

TOURISM IRELAND CLG
MINUTES OF THE 193rd MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD AT TOURISM IRELAND OFFICES, BISHOP'S SQUARE, DUBLIN
THURSDAY 28th MARCH 2024 09.30 – 12.30

PRESENT:

Christopher Brooke (Chairman)
Ruth Andrews Katy Best
Stephen McNally Joe Dolan
Mary Mulvey Laura McCorry
Harry Connolly (online)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alice Mansergh Chief Executive (Designate)
Shane Clarke Director of Corporate Services, Policy & NI / Company Secretary
Siobhan McManamy Director of Markets (items 8 and 9)
Aidan Power Director of Marketing (items 8 and 9)
Elmagh Killeen Head of Brand and Marketing Communications (items 8 and 9)
Neil Aulton Head of Strategy & Insights (items 8, 9 and 10)
Margaret O'Reilly Office of the CEO

1. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

Apologies were received from Kathryn Thomson and John McGrillen.
Minister Catherine Martin also sent apologies that she was unable to join the meeting.
Board members welcomed the new Director of Marketing, Aidan Power.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY

1st February 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on Thursday 1st February 2024, were approved with a minor adjustment and were signed by the Chairman. They will be published on Tourism Ireland's corporate website.

ACTION: Shane Clarke

4. MATTERS ARISING

It was noted that matters arising from the previous meeting on 1st February 2024 had been actioned.

Shane Clarke advised that a series of specialist briefings would be scheduled for the Board through 2024/25. A list of prioritised topics was approved with the addition of an

expert on trans-atlantic air services. Suggestions for suitable speakers were invited.
ACTION: Shane Clarke

The Board was advised that the communication of revised consumer segments to wider industry partners is progressing.

5. **CEO Designate REPORT**

The Board noted the contents of the paper circulated.

The CEO (Designate) elaborated on the following:

- Interactions with government were discussed including the presence of the Taoiseach at the JetBlue route launch in Boston and Minister Murphy at Tourism Ireland's business breakfast in New York, interaction with the Taoiseach, First and Deputy First Ministers and other Ministers during St Patrick's events in Washington DC, quarterly meeting with the Permanent Secretary of DfE and attendance of the Secretary General of DTCAGSM at ITB Berlin.
- Extensive media coverage was secured for the island of Ireland over the St Patrick's period, with the Dublin parade and destination content airing to a potential 200M viewers across the US, Ireland Weeks brought the destination to life in cities in Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and Austria.
- St Patrick's week importance for tourism was discussed, with activities generating up to four-fold increase in internet searches for Ireland compared to spring baseline.
- Despite a slower start for some accommodation providers in the early months, industry sentiment suggests a positive view forward for overseas tourism in 2024, with North America remaining the strongest growth prospect.
- Leading hotel aggregator reports overseas bookings +5% ahead of last year and +14% for St Patrick's weekend.
- Air seat capacity filed for peak summer months is currently +5% ahead of peak 2023. New daily services from Boston and JFK to Dublin with JetBlue welcomed.

The Board congratulated the team on maximising opportunities around St Patrick's Day and noted the envy of many competitor destinations. Plans for 2025 are under review and an update will be provided at the May Board meeting.

ACTION: Shane Clarke

The impact of increasing input costs for industry and continuing capacity constraints was discussed. Liaison with tour operators, sister agencies and ITIC has been stepped up. Closer monitoring is in place for 2024 and an initial report will come to the May Board. Review/revise on risk register.

ACTION: Alice Mansergh / Shane Clarke

Brand uplift surveys, overseas consumer sentiment trackers and digital marketing campaigns were discussed. An update on our 2024 Plan on a page will be provided at each upcoming Board meeting. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh / Aidan Power

The Board welcomed advances on the People plan and looked forward to the Great Places to Work survey later in the year. An update will be included at each Board meeting. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh / Shane Clarke

6. SECRETARIAT MATTERS

Shane Clarke advised the Board that the draft statutory accounts for 2023 will be presented at the May meeting. Succession planning and pension provision were discussed and an analysis is to be provided. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Lynda Quinn

6.1 Management Accounts December 2023

The Board noted the accounts circulated.

6.2 Financial Memorandum

The Board noted and welcomed the new Financial Memorandum and commended Alan Myles for related work with sponsor departments.

6.3 Business Plan 2024 NSMC version

The Board approved the Business Plan 2024 for progress to the North South Ministerial Council.

6.4 Banking Approvals / Procurement Approvals:

The Board approved the following revisions:

- **Dublin Office EUR, GBP and USD Accounts**

The signing of a new mandate detailing the addition of Mr Aidan Power, Director of Marketing, to replace Ms Louise Finnegan, with an unlimited* signing limit.

* (CEO is one of the two signatories required where a payment is over >€400k for a unique supplier.)

- **NY Office USD Account**

The Board approved the addition of Mr Aidan Power, Director of Marketing, to replace Ms Louise Finnegan, with an unlimited* signing limit.

* (CEO is one of the two signatories required where a payment is over >€400k for a unique supplier.)

- **Toronto Office CAD Account**

The Board approved the addition of Mr Aidan Power, Director of Marketing, to replace Ms Louise Finnegan, with a signing limit of CAD \$375,000.

