



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF SHROPSHIRE TOURISM (UK) LTD**

HELD ON TUESDAY 7th FEBRUARY 2017

AT THE LION HOTEL, SHREWSBURY

Directors & Members Present:

Mike Brogden (Ferndale Flat), Caroline Barr (Bourton Manor), Adrian Brown (The Old Rectory of St James), Tori Beddows (Shropshire Tourism), Tess Bromley (North Farm), Louise Callaghan (Wolverhampton University – Telford Campus), Nigel Dobson-Smyth (Manor Holding Cottage), Kevin & Charlotte Dowd (Hambrook House), Gail Fitzsimmons (Oswestry Caravanning & Camping Club), Mark Hooper (Sabrina Boat), Martin Haycock (Shropshire Tours), Paul Hill (Ludlow Food Centre), Nick Kendrick (River Steam Holidays), Jack Limond (The White Horse Inn), Rachel Mee (Burlton Cottages), Mary Meddings (Serendipity), Pat McLaughlin, Judie McCoy (Chairman), Simon McCloy (Chief Executive), Phil & Diane Ormrod (No 3 Saffron), Richard Powell (Director), Adrian & Tina Richards (Bicton House), Jodie Stephen (Shropshire Tourism), Anthony Webb (Old Quarry Cottage), Amy Willmet (Ludlow Food Centre), Rhian Williams (Number 53)

1. Welcome and Introduction

The Chairman of the Board, Judie McCoy welcomed all members and guests to the Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies and Announcements

Ann Ashton (Soulton Hall), Maureen Buckley (College Hill Guest House), Susan Bywater (Hicks Farm Holidays), John & Gerry Bennett (The Retreat), Gail Benson (Rosecroft) Yoland Brown (Brownhill House), Lesley Burrowes (Lane Farm), Carol Cooper (Vice Chair-Bridgnorth & District Tourist Association), Diane Chadwick (Victoria House), Catherine Collier (Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre), Jayme Dos Santos (Ivy House), Lesley Davies (DTS Assessor), Kathryn Davies (English Heritage), John Dover (Orchard Cottage), Sheila Davies (Linley Cottage/Kerry Cottage), Gillian Dunne (Bon Accueil), Ray Foster (The Mount Guest House), Jon & Susan Good (Barn Cottages), Mike Gillet (Brynallt Country Park), Judy Gregory (Ash Hall B&B), Nadine Holland-Bailey (Bridgnorth VIC), Jane Hulton-Harrop (Pollardine Farm), Judy Harvey (Green Holiday Barns), Audrey Hill (Parkgate Cottages), Chris & Allison Kwaitkowski (Church Farm), Lord & Lady Langley-Ingress (The Old Station), David Leeke (St Chad's Church) Louise Lasance (The Birdhouse), Cynthia & Clive Prior (Mocktree Barns), Dee Revell (Bramley), Colin & Linda Rigby (Barley Mow House), Gabrielle Rivers (The Judges Lodgings), Peter & Christine Sower (Youth Exchange Service), Rebecca & Phil Seed (Moorhead B&B), Dorothy Shakespeare (Acorn Lodge), Mark & Mary-Jane Shakespeare (Cabin at Oaklands Farm), Beryl Smith (Little Dingle B&B), Carmel Simpson (Old Smithy Holiday Cottages), Keeta Thomas (Henlle Hall Holidays), Sue Worthington (Garden Room & Studio Room), Tom & Vanessa Wycherley, Sue Yardley (DTS Assessor)

3. Minutes of the AGM held on 10th February 2016

The meeting approved the Minutes of the AGM held on 10th February 2016 as a true and accurate record.

**Proposed by Jack Limond
Seconded by Richard Powell
All members in agreement.**

4. Matters arising from the minutes of the last AGM

There were no matters arising.

5. Finance Report

5.1 Adoption of the Company accounts year end March 2016

Finance Director Adrian Brown reported that the accounts were available to view online.

He stated that there had been a loss of £25,937. There were various reasons for the loss including staff changes in IT and two members of staff being on maternity leave.

He asked the AGM to formally adopt the company accounts for year ending March 2016.

**Proposed by Richard Powell
Seconded by Martin Haycock
All members in agreement.**

5.2 Update on the budget for the year 2016/17

Adrian stated that it had again been a challenging year for the company. This had impacted on the proposed target for the year.

The board were looking at a small projected profit this year.

