

**Minutes of a meeting of Visit Jersey Limited (“VJ”)
Held at The Atlantic Hotel, St Brelade, Jersey, on Tuesday 10th December 2019 at 9am**

Present:	Kevin Keen (KK) – Chair
Keith Beecham (KB)	Patrick Burke (PB)
Tim Crowley (TC)	Mike Graham (MG)
Catherine Leech (CL)	Amanda Willmott (AW)
(collectively referred to as the “Board” or the “Directors”)	
In Attendance	
Matthew Thomas (MT), CEO, Ports of Jersey (POJ)	
Rick Horsley (RH), Economic Development Tourism Sport and Culture (EDTSC) (Observer)	
Darren Scott (DS), EDTSC (Observer)	
Aimee Maskell, AM to PM Secretarial Services (Scribe)	
Louise Ashworth (LA) VJ (for items 13-15 only)	
Meryl Laisney (ML) VJ (for items 13-15 only)	

1. **APOLOGIES** – No apologies were noted.

2. **REFLECTIONS ON STAKEHOLDER EVENT HELD THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON** – The Board discussed the stakeholder event held the previous afternoon and KB reported that he has already received several emails providing positive feedback on the same. He noted that he spoke with the Chief Minister at the event who, although was only in attendance for the story piece aspect of the presentation (as he arrived late) is supportive of tourism. However, he acknowledged that the question raised by David Seymour (DSE) required further discussion. **ACTION: KB & KK to meet DSE.**

PB welcomed the fact that VJ are releasing positive figures. However, he noted that whilst the significant growth in AirBnB was contributing to VJ’s overall statistics, the same does not apply for STR data. He reported that bookings are low which is stressful for some hoteliers. He acknowledged that whilst occupancy was satisfactory, rates and cost pressures, particularly staff pressures, remain. He therefore suggested that the Board be respectful of this and bear in mind that some elements of the market may need some extra help and understanding.

The Board welcomed the format of the previous evening’s event and suggested that the number of attendees was appropriate. It was agreed that whilst some presentations were well received, the quality of others required improvement. Consideration was given to whether the Board should provide more input into the presentations prior to them being finalised. However, after some discussion, it was agreed that this should be a role for KB as CEO. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that he would feedback to the staff concerned and work with them by providing support and training to help improve their presenting skills going forward. **Action: KB**

The Board noted the positive media coverage of VJ’s “Jersey cows in Christmas jumpers” campaign which was featured in all of today’s national newspapers.

3. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** – There were no new conflicts of interest to note.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – **IT WAS NOTED** that the minutes dated 23rd October 2019 had been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve them for signature by KK.

The Board reviewed the action log, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda, and **IT WAS NOTED** that all actions were complete, save for the following which were pending:

(a) **Sharing of monthly STR data** – **IT WAS NOTED** that KB and PB had not yet discussed the possibility of sharing monthly STR data. The Board agreed that this was particularly important following DSE’s comments discussed above. However, KB explained that STR only permits VJ to put annual data in the public domain and does not allow monthly data to be

shared. A discussion therefore needs to take place with STR about whether they would be prepared to be more flexible in this regard and allow VJ to share more. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** to carry the action forward. **Action: KB/PB**

(b) **Tracked Market Share Data from a Passenger Perspective** – MT reported that he was due to meet with KB on Friday 13th December 2019. He therefore proposed discussing with him how Ports of Jersey (POJ) tracks market share data from a passenger perspective with a view to agreeing how sharing can happen going forward. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that MT and KB would also discuss how POJ and VJ can work more closely together. **Action: MT/KB**

TC expressed concern that at a meeting held with Jersey suppliers the previous day to discuss forming a German Interests Group that there were no attendees from POJ. MT acknowledged that the existing structure around route development in Jersey was “not the norm” compared to other jurisdictions. That said, he reported that positive developments are being made and Jersey ranks highly with some of the German airlines in terms of market share. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would include “Continental Opportunities” as an agenda item at the next meeting and himself and MT would provide an update/summary on the same. **Action: MT/KB**

