

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Board, held via Microsoft Teams  
On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September 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”)  
Tracey O’Keefe (“TO”)  
Steven Broomhead (“SB”)  
Jamie Christon (“JC”)  
Philip Cox (“PC”)

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

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

- **Opening by the Chairman and Welcome**

TB welcomed Board members and thanked them for joining 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 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were correct.

- **Reappointment of Directors**

TB advised that Sarah Callander Beckett has completed a 3-year term and proposed that Sarah is reappointed for a further 3 years. The MC Board members unanimously recommended Sarah’s reappointment.

- **Board Briefing Note / CEO Report**

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

- The cost of living and the increased energy prices is affecting consumer spend and having a negative impact on some visitor economy businesses.
- Visitors are still wanting to book breaks away and are looking for family time and connecting with nature and the outdoors, which is something in Cheshire that we can showcase and are prioritising in our campaigns.
- We continue to have good press and media coverage for the destination including a feature in the Independent.
- Footfall at the VIC is very positive and is seeing a return of international visitors.
- The responsible business conference will take place at Sykes offices on the 13<sup>th</sup> October.

- MC Awards are now open for nominations and we are looking to host the awards in Warrington.

### **Comments from Board**

It was questioned whether Board members could help attract sponsorship for the awards. JM advised that we are looking for sponsorship and would welcome Board members assistance.

Concerns were voiced around the current economic conditions and the impact of this on the visitor economy and in addition to this how the government changes and the LEP review will affect Marketing Cheshire and its role going forward.

It was agreed that it is a watershed moment for the wider economic environment within which the visitor economy operates, as well as the institutional policy environment with the change of Government, potential of reduced funding and the LEP and DMO reviews. It was advised that the newer board members met on Tuesday to discuss. It was agreed that the group would meet again in November to discuss further as part of future strategy and business planning

It was agreed that we will hold a briefing session for the full board to ensure that they are engaged with the process and the activity of the sub-group.

With regard to the LEP review it was advised that government wrote to LEP chairs on the 31<sup>st</sup> March to advise that the long-term role for LEPs will be to be folded into combined authorities, where they exist. If they do not exist, the LEPs will work a lot closer with LA partners. A higher-level budget and business plan will need to be submitted to government by the 25<sup>th</sup> November. Conversations have taken place with all of the LA CEOs and Growth Directors and all raised the importance of the work carried out by MC.

It was confirmed that CW&C have a group set up to review the cost-of-living crisis and are looking to engage with businesses including hospitality and tourism. CW&C are also taking a broader sustainability and inclusivity approach as a sub-region.

JC advised that the Zoo's marketing campaign in Manchester has seen an increase in approx. 20% of visitors from that area. The Zoo have also introduced value for money products such as 5 tickets for price of 4 and the into the night £15 events, advising that people still want to look for a day out but are looking more at value for money products.

It was highlighted that we need to keep our hospitality businesses informed on what our strategy is, particularly the smaller operators who will be hit badly by the cost-of-living crisis.

It was agreed that we need to continue to create positive PR for the area, and advised that local businesses felt the benefit of the PR around our accessibility to our destinations from Manchester / Liverpool etc.

It was questioned whether there is a possibility to pool resources to support partners across the area. NS advised Destination Chester has pulled together the different groups to communicate as one voice. We would like to do more about pooling budgets however this is difficult as our role is on the destination profile and the individual partners look to use their funding to drive their own commercial income.

It was stated that the importance events in Cheshire such as Making Tracks, Creamfields, RHS Tatton should be highlighted in the work we are doing. There is plenty to be positive about at the moment too.

**Action SP  
to set up  
meeting**

The importance of sustainability and inclusivity was highlighted but it was felt that we need to look at a different way to communicate this to the public as the language we use tends to be public sector messaging.

#### **DMO review**

JM referred to the Tourism Alliance statement included within the board pack.

Government will be going ahead with the accreditation process which will consist of Destination Delivery Partnerships and Local Visitor Economy Partnerships. We will progress with the accreditation process as it will be the gateway for any future funds, so it is important for MC to be recognised in this process.

We have set up monthly meetings with colleagues in DCMS and roundtable events will take place in September and October.

Patricia Yates, CEO of VB was due to visit us in August unfortunately this visit had to be cancelled due to train issues. The visit will be rescheduled to November.

- **Company Finances**

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

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

Commercial income is a challenge and likely to come into the business in the latter half of the year, depending on our success in this area.

Discussions are taking place regarding the DMO/VIC contract with Cheshire West and Chester Council. Due to work being carried out in the Town Hall there may be a need to relocate the VIC operation in the future. It was confirmed that this will be carefully reviewed prior to any decisions being implemented.

It was questioned whether we could use 2019 as a comparison year for the accounts. NS advised that we are looking at this as part of the strategy discussion, which will also include a comparison against other DMOs.

It was questioned why York have a higher budget than MC. JM advised that York has a much broader membership and remit. JM and GD are meeting with the Make it York team next week to discuss their funding model.

IB advised that we have been looking at ways to improve our payment systems and have identified a system called Go Cardless. To implement the new system, Go Cardless are required to undertake business checks which will require us providing personal information for Board Directors. Board Members present agreed unanimously to providing their details.

#### **2021/2022 Statutory Accounts**

IB updated Board members on CWTB's financial position at the year end and advised that the Statutory accounts have been approved by the Audit Committee and moved for the Board to approve and sign the accounts.

One recommendation that came out of the audit was around the process of invoice approvals. IB confirmed that this has now been resolved.

The Board Members present approved the Audited accounts for 2021/22 for CWTB.

The Chair advised that he is happy to sign the accounts which will be filed at Companies House. IB to liaise with Murray Smith to arrange.

**Action IB**

The Board also approved the reappointment of Murray Smith as company auditors.

- **Any Other Business**

JM advised that he will be taking parental leave from the middle of September, returning early November.

GD advised that she will be going on maternity leave and will arrange for a colleague to attend meetings in her absence.

**Future Board Meetings**

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022

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

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023

Thursday 14 December 2023

Signature (Trevor Brocklebank, Chair)

.....

Date