

**Minutes of a meeting of Visit Jersey Limited (“VJ”)
Held via Zoom Video Conference on Tuesday 21st April 2020 at 9.30am**

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	
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 item 7 onwards)	
Sarah Barton (SB) VJ (for item 7 onwards)	
Oliver Archbold (AB) VJ (for item 7 onwards)	

1. **APOLOGIES** – No apologies were noted.
2. **CONFLICTS** – KK noted that he was a Director of Rockayne Jersey Limited t/a Channel Island Lines which had unfortunately gone into liquidation with Condor as one of its largest creditors.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – IT WAS NOTED** that the minutes dated 26th February 2020 had been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve them for signature by KK, subject to minor amendment.

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the agenda, and **IT WAS NOTED** that all actions were complete, save for revisions to the Tourism Law which had been superseded by the Coronavirus (CV-19) pandemic and the Website Project, which KB proposed asking LA to provide an update on when she joins the meeting at item 7 below.

KK sought clarification regarding the sharing of weekly STR data and KB reported that whilst the meeting between himself, PB, Simon Miller and David Seymour proposed at the previous Board meeting never took place due to CV-19, weekly STR data is now available and being shared amongst those who contribute to it. However, PB noted that most hoteliers review the STR data on a monthly, rather than weekly basis and therefore suggested that it would be more useful for them to receive it monthly.

4. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** – TC reported that the Financial Statements for the period ended 31st December 2019 had been circulated the previous day and whilst some of the text was still being worked on, the figures would remain the same. He highlighted that based on recommendations from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) the Financial Statements provide additional information compared to previous years (and to other arms’ length organisations (ALOs)) including details of Directors’ remuneration. He therefore stressed the importance of the Board carefully reviewing the same.

IT WAS NOTED that a meeting was held last week with the auditors, TC, PB and KK to review the Financial Statements and TC confirmed that no material concerns were raised. He acknowledged that due to CV-19 it was necessary to hold meetings remotely. Therefore, to avoid a further meeting of the full Board, and given no amendments to the figures were required, he proposed circulating a final copy of the Financial Statements to the Board upon receipt and delegating responsibility for sign off to the Audit Committee and this was welcomed by the Board. TC noted that the final version of the Financial Statements was expected by Friday 24th April 2020 and he agreed to give the Board three to four days to provide any feedback prior to the Audit Committee signing off the same. **Action: TC**

TC proposed recommending the reappointment₁ of the Auditors for a further year, noting that they

did not intend to increase their fees. This proposal was supported by the Board and **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that he would make this recommendation formally at the AGM. **Action: TC**

KK's Chairman's Report was discussed and KK invited the Board's input on the same, particularly the tone. CL welcomed the tone of KK's Report. However, she proposed that KB's CEO Report be amended to refer to the appointment of a new German agency. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would update the same. **IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board would email KK and KB with any further suggested amendments copying in TC and PB by close of business on Thursday 23rd April 2020 prior to the issue of the final version of the Financial Statements for sign off. **Action: ALL**

The scheduling of the AGM was discussed, and KK proposed that, following approval of the Financial Statements, these should be sent to the Government of Jersey (GOJ) and Trustees as usual. However, he suggested that it would be too difficult to hold the AGM via video conference and therefore proposed delaying from from 3rd June 2020 until, say, July or August when KB is still in post and the new CEO, Amanda Burns has also joined, as this will provide the Board and Trustees with an opportunity to say goodbye to KB and welcome Amanda. This proposal was welcomed by the Board and consideration was given to timing the AGM around the Away Day, scheduled for 29th July 2020, potentially the evening before, prior to a dinner.

5. REPORT FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE CHAIR – IT WAS NOTED that the update from the Audit Committee was included in item 4 above.

6. REPORT FROM REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (REMCOM) CHAIR – MG provided an update on the recent Remcom meeting. **IT WAS NOTED** that Remcom agreed it was inappropriate to discuss staff pay rises/bonuses at a time when so many people in the industry are losing their jobs and it was therefore agreed to revisit this later in the year, albeit that no guarantees were being made in this regard. He acknowledged that whilst this was very difficult for VJ staff (as they have all done a very good job), Remcom felt VJ would face criticism if it awarded any pay rises or bonuses at this time and KB has therefore relayed this difficult message to the staff accordingly.

