

English Riviera Destination Management Group

Meeting Notes

Wednesday 26th August 2020, 10.30am-12pm

Agenda

1. Welcome & apologies

RD welcomed all to the call.

Attendees: Rebecca Davies, TDA; Lynn Stephens, SDC (Chair); Cllr Swithin Long, Torbay Council; Carolyn Custerson, ERBIDCo; Martin Thomas, Torbay Culture; Jim Parker, Torbay Together; Carl Wyard, TDA; Gary Calland, National Trust; Alan Tyerman, TCCT; Nick Powe, ERGGO.

Apologies: Adam Luscombe, Torbay Council; Steve Reynolds, TBF; Nicky Harding, Conference English Riviera; Damian Offer, TCCT; Kevin Mowat, Torbay Council; Alan Denby, TDA.

2. Minutes & actions from last meeting

RD went through the actions of the last meeting;

- Action 2.7, RD completed.
- Action 2.19, KM absent from meeting, carry forward.
- Action 2.33, NP completed.
- Action 2.46, AT completed.

Other amendments: date and typo in action 2.35, (adversity). RD will update the document.

3. The way forward

a) LS asked partners to consider meeting frequency, do we have right balance, right balance with commitments and under the current business climate? Does the Group want to keep monthly or revert back to ¼ with interim updates in between? Discussions followed.

- CC – quarterly too long, monthly too quick, 6 weekly perhaps? Then review again. Situation is changing.
- LS recognises and agrees. Monthly too quick.
- MT – agreed 6 weekly, and flex.
- GC – also agreed.

Group decision. 6 weekly meetings until the end of the year and to then review. Weds AM via Zoom. **Action: RD.**

b) LS also asked Partners should the Group do anything differently. Format of meetings, content and actions etc?

- CC – mentioned with all meetings/groups taking place, feel Zoom silos are happening and that the DMG's profile isn't strong enough. For example, this Group isn't mentioned in Torbay Together. Feel we need to strengthen links with more of an official mention.

- JP – this can be resolved by having an official DMG update on the TT. MT offered to pick this up and align with Torbay Culture and share from Sept. LS would like to join the meetings and pick this up with Martin and will email JP to make this happen.
Action JP/MT/LS.

- c) LS is keen to share DMG good news, positive steps that are happening, things we are doing, project developments and achievements. This will help to widen the reach and profile of the Group. E.g. LS and RD recent press release for new DMG Chair.

LS asked JP if we can use the opportunity and connection with the Torbay Weekly to share regular content;

- CW: The Group or activity of place? LS: both, promoting the Place, but also the Group partnership.
- CC: what's the process, need to have this set out. Ideas discussed...
- JP: Need source and can then feature in TW with regular monthly column. "News from the DMG Chair".

Action: LS and RD to shape up process and take with forward with JP. RD to put call out to partners to prompt content.

- NP: need clear remit for DMG- visitor economy vs residents and place. Are all partners clear? Delivering experiences, we need resources. Discussion followed that we have own teams and self-monitoring to take place reflecting against the DMP.
- MT: re cultural strategy, helped establish DMG. Early heads up that there is no funding for Torbay Culture beyond December 2020 and may not be here in January.
- CW: re resources and supporting delivery of the DMP, a review is due (will come to in update). Positives of recent times under the Covid-crisis is a collective voice of tourism/visitor economy sector, including LEP and lobbying for support/resources. There is further opportunity here for the group.

4. Key partner updates

[Please refer to the [Progress Update Report](#) for full partner updates.]

- **RD – TDA,**
Highlighted key points:

As mentioned, the DMP is due to be reviewed against the new Torbay Reposition Plan, this is a large piece of work which will take place over coming months. This review will identify progress, successes and also areas of opportunity and outstanding actions, which will help to focus on Group priorities.

A Great South West Tourism survey, (working with tourism partners Cornwall to Dorset), is now live to measure the impacts of Covid-19 and to also identify business priorities for recovery and survival over the next 12 months. The results will be shared with DCMS and Treasury to lobby for further support. Survey link [here>](#)

- **CW – TDA**
Torbay Reposition Plan is now live on the Council's [website](#), and sets out a Torbay-wide approach over the next two and half years. Visitor Economy has its own theme and is recognised as significant importance to the economy. As RD highlighted, there are multiple actions, strategic documents and now is the time for the DMP to be reviewed, so clear direction can be given for future work focus. CW encourages all to review the document.

Action All.

