

ARGYLL & THE ISLES TOURISM COOPERATIVE LTD  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021  
12.30pm, 19 NOVEMBER 2021  
ONLINE – ZOOM

## MINUTES

The meeting started on time

### 1. PRESENT

#### Directors:

Iain Jurgensen (Chair) (IJ)  
Gavin Dick (GD)  
Neil MacKay (NM)  
Emma Clark (EC)  
Fiona McPhail (FM)  
Calum Ross (CR)  
Andy Roger (AR)

Jean Ainsley, AITC Accountant (JA)

#### AITC Team:

Cathy Craig (CC)  
Carron Tobin  
Lara Ehmler (LE)  
Dan MacIntyre  
Shannon Mackenzie  
Helen Dick  
Iain Johnston  
Lynne Dow  
Karen MacCorquodale (KM)

#### Members:

Kirsten, Destination Helensburgh (K)  
Anne Foy, Destination Helensburgh (AF)  
Tony Hill, Seafari Adventures Oban (TH)  
Ross Coutts, Argyll Holidays (RC)  
Holly McCallister, Dunoon Burgh Hall Trust (HM)  
Archie Dudgeon, Monarch Highland Enterprises Ltd (AD)  
Lucy Hamill, Argyll Holidays (LH)  
Carolyn Perkins, Seafari (CP)  
Reeni Kennedy-Boyle, Fyne Futures (RKB)  
Virginia Sumison, Ardkinglas Estate & Food from Argyll (VS)  
Heather Thomas-Smith, Heathery Heights (HTS)  
Ewan Colville, Love Argyll (EC)  
Hannah Stanger Islay Sea Adventures (HS)  
Steven Chawke, Crear (SC)  
Jill Bowis, Kintaline House (JB)  
Emma Goudie, the old exercise house, (EG)  
Julia Haase, Historic Environment Scotland (JH)

**Speaker:** Rob Dickson, Director of Industry & Destination Development, VisitScotland (RD)

**FORMAL APOLOGIES** – None

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## 1. Welcome from the Chair & Chair's Report

IJ welcomed all to the meeting and explained this was the first online AGM to which member businesses had been invited. There were thirty-four attendees. IJ re-stated the importance of tourism for Argyll & the Isles and that AITC remain committed to representing the needs of the tourism businesses across the destination with senior stakeholders in Scot Gov., STA, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Visit Scotland, and wider partners. IJ reflected on the funding achieved from various partners and specifically the 3-year funding commitment from Highlands and Islands Enterprise enabling the appointment of a new full time Chief Executive and, currently three full time staff, providing much needed capacity within the team and representing a key step forward in the development of AITC. IJ also confirmed our desire to continue to work closely with our strategic partners and that each had a collective duty of care for sustainable and responsible tourism.

IJ confirmed that Gavin Dick was stepping down from his Director role, thanked him for his significant contribution and confirmed that Gavin had been offered the position of honorary chair which he is contemplating. IJ thanked the volunteer Directors and AITC team for their work throughout 2020 & 2021 to date. The Vice Chair, Emma Clarke and Director Neil Mackay also expressed their personal thanks and reflections on the vital role that Gavin has played in the setup and business of the board over the years.

IJ confirmed that it was important to revisit the structure of the board now that a new full-time team is in place and the board have duties as an employer. The board have undertaken to review and inform the members of the outcome at the right time.

## 2. Minutes of Last AGM

IJ referred to the minutes of the last AGM and asked that they be formally approved. Using an online polling facility, the minutes were approved and seconded. There were no matters arising from the last AGM that were not dealt with during the meeting or in the CEO report.

## 3. CEO Report

IJ asked CC, AITC CEO, gave her report. The report is available from the AGM page on Wild About Argyll website. [AGM | Visit Argyll and the Isles | Wild About Argyll](#). Introductions were made to the new AITC team members and thanks was given for the extensive support of the freelance team.

## 4. Membership Review

CC reported AITC currently have 169 fully signed up members and how the fees from the membership go directly to supporting the marketing activity for those individual businesses and the wider argyll destination. CC confirmed that a review is taking place to ensure that member businesses are receiving their full benefits and that the programme is working overall. It was confirmed that as part of our ongoing commitment to our membership, fees would not be increased for the coming year.