KB advised that although the staff were understandably disappointed, they recognise the situation the industry is in. He added that some of them have friends who work in the industry who may not keep their jobs. Furthermore, Remco's decision to revisit the position later in the year was well received and they are aware that KB has submitted paperwork on their performance at this stage which will still be taken into consideration in the future even if he has left VJ by this time. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** to schedule a meeting between Remco and KB prior to his departure to discuss his recommendations. **Action: MG/KB**

AW stressed that Remco's decision was made purely due to the current situation. However, she highlighted that it was not an easy decision to make and was not a reflection on staff performance. That said, although this was acknowledged by the staff, KB described the situation as a "real blow" to the Island and the organisation following the success of 2019. He noted that, save for a 30pence gap REVPAR gap, VJ met or exceeded all of its 2019 KPIs.

7. REVISED 2020 BUSINESS PLAN – SB, LA and OA joined the meeting at 10.05am and CL provided the Board with details of what trends have been seen recently on the 101 Holidays site. She reported an increased interest since Easter, particularly for honeymoons in 2021 and winter sun destinations in 2020/21 and advised that given the expectation that travel is likely to be UK centric in 2020, 101 holidays has taken the decision to launch 101 UK Holidays which will include Jersey.

MT also provided a summary on the situation from the Ports of Jersey's (POJ) perspective. He described significant uncertainty, particularly within the aviation sector and suggested that CV-19 was becoming more of an economic response than a health response due to the amount of money businesses are losing.

MT reported that Condor have mentioned to the possibility of operating Northbound routes from June (although he is unsure whether this will actually happen) and the earliest airlines are talking about flying is 17th June. However, he suggested that this was likely to only be by way of bilateral agreements between countries rather than full free flying. The Board noted that Jersey was still being treated as part of the UK. Therefore, if domestic flying starts up first, which is what is anticipated, Jersey will potentially benefit from this.

MT advised that focus is being placed on the recovery from CV-19 and the restructure required. He reported that consultants have been engaged to assist POJ in this regard and noted that there was likely to be a "slow and steady" ramp up in demand with the situation only getting back to normal towards the end of 2021. However, when travel does recommence, capacity will be limited. MT therefore suggested that Jersey will need to do things differently in order to compete and proposed that a close working relationship will be required between the Airport and VJ to achieve this.

The Board reviewed the revised 2020 Business Plan, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and KB summarised the same. He accepted that the tourism and leisure industry was experiencing a devastating time and, in order to put the situation into context, he reported that earnings from visitors in Q1 and Q2 2019 was £115m but this will not be received this year. In addition, revenue will also be lost from the busier summer months.

IT WAS NOTED that VJ is supporting the affected tourism / leisure businesses in the Island as best it can, many of which are family run and are having to make the difficult, life-changing decision whether to continue or not. Furthermore, VJ is also considering how it can play a role in restoring tourism and KB noted that in the absence of CV-19, focus would be placed on the development of "green" tourism and sustainability and he stressed the importance of this being a priority in the future.

KB explained that the revised Business Plan puts in place mitigation and elements of activity around a framework consisting of five phases in relation to the CV-19 situation. However, he stressed that it was a "bridging plan" for 2020: not a long term plan for the visitor economy, noting that the latter requires more detailed discussion with VJ's partners who, understandably, are unable to dedicate their time to this at the current time.

KB explained that full recovery will be based on (1) what products will be available for visitors to enjoy when travel recommences; (2) when connectivity will be available again (and, as noted by MT, sea connectivity may be in place sooner than air connectivity); and (3) ensure VJ is undertaking appropriate marketing when people do start thinking of travelling again, and he advised that the revised Business Plan focusses on achieving this together with POJ, GOJ, carriers and industry partners.

LA explained the process of how the revised Business Plan was developed. However, due to ongoing uncertainties around CV-19, she advised that it was difficult to map out any definitive proposals, especially around timings. She also welcomed any feedback on the work being undertaken by the consultants engaged by the POJ, referred to by MT above, noting that this will help further inform the VJ Business Plan. MT reported that this would be available in two to three weeks and he therefore agreed that to share it with VJ at this time. **Action: MT**

The Board noted the five phases outlined in the revised Business Plan as follows: emergence of problem; lockdown; re-engagement; domestic and EU travel opens; and international travel opens, and LA summarised the messaging, tone, target audiences, channels and activity proposed to deal with each of them.

LA explained that the Island was currently in phase two ("Lockdown") and reported that together with the support of the chef from the Atlantic Hotel (who provided recipes), VJ had gone ahead with previously prepared marketing content around the Jersey Royal season.

