

AVON TOURISM

Minutes of the Meeting held on TUESDAY 12 June 2012 at Fitzgerald's Hotel, Fitzgerald Street, Northam

1. Meeting Opened

By the Chair at 10.10 am

2. Present

Wendy Williams	Slater Homestead Group
Margaret Rowles	Visitor Centre Manager/Northam Visitor Centre
Chris Pepper	Local Government Representative/Shire of Beverley
Bev Hodges	Industry Representative/Northam Caravan Park
Julie Williams	Local Government Representative/Shire of Northam
Leanne Lee	Industry Representative/The Grandhouse York
Erica Minarik	Museum & Art Gallery Manager/Town of New Norcia
John Maxwell	Industry Representative/Hotel Beverley
Sandra Paskett	Industry Representative/Laurelville Manor
Peter McClintock	Industry Representative /Brackson House Quality Accommodation

3. In Attendance

Ron Lee	The Grandhouse York
Di Swann	Swann Lodge York
Katherine Jane	Lavendale Farm
Barbara Walters	Toodyay Visitor Centre

4. Apologies

Dina Barrett-Lennard	Avondale Farm, Beverley
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5. Confirmation of Minutes

Moved: Bev Hodges

Seconded: Leanne Lee

That the Minutes of the Board Meeting held on Tuesday 01 May at the Beverley Council Chambers be Confirmed.

The Motion was carried

6. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising from the Minutes other than those listed as Agenda Items.

7. Finance Report

Moved: Leanne Lee

Seconded: Margaret Rowles

That the Finance Report as presented be adopted.

The Motion was carried

8. Matters arising from the Finance Report

There were no matters arising from the Financial Statements.

9. Correspondence

Moved: Peter McClintock

Seconded: John Maxwell

That the Inwards Correspondence is received and the Outwards Correspondence endorsed.

The Motion was carried

10. Matters arising from the Correspondence

10.1 Toodyay Herald: It was noted that the article appearing in the latest edition, on the attendance at Trade Shows and other activities undertaken by Avon Tourism was worthy of note.

11. Marketing Report.

11.1 Web Site Report: www.avonvalleywa.com.au is the Valley's premier website promoting destinations, events and industry continues to grow. Current information on attractions and events is available to visitor as a result of constant monitoring of the site, with updates being provided by industry.

The current contract with RedFish Media expired on 31 May 2012. Contact with Kandia Revian has been infrequent of late, with requests for quotations and assistance unsatisfactory, SEO and Adwords Reports not being received in a timely fashion, and invitations requesting their attendance at the March and May meetings receiving no response.

Following discussion, it was resolved that at this time no approach by Avon Tourism would be made to RedFish Media, and that visitation to the site would be closely monitored via GoogleAnalytics Reports, with any variances being noted. It was further resolved to ascertain as to who was responsible for the hosting of the Avon Valley Website.

Contact to be made with other service providers and request quotations for SEO Maintenance and AdWords Campaign Management for comparison and consideration.

- 11.2 Integrated Website Proposal / iConnect – Bookeasy:** At the May Meeting the Integrated Tourism Website Proposal as presented was adopted in principal, subject to clarification in relation to transfer costs. Bookeasy responded to the concerns raised relating to the transfer costs to our satisfaction and subsequently the contract was signed authorizing the commencement of the process.

A Media Release outlining the proposal and the implementation process of the Avon Valley Integrated Tourism Website commencing 01 July 2012, was forward to the tourism industry. A query raised in relation to the Cancellation of Bookings was responded to by Bookeasy to the satisfaction of the Accommodation Provider.

It was resolved to hold Free Training Sessions for operators interested in participating in the on-line booking facility. It was suggested that the sessions be held in a central location, with CY O'Connor TAFE being suggested as a suitable venue. If this was not an option, sessions would be held in Toodyay and York with Avon Events & Marketing being contracted to undertake the training in conjunction with Bookeasy and on behalf of Avon Tourism .