- **Nick Powe – English Riviera Geopark Organisation**

Social Media: running a series of welcome posts for the 15 new Geopark's, aligning to the English Riviera. Geopark 'In Focus': Eight interviews and films now completed by Prof Iain Stewart and in editing. Visual Journeys: Securing shielding offers for anxious visitors with partners and associate partners. Working with 10 partner and associates to assist anxious people – more aimed at residents than visitors, but still relevant.

- **Councillor Swithin Long - Torbay Council**

Following up on anti-social behaviour complaints raised by CC which are affecting tourism businesses and the visitor experience. Issues are arising where people are housed in temporary accommodation in old hotels or next to hotels/B&Bs. The team which deals with ASB also deals with travellers, rough sleepers and are doing their best to resolve issues.

SL is working with Steve Darling, Leader Torbay Council visiting tourism businesses and is lobbying to Government regarding winter concerns - redundancies, extension of furlough. Case studies are being developed to share with Gov to give real examples.

- **Carolyn Custerson - ERBIDCo**

ASB issue –use of redundant hospitality buildings by social services for temp housing. Now a mix of housing and hotels on roads, causing issues with the visitor experience and the reputation of the destination is at risk. This problem won't go away.

Re-opening - better than expected. Worried for autumn and winter, redundancies and perm closures. Right now business is good for the resort accommodation who have fared best; attractions like Kents Caves fared worst due to social distancing measures. Working with RD, sharing Gov support, guidance and grants to businesses. ERBID feature with Jim in TW went down really well, 'Responsible Riviera'.

Visitor Experience – we're failing on attention for detail. E.g insufficient toilets, waste collection, over flowing bins, impacted by more take aways. KM not in meeting for discussion. Next meeting point discussion

Great South West DMO Group – Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth, Torbay, Somerset, Dorset, SWTA, CC and RD attend. Positive and effective weekly call with DCMS and VEV, effective for lobbying. Joined up approach and successes for Vat reduction and extension of Furlough.

Tourism Minister is visiting next month, organised by Kevin Foster, CC supporting. Wants to visit new hotels sites.

First draft ERBID2 Business Plan and renewal ballot underway. In October liaison with businesses will start.

We're not out of crisis, social distancing impacts businesses operating; Attractions being hit hard. F&D, accommodation working through it. Deeply concerned by prolonged SD use and impact on the sector. This is our main issue.

- **Gary Calland - National Trust**

A difficult time, whole organisation under consultation which ends 11th Sept, outcomes by end of Sept. Some good news to share, Coletton Fishacre at 60%, house not open. Working towards reopening Greenway House for 5th Sept, soft launch, may be an opportunity for follow up PR once all steps in place and open. Lots of paperwork to work through and with social distancing and managing staff. Limited opening at first.

There is a new national Theme being launched for members (2 million), The Big Read, featuring Agatha Christie. GC is working with Agatha Christie Ltd to shape this up, will be promoted by social media promoted, with a spotlight on the English Riviera including reading extracts from well-known people.

- **Jim Parker – Torbay Together**

At the last Torbay Together partnership meeting Torbay Council's chief financial officer Martin Phillips gave members a breakdown on the council finances in the wake of Covid-19. Not surprisingly it was not good. Martin outlined a series of 'asks' for the government for which he wanted support from individual partners. A templated letter has subsequently been sent to partners for them to send individually to the relevant minister.

It was also agreed that lobbying was essential at the moment.

Key to this is our own MP who is a minister. It was agreed that we should be guided by him when it comes to lobbying which will achieve results. This is in no way meant to undermine any other lobbying currently taking place.

Members agreed to forward any particular 'asks' and 'gives' in time for a meeting with Kevin at the end of this week. It is hoped that from that we can get a clear steer on how and who we can lobby with one voice for the best results as well as, hopefully, organise a Ministerial 'meeting' with a Torbay Together delegation.

At the meeting, it was also confirmed that fact-finding meetings are being organised with Bristol City Council to see how their 'One City' model has worked so well.

- **Alan Tyerman – Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust**

Occombe development, Trustees meeting next week, should give project go ahead. May reopening target, and for late May bank holiday. Funding gap, £50k. Benefit for the Bay with a new visitor attraction coming on to the market. (Positive news story to come).

- **Lynn Stephens – South Devon College**

SDC staff have been working from home since end March. Last few months ramping up for new term starting next week. Positively seeing high enrolments with re-training and change of career promotions. Investment coming in tourism and hospitality and events with new Level 4 programme work, project developed with RD last year, presenting aspirational and career opportunity pathways in the sector. We should start to see cultural changes in the sector.

5. A.O.B - none

- Date of next meetings TBC – links to follow (expected 7th Oct, 18th Nov, Dec TBC, 10.30am-12pm). RD will also cancel all future dates out of diaries to reschedule.