

**Minutes Area Tourism Partnership Meeting held
Thursday 6th December 2007
Venue: Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, Hill Street, Kilmarnock**

Present:

Bob Leitch, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Chair)
John Spooner, East Ayrshire Council
Daniel Steel, East Ayrshire Council
Michael Wright, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire
Carolyn Elder, Largs Yacht Haven
Stewart Selbie, Turnberry Hotel
Cllr Hywel Davies, South Ayrshire Council
Steven Morley, North Ayrshire Council
Lesley Cannon, South Ayrshire Council
Malcolm Simpson, Gailes Restaurant & Hotel
Robin Jackson, Federation of Small Businesses
Howard Wilkinson, Ayrshire Chamber Tourism Forum
Val Russell, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Sandi Hellowell, VisitScotland
Catriona Mackie, VisitScotland
Liz Boyle, VisitScotland

Apologies:

Apologies received from Cllr. Elisabeth Marshall; Provost Winifred Sloan;
Alex Anderson, North Ayrshire Council; Martin Hunter, Federation of Small Businesses;
Alastair Dobson, Taste of Arran; Mark Rodwell, Prestwick International Airport; Cllr Jim
Buchanan, East Ayrshire Council; Lindsay Robertson, VisitScotland

B Leitch chaired the meeting and welcomed attendees.

The chair then informed that Valerie Russell was going to present the Local Industry Liaison (2009 Homecoming Big Band Event) presentation, and this is going on the agenda first to allow her to leave the meeting and continue with other business, therefore the original agenda will be slightly re-arranged.

1. Local Industry Liaison

2009 Homecoming Big Band Event

Valerie Russell gave the above presentation, on Moira Birtwhistle's behalf, who has been working on this Event for 2009 with the assistance of the Ayrshire Chamber Tourism Committee.

The purpose of the presentation is to raise awareness and gain the approval of the people in attendance to accept the concept of the Homecoming Big Band Event that will take place in 2009. Glasgow Prestwick International Airport is very supportive of the event. It is the intention to recreate a nostalgic experience of 1940's and 50's under a homecoming theme, culminating in a Big Band Event.

The venue is not yet finalised, but it will be within the airport. The timing would be early November 2009, around Remembrance Sunday and avoiding Thanksgiving Day.

Following the presentation there were discussions around co-ordination and management of the event, signature funding and individual theme funding. Signature funding would only be available if it is a Scotland wide event and EventScotland is managing this. Theme funding, from 5 to 50 thousand pounds, is also available, but this project would require substantially more funding than that.

The important point is that it will bring people to Scotland, not just Ayrshire and B Leitch will be enquiring with Event Scotland, if the concept as it stands, would warrant signature funding.

Responsible: B Leitch

2. Previous Minutes and Actions

The Minutes of 14 August 2007 were taken as an accurate account of events and approved.

Outstanding action items update:

Local Industry Liaison

Action update: Dave Killicoat still to pass leaflets to VisitScotland, which will then be circulated round group as soon as available.

Responsible –C Mackie

Expo

Action update: C. Mackie updated (in S. Gibson's absence), that following investigation, it was generally thought it was not a good option for Expo 2008 due to lack of availability of suitable stand space, timing and location. However, the ATP Group should consider participating in Expo 2009 in Glasgow. Planning for this should start in March 2008.

Responsible - S. Gibson

Wish List Group with Private Sector

Action Update - This was discussed by B Leitch and M. Simpson and it was agreed to put this 'on hold' at the moment.

European funding

Action Update - S. Gibson still to feedback re: European funding situation at next meeting in February.

Responsible – S Gibson

Homecoming 2009

Action Update: - C Mackie advised that Michael McDaid has been appointed Festival Director and started in his new role on 3 Dec 07. Michael will be invited to attend the next ATP meeting.

Responsible - C Mackie

C Mackie updated that the Festival Company has changed event management to Liz Hobbs Concerts and Events following tender procedure. This company has an excellent track record of developing, managing and producing major events around the UK. Earlier this year they produced the highly successful Rock at the Racecourse event at Ayr Racecourse and have to date put together an excellent draft programme for the Festival.

3. A Fund to Accelerate Growth

The chairman advised that Lindsay Robertson could unfortunately not attend the meeting and C Mackie would present the papers on her behalf. C. Mackie will take questions and comments back to Lindsay Robertson.

Following the report, there questions concerning the points regarding public sector funding made in the paper. Also a query on the impact of the Scottish Enterprise restructure on the fund was made. Clarification to be sought from L. Roberston.

Responsible - C Mackie

Information on local successful Ayrshire & Arran Challenge Fund Applications to be circulated.

4. Scottish Enterprise / VisitScotland Restructure Announcements

M Wright updated on the restructure at Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire. Local Enterprise Companies cease to exist from 1 April 2008, but detail on local delivery is yet to be announced. However, tourism remains a priority to concentrate on at national level. S Selbie asked for the reasons behind this restructure by Scottish Executive. M Wright replied that it was to help improve efficiency and reduce costs.

