable toilets and reduced time availability of the ER wheel. KM responded that the Council are currently working on a more permanent solution for the wheel and that charging for toilet facilities is now commonplace and that rates of use have not dropped.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
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**Research** – March’s How’s Business Survey results show that visitor numbers the first quarter are slightly down YOY due to the timing of Easter, however turnover remained broadly similar to March 2018. CC confirmed that, having attended a national conference in London performance many other destinations were reporting a similar trend.

**Press & PR** – CF advised that it is still uncertain whether the English Riviera will feature in the BBC2 Inside Out documentary on “Britain’s Busiest Summer – Brexit”. NM advised that there may well be an article on the ER appearing in the weekend’s Mail on Sunday as one of their journalists has been visiting the Bay. NM also mentioned that the next ASDA George advert has been filmed at Berry Head.

**Tourism Awards** – A very pleasing 72 entries for the first year of the new ERBID Awards had been received in total, over 22 different categories. Plans now proceeding with judging and arrangements for the Awards Dinner on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Night Time Economy meeting** – CC attended a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May with Night Time Economy Consultants for TQ Harbour commissioned by Torbay Council. The lead consultant was the CEO of Nottingham BID. They were very supportive of the positive role that Destination BIDs can provide and their recommendations are awaited.

**Riviera Experiences Voucher Platform** – CC has attended a meeting with Clockwork Marketing to explore their idea of an online voucher platform promoting “Riviera Experiences”. This would involve a link from the ERBID website to the platform run by Clockwork Marketing to promote special experiences and packages provided by ERBID partners. PP and CF both expressed concern about potential complications with operator rules in terms of who is doing the selling and explained that this would need to be clarified.

**VisitBritain meeting** – CC updated the board on her meeting with the CEO of VisitBritain on 22<sup>nd</sup> May which included an update on the likely approval of a Tourism Sector Deal for the first time and introduction of 5/6 new tourism zones that would include significant government funding.

**Events update (BMAD)**

This event was not as busy as in previous years. Post-event criticism in the press by the organiser toward the ERBID regarding funding has been challenged by TG. As levy payers believe such events are important to the Bay and their businesses, the ERBID Board had agreed to contribute £5k to this event but as yet have not been invoiced for this by the organiser, the ERBID Company have every intention of paying the £5k. TG will compose a letter/email to this effect. The BMAD organiser has publicly criticised the ERBID’s decision to contribute £10k to Torbay Air Show compared to £5k to BMAD. MB highlighted that this is because the Air Show is a Bay-wide event, whereas BMAD is more of a local Paignton-based event. TG confirmed that he and CC are planning to attend a meeting on 15 July to discuss the future of BMAD with council representatives. KM warned that the ERBID and the TDA may need to consider stepping in with greater financial help with the Torbay Air Show next year due to tightening Council constraints.

TG

3	<p><b><u>Governance and Finance:</u></b></p> <p><b>Monthly Management Accounts</b> Were reviewed and approved.</p> <p><b>Levy Update/Collection/Enforcement</b> TG and CC reported that levy payments received are looking positive. Levy payers have until 31 May to pay and the ERBID Board will then have to decide how to handle any outstanding payments.</p> <p><b>Directors' Code of Conduct</b> The updated 'Directors Code of Conduct' document was discussed and its adoption unanimously approved. TG stressed the importance of continuing transparency and disclosure by all ERBID Directors. KM confirmed this will remain under annual review of the Finance and Governance Committee.</p> <p>All Directors are now required to sign the updated 'Director's Code of Conduct.' The Code of Conduct will then be placed on the B2B website. CC will keep a list of all declarations of interests and any potential conflicts of interests.</p> <p><b>ERBID Renewal</b> On 26 June, CC and AAW will be attending a meeting with IOW BID representatives to share best practice. The IOW BID are also planning a re-ballot. A meeting with Bournemouth Coastal BID is also being planned. CC reported that the new GM of the Grand Hotel, Andrew Huckerby, is ex-Chairman of Plymouth's BID and could be a useful person to join the ERBID Renewal Group. CC is now working on compiling the draft survey to send out in the autumn to all current ERBID partners working with the South West Research Company and summarising list of ERBID achievements to date.</p> <p><b>Destination Management Group (DMG) – Chair nominations</b> CC will be stepping down as Chair at the end of the first year of the DMG and a new chair is to be elected. TG had been asked to ask if anyone on the ERBID Board would like to be considered as the DMG were keen to retain an independent chair. Any interested parties were asked to feedback to CC. CC will remain on the committee.</p>	<p>ALL</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC</p>
4	<p><b><u>Communications:</u></b></p> <p><b>Tourism Awards Update</b> Already covered in item 2, i.e. 72 entries were received in total, over 22 different categories.</p> <p><b>Visitor Trends</b> CC has been contacted by a B&amp;B who are concerned at their occupancy rates and would like some insight into what is happening with Visitor Trends from the ERBID Board. APN confirmed a general view amongst B&amp;B owners that business is currently very patchy and concerns have been raised about the effectiveness of the Waterloo advertising strategy. CC highlighted that this patchiness is a nationwide trend and she has carried out some benchmarking with similar seaside destinations who are reporting similar trends. It appears that there could be a reducing demand for traditional B&amp;B accommodation. CC also highlighted the growing number of Airbnb properties in Torbay, which now total 650 options and are presenting growing competition in the accommodation sector.</p>	

	<p>PC suggested the ERBID producing a piece detailing how the market and holiday patterns have changed and include ideas and tips on changing with the times in order to improve business. The ERBID Board agreed that it was important to encourage businesses to work together and share best practice.</p> <p><b>Focus Group Representation</b> It was agreed this item would be carried forward to the next meeting.</p>	
5	<p><b><u>Any Other Business:</u></b></p> <p><b>Update on the new Council Administration</b> KM explained that the new Leader-Elect of Torbay Council is Steve Darling, with the new Deputy Leader-Elect being Darren Cowell. The Liberal Democrat and Independents have formed a partnership and seven cabinet members are due to be confirmed on 28 May. The ERBID Board agreed it was important to clarify the role and potential of the ERBID to the new Administration and to convey how keen the ERBID Board are to continue working with the Council for the success of the Bay.</p>	