- 11.3 Avon Valley Holiday Planner and Distribution:** The Avon Valley Holiday Planner continues to be well received by consumers, with further supplies constantly being requested by Visitor Centres around the State. 600 Copies have been requested by the Northam Avon Descent Association for distribution to contestants. At present, we currently have approximately 8,000 copies in stock, with contact to be made with town representatives to commence work on Edition 4 to be ready for distribution in January 2013.
- 11.4 Membership:** Membership packages and Forms have been forwarded to industry, together with further information in relation to iConnect/Bookeasy, responding to frequently asked questions. The status quo has been retained with the Membership Fees for the 2012/2013 financial year.
- 11.5 Antique & Collectors Fair / Gourmet Food & Wine Festival:** Thanks are extended to Avon Events & Marketing for providing us the opportunity to promote the Avon Valley Region at these events, both of which had record crowds. Over 3,000 Avon Valley Bags and Holiday Planners were distributed to visitors over the events, with Members also being provided the opportunity to have their brochures at the Gourmet Food & Wine Festival. Special thanks to Lesley Hug [Toodyay Holiday Park & Chalets] for once again joining me over the two days in promoting the Valley.

12. General Business

- 12.1 History in the Valley:** The Avon Valley is rich in history and following discussion, it was resolved to gauge the interest of our Avon Valley Towns in participating in the promotion of the historic buildings and sites throughout the Region, on the same weekend, with the event being titled 'History in the Valley'. The role of Avon Tourism

would be to coordinate planned activities to enabling the marketing and promotion of the event to the wider audience.

It was anticipated that each town would be responsible for the opening of their historic buildings, and perhaps townsfolk showcasing the various venues could be dressed in period costume, possibly recreating the building's heritage. It was also suggested that perhaps each town could form a sub-committee to put in place plans for the weekend. This is a great opportunity to showcase the history of the Avon Valley, highlighting the many museums and beautifully restored historic buildings within the Valley and increasing visitation to the region.

An outline of the proposal to be forwarded to the appropriate groups and/or organisations within each town, requesting their support and submission of an expression of interest to participate.

12.2 Avon Valley Bags: Advertising on the Avon Valley Bags on hand is outdated, with only approximately 2,000 remaining in stock, insufficient for distribution at the 2013 trade shows attended. Interest has been expressed by one operator that they may be interested in some sponsorship should we look at continuing to use the Avon Valley Bags as a promotional tool.

Quotations were tabled for the cost of purchasing a further supply and it was suggested that should sponsorship be forthcoming to cover the entire cost of the bags, we should proceed. It was resolved that we would seek expressions of interest from industry for advertising on the second side of the bags. It was also suggested that the Avon Valley Bags could be made available to operators for guests.

12.3 Around the Towns

Beverley: Busy time over the long weekend, with an overflow of visitors from the Gourmet Food and Wine Festival held in York.

New Norcia: The New Norcia Hotel is under new management, with new staff on board in other areas of the complex.
The town enjoyed a busy long weekend in June, with 115 visitors taking part in the afternoon tour.

Northam: The Avon River overflowed resulting from the recent rains, a good omen for the Avon Descent.

New accommodation provider has opened in the newly restored and refurbished Colonial Hotel, now trading as the Dukes Inn, providing luxury accommodation in the majestic heritage listed building.

The Northam Arts Society will be relocating to the Visitor Centre, with the current Meeting Room being commissioned to house the works from the old building.

The Visitor Centre will be charging Brochure Racking Rates as from 01 July 2012.

The Visitor Centre to plan and provide town bus tours for patrons and visitor to Northam.

Toodyay: The fine weather over the June long weekend was a busy time for the town, with over 280 visitors passing through the Visitor Centre.

York: Excellent crowds over the June long weekend enjoying the many delights of the Gourmet Food and Wine Festival.

Bayleaf Rural Getaway B & B has reopened for business, also catering for private functions.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Avon Tourism will be held on Tuesday 17 July at the Shire of Toodyay Council Chambers commencing at 10 am.

There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 12.40 pm.