

# EASTBOURNE HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEETING



Location: **Lansdowne Hotel**, King Edward's Parade, Eastbourne, BN21 4EE

Date: **Wednesday 26th February 2020 @ 8pm**

Facilitator: **Mark Cotman, Chairman**

Attendees: **Mark Cotman (York House), Duncan & Kris Holderness (Beach Front), Mark & Yvette Cowderoy (Atlanta), Jack Brownell (VE), Annie Wills (VE), Ian & Penny Shearer (Fizz-on-Foot), Allison & Dave Brachtvogel (Beamsley Lodge), Mark Holland (Breakers), Andy & Linda Johnson (SocialMem), Mel & Colin Stratford (Cherry Tree), Alan Carter (CS Printers), Howard & Catherine Simpson (Bassets House), Derek & Brid Phelan (New England), Ron Brooker (Honorary), David McNeely (Ebor Lodge), Gaynor Sedgwick (Number Ninety-One), David Ruddle (BofEBN), Deborah Morley & Ian Anderson-Boles (Beach House), Caroline Mossahebi (49 Carlisle Court), Sheldon Board (Coast), John Squires (Beachside), Catherine Clifford (Lansdowne)**

**31 Attendees**

## Meeting Items

1. Mark **welcomed** all to the meeting and ran through the agenda
2. Mark handed over to Annie Wills for a short **Tourist Update**:
  - VisitEastbourne had a successful **Confex 2020** conference at Excel showcasing Eastbourne
  - **Whole Estate Plan** (referenced in the EHA February'20 Newsletter), is 57 pages, addressing discussion relating to the Downland park area; Annie confirmed, contrary to what the Herald recently printed, there will be **NO** charging visitors and **NO** turning the Downs Golf Club House into a Hotel/Spa (p56)
  - EBN Borough Council considers tourism important, so much so that they have invested in a new post, **Tourism Business Engagement Officer** starting on the 9th March '20
  - **DQ Terrace Bar & Café** is proving very successful
  - **glassbusters** ([www.glassbusters.co.uk](http://www.glassbusters.co.uk)), as part of the Carbon Neutral 2030 campaign, EBC is working closely with Chris Coppin at West Rocks, who has embraced this concept by installing a glass crusher, which is open to all to use. One located East of pier is also planned
  - **Events Update**; going forward, distributing ONE leaflet rather than individual ones
    - SoapBox: New event for 2020, Easter weekend 13th April'20; taking place Hollywell/seafront
    - Airbourne: Very confident to secure the Red Arrows for 2020; not having them last year did have an impact; Bringing the fireworks to an earlier time of 9pm this year
    - Winter Festival at Fisherman's Green is another new event; details will follow during the year
    - Ninja Warrior UK another new event coming to the Beacon
  - **Resort Guide**: Printing & distribution complete, more ahead than previous years
  - **T-Stats**: Which is used for monitoring rain fall as an example, EBC would like to use the same concept for Event Occupancy. It is an extremely useful tool, which EBC have just started to use

- **Buy Local/Book Local:** Campaign to get people thinking about local stories, in an effort to keep resources in the local economy. Exploring a joint stunt on **Sussex Day, 16th June'20**, to break the **Guinness World Record** of the **Longest Picnic Table**. Memphis currently hold the record, but we are attempting 500m
- **Redoubt Cinema:** EHA members will be given some launch event invites; details will follow
- **Upside Down House:** Owners of this attraction currently in Brighton, are in talks to expand to Eastbourne ([www.upsidedownhouse.co.uk/brighton](http://www.upsidedownhouse.co.uk/brighton)). Will need planning permission. Preferred location is Pavilion tea room.
- **Questions:**
  - Sovereign Centre upgrade -> Currently on the back burner
  - Will the 75 seat Redoubt Cinema have facilities -> yes FREE popcorn!
  - Winter Garden -> still in consultation stages to decide how/what is required; Priority is the kitchen facilities; as with all things, all comes down to budgets
  - Claremont -> looking at opening the road by Easter, but the Promenade section is now open for people on foot.

3. **Presentation** by trade members, Ian & Penny shearer from **Fizz-on-Foot** ([www.fizzonfoot.com](http://www.fizzonfoot.com))

4. Annie, Jack and Kris gave a **Visit Eastbourne Partnership update:**

First, Annie gave an introduction to the partnership and how it came about, and confirmed that there is now a truly genuine partnership between EBC:VisitEastbourne and EHA, which initially no one believed possible. But here we are, just about to launch a new Website, jointly funded and on time. Annie, then introduced Jack Brownell who proceeded to co-present with Kris.

Joint venture between EHA & VisitEastbourne is 18 months / 2 years of **HARDWORK**; **94%** of EHA members voted in favour

- Why are we investing in a new website?
  - Need to be more commercial
  - EHA Website is now turned off
  - What are the EHA membership paying for, if not showcasing their businesses? Or raising their visibility; Coupled with c£3-4million is paid out to OTAs
  - Started probing into, what if we could ringfence just 5% of this?
- Improved **Aesthetics** is a main benefit of the VE website; Images vs text amongst inspiration pages; VE selected SimpleView in how they layout images, combined with how user-friendly it was to navigate
- Improved **Functionality**; Better and fairer algorithms in terms of search engines; the site will offer something called "Don't miss boxes"; online polling; e-Marketing systems for Newsletters; more measurable indicators into their 70k strong user database to delve into better stats, to name a few!