IJ flagged that current members have a role to play in helping promote wider membership to ensure the future sustainability of AITC.

## 5. Annual Report & Annual Accounts

The 2019/2020 AITC Annual report was talked through by Jean Ainsley of Ainsley Smith Accountants. Jean Ainsley commented briefly that some of the deficit figures were due to the phasing in of membership payments but that broadly the accounts demonstrate another positive year and that AITC

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continue to be very strongly positioned to represent the sector. JA confirmed grants were enabling the work of AITC and how the membership is vital to achieving a sustainable financial status quoting 'Tourism is everyone's business'. JA requested any comments or queries be fed through via Zoom chat or email. No comments received.

**Accounts** – IJ explained they had been approved by Exec and sought membership approval. The accounts were approved and seconded.

## 6. Elected Directors

Gavin Dick, long standing founding Director, confirmed he was stepping down permanently from the board. His significant contribution was noted, and he has been offered the role of honorary chair. As part of due diligence AITC seeks one third of Directors to step down at each AGM. Both Calum Ross and Fiona McPhail had agreed to step down and were happy to be re-elected. Both were nominated and approved by the members. There were no new nominations at the meeting.

Iain Jurgensen, Emma Clarke, Andy Roger, and Neil MacKay continue in their roles as elected directors.

## 7. Office Bearers

Chair – IJ stated he was happy to continue and for Vice Chair, EC agreed to continue as vice chair. The Finance Director role is to be filled from existing board members following Gavin's decision to step down.

## 8. Appointment of Accountant

Ainsley Smith & Co was proposed as continuing to be AITC's Accountants. Agreed and seconded by the Directors and members.

## 9. Member Questions Raised

### Submitted ahead of the AGM

- **Kate Jackson (Northern Lights Bakery)** - I'm interested to know about the plans for promoting local businesses in 2022? Will there be any networking opportunities coming up?

*Yes – we will hold our annual summit in March which we will plan to be F2F, details to follow. We have also started an online monthly networking event – the first of which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> November – we are seeking input as to the best times & days of the week to hold these going forward*

- **Hannah Young (Loch Lomond Group)** - How do you aim to support local tourism businesses to open back up to full capacity whilst minimising the worry and risk of covid outbreaks in such small rural areas? We are worried about pushing people to do staycations in Argyll in case it brings covid in, but we need to work, and we need our economy to recover, so how do you recommend we do both in a safe manner, will there be guidance available on this?

*Covid is likely to remain a risk for some time to come. To some extent, we must rely on the public following the advice provided by Scot Gov and Visit Scotland. Businesses should be proactive, and both reassure visitors of the steps they have taken to minimise risk and ask visitors to play their part by following appropriate public health advice. There are many resources on the Visit Scotland*

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website to support businesses and we are creating a new section on Wild About Argyll website about all aspects of sustainable tourism.

## Submitted at the AGM

- **Ewan Coville, Love Argyll** – Can AITC confirm the rationale for integrating Wild About Argyll Website with Freetobook and Super Control first – given there are hundreds of different platforms and that his own platform – BookIt – was one of the most popular? Ewan made the point that he felt his business, and others using this platform were disadvantaged by the integrations made. He also commented that we were in partnership with Super Control.

*CC explained that AITC were at the start of the booking platform integration project and that we had used our current knowledge of member platforms used and ease of integration as the primary drivers for choosing the first two platforms. She explained that the integration work was progressing and that we would look at other integrations to provide additional benefits for accommodation providers – however, we were unable to provide integrations for every individual platform due to cost and resources. CC confirmed that we do not have any active partnerships with booking platforms; we are working currently with those who provide a simple API / Widget that we could readily integrate into our Umbraco platform. CC committed to taking Ewan's point away regarding BookIt and coming back with an answer.*

## 10. A.O.C.B.

IJ invited additional questions, none were raised. IJ formally closed the AGM by thanking again the Directors and AITC team and the members and partners for their support

11. **Rob Dickson**, Director of Industry & Destination Development, VisitScotland addressed the meeting outlining the importance of partnership working and the insights gained by the VS team regarding next year's visitor plans. Information can be found here [Travel & Tourism Trends for tomorrow - Latest Industry Research | VisitScotland.org](#).

## 12.

## 13. Date of next Annual General Meeting.

Proposed date 18 Nov 2021 – TBC nearer the time.