



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT
SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT
7.00 PM MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2024**

PRESENT:

Cllr M Banyard, Cllr C Whelan, Cllr W Novick, Cllr C Phillips, Cllr K Holtzman, Cllr R Denness, Cllr R Moss-Eccardt, Cllr R Morgan, Cllr M Wade

Mrs Anna Bennett – Tourism & Events Manager

Cllr Banyard, chaired the meeting in the absence of the Chairman. He informed councillors that item 9 would be taken before item 4, to allow Cllr Moss-Eccardt to speak on this item. This item due to financial sensitive information would be taken in Committee.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Warman.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last Meeting held Monday on the 12th August 2024 and matters arising

The Minutes of the last Tourism and Town meeting held on the 12th August 2024 were agreed by members and signed by the Vice Chairman, Cllr M Banyard. Pages TTC 104, 105 and 106 refer. Matters arising, TTC 104, item 3 - Cllr Banyard asked Cllr Novick if progress had been made with ECCD regarding empty shops, Cllr Novick replied he was progressing with further updates at the next TC meeting.

Item 9 was moved forward on the agenda and discussed before item 4.

Cllr Moss-Eccardt and Cllr Morgan left the meeting at 7.20 pm following the discussion of item 9.

4. To receive an update on the Service and Town Centre

The Tourism & Events Manager gave an update with reference to the service report for Sept/Oct 2024. The presentation opened with an update on Oliver Cromwell's House visitor attraction and shop. Adult admissions are as they are to be expected this time of year with visitor numbers slowing down. She explained stock was still selling well, especially postcards, locally made produce and Cromwell merchandise. It was explained to members that whilst the shop maintains the SLA, there are plans (with careful research) to change some stock and replace with something new for Q1. A newly designed tour was discussed, like the Eel Trail, but called Heritage 'here and

4.To receive an update on the Service and Town Centre continued

now'. This is a project that is being developed in-house using resources, with links to physical tours for 2025. Further updates will be provided at the next Tourism meeting. Cllr Whelan asked if this tour would be available on the app. The Tourism & Events Manager confirmed there would be information linked to the tour, but the tour is self-guided and a physical map style document. It was explained that there was various audio links already linked to trails on the app.

The Tourism & Events Manager advised that a suitable quote had been obtained with assistance from the Estates Team for the OCH figures. All members were pleased to hear of the 're-fresh' and new look for next season.

It was explained that communications had loosened off since a meeting with Ely Cathedral regarding a 48-hour pass to Ely Attractions. A date in the diary to discuss was being pursued and once finalised more information would be provided. Further updates will be provided in due course.

The Committee discussed the Railway 200 project and modern railway to the UK initiative. All were in favour of the idea of the 'goalpost' structure on platform 2/3. The Tourism & Events Manager explained that the VG25 cover design would be based around the initiative, with a page dedicated to the history of the modern railway to Ely. The members did think the budget allocation was excessive. The Tourism & Events Manager agreed to investigate costs with one of the stakeholders and report back.

A brief update on Digital Signage was provided to the Committee. Cllr Holtzmann asked where the monies came from to power the screens. It was suggested they obtained the signed contract from the RFO for further information. The Tourism & Events Manager urged members to report any faults or damage to the relevant email address. Sales for advertising remain buoyant and any sales enquiries should again be referred to the relevant email, addressed to the Sales & Events Officer, who is responsible for sales of advertising on the screens.

A full update regarding Visit Ely Events was discussed. Cllr Phillips together with Cllr M Banyard and the rest of the Tourism Committee all wanted to thank the Visit Ely events team for all their hard work and preparation for yet another fantastic Apple and Harvest Fayre. All councillors were pleased to read the Ely Standard article. The Chairman of the Council, Cllr Phillip's commented that the Deputy Mayor from King's Lynn mentioned that 'Ely knows how to do it' referring to a successful autumn event. The Tourism & Events Manager agreed to pass on the positive comments from the Committee and Chairman.

Further discussions were reported regarding past and present events. The Tourism & Events Manager explained the Heritage Open Days/Halloween Spooky Season, and all are mostly sold out. The Taste Trail was a success with traders involved very happy with new customers. A brief update regarding Trials of Terror was provided, together with advising members to attend 'Scrooge on Trial'. The Tourism and Events Manager commended all the staff that take part were incredibly talented and dedicated to the performance.

To conclude events, it was confirmed that all was prepped for Remembrance Day 2024, with road closures in place and all teams briefed. It was added that participation had been logged for VE80 which takes place May 2025.

4.To receive an update on the Service and Town Centre continued

The Visitor Guide 2025 books are open for advertising, and with over 10 full pages sold already, slightly earlier than normal, and the copy for EC and Markets would be streamlined, allowing more space for advertising newcomers to Ely and surrounding areas, and editorial about other areas of interest. It was also explained that the Railway 200 would be a feature on the main cover, and distribution split would raise to 13000, with more supplied to TIC ELY.

Lastly a very positive GLT show was reported with many group tour organisers chatting to Visit Ely Staff. Lots of potential leads were received with a view there will be an increase for group travel to Ely in 2025.

5. To discuss budget updates and setting of draft budgets for 2025/2026

There were no comments regarding budget updates which went up to the 31st August 2024. The draft budgets for 2025/2026 were all agreed apart from the comments made regarding the Railway 200 initiative, the project team are waiting for financial approval at December's Full Council meeting.

6.Town Crier Competition

The Town Crier Competition planned for the Apple and Harvest Fayre had been cancelled due to just one application received. Councillors had agreed to consider the application at the meeting instead. It was unanimously agreed that the applicant for the City of Ely Town Crier position be recommended for approval and appointment at the next Full Council.

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

Cllr Holtzmann gave a brief report regarding the criteria set that meets each committee's strategic plan. It was felt that the current strategic plan did not meet the criteria, and all voted this should be discussed in the next meeting when the Chairman, Cllr Warman would be present.

8. Escape Room Update

The Tourism and Events Manager explained that due to unforeseen circumstances, the facilitators of the Escape Rooms at Oliver Cromwell's House had given notice to end the contract. The councillors were saddened to hear of this. Cllr Whelan asked if this was with immediate effect, she responded that all bookings up until 31/12/24 would be honoured and further updates would be provided at the next meeting regarding room hire, ideas, functions how best the team use the room moving forward.

Item 9 was discussed in Committee before item 4.

9.To Discuss Estimate for Works to OCH and Request to Change the Financial Regulation Regarding Contracts Finder for this Project.

Cllr Moss-Eccardt was asked by the RFO to address the Committee and discuss expediency regarding obtaining quotations for repair to Oliver Cromwell's House. Two options were presented by Cllr Moss-Eccardt. The decision was that the members would discuss at Full Council with three members in favour, two members against, with one abstaining. Cllr Whelan asked where monies were coming from, and Cllr Banyard explained the RFO was dealing with this.

10. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting is on the 3rd February 2025.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm