



Minutes
Mercure Queen's Hotel & Spa
Tuesday, 21 March 2023
11:00 -13:00

MEMBERS PRESENT

Craig Mathie (CM)
Andy Lennox (AL)
David Bailey (DB)

Chair
Vice Chair
President

Sector Reps

Guido Schillig (GS)
Richard Wade (RW)
Steve Turner (ST)
Rosie Radwell (RR)

IEA Sector Rep
Transport Sector Rep
Conference & Convention Sector
Accommodation Sector deputy

BID Representatives

Christina Pengelly (CP)
Jacqui Rock (JR)
Martin Davies (MD)
Peter Ruscoe (PR)
Tim Lloyd (TL)

Christchurch BID
Poole BID
Bournemouth Town Centre BID
Bournemouth Coastal BID
Christchurch BID Deputy

Co-opted members

Cllr Philip Broadhead (CPB)
James Croker (JC)
Jon Weaver (JW)
Sam Fox (SF)
Samantha Richardson (SR)

Leader BCP Council
Future Places
Head of Destination & Events BCP Council
Interim Director of Planning
National Coastal Tourism Academy

Secretariat

Stevie Sainsbury (SS)

Destination Development Co-ordinator - BCP Council

APOLOGIES

Carol Scott (CSc)
Chris Shephard (CSh)
Councillor Beverley Dunlop (BD)
Fiona McArthur (FMc)
Georgina Bartlett (GB)
Lucy Filer (LF)
Paul Kinvig (PK)
Morag Wood (MW)
Tim Seward (TS)

Leisure & Attractions Sector Rep
Director, Economic Development
Cabinet Member - Culture & Vibrant Places
Bournemouth Coastal BID
Poole BID Chair
Christchurch BID
Bournemouth Town Centre BID
Cultural Representative
Accommodation Sector

- **Welcome & Apologies - Chair**

Chair welcomed people to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves to Sam Fox (SF) who was attending the Board for the first time.

- **Actions from the last Minutes (not covered by agenda items) - Chair**

- (i) **Setting up Destination Management Board as a CIC**

- Chair reported that following the last meeting approval had been sought and received for ARG funding to be used to set up the DMB as a CIC. Lucy Cooper will be taking the lead and formalising the white paper, engaging with stakeholders and bringing core board members into the leadership team and as directors.
- The expectation is that there will be a clear project plan and the money will be spent imminently as otherwise it has to be returned to the Government. Any remaining funds cannot be used to fund the CIC.
- Chair asked that any Board members interested in becoming Directors of the CIC let him know.

- (ii) **Time for future meetings**

- It was agreed that for the time being the meetings will continue to be from 11am - 1pm on the third Tuesday of every other month. This will be reviewed following the outcome of the May elections if required.

- **BCP Council Structure Changes - Sam Fox**

- SF gave the Board a brief outline of what the new structure from 1st April will look like.
 - Having been appointed as interim Director for Planning last July SF has now been asked to take on the role of Director of Planning & Destination taking forward the 'sense of Place' agenda from 1st April 2023.
 - Graham Farrant remains CEO with 4 Corporate Directors reporting directly to him including Jess Gibbons - Chief Operations Officer
 - Reporting directly to Jess Gibbons will be:
 - Amanda Barrie - Director of Commercial Operations
 - Julian McLaughlin - Director of Infrastructure
 - Kate Langdon - Director of Environment (including street cleansing/waste etc)
 - Matti Raudsepp - Director of Customer, Arts & Estates
 - Sam Fox - Director of Planning & Destination
 - Economic Development will sit in Planning & Destination - Chris Shephard has moved into a Strategy role across the whole organisation
 - Destination will now fall under Planning and Destination but Events and Seafront will sit under Commercial Operations.
 - SF explained that he will be spending a couple of months initially working out what goes where and who does what. He does not intend to rush into anything and is very aware that he cannot fix everything overnight.

