



**Minutes of Board Meeting**

2.00pm on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Video Call

Present: Carolyn Custerson (CC) – Chief Executive, ERBID Company, Tim Godfrey (TG) – Partner, Bishop Fleming, Chris Hart (CH) – Chief Executive, Wollens, Anthony Payne-Neale, Court Prior (APN), Kelly Widley (KW) – Pier Point, Clare Flower (CF) – Director Beverley Holidays, Kevin Mowat (KM) – Director of Place, Torbay Council, Richard Cuming (RC) – General Manager, Bygones, Pippa Craddock, Director of Marketing & Development, Paignton Zoo, Lorraine Stewart (LS) – minutes

CC/TG/CH/KM/MB/APN/KW/SJ/RC/JG

ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM/ BY WHEN
1	<p><b><u>APOLOGIES, MINUTES, MATTERS ARISING:</u></b></p> <p><b>Apologies</b> – Apologies: Simon Jolly (SJ), Jason Garside (JG), Martin Brook (MB), Helen Brenton (HB)</p> <p><b>Approval of Minutes</b> – All agreed were an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Matters Arising</b> CC advised the Board that the joint application with Destination Plymouth and VisitDevon into the VisitEngland, Escape the Everyday Fund had been unsuccessful this time. All other matters covered in the agenda</p>	
2	<p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p>TJ opened the discussion on the company’s current financial situation and shared the latest details with the Board.</p> <p><b><u>2020 Final Accounts</u></b> These are currently being finalised and a carry forward of £149,000 is expected. This money is allocated for Destination Marketing. A further £9k was collected in Levy up to the end of December.</p> <p><b><u>2021 Levy Collection</u></b> The 2021 Levy invoices were dispatched with the ERBID 2020/21 Annual Report at the normal time between Christmas and New Year. Payments over 3 months have been set up for 2021 to help businesses. £98,000 has been collected by the middle of the month. The Board asked CC to request a report from TBC to advise</p>	

	<p>us which businesses have paid in full and which businesses have paid the first instalment. A small increase in the number of businesses finding difficulty in paying the Levy because of COVID-19 is being noted across some business types. Pubs and large hotels seem to be in a worse position. KW highlighted that many Food and Drink businesses were also now experiencing cash flow problems, particularly those that cannot provide Takeaway or Delivery.</p> <p>The Board asked CC to undertake some qualitative research talking to a variety of businesses to see if any further action is required by the ERBID Company. It was recognised that we need to understand if there is a problem/need. Consideration to agreeing a reduction in the 2021 payment for any businesses experiencing particular hardship was discussed. CC to report back with recommendations. APN suggested that the ERBID2Workshops may prove useful in helping to identify if there is an issue that the Board should address and it is very important that we listen carefully and assess business sentiment across the resort and in different sectors.</p> <p><b>ERBID Commercial Income Update</b> A year-on-year increase is being seen in the level of investment in advertising on the English Riviera website with a particular demand for website banners. £5k confirmed to date.</p>	CC
3	<p><b><u>Destination Marketing</u></b></p> <p><b>Consumer Messaging</b> CC updated the Board on current consumer messaging which is taking a ‘soft’ approach during Lockdown with the revised caption ‘Visit When the Time is Right’. The Government announcement on the 22nd February will be the time to review messaging with plans to re-introduce the Digital Campaigns to promote the WELCOME BACK – Book Your Summer Holiday Now. Everyone highlighted the opportunity for attracting new visitors because of the predicted growth in Staycations. RC emphasised the need to keep marketing the destination as we will be competing with many more destinations across the UK who will also see the Staycation forecast as an opportunity too, with less common destinations now on the map.</p> <p>A discussion on current booking trends took place with everyone reporting a generally lower number of enquiries and bookings than this time last year. Interest in Easter is very low. Carrying forward postponed bookings from 2020 is impacting 2021 availability. August is looking the strongest month. CC reported that requests for the Accommodation Guide were significantly down, 254/1390 this time last year.</p> <p><b>Website and Social Media Performance</b> Website traffic is currently very up and down mirroring Government announcements and as of 28<sup>th</sup> January 40% down on the same time last year. Focus continues on refreshing and introducing new inspiring content to attract new visitors. Facebook followers are continuing to increase.</p>	

