



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Wednesday 14th June 2023, 11am

held in a hybrid format both in person at the Lion Hotel, Dulverton and online via Zoom

Directors present:

Robin Barker - Chair (RB), Emma Thomasson - CEO (ET), Max Lawrence - Treasurer (ML), Hayley Sampson - Vice Chair (HS)

Non-executive Directors:

Katherine Daniel (KD), Thomas Lowe (TL), Huw Rees (HR)

Team:

Verity Vigars (VV)

Committee:

Kate Godden (KG), Dan James (DJ), Evelyn Stacey (ES)

Other attendees:

Visit Exmoor members

1. Welcome on behalf of Visit Exmoor from Robin Barker

HS welcomed attendees to the Annual General Meeting, explaining that the majority of directors were present in person but that others, including RB, along with several Visit Exmoor members were online. She would be chairing the meeting, but invited RB to give a brief update. RB explained that Visit Exmoor had implemented a successful strategy for the last 3 years, but now was time to revisit this to ensure the organisation is adaptable in fast-changing times, particularly following the recent DMO review and the creation of the first LVEPs elsewhere in the country.

2. Apologies:

Dominie Dunbrook – North Devon Council, Nicki Maclean – Somerset West and Taunton Council, Wayne Moore.

3. To receive and approve the Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held via Zoom 26th April 2022:

It was proposed by ET and seconded by HT to approve the minutes, which was agreed.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Exmoor and Visitor Economy Industry Update – Max Lawrence, Business Support

ML presented a detailed update from the industry perspective, citing key stats such as Exmoor is looking at about an 18% increase in overseas visitors; overall about 35.1 million visitors; roughly 86% of pre-pandemic levels. Utility price increases have meant average room rates have increased by 16% across the UK (£142.73). The recruitment crisis is still acute, but eased slightly but there is now a tendency to over-promote staff to aid retention; staff turnover is around 8.3% and wages have risen 9% over the last 12 months. Bookings across the South West are inconsistent with previous legacy with short lead times and guests looking for better experiences and shorter breaks. A key trend emerging is ethical purchasing. Training and development are important for retention of employees

and members were encouraged to look at the Visit Exmoor Centre of Excellence for signposting. Another key trend is a health and wellbeing component, where guests want to go back feeling better. Working in partnership with other businesses to deliver packages and experiences is important.

6. Visit Exmoor Achievements 2022/23 and Priorities 2023/24 - Emma Thomasson, CEO:

ET gave a video presentation on the Visit Exmoor highlights and a comprehensive review of the achievements of the past 12 months, plus future strategy and ways to best engage. The document will be available to download on the website after the meeting. A few exciting upcoming things to note include the imminent launch of the accommodation availability platform on the website, which members were encouraged to sign up to; plus, the 5th Edition of the Eat Exmoor publication will be coming out in the autumn, and finally, the Young Chef Competition will take place in October.

7. Finance Report – Max Lawrence, Treasurer

ML explained that owing to starting as a CIC this year, it has been necessary to operate two sets of accounts and bank accounts, however, the migration to the incorporated set has now taken place and the unincorporated side is being closed down. This has been a complex operation. The accounts that have been presented are unaudited and currently with the accountant, where there is a delay of some weeks, however the audited set will be available on the website in due course.

8. Questions and Answers – Hayley Sampson

No questions were pre-submitted.

It was acknowledged how much time had been spent on transitioning the organisation from unincorporated to incorporated and the governance requirements from that and it asked whether going forwards there would effectively be some free time available. It was replied that yes, once completed there will be and this will be primarily be allocated to business support and upcoming strategy planning.

It was asked whether the audited accounts could be forwarded to the membership once available with a deadline for comments to be made ahead of approval. This was agreed.

A final question was asked as to what members should be looking out for ahead of the launch of the accommodation availability platform. It was replied that there will be a social media campaign to the visitor audience. Any business wanting to be involved should email membership@visit-exmoor.co.uk to get details on how to be included.

With no further questions, HS thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11.54am.