- **All Tourism Ireland Bank Accounts**

The Board approved the removal of Ms Louise Finnegan as account signatory from all accounts with immediate effect.

- **Paris Bank Account**

The Board approved the opening of a new Escrow deposit account with BNP Paribas to facilitate the holding of the security deposit for the new Paris office.

- **Sydney Bank Account**

The Board approved the addition of Ms Viktoria Albrecht to the bank mandate with a signing limit of \$10,000.

Appropriate mandates and bank documentation in respect of all the above bank accounts were prepared for signing and sealing as necessary.

- **Approval to Award EU Level Contract for the Provision of Global Travel Insights**

The Board approved the recommendation of the panel to award the above EU level contract to RED C Research & Marketing Ltd on behalf of Tourism Ireland's Strategy & Insights Team, Marketing Division.

6.5 Board Terms of Reference and Risk Appetite Statement

The Board approved the updated Board Terms of Reference.

6.6 Update Board Governance Manual:

The Board approved the updates to the Board Governance Manual.

6.7 Overseas Cost of Living:

The Board noted the overseas cost of living increases for payment in April.

Lynda Quinn, Head of HR, joined the meeting.

6.8 Partnerships

Following discussion, the Board endorsed the Executive's Partnership proposal as presented. It will now be discussed with sponsor departments. Organisation development and staffing will be discussed further at the May meeting and the outcome will inform the next steps.

ACTION: Alice Mansergh / Shane Clarke

Lynda Quinn left the meeting.

Siobhan McManamy, Director of Markets, Aidan Power, Director of Marketing, Neil Aulton, Head of Strategy & Insights and Elmagh Killeen, Head of Brand and Marketing Communications joined the meeting.

7. Business Events

Siobhan McManamy, Director of Markets, presented an update on Tourism Ireland's role and responsibilities in the promotion of Business Events to the island of Ireland – primarily meetings and incentives – and updated the Board on objectives for 2024 including key account management, sales platforms, marketing communications, social media, publicity and resourcing. Discussion also centred on ambition, brand, lead generation, collaboration with industry, sister agencies and convention bureaux and sustainability. The Board recorded its thanks to Siobhan McManamy for her work in this area. Another update will be provided to the Board in the autumn.

ACTION: Alice Mansergh / Siobhan McManamy

8. Sustainability

Shane Clarke, Neil Aulton, Elmagh Killeen and Siobhan McManamy updated the Board on Sustainability in the context of Tourism Ireland's overall commitment and plan. This included progress on certification mark development, resourcing and plans to benefit downstream tourism businesses. It was confirmed that staff had completed a sustainability training programme early in 2023, all new staff undertake a sustainability module as part of induction and further training will be rolled out. Discussion also included industry engagement, certification validity dates and promotional plans. The Board noted the progress against objectives. Further updates at June, September and December meetings. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Neil Aulton

Siobhan McManamy, Aidan Power and Elmagh Killeen left the meeting.

9. ROMI

Neil Aulton updated the Board on the context, need and challenges of establishing a ROMI estimate. He outlined three potential avenues for delivery and the work under way to establish validity and a way forward. Progress milestones will be shared with the ROMI sub-committee and sponsor departments. Return on Marketing Investment calculations add to robust ongoing tracking of all spend, tied to clear and trackable business and marketing objectives in Tourism Ireland's plan. The Board will be kept updated in June and September. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh / Neil Aulton

Neil Aulton left the meeting.

10. ARAC update

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee provided an update on their satisfactory meeting. It was noted that legal advice is being sought on alignment in relation to new climate legislation in Ireland, Northern Ireland and at EU level.

11. ROMI update

The Board approved the revised terms of reference for the Return on Marketing Investment sub-Committee, noting the CEO's attendance at the meeting. The Chair of the Committee updated the Board and expressed appreciation for the work under way to establish a ROMI estimate. The Committee will report to the Board in June and October. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

12. AOB

The Board agreed to a change of date to 18th June for the mid-summer Strategy meeting. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

The Chair encouraged Board members to attend the annual Meet the Buyer and Meitheal workshops in Belfast and Killarney respectively in the week commencing

8 April. Details will be circulated to members. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

Locations and venues for upcoming Board meetings were discussed and further details will be circulated to members. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 2nd May 2024, to take place in the Tourism Ireland office in Coleraine. Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy MLA will attend. A meeting with the Tourism Northern Ireland Board will take place the evening before. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Tourism Northern Ireland

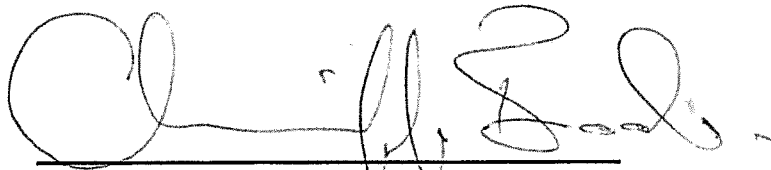
Alice Mansergh, Shane Clarke and Margaret O'Reilly left the meeting.

14. MEETING WITHOUT THE EXECUTIVE

Several matters were discussed by the Board. No actions arose.

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

Signed:



CHRISTOPHER BROOKE - CHAIRMAN