



Tuesday 17 March 2020
2.00pm – 4.00pm
The Captain's Club, Christchurch

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT

David Bailey (DB)	Chair
Mike Francis MBE (MF)	President

Sector Representatives

David Squire (DS)	Transport Sector
Guido Schillig (GS)	IEA Sector
Jackie Richmond (JR)	Leisure & Attractions (Deputy)
Paul Clarke (PC)	Coastal BID (Bournemouth)
Steve Turner (ST)	Conference & Convention Sector
Tim Lloyd (TL)	Accommodation Sector

Professional Officers

Bill Cotton (BC)	Executive Director – BCP Council
Chris Saunders (CS)	BCP Tourism
Cllr Vikki Slade (VS)	Leader – BCP Council
Cllr Lewis Allison (LA)	Portfolio Holder - Tourism
Jon Weaver (JW)	BCP Tourism
Stevie Sainsbury (SS)	Board Administrator - BCP Tourism

Apologies

Craig Mathie (CM)	Vice Chair
Carol Scott (CS)	Leisure & Attractions Sector
Graham Farrant (GF)	CEO – BCP Council
Martin Davies (MD)	Town Centre BID (Bournemouth)
Sara Uzzell (SU)	Dorset LEP

1. Welcome

- Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
- Declarations of Interest – None

2. ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

- *St Michaels* No update – deferred.
- *Update on FJB Hotels* – No update at present
- *World Beach & Rowing Championships* – deferred

- **Are the Minutes from the last meeting correct?**
Proposed by GS and seconded by DS. Agreed

3. COVID19 – update from Sectors

a. International Education Association (IEA)

- The situation for language schools is much more serious than for universities due to their smaller size and the shorter duration of courses.
- Bookings have already fallen by more than a third with very few new bookings coming in.
- For all schools there is a very delicate balance between cash flow and balance sheets with most schools only able to keep going for between 2 to 3 weeks so expecting to see closures across the whole country.
- International students are finding it very hard to make preparations for any future travel as the outbreak has put a halt on visas etc.
- China is now showing signs of being on the other side of the outbreak. 'Coronavirus Worldometer' is a useful tool for keeping up to date with the latest statistics. Currently 22.7/million cases in UK against 220+/million cases in Italy.
- It is certain that there will be fewer language schools across the area when the pandemic is over, and it will take time to rebuild confidence and financial stability to get bookings back.
- There is concern over whether students who return home during the outbreak will be able to return once it is over. MF confirmed that Tobias Ellwood is looking into this issue.

b. Accommodation

- All hotels are reported a massive drop in bookings with cancellations pouring in. Occupancy down to around 45%
- Clear message needed from the Government particularly in relation to the payment of salaries. Zero hours staff already being laid off.
- BAHA is lobbying for a deferment of the increase in the minimum wage to help businesses survive.

c. Conference & Convention

- BIC has been reprofiling income to reflect postponements and moving dates around but at present are not being proactive in cancelling events/shows because of the resultant liabilities involved.
- Are currently relying on cancellation requests
- A number of staff are already working from home.

d. Leisure & Attractions

- Very worried about mixed messaging going out and the lack of clarity
- Position very difficult because there has been no instruction to close businesses as yet
- Likely that unless help is forthcoming a number of businesses will go under in the next few weeks
- Worst possible time for this to happen as businesses are just coming out of the leanest period of trading, relying on business picking up into spring/summer. If cannot trade properly in July/August, then estimate that up to 70% of businesses will go under. Need Government help now.

e. Transport

- Similar position reflected across Transport sector with revenue massively down already.
- Been speaking with unions and already cutting services dramatically
- Even when reach the end of present emergency there will be a massive issue over public confidence that will need to be addressed in order to get people back using public transport.
- At the moment schools are remaining open but that is unlikely to continue for long. Some year groups at Carter Community and Corfe Hills schools have already been sent home.

f. Coastal BID

- Held AGM yesterday (16th) and there was concern that small businesses may not be able to make their levy payments which will place severe strain on BID cash flow and finances going forward.

g. Council Events/Marketing

- Cancelling all outdoor events on council land for the next 2 months. Will review at the end of May
- Some events are choosing to postpone to a later date with most opting for late August/September which will put pressure on Council teams and Emergency services with an influx of events over a short period.
- Bay Run postponed to March 2021 – to remain in same financial year.
- Air Festival – will review as and when appropriate
- At the moment wedding bookings are being honoured but this may not continue
- Marketing/PR messaging currently aimed at keeping the destination in public awareness, but the tone of messaging will undoubtedly change as things develop. Exploring different avenues at present.
- Beach Lodges remain open at present.
- Availability of cleaning resources will affect the ability to keep toilets and other establishments open.

