



**DORSET TOURISM ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING**  
**Minutes of the Board Meeting held via Zoom Conference on**  
**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021 at 11.00am**

<b>Directors attending</b>	<b>Representing (Tourism Sector)</b>
(RS) Richard Smith (Chairman)	Attractions/Dorset LEP
(MC) Martin Cox	Accommodation
(SK) Sally King	Dorset AONB/Jurassic Coast Trust
(TMM) Tamsin Mutton-McKnight	Weymouth BID
(HP) Hazel Province	Culture and Arts (Arts Development Company)
(SPS) Sandra Palmer-Snellin	Best of Dorset (Chairman)
(SU) Sara Uzzell	National Trust /Dorset LEP
<b>Local Authority attendees</b>	<b>Representing</b>
(DB) David Bailey	Bournemouth Destination Management Board (Chairman)
(AE) Andrew Emery	BCP Council
(TF) Cllr Tony Ferrari	Dorset Council Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property
(AP) Amanda Park	Visit Dorset Team
(GR) Graham Richardson	Visit Bournemouth and Poole Team
(CS) Cheryl Stapleton	Visit Dorset Team
<b>Associate Members attending</b>	
<b>Others attending</b>	
(NG) Nick Gregory	Dorset Growth Hub
(NL) Nimisha Loveridge	Dorset LEP

Item		For Action
1.	<b><u>Apologies</u></b> Apologies were received from Anthony Woodhouse (AW) and Caz Richardson (CR).	
2.	<b><u>Minutes of the last board meeting</u></b> The Minutes of the board meeting held on the 11 <sup>th</sup> May 2021 were accepted as a true record of the matters discussed.	
3.	<b><u>Matters arising from the last meeting</u></b>  i) <u>Local Plan Consultation response</u> Response from David Walsh, Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, Dorset Council: "The Dorset Council Economic Growth Strategy seeks to address issues of seasonality thereby creating	

	<p>higher quality and skilled jobs and reduce the environmental impact in terms of transportation and business efficiency. The Local Plan must be aligned in order to enable private sector investment to improve infrastructure (including accommodation, electric vehicle charging points, attractions, broadband, retail opportunities, etc) based upon a sound business case to increase resilience and financial returns.”</p> <p>ii) <u>DTA – Terms of Reference (ToR)</u> The revised Terms of Reference have been accepted by Dorset LEP</p> <p>iii) <u>Dorset LEP – administration offer</u> PH and NL completed their handover and NL will now provide administrative support to DTA.</p> <p>iv) <u>Rural Enterprise Group (REG)</u> MC contacted REG and suggested his attendance was not required, due to overlap with DTA. NL to follow up with Dorset LEP.</p>	Nimisha Loveridge
4.	<p><b><u>Covid updates and feedback for LEP</u></b> RS said he is feeding information from DTA to Dorset LEP.</p> <p>RS, MC and SU met with Nigel Huddleston (NH) (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Sport, Heritage and Tourism at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport). Therefore, feedback is going straight to the Ministers.</p> <p>RS asked if there were any thoughts or reflections DTA would like to build on. SU replied that, from the meeting with NH, there was a strong impression that the government want to listen to what we have to say. NH has direct experience of tourism, and we need to keep the dialogue open and ongoing.</p> <p>For Dorset Council - TF said he had raised the matter of competitive VAT rates for food and drink, so that it is in line with overseas rates. TF meets with constituent MPs on a fortnightly basis and they agree who will take each agenda item forward.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>Dorset Council and BCP Tourism team updates</u></b></p> <p><u>Local authorities</u> <u>Dorset Council</u> AP reported that web statistics are showing a hunger for information, with a 65% increase in web traffic compared to this time last year. Visit Dorset are promoting the idea of ‘Respect, Protect, Enjoy’ and visitors behaving responsibly. AP added that rural towns are also doing well.</p> <p>CS said that developing the new website was a key project, and would be launched in early August. There would be microsites for the towns. AP added</p>	

that effort should be put into keeping those who would normally go abroad to come back to Dorset again.

