



## ASSC Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

---

Time: 11:00am.

---

Virtual Meeting called to order by: Adrienne Carmichael.

---

### In attendance:

Adrienne Carmichael            Chair

Noemi Alonso

Simon Allan

Louise Dickens

Donald Dunlop

Geraldine Hamilton

Iain Muirhead

Nigel Pollard

Jane Slaughter

Fiona Campbell                CEO

Sharon Luke                    Finance & Governance

Anna Scott                      Membership, Partnership & Events

Myah Thomas                  Marketing & Communications Assistant

### Welcome & introductions:

All ASSC team members & board members gave an introduction of who they are and what they do.

### Apologies:

Tara Scott

Barry Burton

David Nash

Clare Winskill

### Approval of minutes:

- **9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 Minutes of meeting approved as distributed, proposed by Louise Dickens. Seconded by Donald Dunlop.**

There were no matters arising.



### **Reports for the board:**

#### **JR Update:**

- Louise advised that the City of Edinburgh Council did not challenge 1<sup>st</sup> JR ruling.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> JR looking at planning policy.
- Funds under £1000 will go back into JR2 for payment of legal fees.

### **Subscriptions, membership & trends:**

Sharon referred the board to the reports provided, highlighting increase in members and frustrations with staffing capacity.

Sharon requested an increase in contracted hours to fulfil roles.

Fiona indicated that the transitional period to the new membership IT systems and websites had been extremely challenging. She thanked Sharon & Anna for coping with a terrible situation, working incredibly hard to get the data right, and assess problems to be addressed to enable the ASSC to move forward.

Adrienne indicated that, in the licensing legislation circumstances, it was virtually miraculous that membership numbers of 1712 had been achieved when compared to last year's figures.

Thanks also came from Louise Dickens for the efforts of all involved.

Anna echoed Sharon's comments, expressing frustrations with the staffing capacity. She is now working on building & maintaining relationships with Partners.

3 regional events will be planned for next year (dates to follow).

An update on the Talks programme was given, including projected revenue generation.

### **CEO Report:**

Fiona referred to her report.

Highlighting her lobbying efforts being critical over the last few months.

Delighted with the new team, but that she has serious concerns with respect to staffing capacity.

The transition to the new website continues to cause considerable frustration.

Pre action letters going out 9<sup>th</sup> May 23 to Highland Council, Argyll & Bute, and Glasgow City Council with a potential judicial review challenge as per their licensing policies.

Letter going to Edinburgh City Council challenging them on competition law, regarding the conflict of interest of CEC now owning 3 different hotels and rejecting pretty much every single planning permission application.

Intending to write to Competition and Markets Authority and office of internal markets – asking them to follow up on the meeting that was had with them last week- ultimately challenging City of Edinburgh Council on competition law.

Conversation had by all regarding licensing in general.

### **Marketing & strategic planning report:**

VB not present – taken by FC.

Adrienne opened with thanks to VB and the team for the development of comprehensive activity and action plans to underpin the new Strategic Plan. The Board now had a robust framework whereby ASSC performance can be measured, and the work of the team can be guided. This, in turn, should enable the Board to focus on our responsibilities and the duties associated with our role.

**Adrienne asked the board for any objections to signing the plans off – no objections – plans approved.**



Fiona added her thanks to the team for providing the documents and extended her thanks to Adrienne for her direction on the plans.

Fiona outlined the team's activity for the near future with respect to the Autumn marketing campaign, in collaboration with VisitScotland.

She is also working with Springboard, a charity that provides financial support to young people for training to increase their skill sets.

Myah described the focus on the Autumn marketing campaign, and the collaboration with Dom from Bulb to get this ready.

Nigel asked about plans to try and improve the website integration for channel managers. A general discussion ensued. **Fiona would discuss with Bulb and report back.**

### **Accounts:**

Sharon referred the board to the finance report.

The report was considered, and a general discussion ensued.

There had previously been tacit agreement that the case for an increase in staffing capacity and associated terms and conditions had been established.

Whilst the current budget forecasts looked sufficiently positive to support any proposals, there was a general acceptance that the potential impact of licensing on currently healthy membership numbers should be considered if long term fiscal affordability was to be assured. Adrienne asked that, as well as budgets showing current membership levels being maintained and then increased by 15%, in view of potential attrition in membership given survey findings, it would also be prudent for a budget forecast showing a 15% reduction in membership income to check that associated expenditure remained within the organisation's means. **This was agreed.**

**Fiona asked the Board to comply with the need for the annual review of membership subscription rates to present to the AGM.**

**Following lengthy discussion around the membership and budget reports, consequences of cost-of-living crisis and impact on businesses in relation to fees, Nigel proposed no increase this year – seconded by Simon. The motion was approved.**

### **Tall projects:**

Fiona referred the board to the report.

Total claim £187,000. Realistically expecting Tall Project fees minimum £76,000 + 50% of the rest, the claim is made against their insurance company.

Adrienne asked that it would be prudent for £30,000 in additional legal costs be included in the budget in case Tall Projects insurers declined mediation and the case had to go to Court.

### **Any other business:**

- Adrienne stated that members had not indicated any further business to address.

### **Dates for future meetings:**

- Adrienne indicated that the dates on the Board Agenda were incorrect. The correct date is 15<sup>th</sup> November at P&Gs in Edinburgh.



- In person board meeting 9.30- 10.30 – with space if we over run.
- AGM at 11.30
- Regional event in the afternoon.
- Adrienne asked that the next Board meeting plan dates for all of 2024.

**Close:**

Adrienne closed the meeting, indicating that updates would follow where necessary for any major developments. She looked forward to meeting everyone in person in November.

**Motions Agreed:**

- ASSC Action Plan – APPROVED.
- Budget forecast clarified & report requested - APPROVED.