

**Minutes of a meeting of Visit Jersey Limited (“VJ”)
Held at Visit Jersey, Commercial Street, St Helier, Jersey on Wednesday 26th February
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)	
Aimee Maskell, AM to PM Secretarial Services (Scribe)	
Louise Ashworth (LA) VJ (for items 4 and 8 to 13 only)	
Sarah Barton (SB) VJ (for items 4 and 8 to 13 only)	
Ruth Perchard (RP) VJ (for items 8 and 9 only)	

1. **APOLOGIES** – No apologies were noted.
2. **CONFLICTS** – There were no new conflicts of interest to note. However, KK noted that he was currently part of a discussion group regarding the establishment of a local body to distribute lottery grants and, going forward, may become a member of the newly established body. He advised that whilst this would be a voluntary position it may present conflict.

The Board were reminded to complete and return their conflict of interest forms to TC as soon as possible.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – IT WAS NOTED** that the minutes dated 10th December 2019 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 the following which were pending:

- (a) **Sharing of monthly STR data – IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB and PB would arrange to meet (together with Ruth Perchard (RP)) to discuss the possibility of sharing monthly STR data within the next two weeks. It was also agreed to invite Simon Miller from Hand Picked Hotels and David Seymour from the Seymour Group to join the discussions. **Action: KB/PB**
- (b) **NED Recruitment Process** – KK reported that Bob Hassell (BH) was willing to assist the Board with the NED recruitment process in his personal capacity on a voluntary basis and it was agreed to discuss this in more detail at item 16 below.
- (c) **VJ Response to Migration Policy Development Board’s Consultation** – The Board noted KK’s draft response to the Migration Policy Development Board’s Consultation, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and it was agreed to discuss this in further detail at item 11 below.
- (d) **Website Project – IT WAS NOTED** that an update regarding the tender process for the website project had been included on the agenda and it was therefore agreed to discuss the same at item 10 below.

4. **CORONAVIRUS** – SB and LA joined the meeting at 9.45am and, together with the Board, they discussed the potential impacts of Coronavirus on VJ, particularly in light of SB, LA and TC’s forthcoming attendance at the ITB conference in Berlin next Tuesday 3rd March 2020.

KB proposed that the Board consider the following points:

- 1) What advice should VJ give to the trade?
- 2) How should VJ deal with ITB?

- 3) How should VJ deal with its own members of staff (particularly those currently in affected areas)?
- 4) Should VJ give advice to visitors?
- 5) What input should VJ give to the GOJ?
- 6) Should VJ amend its marketing plan due to Coronavirus?

and after a lengthy discussion the following actions were agreed:

- LA to contact the VJ member of staff currently on holiday in Venice to determine where else in Italy she has visited and subject to her response, suggest that she works from home for two weeks following her return. **Action: LA**
- VJ to follow any formal advice released in respect of travel to Germany. However, in the absence of the same, it would proceed with BAU in respect of travel to Germany / representation at ITB, albeit if any staff members do not wish to travel, VJ would be understanding of this. It was further agreed to revisit the position on Monday 2nd March 2020 to agree a final decision. **Action: ALL**
- KB to signpost where information is available in a VJ newsletter; encourage trade partners look at the GOJ updates. KB would also keep a watching brief on the situation and, if the position changes, revert as a matter of urgency to the Board. **Action: KB**
- LA to work with KB, SB, the VJ Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Board, as required, to prepare a risk matrix / undertake scenario planning with a view to getting ahead of what might happen in the event of a case of Coronavirus being confirmed in Jersey and how VJ would deal with it. **Action: KB/SB/LA**
- KB to discuss what VJ and the JHA can do collectively at their meeting scheduled for Friday 28th February 2020 to support hotels or other businesses that may find themselves in distress as a result of the situation. **Action: KB**
- KB to prepare a written response to the GOJ on the potential impact of Coronavirus on VJ/the tourism industry. **Action: KB**

