



Minutes of Board Meeting

30th March 2023 – Wollens Board Room

Meeting commenced 2pm

ITEM	ACTION	BY WHOM/ BY WHEN
<p><u>1</u></p>	<p><u>PRESENT, APOLOGIES, MINUTES, MATTERS ARISING</u></p> <p>Present: Chris Hart (CH) ERBID Chair, Chief Executive Wollens, Anthony Payne-Neale (APN) ERBID Vice-Chair, Owner of Court Prior Boutique B&B, Carolyn Custerson (CC) ERBID Chief Executive, Andy Banner-Price (ABP) Owner of The 25 Boutique B&B, Tim Godfrey (TG) Partner, Bishop Fleming, Martin Brook (MB) Owner of Pilgrims Rest, Pippa Craddock (PC) Director, Business & Marketing Solutions Ltd, Richard Cuming (RC) Owner of Bygones, Claire Flower (CF) Director, Beverley Holidays, Kevin Mowat (KM) Director of Place, Torbay Council (TC), Jim Parker (JP) Editor in Chief, Torbay Weekly, Alison Bayliss (AB) ERBID – minutes.</p> <p>Apologies: Jason Garside (JG) Managing Director, TLH Kelly Widley (KW) Food & Drink Hospitality Consultant</p> <p>Approval of 23rd February 2023 Minutes – two amendments were raised (action AB)</p> <p>Matters Arising CH advised that CC has met with Lisa Tuck (Divisional Director Economy, Environment and Infrastructure, Pride in Place) and with her background and experience of setting up BIDs proposed that Lisa becomes the new representative of Torbay Council on the ERBID Board, replacing KM who is retiring today. All agreed.</p> <p>Sub-Groups – At the previous meeting it was decided which sub-groups the individual board members would sit on. JP, who was away for the last meeting, chose to join the Destination Marketing, and the External Relations sub-groups. It was agreed that sub-groups would meet via Zoom, unless otherwise required for a particular meeting.</p> <p>Focus Groups – CC advised that Focus Groups have all been organised for July. The Board agreed that all levy payers would be invited.</p>	<p>AB</p>

