

TOURISM IRELAND CLG
MINUTES OF THE 191st MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
HELD AT TOURISM OFFICES, BISHOP'S SQUARE, DUBLIN
THURSDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2023 09.00 – 12.30

PRESENT:

Christopher Brooke	(Chairman)
Nóirín Hegarty	Ruth Andrews
Katy Best	Kathryn Thomson
Joe Dolan	Mary Mulvey
John McGrillen	Laura McCorry
Stephen McNally	Harry Connolly (virtual)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Alice Mansergh	Chief Executive (Designate)
Shane Clarke	Director of Corporate Services, Policy & NI / Company Secretary
Lynda Quinn	Head of HR (agenda item 7)
Alan Myles	Head of Finance (agenda item 7)
Sinéad Grace	Head of Corporate & Industry Communications (agenda item 7)
Helen McGorman	Head of NI Stakeholder Liaison (agenda item 7)
Jackie Gillan	Acting/Head of ICT & Data Protection (agenda item 7)
Neil Aulton	Head of Strategy & Insights (agenda item 7)
Margaret O'Reilly	Office of the CEO

1. APOLOGIES AND OPENING REMARKS

There were no apologies for this meeting.

The Board recorded its thanks to Vice-Chair, Nóirín Hegarty, for her contribution and service over many years and congratulated Ruth Andrews on her appointment as Chairperson of Fáilte Ireland.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING ON THURSDAY
19th October 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chairman. They will be published on Tourism Ireland's corporate website. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

It was noted that visitor estimates would not be included in the Business Plan 2024 due to a difference in the jurisdictional data available. The planned industry engagement in December had been deferred to the next Board meeting.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

It was noted that matters arising from the previous meeting on 19 October 2023 had been actioned.

Shane Clarke advised the Board that a meeting with key stakeholders to discuss tourism policy will be set up in Q1 2024. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / John McGrillen

Shane Clarke updated the Board on the planned one-day training programme which has been deferred until April 2024 to include anticipated new Board members. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

Shane Clarke advised that the Annual Accounts 2022 had been signed-off by the C&AG and the filing deadline had been met.

The Board was advised that Tourism Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, Fáilte Ireland and ITIC continue to work with the CSO to understand better their performance data. It was unlikely that the required clarification would be available ahead of the February meeting due to complexity in triangulating with third party data. The Board will be kept updated. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Neil Aulton

Shane Clarke advised that the brand strengths of Northern Ireland attractions relative to Northern Ireland overall was being explored further and the work would continue into 2024. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Neil Aulton

The Board was updated on the Island of Ireland Sustainability Assurance Scheme and advised that Stephen McNally has been appointed as independent nominee to the expert panel.

Air Access and Digital Marketing would be included in the schedule of specialist briefings for the Board during 2024. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

The Boards of Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland will meet on Wednesday 31 January 2024 in the Coleraine area. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

5. **CEO Designate REPORT**

The Board noted the contents of the paper circulated.

The CEO (Designate) elaborated on the following:

- Ongoing engagement with Ministers, Departments, Fáilte Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland and with the industry across the island
- Participation at key industry events including the annual conferences of AVEA and IAAT and meetings with sector leaders and with airports in Ireland and Northern Ireland.
- Strengthening marketing relationships with global organisations like Google and Meta
- Continuing engagement with the Tourism Ireland leadership team and staff throughout the organisation
- Marketing activity to year end and over the Christmas holiday planning period

- Feedback from industry and outlook for 2024
- Business Planning for 2024

The CEO (D) commended the GB team for their innovative use of native plants and other sustainable materials in the Tourism Ireland stand at World Travel Market, the busiest since 2019, where 75 island of Ireland tourism businesses engaged in 2,800 commercial meetings (1,000 for Northern Ireland).

Unrest in Dublin and resulting unwelcome media headlines was discussed. The Board was advised that a new quarterly sentiment tracking survey would be in place in 2024 to monitor overseas consumer attitudes across a range of topics. **ACTION:** L Finnegan / N Aulton

Visitor performance and uneven recovery was discussed. Insights shared by leading accommodation aggregators and other commercial industry sources indicated their tourism bookings had returned to 2019 levels or above. Closer relationships and, in particular, the ongoing sharing of data with these sources was advocated. **ACTION:** A Mansergh

Competitiveness and capacity were discussed and it was felt that identification of available hotel and self-catering accommodation stocks and their location would facilitate targeted marketing. **ACTION:** L Finnegan / Neil Aulton

Marketing Plan 2024 launches were discussed as a key platform to communicate sustainability message to industry. The launches will be on 9 and 11 January in Dublin and Belfast respectively. The Island of Ireland Assurance Scheme, environmentally friendly holidays (by rail etc) and specific benefits of coach tourism are good reference points. **ACTION:** A Mansergh / Shane Clarke

6. SECRETARIAT MATTERS

Shane Clarke advised the Board that the summary annual agenda and schedule of Board meetings had been uploaded to Decision Time.