5. 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) **French Trade FAM Trip – IT WAS NOTED** that a large group of French travel agents are due to visit Jersey on 31st March 2020 and KB suggested that this will provide a good opportunity for VJ to work with Condor on getting more French visitors to the Island from the Paris region. He added that whilst some are only visiting for the day, others are staying overnight.
- (b) **Jersey Big Weekend (JBW)** – KB reported that a significant amount of work has taken place on the JBW and, as of yesterday, 1242 registrations had been made; approximately 20k applications for tickets had been received; and the website had received over 70k page views. He reminded the Board that JBW is based on a model by Visit Kent who have advised that the results are very impressive for the first year.
- (c) **CONFIFA** – The Board noted that despite some travel issues, CONFIFA’s AGM which was held in Jersey recently went very well and discussions are now taking place as to whether the tournament could be held in Jersey in the future.
- (d) **Brecca Swim Run – IT WAS NOTED** that a proposal for the 2020 Brecca Swim has been agreed with reduced funding of £10k which is expected to improve on its 6:1 ROI target.
- (e) **Super League Triathlon (SLT)** – KB reported that Lyndon Farnham (LF) has announced that the SLT will happen in Jersey again in 2020.
- (f) **“Little island. Big spirit” Campaign** – KB advised that the “Little island. Big spirit” campaign was having positive results and noted that LA would provide a further update in her

marketing update at item 12 below.

(g) **Partnership Agreement** – The Board noted that the GOJ agreed funding for 2020 of £4.9m, £1.5m of which was received at the start of February and KB advised that revised schedules for the Partnership Agreement have been also been received and signed off.

6. **RISK REGISTER** – The Board reviewed the Risk Register, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and the following updates were noted:

(a) **CEO Succession fails** – reduced following appointment of new CEO.

(b) **Global Incident – Contagion (Coronavirus)** - added as a cause together with associated mitigation.

(c) **Loss of Visitors - Climate Change** – The Board acknowledged that this was likely to remain on the register for some time and noted that a sustainability paper was being drafted by RP comparing VJ's targets for 2030 against the GOJ's carbon neutral by 2030 target. It was agreed that there was some conflict between the two objectives and **IT WAS NOTED** that this issue was put to the CEO applicants at interview.

Other potential risks were discussed, including Airbnb, about which a number of trade partners have raised concerns and KB confirmed that this has been referred to in the update to the 1948 Tourism Law. He noted that despite VJ working with the JHA, Chamber and the GOJ on this, the law remained in draft as, unfortunately, the GOJ do not consider it a priority. PB stressed the importance of ensuring appropriate rules are introduced around Airbnb and reminded the Board that this was discussed at VJ's away day in July 2019. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would draft a letter to LF to establish progress on the revised Tourism Law and circulate a copy of the same to the Board for their review prior to sending. The Board agreed that whilst this should not be an open letter to the media, it should be made available to members of the industry, if required, to highlight that VJ is acting on this matter. **Action: KB**

7. **2020 FORWARD MEETINGS CALENDAR** - The Board reviewed the 2020 Forward Board Meetings Calendar, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda. Consideration was given to moving the next Board meeting (28th April 2020) to coincide with Destination Jersey (20th to 22nd April inclusive) and to enable Board members to attend a stakeholder meeting on the morning of 21st April 2020. After careful consideration, the Board agreed that there was little value in their attendance at the stakeholder meeting and **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** to reschedule the Board meeting for 930am on 21st April 2020 with a view to the Board joining the stakeholders for lunch following their respective meetings. **Action: KB**

IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED to schedule a meeting of the Remuneration Committee on the afternoon of 20th April 2020 and include an item on the agenda to appoint a replacement for MG on the Committee following his retirement from the Board after the AGM. **Action: KB.**

RP, LA and SB joined the meeting at 11.30am

8. **2019 VISITOR ECONOMY PERFORMANCE REVIEW** – RP summarised the 2019 Visitor Economy Performance Review, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. The Board noted that the statistics were largely positive, and the following headlines were highlighted (compared to December 2018):

- Total visitors up by 6%;
- Spend up by 4%;
- Day trips up by 14%;
- Holiday nights up by 2%;
- Visitors from the UK, France, Germany and Guernsey up by 7%, 4%, 6% and 8% respectively;
- Visitors from Ireland down by 19%;
- Net Promotor Score (NPS) up from 55 to 58;



- Visiting friends and relatives up by 5%; and
- Business visitors down by 14%.

