

Confidential - Board of Directors

Board of Directors - Minutes

Thursday 4 February 2021 via video conference

Present:

James Aitken (JA) Chairman
Lana Bennett (LB) Treasurer and Finance Committee Chair
Chris Ball (CB) General Secretary and Membership Committee Chair
Jennifer Cormack (JCo), Communications Committee Chair
Andrew Guthrie (AG), Events Committee Chair
Rebecca Brooks (RB)
Alexis Peppis (AP)
Rachel Tooley (RT)
Kathryn Davis (KD)
Helen Peters (HP)
Diane Glover (DG)
Luke Reilly (LR)
Helena Beard (HB)
Kelly Strong (KS)

Joss Croft (JC) Chief Executive Officer, UKinbound
Lauren Broughton (LBr) Head of Public Affairs & PR, UKinbound

Apologies:

Rob Way (RW)
Tricia Warwick (TW)

1. Welcome & Apologies

JA welcomed the new Board

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were confirmed as accurate

3. Matters arising

The following was noted:

- Implementation of the new CRM software, Bitrix, is going well and ongoing
- The UKinbound Facebook Community hub rated very highly in the 2020 Membership survey and new board members are encouraged to join the group and post relevant content
(Action: LBr to share link to access community)

- Exploring how we can use Google Analytics to get an accurate view of website dwell times
(Action: CN)
- We've been working with the Chinese tour operators to instil a better sense of membership inclusion
- In our 2020 Membership survey we've been able to secure new testimonials and confirm members that are happy to provide case studies
- Continuing to explore new avenues to connect with the Treasury but we had made positive headway with our engagement with No 10, via the PMs business advisor Alex Hickman
- Our Tourism Resilience Fund was submitted to DCMS' Tourism Recovery Plan which is expected to be published at the end of March
- UKinbound is considering if it will attend Arabian Travel Market however the show is looking very costly
- CBILS application has had initial submission and UKinbound's cash flow projections for the next three years will be submitted when complete **(Action: JC)**
- 14th May notice on the office is required and we're currently looking at alternative options
(Action: JC)

Question raised by JA – With regards to Bitrix, can this replace a lot of the existing software we already have in place? JC reply – yes, the functionality of Bitrix allows us to remove licences from other areas, a cost saving e.g., Act, Mail Chimp, type forms, events registration. Allows for efficiencies.

4. CEO update

JC and LBr provided the Board with an overview of key activity undertaken since December. Key actions and comments noted were:

Membership

- Currently we have 290 members down from an all-time high of 420 last year, however retention has been slightly better than hoped and on a positive note, new members continue to be recruited by the team
- It was expected that businesses that fall into Band 1 would be the most likely to resign and this has been the case. Proportionally less businesses in Band 2 and Band 3 have resigned
- Continue to have ongoing engagement with the membership and the team will continue to communicate with members that have left to bring them back in

Marketing and Communications

- Our social media following continues to grow - LinkedIn (6,339) and Twitter (4,753) – and our engagement rates are strong at 5% on LinkedIn and 1.2% on Twitter

- The team is working on curating new content to be posted on the UKinbound Facebook Community Hub **(Action: CN)**
- 2021 Directory has been published and we secured £20,977 in advertising from it, a very positive result given the current market. In 2019 we secured around £30,000 in advertising
- Three member newsletters were sent out in this period, with an average open rate of 31.8%. One bespoke mailing was also booked, the first since February 2020
- Website traffic continues to be at reduced levels compared to 2019/20, however visits to our Advocacy pages have grown by almost 30%
- The team is currently developing a 2021 content plan, a new commercial plan and a marketing campaign **(Action: CN)**
- Our new CRM system Bitrix is being set up and tested, and our web developers Granite5 are working on integration with the website
- Continued strong media relations with 126 pieces of coverage between December and January, reaching over 75 million. This includes substantial broadcast coverage with 14 interviews including *BBC Newsnight*, *BBC News*, *Good Morning Britain*, *Sky News*
- In 2020 a total of 831 pieces of coverage were secured, an increase of 156% compared to 2019. The coverage had a total reach of over 3 billion

