



UKINBOUND

THE VOICE OF INBOUND TOURISM

UKINBOUND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - MINUTES

6 February 2023

Science Museum

1. WELCOME – JOSS CROFT, CEO & JAMES AITKEN, CHAIRMAN

- 1.1 Joss Croft (JC) officially began the Annual General Meeting (AGM), stepping in on behalf of James Aitken (JA), due to Chairman's absence.
- 1.2 JA welcomed attendees to the AGM through a pre-recorded video. JA shared his optimism for a positive 2023, acknowledging a wave of confidence for the year ahead. JA noted that air traffic figures are now back to pre-pandemic levels, and that there is a general uptake in holiday bookings.
- 1.3 JA thanked Caroline Stokes, Marketing Manager at Science Museum for the support around hosting the AGM.
- 1.4 JA congratulated Joss Croft (JC) for his recognition in the New Year Honours List for services to the tourism industry.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 22 February 2022

2.1 Chris Ball (CB), General Secretary of UKinbound, presented the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting which took place at The National Gallery in February 2022. Daryl Bennett, Go City, proposed that the minutes are a true and accurate record of the meeting. The motion was seconded by Hitesh Raja, Golden Tours.

2.2 Helen Peters, Shakespeare's England, proposed that there were no matters arising. The motion was seconded by Mike Newman, b2me Tourism Marketing.

2 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE – CHRIS BALL, GENERAL SECRETARY

3.1 Chris Ball (CB) gave an overview of current membership numbers, which stand at 351, with a total of 82 members joining in the last membership year (a record in a 12-month period). Since 1 October 2022, UKinbound has welcomed an additional 32 members. This January alone, the Association welcomed three times as many new members, compared to the average.

3.2 CB presented a membership overview, reporting that there is a spread of members across different sectors and regions. CB noted that there is still more work to do in amongst other regions and demographics to ensure an equal representation. CB stated that last year's membership drop offs in the accommodation category have been particularly high due to factors such as the pandemic, however, suggested that this audience has now bounced back and grown by 50% since September 2021.

3.3 CB welcomed new members that have joined the Association since October 2021, many of whom were present at the AGM. CB encouraged all members present at the AGM to introduce themselves during the networking part of the evening. He also thanked the UKinbound team and Board of Directors for their ongoing support.

3.4 CB reminded members of the wide range of member benefits, many of which are free and encouraged all members to take advantage of all tools available (newsletter, fam trips, networking evenings). CB urged members to communicate and engage with the Association as well as the rest of membership.

4 EVENTS UPDATE – ANDREW GUTHRIE, EVENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR

4.1 Andrew Guthrie (AG), Events Committee Chair reflected on 2021/22 and reminded members of the restrictions that were applicable to the events industry at the time, and how positive it has been to come back to face-to-face interactions amongst colleagues, and new contacts. AG gave an overview of the department's activities over 2022, which included over 36 events in total (both online and offline) across the country, ranging from webinars, DMO updates, mental health and finance sessions, GMs, networking evenings, fam trips, WTM, ATM and the UKinbound Annual Convention in Aberdeen. The Association was also able to re-introduce its Awards for Excellence Gala Dinner as part of the Convention programme – celebrating the very best of the tourism industry. The World Travel Market 2022 was considerably smaller in size, compared to previous years, yet the footfall made the stand feel its busiest. The Association continues to review and increase its regional, domestic, and international events – making sure that all members can benefit from these opportunities.

4.2 AG outlined the Association's event programme plans and ambitions for 2023 and beyond – ensuring that all events are relevant to the membership and deliver significant value. AG revealed that this year's Annual Convention will take place in Belfast, on 21 – 21 September. The planning of content, venues, and opportunities to deliver the event is currently underway.

4.3 AG revealed that the Events Department is aiming to utilise and invest in the EventsAir platform further, which supports with the registration, tracking and delivery of UKinbound events. The Association will be going out to the membership in the near future to widen its offering and propose EventsAir for member usage.

4.4 AG also reported that the Association is continuing to increase the profile of all members through event sponsorships, which further supports income generation.

4.5 AG thanked Events Manger, Palmira Errico, Saara Vuorela-Valladares, Head of Events and the Events Committee for their ongoing support.

5. PUBLIC AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE – JOSS CROFT, CEO

5.1 Joss Croft (JC) stepped in on behalf of Jennifer Cormack, Marketing & Communications Committee Chair, and gave an overview of the Association's marketing, communications, PR and advocacy activities over the past year. Advocacy highlights include lobbying and the removal of Omicron restrictions, maintaining a seat at the table (TIC's Intl Competitiveness Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group), engaging with the parliament, giving evidence at several committees, and collaborating with the industry on key matters. JC reported that despite most restrictions being now lifted, the industry is facing external challenges including the war in Ukraine, staff shortages, cost of living crisis, amongst others. The Association also published a joint report with ABTA on value of international tourism, which has been broken down by constituency – an invaluable tool for future advocacy efforts.

5.2 JC reported that the Association is continuing to attract news headline, with 334 pieces of coverage including 28 national newspapers and five television/radio interviews. The Association has also made it to international news in Poland, the Netherlands, Germany, and others. JC has also reported that the Association has grown its digital audience by 15% in the last year and helped more than 130 members to raise their profiles to the travel trade and beyond, through newsletters, bespoke mailings, sponsorships and GTW column opportunities. The Association has also published a range of print collateral, including the Year in Review, WTM magazine, UKinbound Map and Members Directory.

