

**Minutes of a meeting of Visit Jersey Limited (“VJ”)  
Held at The Somerville Hotel, St Brelade, Jersey, on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at 4pm**

<b>Present:</b>	Kevin Keen (KK) – Chair
Keith Beecham (KB)	Patrick Burke (PB)
Tim Crowley (TC)	Mike Graham (MG)
Catherine Leech (CL)	Amanda Willmott (AW)
(collectively referred to as the “Board” or the “Directors”)	
<b>In Attendance</b>	
Alan Merry, Interim CEO, Ports of Jersey (POJ)	
Rick Horsley (RH), Economic Development Tourism Sport and Culture (EDTSC) (Observer)	
Darren Scott (DS), EDTSC (Observer)	
Aimee Maskell, AM to PM Secretarial Services (Scribe)	

1. **APOLOGIES** – No apologies were noted.
2. **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST** – There were no conflicts of interest to note.
3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – **IT WAS NOTED** that the minutes dated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 had been circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve the same.
4. **AWAY DAY – NEXT STEPS** – KB confirmed that he took relevant notes during the away day held prior to the meeting that outline what steps should be taken going forward and advised that Andrew Jackson had also taken notes of the away day. A summary note would be provided to NEDs and managers attending the Away Day.
5. **Q2 2019 REPORT FOR EDTSC** – TC provided an update from the Finance and Audit Committee meeting held the previous week. He reported that it was a quiet quarter in terms of the financials and that budgets were on track. However, he advised there was currently more cash in the bank than expected and consideration is therefore being given to putting some of it on a deposit account.

The Board noted that there was no real reason for this underspend, other than the later timing of marketing spending in 2019. KB acknowledged that there was currently some underspend in marketing and trade and he would be discussing the same at the management team meeting scheduled for the following day. However, he reassured the Board that whilst the timing of some marketing spend may have changed, the messaging had not. He added that he was confident that all spend was being tracked appropriately and that there were valid reasons for the current underspends.

KB reported that the Q2 report for submission to EDTSC was not yet finalised for review by the Board (due to VJ's accountant being unwell the previous day). **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would circulate a final copy for the Board's review on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2019; the Directors would provide any comments on the same by close of business on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019; and KB would submit the report to DS by late afternoon Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019. **Action: KB/Directors**

6. **EXIT SURVEY MAY REPORT** – The Board reviewed a paper summarising the Exit Survey results for May and the year to date, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. KK reported that whilst he had welcomed the positive results, he had requested a comparison with airport arrivals against which to cross reference them. KB advised that he has also met with a number of stakeholders about their level of business and has received mixed messages. He noted that whilst one chain hotel is reporting positive results, others are not so positive, particularly if they do not get any late bookings coming in. He therefore accepted that if the results do not match those of the industry, concerns could be raised when they are published next week.

AM reported that the airport recorded a 4% increase in passenger arrivals for the year to date and a 1% increase for the month of May whereas the harbour was down by nearly 10k passengers and

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4,700 cars for the year to date and down by 4k passengers in June. However, **IT WAS NOTED** that the airport's four main routes were up and these were used by mainly visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and business visitors.

KK noted that the May figures were reporting a 17% increase in the total market for non-local visitors and TC and MG both expressed concern that this was too high. KB highlighted that biggest area of growth has been seen in VFR. However, PB reported that based on a meeting of luxury hoteliers held last week, some of them are concerned about the current situation and believe that the STR results should be studied in more detail.

**IT WAS NOTED** that the June exit survey results will be ready by the second week of August (subject to receipt of data from the Ports of Jersey which AM agreed to provide as soon as possible) and KK therefore suggested deferring release of the May results until the Board has had an opportunity to review the June results. KB agreed to this suggestion, reiterating that he would not wish to attract negative feedback from hoteliers by publishing the results if they were not consistent with their current position. However, he stressed the importance of also considering other areas of the market such as Air BnB which is reporting significant success. He added that it is possible to defend the data as it has been prepared using legitimate samples and processed with the same methodology used previously.

PB expressed concern about VJ giving the impression that "everything in the garden was rosy" when this is not the case for some accommodation providers and suggested that a way of reporting which is appropriate for everyone should be found. With this in mind, he reported that it is proposed to invite STR to the Island to run a workshop to enable better interpretation of the data.