Advocacy

- The Association continued pressuring Government to implement urgent changes to its Covid-19 business support system and the need for a reopening roadmap
- We had a very positive breakthrough with regards to the Tourism Resilience Fund (TRF) in Scotland - a £6 million fund for international tour operators has been created
- We submitted our TRF for inclusion in DCMS' Recovery Plan, and shared with 20 friendly MPs, and we re-submitted the proposal to the Treasury as a Budget submission
- We continue to work closely with other organisations such as Airlines UK, we signed a letter they issued to the Prime Minister, and ABTA's Save Future Tourism Coalition, we signed their letter to the Chancellor
- Some positive news - following Wendy Chamberlain MP's adjournment debate and Nigel Huddleston MP's response that tour operators etc should be eligible for rate relief and grants, the LGA confirmed they would include this comment in their next update to local governments
- JC continues to meet with MPs and Peers to discuss the needs of the industry
- We continue to work with public affairs agency Tendo and through them we will be feeding into new research that the Future of Aviation APPG is undertaking **(Action: LBr)**

Advocacy – additional update from RB

- Outlined details regarding a recent meeting she was involved in hosted by Fergus Ewing MSP (FE) and attended by Nigel Huddleston MP (NH) and key individuals from the tourism industry
- During the meeting RB provided the inbound, international perspective – need for furlough extension to end of year and Spring 2022 for inbound (Ireland example referenced), protection of intellectual assets, need for a roadmap as demand is there but if we are too slow people will book elsewhere, divergence on policy across four countries not helpful
- Positive feedback received from NH who suggested there was cause for optimism in the industry and that we should be confident that the Chancellor will deliver positive news in his budget, however Government. still not in favour of sectorial support
- With regards to Local Authority grants and rate relief, NH stated businesses should continue with their applications as support is being opened up to new types of businesses
- NH cautioned about putting ‘too many eggs in one basket’ with regards to domestic, suggesting there is confidence international travel will restart with the “flight” of UK residents
- FE stressed the need for a Marshall Plan for tourism, and the need for financial support for tourism from Westminster. Also, once over 50s are vaccinated, restrictions need to go
- Recovery funding in Scotland is expected in March/April

JC also extended a personal thanks to RB for all of her help with the Scotland TRF

Events

- Events continued to be headed by Temi Fatona who is standing in for Saara Vuorela-Valladares who is currently on Maternity leave. Saara is expected back in summer but no date has yet been confirmed
- Planning to implement a new B2B platform for online events. Costing for six services have been received and the cost benefits are currently being worked through. Once complete our research will be shared with the Events Committee and then a new system rolled out
(Action: TF)
- Physical events on hold but this will change as soon as it can. DMO virtual fairs continue to be very well received and in high demand. 12 in the pipeline. A large programme of webinars will be rolled out between now and Summer
- Still planning to have a recovery drinks reception in early October, which its hoped Reed will sponsor. As part of this, also looking to include an awards ceremony linked to people that went over and above during Covid
- The Events Committee met last week to discuss Convention 2021 and felt it would be best to move the event to September so it can be a physical event. This may impact 2022 in Aberdeen and moving it back from February

Finance and Operations

- JC outlined that the audited accounts have come through and an exit interview with the auditors is currently being sorted. Figures as expected and no qualifications
- The Association's CBILS application is ongoing and we're also trying to switch banks as the Government is offering a cash incentive to do this
- The management accounts to end of December were shared
- Everyone continues to work from home. When the office lease expires in June we are going to look at a more cost effective work space via Southwark Council, WeWork, or sharing space with a member

Question raised by RB – Looking at the full year figure for operating loss, to what degree is that figure expected to fluctuate? JC outlined income leavers and our spend, along with reserves and why we're applying for the loan. Stated that membership income has come in over budget and now won't change, and the main risk is the recruitment of new members. Also stated that due to the way we run events, payment in advance, we ensure minimal risk to the Association.