5.3 JC outlined the department's priorities for 2023, which include: supporting the industry's recovery, maintaining a seat the table, continued industry collaboration, and representation of members through parliamentary engagement. The Association has also recently submitted several keys asks to the Government, ahead of March Budget.

5.4 JC thanked Cindy Ng, Head of Marketing & Comms, Karolina Danciewicz, Marketing Exec and Lauren Broughton (Head of PR, currently on maternity leave) for their ongoing support.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT – LANA BENNETT, TREASURER

6.1 Lana Bennett (LB) presented the year end accounts, noting that the audit went well with no qualifications and that it was prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements. Overall, the Association came in under budget for the year and UKinbound is a going concern with no corporation tax to be paid.

6.2 LB reported that despite a challenging environment that the Association find itself in, UKinbound overachieved on membership last year, against budgeted income. Similarly, the events income was higher than anticipated, giving a positive side to the income generation all together. The Association also experienced less expenditure on events and central operating costs, thereby delivering a lower deficit than budgeted for.

6.3 LB explained that the lack of face-to-face events across 2021/22 led to a reduced turnover, however the reintroduction of live events in 2022/23 resulted in an increase of 76% in revenue. Furthermore, the Association experienced an increase of 19% in membership revenue, thus highlighting the new member figures which have begun to stabilise the business.

6.4 LB outlined the projected deficit for 2023, with an anticipated surplus from next year – with the Association’s aim to rebuild its monetary reserves. Further to this, the business is secured by the surpluses brought in over the previous years, in addition to the Government load.

6.5 LB highlighted key financial risks for the next year which include: further Government restrictions or restrictions in source markets that dampen demand, and damaged balance sheets of members which may impact ability to invest in UKinbound activities. Mitigations against these risks include monthly reforecast after Q1, monthly cashflow reports, and management accounts produced within a week of month end to allow agility in case of any issues. Given that the Association’s income comes in advance (events & membership fees), this de-risks UKinbound’s operations.

7. CEO UPDATE – JOSS CROFT, CEO

7.1 Joss Croft (JC) thanked the Board members for their updates and presented the interim results of the latest Membership Satisfaction Survey, which show that 84% (58% in 2022) of members are renewing their membership annually to gain access to the travel trade, thus making contacts through networking opportunities. JC also presented figures which suggest that 96% of members find their membership with the Association valuable. In addition to this, 95% of members are satisfied with their overall membership – an increase from 89% in the last year. JC noted that there is still work to be done, and encouraged members to complete the survey before it closes.

7.2 JC outlined the recent VisitBritain Inbound Tourism Forecast for 2023, which predicts that passenger volumes will return to 86% of the 2019 level and 87% of 2019; though there are uncertainties around these figures, particularly due to the challenging global economic situation. The forecast also assumes that European markets are to recover a lot quicker than long-haul overall, reaching 24.1 million visits in 2023, which equate to 88% of the 27.3 million visits in 2019. JC also added that during the financial crisis in 2008/09, business tourism has suffered, whilst leisure tourism continued to grow, indicating that the current economic crisis may not have such a detrimental impact on inbound tourism after all. JC continued, by adding that December’s Business Barometer results indicate an increase in confidence across members, after a sharp decrease in the previous quarter.

7.3 Other challenges include: visas, ID cards, ETAs, APD, tax-free shopping, destination image & confidence, along with staffing issues, quality of offering and future opportunities for the sector – including the coronation and Eurovision Song Contest being held in Liverpool later this year.

7.4 JC outlined the Association’s priorities for 2023, which include: focus on member retention and growing overall membership portfolio, providing members with commercial opportunities, guidance and support, as well as keeping the events programme fresh and relevant. Additionally, the Association will continue to work with members to understand their needs further, leverage skills and networks of the Board and the team, and finally, grow the overall reach and influence.

7.5 JC thanked members for their continued support, and the Board and Secretariat for their hard work and dedication.

8. Q&A

8.1 JC asked the audience for further matters or questions to be raised during the AGM.

Rob Russell, CEO, AC Group, shared his concerns on the growing number of hotels that are continually closing across the country, and having a knock-on effect on all business types across the tourism industry. He also added that the shortage in accommodation supply could have a detrimental impact on the Chinese market, which is expected to return. JC explained that hotel chains across the UK are giving up their room availability and dedicating it to the Government, primarily for asylum seekers and refugees, but also increasingly for hospital discharges. JC also responded that the local constituencies and MPs need to be aware of this issue going forward, and what the economic impact is. The Association is also looking at ways to make Government aware of this ongoing concern.

Mike Newman, b2me Tourism Marketing shared his views on the work that he has been undertaking with several DMOs, who say that there is currently an uptake in the amount of hotels that are opening outside London.

9. TOURISM ALLIANCE UPDATE - RICHARD TOOMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

9.1 Richard Toomer, Executive Director at Tourism Alliance shared the organisation's mission and current as well as future policy priorities.

10. AOB

There was no other business arising.

JC thanked all members and closed the meeting.