

BOARD MEETING

9th December 2020, 15:00 - 16:30

Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Visit Inverness Loch Ness Board Present

Joyce Arbuckle	JA	Graeme Bell - Chair	GB
Marina Huggett	FC	David Shayer	DS
Jo De Sylva	JD	Jane Slaughter	JS
Raoul Curtis-Machin	RCM	Julie Dell	JD
Debi Mackenzie	DM	Anna Low	AL

Also present

Michael Golding	MG	VILN CEO
Sabine MacDonald	SM	VILN Administrator

Apologies

Angela Wilson	AW	Helen Carmichael	HC
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BUSINESS

AGENDA ITEM 1

1. Welcome and Apologies

GB welcomed everyone to the Board meeting, especially new directors DM, JD, DS and AL.

AGENDA ITEM 2

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 3

3. Visit Inverness Loch Ness Objectives

MG explained the goals of the Tourism BID, which are to:

1. Ensure that the destination remains competitive with other similar sized destinations both nationally and internationally
2. Continue to grow the value and importance of tourism to the local economy
3. Create confidence in the destination for tourism businesses to invest and create more quality, all year-round jobs
4. Enhance the visitor experience and reputation of the destination

5. Ensure the long-term sustainability of a viable and attractive tourism destination that visitors will value and return to

In order to achieve these goals, the organisation is committed to delivering initiatives, both independently and in collaboration with others, under six key objectives which are as follows:

1. To better market and promote the destination nationally and internationally
2. To undertake initiatives that will improve the tourism infrastructure of the destination, particularly that relating to outdoor activities
3. To promote and support new and existing sustainable events and festivals
4. To grow the value and importance of business tourism to the destination by attracting more conferences and business-related events
5. To provide business development opportunities for member businesses
6. To be a strong lobbying voice on local and national issues that matter to member businesses

There were no questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 4

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the board meeting on 23rd September 2020 were approved by MH and seconded by JA.

AGENDA ITEM 5

5. Appointment of Directors to Sub-Groups

MG gave a short explanation of the sub-groups for the benefit of the new directors.

The board appointed DS to the Finance & Governance sub-group.

The board appointed AL, DM and JD to the Loch Ness Challenge sub-group.

There were no further questions.

AGENDA ITEM 6

6. Matters arising

Blue Sky Scoring Matrix

MG explained that it had been agreed to create a Blue-Sky Scoring Matrix in order to evaluate new opportunities. Before a draft matrix is created and presented to the Business Development sub group the board are invited to comment on key areas that could be included – this could be: impact for location of activity, time to implement, potential scale of impact, level of spend required etc

It was agreed the production of a mission statement could add value to the clarity of communications and decision making. *MH and JS to take forward.*

There were no further questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 7

7. Finance Report

MG talked the board through the financial report.

The board noted the yearend projection of +£89k at 90% levy collection

The next update will be provided to the Finance and Governance sub group in the January.

DS enquired which bank VILN bank with and who in the team is responsible for making any payments.

MG informed him that VILN bank with RBS and payments are processes by the CEO and Administrator.

AGENDA ITEM 8

8. Business Plan Progress Report

MG talked the board through the Business Plan progress report.

He highlighted the following -

- The Business Plan is currently 64% complete, including repeat actions that have previously been fulfilled, while being one third of the way through the Business Plan period – 20 of 60 months
- Only one point in the Business Plan may not be able to be completed due to the ongoing Loch Ness 360 trademark issue
- Without the pandemic other points would have progress further such as hosting the Loch Ness Challenge

MH commented that the report was a good way of showing progress and individual contributions.

AGENDA ITEM 9

9. Performance Report

MG shared the newly developed performance report and discussed with the board.

There were no questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 10

10. Key Projects, Funds and Events

MG outlined current VILN key projects, funds and events.

The board noted the successful delivery of the Inverness Influencer Lodge, Winter Wonder Highland and Sky Ads campaign.

The board also noted the Inverness City Marketing proposal and Scotland's Towns Partnership applications.

Furthermore the board agreed the intention to apply to the HIE DMO fund to complete the Loch Ness Ranger project and a community development post.

MG proceeded to ask the board to pre-approve £15k to continue the Highland Winter Wonderland campaign with Visit Scotland and Lochaber Chamber of Commerce.

JA enquired how the success of the campaign had been measured and when the new marketing activity would take place.

MG explained that the first phase of the campaign had just ended and VILN were awaiting campaign statistics from VisitScotland. Phase 2 is due to start in January 2021.

DS asked whether the campaign was taking place at the wrong time, as most potential customers cannot travel.

