

**Minutes of a meeting of Visit Jersey Limited ("VJ")  
Held at Radisson Hotel, St Helier, Jersey on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 10.30am**

<b>Present:</b>	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")	
<b>In Attendance</b>	
Amanda Burns (AB), CEO Designate, VJ	
Matthew Thomas (MS), CEO Ports of Jersey (POJ)	
Dan Houseago (DH), EDTSC, Government of Jersey (GOJ) (Observer) (via conference call from item 5(a) onwards)	
Aimee Maskell, AM to PM Secretarial Services (Scribe)	
Oliver Archbold (AB) VJ (for part of item 5 only)	
Louise Ashworth (LA) VJ (for part of item 5 only)	
Sarah Barton (SB) VJ (for part of item 5 only)	
Meryl Lainsey (ML) VJ (for part of item 5 only)	
Ruth Perchard (RP) VJ (for part of item 5 only)	

**1. WELCOME TO AB**

KK welcomed AB, VJ's CEO designate, to the Island and her first meeting and noted that she would be appointed to the Board following KB's departure.

**2. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were noted.

**3. CONFLICTS**

No conflicts were declared.

**4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**IT WAS NOTED** that the minutes dated 31<sup>st</sup> June 2020 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 KB confirmed that all actions were all complete, save for the action relating the staff pay awards and bonus recommendations. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that prior to leaving, KB would arrange review meetings with all staff and provide an interim view to Amanda Burns. **Action: KB**

**5. COVID UPDATE AND PROSPECTS FOR THE SEASON INCLUDING OXFORD ECONOMICS (OE) "THE VALUE OF TOURISM TO JERSEY AFTER COVID-19"**

KK suggested that discussions should focus on what short term actions VJ can undertake to help the tourism industry leading up to the end of the year.

It was noted that the OE report was a confidential document which had only been shared with the Board and the GOJ at this stage.

KK expressed concern that the GOJ may not have considered the report in detail yet and that they

may be required to provide the industry with more support than anticipated, given that the forecasts in the report indicate that it could take until 2023 for the industry to get back to normal. However, PB reported that a group within GOJ are already looking into this and, as he understands it, taking a realistic approach. The Board felt that while there were some challenging forecasts for the visitor economy in Jersey, it was reflective of the industry and it was agreed that VJ should focus on how the Island positions itself to benefit from the upsides referred to in it and how VJ build on the positives and opportunities for the future.

KK proposed that AB should use the report as part of her strategy review, forming part of the Board's discussions at their away day on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and that the GOJ should also be aware of it.

MT provided an update on the POJ's interaction with GOJ. He suggested that the Island will face significant challenges going forward, therefore any informed debate will be positive, adding that the tourism industry will also be required to unlock business connectivity.

KK proposed that whilst AB should take an initial 100 days to deal with any emergencies, she should not look to implement any strategic changes in this time. He added that during this time, she should take the opportunity to meet people and attend the away day and present her views on strategic direction at the 21<sup>st</sup> October meeting, albeit that VJ will be required to submit an interim business plan to the GOJ in September.

KB commented that consideration must also be given to aligning with other arms' length organisations. He reported that good work is taking place in this regard already and proposed that VJ use it as a platform to provide input into GOJ thinking.

The Board welcomed Lyndon Farnham's (LF) support, highlighting how tourism fits into the Island's economy. However, it was accepted that this was not a view shared by all States members, particularly those with concerns about population and high/low value jobs. It was also acknowledged that whilst the GOJ's emergency response to Covid had been positive, this was a "black and white" situation, whereas re-building the economy was "grey" and could be impacted by different personalities in the States. Therefore, a post-Covid vision was required for the Island.

ML, OA, RP, SA and SB were welcomed to the meeting at 11am and KK requested that the discussion focus on what action VJ were taking to salvage the 2020 season. He noted that various documents had been circulated with the agenda and these were discussed as follows:

**(a) OE Report** – RP provided a summary of the OE report, the full slide deck of which is available on the VJ Board SharePoint Site. The Board acknowledged that the position has already changed since the OE report was issued a month ago and continues to change daily. They thanked RP for her work summarising the statistics and forecasts from the report, stressing the importance of agreeing what action should be taken to prevent the "downside" scenarios from happening.

