

**Minutes Area Tourism Partnership Meeting held
Tuesday 13 February 2007
at the Dower House, Dean Castle & Country Park, Kilmarnock**

Present:

Bob Leitch, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry (Chair)
Cllr Eric Ross, East Ayrshire Council (Vice Chair)
John Spooner, East Ayrshire Council
Stuart Gibson, North Ayrshire Council
Cllr Tom Barr, North Ayrshire Council
Nick Larkin, South Ayrshire Council
Michael Wright, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire
Carolyn Elder, Largs Yacht Haven
Howard Wilkinson, ACTF
Malcolm Simpson, Gailes Restaurant & Hotel
Martin Hunter, Federation of Small Businesses
Alastair Dobson, Taste of Arran
Sandi Hellowell, VisitScotland
Catriona Mackie, VisitScotland
Elaine Sykes, VisitScotland

Apologies:

Apologies received from: Alex Anderson, North Ayrshire Council; Glenn Wedlock, Prestwick International Airport; Stewart Selbie, Turnberry Hotel; Cllr Margaret Toner, South Ayrshire Council

The Chair advised the Ian McCaig of Golf Tourism Scotland was running late and that the Agenda would start as shown below and his presentation given later on in the meeting.

1. Previous Minutes and Actions

H Wilkinson asked that, p2, last paragraph, be amended and the wording changed from “product funding” to “product development”, which the group agreed to. The Minutes of 12 December 2006 were then taken as an accurate account of events and approved.

Action:

- Amend Minutes of 12 December 06.

Responsible – E Sykes

2. Tourism Conference

The Chair stated that the update had been circulated to the Partnership Group for information. Points to note were that due to another commitment Ellis Watson had cancelled his attendance, but a new key speaker had been identified – Charan Gill, MBE.

Approx 140 delegates have registered to attend the Conference, but there are still spaces available. All ATP members attending this meeting, advised of their intention to attend the conference.

A promotional DVD has been produced for the conference, lasting 3min 20 seconds long, which showcases tourism in Ayrshire and Arran. Copies of the DVD will not be available at the Conference, but if requested, will be available at a later date, however a small charge may be incurred.

Action:

- Promote conference to colleagues in the industry

Responsible - All

3. Local Industry Liaison

Chair advised that M Balish from the Ayrshire Hotels Association would be unable to attend the meeting. Instead M Simpson gave a brief overview of providing seamless golf experience in Ayrshire and Arran, which is a trying to move the golf product forward by engaging with hotels, golf courses and service providers to ensure best experience for visitor.

Action

- M Balish to be invited to attend next meeting of ATP.

Responsible - Chair

4. European Funding Presentation – by Alex Anderson, North Ayrshire Council

S Gibson, NAC advised that A Anderson was unable to attend due to another meeting commitment. He advised that A Anderson was happy to head up a sub group, but that at the moment it was possibly to soon, as dates, and eligibility of funding were still to be finalised. Chair advised that at last meeting it was discussed setting up a Private Sector brainstorming group, with interested members from the group and outwith, to look at a wish-list of projects. A Dobson added that these projects should not be duplicate work already planned but should be strategic in nature. M Simpson agreed to take this forward.

Action:

- M Simpson to contact A Anderson to discuss.

Responsible - M Simpson

5. Golf Tourism Scotland

Ian McCaig, representative of Golf Tourism Scotland, provided the Group with an overview of why and how the organisation was formed. GTS was built on the foundations laid by SIGTOA with the hope of raising awareness of product development, golf tourism marketing, training, research and monitoring. Over the last three years GTS has gone from a concept to an organisation with over 230 private sector members. In the past six months GTS has formulated a golf structure to facilitate communication within the golf sector, and within this, proposals for

Regional and Area bodies to replace the reducing numbers of regional golf initiatives. Another key issue is the need to create greater cohesion and avoid duplication within the industry and build a strong private/public sector partnership.

He advised that the purpose of his presentation was to ask the ATP to consider the creation of a membership based Area Golf Group to pursue the business development activities of Ayrshire and Arran within the proposed structure of Golf Tourism Scotland. He also asked the ATP to consider the loss of Scottish Golf SouthWest and the potential benefits creating an operator led golf group with direct inputs from the appropriate public sector bodies in the area.

After the presentation there then followed a discussion between I McCaig and the group. The Chair informed I McCaig that the above proposals had already been considered by ATP. After discussion the chair thanked I McCaig for his time and that they would review the information given and get back in touch with him.

The group then discussed and agreed to the idea of having an Area Golf Group, but membership issue, should be considered further, and it was suggested holding a workshop once relevant information has been gathered together.

Action:

- Hold golf workshop with group in June, once evaluation report on Scottish Golf SouthWest is complete as that will give clearer picture. **Responsible - SEA**
- Contact I McCaig to advise of response **Responsible - Chair**

6. Partnership Plan

C Mackie circulated the completed Project Initiation Documents. She advised there were 14 completed PID's out of 24.

Below are documents still to be completed and person/s responsible

Objective/Action	Responsibility
Improve the quality of the visitor experience Support all improvement activities in particular eg clean beaches, town centre regeneration plans	North Ayrshire Council agreed to take this forward for next meeting
Improve access and transport choices for the visitor and local community Assess signage problem and co-ordinate the development of a signage plan involving relevant agencies	East Ayrshire Council working on for next meeting
Improve the product offering in Ayrshire & Arran Establish Ayrshire & Arran working group of relevant people with the objective of improving Path network for visitors eg	3 local authorities to liaise and advise for next meeting.

Paths for walking, cycling, horseriding etc. ATP to write to existing access forums to suggest a joint approach/working group.	
Maximise available funds to market the area Use VS national marketing campaigns to maximise the benefit to the local area.	Agreed Project Initiation Document not required. Instead an update will be provided in monitoring document.
Support & encourage Challenge Fund applications	VisitScotland to complete for next meeting
Identify opportunities for closer working and communication between VS private sector	M Simpson/M Hunter/S Hellowell to take forward
Ensure that all actions taken forward address the issues of sustainability All representatives on ATP to look into implementing Green Tourism Business Scheme	VisitScotland to complete for next meeting

The group need to look at actions and reassess, to look if they are real projects and if actions are going to be met by date given. All actions will be added to the monitoring document. Decisions need to be made on the most important issues and prioritise them.

Action:

- Meeting to be held to review list of the relevant actions and discuss priorities.
Responsible - C Mackie/BLeitch/S Hellowell
- List then to be circulated round rest of group and group to feedback their top three actions
Responsible – All
- Monitoring Framework Spreadsheet to be circulated round group
Responsible – S Hellowell

7. Nominations for Partnership April 07

Stewart Selbie and Glenn Wedlock’s term on the ATP comes to an end in April. Both can stand for re-election, but also new nominations can be accepted. Any suggestions for nominees to be fed through to the Chair or C Mackie. A sub-group will be formed to shortlist nominations if necessary. The Chair will announce this at the Tourism Conference

Action:

- Feed through suggestions for nominations to the Chair, C Mackie
Responsible – All
- Advise delegates at conference of nomination process
Responsible - Chair

8. AOB

Scotland's First Coastal and Marine National Park (VisitScotland's response) – this document was passed round the Group by C Mackie and advised it was for information.

Dates for your Diary

Tourism Conference – Tuesday 27th February 2007, starting at 0930 hours, Gales Hotel, Irvine.

Next ATP Meeting – Tuesday 17 April 2007, Isle of Arran, venue tbc