

## Ayrshire & Arran Tourism Leadership Group

### Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 11 February 2015 At Blairquhan Castle, nr Maybole

#### Present

Nat Edwards (Chair)  
Liz Drysdale  
Ros Halley  
Annie Armstrong

Guy Redford  
Sharon Hodgson  
David Mann  
Linda Johnston

Laura Cree (Minutes)  
Charlie Smith (VisitScotland)

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Apologies –</b></p> <p>Moira Birtwistle, Jill Cronin, Audrey Sutton, Carolyn Elder &amp; Bill Costley</p>	
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26 November 2014</b></p> <p>No issues</p>	<p><a href="#"><u>TLG Meeting Minutes - 26 November 2014</u></a></p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>VisitScotland – Marketing Director</b></p> <p>NE introduced Charlie Smith, Marketing Director; VisitScotland. After working in the private sector Charlie joined VisitScotland in 2014. He is currently visiting regions to gather feedback from industry to build on partnerships.</p> <p>CS emphasised the need to be moving forward and embrace new technology along with promoting the right products to the right markets.</p> <p>Discussion ensued and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RH enquired about the role VisitScotland currently has in terms of marketing within Scotland and in particular encouraging Scots to visit other Scottish regions. Ros suggested that it would make more sense for VisitScotland to concentrate on marketing Scotland and to encourage visitors into Scotland.</li> <li>• CS responded saying that they need to be clear of respective roles and that VS do not see any issue spending money in Scotland for people who are already here on holiday. CS clarified that ideally VS would love to advertise in other countries however with the funding levels available it would be impossible to make a dent in emerging markets like China and pull in potential visitors from North America – and therefore need to focus on advertising in certain targeted foreign markets.</li> </ul> <p>Discussion also took place regarding the Marketing Interest Group which was attended by some members of the TLG.</p> <p>Overall feeling from TLG members was it was very much a opportunity lost, as members of the industry and public sector were being advised what was already being done and not engaged in planning the future. AA advised that the next meeting should be for industry to shape the Autumn/Winter 2015 campaign.</p>	