There will be a dedicated EHA login membership area, which will provide an Extranet interface so that you can change your images / contact details etc

Within the VE web pages, there will be dedicated EHA pages, where we can give you more transparency with regards to minutes of meetings and hotel/trade membership listings

- **New Advertising Opportunities:** Providing source advertising by means of an ad/media box. Jack and Kris have been working together to identify opportunities within EHA membership that will benefit organisations and raise their visibility.
- **Itinerary Planner:** Due to the power of this function, was ultimately why this platform was selected. A visitor to Eastbourne via the new website will be able to plan their trip, end-to-end; Planned in one place, so no user 'jumping off' or away onto another site.

They can plan by selecting, accommodation, theatre tickets, book a restaurant etc etc Further down the line, rewards can be given to encourage. OpenTable is used for restaurants that have signed up to it.

- Above and Beyond: VisitEastbourne is a team, which includes the hardwork undertaken in the TIC; Access to the regular Destination Updates; Representation at Trade shows; Members Trade Pass, where 2020 gave discounts to 23 events/attractions

- **Highlights:**

- Modernising
- Investing in search Engine Optimisation (SEO)
- Image heavy, aesthetic design and layout
- User-friendly platform
- Online polling & Guestlink+ Connection enabled
- New German & French websites
- New E-marketing platform
- Combining microsites into one for more page hits
- Itinerary Planner

- **Stats:**

- 4.2 million -> Page views
- 70,000 -> E-Newsletter Database
- 93,823 -> social Media Followers
- 180,000 -> TIC Visitors
- 10% -> Commission
- 84p -> Cost per day

- **Introductory Membership:** VisitEastbourne are offering members a "Try before you buy" Offer, 6 months for £150; So get a few months for FREE!
- Everyone is welcome to the **Launch Event: Thursday 23rd April'20** (5pm to 7pm) DQ Terrace Bar & Café

## 5. Chairman's Report:

Mark began by apologising for initial silence, but he assured everyone that there is a lot going on in the background.

- A. Progressive changes with the EHA
- B. Building positive relationships
  - i. Eastbourne Business Alliance; which includes Chamber of Commerce / EDEAL, the BID and EHA
  - ii. VisitEastbourne partnership
  - iii. Eden Project; still early days but fantastic that the EHA is at the beginning of talks
- C. **Kestrel House Vote:** Finally, we are there! Which means stable and secure with tenants for the next 3 years at a rent increase
- D. **Bank Account:** Well ahead of where we were this time last year
- E. **EHA & the Future:**
  - i. **Future proofing:** To survive we need to modernise
  - ii. **Transparency:** There have been criticisms in the past, but we need aspire to be more A-political with other groups/parties, therefore no taking sides. We have listened to the members around transparency and with the help of the new site, meeting minutes will be published as well as EHA policies/procedures.
  - iii. **Clear & regular communication;** Mark referenced the new Emergency System now in place
  - iv. **Campaigns:** EHA has been approached by lots of groups, such as Plastic Free, Cycling, Walking tours, etc
  - v. **Visibility for all our members:** Some of the Exec were present at the meeting, but always available if required
  - vi. **Constitution Changes for the future:** The last update was 2010, therefore changes are required to rationalise. For example, should the membership be a 'Personal' one or 'Property' one? This will be issued to members to vote on.  
  
Changes need to be debated, but we do need to become more diverse.  
  
The domain, "[eastbournehospitality.com](http://eastbournehospitality.com)" will be within our own pages on the VE website
  - vii. **EHA Tourism Passport:** Appeal for new attraction recommendations, as a few have dropped out; Please contact Allison & David Brachtvogel. Mark recognized how much work this piece takes and thanked Allison & Dave publicly for thier hard work.

Mark concluded with how successful this year's Dinner and Dance was and thanked Mel Stratford for organizing the majority of raffle prizes, which raised **£420**, for charity.

## 6. Any other Business:

Howard Simpson asked when the road would be opening outside the Claremont; which was answered by Annie earlier in the evening; By Easter

David Ruddle:

- Best of Eastbourne has produced a FREE gift, **Linked-In** business guide, if anyone would like one, please contact David.
- Also wanted to say, thank-you, for EHA sponsoring “Best Entertainment Event 2020”, which the Royal Hippodrome won. They will be presented with the award on 2<sup>nd</sup> April’20, where they will share photos.
- **25<sup>th</sup> March’20** Best of Eastbourne partnering with Safe with East Sussex, running a Fraud & Exploitation Awareness course. David will give details to Yvette to distribute.

<https://www.thebestof.co.uk/local/eastbourne/events/feature/communities-against-exploitation-keeping-your-business-safe-from-financial-exploitation-fraud-free-event/>

Catherine Clifford wanted to raise awareness of her fund-raising event for **St Wilfrid’s Hospice (Eastbourne) Ltd**, **help her get out of jail!** If you would like to donate, please contact the office

Future of Burling Gap? Annie will investigate and report back

Meeting Ended: 21.23 hrs