<p>2</p>	<p><u>FINANCE & GOVERNANCE</u></p> <p>Levy Collection - CC Collection is ahead of last year at 53.7% (up from 48.1% last year). Many third instalments have been received with the 3 monthly payment plan ending on 20th March. Chasing processes will now commence by Torbay Council and discussions have begun. CC has advised Ian at TC of the Board’s decision not to repeat the payment plan next year.</p> <p>Matter arising: In-Year Changes Further to the discussion at the previous meeting, CC clarified that the current ERBID system does not allow for in-year changes. TC have advised they do not have the capacity to issue more than the January invoice. CC recommended that, looking ahead to ERBID3, this should be reviewed as there are many changes of ownership that are not reflected. Mo would be able to advise if it is possible to change our Business Plan to include it for the existing BID. The Isle of Wight BID does include in-year changes and operates on a rolling programme, which they pay their Council to collect. The Board discussed and agreed this should be looked into. Action CC to discuss with Mo.</p> <p>New Rateable Values – CH raised that it would be helpful for TC to profile the impact that the forthcoming changes may have on levy collection. CC has asked TC to report but they advise that they will not know until April. Action CC will request again, impact report needed by 1st June.</p> <p>2022 Debtors On our request, TC sent out a Final Demand letter on 3rd February, at which time the 2022 debt was £35,815.12. As a result, an additional £3446.75 was collected, reducing the amount owed for 2022 to £32,368.37. The total 2022 levy collection is 94%. Discussion in room regarding the next course of action - whether we pursue enforcement and possible court action and how this would be done, with the feeling that it should be a Council-led process. CC advised that Mo has confirmed that debt from ERBID1 cannot now be pursued. Action CC/CH – arrange F & G Sub-group, to discuss further.</p> <p>2023 Budget - TG With £68k collected in March and a further £28k in the last week, we are broadly where we hoped to be. It is important to take action on debtors. There is a planned spend over the next few months and 80% collection is hoped for. CC advised that the VIC budget has been increased by £3.5k to cover Sunday opening throughout the summer, plus the extra bank holiday, and the increase in the basic rate of pay. The £2.5k allocated for digital screens in the VIC has been removed to accommodate some of this. TC have not given planning permission for screens but the conversation will continue, with the VIC’s new lease to include a landlord’s agreement that they can be installed, as this is separate to the Planning Dept’s decision (see Office Lease below).</p> <p>Commercial (Additional) Income Generation – CC At the last Board meeting, CC highlighted her concern that the in-house team may not achieve the commercial income target set for 2023. The Board suggested that external support be considered and talks with Clearwater Publishing are pending. Meanwhile, the situation has improved with banner advert sales doubling in value since the last meeting. These have been generated in-house.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>CC</p> <p>CC/CH</p>
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	<p>All the banner ad spaces for the Air Show and Food & Music Festival pages have been sold. £5970 has been secured to date and the banner ad target is £12k. CC and KH are meeting with Stagecoach before the next Board meeting, which may secure a further £6k of additional income.</p> <p>Office Lease – TG TG has received the draft lease from Ashley Bevan from Wollens and has agreed that his amendments are acceptable. We are still waiting for a copy of the landlord’s insurance to check that we are charged correctly, but TG is happy to sign now. As advised by KM above (see 2023 Budget), Action TG to have it included that the landlord has no issue with screens being installed, then sign and return.</p>	TG
3	<p><u>DESTINATION MARKETING - CC</u></p> <p>The February Marketing Report was circulated to the Board. CC highlighted that website performance is determined by campaign activity. Traffic is being closely monitored and we are looking to invest more in generic English Riviera Google search campaign over the next few weeks, to boost traffic whilst people are searching for/researching holidays. Bookings are getting later and later and our continued visibility on Google is critical. MB pointed out that the Walking Festival has its own dedicated site so the traffic going there can be considered in additional to englishriviera.co.uk figures.</p> <p>Ready for the Riviera Summer Family Campaign This new campaign has had a positive impact on increasing web traffic, particularly from the Birmingham area. The Destination Marketing Sub-group has decided to invest a further £10k in a second two-week campaign across 8 poster sites in Birmingham from the 27th March, taking the total campaign cost to £95k. A full evaluation will be reported at the April Board meeting.</p> <p>New Couples Spring Campaign Following recent discussions, this has been developed further for the Board’s consideration. A draft media schedule was circulated, proposing a £10k investment. The Board had already been shown RH’s creative proposal, and the feeling was that the brief hadn’t been met. CC advised that meetings with other agencies (Big Wave and Stuff Advertising) have been arranged, therefore this campaign will be delayed. Any new proposals to be looked at by the Destination Marketing Sub-group.</p> <p>Groups – DATA/British Tourism & Travel Show Working in partnership with DATA, the English Riviera was represented by CC and AB at the British Tourism & Travel Show on 22nd-23rd March. We assisted with many quality enquiries from tour operators, both domestic and inbound. CC believes that BTTS performed better than the Group Leisure Show (Milton Keynes last October), which attracted more group operators than tour operators. Our plan is not to return to GLS for this year but to focus efforts on next year’s BTTS in March at the NEC. TLH, Fragrance Group and Providence Hospitality were also exhibiting this year with meant new group business could be secured.</p> <p>Meeting with Stuff Advertising - CF CF, CC and GF met with Stuff Advertising (SA) following a recommendation from CH, as Wollen’s had been impressed by the work done for them. SA looks after other DMO clients including Visit Bristol. It was a positive meeting; it was felt they understood the</p>	