Questions were invited from the Board and PB noted that whilst total German visitors were up total German visitor nights were down and he stressed the importance of balancing the messaging around the statistics given that visitor nights have a big impact on the economy. This was echoed by KK who suggested that VJ "socialise" the visitor nights statistic more.

The total visitor nights statistic was discussed in more detail and the Board noted that this was recorded as 2,737,000 in 2019 which was a 1% increase in overall terms from 2018 when it was 2,700,000. RP reminded the Board that between 2011 and 2015 a reduction of total visitor nights was seen in Jersey when the old registration card system was being used and, in 2016 both systems were used.

KK proposed highlighting the following figures when releasing the 2019 statistics and the Board noted his justification for this:

- 1) Total Visitor Numbers – keeps access open; a significant figure for the Ports of Jersey (POJ);
- 2) Total spend – required as its value generates throughout the Island; and
- 3) Visitor nights – particularly important if stays are shortening as more visitors will be required to fill hotels. This statistic also affects attractions.

PB suggested that consideration should also be given to the objective of extending the season. He explained that if the overall bed night figure is flat, consideration may need to be given to the figures around REVPAR as this enables accommodation providers to measure their assets. He expressed concern that this target had not been met by £0.33 and stressed the importance of recognizing it, particularly for accommodation providers who have invested in their properties as it very difficult for them if nights and REVPAR are reducing and inflation is increasing.

KB suggested that the messaging around the 2019 figures must be made simple so that readers understand REVPAR. KK accepted that the media were likely to focus on total visitor and spend figures. However, for the benefit of the trade, he suggested VJ also refer to other important measures to highlight that it is aware of the challenges they are facing, and he proposed doing this by way of messaging in the newsletter.

KB advised that consideration could be given to the last four years' data visitor numbers and spend over two six month periods (October to March and April to September) to establish whether there has been any improvements in the shoulder months, noting that Q1 and Q4 now account for 24% of overnight holiday visits (up from 22% in 2017). This was welcomed by the Board and RP agreed to undertake this exercise. **Action: RP**

KK noted that the 2019 visitor figure was 3% higher than the 800k target in the 2015 Jersey Destination Plan (JDP) and the Board agreed that the headline news from the 2019 statistics was positive. Other comparisons with the JDP were noted including the target spend for 2020 of £310m which was currently £279.8m. However, **IT WAS NOTED** that the 2019 KPI in this regard was £274.7m.

KB asked RH to obtain a comment on the 2019 statistics from LF to include in the messaging for release via the VJ newsletter, scheduled for Wednesday 4th March 2020 and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that RH would arrange the same. **Action: RH**

A discussion took place regarding whether BDO should be instructed to audit the 2019 statistics at a fee of £5k (as was the case with the 2017 and 2018 figures). However, after careful consideration the Board agreed that although the process of collecting and analysing statistics was not undertaken fully independently of VJ until 1st January 2020 (when it was transferred to Statistics Jersey (SJ), there was no justification to instruct BDO to audit the 2019 figures because the process

VJ

used to collate had not changed. Furthermore, David Edwards has prepared the figures acting in a consultancy capacity to VJ with RP preparing the analysis and communications thereby providing VJ with a level of independency.

RH queried whether Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) was comfortable with the verification process adopted by VJ in respect of the visitor numbers and KB advised that transferring responsibility for the exit survey and analysis of the statistics to SJ has addressed the recommendations made by the CAG in her recent reports in this regard.