MG explained that the campaign is aimed at a demographic who can travel locally and its main purpose is to support local businesses.

The board agreed to wait for the report on Phase 1 before committing funds to Phase 2.

MG to work out a range of options going forward with VisitScotland.

AL enquired whether VILN own the content created during the Influencer Lodge project.

MG stated that all 4 influencers had different contracts, but some of the content will become available to members.

DS asked if VILN are currently working with NC500 and other DMO's.

MG explained that VILN currently work with Moray Speyside and Visit Cairngorms, but NC500 tend to not participate in the meetings of DMO's.

The board discussed the benefits of working more closely with NC500. Several directors pointed out that NC500 is only relevant to certain areas and sectors of the TBID, but not others.

JA proposed to approach NC500 in order to negotiate a reduced rate for members who wish to join. It would then be up to individual members to take up the offer.

MG to take forward.

AGENDA ITEM 11

11. Marketing

MG talked the board through the following current marketing campaigns –

- Winter Wonder Highland is being delivered in partnership with Visit Scotland and Lochaber Chamber of Commerce and aims to reach 5.5 million impressions in phase 1
- A new campaign #worthleavinghomefor will run on Sky from the 4th of December for one month and promotes the area to local people, encouraging them to think local and support their communities and businesses. It is expected to reach 120k people for multiple viewings.
- Visit Inverness Loch Ness supported Orca Swimwear in producing a new advert for their swimming equipment
- The team are working with LNER to produce content for promotion of one year since the launch of the Azuma train from Inverness.
- The team are also working with ScotRail on a similar activity to promote the destination on their website and to their email network. Currently guidelines do not permit this campaign due to the varying tiers however the content is being prepared ready to begin in the new year.
- A new website went live on the 30th of November for a soft launch, this allows for ongoing development to take place that was not possible during the 82-day delivery timeline.

MG also provided a short presentation on the new website.

The board commented on the improved look and functionality of the new website.

DS enquired if B2B offers would be included in phase 2 of the website development. MG explained that this would be the case.

Further new ideas, e.g. the development of an app, will be discussed in the sub-group in due course.

There were no further questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 12

12. HR

The board noted the change in title to Digital Engagement Manager and Membership Manager better reflect their roles and outputs. In addition, the administrator role now focuses on administrative outputs, supporting the management team in their delivery of activities and projects.

There were no questions or comments.

AGENDA ITEM 13

13. VILN Post-Ballot Review – Actions

MG talked the board through the following action points –

- The membership development actions have seen significant progress since the creation of the report. This includes the new communications strategy and development of a new on-board process for new members – both levy and Opt-In. The next stage is to work on members awareness and utilisation of the membership benefits while engaging potential new Opt-In members. The new website will support delivery of these actions.
- The Market, Branding and Destination Development actions have begun including a modernisation of the branding during the website development, funding application for physical advertising and ongoing discussion about the blue-sky scoring matrix.
- The Internal Development actions have shown progress with the recruitment of four new directors, three from under represented areas and all from under represented sectors. The new performance report is in use and changes have been made to job titles. A new director welcome pack has also been created which was used for the first time to induct our newest directors.

There were no questions or comments.

14. VILN Post-Ballot Review – Future

MG explained that the business plan is 64% completed with only point potentially unable to be completed from the 42 points. It is likely the organisation will have increased flexibility to explore activities in addition to the business plan in the period up to the next ballot.

MG asked the board if there were any further areas that should be considered for inclusion in the blue-sky scoring matrix.

The following ideas were suggested –

- Strategy to work with TV shows and film makes
- An iconic sculpture such as the Kelpies, based on the Nessie legend
- Improvement to roads and signage, such as a welcoming sign
- Promotion of the Loch Ness 360 as a driving route as well as a walking and cycling route
- Development of Hidden Gems and Itineraries for the website to encourage people to stay longer in the area

MG explained that business members are facing a continuing challenge, levy is the primary source of income and due to these challenges, there may be a decrease in levy in the coming years. The board were asked if they would like the management team to investigate sustainable sources of revenue and share any thoughts on what could potentially be investigated.

The board agreed – *MG to take forward.*

Succession planning

The board were invited to discuss succession planning and the position of Chair.

GB explained that JD had expressed an interest in the position.

MH proposed to invite JD to take up the position of Chair, JA seconded the proposal.

JD was elected to the position of Chair, GB will remain a member of the board until the AGM in 2021.

AGENDA ITEM 15

15. AOB

AGENDA ITEM 16

16. Meeting Review

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Date - TBC

Venue – Virtual via Google Meet