	<p>BID concept. They discussed the use of the term ‘English Riviera’ and that other destinations use ‘Visit...(location)’ as a known and trusted term. They believe that ‘Torbay’ doesn’t have the negative connotations that we still believe it has and potentially ‘Visit Torbay (English Riviera)’ could attract more visitors, particularly 18 – 34 year olds. They suggested research, which we haven’t carried out since 2012. CC – the ER Management Plan includes recommendations regarding a brand review. CC feels that it is time to do a piece of research like this and proposes that the TDA/TC fund the research 50/50 with ERBID Co. She also proposes that the work should go out to tender. The cost would be approx. £25k. Discussion in room regarding branding with the agreement that research would be a positive move.</p> <p>Action CC to approach TDA to find out if there is an appetite for a joint venture. Action CC to draft a proposal for Liam/Ann Marie, first showing it to CH. Action CC/PC to prepare a brief that would go out for tender to three companies, possibly SA, Blue Sail and Brand Vista.</p> <p>Geopark Briefing Day Due to timing, it was agreed that the Geopark Briefing Day update would be moved to April’s Board meeting.</p>	<p>CC CC CC/PC</p>
<p>4</p>	<p><u>EVENTS UPDATE - CC</u></p> <p>Food & Music Festival This is currently the busiest page on the englishriviera.co.uk website.</p> <p>English Riviera Spring Walking Festival Bookings had been slow but have now improved since increased promotion of the event, and since the online ‘basket’ functionality was launched on the dedicated Walking Festival website. The Spring Festival will go ahead on a reduced programme of walks. The Autumn Festival will not be launched until the Spring Festival has been concluded and reviewed. Running this event has been heavy on our resources but is an exciting new event and part of the ERBID Business Plan. ABP and MB both highlighted that bookings generally are very late this year, so the late festival bookings are on trend.</p> <p>Torbay Pride MB advised we have received an application for funding. ERBID have already committed the budget for this year but the Board feel they would potentially like to support this event. More information required. Action MB – will ask the organiser for his Promotional Plan, with a view to considering seed funding.</p> <p>Agatha Christie Festival The programme is well advanced and the Box Office should open in May, earlier than previous years.</p> <p>England’s Seafood FEAST KW is making good progress and bookable product is being agreed. A new photo shoot is scheduled for 28th March, to help with promotion.</p>	<p>MB</p>

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS/KEY MEETINGS

DMO Review – CC

This has been much discussed in recent weeks and there is now strong support for there to be a new Devon LVEP (Local Visitor Economy Partnership). We (Torbay) are not big enough to be a solo LVEP, so the SWLEP want Devon to work together and apply jointly to be an LVEP. Devon has numerous local authorities, unitary authorities, national parks and ATPs so any consolidation will not happen ‘naturally’. To help pave the way, the TDA will carry out a project, funded by the LEP, to review the current LEP footprint in terms of forming an effective LVEP. Kevin Foster has been briefed and is in full support. CC strongly supports the direction being taken.

Torbay Emergency Climate

CC attended a Torbay Climate Emergency Action Plan meeting at Paignton Zoo. KM advised that the Council’s Climate Action plan has gone through but that the community-backed plan was not adopted, as there was insufficient support after public consultation, with protestors impacting support. The Plan is now being refreshed. CC has proposed to the Torbay Climate Partnership (TCP)’s Chair that an ERBID Focus group is formed. The Board discussed, and agreed that ERBID should set up a Green Tourism focus group with a view to providing practical advice, such as a ‘Green Toolkit’ to levy-payers and for lobbying as required. This is to be independent of the ongoing existing TC and community plans, which are proving to be political. CC proposed MB as Chair of the Green Tourism Sub-group – proposal agreed.

Action CC – will extract ERBID from existing plans, update the TCP’s Chair and invite him to attend a Green Tourism Sub-group meeting.

CC

Action CC – to approach Neil Warren to explore possibility of staging a Green Tourism programme across the resort, something Plymouth have already invested in.

CC

Meeting with Kevin Foster (KF) - CC

JG, ABP, ANP, JP and CC met with KF for an hour, to discuss a specific agenda including Asylum seeker/homeless hotels, policing and anti-social behaviour, Torquay Town Deal and the DMO review:

KF updated on Asylum seeker accommodation – the Government is reviewing their policy around using hotels. There is no update yet on when the Esplanade will stop being used.