Other topics raised were:

- DMB does not have its own financial resources and there needs to be dialogue over what the Board should and should not get involved in. CPB pointed out that there has been a fundamental move from the expectation that the Council will 'do everything' to looking at ways in which those with experience and expertise can take things forward outside of the Council. This will include the new DMB CIC.

- CPB confirmed his ongoing support for Tourism and the Destination but he pointed out that if there is a political change following the May elections then there may well be work for the Board to do in relation to the continuation of the Air Festival and Arts by the Sea Festival.
- CM expressed some concern over what he perceived as a ‘whittling down’ of the importance of marketing in relation to tourism and the destination and a lack of focus on campaigns. CPB acknowledged that unfortunately there has been a cut in the Marketing and PR budgets due to budget pressures and there may be a need to look at the opportunity to use others to promote the destination. He hoped that Future Places would play a bigger role within the new CIC in taking this forward.
- It was agreed that there needs to be more clarity over who does what within the Council so that the Board members know who to approach in relation to a specific concern /query. There needs to be an acknowledged first point of call. **ACTION:** It was agreed that it would be useful if the Board could be provided with a ‘Responsibility Diagram’ which could be shared within the sectors. SF to provide this.
- MB asked if there could be more co-operation between different departments within the Council to avoid situations like that which occurred during CTW this year when roadworks caused major issues over parking during the period of the attraction. SF asked that he be made aware of any instances where Board members were unhappy about a particular situation so he can look into ways of mitigating any problems. Similarly, he asked to be made aware of any positive feedback.
- Place shaping - SF pointed out that there is a need to look differently at what we do with our town centres and high streets moving forward and there are some really important conversations taking place around new ideas to reinstate them as vibrant places with good footfall. CM pointed out that this should include the districts - not just the three town centres.
- At present Bournemouth is the area with most pressing problems but it was acknowledged that it is important that it was not seen as a drain on the other areas.

4. Emerging Vision for Planning & Destination - Sam Fox

- Initial problems within Planning resulted from the bringing together of the three legacy councils. These issues were amplified by back office and computer problems. It was initially hoped that these issues would all be ironed out by the summer of 2023 but things are taking longer than expected
- Customer feedback is currently very critical and when SF was brought into post as interim Head of Planning in July 2022, he put customer care right at the forefront of all planning.
- Problems have been exacerbated by a national shortage of Planners and at the moment attracting the right calibre of people with the right mindset is still a big issue.
- SF acknowledged that the foundations are not in place and although recruitment at a junior level has already taken place there are currently still a number of Senior Officer vacant posts.
- Out of around 700 active cases there is currently a backlog of 350 which have exceeded the deadline for completion.
- SF asked that Board members make him aware of any issues they know about as knowing what the problems are will help in finding the solutions.

- CPB asked that the Board give credit to SF for the progress already made as he started from a very difficult position particularly in relation to the legacy position and also a reliance on other departments eg. Legal and Transport

Chair thanked both SF and CPB for their input.

5. Tourism Strategy Update - Jon Weaver/Sam Richardson

- The Strategy was approved by CMB on 8th March and is now available to view on both the Destination Management Board and the Coast with the Most sites.
- There is a meeting planned today to discuss the next steps and actions.
- JW reported that there are a number of aspects around Destination Marketing, now and in the future, that need addressing. The Seafront and other services are dependent on marketing and establishing an integrated approach to Place Marketing is essential.
- Focus is on high value/low volume (fewer people spending more) and this includes residents.
- JW pointed out that a solid understanding of our key markets, particularly growth markets, is essential and that our research needs to improve in order to fully understand the markets. Some ARG funding was used last year to better understand these markets
- There was some discussion around how the strategy will address issues around the state of some listed buildings, particularly in Bournemouth. MB pointed out that it is a criminal offence not to comply with an improvement order but that enforcement is woefully inadequate at present. SF agreed that the Council can serve repair notices on owners but they need to be in a pretty bad state for this to happen.
- SR reported that an Expression of Interest had been submitted to Visit England for a partnership but that the next stage was proving very challenging as the process was designed for existing partnerships rather than new ones. Currently gone back to VE with a lot of questions and it is going to take time to work through the whole process.
- ST pointed out that as far as he could see Business Tourism was not really represented in the Strategy document despite it having a key influence on the area. It was agreed that although it was referenced in the document in places, there were no actions and it was not obvious enough and this was something that needed to be rectified. **ACTION:** ST to be included in the discussions.