**(b) Marketing Update** – **IT WAS NOTED** that a marketing update report had not been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that LA would circulate a summary following the meeting (to include statistics from recent marketing activity). **Action: LA**

LA reported that the following focus had been agreed:

- Drive bookings for this summer (now);
- Extend the Summer season (September onwards); and
- Strategy messaging / bringing 2021 activity forward.

and she summarised the work being undertaken aimed at consumers based on awareness; assurance; and action.

LA advised that the marketing budget for this year will be media spend in excess of £700k and that over £1m of the marketing budget will be applied to salvaging this season.

The Board requested that marketing content is very current, given that the situation is changing

daily and ensure a strong call to action for people to come to Jersey because it is a safe place to visit and concern was expressed that VJ may not be acting urgently enough and that they prepare a direct communication of offers (e.g. "book now travel next week"), noting that the public are currently responding very well to these types of deals. LA noted that some industry offers are available and promoted.

MT stressed the importance of the SMT being able to adapt and be tactical in their activity, given that the border position is changing so quickly and suggested that they be delegated with authority to enable them to move more quickly if required.

There was discussion regarding the frequency and regularity of consumer and trade newsletters and CL expressed concern she had not received a newsletter in a number of weeks. The consumer newsletter is issued monthly and there was discussion about increasing frequency to every two weeks. LA asked that consideration be given to the unsubscribe rate by increasing frequency and KB reassured the Board that the SMT were aware of the urgency of the situation and were being urgent in their activities. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that LA would check the mailing list for CL's details. **Action: LA**

(c) **Visit Safe** - TC referred to the Steering Group minutes of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda and which referred to the "Visit Safe" logo/guidelines not yet being available for use by tourism businesses. He expressed concern in this regard, noting that this initiative was first discussed over five weeks ago.

LA confirmed that details around the "Visit Safe" initiative are on the Covid Travel Page on the VJ website which also includes links to other pages, but ML advised that VJ is still awaiting approval of the "Visit Safe" guidelines by the GOJ prior to releasing them to the industry.

Disappointment was expressed that in such an emergency situation, the GOJ have still not provided their approval and whilst it was acknowledged that this was not due to lack of effort by VJ, the Board queried what could be done to progress the matter. LA advised she did not want to release the logo/guidelines to the industry until the GOJ have confirmed they are in full agreement with it. Concern was expressed that the opportunity may have been missed for this season and that the "Visit Safe" guidelines were uploaded asap. However, this was not accepted by KK and he therefore agreed to follow the matter up with LF. **Action: KK**

TC expressed concern that businesses are putting adverts in next year's "What's On" guide and, due to the delay in approval being received, it will only include a general reference to stay safe accreditations for industry partners. Furthermore, industry partners are unable to use the guidelines themselves.

The Board discussed the demand for Condor's service. **IT WAS NOTED** that they were currently offering three sailings per week, most of which were running at approximately 80% capacity and, SB advised that she was awaiting an update from them regarding the addition of a further service. She added that a joint marketing campaign between Condor and VJ was currently ongoing.

TC queried whether a Jersey day trip was currently available from France and MT confirmed that whilst this was the case, Condor are experiencing issues with St Malo and are therefore considering other options such as Cherbourg. However, he reported that the boat arrived on time this morning and all visitors will be tested (and held at Elizabeth Terminal if they refuse).

KK reiterated the importance of VJ doing what it can to help businesses avoid bankruptcy and he accepted that whilst the work currently being undertaken was working, more action was needed. LA confirmed that consumers are interested in Jersey as destination. However, they require reassurance and, due to the continual changes in the UK, this is proving difficult. She added that although consumers welcome offers, they are more interested in confidence/safety. She also highlighted the importance of accommodation providers having good cancellation policies in place if flights are cancelled and noted that not all Jersey providers are offering these.

MG suggested that accommodation providers were unlikely to provide a cancellation policy and noted that this was the reason for more bookings being made at short notice. On this basis, CL stressed that engagement with trade partners was key and sought confirmation from SB that she had enough budget to make a difference with partners. SB confirmed that she had a sufficient budget in this regard and was working closely with the OTAs and trade partners. She added that VJ also has some oven-ready campaigns which are due to launch with Expedia, Trip Advisor, Last Minute.com, BA and Travel Zoo.