6.1 Draft Management Accounts October 2023

The Board noted the accounts circulated.

6.2 Banking Approvals / Procurement Approvals:

- The Board approved the closure of two dormant Bank of China accounts. Appropriate mandates and bank documentation were signed and sealed as necessary.
- The Board approved the signing of a new mandate for the Paris Office Account – the addition of a new account signatory and removal of the existing one due to retirement. Appropriate mandates and bank documentation were signed and sealed as necessary.

- The Board approved the addition of a new signatory to the Sydney Office Account to replace the existing signatory while on maternity leave. Appropriate mandates and bank documentation were signed and sealed as necessary.
- The Board noted the initiation of a competitive procurement process, via an OGP [Office of Government Procurement] central framework, for the provision of internal audit services.
- The Board noted the resolution, for 2024, of the funding issues relating to Tourism Ireland's contribution for the fit-out of New York Ireland House.

6.3 Board Effectiveness Action Plan & Board Governance Manual:

The Board noted the updated contents of the Board Effectiveness Action Plan. Approval was given to share the Action Plan with both tourism Departments at the December O&L meeting.

6.4 Summary Draft Annual Agenda and Schedule of Board Meetings 2024

The Board approved the contents of the summary and schedule for 2024, noting request advised under Matters Arising.

7. CORPORATE SERVICES, POLICY & NORTHERN IRELAND PRESENTATION

Lynda Quinn, Sinéad Grace, Alan Myles, Tom Noone, Helen McGorman, Jackie Gillan and Neil Aulton joined the meeting.

Shane Clarke, Lynda Quinn, Sinéad Grace, Alan Myles, Jackie Gillan and Helen McGorman made a presentation updating on the work of the Corporate Services, Policy and Northern Ireland division, mapping activity to the objectives of fostering a world-class team, demonstrating integrity, living our values and growing expertise. The following points and actions arose:

- Progress report on Great Places to Work action plan will be included on Board agenda quarterly in 2024. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh / Shane Clarke
- Management accounts on track. Breakdown of jurisdictional specific funding will be shared once confirmed. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke
- The Board noted its obligation to be familiar with key governance documentation. This is available on the Decision Time Reading Room.
- Communications continue to inform stakeholders on Tourism Ireland activity.
- Funding available under Peace Plus and Shared Island provide additional opportunities for tourism collaboration across the island.
- Migration of IT and data infrastructure and systems to the cloud continues; ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Board commended the presentation and thanked the presenters.

SUSTAINABILITY

Neil Aulton presented on working towards a sustainable future – effecting change and making it happen. The Board will be updated on progress early in 2024.

ACTION: Neil Aulton

The Board commended the progress and thanked Neil for his presentation.

Lynda Quinn, Sinéad Grace, Jackie Gillan and Helen McGorman left the meeting.

8. DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2024 (Long form document)

Neil Aulton advised of feedback received from the Board and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM). The Board discussed and agreed that this would be incorporated in the long form Draft Business Plan 2024 document. **ACTION:** Neil Aulton

The Board approved the long form Draft Business Plan 2024 for submission to the North South Ministerial Council subject to final additional comments from the Department for the Economy and agreement with DTCAGSM. Substantive changes will be brought to the Board's attention. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh / Shane Clarke

9. AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee provided an update on their meeting. Discussion included C&AG sign off of Annual Accounts 2022 and the welcome attendance of a representative of the C&AG's office at the meeting, revised Board TORs and risk appetite – terms of reference to be reviewed in light of new Financial Memorandum, feedback on funding ratio paper and internal audit tender.

Shane Clarke advised that an updated Financial Memorandum for Tourism Ireland was being reviewed by solicitors. Once clearance is received, it will be brought to the Board for approval. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke / Alan Myles

10. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Chair of the Remuneration Committee provided an update to the Board on the discussion at their meeting. A further update will be provided to the Committee in H1 2024. **ACTION:** Alice Mansergh

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair of the Return on Marketing Investment Committee provided an update on a recent meeting. A further update will be provided at the February 2024 meeting.

ACTION: Committee Chair Ruth Andrews

The Chairman thanked the Chairs of the ARAC, Remuneration and ROMI Committees for their work.

The Chairman wished the Board and everyone at Tourism Ireland a very happy Christmas and every success in 2024.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 1st February 2024, to take place in the Tourism Ireland office in Coleraine. An industry engagement will take place the night before. **ACTION:** Shane Clarke

Alice Mansergh, Shane Clarke, Alan Myles, Tom Noone and Margaret O'Reilly left the meeting.

13. MEETING WITHOUT THE EXECUTIVE

The Chairman led a discussion with Board members on actions 16, 17 and 18 of the Board Effectiveness Review. It was agreed that appropriate actions under each heading would be implemented in 2024. **ACTION:** Chairman

The meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

Signed:



CHRISTOPHER BROOKE – CHAIRMAN