5.3 Adoption of the proposed budget for the year 2017/18

The proposed budget for the 2017/18 shows an anticipated net operating profit of £10,429 which the board felt was a realistic, but still challenging target.

Adrian asked the members if they had any questions.

Anthony Webb asked if the Other Income stated in the budget was the rental. Simon said that it was, and the offices had been constantly let since we bought and refurbished the building.

They were no more questions, so Adrian asked the AGM to formally adopt the proposed budget for the year 2017/18.

**Proposed by Anthony Webb
Seconded by Nigel Dobson-Smyth**

All members in agreement.

6. Appointment of Auditors

Adrian asked the AGM to formally approve the recommendation of the board to re-appoint Crundell & Company as Chartered Accounts for year ending 31st March 2017.

**Proposed by Martin Haycock and seconded by Nigel Dobson-Smyth.
Vote carried in favour.**

7. Election of Directors

Simon took the opportunity to thank all of the board for their support and the time they provided on a volunteer basis. He thanked previous Chair Deborah Clough who had resigned from the board in November after many years service. He also thanked current Chair Judie McCoy that had filled the role in her absence.

Simon informed the AGM that under the company's memorandum and articles of association all directors must be members of the company.

The Directors of the company are appointed annually at the AGM when all current Directors resign, including any Directors appointed by the board during the year, and the membership then elect their Directors to the Board for the forthcoming year.

7.1 The Directors who had served in the last 12 months are:

Mr Deborah Clough - Chairman
Mrs Judie McCoy - Company Secretary
Mrs Samantha Gray
Mr Jack Limond
Mr Mike Brogden
Mr Adrian Brown
Mr Richard Powell
Mr Clive Shingler
Mr Anthony Webb (Board Member)

Honorariums

It was approved at the last AGM that each director elected by the AGM should receive a free membership and fee web entry whilst they serve as a director, for their service to the company. It is proposed that this arrangement should continue for the 2017/18 membership year.

Election of Directors to the Board 2017/18

The following members indicated their willingness to be re-elected as Directors to the board of the company for the forthcoming 2017/18 year:-

Mrs Judie McCoy
Mr Clive Shingler
Mr Richard Powell
Mr Jack Limond

Mr Mike Brogden
Mr Adrian Brown

Simon stated that there had been one new nomination received for the role of Director;

Mr Kevin Dowd – Hambrook House

He stated that although there is no constitutional maximum or minimum as to the number of Directors who may be elected to the board by the membership, it has shown in the past that a small board of 6 or 8 appointed officers works well. It is therefore recommended that all above nominees be elected on block.

**Proposed by Nick Kendrick and seconded by Anthony Webb
All members in agreement.**

8. Any Other Urgent Business that the Chairman may allow

No urgent business.

9. Chief Executive Presentation

The Chief Executive, Simon McCloy, began his presentation by informing the AGM that Shropshire Tourism were the only self funded countywide destination marketing organisation in the country.

Simon continued his presentation, running through the destination marketing activities that had been carried out throughout the year.

Firstly there was the Shropshire & the Welsh Borders brochure. This was supported by a targeted media response campaign, an email priority response campaign, and was used to service direct requests from the web and via the office and support the Press & PR work carried out. The Shropshire & Welsh Borders Brochure 2016 brought in over £3.86 million worth of business to Shropshire. An ROI of over £318 to every £1 spent on its production and distribution.

He also spoke of the Shropshire Days Out package for the day visitor including a leaflet and website. The package was trackable and made it easier for businesses to see that it was working for them. This brought in at least £2.48m worth of business to the Shropshire economy. A ROI £177 to £1.00

The Shropshire Tourism website network generates over 616,000 Visitors of which over 77% are first time visits.

He also reported that Shropshire Tourism had generated press coverage, which generated over £55 million worth of Advertising Equivalent Coverage for the county in 2016.

The priority email for the 2017 Shropshire & the Welsh Borders brochure had been very successful this year. The results can be seen below:

Emails Sent: 9,278

Emails Read: 3,783

Read Rate: 41%

Brochure Requests: 959

10.34% response rate

Therefore, this campaign generated an estimated £185,000 worth of business to the county.

A brochure conversion survey had been carried out in November-December where 3,070 brochure recipients had been contacted via email from our 2016 database. They were asked to complete a simple two question survey;

- 1) Will you, or have you, visited Shropshire as a staying visitor this year since requesting your brochure?
- 2) What type of accommodation will you or did you use?

683 completed the survey, which gave a 22.24% response rate.