LA noted that these campaigns are offer-led; include good priced deals; and are expected to reach a database of 1m. However, she proposed starting with Expedia and other OTA campaigns in first and reviewing them to establish the level of engagement they attract and increase or decrease investment depending on their success. She acknowledged that whilst this may require an increase in budget, the current budget was sufficient at this time. Although KK welcomed the prospect of the Island being full in September or October, he queried whether the SMT have enough budget to make the most of the remainder of the year and LA reiterated the importance of regularly reviewing campaigns to gauge engagement, noting that there was a risk of spending money on campaigns with OTAs that do not get any engagement. However, KK suggested that now was a time for VJ to make calculated risks and this was echoed by PB who stressed the importance of VJ taking risks to do what it can to support the industry, even if it results in some money being spent on campaigns which prove unsuccessful.

KB informed the Board that there was a pipeline of campaigns, some of which had already started and explained that with regular monitoring, those that do not work very well will be stopped and those that work well will be increased.

The rapid testing process was discussed, and TC queried whether this will be scalable when arrival numbers double or increase in size. MT accepted that at this stage, health resource may become an issue. However, he reported that the processing of testing on-Island is due to start in the next couple of weeks. AB referred to her recent travel to the Island and thanked POJ and Condor for the advice received prior to arrival the fantastic service delivery, noting that she felt safe, respected and cared for arriving in Jersey.

CL noted that it has been agreed that the new VJ website will be ready by the end of the year and expressed concern that the SMT may be under too much pressure at the current time to achieve this. She therefore queried whether there was sufficient resource to complete the website project by the year-end deadline, thereby avoiding VJ being without a website. LA reassured the Board that the existing website will continue working post-31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. However, more "bugs" may be experienced, and its speed may slow down as it will no longer be supported. That said, if there is a slight delay in the new website going live the consumer facing aspect of the site will not be affected, albeit it will become more challenging to make changes at the back end.

Referring to resource, LA acknowledged that this was always an issue. However, she reported that Ed Le Gallais was due to return from secondment on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020; Claire Robinson had been allocated to the website project full time; an agency has been appointed; ML would be leading on listing/product facing issues; and she confirmed that the whole team were committed to delivering the project. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that LA would revise the project timetable and divide the workstreams up across the available resource and continue to keep the Board updated accordingly. **Action: LA**

TC queried whether there was a penalty clause in the agreement with the agency if the website is not delivered by the year end and LA confirmed that the agreement takes a phased approach. However, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that she would check the position regarding non-delivery clauses. MG stressed the importance of being patient in respect of the website project to ensure VJ ends up with the right product. He suggested that whilst a completion deadline of the year end was unlikely at this stage, he reassured the Board that project team would keep the agency to the timelines set out in the various phases of the contract and this was echoed by LA. **Action: LA**

There being no further comments or questions for LA, OA, RP, SB or ML, KK on behalf of the Board thanked them for their time and for their hard work over the last few months and they left the meeting at 12pm.

## 6. AWAY DAY

The Board reviewed KB's memo dated 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 outlining the proposed purpose and requirements for the Board Away Day scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that AB would review and finalise the proposed format for the Away Day and if the Board have any further input, they would advise her accordingly.

**Action: AB/ALL**

## 7. Q2 2020 REPORT FOR EDTSC

The Board reviewed the Q2 2020 Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. KB confirmed that the Audit Committee had reviewed the figures contained therein and agreed that it should be submitted to EDTSC together with the inclusion of an update regarding to health and safety regulations (which were discussed at the Audit Committee meeting).

## 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 items were discussed in more detail:

(a) **Tourism Information Centre (TIC)** – TC queried whether the TIC was now operating as normal and KB confirmed that they were still working on reduced staffing. However, he expected them to be back to BAU next month. TC referred to a recent discussion he had with the CEO of Liberty Bus who reported that the current reduced bus timetable is likely to remain in place until early September. He noted that this timetable has a very reduced number of busses going to the country parishes and whilst this is particularly disappointing for La Mare, given that they have recently opened their restaurant on Friday and Saturday nights, he stressed that the Island's tourism industry needs the busses. This was acknowledged by KB who noted that some transport providers (e.g. private coaches) were still awaiting guidelines from the GOJ. However, TC reported that an update was received in this regard the previous day and they are now able to operate with full busses if passengers wear masks.

As discussed above, MG suggested that VJ should take some risks with their budget by investing in incentives which will improve visitors' holidays and, by way of example, he proposed providing Liberty Bus or Jersey Zoo with funding to enable them to offer free busses or free entry. This was welcomed by TC who highlighted that accommodation providers are unable to use traditional literature in their properties to promote attraction businesses due to CV19. He therefore stressed the importance of doing something different.

(b) **Airlines** – PB expressed disappointment at the recent flight schedules and queried how VJ can generate demand, noting that it was difficult for hotels to look at the arrivals at the airport and be positive.

