



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT
SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT
7.00 PM ON MONDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY 2025**

THOSE PRESENT:

Cllr D Warman (Chair), Cllr C Whelan, Cllr C Phillips, Cllr M Wade, Cllr R Denness

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Events Manager – Visit Ely)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr K Holtzman, Cllr M Banyard and Cllr W Novick.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last Tourism Committee Meeting held on Monday, 14th October 2024 and matters arising

The Minutes of the last Tourism Committee meeting held on the 14th October were agreed by members and signed by the Chairman Cllr D Warman. Pages 107, 108 and 109 refer.

4. To receive budget update and to note the three quotes received for the Visitor Guide 2025.

The budget update, dated to the 31st December 2024 was noted. There were no concerns.

5. To Receive an update on the Service and the Town Centre

The committee were very impressed with the Visitor Guide, giving praise to the Visit Ely Team for all their hard work and having the 2025 edition ready earlier than usual. The Tourism and Events Manager explained that this freed up more time for the team from January onwards to work on a very busy events schedule for the forthcoming year. It was also fed back to the committee how the product was gratefully received by advertisers ready for the new year. Three quotes for the design/layout and print were received in accordance with financial regulations. Cllr Wade commented that the 'things to do every month' page was useful, and it was an exceptional product which was a credit to the team. Cllr Wade had also visited the Tourist Information Centre shop and again, gave thanks to those involved regarding layout, products on display (particularly local history) and the general quality of the service provided.

5. To Receive an update on the Service and the Town Centre continued

The Tourism and Events Manager discussed the Cromwell Figures, and the committee agreed the restoration of the figures could take place after OCH re-opens after the building works.

The vandalism issues were discussed with regards to the Digital Signage Board at Pegasus Walk. The Chairman suggested registering the issue with the Police & Crime Commissioner, Mr D Preston and the Community Safety Partnership. Costs for either removal or repair were discussed but it was agreed that reporting it was the first step. Once a response had been received, it would be agreed the next steps forward. It was noted that advertising sales were going well, with encouraging interest from a well-known shop in Ely, and an estate agents. The promotional offer for advertising in the Visitor Guide and the signage, was a huge success, and certainly gained much interest. There was nothing to report about the Visit Ely App, other than local events are kept up to date, any additional elements such as the Heritage Trail will be added when live. Cllr Whelan noted whilst arriving at a train station, yellow arrows painted on pavements to assist those that found the digital wayfaring difficult to navigate and to assist with finding the town centre. It was suggested by Cllr Whelan perhaps this could be discussed further, and that CIL funding could be applied for. It was agreed this would be looked into.

The Tourism and Events Manager updated the committee regarding event success since the last meeting and planning for 2025 events. It was reported that October 2024 spooky season tours and events sold out with extra dates added, together with Fen Tales in the Crypt which has been relaunched and sold out for Feb 2025, with a March date added. Other events and tours namely 'Ely Highlights' weekend tours have been re-launched for spring, together with the Ramble and Roast.

Further updates were provided to the committee with regards to the upcoming Eel Festival Weekend 2025. The Tourism and Events Manager explained all essential services were booked such as road closures/equipment hire and first aid. Allocations to traders were being advised, regarding their successful application over the next two weeks. The organisation for the Eel Parade was underway together with entertainment throughout the day. The parade will be themed VE/VJ80

Plans for VE80 and VJ80 were also discussed with a full day of activity to celebrate the occasion. Visit Ely were working closely with the RBL, St Mary's Church and Ely Cathedral. The events will be held on the 8th May and 17th August, respectively.

The footprint for Armed Forces Day (VE80) was also discussed. The Tourism and Events Manager explained to the committee how she had contacted Reg Seekings, the author of SAS: Duty before Glory: the true WWII story of SAS original. A book signing and presentation will become an integral part of the event, together with a vintage tearoom, other entertainment, military vehicles, cadet parades and a service. The event is to take place on the 21st June, a week earlier than the National AFD so not to clash with Ely Arts Festival and other local events.

There was no significant update on high street independent traders. It was discussed that the Visit Ely team were working on a new page of the visitor website to include 'dog friendly' resources and vinyl stickers for 'dog friendly' establishments. The Tourism and Events Manager felt this would have a positive impact on the public perception of the City of Ely Council. Sponsorship has been received so this project will have a low cost to the Council.

6. To discuss ideas to be put forward for inclusion in the Strategic Plan.

The ideas for inclusion in the Strategic Plan was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Warman would be writing these plan based of the criteria provided . The Tourism and Event Manager's would also input if required.

7. To discuss progress with Railway 200 project and to note the three quotes received

The Tourism and Events Manager updated the committee with regards to this project. It was explained that after three quotes had been obtained, a decision had been made in consultation with Greater Anglia as to a preferred supplier in manufacturing the structure for platform 2/3. The historical content is in draft and with the designers for layout and brief plans were discussed for the 'reveal/unveiling' at the end of July. Furthe updates would be provided at the next meeting.

8. To receive an update on the works at OCH and review Ted Coney's paper

Cllr Warman had been briefed by the Clerk to the Council and explained to the committee that the deadline had been extended for respective tenders. The councillors asked who would project manage once the work begins. The Tourism and Events Manager and the Chairman agreed that this would be discussed with the Clerk. The Clerk would be providing an update at the next Personnel, Finance & Governance Committee meeting. The Tourism and Events Manager was requested to attend this meeting.

The Session's House paper (to be used a Tourism Attraction), written by Ted Coney, was discussed. The paper goes into detail and comparisons to other courthouse establishments as to how Ely's building can be best utilised. It was agreed that whilst the ideas were very comprehensive costs must be considered. The Tourism and Events Manager explained to the committee that the building would be used, temporarily whilst work was being undertaken at OCH. Cllr Warman agreed to email Mr Coney regarding his paper.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting date to be confirmed.

The Meeting closed 8.35 pm