<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Future of Tourism Strategy</b>  <b>Feedback from Councils and TLG on action planning sessions held</b></p> <p>NE reported that the 3 councils had progressed their action planning sessions and that the industry members had also met to carry out an action planning session.</p> <p><b><u>Local Authority Feedback</u></b></p> <p>Feedback from 3 councils was very limited as only SH in attendance. Unfortunately SH had not been able to attend the councils' action planning session.</p> <p>NE stated that industry members were very disappointed that councils do not seem to be taking the action planning forward as quickly as was anticipated..</p> <p>SH advised she will have feedback from 3 councils to forward to the group following the shared services meeting taking place on Friday 20 February.</p> <p>DM stated that he, LJ and GR all attended a meeting with North Ayrshire Council looking at 3 keys areas Arran, Largs &amp; Irvine and how NAC plan to move forward.</p> <p>NE stated there is a danger of the 3 councils falling back into thinking they are working individually.</p> <p>RH stated there is not enough being done to join together the three prongs of the councils, NAC have been very active in trying to move forward their thinking regarding the structure of tourism in the future, however EAC &amp; SAC are not appearing to be making the same sort of progress.</p> <p><b>Action: SH to forward on feedback from 3 councils</b></p> <p><b><u>Industry Feedback</u></b></p> <p>NE advised that industry members of the TLG met on 29 January 2015 to have their own version of the action planning session at the Menzies Hotel, Irvine.</p> <p>Industry members looked at the strategy for Ayrshire &amp; Arran in line with the national 2020 strategy, where the growth markets are likely to come from and where Ayrshire &amp; Arran visitors fall into new market segmentation outlined by VisitScotland.</p> <p>Discussion looked at any developments taking place within the region, the recent purchase of Turnberry by Donald Trump, potential of Prestwick having a Spaceport and new pier at Brodick. Along with looking at the potential of having a space which could be used for travelling exhibitions or expo's, these were all considered to have significance going forward.</p> <p>The new market segmentation by VisitScotland helped the group identify who the target audience may be for Ayrshire &amp; Arran. From the 5 new segments, 2 were seen to be what Ayrshire &amp; Arran attracts: Enthusiastic Sightseers and Food Loving Culturists. It was also apparent that the region is also popular for golfers and day trippers.</p> <p>It was also identified that with the current set up of the TLG they were not at their most efficient and the situation should be rectified as soon as possible by inviting new members to join the group.</p>	<p><b>SH</b></p>
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	<p>Discussion ensued and it was agreed that 4 potential new members, Sheila Gilmore (VisitArran), Danny Anderson (Zisys Events), Ralph Porciani (Trump Turnberry) and Rob Woodward (STV) will be contacted and ask to join.</p> <p><b>Actions: NE and LC to liaise regarding letters being sent out.</b></p> <p>It was also agreed that the momentum should not be lost and another action planning exercise should be scheduled prior to next TLG meeting in May and include both industry and local authority members.</p> <p><b>Actions: LC to liaise with group regarding date for next action planning meeting.</b></p> <p>The action planning session also explored marketing of the region. The overall feeling amongst industry members attending were that marketing of the region should potentially be done by the Ayrshire &amp; Arran tourism team (in house or using a contracted PR company) as the group do not feel VisitScotland offers value for money or great coverage of the region.</p> <p>It was also stated that not all regions within Scotland pay VisitScotland to carry out marketing on their behalf however these regions are still being promoted by VisitScotland. The members felt it was unclear what the benefits of paying VisitScotland are.</p> <p>Discussion ensued and it was suggested by CS from VisitScotland that he would be happy to attend the next meeting and give members the opportunity to see how the Ayrshire &amp; Arran contribution is being spent and how the region is benefitting from the extra VisitScotland activity paid for by the three councils.</p> <p>All members happy for CS to return for meeting in May.</p>	<p><b>NE, LC</b></p> <p><b>LC</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>6 Month Review Paper – Ayrshire Golf Scotland</b></p> <p>GR gave feedback on the 6 month review paper from Ayrshire Golf Scotland.</p> <p>Little slow to get momentum going but a lot of work has been covered i.e. website designed and launched, attending Golf Show and mainly Jamie going out and meeting with the local businesses.</p> <p>Slow uptake from accommodation providers, however the general feeling is that a lot of people would be waiting to see what the website look like.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Budget Review</b></p> <p>No issues, however question was asked regarding the delay of the walking project.</p> <p>RH advised delays due to complications with funding from Forestry Commission Scotland. FCS is now awaiting confirmation of their own investment budgets which may take between 6 to 9 months.</p>	
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Industry Marketing Group</b></p> <p>This section was covered during the discussion with the VisitScotland Marketing Director.</p> <p>AA requested that suggestions of anyone suitable to join the Marketing Interest Group should be forwarded on.</p>	

<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Industry Horizon Scan</b></p> <p><u>National Maritime – Ship Ahoy</u></p> <p>Roughly 2,500 kids participating in a national maritime museum day taking place at the Scottish Maritime Museum in April during the Easter Holidays.</p> <p><u>National Trust developments at Culzean Castle</u></p> <p>A new children’s playpark next to the Swan Pond and a free open day.</p> <p><u>Cross Parliamentary Group</u></p> <p>New group being set up the Scottish Government working in conjunction with Scottish Tourism Alliance and VisitScotland to look at tourism in Scotland.</p> <p><u>Cold Water Tourism Conference</u></p> <p>Being held on Arran on the 18 &amp; 19 March, with delegates from all over Europe.</p> <p><u>Ayrshire &amp; Arran Cultural Heritage Group</u></p> <p>Invitations to the next meeting have been sent out to 27 businesses last week.</p> <p><u>Press Day</u></p> <p>The press day for the Ladies Scottish Open 2015 will be taking place at Dundonald Links on 20 March 2015.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>NE thanked Nan Li for allowing the group to hold the meeting at Blairquhan Castle.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>The next meeting will be Wednesday 13 May 2015 at Auchrannie Resort, Brodick, Isle of Arran.</p> <p>There will also be a familiarisation trip incorporated, more details will follow.</p>	