2nd question raised by RB – worth looking if we can apportion some of UKinbound's staff costs to a project that Government funds. JC commented it is a great idea and worth looking into. JC to pick up with RB offline. **(Action: JC)**

Question raised by HP – Events is main way of getting in income. What events are included in the budget and what would be the swing if restrictions are in place for a longer or shorter period? JC outlined that in a normal year events secure a surplus of around £150k but in this budget we have aired on the side of caution and predicting a surplus of just £13k.

Question raised by HB – With the new platform, is there an opportunity to use this as a member benefit? JC commented this may be possible depending on which platform we move forward with and yes, it should be something we are looking at to add value for members. **(Action: JC/TF)**

Question raised by JA – Requested clarification regarding the website integration with Bitrix and if we could undertake this activity ourselves rather than paying Grantie5 to undertake. LBr commented that this will be taken up with the team and that they will revert. **(Action: LBr)**

5. AOB

Membership Survey

- JC outlined that the results were very positive and that the secretariat is now working on a plan of action linked to the insights gained
- The insights and actions will also form a discussion point at the Board awayday in March

Question raised by KS – Concerned that 34% of members attended less than three events last year but that we will likely see an improvement on this once we have the new database. Also raised concerns that only 54% of a members' immediate team were aware of UKinbound, suggesting that

some members are territorial of their membership and do not share insights with their team/wider company. Suggested more could be done to engage with all staff at a business not just the person that holds membership. JC commented that the 54% stat is also risky for the Association as if that member leaves so will the membership. A good example of people sharing details is the Daily Update. The Association will look into how it can enlist more members to attend events. **(Action: TF)**

Comment from AP – KS makes a good point about ownership and people being territorial. When you're the main contact you have first access to events and fam trips and don't have to fight a colleague for the spot which is why one person will often own the account. Something to consider.

JC commented – As times are changing, we may need to look at a charging mechanism in the future so more can attend our events.

Comment from LR – We need to use existing members to get their internal teams onside.

Comment from HP – Only 22% found the Year in Review useful. I'm sure huge resources are needed to create this, has it had its day? Could it be moved online or included in the Directory? JC commented that previously the document had generated advertising revenue and that the Association use the document as a resource to inform members of any membership fee increases but we will explore how this can be changed in the future. **(Action: JC/CN)**

Comment from LB – Although events attendance is low and can be improved, from March to June people were bombarded with events but a lot were shell shocked and on furlough, therefore a low figure is understandable. Also referenced the popularity of the virtual FAMs, however only TOs can attend these. Events have done really well and in 2021 need to look at more inclusive offerings.

Comment from CB – Can we do an awareness piece for members to send to their staff that states please sign up for our updates? Members are the ones not communicating about the benefits of UKinbound etc to their own teams. JC added – in the daily update we will include a comment to say, if anyone in your team would like to receive let me know **(Action: LBr)**

Board Away Day

- Confirmed to take place Monday 15th March at 11:30am. Details will be issued to all in due course. **(Action: JC)**

Companies House

- JC outlined that all Directors' details need to be uploaded onto Companies House, please get back to Cindy if you've not already. **(Action: Board Members)**
- Contact numbers of the Secretariat wasn't correct – a new version will be sent out shortly **(Action: JC)**

- Workplace will no longer be used, therefore we'll be setting up a WhatsApp for the Committees, similar to the one in place for the board. JA outlined that Bitrix will have this function. **(Action: LBr, AA, TR, CN)**

Question from HB – When do we officially become Directors, and can we put this on LinkedIn? JC commented that everyone is a Director from today and that a note will be going out on LinkedIn later, which the board can share if they would like too.

6. Date of next meeting

- Monday 10th May from 1:30pm – 3pm. TBC if this event will be physical or via Zoom. Following this will be the GM, which will be virtual.