66% said they had, or would be visiting with 54% staying in Serviced accommodation.

Over the same time period the same survey was carried out on the Shropshire Tourism website. Both were incentivised by a prize; the Prince Rupert Hotel kindly donated a two night stay for two people.

The web survey generated 1,100 responses, with 86.8% saying they did plan to visit. 32.46% as Day Visitors and 67.54% as Staying Visitors. 72% of these planned to stay in serviced accommodation.

From these results, the visitor spend per person per trip could be calculated as follows:

Day visitors spend is £31 pppt

Day visitors 32.46%

347,120 visitors based on 2 people per visit =£11 m

Staying visitors spend £144 pppt

Staying Visitors 67.54%

722,256 visitors based on 2 people per visit = £104 m

Overall Potential Value £115 m pa

Simon stated they were planning to carry out another web survey between March-October to get a larger representation.

He then spoke of the DTS Assessment Scheme and the decline in assessments over the past 5 years, and particularly since the change in policy last year to allow un-graded properties to advertise on the website. This year they were looking at a total of 63 assessments. It was likely to get to the stage soon where the scheme would become unviable, and the staff time could be better spent undertaking more income generating activities. Members feedback on the decision would be helpful.

Question: Mary Meddings (Serendipity)

I joined membership last year and was told that if I was not graded I would appear at the bottom of the list on a search on the website each time.

Answer: Chief Executive

The properties that are graded will get priority ranking, however if someone searches 'all' the order is randomised.

Simon spoke of the recent decision to make membership free and (as a DMO criteria) 'open to all'. He stated that the companies remit was to represent the whole tourism industry in Shropshire and the surrounding areas, and this was not currently being carried out with our 400 paying members; as the official DMO for Shropshire they needed better engagement and representation with the industry.

Therefore joining free membership would be via a sign up and declaration form. There would still be an advertising fee to appear on the Shropshire Tourism websites which would be optional.

Quarterly e-newsletters could then be sent out to all, and future AGM could become forum type meetings.

Question: Adrian Richards (Bicton House)

Can I ask what is meant by a DMO that you refer to?

Answer: Chief Executive

DMO stands for Destination Marketing Organisation

Question: Nigel Dobson Smyth (Manor Holding Cottage)

Should the members vote on this change?

Answer: Chief Executive

The matter has been discussed at length by the board as they represent the membership and there is no constitutional change so the decision rests with the board.

Question: Diane Ormrod (No. 3 Saffron)

Could the members have visitor surveys to put in their accommodation for guests to complete?

Answer: Chief Executive

This is something we have done in the past, however it did not prove very successful. We do encourage members to have their own visitor surveys though for their own guests.

Question: Phil Ormrod (No. 3 Saffron)

How do you calculate the figures for visitor spends?

Answer: Chief Executive

Economic impact assessments used to be carried on a bi-annual basis and is calculated using occupancy, footfall etc. to give the volume of spend per person. So the £31 pppt is taken from the last report in 2011. However you cannot compare like for like as the formula did tend to change year on year.

Question: Nigel Dobson-Smyth (Manor Holiday Cottage)

Where you aware that the Data Protection Act was due to be upgraded and the effect this could have on businesses with customer databases?

Answer: Chief Executive

Yes I am aware. I attended a TMI conference last year where a speaker did a presentation on the Act. We treat customer data with a high level of confidentiality, our websites do not track personal data. With the brochure requests there is an opt in/opt out option and the option to unsubscribe. But we will let members know of these changes and their implications when they become clearer and can be understood.

Question: Gail Fitzsimmons (Camping & Caravanning Club Oswestry)

Where are your brochures distributed?

Answer: Chief Executive

We have our researched target markets for staying visitors, the key areas are London & the South East, South West, North West and the West Midlands so this is where our brochures are distributed to VICs in these areas. With regards to brochure requests from the website, anyone can order a brochure and we will send it out.

Question: Rachel Mee (Burlton Cottages)

How important do you feel social media is?

Answer: Chief Executive

I do believe it is important to have social media accounts, however I feel it questionable as to how much business they can generate. I feel it is probably more important for individual businesses rather than the destination itself. We are active on social media, which Tori heads up, and do offer social media training as one of our IT services. There was a substantive proposal included in an unsuccessful DEFRA bid which would have created a unique social media platform for Shropshire.

The Chairman thanked the members for attending the AGM, and the Directors, and the Shropshire Tourism team and brought the meeting to a close at 12.30pm.