

STF Newsletter December 2004

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Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year to all!! We hope that this newsletter heralds a busy and productive 2005.

Committee Area Tourist Boards Review

STF Board Directors Peter Taylor, Ian Gardner and Alan Rankin, Chief Executive, gave evidence to the Enterprise and Culture Committee at the Scottish Parliament regarding the progress of the Area Tourist Board Review on 23rd November. The full notes of the meeting are available on <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/enterprise/or-04/ec04-2601.htm>.

New Board elected for the Forum

On 9th December STF held its EGM at the Huntingtower Hotel, Perth. The meeting unanimously approved a new constitution. The new constitution allows for the reformatting of the STF board and the categorisation of membership. In seeking a greater spread of representation across sectors and geographically the following people were elected as a result of a members' ballot taken prior to the EGM:

Geographic

South of Scotland – Kevin Keenan, The Dryburgh Abbey Hotel

Edinburgh & Lothians – Ian Gardner, National Trust for Scotland

Glasgow & Strathclyde – *No candidate*

East Central – Roger Brown, Promotional Print Distribution

Highlands & Islands – Laurence Young, Lochaber Centre for Tourism Excellence

Sector

Attractions & Activity – David J Adams McGilp, The Dalriada Project

Accommodation – Andy Machen-Young, The Windsor Hotel

Skills & Training – Geoff Fenlon, People 1st

Business Tourism, Food/Drink & Retail – Peter Taylor OBE (Interim Chair) Townhouse Company

Business Development & Tourism Services – Douglas Logan, Scottish Destination Management Association

The board now moves to elect further co-opted directors to further strengthen the board. After two years in post Andrew Mathieson stood down as chairman and director of STF. Peter Taylor will assume the role of interim chair until the board elects a new chairman early in the New Year.

Our sincere thanks to Andrew for his unstinting work and wise direction of the Forum. We would also like to thank the retiring Board directors: Amanda Clark, Marjory Rodger, David Cooper, and Marc Robertson for their energy and work on behalf of the Forum over the last few years.

VisitScotland Appointments

Philip Riddle has been confirmed as Chief Executive for the new integrated network of the restructured VisitScotland. The following Director posts have been filled:

Director of Marketing - Malcolm Roughhead

Director of Corporate Services - Ken Neilson

The unfilled posts are:

Director of Network Operations

Director of Industry Engagement

Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Communications

New Business Development Director at visitscotland.com

Paul Wedgwood has been appointed Business Development Director of visitscotland.com. Paul has an immense amount of knowledge of the travel and tourism sector with over 13 years experience with Thomas Cook and Expedia.co.uk/TV Travel Shop. Much of Paul's work has involved creating and developing commercial relationships with travel product suppliers, driving sales through multi-media channels and creating sales promotions. Having worked in this highly-competitive market place, he has a good grasp of the <http://visitscotland.com> aims.

Scotland United

With over 400 delegates, the conference was attended by Tourism Minister Patricia Ferguson MSP. She told the conference that, with the new Tourism Network structure largely settled, it was time to concentrate efforts on improving the use of IT and developing skills and training in the Scottish industry.

Sir Tom Farmer gave a rousing speech on "No stinking thinking", and Tom McCallum spoke out for stronger leadership and investment to match Tourism's major contribution to the Scottish GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

Evaluation forms will be sent to all delegates **by post** from VisitScotland – expect them to arrive through your letterbox (along with the Christmas cards) by the end of this week. Please, do respond, as your comments are formative in the development of next year's national industry conference, Scotland United 2005.

STF ran a **QA for All Workshop** where delegates heard from VisitScotland on the common UK schemes, new sector grading schemes and the new, food grading scheme to replace the Taste of Scotland scheme. Over 90 people attended and were given research results, aims, and the increased importance of service and ambiance as rateable grades. We also discussed proposed timings for roll-out of the new schemes. Workshops allowed individuals to ask questions in detail and exchange their views at this planning stage.

SFQC (Scottish Food Qualification Certification) <http://www.sfgc.co.uk/> has been awarded the contract to operate the new VisitScotland Food Quality Scheme. Set up in 1995, SFQC assesses over 16,000 food & farming businesses each year. Peter Brown introduced the initial plans to develop a simplified, whole industry scheme that will be based on entry level/Silver/Gold awards. The Scheme pilot will be launched in late January 2005.

If you were unable to attend the workshop, and would like to receive copies of the presentation, these can be obtained from the Forum office at a small charge to cover administration costs (free to STF members). Additionally, if you would like to note your interest in attending similar workshops next year, please email to be put on the information list to elainet@stforum.co.uk.