CM explained the VisitScotland proposed re-structure. This change is largely an internal reorganisation resulting in function based reporting lines rather than geographical based reporting. There will be 6 regions in line with the Scottish Enterprise regions but as yet the detail on how the new structure will operate is not available.

5. 2008 Tourism Conference

B Leitch advised that the Tourism Conference would be held on Tuesday 26th February at The Park Hotel, Kilmarnock. Next meeting of Conference group will be 19 Dec at 0845am at Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce offices and the chairman extended an invitation for any ATP members to attend this meeting.

Suggested content includes:

- State of nation/intro by B Leitch
- Prof John Lennon of Moffat Centre (successful tourism innovation and tourism development)
- Panel of speakers for Q & A session
- Key Speaker will be Pierre-Yves Gerbeau, Executive Director of Capital & Regional, ex Chief Executive of the London Dome.

SEA have come in as the major sponsors of the conference and are supported by VisitScotland, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce and The Park Hotel.

HW said we should take into consideration the fact that this conference is being held 2 days before Tourism Innovation Day and decide how to incorporate this.

BL requires the ATP group to encourage attendance at this conference. Target to reach is 150. Last year attendance was 125.

J Spooner offered the assistance of East Ayrshire Council to be involved in the 'welcome presentation' at the start of conference. This was accepted by the Chair.

6. Information & Sales Strategy

C Mackie updated on the status of above. Two brainstorming meetings were held with the following suggestions being put forward for the strategy:

- Relocation and upgrade of Ayr TIC possibly incorporating a visitor attraction such as genealogy centre.
- Tourist Information Centre in Prestwick Airport (underway)
- Upgrade of website to include interactive visitor maps and downloads for CD's or USB's. Also possibly a customer review section.

- Use of technology such as plasma screens in key visitor locations but linked to other outlets e.g. accommodation providers.
- TIC's listed on satellite navigation software
- Monthly bulletin on events to accommodation providers (implemented)
- Upgrade and tailor retail in TIC's (underway)
- Review of TIP's and eTip's (underway)
- Continuing customer surveys and mystery shopping
- Marketing of TIC's to visitors
- Programme of TIC staff swaps to improve product knowledge

Other opportunities for partnership implementation:

- Programme of fam trips for Industry. This should be organised by AAVAA or Local Authorities.
- Red jacket scheme involving students or volunteers organised by Colleges or Community Groups.
- Signage in different languages.
- Tourist service training for non-core industry e.g. petrol stations, supermarkets etc. This could be organised by Chamber possibly.
- All accommodation providers to be wi-fi enabled. This would be a scheme run by SE Ayrshire and/or local authorities.

These suggestions will be progressed during 2008.

7. High Priority Actions Update

Status of documents marked high priority:

Area Visitor Survey - C Mackie updated group on selection process, which will take place in January 08, to commission company to carry out survey. The survey will take place over one year. Funding agreed with all three Local Authorities and two Enterprise Companies.

Prestwick Airport TIC - C Mackie advised that the capital funding is in place now SEA and VisitScotland. The three Local Authorities have been extremely supportive towards the first year of getting the TIC into operation, as have GPIA. The final business case has now been approved by Senior Management Team, VisitScotland. Plans to progress implementation have commenced.

Golf Tourism - M Wright updated, on the paper already circulated. Golf Club Secretaries have met and are now focussed on golf tourism, agreeing to additional teetimes. A Workshop will be held by GTS Scotland in January and all signs are look very positive.

Malcolm Simpson added that the workshop would allow ideas to be put forward. A good level of support has been shown by local hotels. Caddy Training plan has been proposed. Key point was made that golf courses that are involved are the more private high-end courses and there is a requirement to involve municipal courses.

Sailing - M Wright gave an update on this project and informed that the Sail Clyde Strategy will be finalised and published in February. Local projects are progressing, including proposal to enhance Largs Slipway and World Events are being organised. North Ayrshire Council, Argyll & Bute Council and SEA are continuing to support this. Hopefully investments will be forthcoming.

Food and Drink - H Wilkinson updated the group on the success of this project. SEA tourism group have produced a handout called 'your foodkit', which was circulated which will encourage everyone involved in Event Management to use local produce. Also VisitScotland have introduced a new website www.foodtourismscotland.com. Proposals are being put forward both nationally and locally where there are a series of initiatives being driven, ie working with Burns Groups to rejuvenate the Burns Country, linking up with Events Scotland and VisitScotland regarding Expo 2008, seminars planned at Gleneagles in February.

Event Strategy - M Wright reported that the planned Workshop for November had to be postponed. VR Management Consultants will now prepare a report with a view to presenting this to the ATP group in February. M Wright to circulate report prior to the next meeting.
Responsible: M Wright

8. Date and Venue of next meeting

Next ATP Meeting – 19th February 2008 at Gailies Restaurant and Hotel, hosted by Malcolm Simpson

John Spooner asked if this date could be flexible to ensure that Cllr Buchanan could attend the next meeting, the Chair agreed.

Responsible – L. Boyle/E. Sykes