(c) **Travel Smith / Fleetway** – PB noted that Travel Smith had ceased trading after several years and that Fleetway had also gone into liquidation and commented that this would have an impact on a number of hotels.

## 9. RISK REGISTERS – STANDARD RISK REGISTER AND CV-19 RISK ACTION PLAN

The Board reviewed the standard risk register and the CV19 risk action plan, copies of which were circulated with the agenda. TC reported that the Audit Committee recently reviewed the registers

and questions were raised about what lessons had been learnt from CV19 should a second wave occur. KB advised that it was agreed that VJ would consider how it is able to mitigate any risks in this regard, albeit that this exercise would be deferred until October, due to the current demand on the team.

## 10. 2020 FORWARD MEETINGS CALENDAR

The Board noted the 2020 Forward Board Meetings Calendar, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda. As discussed above, AB would present her way forward at the meeting scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 and (with input from the Board) would also consider and finalise the format of the Away Day scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Referring to the latter, the Board agreed that this may need to be deferred if AW and CL are unable to travel as it would not be appropriate for them to attend via Zoom. However, CL advised that she and AW will endeavour to have a test in the UK prior to travelling to Jersey. TC added that it may also be of benefit to invite a representative from the Public Health Department to provide an update on the CV19 situation.

KB sought the Board's input on the dinner scheduled prior to the September Board meeting, noting that AB may require some support on who to invite from the various organisations.

## 11. AOB

AW reported that she had difficulty hearing a large proportion of the meeting via Zoom. She expressed frustration about the lack of urgency around the current situation and suggested that this could be a result of too many people being involved in the decision-making process. This was echoed by CL. She accepted that although the SMT were working extremely hard, she was unsure whether the importance of focusing on the short term and deferring 2021 for the time being was coming across. However, whilst she did not wish for the Board to come across as critical, she suggested that it was important to highlight the short-term urgency of the situation. She expressed concern that the SMT may be feeling despondent after today's meeting and accepted that it was more difficult for KB to nurture them when everyone was not working under the same roof and therefore offered support from the Board, if required.

PB proposed that a list of businesses which are open / closed be prepared and shared amongst the industry. **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would arrange the same. **Action: KB**

MG suggested that whilst CV19 was ongoing, Jersey was the ideal destination to visit, due to the short flight from the UK and its big open spaces. However, with only two weeks left to market this season, he stressed the importance of VJ not being too cautious or traditional and getting out as much bold content as it can. TC added that Jersey should also look to take advantage of the very short lead times which are resulting in the average length of stay increasing. This was echoed by MG who noted that some visitors are using Jersey as their main holiday this year and staying for two weeks.

PB stressed the importance of focusing on the short-term (i.e. September and maybe October) and the medium term (i.e. 2021) thereafter. He accepted that the Island may "bounceback" next year and referred to the OE Report which refers to the possibility of a stronger bounce-back in recovery by 2025 if the conditions are right. He reiterated the comments above regarding the SMT and clarified that the Board were not criticising them to disappoint them but just need them to be more "on the front foot".

KB provided the Board with heads up regarding the forthcoming GOJ budget requirements and DH advised that the GOJ were due to go through a Government Plan 2021 review this week at which time they will debate the narratives and figures for growth and BAU, following which the Council of Ministers will need to review the same, the deadline for which is 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020. **IT WAS NOTED** that John Vautier will therefore be liaising with Officers to ensure the narratives and figures

make sense prior to submission to the Council of Ministers.

DH reminded the Board that an outcome from the newly established Economic Council was to create a new Tourism Strategy. He therefore suggested that an understanding needs to be agreed as to what this is. KK noted that this was a positive initiative put forward by LF and welcomed the same, noting that it recognises the benefit of tourism to the community/economy. That said, he acknowledged that it will also bring challenges. MG suggested that the GOJ Tourism Strategy was unlikely to happen straight away and this was accepted by KK who proposed that VJ should proceed with its plans in any event.

**IT WAS NOTED** that today was KB's last Board meeting prior to him stepping down as a Director and from his role as CEO on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020. KK, on behalf of the Board thanked him for all the work he has done over the last five years and confirmed that a leaving event would be arranged in due course, pending confirmation of LF's availability.

The Board also congratulated KB on his recent IOD award which they agreed was richly deserved.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING – IT WAS NOTED** that a Board meeting would be held following the Away Day on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 4pm.

Chair  21st Dec 2020