CL noted that Ireland's visitor numbers to Jersey were down compared to 2018 and highlighted that number of visitors from the category referred to as "other" was higher than all of the German speaking markets. She therefore queried whether it was possible to break this down into more specific countries. LA explained that whilst it would be difficult to do this retrospectively, VJ could ask SJ to include it going forward. RP added that an extensive list of all of the countries included in the "other" category is available and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that she would share the same with the Board. **Action: RP.**

9. TOURISM TAX REVIEW – The Board noted the paper prepared by RP and circulated with the agenda entitled "a review of Tourism Taxes". KK thanked RP for her work in undertaking this review and the Board agreed with its conclusions.

RP left the meeting at 12.10pm.

10. WEBSITE PROJECT – The Board reviewed a paper on the website project which had been circulated with the agenda. **IT WAS NOTED** that this included a timeline for the project broken down into ten phases and LA invited questions from the Board on the same.

In response to a question from PB, LA reported despite consulting with industry to obtain feedback on the new website, this did not result in a clear message. However, she offered to provide the detailed feedback to the Board if required. She explained that whilst mixed views were expressed at the different focus groups and 1:1 sessions, everyone agreed it was important for VJ to have a VJ website for the inspirational stage of the consumers' journey. However, depending on business type, everyone was looking for something different. Therefore, additional focus groups will be established to test what this should look like as the project rolls forward.

KK queried whether there was anything that should be added to the new website that is not on the current website. By way of example, he suggested that VJ might be required to generate more income from the website going forward and therefore queried whether it should include functionality to track referrals to accommodation providers now, to avoid the cost of adding this on at a later date. He stressed that whilst he did not propose implementing this at this stage, it may be something the Board wishes to consider in the future.

TC suggested that the industry would be more amenable to paying VJ for traffic to their websites rather than a referral fee. He noted that this would enable larger businesses to be charged more than smaller businesses instead of partnership fees being paid to VJ. He added that consideration could also be given to working with a third party on the website to provide consumers with a booking facility for all providers.

LA expressed concern that including a booking platform on the website would make it too commercialised and take away for inspiring people to visit Jersey. She added that if a booking platform is included, VJ would need to ensure it optimises opportunities for its partners and noted that this would also significantly increase costs. Furthermore, she advised that 8/10 partners were not supportive of this.

AW suggested that consideration could be given to selling marketing space on the website. However, LA expressed concern that this would completely change the "look and feel" of the website which was not at all commercial at the current time save for a small amount of commerciality around the partnership programme.



MG highlighted how short a "lifespan" websites have and proposed that consideration is therefore given to including functionality to track referrals in the next iteration of the website. This was accepted by KK who suggested that VJ were likely to be challenged by the GOJ in the future about why the industry does not contribute to the operations of VJ in a similar way to which the finance industry contributes to Jersey Finance Limited. This was echoed by RH who referred to a paper previously prepared by the Tourism Shadow Board which mentioned VJ generating its own income (equating to up to 10% of its GOJ grant funding) in the future. With this in mind KK reiterated the importance of ensuring the design of the website has been carefully considered at this stage to include functionality that may be required at a later date. However, MG noted that a new website was likely to be required in three to four years in any event.

LA reported that the tech specification expressions of interest brief was currently being written. However, whilst it was possible to track the volume of referrals made via the current website, she highlighted that the quality of the referral was more important than the volume. She therefore suggested that the tech specification brief include options for tracking referrals in terms of cost. This was welcomed by the Board who noted that this would enable VJ to revert to partners retrospectively and charge for referrals should this process be implemented in the future.

PB accepted that VJ should look to generate income from the industry. However, he suggested that this required wider discussion and that partners were likely to pay more for additional advertising space on the website. He therefore proposed that the SMT put forward other options for future income generation. KB acknowledged that although VJ's main focus is to "inspire people to visit Jersey", he accepted that it needs to question why it exists and where funding will come from in future years. He therefore suggested including this as a discussion topic at the next away day, noting that moving from a "marketing" to a "selling" tourism board changes its whole shape and requires thorough and comprehensive debate. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** to include this as an item for discussion on the next away day agenda. **Action: KB**

AW noted that marketing on tourism websites can work very well and was used successfully on Visit Bath's website. She stressed the importance of starting to consider alternative income streams given that GOJ funding was unlikely to continue at the same rate going forward.

