

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT CROSS PARTY GOLF GROUP

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD ON 21 JUNE, 2012 AT THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT, EDINBURGH

Present: David McLetchie MSP (Convenor), Chic Brodie MSP, Ewen Cairns (Scottish Enterprise), Lee Derrick (Golf Tourism Scotland), Fiona Farquharson (SLGA), Alan Grant (EventScotland and VisitScotland), Hamish Grey (SGU), Alison Liddy (Freshwater Scotland), Heather Moir (PGA), Jacqui Stone (**sportscotland**) and Gordon Todd (Scottish Enterprise).

Apologies: Neil Findlay MSP, Murdo Fraser MSP, Stewart Maxwell MSP, John Pentland MSP, Tavish Scott MSP, Dr Richard Simpson MSP, Kim Atkinson (Scottish Sports Association), Jane Booth (PGA), Jackie Davidson (ClubGolf), Stuart Ferrier (**sportscotland**), Michael MacDougall (PGA), Andy Salmon (Scottish Golf) and Chris Spencer (Association of Golf Club Managers).

1. Minutes of 15th March 2012 Meeting

The minutes of this meeting were approved. It was noted that formal discussions were about to resume in relation to the proposed SGU/SLGA amalgamation and that the Bill to consider changing British Standard Time had failed. There were no other matters arising.

2. Scottish Golf Tourism – Presentation by Alan Grant

Alan Grant (AG) presented on VisitScotland's plans to promote and develop Scottish Golf Tourism. Golf is a key focus for VisitScotland and embedded within all of its activities.

AG is now in a new role of Golf Marketing Manager working to both coordinate and integrate golf in all VisitScotland activity and deliver a marketing programme with the focus on maximising the benefits of Scotland hosting the 2014 Ryder Cup. VisitScotland are working on growing golf tourism through this activity under the banner of 'Scotland – The Home of Golf'. This brand is intended to showcase Scotland as the 'world's best golfing destination'.

Golf Tourism is worth £220m per annum to the Scottish economy, creates 4,000 jobs, and involves 560 golf courses. 70% of golf visitors come from GB&I, with 30% coming from overseas. However, the 30% from overseas contribute 70% of the spend. Last year this meant 126,000 golfers visited Scotland and played 674,000 rounds of golf. This represents a slight decrease in the number of golf visitors but an increase in value compared to the prior year. Outside of GB&I the main markets for golf visitors are Sweden, Germany and North America.

Key objectives and targets are to increase golf tourism income for Scotland; to increase seasonal and geographic spread; to enhance the 'Scotland – the Home of Golf' brand; to expand on customers knowledge and perceptions and thereby reduce the focus on the top end golf courses and encourage them to experience the whole of Scottish golf; drive significant increased digital activity and increase data acquisition.

There followed a wide ranging discussion in which Chic Brodie suggested the use of the brand 'Scotland – the Home of Golf' needs to be supported by stories to add meaning to the words. Links to using the Global Scots network were discussed as was the importance of working with airlines and airports to ensure flights are available at appropriate times from the right markets to increase golf visitor traffic. The example of the negative impact a change in the timing of a flight from Sweden to Prestwick had on golfing visitors was provided. It was noted that VisitScotland is constantly working with airlines and airports to try and open up routes.

In terms of frequency of professional tournaments, Scotland performs well in comparison with the rest of GB&I. In this respect it was noted that EventScotland and its role to promote Scotland as a preferred venue for events, is unique in the UK.

There is a Ryder Cup marketing group now in place involving Ryder Cup Europe, VisitScotland and Gleneagles and they are developing a marketing and PR plan to maximise the benefits around the event. This activity starts in Chicago – the venue for the 2012 Cup matches later this year.

The Convenor thanked Alan Grant for his presentation.

There being no other business, the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Convenor. A date for the next meeting will be circulated.