Referring to phase three ("Re-engagement"), LA advised that local restrictions are expected to be



lifted sooner than domestic or EU restrictions allow travel to Jersey. Therefore, VJ is looking at ways to use locals as ambassadors to inspire visitors to come in the future.

LA acknowledged that when EU travel does open, Jersey's core summer audience could possibly be one of the last to bounce back given their age demographic and their possible nervousness around travelling. She reported that VJ is using desktop research to identify trends and advised that it is expected that visiting friends and relatives (VFR) will be the first market to start travelling again, together with those in their 20s and 30s. However, she suggested that this is likely to change as the situation progresses and research will therefore continue to be used. She added that people are also likely to change their spending patterns as a result of the CV-19 situation and were unlikely to revert to the same spending patterns the longer the situation goes on. She therefore stressed the importance of VJ talking to the right consumers to ensure it is able to convert the right people to visit at the right time.

LA advised that Ruth Perchard had undertaken a huge amount of research which was proving very helpful and acknowledged that, as a result, the revised Business Plan contained significant detail. She therefore welcomed any questions on the same from the Board.

KB drew the Board's attention to the revised budget on page 6 of the Business Plan and summarised the same. **IT WAS NOTED** that following a £522k "handback" to the GOJ plus the addition of £300k of reserves, VJ will have a budget of £4.678m in 2020. The Board reviewed the targeted ways in which it is proposed to spend the revised budget and noted that the marketing budget has been protected as much as possible (as significant marketing will be required following the CV-19 crisis).

KB reported that VJ's spending in Q1 totalled £1.2m. He advised that this was broadly in line with expected spending, noting that money was spent on marketing activity in Q1 prior to the outbreak of CV-19. **IT WAS NOTED** that the remaining budget was approximately £3.5m and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would share a breakdown of the Q1 spending with the Board for their information. **Action: KB**

KB stressed the importance of maintaining discussions with the GOJ to ensure any funding from the GOJ which supports the re-building of the economy is considered as an investment not a cost to the tax-payer.

DS provided an update from a GOJ perspective. He reported that whilst the "handback" of £522k by VJ was viewed positively by the GOJ and that this was seen as a generous and realistic approach, it may not necessarily be the end of the matter. He stressed that although there have been no discussions within the GOJ about asking the ALOs for more money, he would not rule it out given the amount of money the GOJ is currently spending. DS welcomed VJ's revised Business Plan and, when finalised, he proposed that VJ seek sign off of the same from Lyndon Farnham and his accounting officer for 2020.

DS reported that a fundamental restructure of the public service (which will affect the GOJ and the ALOs) is anticipated as part of the recovery from CV-19 and advised that conversations in this regard are already taking place. He noted that the GOJ's revised budget has not been signed off using a set procedure and therefore suggested that it was appropriate to ask ALOs about what money can be pooled for use by the GOJ.

In answer to a question from KK, DS reassured the Board that the GOJ are looking to save money in the future as well as relaunching the economy (including the visitor economy). He suggested that the Board should take comfort from the fact that LF is supportive of the economy and visitor economy and he proposed that the Island's tourism effort will be an important factor in MT's discussions with the airlines when re-building the economy.

CL suggested that safety over price will be an important message, particularly in 2020, and queried whether there have been any discussions in the Island around setting safety standards post-CV-19 by which everyone in the accommodation sector must abide. She noted that the ability for

visitors to be able to travel by sea will also be important. LA reported that the JHA sent out guidance to hotels earlier today regarding safety standards and referred to Singapore as a jurisdiction which have implemented something similar. She agreed that this was something that accommodation providers should be doing to give consumers the necessary reassurance and proposed highlighting it for discussion at the next stakeholder meeting. However, she expressed the view that most accommodation providers in Jersey already have very high standards. Therefore, the only action required should be to put the guidelines together into a "charter" or "give them a label".

DS reported that David Seymour has already written to LF suggesting that Jersey is created as a "safe haven". He therefore proposed seeking his input on the development / implementation of the guidelines. **Action: LA**

LA reported that research shows that post-CV-19 holidays are likely to be more popular if they offer open space, beaches etc. rather than cities or built up spaces. She therefore agreed to build this into VJ's messaging accordingly. **Action: LA**

From an accommodation provider perspective, MG agreed that the VFR market would be the first to return and that this should be taken advantage of. However, he expressed concern that, at this stage, it is difficult to judge whether it will be possible to salvage any business from this year and noted that this could be the difference between some businesses surviving or not. He accepted that whilst it was difficult to predict the future, as much information as possible was required to enable accommodation providers to "ramp up" their businesses quickly. LA stressed that whilst it was not possible to provide any definitive answers at this stage, she reassured the Board that as soon as VJ are able to do so, they will do their utmost to attract visitors to the Island using whatever connectivity is available.