	<p><b>National Advertising</b> The Digital Roadside Advertising Boards have been re-scheduled to take place across Birmingham for two weeks from 22<sup>nd</sup> March to encourage new Staycation stays. The Bristol activity is to be re-scheduled. Under continuous review.</p>	
4	<p><b>ERBID2</b> Mo Aswat from Mosaic Partnerships joined the call.</p> <p><b>ERBID2 Database</b> CC advised that the Business Plan will be posted out to businesses on Monday.</p> <p>CC and MA updated the Board regarding the ERBID2 Database and an issue that had arisen concerning duplication of entries that had had a negative impact on the budget. The budget has had to be re-worked with ERBID2 now expected to raise £3.5 million not £4 million as originally hoped. The need for an investment in a new centralised ERBID database drawing data directly from the Council RV list was recommended by MA and is to be pursued if a positive vote is secured. MA is to introduce a leading BID Database Management Company to CC.</p> <p>TG advised that there has been a lot of communication received from customers stating their upset over the BID levy invoices that have been sent out given the current situation. CH asked MA what the situation is with regards to flexibility to concessions being applied to the levy bills that were sent out. MA advised that the legislation states that a bill has to be issued to the eligible levy payers. MA advised that there can be discounts applied which can be decided on various categories for example retail, cafes etc that have closed. MA advised that he believes that the businesses that have remained open during lockdown that they should be invoiced. MA advised to ensure that when the discount is applied that it is completed soon so not to be too close to the renewal ballot. CC asked how many businesses MA was aware that awarded a concession due to COVID and he advised 60% out of 120.</p> <p><b>ERBID2 Draft Consultation Business Plan</b> MA highlighted that this is a strong Draft plan with a lot of evidence demonstrating the benefits and services provided by ERBID1 and that he is confident of a positive vote. CC reminded the Board that the Draft Plan is being mailed out w/c 1<sup>st</sup> February.</p> <p><b>ERBID2 Consultation</b> MA confirmed the consultation programme that will start on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Many of the Board working as the Task Group had already registered to attend the weekly workshops being held to the end of March. Feedback from the workshops will help shape the Final Plan. MA also highlighted the ERBID2 online survey also in place.</p> <p><b>ERBID2 – Publicity</b> MA recommended to the Board that with the companies’ strong skills in Digital Marketing they should use Social Media channels as part of the ERBID2 Vote YES Campaign. CC confirmed that a new ERBID2 Facebook Page is being developed along with a new YouTube channel to host testimonials in support of ERBID2.</p>	<p>MA/CC</p> <p>ALL</p>

	<p>Creative assets from the Business Plan would be shared and used across all platforms. CC asked if all the Board members could create a 30 second testimonials that can be used on a YouTube channel for promotion of the ERBID2.</p> <p>CC recommended that a Press Release should also be sent to Torbay Weekly to coincide with the launch of the draft plan. Everyone agreed that in all communications there needed to be careful consideration of those businesses that are finding things very difficult at the present time because of the continuing impact of COVID.</p> <p>CC advised that the business plan is available in paper copy, PDF version, will be displayed as a booklet on B2B page and various sections will be promoted on Facebook.</p>	
5	<p><b><u>Communications and Engagement</u></b></p> <p><b>Great South West Tourism Partnership and the HOSWLEP</b></p> <p>CC referred to her report and highlighted in particular the regional strategic work that is currently being undertaken by the Great South West Tourism Partnership and the HOSWLEP, to which Vince Flower had recently been appointed a director to represent the Tourism Sector. Working jointly with all three SW LEP's a new SW Tourism Recovery Plan has been commissioned supported by fresh Data collection with the latest survey recording over 1000 entries. A cross party MP's Tourism presentation is happening on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. Regionally everyone is pressing the Government for a Roadmap out of Lockdown as their priority ask. RC highlighted the importance also of a continuation of the 5% VAT.</p> <p><b>2021 AIR SHOW</b></p> <p>KM advised the Board that the Council would be making a final decision on February 8<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p><b>Blue Flag Beaches</b></p> <p>CC confirmed that the consumer research regarding the continuing importance of the Blue Flag Beach scheme had been commissioned.</p>	
6	<p><b><u>AOB</u></b></p> <p>CC highlighted the success by many of the ER Businesses in being finalists in the 2020 VisitDevon Tourism Awards. KW advised that she had encouraged more Food and Drink businesses to enter and that it was really good to see a number of new businesses being selected as finalists.</p> <p>RC advised that there needs to be continuation of press releases reiterating the 5% VAT and business rate holidays. CC advised that she would like to start announcing weekly press releases to help business with their awareness of the assistance available.</p> <p>KM advised he has been having discussions with CC about emailing all Councillors to try to encourage them to get behind the ERBID2 for the ballot process.</p>	

<p>APN raised issue of Christmas Lights and had seen some feedback on social media that the ERBID had contributed towards Brixham Christmas lights and not Torquay. He has seen a video online promoting that there would be some new lights being out into place around the Harbour at Torquay. KM advised that there will be some replacement new illuminations on Torquay Seafront along from the Pavilion towards the curly bridge. Also the lights on Paignton Seafront will be replaced with new illuminations.</p> <p>CH raised about Cruise Ships in the Bay and there is a Facebook page for Cruise ships located in the Bay which has around 10,000 members. There has been a post on there by a member of the public who has advised that she has made contact with Holland America who have stated that they have put the interest towards the itinerary planners. KM confirmed that Tor Bay Harbour Authority has actively tried to encourage new companies to visit the Bay by attending various conferences and LS confirmed this and prior to COVID, good conversations had taken place with SAGA Cruises and other Cruise ship companies to try and organise familiarisation visits. CC advised that more active promotion for Cruise Ships is detailed within the Business Plan and LS advised CC she can help with providing contacts for future engagement.</p> <p>KW advised that she has received contact from the owners of Pier Point with regards to the proposed sea defence wall at Paignton and Preston. Businesses are feeling that they have not been engaged with. KM commented that there has been active engagement taken place with Community Partnerships, councillors and businesses since September with regards to the proposed sea wall. KM advised that Torbay Council is engaging with local businesses in Preston and Paignton and those who have not been contacted, will be contacted to discuss. There is now a page on the proposal on the Torbay Council website which details consultation process.</p>	
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