The Board acknowledged that whilst VJ were only able to report on data collated based on the existing methodology/process, it should proceed with caution regarding the May results and defer publishing them until a review of the June results has taken place. **Action: All**

7. **UPDATE ON THE SEASON AND OUTLOOK** – AM advised that Ports of Jersey do not hold significant information on forward bookings. That said, he is aware that bookings are being made later than usual. He added that Condor reported earlier in the year that their numbers were up on last year. However, since experiencing technical issues with the Liberation in May they are now down. He reported that sailings were also cancelled by Manches Iles which have affected the harbour figures.

KB advised that VJ carries out a forward bookings survey (albeit this is only completed by approximately 25% of the Island's hotels) and, from memory, he reported that the most recent results from this show that every month in 2019 is up on forward bookings, save for November or December. KB agreed to circulate a copy of the report to the Board following the meeting for their information but he reiterated that it only included a small sample of hotels. **Action: KB**

**IT WAS NOTED** that the season going forward was discussed at the recent VJ stakeholder breakfast meetings and KB summarized this as "nervousness" due to the lateness of bookings. MG reported that in his business this had changed in the last three weeks. However, PB noted that some hoteliers remained concerned, not only about occupancy but also about rates, particularly as many hotels will reduce rates until they reach full occupancy. He added that a number of hoteliers have even expressed concern about August when this should not be the case.

CL suggested that Brexit was still having a significant influence, noting that this has been evident with traffic to 101 Holidays. She reported that although holiday bookings to luxury family hotels increased in January, villa companies were struggling and only started to pick up in May and June. She suggested that this was due to travelers not wanting to book until after the original Brexit deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March unless it was considered "watertight". As a result, she noted that holidays are now very offer driven and reported that offers with 30-50% off are being received. She stressed that it was currently a very difficult market due to booking behavior and based on these trends, she suggested that it was positive that Jersey had seen an increase. This was echoed by KB who

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reported that VJ continue to track the “staycation” market in the UK compared to Jersey and advised that they were all down last year.

KB noted that there was a reluctance from Europeans to travel to sterling destinations as a result of Brexit and he suggested that Jersey was not as affected by this as the UK. That said, he accepted that it may have affected the German market as the operators were only reporting 70-80% capacity as opposed to 80-90%. Nevertheless, he welcomed commitment from all German operators to Jersey for next year.

**IT WAS NOTED** that work has taken place to ensure that as soon as Brexit has been finalised, VJ will be able to respond accordingly and KB reassured the Board that VJ was on “standby” in this regard, albeit that some changes may be required depending on the circumstances.

David Edwards’ (DE) replacement was discussed and KB reported that a new appointment had been made and she would start on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2019. **IT WAS NOTED** that DE was on a contract until the end of August. However, KB proposed extending his contract until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 so that he would be available to help the new appointment settle in. He added that this would also coincide with the Statistics Unit taking over responsibility for the Exit Surveys. This proposal was welcomed by the Board and **IT WAS THEREFORE RESOLVED** that KB would extend DE’s contract accordingly. **Action: KB**

Referring to the transfer of the exit surveys to the Statistics Unit, KB expressed the hope that the field workers currently employed by Island Global Research will continue providing the same service for the Statistics Unit.

**8. CEO REPORT AND TRENDS REPORT** – The Board reviewed KB’s CEO Report and the Trends Report copies of which were circulated with the agenda. KB sought the Board’s guidance regarding the implementation of a policy whereby ex-Board members were not permitted to submit a tender for VJ contracts. The Board supported the implementation of such a policy and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that this should have a time limit of one year following the relevant director’s resignation. **Action: KB**

KB reported that arrangements for the Big Weekend were progressing well for the weekend of 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020. He noted that this would provide the tourism industry with an opportunity to engage with the local community and thank them for their support of tourism and confirmed that the event is being supported by the attractions.

The Board noted that two workshops were scheduled for the following day regarding the Super League Triathlon (SLT). KB reported that the first workshop would be held with approximately 40 local suppliers to offer them the opportunity to become more involved in the SLT, noting that particular effort was being made to engage the retail sector in this year’s event and DS advised that the second workshop would be held with arms’ length organisations and government owned bodies. DS added that government are changing the criteria of the SLT with a view to it increasing value to the Island in other ways than just bringing visitors over (i.e. education).

**9. 2019 FORWARD BOARD MEETINGS CALENDAR** – The Board noted the 2019 Forward Board Meetings Calendar, a copy of which was circulated with the agenda and **IT WAS RESOLVED** that KB would schedule a dinner with representatives from the two and three star hotel market on the evening before the next Board meeting (Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September). **Action: KB**

**10. AOB** – There was no further business to discuss and the meeting was closed at 4.50pm.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING** – **IT WAS NOTED** that the next Board meeting was scheduled for 9.30am on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

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Chair

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