



**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022 - 10.30am  
Virtual Board Meeting

**Minutes**

**Present:**

Adrienne Carmichael (Chair)  
Barry Burton  
Clare Winskill  
David Nash  
Donald Dunlop  
Geraldine Hamilton  
Louise Dickins  
Nigel Pollard  
Noemi Alonso  
Simon Allan

Fiona Campbell (Chief Executive)  
Eleanor McBain (Membership/Admin)  
Joyce Borthwick (Minutes)

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- Chair, Adrienne Carmichael, welcomed.

**2. Apologies for absence**

- Apologies were received by Tara Scott and Les Robinson.

**3. Minutes of 17<sup>th</sup> May and Matters Arising**

- Amendment to the minutes, to note that Donald Dunlop was in attendance.
- Adrienne asked for the minute to be amended as follows
  - Page 3: 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet pointing referring to ASSC having 15 employees. It was confirmed that this number is higher than the actual paid employees as HMRC directors require to be registered as "employees" although will not receive remuneration for work undertaken and ASSC has no contractual obligations towards them
  - Page 3/Item 7: the word "legals" in the first bullet point to be expanded

upon/removed.

- There were no matters arising, over & above items being discussed within the Agenda.
- The Minutes were approved: proposed by Donald Dunlop & seconded by Barry Burton.

#### 4. Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive's Report had been circulated to the Board.

Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the key points to note since the last meeting, and the many challenges facing the ASSC.

- Fiona reported that the team are extremely busy with work in general and coping extremely well with the current demands
- Regulations Roadshows have been a massive success, engaging and meeting with members and organisations throughout the country. It's been a long journey but extremely worthwhile and she feels that the Association is positioning itself extremely well
- Discussions took place on the STL work
  - Conversations are taking place with local authorities around fee structures v cost recovery and local authorities are aware that FOI requests will be submitted if required to justify fees in excess of cost recovery, as there are strict rules around this which can be challenged. David suggested that this could be expensive if taken to court and that a well worded letter (backed up by Counsel opinion) might do the trick / deal with the process step by step and use the letter as a template for other local authorities. Time consuming process unless there is a legal requirement to respond within a specific time-frame.
  - Concern expressed re significant higher fees being charged for self-catering v home-share and differing fees throughout each local authority. Fiona met with Paul McLennan outlining excessive difference between the two and Paul understood the situation and advised he would look into it
  - Highland, Argyll & Bute and Edinburgh have not indicated fees as yet
  - ASSC getting requests from local authorities asking how many self-catering properties are in the area
  - Louise is meeting Paul McLennan re Edinburgh regarding the un-level playing field for businesses across the country and asked is there anything legal we can do about this prior to 1<sup>st</sup> October
  - Concern expressed re what happens if local authorities are not set up in time. Claire has had interesting conversation with principal solicitor at Highland Council re legislative process and that Highland Licensing Committee can take 9 months to process. New operators are unlikely to get a license in Highland for up to 12 months. **ACTION: Claire** to email correspondence to Fiona
  - Noted that many operators will stop/sell up with detrimental effect on business; stock and the overall economy

- Some local authorities are adding extra conditions ie planning; safety of hiring out paddleboards / ensuring guests are not outdoors after 9pm etc
- Shona Robison responded to Paul McLennan advising there should be a “light touch” approach and should not be “burdensome or onerous” - which is currently not the case and which can be called out. **ACTION: Fiona** to share correspondence to use as required as it shows government is being disingenuous
- Simon requesting if any information from Fife. **ACTION: Simon** to email Fiona correspondence with Jenny Gilruth
- Fiona in regular contact with a range of cross-party MSPs, Scottish Government and VisitScotland and journalists explaining the catastrophe and that people are terrified. She requests acknowledgement receipt of communications sent
- We are doing our best to help people navigate this. **ACTION: Directors** are asked to lobby as much as possible
- Request for monthly updates / virtual meetings with what is going on as next Board Meeting is not until 24<sup>th</sup> October. **ACTION: Extraordinary meeting** to be arranged if required by **Adrienne**
- Fees Chart - **ACTION: Fiona** to share information in chart form when available

## 5. Accounts

- Accounts are healthy and we are in a positive financial situation due to additional partnerships and sponsorships. Organisations are coming to ASSC to offer support, which is a change to 2 or 3 years ago
- Fiona is getting requests for expertise and knowledge and Adrienne has advised that this can no longer be done free of charge - the priority has to be pay back for what Fiona is doing based on volume of work at the moment

## 6. Members Subscriptions 2023-24

- No subscriptions rises for 2 years and need to be cognisant of cost of living to make membership affordable
- Discussion on money in the bank / reserves and how much a not-for-profit organisation should have / what expenditure expected in the coming months. Agreed potential cash in bank justifies an increase
- Discussion took place around option for “locking in” existing fees / spreading the cost throughout the year / option of monthly quarterly payments and cancellation options. Great ideas but not possible at the moment
- Eleanor explained she is flexible with some people who cannot pay in full
- With the new website there will be more opportunities for income from marketing members. Membership will be on a rolling basis rather than year-specific
- All agreed to a 2% rise