(c) **NED Recruitment** – KK reported that he has followed up with Bob Hassell with a view to him preparing a proposal around the NED recruitment process (to replace MG when he retires from the Board next year). The Board noted that a number of individuals have already expressed an interest in this role. **Action: KK**

(d) **Board Evaluation** – **IT WAS NOTED** that a Board evaluation questionnaire has been circulated for submission by the Directors. AW reminded the Directors that the deadline for submission was 1st February 2020 and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that she would present on the results of the same at the next Board meeting scheduled for 26th February 2020. **Action: AW**

(e) **KK Chamber Presentation** – KK advised that the speech he made to Chamber on 13th November 2019 received significant media attention, particularly in relation to migration. He suggested that VJ should formally write to the Government of Jersey (GOJ) in response to the Migration Policy Development Board’s recent consultation. However, he sought the Board’s views in this regard and queried when the closing date for the consultation was. RH advised that the GOJ was likely to ask the arms’ length organisations (ALOs) for their feedback on the consultation within the first six months of 2020 and DS noted that although the Migration Policy Development Board has published an interim report, they are still gathering information from businesses and welcoming written submissions.

TC stressed that for VJ to achieve its targets, migration will need to be addressed. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KK would draft a response to the Migration Policy Development Board on behalf of VJ for the Board’s review and comment. However, it was agreed that whilst this should highlight the considerable stress that the tourism industry is under, it should not conflict with the work which was being undertaken by the Jersey Hospitality Association (JHA). **Action: KK**

CL proposed including quotes from Board members who are stakeholders in the industry and who are immediately impacted by the current issues. She suggested that VJ’s submission should be more observational/strategic rather than mentioning specific names and this was echoed by KB who proposed that VJ should be factual in its response rather than emotional. With this in mind, he proposed asking David Edwards to look at best practices in other jurisdictions to include in the response by way of comparison. **Action: KB**

5. **CEO RECRUITMENT** – CL provided an update on the current CEO recruitment process. She reported that 68 applications had been received as at the closing date, 30 of which have been discounted. The Board noted that the recruitment agency will now undertake the process of creating a “long-list” which will be sent to the interview panel (currently consisting of herself, KK, DS and Jennifer Carnegie (JC) from the Appointments Commission) by Monday with a view to

them agreeing a short-list for interview.

The Board welcomed KB having an input into the short-listing and interview process and it was agreed that psychometric testing and a media interview should be included as part of the interview process. **IT WAS RESOLVED** to contact BBC Radio Jersey regarding the latter, noting that they assisted with the previous CEO recruitment process. **Action: CL/KK**

6. **NED RECRUITMENT** – As noted in item 4(c) above, it was proposed to progress the NED recruitment process with Bob Hassell in the new year.

7. **BOARD EVALUATION** – As noted in item 4(d) above, the Directors agreed to submit their Board Evaluation questionnaires to AW by 1st February 2020 and AW would present a summary of the results at the Board meeting scheduled for 26th February 2020. In addition, the Directors would provide AW with an update of the activities they have undertaken over the last quarter. **Action: Directors**

8. **CEO REPORT AND TRENDS REPORT** – The Board reviewed KB's CEO Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and the following salient points were discussed:

(a) **Office of National Statistics** – **IT WAS NOTED** that the Office of National Statistics was undertaking a review of its figures back to 2009 and, as a result, are suspending the release of any further data until the end of May 2020.

(b) **Product Action Group (PAG)** – The Board noted that a positive PAG meeting took place on 20th November 2019 when the CEO of Visit Cornwall presented on the issue of sustainability. KB advised that this was well received by the audience and noted that the industry is committed to finding ways of taking the sustainability agenda forward. This was echoed by TC who also described a positive meeting. However, whilst he acknowledged that the outcome of the meeting was the recognition of the importance of sustainability from the GOJ and industry, it was not possible to reach agreement on who should lead it going forward and he suggested that it should be driven by Team Jersey rather than VJ.

