



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL TOURISM COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT 7.00 PM TUESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER 2025

THOSE PRESENT:

Bold font indicates voting member of committee

Cllr D Warman (Chair)

Cllr Mike Banyard

Cllr Chris Phillips

Cllr Mary Wade

Cllr Christine Whelan

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from **Cllr Satwinder Sandhu**.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the last Tourism Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 26th August 2025, and any matters arising

The minutes of the last Tourism Committee meeting held on 26th August, were unanimously agreed by the members and signed by the Chairman, Cllr D Warman. Pages 114, 115 and 116 refer. There were no matters arising.

4. Budget Update and Budget Setting for 26/27

The budget update, up to the 30th September 2025 was noted with no significant variances. Discussions were held regarding the proposed budget for 26/27. Mrs Bennett explained how the estimated loss of income was calculated should the house be closed for repair in the Spring. Members agreed the proposed budget for 2026/27.

5. To receive an update on Tourism and Events

Mrs Bennett presented the update regarding Tourism and Events and OCH starting with admissions and the increase over the summer period which was very welcomed. The TIC/Visitor Attraction had in the region of 190 visitors per day, with a healthy spend in the shop. With a move no longer pending, a short explanation was provided regarding stock. Cllr Wade suggested contacting Cambridge Open Studio's and local artists to source Christmas products on a commission basis. Mrs Bennett said she would give that some thought and discuss with the desk staff.

It was reported that the passport had had fewer sales than expected, but this was pending a meeting with stakeholders and further updates would be supplied in the New Year.

The team are actively engaging towards developing the LVEP working with the Combined Authority and Mrs Bennett explained a more detailed update could be supplied on request. There had also been some collaboration with the CRP whereby Visit Ely hosted a couple of events, one being a Railway Heritage themed tour. Further plans to work with the CRP were in progress with a full page agreed for the 2026 Visitor Guide, and further funding to purchase copies of the VG26 for their CRP Events. Plans are afoot to work further with Great Northern and a brand-new social media campaign.

Mrs Bennett said she was very pleased with how the 2-day event for the Apple Festival had gone and all members agreed. With over 8000 in attendance the event worked well with combining celebrations for Harvest Festival with Ely Cathedral. It was agreed to keep a two-day fayre for 2026 with the name of the fayre being rebranded. Feedback from traders, the public and sponsors had been tremendous.

Members were excited to hear about further plans and updates regarding tours/walks and trails. Plans for a new collaboration with Ely Cinema were underway together with a Carol Concert with St Mary's Church and lighting of the Beacon on St Mary's Green. Cllr Phillips enquired about a 250 years of America event and Cllr Banyard mentioned the Cambridge Criterium event, of which Mrs Bennett said she would follow up.

Sales for digital signage advertising were positive with interest from various National Trust sites, Ely Cinema and events hosted at the Maltings. A brief update regarding Ely's Town Centre destination shops, like Victoria's Cheese and others was provided. It was re-iterated to members that Visit Ely were still working with Town Centres, but only independent businesses.

The 2026 Visitor Guide is now underway with Mrs Bennett explaining the production costs, particularly the savings in print by using the current distributor. Three quotes had been obtained for the printing of the Guide. It had been agreed that a portion of the 2026 guides would be distributed in Central London which will be a trial campaign. The front cover had been designed by artist, Claire McGinley.

Members were reminded about the Remembrance events, with all road closures now in place. Press releases to Elyi and the Ely Standard had been issued.

6.To discuss moving forward with the decisions made at the last meeting regarding Digital Signage Boards

Members were given the costs for the decision made at the last meeting for the removal and repair of the digital boards at Pegasus Walk and Newnham Street. The cost of the removal for Pegasus Walk was included within the budget for next year. The repair to Newnham Street board would hopefully be undertaken in next year's budget.

7.To receive an update regarding the change of date regarding the work required at OCH

Mrs Bennett gave a full explanation for the delay in the works to OCH, and the current position. The Chair proposed that a committee member attend the next meeting with the Project Managers. It was agreed that Cllr Phillips would attend.

8.Date of next meeting. The next meeting will be held 16th February 2026