h. Other

- Chair pointed out the importance of ensuring that when things calm down there is still something for visitors to return to – really important that restaurants, attractions, hotels and shops survive so that there is the infrastructure for tourism to bounce back when things change. Need to plan for recovery – which *will* happen.
- VS expressed the Council's support for everyone in these difficult times pointing out that the Council itself is experiencing severe financial issues with some revenue streams, eg. car parking, substantially down and things like support for the elderly and vulnerable requiring a massive injection of funding. The Council is in Emergency Planning mode, focussing on how to cope with a possible 20% reduction in staff.
- BC confirmed that Chris Shephard is leading on Business Continuity strategy and that daily meetings are taking place to ensure that the Council is supporting the NHS and vulnerable groups whilst still understanding the unprecedented problems being faced by local businesses in all sectors.
- It was agreed that the Board needs to concentrate on lobbying Government for financial assistance for all sectors.
- Need to ensure that as strong a message goes out about Tourism as is currently going out in relation to the aviation industry, reflecting Tourism's position as the 3rd biggest employer in the UK.

- It was reflected that Visit Britain and Visit England have been very quiet up to date and need to be pushed to start getting the messaging out there. JW reiterated that VB needs to think about the UK domestic market at this time, not the wider international market.

i. Lobbying Government – letters

- JR confirmed that Lemur Leisure Ltd had today sent a letter on behalf of BALPPA to the Chancellor asking for Government support. (attached)
- PC confirmed that the Coastal BID had also sent a letter to Tobias Ellwood and Conor Burns today asking for support (attached)
- VS confirmed that the Council would be drafting a similar letter that evening.
- It was agreed that in addition a letter should go directly from the Board to all 5 MPs representing the BCP area urging the Government to provide an urgent cash injection into the industry businesses if they are to survive. DB & JW to draft the letter and circulate a copy to Board members. **ACTION: Draft and send letter and circulate to Board.**

j. Planning for the future

- Need to start looking forward to the recovery which will undoubtedly come.
- Need to ensure it is easy for people to book attractions/hotels etc.
- Need to understand what the market will look like as we go into recovery. After the 2008 financial crash we saw an increase in 'staycation' visitors but a very low spend.
- Need to ensure that the offer is as attractive as it can be – entrepreneurial initiatives and ideas.

4. Impact of the New immigration bill

- Deferred

5. Tourism & Destination Strategy

- On hold
- Need strong action plan and clarity for the future. At the moment national advice is very unclear.

6. Cultural Conference

- Postponed

7. Tourism & Culture LGA

- Deferred

8. Marketing & Events update

- Mainly covered above
- Christmas Tree Wonderland – Will need to look at the options when current position is clearer.

9. Erasmus

- Very successful event took place on 16th March at The Conservatory, Bournespace although with much reduced numbers due to the pandemic.
- Feedback has been very positive
- The event was livestreamed on Facebook and the link will go out to all those unable to attend at the last minute. JR suggested that it be sent again in a few

months' time as some businesses may well not be in the right frame of mind right now to engage with the content but it could be very useful for them in the future as they start to rebuild their businesses.

10. Destination Awards

- Postponed.
- Had been going well but definitely not the right time to hold awards. People are not in the right frame of mind.
- A new date has not yet been set.

11. BCP Council approach to anti-social behaviour

- LA confirmed that there is an expanding scheme taking shape with new officers being put in place. Still requires some consultation. Will update when things have normalised a little.
- DB confirmed that he attended a recent meeting of the Bournemouth Chamber at which Dorset Police presented a very positive picture. Having gone through a really bad patch in mid-2018 they felt that they were now back on track and the promised extra officers were now coming through to form a task force for the Town Centre.
- VS agreed that there has been a definite improvement in the whole situation and confirmed that she had a meeting scheduled next Friday with Martin Underhill and Kelly Ansell when they would be discussing the pooling of resources.
- The situation in Poole is also improving although there is still some concern over the Bus Station. VS pointed out that an issue over children with bus passes had been identified whereby meetings were being arranged at the Bus Station as that was where the children with passes were coming to but this had created a 'meeting place' for the young people, which had then led to some of the problems being identified. This is now being rectified with meetings being scheduled away from the area.
- Christchurch continues to be monitored but there are no real concerns there at present.
- With the setting up of the new Council it was agreed that although it has taken time to stabilise, we are now seeing an overall improvement across the area.

12. Corporate Plan

- Deferred

13. Sector Updates

- Covered above

14. Date of next meeting

- **Tuesday, 19 May 2020. 2pm**
Venue: Clubhouse, Bournemouth Sports Club, Chapel Gate.