

**Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Board  
Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – 8am**

**Present:** Trevor Brocklebank – Chair (“TB”)  
Joe Manning (“JM”)  
**Marketing Cheshire  
Directors** Mark Goldsmith (“MG”)  
Andy Lyon (“AL”)  
Eleanor Underhill (“EU”)  
Sarah Callander-Beckett (“SCB”)  
Rob McKay (“RM”)  
Gemma Davies (“GD”)  
Steven Broomhead (“SB”) (part meeting)  
Tracey O’Keefe (“TO”)  
Jamie Christon (“JC”)

**In Attendance:** Nicola Said (“NS”)  
Ian Brooks (“IB”)  
Sharon Pond (minute taker)

**Apologies:** David Walker (“DW”)  
Peter Mearns (“PM”)  
Philip Cox (“PC”)

- **Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

TB thanked the board for joining the call and welcomed Board members to the meeting.

- **Declarations of Interest**

TB asked Board members to advise of any declarations of interest.

- **Minutes and Actions from the last Meeting**

The Board confirmed that the minutes from the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were correct.

It was confirmed that the actions from the previous meeting have been dealt with.

- **Board Briefing Note / CEO Report**

JM referred Board members to the report circulated within the Board pack and highlighted the following key items.

- We had a strong footfall, particularly at attractions over the summer and autumn period, however, businesses in Cheshire have reported that they have been badly impacted over the Christmas period due to the implementation of additional Covid Restrictions. There are also concerns around what the economic impact of the energy and National Insurance price increases will have on businesses and whether these costs will be passed onto consumers.
- We are moving forward with the Destination Cheshire work in pushing the staycation market with the ‘Our family welcomes your family’ campaign. The theme provides us with the opportunity to package a wealth of different attractions and our diverse offer into one campaign.
- Joe, Jamie, and Gemma are looking into the future options for Destination Chester, and we are planning an in-person event at Storyhouse on the 1<sup>st</sup>

March. The Spring blooms campaign launches next week which will also help to drive footfall.

- Levelling Up white paper was published last week, not a significant amount included regarding tourism. We are still waiting for the DMO review to be published

### Comments from Board

- The lack of tourism content in the Levelling Up paper was referred to and questioned on whether this should be a concern. JM advised that he is not overly concerned as the paper does not reference a lot of other sectors either. However, there was no mention of the DMO review. JM and NS are meeting with DCMS officials in two weeks-time to get an update.
- With part of the LEP's strategy being around conference and business events it was questioned whether the strategy has been adjusted in light of the Covid impact. Some of our venues are reliant on corporate bookings so discussions with these organisations is a priority for us.
- It was questioned whether there is any intelligence on what the impact of rising costs will have on visitors and the staycation market. JM advised that we have not seen any analysis on this yet but will keep under review.  
JM advised that we will be promoting sustainable travel as part of the campaign and that Rail companies are offering discounted rates, we are also promoting the free of charge activities available in Cheshire.
- The understanding and prognosis around international tourism was questioned. NS advised that there is a real focus on International Tourism from Visit Britain, targeting the markets most likely to visit such as near-by Europe and the USA and primarily targeting pre children couples. We are also exploring relationships with tour operators and will be offering Familiarisation visits. NS confirmed that she is meeting with Manchester to ensure we are part of the Manchester International Gateway project and we are also speaking with Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
- VisitBritain are also leading on a social campaign funding holidays aimed at families who have not had a holiday in the past 4 years. We will share details with Councils to promote.

The Board discussed opportunities for sustainable and responsible businesses and agreed there were opportunities for us to do more on this agenda. This would also relate to inclusive growth and local multipliers of the visitor economy.

- NS confirmed that the Jubilee celebrations will be included within the Family campaign. It was advised that it would be beneficial for MC to take a leading role and give guidance on the Jubilee celebrations taking place in Cheshire.

- **Partner Engagement and Feedback**

NS ran through the partner engagement presentation providing feedback from Partners on the work undertaken by Marketing Cheshire and highlighting the 2022/2023 strategy

### Comments from Board Members

- The possibility of funding for a responsible/sustainable tourism resource was discussed. JM advised that we have been looking at how we grow the offers to partners in the future.
- SB advised he would be happy to provide support and will raise this with the other local authorities.
- NS advised that she is in communication with Manchester regarding Insight gathering and there is an opportunity for future collaboration on this.
- It was agreed that it would be beneficial in the future to have a scoping meeting with research colleagues from partner organisations

TB and the Board thanked Nicola, Leanne, and all the Marketing Cheshire team for all their hard work.

**Action SB**

**Action JM & NS to meet with AL to discuss provision for a responsible / sustainable tourism resource, sustainability conference, data dashboard and tour guide membership.**

**Action  
AL/JM  
/NS**

- **Company Finances**

TB introduced IB to give an overview of the company finances.

IB referred Board members to the December YTD report included within the board pack advising that the operating result is slightly ahead of budget returning a small deficit and ran through the key elements of the report noting that the Audit Committee are comfortable with the cash position and reserves position.

There was a slight confusion over the use of the term projects in the accounts and it was emphasised from Board members that they need to have clear sight and understanding of the finances. Because of the recovery and future plans for partnerships, a request was made to have partnership support on a separate line so that it is clearly identifiable.

**Action IB**

It was advised that there is a vacancy on the audit committee should any board members wish to join the audit committee.

IB offered to organise a finance session to provide board members with a better understanding in the finance processes.

**Action  
IB/SP to  
find a  
date**

**Approach to Budgeting**

Due to the uncertainty of the Government funding in waiting for the Levelling Up white paper and the DMO review it was suggested that we delay producing the budget until we have this information. One of the risks is that we may need to use reserves in the first few months on the financial year to enable us to continue running the company at its current size.

The board confirmed they are supportive to this approach.

The production of a business plan was questioned, and Ian advised that the aim is to include a delivery plan with the budget.

Due to the board papers being published online the board agreed for the finances to be extracted from the board pack and show in a separate paper.

- **Any Other Business.**

It was agreed that the May board meeting should be extended to include a discussion around the strategy of Marketing Cheshire going forward

It was agreed that JM and NS would meet with AL to discuss how the Chester Tour guides can work with MC going forward.

**Future Board Meetings**

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at Chester Zoo – 0800-1200

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Signature (Trevor Brocklebank, Chair)

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Date