CL sought clarity around the timeline of the launch of the website and LA confirmed that this was scheduled for 31st December 2020. CL expressed concern at a launch date so close to January which is a very busy time for sales. LA reassured the Board that launch will only go ahead if the project team are confident. However, she explained that it is hoped to align the website with the campaigns and it is planned for it to be fully tested by the 31st December 2020.

Resource was discussed, particularly whether there will be sufficient staff to support the project when GM goes on maternity leave in July. LA advised that following the tender process and subsequent appointment of a partner, responsibility for the ongoing phases of the project will convert to them. The Board stressed the importance of having the right resource in place to complete the project and LA reassured the Board that she would provide a further update in this regard in due course and seek Board approval for additional funding for extra resource if required. She added that members from the various focus groups with tech expertise have also offered their support if required and welcomed the positive industry engagement around the project.

IT WAS NOTED that a budget of £200k has been agreed for the website project and LA reported that whilst the previous website cost between £300k and £350k this was not comparable as it is not necessary to start the new website from scratch and VJ already has assets available.

CL queried whether it was proposed to appoint an on or off Island firm and LA advised that both on and off island companies are invited to submit a tender. She explained that the successful partner will be selected using a set criterion by a selection committee consisting of herself, KB, MG, GM and Claire Robinson, noting that consideration is being given to the latter replacing GM as the project lead when she goes on maternity leave.

LA briefly outlined the process to be undertaken following the deadline for expressions of interest next Friday. She advised that thereafter all applications will be reviewed and a minimum of three / maximum of six will be shortlisted to pitch to the selection committee at which stage they will be provided with a more detailed specification.

Given that the new website has implications for the whole industry, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would add the website project to the risk register. **IT WAS FURTHER RESOLVED** that LA would prepare a progress report on the status of the project RAG rated against plan for review at future Board meetings. **Action: KB/LA**

11. MIGRATION PAPER – IT WAS NOTED that KK's draft response on behalf of VJ to the Migration Policy Development Board's recent consultation had been circulated with the agenda. However, due to pressures of time it was agreed to defer a review of the same.

12. MARKETING UPDATE – LA provided the Board with a marketing presentation which included a summary of the key highlights from 2019 and an update on 2020, together with a showing of two new "little big hero" videos.

13. 2020 TRADING UPDATE – SB summarised her 2020 Trading Report dated 14th February 2020 a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. She noted the 2019 performance and highlighted that some of the expected 2020 performance has been superseded by Coronavirus. That said, she suggested that it was still too early to conclude about the year ahead and proposed that VJ continues to talk to partners on a regular basis, particularly given the added concerns around Coronavirus and airline vulnerability.

SB referred to an AITO Report which had been released the previous day, a copy of which she agreed to share with the Board and she noted that this highlights an opportunity for Jersey in the 60-65 age bracket based on their top three interests. **Action: SB**

CL queried whether the trade team required anything specific for 2020 and SB stressed the importance of ensuring it can communicate marketing's messages to trade partners so that they are able to translate them to consumers on VJ's behalf. She reported that whilst this was sometimes hard to achieve with more traditional tour operators, she highlighted the value of them including VJ's messaging in their messaging.

SB reported that she recently received feedback about pricing in Jersey, particularly hotel prices and suggested that this required consideration going forward to prevent Jersey being priced out of the market.

There being no further questions for SB or LA, they were thanked for their time and left the meeting at 1.20pm.

14. CEO RECRUITMENT – CL provided the Board with an update on the recruitment process recently undertaken to appoint a new CEO. She advised that five applicants were selected for interview and were interviewed by a panel consisting of herself, KK, DS and Jennifer Carnegie (Appointments Commissioner). In addition, they undertook psychometric testing and a media interview (which was carried out by James Filleul from Bailiwick Express in a "mock up" studio at the BBC).

