

## **CIDOT RESPONSE TO CAYMAN COMPASS ARTICLE**

### **REGARDING TOURISM SPONSORSHIPS**

1. The Department of Tourism sponsors a number of British sports teams, including Portsmouth FC, Gloucestershire CC, London Irish rugby and British Canoeing. **Can you explain why these specific teams were chosen, what business case was undertaken and what you think the destination has got for the money spent?**

The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism aims to build awareness of the Cayman Islands as a holiday destination through partnerships with, and sponsorship of, a number of British sports teams. The teams chosen are located in areas that have geographic and/or demographic relevance to the Cayman Islands. The partnerships were undertaken with the intent to meet our audience where their passions are and engage with them in an authentic and relevant manner.

2. There are also some amateur teams that DoT is sponsoring that have almost no fan base or media coverage (Eg Weybridge Vandals rugby and Old Cranleigh hockey team). **What is the thinking behind that expenditure?**

The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism is supportive of sponsorships that not only allow us to build brand awareness, but also to support community involvement, particularly in affluent areas of the country where the audience demographic aligns with the Cayman Islands brand. The UK sports partnerships fulfil those mandates. Additionally, the Cayman Islands receives significant exposure from destination branding inside and outside the stadiums and from direct marketing engagement achieved through online channels, email subscriptions and newsletters.

3. **Why were those teams specifically chosen (this has been asked and answered under point no.1 above) and what process was undertaken to select them over other possible candidates?**

CIDOT evaluates sponsorship opportunities based on an established set of criteria tied back to the mandate of CIDOT. Each sponsorship is evaluated to assess the potential opportunity with respect to its ability to:

- Amplify awareness of the Cayman Islands as a leading Caribbean vacation destination;
- Influence travel decisions thereby driving visitation
- Reach/connect with audiences that are likely to be receptive to destination marketing messages and influenced to visit the Cayman Islands for business or leisure purposes;
- Deliver value for money based on the benefits
- Fit within the CIDOT budgetary parameters to maximise

As stated previously, the teams chosen are located in areas that have both geographic and/or demographic relevance to the Cayman Islands. The choice of these grassroots clubs stems from

knowledge of the area and the Clubs, as being located in some of the most affluent areas of greater London (and the country). This raises the awareness of the Cayman Islands year-round for less than the cost of one advertisement in a newspaper or magazine; thereby delivering value for money for the destination. Having an impactful promotional calendar that directly targets the summer market, through targeting families and multi-generational travel, is a key aspect to ensuring that the Cayman Islands destination strategy incrementally grows the slower travel periods of summer and fall. This is achieved through key partnerships and sponsorship agreements year-round.

**4. Are you aware that Adrian White – CIDOT’s regional manager for the UK – plays for Old Cranleighans hockey and coaches in their youth teams?**

At the time the sponsorship was undertaken the CIDOT was unaware of any affiliation by any team member with the Old Cranleighans hockey club. We are currently reviewing this matter.

**5. Do you think it’s appropriate for CIDOT to use Cayman taxpayer’s money to sponsor the UK based amateur sports team of one of its senior staff members? Can you explain why this happened?**

The sponsorship of Old Cranleighans Hockey club is a commercial opportunity that delivers on the awareness, connection and value-for-money objectives that are outlined above.

**6. Did Mr. White declare his personal interest in this club? Was he directly involved in the award of the sponsorship to Old Cranleighans?**

As mentioned above we were unaware of any personal interest from any member of our CIDOT team in Old Cranleighans hockey club.

All sponsorships are evaluated based on an established set of criteria tied back to the mandate of CIDOT, and are reviewed by relevant personnel in each office in accordance with this criteria. See published application forms [here](#).

**7. Are there any other affiliations between Mr. White or other CIDOT staff members and the teams that CIDOT sponsors?**

The CIDOT is not aware of any conflicting affiliations between any of our staff members associated to the commercial opportunities sponsored by the CIDOT at this time.

**8. Has Mr. White or other members of staff accrued any benefits – for example match tickets – as a result of any of these sponsorships?**

In keeping with standard industry practice for agreements of this type, the CIDOT receives access to matches as part of the sponsorship package, which facilitates staff attendance on behalf of the CIDOT to network with industry reps, partners and potential visitors to the Cayman Islands. It also affords the CIDOT a unique opportunity to receive feedback from our team to evaluate our partnerships and their performance.

**9. Why were all these sports sponsorships considered necessary at a time when UK tourists couldn't fly to Cayman and supporters were, in some cases, banned from stadiums in the UK?**

It should be recognized that some of these partnerships were made prior to the pandemic, as far back as 2019, and were pivoted to support our brand awareness after the pandemic hit. It is also important to note that many of our partnerships present opportunities to connect with audiences both on the field and off the field, as well as exposure through direct marketing, achieved through online channels, email subscriptions and newsletters.

Throughout the pandemic, the Department of Tourism carefully monitored the market and adjusted its advertising strategy in order to maintain audience interest and engagement while borders were closed. With TV commercials and print advertising halted while international travel was at a standstill, it was vital for the Department to maintain its connection with all primary and secondary source market audiences, to inspire and encourage affluent travellers to visit the Cayman Islands when travel resumed. It has also been proven that despite the Cayman Islands measured approach to reopening our borders that our target audiences wanted information, updates and inspiration of the travel they would take in the future. Therefore promotional activity to inspire travel was ongoing throughout the pandemic. So that our visitors new prospects and repeat guests kept “Dreaming about the Cayman Islands.”

A range of marketing tactics and channels were used to push destination messaging, which included the sponsorship of select sports clubs/teams that presented a cost-effective way to sustain brand awareness and achieve audience engagement.

**10. Do you think Cayman has received value for money for this set of sports sponsorships?**

Promoting the Cayman Islands to affluent audiences across the UK year-round for less than the cost of a single newspaper or magazine advertisement delivers significant value for money for the Cayman Islands. These partnerships have resulted in the Cayman Islands reaching hundreds of thousands of potential visitors and afforded the destination the opportunity to keep the Cayman Islands at the forefront of the consumer's mind both on and off the field during the pandemic.

**11. What analysis has taken place on these deals to demonstrate that they resulted in any increased tourism to Cayman?**

All sponsorships and partnerships are required to submit an evaluation report once the sponsorship agreement has concluded.

The CIDOT evaluates the sponsorships and partnerships based on the specific purpose and objectives agreed upon by both parties. These include the ability to increase or build brand awareness against our target audience, deliver powerful public relations that will help differentiate our product against our competitors or drive visitation. These partnerships took place from 2019 to 2022. In 2022, despite the pandemic, the UK market was the fastest recovering market for the Cayman Islands reaching 78% of 2019's visitation level. This is a testament to the pent up demand created by our marketing and PR efforts in the UK during the pandemic including our strategic partnerships and sponsorships.

**12. Any further comment?**

The CIDOT regards transparency and accountability in the workplace as being vitally important and we promote a culture of ownership at all levels within our organisation. When deficiencies are identified, action is swiftly taken to remedy the situation and prevent reoccurrence in the future.

The perception of conflict of interest – whether real or apparent – is also taken seriously by the CIDOT and the CIDOT will review this matter.