

AITC ADDITIONAL BOARD MEETING 28th April 2022

Venue: Online

Attendees: **Chair:** Iain Jurgensen (IJ)
Vice Chair; Emma Clark (EC)
Cathy Craig (CC/CEO)
Calum Ross (CR)
Fiona McPhail (FM)
Andy Roger (AR)
Robert Kidd (RK)
Ewan Colville (EC)
Graeme McFall (GM)

Apologies: None

Agenda:

1. **Chair Open**
 - a. **Chair opening remarks**
 - b. **Declarations of interest**
 - c. **Minutes of the last meeting** – to be agreed
 - d. **Record of Board Actions** – outstanding items
2. **Finance, Assurance & Risk – Calum Ross**
 - a. **Findings from RAC 25/04/22**
 - b. **Update on current risk register** – Board to agree
 - c. **Current cash flow** – CEO to add commentary
3. **CEO Report – CC**
 - a. **CEO report to be taken as read from Board pack** – Board opportunity for questions
4. **Consideration for FTE salary increases / cost of living rise** – Board to discuss & agree
 - a. **Specific case for Lara Ehmler** – CEO to present scenarios
5. **AOB**

Minutes:

1. Chair Open

- No apologies were noted.
- The Chair asked for declarations of interest. No declarations of personal interest were offered.
- Chair stated that AR should agree decisions taken in the last Board meeting with the papers having been circulated before the meeting. AR confirmed his agreement to the previous actions agreed at the last Board meeting and commented that the new Board Actions tracker was a huge benefit for the Board.
- The minutes of the last meeting 27.01.22 were approved by the Board.

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- The Board Actions tracker was discussed with the Chair noting that there were several outstanding actions for the Board to undertake and that any updates should be provided to the CEO so she could update the tracker.

ACTION(S):

- Board to issue action updates to CEO as required.

2. Finance, Assurance & Risk – CR

- CR gave an overview of the RAC process for AR's benefit and confirmed that the actions agreed were underway and reflected in the Board Actions tracker.
- IJ asked if the CEO and CR have met prior to the Board meetings. CEO confirmed the RAC would meet ahead of each General Board meeting and report to the Board. CR confirmed that CEO had been updating him of progress on production of cashflow for AITC for the forthcoming year.
- The CEO confirmed that the cashflow work was almost complete and that she just needed to clear the year end in terms of grants and related expenditure to have a clear view of cashflow for next FY. CEO also stated that it was already clear the current trajectory of membership funds would not meet the ongoing running costs of the business unless there were significant membership sign ups, particularly larger businesses, in the coming months. The Board were asked to support Membership sales by passing leads to the team.
- CEO also confirmed that the cashflow position is now included in each months Board pack.
- IJ gave a summary of the bank authority status confirming that the handover of authority from Gavin Dick (previous FD) was not yet complete and that progress was slow. CEO asked if the Chair had ascertained if an overdraft facility was available and it was confirmed the position is still unknown for the new accounts' setup in 2021. Chair asked CEO to provide a steer to the Board for the overdraft requirement. CEO confirmed she would be able to do this once the cashflow work was complete.
- CR asked if there is a target list of larger potential members that the Board can approach. The CEO confirmed there is no such list yet, but in the main target is those larger companies and accommodation providers. It was also noted that from a destination perspective, AITC needs more activity providers to join although these are low yielding in terms of fees.
- Further discussion took place regarding the current level of membership fees but action on this cannot be taken until the AGM in November 2022.
- The CEO highlighted the potential and importance of having sponsor(s) for the AITC Summit. Further discussion about sponsors continued and will be followed up by the CEO and Board.
- CR asked for a list of suppliers who have been contacted about membership. CEO confirmed she will circulate.
- Chair circulated the Virgin Money Terms and Conditions of access for Board review.

ACTION(S):

- CEO to continue building the cash flow and present to CR and then bring to the Board each meeting and confirm the amount of overdraft requirement.
- CEO to forward a list of suppliers who have been contacted for membership to the Board.
- CEO and the Board to find a potential sponsor for the AITC Summit. Chair was asked for an introduction to new Argyll Holidays owners – Cove.
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- The Board offered to assist in creating member leads and gaining new members. EC said she could support with distilleries and Chair confirmed he would follow up with suppliers who had said they would join but have not done so to date.