KB reported that he was in regular contact with the CEO at Visit Guernsey (VG). He advised that they have exchanged insight and agreed that staycations (across both Islands) are an area on which both of the Islands could build upon. They therefore agreed that VG and VJ, together with Condor, should look at inter-Island travel as part of the Islands' early recovery from CV-19 and work together on this.

PB advised that his son was currently working in a restaurant on Hong Kong which remains open and operational and referred to the restaurant's 20 page operating manual which he agreed to share with the Board for their information. **Action: PB**

PB acknowledged that whilst the CV-19 pandemic was global and not just in Jersey, Jersey's tourism industry loses money in the winter and the pandemic has occurred at a time when tourism providers start to open and make money. He accepted that the airlines were experiencing dire problems but stressed that there was a also a local community of hoteliers who were also experiencing a very difficult time and expressed concern that if lockdown continues for too long, they will be due to close for winter again. He explained that if this occurs, some accommodation providers will effectively be closed for the equivalent of three winters in succession. He therefore proposed that more than a marketing plan was required and suggested approaching this in three stages: (1) immediate (applying for co-funding from GOJ); (2) medium term (establishing what can be salvaged from this year's season); and (3) long-term (giving radical thought to how the tourism industry (environment and economy) can be put back "on track").

KK expressed concern that if some businesses are unable to salvage anything from the 2020 season they may not survive, thereby leaving fewer places for visitors to stay when connectivity is recommenced. This was echoed by PB who noted that the Island only really has five good months, one of which (May) has already been lost and it appears that June will also be lost. He advised that although it would be positive if restaurants were able to re-open, unless the airport/harbours open, flights recommence and visitors return to the Island, Jersey's tourism industry may not survive this summer. He added that that whilst promotions could be run for locals, these would be at a low cost.

PB accepted the importance of considering the health problems associated with CV-19. However, he suggested that the GOJ also start prioritising the economy to prevent the many social problems that are likely to occur from businesses having to borrow extensively just to keep their staff.

AW noted that although VJ has a budget of £3.5m remaining for 2020, she anticipated that the GOJ will ask for some of this back. She added that there was little point in VJ developing plans if the Island's businesses are unable to respond to them. She also suggested that plans should not be developed based on rumour and, by way of example, noted that there has been talk of relaxing travel restrictions for the younger demographic initially in the UK. However, she suggested that holiday destinations such as the South West of England are unlikely to welcome this when there is a high population of older residents who will still be subject to the restrictions.

TC referred to the recent stakeholders meeting which he described this as "very difficult" and "upsetting". He reported that despite having done nothing wrong, some businesses have had to let staff, who have worked for them for a number of years, go. TC reiterated that the VFR market will be the first to travel and that promotions should be done around this. However, as many businesses are already struggling financially, they may not want to do this too cheaply.

TC noted that the fixed costs of tourism/leisure businesses were significant. Therefore, consideration will need to be given to whether GOJ co-funding will stop if opening is relaxed. He reiterated that businesses will only benefit once visitors start travelling to the Island again and expressed concern that "drip feeding" the re-opening of businesses may be more damaging, noting that rather than re-open in September, lose GOJ funding and then have to close again for the winter season, it may be preferable for businesses to remain closed.

SB provided an update from a trade perspective. She reported that she was following the phased approach outlined in the revised Business Plan and offering support to partners. She advised that whilst it was too early to take too much action, it was important to audit the landscape, albeit it was changing on a daily basis. She was therefore in regular contact with Partners to understand how they are managing the situation.

The Board noted that SB was also liaising with the POJ, Condor and the airlines and SB reported that JET2 are looking to re-start flying to some destinations from 18th June. She added that she has provided BA with reassurance that VJ will support them in promoting the Jersey route when they start flying again.

SB reported that she was also in contact with Expedia who have advised that their searches were down by 80% and 60% respectively in March and April. She added that they are taking a flexible approach with regard to existing bookings and encouraging people to re-book rather than cancel. She advised that Premier Holidays are also encouraging consumers to re-book and confirmed that whilst most have been happy to this, it is becoming harder to convince them not to cancel. However, she noted that they are still receiving enquiries for autumn and winter 2020 and for 2021.

