



UKINBOUND SPRING GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

16 May 2023

Historic Dockyard Chatham

1. WELCOME

- 1.1 James Aitken (JA), Chairman of UKinbound, welcomed all attendees to the Spring General Meeting and thanked the team at Historic Dockyard Chatham.
- 1.2 JA noted that the Board of Directors are coming to the end of their current term, with elections for the 2024 – 2027 Board due to begin in October. JA gave an overview of the Board's responsibilities and opportunity to impact the direction of the Association, and encouraged members to consider applying.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS GENERAL MEETING – 12 December 2022

- 2.1 Chris Ball, General Secretary reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting. Lana Bennett, Tours International proposed that they were a true and accurate record of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Jennifer Cormack, Windermere Lake Cruises.
- 2.2 Diane Glover, The Beatles Story, proposed that there were no matters arising. The motion was seconded by Stacy Whittington, QHotels Collection.

3. CEO UPDATE – JOSS CROFT

- 3.1 Joss Croft (JC) welcomed all attendees and presented an update on the industry and UKinbound's recent activities since the Annual General Meeting in February 2023.
- 3.2 MEMBERSHIP. 28 new members have joined since the last General Meeting, with numbers now standing at 377 – close to pre-pandemic figures. JC gave an overview of the membership team's recent activities, including attendance at and speaking on behalf of UKinbound at a number of industry events. JC encouraged members to contact the team to discuss any issues impacting their businesses or how to maximise their membership benefits.
- 3.3 EVENTS. JC gave an overview of the events programme since the last meeting, which has included: Discover Workshops in Kent and the East of England; webinars on UK tourism prospects and sustainability trends; a virtual DMO update with Visit Wales and

The Royal Mint, a Membership Masterclass in Edinburgh, networking evenings at the Scott Hotel Edinburgh, Frameless, and the The Queen's Gallery; and a fam trip to Balfour Winery.

UKinbound also returned to Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai where there was strong interest and demand for the UK from the GCC and Indian markets. The UKinbound stand was visited by His Majesty's Consul General and Trade Commissioner for the Middle East, Simon Penney, and the Irish Ambassador. JC also took part in a panel discussion on innovations in travel. A large number of overseas enquiries were submitted from ATM and JC encouraged members to view and respond to these via the Members Dashboard on the website.

- 3.5 **ADVOCACY.** JC gave an overview of the Association's advocacy activity, noting that the high turnover of Tourism Ministers in recent months has made it challenging to build trust and understanding. UKinbound has written to all the recent new appointees – the new Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Lucy Frazer MP; Tourism Ministers Julia Lopez MP and Sir John Whittingdale MP, and Richard Lochhead MSP.

UKinbound issued a response to the Spring Budget, expressing disappointment at the lack of measures to help the UK's competitive position. JC noted that despite positive forecasts for the year ahead, the challenges of rising costs, capacity and staffing issues, and the impact of Brexit remain ongoing and the Association continues to push this message in its lobbying activity.

Engagement with parliamentarians across all parties and benches is building up ahead of the General Election to establish a good understanding of, and support for, inbound tourism. In recent weeks JC presented to the APPG for Hospitality and Tourism, engaged with the APPG for the Future of Aviation, met with Shadow Tourism Minister Jeff Smith MP, and attended a roundtable with Liberal Democrat frontbenchers, Tim Farron MP and Jamie Stone MP.

Collaboration with other industry associations continues, including with the Association of International Retail on VAT-free shopping. JC noted the campaign has garnered significant support by the Daily Mail.

- 3.6 **MEDIA ENGAGEMENT.** Media engagement continues to be strong with 109 pieces of coverage and three BBC broadcast interviews generated since February, with a reach of over 147 million people. Key topics included the return of business confidence following the Q1 Business Barometer, the impact of the Coronation, the growth of the American market, post-Brexit border issues, and key advocacy topics such as VAT-free shopping and youth travel. JC encouraged members to complete the business barometer surveys as they provide vital statistics to support the Association's arguments to the Government and media.
- 3.7 **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS.** The 2023 Members Directory was recently published; JC encouraged members to use this resource to contact other members. Those who have not received their copy should contact the team. The 2023/24

UKinbound map is currently in development and will be available for tour operator and accommodation provider members to order for free.

UKinbound's digital channels continue to show strong year-on-year growth with around 14,500 followers across all channels, meaning members' content and the Association's activities are reaching a larger audience than ever.

JC highlighted key marketing opportunities for members including the free members newsletter and the Group Travel World columns, and encourage members to contact the Marketing team to discuss plans for their business.

JC announced a partnership between UKinbound and The National Sales Conference, which will allow UKinbound members to get 20% off tickets to the National Sales Conference in November. The partnership includes a free 12-month subscription for UKinbound members to professional development platform, The Growth Hub+.

3.8 **UPCOMING ACTIVITIES.** Forthcoming activities include: the UKinbound Annual Convention in Belfast, on 20 & 21 September; World Travel Market London in November, and an MP email writing campaign

3.9 JC thanked the team at Historic Chatham Dockyard for hosting the Board Meeting, tours, General Meeting and networking evening, and thanked the Events and wider UKinbound team.

4. HAS SCREEN TOURISM GONE INTO OVERDRIVE? – SEREN WELCH, SEREN WELCH CONSULTING

4.1 Guest speaker Seren Welch (SW) presented on the state of screen tourism and the opportunity it presents for tourism businesses and destinations. SW discussed the ways media companies are changing their operations, fuelled by increased demand for content during the pandemic, and changes to visitor influences. SW discussed how tourism businesses can become involved, citing long term strategy and working directly with producers as key factors.

6. Q&A

6.1 Ashley Jones, Frameless asked JC: Of all the Ministers and MPs you write to as part of your lobbying activity, do any ever write back?

JC responded: We do get responses but it can take a while. It's something to hold onto but also with which to hold MPs to account. Recently we got a response from Robert Jenrick when we wrote to him about our concerns around the cost of the new ETA and lack of plans to translate the application form to multiple languages. We also spoke to a Kent MP to provide an aggregated response to write to Robert Jenrick.

6.2 JC asked SW: It can be difficult for businesses to know the right time to get in on a screen tourism project – you can get in early when there might be more flexibility on the rights but it might not be a success. Or you can get in later on an already successful franchise but by then the rights are very restricted. How do you know when the best time is?

SW responded: There is a checklist. It's very interesting because due to the competition between streaming channels, they are increasingly taking less risks themselves. So what

we're now starting to see is a resurgence of tried and tested storylines. The new HBO Max Harry Potter remake is an example – it's tried and tested and they know its going to work. There's another series coming out soon based in the North of England adapted from a literary series and follows another tried and tested storytelling model. Streaming companies are less willing to take content risks compared to during the pandemic, as production budgets often equal subscription revenue. So if it's a tried and tested model or based on an existing series, you know there will be a level of commitment as they're not trying to write the script as they go along.

There are of course lots of other factors which I haven't got time to discuss but I'm happy to share that checklist afterwards.

NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be held on 4 September 2023.

There was no other business.

CLOSE OF MEETING.