TC noted that the average holiday stay in Cornwall was 6.6 nights and that this is has not changed in ten years. However, it was agreed that this was not relevant for comparison purposes with Jersey because there was much more self-catering in Cornwall and many people have second homes in Cornwall. Therefore, they market themselves as such rather than as a short break destination like Jersey.

(c) **Jack Whitehall "Travels with my Father"** - The Board noted the content page "five epic detours in the Island break" which was developed following the release of Jack Whitehall's recent series "Travels with my Father" which featured Jersey.

(d) **Cyber Essentials** – **IT WAS NOTED** that with effect from 1st January 2020 any companies with GOJ contracts over the value of £25k must be cyber essential accredited. KB advised that Ollie Archbold had obtained the same for VJ.

(e) **Staff** – **IT WAS NOTED** that Ben Jordan has resigned to go travelling and a recruitment process to appoint his replacement is due to start shortly; Georgina Matthews has joined VJ as Marketing Manager; and ML is due to go on maternity leave next week. Referring to ML's maternity leave, **IT WAS NOTED** that a handover has taken place with LA who will act as interim Head of Product whilst she is away. This will mainly involve implementation work as ML has already planned a work programme for the forthcoming six months, save for the plans in relation to Liberation 75 which are still awaited from the GOJ. In answer to a question from PB, KB confirmed that the issue of sustainability will be the responsibility of the product team, although the presentation of it will be undertaken by the marketing team.

(f) **Technology** – KK referred to the issues experienced by Income Tax with their new computer system and stressed the importance of ensuring similar issues did not occur with VJ's new website, particularly as the timetable for implementation was scheduled when LA was due

to be undertaking two roles. He suggested that care must be taken regarding the timing of the implementation of the new website and welcomed an update on the same. He also queried whether, given its importance, the project should be placed on the Risk Register.

KB explained that the current website will not be supported after 2021. However, whilst it will still be possible to use it after this time, the site will not be technically supported and updates will not be possible, it is therefore preferable to install a replacement beforehand and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to undertake a tender process to establish who VJ will partner with on this project.

Action: KB

MG queried who was responsible for managing the website project, noting the importance of them having the necessary technological expertise and **IT WAS NOTED** that the project will be led by LA. The Board acknowledged the size of the project and the importance of ensuring the website does not fail during the industry's busy season was noted. KB reminded the Board that the executive team delivered jersey.com- a completely new website when Visit Jersey was set up and these skills and learning would be called upon for the new site. They also welcomed sight of the project plan and timetable, particularly as there may be challenges as a result of the forthcoming reduction in resources.

(g) **GOJ Government Plan – IT WAS NOTED** that the Government Plan which was recently approved by the States included a budget of £4.9m for VJ. However, DS advised that this remained subject to approval by Lyndon Farnham (LF) pending his approval of the inter-department budget on either Friday 13th or Monday 16th December 2019. DS added that an additional £250k of funding would also be forthcoming for "Promoting Jersey" by way of a top up grant. However, he advised that whilst this additional funding will be held by VJ, there will be conditions attached to it, including working with POJ on route development

KB advised that the route marketing funding of £250k was very welcome particularly if the funding profile in the original business is confirmed (i.e. £250k in 2020 and £850,000 in 2021, 2022 and 2023) as this will enable VJ to agree a four year plan with the airlines. This was echoed by MT who noted that VJ and POJ must be able to offer three-year cycles for the airlines to consider working with them. However, DS stressed that the GOJ was currently working on a "one year, plus three" cycle. He explained that whilst "year one" was approved, everything else was indicative at this stage. Therefore, the GOJ will probably ask that a similar process is repeated for 2021. He acknowledged that route development requires a long-term plan but suggested that VJ/POJ should act on the principal that the funding is approved for the long-term, noting that other ALOs are experiencing similar issues. However, RH stressed that whilst funding for the "plus three years" is in the Government Plan, VJ cannot not assume it is guaranteed.