6. Tourism Awards 2023 Update - Chair

- Chair reported that TS had updated him as he was unable to attend today's meeting.
- The Tourism Awards will be launched after Easter with the Gala evening scheduled for 9th November 2023 at the Pavilion, Bournemouth.
- Chair asked Board members to show their support and fully engage with the Awards.
- PR expressed some concern that as a Judge for the awards last year he had not been approached for any feedback on how well the Judging process had worked. DB agreed that one of the actions from the debrief from last year's awards was the need for greater dialogue between TS, as the organiser of the Awards, and the Board on whose behalf the Awards are delivered. It was agreed that a further meeting needs to be set up imminently to ensure that the Board are kept fully informed of plans and have the opportunity for input into the arrangements. **ACTION** Meeting with TS to be set up.

7. Update from Marketing Sub-Group - Sam Richardson

SR reported that:

- Meetings have been scheduled to take place one week before each DMB meeting
- Anyone interested in attending to let SR know.
- There is now new branding on the websites
- The group will be looking at new growth markets in 2023
- Social media will focus on the 3 core Love channels
- Content this year will be mirroring the Year of the Coast. It is particularly encouraging that, for the first time, English Tourism has had a more consumer focus.
- Tourism Partnership income is vital for Marketing and SR asked sector reps to remind and encourage people within their sectors to renew their partnership and to share with them why it is beneficial to them to become partners.
- SR encouraged people to join in supporting Tourism Week this week which she reported was building momentum.
- CM asked why it appeared that a decision not to buy into the Blue Flag status this year was made. CPB confirmed it was as a result of budget restraints but that once the final budget outcome was known he would look at the possibility of reinstating it. He asked for confirmation on the cut-off dates and the cost involved. SR confirmed that the cost for all flags was £10K and that there was still time to reinstate the Blue flags.

8. Sector Updates

a. International Education Association - Guido Schillig

- All areas are doing well apart from the Language Schools
- Biggest problem for Language Schools is the lack of accommodation. This is an international problem as far afield as Canada and Australia. It is proving very challenging with no solution in sight at present.

b. Transport - Richard Wade

- Group met 2 weeks ago. Good attendance except from the Airport, Port and boats.
- Staffing shortages remain an issue with problems over recruiting suitably qualified staff. However, Taxis are now back to pre-pandemic levels.
- Railways continue to have industrial issues but look as if they are about to turn a corner.
- Sightseeing trips - trying to raise awareness outside of the immediate area. Until the end of June there remains a £2 cap on bus travel which means visitors can travel from Swanage to Salisbury for £2.
- Congestion continues to affect all areas of transport. Aim is to get people here and encourage them to stay longer and not use the car while here.
- Traffic jams put visitors off. Looking at ways that buses can bypass the traffic. £8.9m funding - hope to deliver by summer 2024.
- Concerns over the withdrawal of funding for CSAS officers which could result in gridlocks.
- Looking at a more joined up approach with different modes of travel working together. 'Come by train, use bus and /of taxi at night.'

c. Conference and Convention - Steve Turner

- Last meeting was on 6th March.
- Post Covid there is a definite trend in late bookings and late decisions which is causing challenges in planning.
- Feedback at national conferences is that footfall is still down on pre-covid.
- There are a lot of journalists/FAM visits being planned.