SK presented the campaign statistics:

Website stills and gifs are doing well.

1.5 million impressions

48,000 likes and shares on Facebook

Daily Mail, Weather Apps

Highest levels of interaction

Driving carefully

Visit Dorset website is looking good and doing well.

RS asked whether Dorset could use the BCP apps to inform visitors about capacity on the beaches and crowding. AE added that Dorset decided not to use this function but it has been launched nationally for beach information.

AE added that BCP are working on additional functionality within the apps, for example, incident reporting and emergency planning, and car parking availability.

#### BCP Council

GR added that the picture for BCP was similar to that of Dorset Council. The website statistics are higher than last year. GR added that the seafront management was going well. It was busy a few weeks ago but manageable, although cars had to be towed. BCP are encouraging people to visit out of town places, not just the beaches. Still wearing masks and distancing.

GR said the two biggest issues are recruitment and fear of being contacted to self-isolate by the track and trace app.

DB said that the preparedness of the council had paid off. BAHA had been awarded a bounceback loan and it would focus on three areas:

- i) Training – staff are moving between jobs but they will have a consistent level of training when joining an organisation
- ii) Marketing – some hotels do not have a good online presence; the funding will allow for a photography package, a set of images that can be used by the hotel for marketing
- iii) Recruitment – DB had spoken with local MP's and Robert Jenrick about issues across the sector. DB added that we need to consider the long term sustainability of the sector, by engaging school age children to follow a career in hospitality at college.

#### Accommodation

SU and MC reported that bookings across the accommodation sector are good but delivery could be problem due to staffing challenges. Pop-up camping is still an issue. MC is preparing a letter to Environmental Health about the issue of site licences.

RS added that attractions are having to cap their numbers but there is no cap on accommodation, and hence a disjoin between the two. MC added that there are more people in accommodation than can be accommodated in cafes and restaurants.

MC also reported that he was concerned about public order challenges after 19 July, particularly whether masks need to be worn.

MC added that there are also indirect issues, like availability of linen, and other supply chains.

TF said that anecdotal experience has shown that farmers have taken to offering camping responsibly, by improving their facilities for the second year. TF agreed to flag the issue with DC.

#### Attractions

SPS reported the following:

Some attractions have received grants for during the pandemic to help with re-opening.

Staffing is a major issue as people are being 'pinged' through the track and trace app

Customers are not reading the guidance that is put out so it is having to be presented as bullet points.

People are bringing dogs on holiday where this is not permitted.

Happy with the online booking system

Proceeding with caution with regards to wearing facemasks after 19 July.

SPS added that demand is high but businesses are having to adapt post-Covid. SPS felt that there would be hesitation on 19 July and that the sector needed to build customer confidence.

TMM reported that demand is high in coastal resorts but also in cities like Manchester and Birmingham. There is high demand in Weymouth, where they are extending opening hours and adding more events. There is also a big 'come to London' campaign. Recruitment is a key issue across the UK, with, track and trace having a big impact in city centre locations.

#### Arts & Culture

HP reported that there are swathes of the sector that have not reopened. There is lots of innovation going on, with outdoor stages for music and theatre, and concerts being live streamed. Tickets are selling online for Autumn events but there is a high likelihood that events over the summer will be cancelled so we have to prepare for customer disappointment.

#### Food and Drink sector

CR provided the following written update:

DF&D pop up markets continue to gain traction. The inaugural Tank Museum pop up on Saturday 5 June, followed by the Thomas Hardy Victorian Fair pop up - Sunday 6 June, Borough Gardens, Dorchester, were well received.