SB advised that the German agency is providing her with a weekly CV-19 update and **IT WAS NOTED** that as Germany has seen a decline in cases recently, they have relaxed some of their restrictions. She reminded the Board that the German charter flights were due to start in May and June and reported that Partners were looking at possibly having a late summer/early autumn charter instead.

SB advised that VJ has received conflicting research from the tour operator market for 2021 and by way of example, she noted the following statistics: (1) every third person has cancelled or postponed their holiday; and (2) 28% of people want to stick to their holiday plans.

KK thanked the Board for their input and comments and noted the following:

- VFR were likely to be an early market;
- There was a risk to Jersey's traditional, older visitors as they may be reluctant to travel;

- Sea/ferry travel is perceived as safe;
- Safety and open space/beaches are possible advantages for Jersey;
- There are possible opportunities with Guernsey; and
- Stakeholders will be in a very difficult position if it is not possible to salvage any of the 2020 season.

IT WAS RESOLVED that KB would update the revised Business Plan to include the Board's above comments and re-circulate a copy of the same the following day. **IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board would provide any further input via email and thereafter a final copy of the revised Business Plan would be sent to LF. **Action: All**

KB advised that it was proposed to work with a specific stakeholders' "taskforce" group on implementing the Business Plan and noted that a further stakeholder meeting was scheduled for next week at which time the revised Business Plan would be announced. **Action: KB**

8. AWAY DAY – The Board noted KB's paper outlining his proposals for the Away Day scheduled for 29th July 2020, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. The Board welcomed both KB's and Amanda Burn's attendance at the Away Day and the proposal to discuss "Jersey post-CV-19 – what is the "new normal"?" together with the debating a new 2021 plan.

CL queried whether the Away Day could be extended to include industry partners/stakeholders and TC proposed holding the Away Day over two days: allowing one day for Board discussions and another for stakeholder discussions. However, whilst the value of stakeholder input was welcomed by KB, he stressed the importance of ensuring the format was right. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that he would liaise with KK regarding the appropriate plan and format to include input from stakeholders. **Action: KB/KK**

MT suggested that the Board are mindful that they may not have as much certainty as they would like by 29th July and may therefore need to consider a series of planning meetings.

9. 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 points were highlighted:

(a) **Website** – LA reminded the Board that the website upgrade needs to take place by the end of the year as it will no longer be supported at this time, although it will still be available but not updatable. She noted that whilst the project had been put on hold due to the CV-19 situation, phase two was due to be re-started the following day with a view to a partner being appointed by the end of May and the work commencing in June. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that she would provide an update on revised delivery times and costings in due course. **Action: LA**

(b) **GOJ Funding** – KB confirmed that since the time of writing his report, the second tranche of VJ's grant from the GOJ had been received.

10. RISK REGISTERS – STANDARD RISK REGISTER AND CV-19 RISK ACTION PLAN – The Board reviewed the Risk Register, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and reviewed by the Audit Committee and KB reported that no amendments had been made to the same since the last meeting.

The Board reviewed the CV-19 Risk Register, a copy of which had also been circulated with the agenda and reviewed by the Audit Committee and KB welcomed the Board's input on the same. KK reiterated PB and MG's earlier concerns regarding the potential permanent loss of capacity from businesses having to close even if airlines do re-start flying and KB agreed that it was wrong to assume that, at some stage, the industry will return to how it was. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that he would reflect this into the CV-19 risk register accordingly. **Action: KB**

11. 2020 PASSENGER AND EXIT SURVEY RESULTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2020 – The Board noted the Statistics Jersey (SJ) summary of the 2020 passenger and exit survey

results for January and February 2020 together with VJ's summary of the same, copies of which were circulated with the agenda. However, whilst KK welcomed the format of the SJ report, he did not propose discussing it in detail given the current situation.

KB advised that going forward, following any input from the Board, the SJ report would be shared publicly. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that they would provide KB with any comments.

Action: Board

12. 2020 FORWARD MEETINGS CALENDAR - The Board reviewed the 2020 Forward Board Meetings Calendar, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda. **IT WAS NOTED** that the next meeting was scheduled for 3rd June 2020. However, CL proposed arranging a one hour ad hoc meeting in May to further discuss the impact of CV-19. This was welcomed by the Board and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would revert to the Board with suggested dates. **Action: KB**

13. AOB – KK thanked the Board and VJ for their hard work during this challenging time.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING – As discussed in item 12 above, it was agreed that KB would schedule a one hour ad hoc meeting in May.

 31 June 2020

Chair