

FALKLAND ISLANDS TOURIST BOARD



Closed Exempt Minutes

Held at 10:00am on 14th December 2022
Chamber of Commerce

These minutes are draft until confirmed at the next meeting of the Falkland Islands Tourist Board

Present:	Alex Olmedo	AO	Chair
	Richard Stevens	RS	Vice Chair
	Karen Lee	KL	Financial Controller, FITB
	Stephanie Middleton	SM	Executive Director, FITB
	Petra Gilding	PG	Director
	The Honourable Gavin Short	GS	MLA
	Tim Miller	TM	Director
	Amanda Curry Brown	DPED	Director of Policy and Economic Development

In Attendance: None

Minutes: Sasha Williams SW

Public and Press: None

Item	Part 1	Action
	<u>Apologies for absence</u>	
1.	Carli Sudder was absent from the meeting due to personal reasons (Covid) SM informed the Board that Andrea Barlow has officially resigned as a director.	
2.	<u>Declarations of interest</u> -	
3.	<u>Confirmation of exempt minutes dated 27th September 2022</u> The minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record.	

4. **Matters arising from exempt minutes dated 27th September 2022**

Airbridge arrivals video and MPC marketing (12.1 in previous minutes)

4.1 GS made an enquiry about how the biosecurity video upon arrival to the Falklands was being handled and if it was in circulation. PG also added to this point about providing information about Avian bird-flu. TM also asked about the reach of the biosecurity video and its availability to be put on the LATAM flights. SM informed the board that it was being investigated further and that they were also looking to make sure the foot baths were readily available and placed in correct areas as well as the right information provided.

4.2 SM has been communicating with the CMLO and the current CBFSAI about arranging a base for FITB to be able to promote tourism at MPC.

AO asked if Sullivan or Penguin Travel are doing tours to Kidney Island, but it was noted that both companies are not currently offering this tour.

Item	Paper number 5	Action
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5.	<u>Subvention request 2023/24</u>	
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KL gave an overview of her paper request for the 2023/24 subvention.

KL discussed that in the last year/term FITBs budget was denied the £700k request and was given the £500k instead. The Board was informed that this year FITB is spending as per the budget of £853,000 and will most likely have £0 in the bank by June 2023, thus the need for the increase/revert to the £700k. KL also informed the Board of the breakdown including where cuts may be incurred such as staff cuts or cancelling trade shows if necessary.

AO enquired about the budget and if it is taken to the MLA's, how the budget was being spent/breakdown of the budget would be important. He made the point that for the previous two years we have spent more than the subvention awarded. AO also enquired about the current grant schemes available with FITB and asked if they would be available going forward.

DPED suggested that it would be good for the breakdown of reserves to be clearly stated and structured.

TM stated that it is important for the tourism sector to get the increase in budget as the tourism industry is the second largest sector bringing revenue into the island and questioned what might happen if the budget shrinks.

AO furthered his point on the grant schemes with FITB and what the spending budget looks like after the pandemic. TM also noted that a lot

of business and lodges have expanded over the quieter period due to the pandemic.

KL addressed the points noting that lodges and businesses have been noticing more wear and tear due to the change in the local market. KL also noted that FITB have worked alongside FIDC & FIG so that there are no duplicates in grants, and no one is abusing the system as well as making sure it is fair for all of those who participate. Grants have been maintained in the subvention request, but it will have to be reduced if the subvention was reduced from the £700,000 request. Also, KL noted that this had been a critical point in the previous subvention meeting.

SM noted that a lot of thriving lodges all started as small domestic based businesses but increased and grew to reach the international market. SM further noted feedback from tour operators from previous years who have passed on that the standards have improved largely over the past year. KL added to this by noting that the grant schemes have a multiplier effect for the local market, and this would be noted in the subvention request.

RS passed his views on both sides, noting he can see the outlook as a lodge owner but also a local. Noting that the grants provided by FITB to businesses assisted with maintenance and improvements of the offering but grants such as the TRIP Scheme help to keep the interest high and have now increased a demand for the domestic market. During the pandemic, the TRIP allowed providers a substitute income and so they were not the same. AO also stated that he also agreed that the TRIP Scheme has really given a push to visit more locations in the Falklands by residents.

AO brought up that with the current impact in salary/wages with the rise in prices and the current inflation is there any protocols in place. Also noting that he does not see what the incentive for employees to stay with FITB. TM also voiced his concerns about inflation.

KL informed the Board that with the current inflation that the budget will not be affected as FIG had asked for us not to include inflationary increases in the budget, instead they had to be absorbed within the budget – effectively meaning savings. A discussion about cost of living pay rises ensued, noting that FITB is different to FIG with their increase based on the cost of living on 31st March and effective from 1st July the same year. KL mentioned that training (which FITB pay for) is a further way to increase salary for member of staff, also informing the Board that if an employee is interested in training the budget is available. SM added on to this point by saying that FITB did not have a grading system but that employees are informed clearly on what their pay is and how to increase it. DPED mentioned that FIG is currently working on their formula for cost of living increases and would be happy to provide more information to FITB when it finished the review.

The Board discussed the strategy and how it is being implemented. SM noted that the strategy can develop and that some areas may not be in the budget specifically but can still be in the strategy.

SM brought up Vision 2023 and will be passing that out to all Board members, saying briefly about the results and how people will be interested to see that tourism maybe be moving in a different direction in the future.

The Board all discussed the issues with the second flight, as well as the importance of the second flight on businesses as it allows them to know the demand and options for growth if necessary.

The budget was approved.

SM briefly discussed the change around with staff at FITB. KL asked for Board approval for a Visa bank card for Sasha Williams and for her to be a signatory. KL also asked for approval to remove Rachael Crowie to be removed from the mandate. The Board agreed to the updates to the mandate.

AO concluded the meeting.

Minutes confirmed this day of 2023

Chairperson

Secretary