CC advised that no shared comms have been received from TC, but ERBID businesses need to be updated.

KF updated on hotel accommodation for homeless people – JP particularly was concerned about the use of the Seascape Hotel and anti-social behaviour. Use of hotels to house the homeless seems to be increasing and the number of hotels being used is expected to escalate. The lack of planning enforcement regarding changes of use is an ongoing concern.

KF updated on policing – 350 additional officers are being trained across Devon and Cornwall. We have seen a significant increase in police presence across Torbay. These heightened levels are planned to stay in place for the summer

	<p>with increased monitoring of street drinking in groups, drug trafficking and will see the introduction of more Protection Orders.</p> <p>KF updated on the Torquay Town Deal: The Strand – a contractor should soon be appointed for the Strand project, with work likely to start this year. Match-funded money will not have to be returned if initial deadlines are missed as there have been contracting delays across the country, with growing challenges regarding increased costs. Crossways – demolition is about to start.</p> <p>KF updated on pending VAT changes – KF advised that Government are looking seriously at increasing the current VAT threshold to encourage smaller businesses to stay open longer. The Cleveland Hotel in Torquay was suggested by ABP as a good case study with them closing the day they hit the threshold. With all the new ‘branded hotel’ bedrooms coming onto the market CC feels that ERBID should support this initiative as it could help make the smaller hotels more competitive. KF is reasonably confident this VAT threshold increase will happen.</p> <p>As a result of discussion following CC’s review of the KF meeting, Action CC to speak to owner of the Seascope, re Asylum seeker situation.</p> <p>Torbay Leadership Board/Torbay Story - JP The latest meeting of the Torbay Story, attended by CC, covered a review of the first 12 months, and included some positive and encouraging feedback. There are almost 2000 Torbay Story Champions. The move towards having Town Boards, so that each town can have a voice, is progressing. UKREiIF 2023 – Planning is underway for the UKREiIF Forum in Leeds on 16th – 18th May. Torbay has an exhibition stand at the event for all 3 days and has a Place Promotional Event at the forum, with over 100 people invited, on 17th May, 1-2pm. There is still a lot of work to do but the group is finding momentum. It is working, but the private sector needs to buy into it.</p>	CC
	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <p>JP asked for a discussion of a new 5-year action plan to be put on a future Board meeting agenda. Action CC/CH.</p> <p>Combined ERBID/Torbay Business Forum Expo - CC CC gave a reminder that 3rd October 2023 has been set for this combined Expo. A headline sponsor has been secured and plans are progressing well.</p> <p>Latest Research: GSWTP Cost of Living Survey - CC As a partner, we contributed £200 to the cost of conducting this latest Cost of Living Survey, with the purpose to provide evidence for lobbying Government for further support. CC distributed draft copies to the Board. 96% of businesses are very concerned about rising costs impacting their business viability/survivability. Torbay had 155 responses.</p>	CC/CH

	<p>South West Tourism Awards – CH CH attended the awards ceremony. English Riviera businesses won two bronzes, one silver, and some commendations which included the English Riviera Visitor Information Service.</p> <p>Torbay Weekly Business Awards – CC ERBID will be sponsors of the Tourism Business of the Year award. The Awards ceremony is to held on 15th June at the Riviera International Centre.</p> <p>Illicit use of Tourism Accommodation / Policing - MB MB reported on issues he had recently when part of his accommodation, rented via Airbnb, was used for prostitution/drugs, and the challenges he experienced with the police. He raised the issue of what fellow businesses should do in this situation? APN recommended that Will Kerr, the new Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, should be invited for a meeting. It was agreed by the Board that the External Relations Sub-group should discuss further and Action APN to contact Will Kerr with an invitation to meet with them.</p> <p>Kevin’s Retirement It was KM’s last day before retirement. He thanked the Board and advised that he has enjoyed being part of the ERBID Co. CH thanked KM, on behalf of the Board, for his long years of service to both ERBID1 and ERBID2, and for his wise counsel.</p>	APN
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Meeting closed at 5pm