KK expressed concern that organisations such as VJ require commitment from the GOJ in order to make its own financial commitments and CL stressed that as VJ will be required to agree a three-year plan with the airlines from 2020 onwards consideration may need to be given to VJ using funding from its 2021 core budget. However, whilst this was accepted by KK, he noted that, technically, VJ's core budget was also only agreed on a year to year basis.

DS explained that the process for the GOJ providing core funding to the ALOs was the same. However, some ALOs are placing more reliance on the fact that they have submitted a four-year plan to the GOJ and, because the Government Plan includes a three-year plan, they are taking a more confident approach. TC noted that the GOJ are obliged to cover any costs if VJ is wound-up. He therefore suggested that there was no risk in VJ signing up to a three-year plan with the airlines.

DS stressed that whilst VJ should not enter into any agreements with the airlines without the GOJ knowing, he accepted that it should be more confident. However, MT noted that any contract entered into by VJ with the airlines would default to the GOJ in the event of a VJ winding-up and will be based on ROI.

9. **RISK REGISTER** – The Board reviewed the Risk Register, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would update the Risk Register to reflect the discussions in item 8(g) above regarding the website together with any appropriate mitigation around the same. **Action: KB**

MT reported that forecasts are showing growth in air passenger numbers every ten years. However, he accepted airlines need to consider how quickly they will have sustainable fuel for their aircrafts. He noted that Easy Jet are considering being carbon neutral by 2030 and governments worldwide are considering the economic impact of connectivity and the sustainability of it. The Board noted that whilst the POJ do not have any concerns about being carbon neutral by 2030, getting airlines to do the same will be difficult.

KK suggested that if governments make it less attractive for people to travel, the Board may need to consider how this could present a risk to VJ. However, MT highlighted that carbon emissions are going down at airports because planes are newer, larger and fuller. TC added that research shows that people will continue to travel but not for as long which may benefit a destination such as Jersey. Nevertheless, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would add “climate change” to the Risk Register and liaise with MT for input on appropriate mitigation wording if required. **Action: KB/MT**

10. **2020 FORWARD MEETINGS CALENDAR** - The Board reviewed the 2020 Forward Board Meetings Calendar, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda and KB confirmed that meeting invites had been sent for each meeting. **IT WAS NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled for 26th February 2020 and the Board briefly discussed the format for the previous evening’s dinner. It was agreed that this should take the format of an in-house dinner with a view to possibly introducing the new CEO.

11. **EXIT SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2019** – The Board reviewed the summary of the September 2019 exit survey results, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS NOTED** that the same would be published the following day.

12. **AOB – German Agency** - A discussion took place regarding the meeting held with the newly appointed German agency the previous day. PB described this as exciting and welcomed the sense of opportunity around the meeting. However, concern was expressed that the agency appeared to be unclear as to whether they were contracted to only work in Germany or in all “German speaking markets” (i.e. Germany, Austria and Switzerland) despite “German speaking markets” being defined in their contract and referred to in the slides of their presentation. KB explained that contract with TMR (German agency) clearly names Germany, Austria and Switzerland as target countries.

Exit Interviews – AW queried whether exit interviews are conducted when VJ staff leave and KB confirmed that these are undertaken on every occasion.

13. **Marketing and Product Update** – The Board welcomed ML and LA to the meeting at 11.15am and they provided an update from the marketing and product teams.

14. **Sustainability – What’s Visit Jersey’s Role?** - The Board noted ML’s paper dated 4th December 2019 entitled “Product: Sustainability – What’s Visit Jersey’s Role?” a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and a discussion took place regarding the same.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – **IT WAS NOTED** that the next Board meeting was scheduled for 9.30am on 26th February 2020 and at Visit Jersey.


Chair

26th February 20