## 7. Staff

- Fiona advised that Mel is leaving for pastures new and thanked her for her support over the 5 years. Adrienne and the rest of the Board also expressed their appreciation and wish Mel all the very best
- Discussions are on-going regarding Joyce possibly becoming a member of staff and Victoria Brookes, ex-Wild Scotland, joining as a part time contractor. **ACTION: Fiona & Adrienne** dealing with this
- Adrienne indicated that Mel's departure promoted a review of staffing and the strategic plan for the next 3 -5 years including more even distribution of roles and responsibilities leading to long-term stability of the association
- Adrienne would like to better use the skills and expertise of all Directors and has requested information from each in order to take the Association forward and identify any gaps that can be filled. **ACTION: All Directors** to email Fiona/Adrienne with details

## 8. Membership Subscriptions & Trends

- Eleanor reported a steady increase in numbers and is not at 1415. David asked if there's evidence of people joining to find out more about STL or are they new businesses
- A number of resignations (ie 96 since 19/1 - 3 times higher than a year ago) with 134 new members) have been received due to sales of properties.
  - Claire reported that 85 properties have been sold in Skye since October 2021 ie secondary lets; home-share and B&Bs. Not sure if continuity in same way but think a large number of properties are now off the market with knock-on effect on the economy. David mentioned his property in Fife which has now been sold as a 2<sup>nd</sup> home rather than self-catering property - he's not happy about that but that was the decision he had to take
  - Some people think licence is transferrable when not
  - Suggestion to make "friends" with estate agents who will have knowledge of what's happening with properties
  - Some estate agents are misleading potential buyers and some do not even know about the ST legislation
  - **ACTION: Fiona** to receive/collate intelligence **from the Directors** ie barrier to entering the market / those leaving the market
  - **ACTION: Fiona** - briefing note to be generated / distributed to estate agents
  - **ACTION: Fiona** in discussion with Grant Seaton at The Cumberland as they may pull of out lending for self-catering properties and concern over withdrawing as Partner for Business
- Attendance at Roadshows by non-members is increasing the number of contacts in the hope that many will take out membership
- Receiving lots of phone calls from people unaware of STL and unsure how it will affect them

## 9. Digital & Marketing Update

- a) **EmbraceScotland Website:** expected to launch early September. It is on budget and will be a game-changer. Expecting massive revenue for members flipping to marketing members. £42k of VisitScotland money has been invested in a film which is exciting and an industry/sector "feel good" product. **ACTION: Eleanor** to email Nigel the film
- b) **ASSC Membership Website:** under way and on track and within budget. Excellent working relationship with BULB - an exciting project that will make a huge difference. Fiona reported that the Irish Self-Catering Association have been in touch re purchase of the white label product which could be a good revenue stream. **ACTION: Fiona** promoting at summit in Malaga in October.
- c) **Tall Projects:** as outlined in the paper attached, this issue is now progressing. Discussion took place around costs (full or partial recovery) and how this features in the accounts. Adrienne confirmed that real costs will feature in the 2022/23 accounts

## 10. Adoption of Director's Handbook & Standing Orders

### 11. Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

- Draft documents attached taking account of restricting; KPIs; business planning and succession planning. Adrienne is working on this and would appreciate feedback for approval prior to the AGM either via email or via an Extra Ordinary meeting (tbc). **ACTION: All Directors** to feed comments to Adrienne asap.

### 12. Any Other Business

- **Affordable Housing**
  - Estates in Cairngorms Affordable Housing Projects had 400 applicants which indicates the problem of not enough houses being built.
  - PRT Section 24 - Landlord face the challenge of it taking as much as 12 months to get a tenant out
  - Fiona suggested we need to be careful about discussions around affordable housing
- **Moffat Centre Report** - 1300 responses to date re survey which Moffat Centre think is good but neither Fiona nor Adrienne are happy response rate - so extra push to be done / extended to 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- **Conference 2023** - Fiona asked if we should reinvest in a conference in 2023. Advised the plan for 2 regional events per year. Interest received from partners to attend. Concern expressed re membership and possible attendance as often have more exhibitors/partners than members. Mixed response re yes/no with final decision being "no" and until such time as the Tall Projects situation is resolved and known costs associated with that realised

- Regional events x 2 minimum (Nigel suggests x 4) to be progressed meantime
- Roadshows will continue as required
- **Resignation of Les Robinson** - Adrienne advised that Les will be standing down at the AGM this year. Huge thanks to Les for his support which will be formally recognised at the time.
- **Melanie Allen** - again huge thanks for Mel for her contribution to and support of ASSC over the past 5 years.
- **Board Meeting Issues or Concerns:** if any Director has an board issues or concerns please get in touch with Adrienne

End.