- BEB continues to work well, with some large conferences taking up the service - LGA, Lib Dems.
 - RR reported that she has had a number of people coming to them directly rather than through BEB. ST promised to look into this.
- d. Accommodation - Rosie Radwell**
- Police Crime Commissioner will be attending the next meeting to discuss the Crime Prevention Partnership
 - Still pushing for the VAT reduction
 - Concern that there is no incentive to hotels to stay open as they can get a better rate for taking in refugees.
 - Been quiet over the winter with weddings down. However, Marsham Court has seen a good uptake on events - possibly as a result of their sustainable credentials.
 - As with the Conferences there is a trend for group bookings to come in a lot later.
 - Recruitment is not easy - particularly in relation to chefs.
 - JG has been meeting with BAHA and SF will be attending the next meeting.
- e. Eating Out - Andy Lennox**
- Situation for the sector remains very tough particularly for the Night Clubs
 - People are coming out but not spending as much.
 - Christchurch is doing well as a 'microclimate' and Poole, although quiet over the winter, is expecting a good summer. Bournemouth is the area struggling. Still no real progress on getting in the greenery and lighting required on Poole Hill. There remain issues over litter and anti-social behaviour.
 - CPB reported that the Council has introduced spot fines for littering for which there is massive support. Working on the issues over double yellow line parking and camping on the beach. Rough sleepers have reduced from 66 around Christmas to 20.
- f. Poole BID - Jacqui Rock**
- Christmas was good although the Old Town continues to struggle.
 - Flip Out is replacing M&S in the Dolphin Centre and the BID is creating a database so they can continually monitor the situation around vacant premises.
 - Using DISC to monitor business crime. Poole BID used to fund CSAS, although other BIDs do not. Will wait to see outcome of use of the app before making a decision.
 - There continue to be issues over the infrastructure in the Old Town which will impact on the ability to hang bunting in the summer.
 - Poole Christmas Maritime Light 'Festival' has been renamed 'Trail' (PCMLT) and will continue for a further three years.
 - There is a patronage scheme now running to encourage Quay businesses to provide some financial support for events on the Quay.
 - Concerns that marketing can be rather Bournemouth centric with very little mention of the Quays and the Harbour. SR expressed agreement with these comments and promised to take them back to the Marketing Group.
- g. Christchurch BID - Christina Pengelly**
- Similar to Poole, Christchurch are exploring the use of DISC.
 - Looking into encouraging more Business tourism in the area as Christchurch is the ideal venue for smaller conferences
 - CP expressed concern that she felt that Christchurch was not included in Summer events marketing. JW points out that community events are incredibly strong in the area and that these are always included in the marketing and will continue to be.

- Overall Christchurch is in a good position with less empty shops than other areas.
- h. Bournemouth Coastal BID - Peter Ruscoe**
 - PR reported that Paul Clark has now stepped down as Chair and he has taken up the position.
 - Footfall is good but although people are coming out the spend is down.
 - CSAS - the BID withdrew funding because the Council and Police could no longer guarantee that they had the personnel to provide the service.
 - There need to be some decisions taken over the state of the electrics in Boscombe before next Christmas.
- i. Bournemouth Town Centre BID - Martin Davies**
 - CSAS - funding was withdrawn for the same reason as the Coastal BID.
 - Concern that the agreement with BCP Council is 'not worth the paper it is written on' as the Council do not have the resources to do what is required of them. The BID wants more honesty from the Council. **ACTION** Set up an Area Meeting with the BIDs, Jess Gibbons and other Council Directors to discuss the Baseline Agreements. JW suggested that including Chris Shephard in this meeting might be beneficial.
 - It was also suggested that Jess Gibbons be invited to the next DMB meeting. **ACTION:** SS to invite JG to the May DMB meeting
 - MD expressed the concern that there is tendency at present to use Bournemouth as the 'whipping boy' for all that is wrong, where in reality Bournemouth, with the BIC and its large number of hotels, is the strongest area despite some issues and the strategy needs to deal with the whole area not try and develop the other areas at the expense of Bournemouth.

9. AOB - none

10. Date of next meeting

Tuesday, 16 May 2023. 11am - 1pm. Venue tbc. (Poole)