

# Open Meeting – Minutes

**Date:** 1st February

**Type:** Open Meeting for Guides and Tourism Stakeholders

**Location:** Tromsø

**Chair:** Peter (TGF Board)

**Minutes prepared by:** Peter / TGF Board

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## 1. Attendance

**Total participants:** 28

**Participants included:**

- Northern Lights guides
- Outdoor guides
- UiT PhD student
- Sámi guides and representatives from:
  - Tromsø Arctic Reindeer
  - Tromsø Lapland
  - Reindeer Experience Tromsø
- Villmarkssenter
- Tromsø Outdoor
- Hotel representatives from:
  - Skibotn
  - Helligskogen

(both areas experiencing high pressure from Northern Lights tourism)

**Board members present:**

- Peter
- Lorenzo
- Martin

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## 2. Opening & Presentation

The meeting was opened by **Peter**, who gave an introductory presentation outlining:

- Who Tromsø Guideforening (TGF) is
- What TGF has already achieved
- What TGF is currently working on
- The long-term vision for the association

The presentation content is documented in the attached presentation “*Who We Are – What We’ve Done – Where We’re Going*”

Following the presentation, the meeting continued with an **open discussion**.

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## 3. Topics Discussed

### 3.1 Guide Etiquette & Professional Conduct

- General guide etiquette on **Northern Lights** and **fjord tours**
- Behavior at stops, parking, and shared locations
- Respect between guides and companies in the field

### 3.2 Northern Lights Tours – Spot Sharing

- Ongoing issues with **sharing aurora viewing spots**
- Pressure in popular areas and conflict between different tour formats
- Discussion around space usage:
  - Acknowledgement that **1 Big Bus (BB)** typically occupies less space than **3–4 Minibuses (MB)**

### 3.3 Year-Round Guides

- Strong agreement that **TGF should actively engage year-round and returning seasonal guides**
- Recognition that experienced guides are the backbone of quality tourism

### 3.4 Education & Training

- Proposal that TGF could **organise a 1-week wilderness first aid course**
- Interest in **shared training initiatives** between companies, coordinated by TGF
- Discussion about pooling resources for education rather than duplicating efforts

### 3.5 Companies & Transparency

- Idea to create a **public list of companies** on the TGF website
- TGF to research and use **publicly available information**, similar to work currently done by VTR (Visit Tromsø)

### 3.6 Certification

- Mixed views on certification:
  - General agreement that **some form of certification is needed**
  - Warning **not to overdo certification**, referencing negative examples from other countries (e.g. Italy, France)
- Opinion expressed that:
  - **VTR**, as the **DMO**, should be the body running any official certification scheme
  - TGF's role should focus on standards, education, and professional input

### 3.7 Knowledge Resources & Communication

- Proposal to create **PDF guides** in the **Members section** of the TGF website covering:
  - Northern Lights guiding
  - Whale watching
  - Husky tours
  - Sámi tourism
  - Fjord tours
  - Other guiding fields

- Similar simplified materials could also be created **for tourists**, to improve understanding and expectations

### 3.8 Land & Property Use

- Discussion about the **need for standardised contracts** between:
    - Land / property owners
    - Tourism companies
  - Acknowledged that this topic has been discussed previously and should be continued as a separate focused process
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## 4. Key Takeaways

- Strong support for **dialogue, education, and shared standards** rather than strict control
  - Clear need for **better coordination** between guides, companies, landowners, and authorities
  - Recognition of TGF's role as:
    - A professional platform
    - A community builder
    - A voice for guides
  - Broad interest in **practical outcomes**, not just discussions
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## 5. Next Steps (Indicative)

- Continue work on:
  - Guide standards and etiquette
  - Education and training initiatives
  - Website resources and communication
- Further discussion on:
  - Landowner–company contracts

- Cooperation with VTR and authorities
- Plan follow-up meetings and working groups