News in Short

Skye Bridge tolls were abolished this week (21st December 2004) with immediate effect. "This is the start of a new era for Skye. A toll-free bridge will boost tourism and commerce - to the benefit not only of the Skye and Lochalsh economy, but also across the Highlands as a whole." The Skye Bridge was built as one of the first private finance projects, and tolls have been in place for nine years.

STF members **The Scottish Tourist Guides Association** (STGA), in partnership with **Mercat Tours** of Edinburgh, has won its biggest ever contract – to provide around 8,000 tours a year at the new Scottish Parliament building at Holyrood. In the new year, guides will be trained to offer specialised tours – for example on the building's magnificent architecture or its stunning art collection –in a number of languages.

Scotland was named as the winner of the **Established Golf Destination of the Year Award** by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) in Lisbon during the International Golf Travel Market. Other 9 contestants included: Algarve, Portugal, Andalucia, Arizona, Florida, S. Carolina, S.W. Ireland, Dubai, France, and South Africa.

Glasgow's new annual festival of modern art called "**GI**" is to start next year based in the Tramway venue in the city's south side, from April 21 to May 2 2005. It will feature spectacular set-piece art shows and installations, and builds on the work the community of Glasgow has already done. The programme for **GI** will be released in February. The festival has financial backing from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Enterprise, the Scottish Arts Council, and funding worth £170,000 from EventScotland.

Full service restaurants on trains facing the end of the line. The last British railway line to offer a full restaurant service throughout the day is facing a review of catering that could see silver service being replaced by pre-packed sandwiches. Several of the companies bidding for the East Coast Main Line franchise are considering reducing the number of restaurants on services between King's Cross and Edinburgh, with plans to save millions of pounds a year by offering only light snacks on some trains.

JAC Travel Scotland Limited is the new Scottish trading name for STF member JAC Travel Scotland. Formerly a division of JAC Travel group, this is in recognition of the continued success of their Scottish Business. Iain Limond, Managing Director, will be contactable at their new office from 10 January at 116 Dundas Street, Tel 0131 556 4500, scotland@jactravel.co.uk

New STF members

We are delighted to welcome the following members to the Forum during the months of November and December:

1576 Advertising Ltd is one of Scotland's leading advertising and strategic brand communications agencies delivering advertising and strategic services for VisitScotland, the National Trust for Scotland, National Museums of Scotland and the Scottish Executive, among others. <http://www.1576.co.uk>.

Aberdeen City Centre Association – association of businesses and retailers.

Ardochy House Cottages run traditional holiday cottages in the West Highlands, converted from and old shooting lodge. <http://www.ardochy.ukgateway.net>.

Caithness Tour Ltd – personalised minibus & walking guided tours of the Caithness area <http://www.caithnesstour.com>.

EventScotland's remit is to attract, support and create major events that will draw international spectators, participants and media to Scotland. <http://www.eventscotland.org>.

Highland Cottage – small hotel and restaurant. <http://www.highlandcottage.co.uk>.

Highlands & Islands Tourism – emerging local tourism forum representing tourism businesses in the Highlands & Islands. <http://www.highlandsandislandstourism.com>

The Hub Agency is recognised as one of Scotland's and UK's foremost creative agencies. The Hub has a track of significantly contributing to their client's profitability and success within the tourism sector. <http://www.thehubagency.com>.

The Lodge – Daviot Mains – luxury country house accommodation set in 80 acres of pastureland. <http://www.thelodge-daviotmains.co.uk>.

The Marcliffe at Pitfodels, 5 star luxury castle and hotel specialising in Grampian produce, golf and salmon fishing, naturally. <http://www.marcliffe.com>

National Galleries of Scotland – 5 prestigious venues across Edinburgh – home to Scotland's world renowned national art collection and international blockbuster exhibitions. <http://www.nationalgalleries.org>.

Nethy Bridge Association – the aims of the association are to promote tourism within the area of Nethy Bridge, maintaining the character of the village, and to raise and administer funds to this end. <http://www.nethybridge.com>.

Training Matters – provide customised management development programmes for managers in the hospitality and tourism sector. <http://www.trainingmatters.com>.

The Scottish Tourism Forum is the lead independent body in Scottish Tourism and was formed to represent industry views and to take these views to government and the public agencies. The Forum comprises tourism trade associations, companies, individuals and local marketing groups who earn their living from tourism or have an active interest in tourism. If you wish to know more about the benefits of joining the Forum, please contact Fiona Maclachlan on fionam@stforum.co.uk, 0131 220 6321