



Accommodation Focus Group – Tuesday 11th December 2018

The Commodore, Torquay 2pm

Present: Sarah Hemingway, Carolyn Custerson (ERBID), Gemma Carlin-Wells (GCW), Robbie Clymo (RC), Keith Hutchinson (KH), Stuart Lewton (SL), Anthony Payne-Neale (APN), Des Pitman (DP) Osborne Apartments, Nigel Ede (NE). **Chair:** Tony Smyth (TS)

1. Welcome & Apologies

Tony welcomed members and thanked Stuart for hosting the meeting.

Apologies were received from Jacqui Carlin-Wells, Villa Capri; Paul Feasey; Debra Wilson, Brixham House; Jessica Dowell, Imperial Hotel; Leandra Goldberg, Providence Hospitality; Nigel Makin, Beacon House.

Action Points and matters arising

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

2. Website Performance

Carolyn provided an update:

The website is now in a positive position with an increase in traffic and ongoing development work including the generation of new content (blog articles replacing previous microsites, new images and films). The increased social media activity has increased website traffic by 140%. All recommendations to improve the website search options have been implemented during 2018 with an increase reported in online accommodation bookings. Angie is currently working on ensuring that the advertising packages recently taken up are in place by January.

Nathan has circulated the Digital Marketing Toolkit to assist with improving product webpages. Members encouraged to keep information up-to-date.

A review of the current website is ongoing at the request of the ERBID board. Other website providers are being considered in relation to costs, functionality and maximising online bookings. There is also the potential to include a retail web section if voluntary contributors are willing to sign up. Carolyn is planning to approach potential large retail partners in the new year.

Action: CC to send TS for circulation Nathan's October 2018 website report

3. Online bookings

A focus subgroup has been created with Nathan, Anthony, Tony, Carolyn and Angie. The group recently met with Adam of Staylists who provided a presentation of their online booking services and support. Staylists is currently working with Keswick and East of England businesses, providing a

24/7 support package. They have their own PMS and are pitching to link with the ER website. Martin Brook will be working with Staylist to trial their services and Carolyn will ask Jacqui, Villa Capri to also pilot as a self-catering provider. Guestlink+ does not currently work with self-catering providers. Staylists services require partners to pay a licence fee or on a shared commission basis. The current website host, Newmind does not work with Staylists and the implementation of a new website will require a large financial, time and staffing commitment with the potential to distract from core destination marketing activities.

Accommodation providers who are listed on Booking.com have been automatically linked to the ER site as part of an ERBID strategic decision.

4. 2019 Marketing plan & budget

The draft 2019 budget has been circulated to members. A 97.5% BID collection recovery result has generated a destination marketing budget of over £554k, exceeding the amount forecast. National marketing activity will include a TV campaign targeting the Midlands area (March to Mid-April) and a London Waterloo train station advertising campaign using the Sunrise to Sunset video (29 April for two weeks). Both campaigns have been booked with MostlyMedia. There will be a Family Fun digital campaign with mini videos and photos from January to March. £63k has been allocated for reactive marketing with the potential to use this for autumn activity promotion. Drone footage of Cockington is already available for this and aspirations to develop a new TV advert which brings all age groups together.

Action: CC to clarify that £50k allocated for London Waterloo station is an ERBID contribution

The 2019 Destination Guide will be arriving this week and 82-85k requests are anticipated. The Café & Restaurant guide will be produced in 2019, sponsorship is in place to cover costs. There will be a reprint of the Pub & Bar guide.

An event development fund has been established to support destination events, seen as part of ERBID strategy. £10k has been allocated to 2019 Torbay Airshow and £5k to 2019 BMAD. Paignton accommodation providers are encouraged to show their financial support for BMAD as well.

Members agreed that a shoulder season key event in Torquay would be beneficial and a push to use the *Book Smart, Book Direct* message.

Action: CC to contact Matt to discuss re-instating SuperWeekend event

The Discover England Fund's Seafood FEAST £250k funding will end on 31st March 2019. A £50k project bid application has been submitted to GWR as they have a South West focus currently. International marketing activities are ongoing, ERBID is working with Visit Plymouth on US Connections and Mayflower 400/2020 project to bring US visitors to the area.

There have been technical issues with uploading drone footage videos onto the ERBID website due to large files. This is available on a hard drive and can be sent to accommodation partners via WeTransfer upon request.

£10k has been allocated to support conference provision marketing development with RICC, Torquay.

5. How's Business Survey/Performance monitoring & evaluation (T.Stats)

Carolyn reported that October results were disappointing and down on the South West average. Businesses need to plan for split of schools' half term dates in the future. The digital marketing budget includes an Oct campaign which should help. In response to members' requests to adapt and automate the How's Business Survey to prevent inputting data twice, this isn't possible.

The T.Stats platform will enable access to useful data such as national statistics, visitor information requests, Airbnb data, regional travel information for benchmarking purposes and to monitor business performance. Access will only be available to those who provide confidential turnover data. Members should let CC know if they would like to take part in the trial.

Action: SL to advise Bridge Group members that this opportunity is available to them and that specific turnover data will be required, but that all information given is in strict confidence.

6. AOB - ADDITIONAL POINTS DISCUSSED AT MEETING:

Carolyn provided an update on latest developments:

IBIS Hotel's planning permission to develop the site of Park Hotel, Paignton has been granted with ERBID's full support. Harbour Lights, Paignton premises due to be taken over by St Austell Brewery. Hyatt Luxury spa hotel is planned for Palace Hotel, Torquay site. The Pavilion, Torquay planning application halted. TDA is looking at alternative options. Premier Inn planning permission behind Terrace car park, Torquay is due to go through.

2019 dates for diaries:

12th Feb: Google Garage, digital media workshop sessions at RICC

27th Mar: Tourism exhibition, ERBID update and AGM

The Growth Support Programme run by Kim Thornton and Rebecca Sanders at TDA, is a fully funded programme providing free 1 to 1 digital marketing support including a review provided by digital skills experts, Cosmic. Contact TDA for details.

Members reminded to inform ERBID if email addresses or contact details change.

Action: CC to invite Gary of Hoburne Holiday Parks to join focus group meetings

Date of Next Meeting: early March 2019 (tbc)