3. CEO Report – CC

- Chair asked for general feedback from the Board on the CEO Report. The Board agreed it is easy to read, and a great tool overall. The Board thanked the CEO for implementing a comprehensive report.
- Chair asked if CEO has anything to add, CEO stated she needed the Board's help with membership leads and made the Board aware of the new 75K grant awarded from Argyll & Bute Council. CEO stated that working in partnership with HIE and other funders and key stakeholders will be key going forward.
- Chair asked if the Board had any questions for CEO on her Board report. None were raised.
- Chair asked CEO for an update on the applications received for new Directors. CEO confirmed that two candidates had formally applied and two had expressed interest. CEO raised the question about whether the Board should be able to nominate individuals as this could be construed as conflict at the interviewing and appointment stage. The Board discussed the possibility. The Chair confirmed that there may be a conflict of interest, however the main importance is choosing the right candidate with the skillsets to contribute to the Board. The Board decided Directors could nominate a director candidate if they knew them personally and could vouch for their suitability.

ACTION(S):

- CEO to continue to advertise the roles and to submit to the Board applications.

4. Items outstanding from last Board meeting - CEO

- **Direct Booking Functionality.** The CEO presented an update on the new WAA website booking functionality presentation. The presentation showed the current members booking platforms, set out the rationale for this development and put forward a number of models of working going forward. The Board were asked to ratify the direction of travel.
- A discussion followed about the member benefits of the booking functionality, revenue opportunities and concerns for those bigger businesses, who do not benefit from the new booking functionality. CR flagged concerns surrounding bigger accommodation providers not using the booking function, and how AITC would still make it a member benefit if some members cannot be present on the platform. It was then noted that the website accommodation search and copy within the site would be amended quickly to show that the booking functionality is not the only way for visitors to book their stay.
- The CEO confirmed to the Board that the booking functionality will not be advertised on the WAA social platforms and will just be present on the site.
- Chair raised his concerns about the booking functionality and wanted to understand the potential for revenue opportunities for AITC. The CEO confirmed that she was unable to quantify at this stage as there are too many unknowns. It does support member recruitment and retention for some members, however at this stage without data to support the usage of this functionality, the potential for commissions from bookings and other commercial models was unknown. The CEO agreed to monitor the information the booking functionality provides to evaluate the potential risks and benefits as we move forward.

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- Chair asked the Board to ratify the direction of travel for direct booking functionality. This was confirmed.
- **Commercial opportunities:** The CEO confirmed that it is a requirement of the HIE funding to produce a high-level business plan to achieve financial sustainability. The CEO presented to the Board a list of opportunities and barriers for AITC. Further discussions followed and several suggestions were made:
 - Recognition that it was AITC's 10-year anniversary and that the Board should reach out to members to establish their voice amongst members. More discussion followed, with EC stating that we should make our partners aware of our 10 years. CR then added that testimonials from AITC partners would be of interest to bring to the AITC Summit. CEO noted it will be worth celebrating 10 Years of AITC at the Summit in some way.
 - CR noted that paid for downloadable maps and guides should be relatively easy to achieve given the amount of times Melfort has been asked to provide and should be prioritised for development.
 - EC suggested that merchandising could follow the Calmac model where the core brand presented was not WAA but a play on that. CEO agreed and said that she could see that Wild About... (destination) clothing could work. CEO also noted that AITC do not want to be in the distribution end of merchandising as this would be resource hungry but that we could do a small trial and that the ecommerce functionality now exists in the WAA website.

ACTION(S):

- CEO to further review and measure the performance of the booking functionality and for further recommendations to be made in the future with regards to revenue opportunities.
- CEO to develop a 10 Years of AITC celebration mini campaign for the AITC Summit, to be agreed with the Board.
- CEO and Marketing Executive to follow up with website development and copy surrounding accommodation and the booking functionality to make the visitor and member aware there is more than one way to book their stay/business on the website.

5. AOB

- Chair asked the Board for AOB. None were raised.
- CEO raised two points; that the Board to support sign-ups for the Roadshow workshop commencing 7th March 2022 and that the Board consider charging a fee to attend the Summit.
- Discussions then followed about the potential to charge for the Summit to cover the costs circa £2,600. CR agreed a charge or sponsorship would be needed to cover the costs. Further consideration and talks will be needed between CEO and the Board.

ACTION(s):

- The Board are to help with member and non-member sign-ups for the AITC roadshow.
- CEO and the Board to decide on whether those attending the AITC summit should pay a ticket fee

END