IT WAS NOTED that the panel were unanimous in their decision to appoint Amanda Burns (AB) who will start at VJ on 27th July 2020 and CL confirmed that the four unsuccessful candidates have all been notified.

CL suggested that engaging a trade specialist recruitment agency worked well. She reported that whilst minimal advertising costs were incurred (approximately £300) the total cost of the recruitment process is expected to be approximately £45k as candidates were required to travel to Jersey for interview, the cost of which was covered by VJ. The psychometric testing was £1,500 and James Filleul's fee was £1,500.

KK stressed that AB will require support in her move to Jersey and taking on the role, albeit he acknowledged that VJ has this in place.

The timeline / process for announcing AB appointment was briefly discussed and KB advised that he proposed advising the management team the following day and the staff very soon thereafter. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that he would also refer to AB's appointment in the next VJ newsletter and invite her to attend the away day scheduled on 29th July 2020. **Action: KB**

Appropriate liaison with the media regarding AB's appointment was considered and it was agreed that whilst a press release was not necessary, KK would respond to any media interview requests.

15. 2019 BOARD EVALUATION – AW provided an update on the 2019 Board Evaluation process and thanked the Board for completing and returning their forms online (and Ollie Archbold for his help in making it an online process). She reported that the scores received were mainly threes or fours with no significant issues highlighted, save for some twos around timing where concerns were expressed about too much time being spent discussing local politics rather than how to get people to the Island. However, overall, she noted that the Board agreed that KK manages time at meetings very well.

The Board noted that feedback received on information received from the SMT was good, save for some concerns around project management (e.g. delay in the appointment of German representatives). AW reported that it was also suggested that key presentations should be shared with the Board prior to stakeholders to enable Board input to be provided.

AW reported that good feedback was received on the Audit Committee. However, it was highlighted that whilst they were trying to do things well this was always against a change in GOJ policy which can make it difficult for them to keep up to date. She added that the Audit Committee are not always given clear a clear framework from the GOJ within which they are expected to operate.

IT WAS NOTED that no concerns were expressed regarding the current, smaller, composition of the Board. However, it was suggested that when looking for Board members consideration should be given to those with expertise in digital marketing.

16. NED RECRUITMENT – The Board agreed that NEDs with marketing, accountancy and industry experience were required. Therefore, expressions of interest should be sought as widely as possible (including those industry representatives who have previously advised that they are willing to join the Board) with a view to reviewing potential candidates thereafter.

KK advised that consideration also needs to be given to his replacement as Chair in due course and whilst he accepted that Appointments Commission involvement will be required for the recruitment of this position, he suggested that it would be preferable for the new Chair to have spent some time on the Board prior to their appointment.

As mentioned above, KK confirmed that Bob Hassell is able to support VJ in the selection process and appropriate governance procedures in an individual capacity. He therefore proposed placing an advert for two NEDs: one to replace MG following his retirement from the Board in May and one as a potential new Chair. Referring to the latter, he reiterated that they would still have to go through the relevant Appointment Commission process at the appropriate time.

17. ANNUAL REPORT TIMETABLE AND NEW CONTENT – TC summarised the annual report timetable, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. He highlighted that the dates of Audit Committee and Board sign off had changed to 16th and 21st April 2020 respectively. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would circulate a revised copy of the timetable following the meeting. **Action: KB**

TC confirmed that the Audit Committee have reviewed the CAG's report(s) to ensure her recommendations have been followed up and changes reflected in the Annual Report (e.g. remuneration) accordingly.

18. **GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC DEPARTMENT** – The Board noted the press release dated 12th February 2020 from the GOJ summarising the proposed merger of the economy teams from the Office of the Chief Executive and the Growth Housing and Environment Department, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and RH advised that this restructure was likely to lead to a new appointment would be responsible for VJ.

19. **AOB** – There was no further business do discuss.

20. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – IT WAS NOTED** that the next Board meeting would take place at 9.30am on 21st April 2020 at Visit Jersey.

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Chair

21st April 2020