6.	<p>Although with more members being able to book into other markets, events and festivals, the pool of traders available is often reduced, and August looks like it will be a busy month for many of them.</p> <p>The core vision and objectives of Dorset Food and Drink remain almost unchanged, but the pandemic has sharpened focus and DF&amp;D are shifting towards a more sustainable, mindful approach towards work, members and consumers.</p> <p>Save the dates for the following DF&amp;D Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Dorset Food &amp; Arts Festival -lite- Saturday 7 August -from 10-4. The Great Field, Poundbury, Dorchester DT1 3RH (After advice from Dorset Council licensing, the festival changed location to provide more space and to operate safely. The festival hopes to return to Queen Mother Square next year.</li> <li>o Abbotsbury Food Fair – Saturday 18 &amp; Sunday 19 September Abbotsbury SubTropical Gardens.</li> <li>o Athelhampton Christmas Food Fair – Saturday 4 &amp; Sunday 5 December Athelhampton House</li> </ul> <p>The new DF&amp;D website is live. Shopify is live and TXGB is coming on stream soon.</p> <p>DF&amp;D are headline sponsors of this year's Dorset Magazine Food &amp; Drink Awards.</p> <p>Covid-19 continues to have a huge impact on the hospitality industry. As lockdown restrictions ease, it will be more important than ever to support Dorset's food and drink businesses, and these awards are one of the ways you can show appreciation. The awards remain open for entries until Sunday 18 July.</p> <p><u>Summary to Sector update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short term business looks good, with confidence in Local Authority plans</li> <li>• Concern about misalignment of over capacity of accommodation and availability of attractions</li> <li>• Recruitment across all sectors</li> <li>• Concern about the legal framework becoming informal and the effect this will have on public behaviour</li> <li>• Misalignment of rules on Track and Trace as facilities re-open</li> <li>• Financial support being reduced</li> </ul> <p><b><u>What next for the DTA – the 2019 NCTA (National Coastal Tourism Academy) report and where we go from here</u></b></p> <p>RS said that following the report from Samantha Richardson (Director, NCTA) it was important to have the right representation on the DTA. There was a proposal to look at themes within the industry but this has not been</p>	
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	implemented yet owing to the pandemic. RS proposed that this be implemented in 2022.	
7.	<p><b><u>Consultations, Surveys, Statistics and Grants</u></b></p> <p>RS said that there is a new Government Tourism Strategy but the resources allocated to it are unclear. He suggested members look at the Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>DMO (Destination Management Organisations) review – still awaiting outcome but Nick de Bois (Chair of the VisitEngland Advisory Board) has completed all his visits to DMOs and there are similarities around the country. It is important that core areas are funded. In the future, the structure of DMOs might look different, service level agreements needed, and more co-ordination between DMOs. MC added that the outcomes of the review will most likely be shared before the comprehensive spending review in October.</p> <p>RS thanked SU and MC for attending the meeting with Nick de Bois.</p> <p>TF stated that the council are working on the second draft of the Local Plan.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>AGM</u></b></p> <p>The AGM is due to take place in September and a number of Directors' tenures will be expiring. RS said that the pattern of rotation was appropriate for 'normal' times, but with the unusual circumstances of the pandemic, it would seem sensible to push the expiry dates back by one year; this allows for consistent and coherent representation on the DTA, as too much change would be unwise at present. This would be discussed further at the AGM in September.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Annual Conference</u></b></p> <p>RS said that, due to the pandemic, the DTA is not in a position to deliver, or commit to delivering, a conference this year. The tourism industry is dealing with more immediate problems and suggested that the group revisit the idea early next year. The Board agreed that there would not be a conference this year.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Any other business</u></b></p> <p>MC suggested that agenda item 6 should be on the agenda until the outcome of the DMO review is known. NL to add this to forthcoming agendas.</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting closed at 12.30pm.</p>	<b>Nimisha Loveridge</b>
11.	<p><b><u>Date of next meeting</u></b></p> <p>Notice was given that the next DTA Board Meeting and AGM would be on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 at 11am (via zoom).</p>	