



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT
SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT
7.00 PM TUESDAY 2ND APRIL 2024**

THOSE PRESENT:

Cllr D Warman (Chair), Cllr R Trent, Cllr M Banyard, Cllr Richard Morgan,

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)

One member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr C Ni Dhonaill and Cllr R Ward.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last Tourism and Town Centre Meeting held Monday 16th October 2023

The minutes of the last meeting held Monday February 5th were signed by the Chairman, Cllr D Warman as a true record. TTC 95/96/97 refer. Matters arising – Page TTC 97, item 6 – Cllr Banyard reported the meeting regarding volunteers with Mr Joesph Aitiki from Ely Cathedral would be happening soon, and the Committee would be updated in due course.

4.To receive an update on the Service including update on Events

Mrs Bennett presented updates on house admissions, and entrance to visitor information centre overall. It was explained to the committee that numbers are lower than last year in comparison with an average of 10% lower week on week. It was explained that the quiet period was being felt by most of the High Street, and other attractions also experiencing a lull in footfall. It was felt across the board that the year had not really started well with bad weather, increase in admissions and general cost of living crisis having a direct impact in High Street sales. OCH for a period of time was also covered in scaffolding, which the team felt was a deterrent as many visitors look to take photos of the building. Mrs Bennett explained to all that the scaffolding would be re-erected later this year, when building work was confirmed, and was in hands of the RFO/Town Clerk, Mrs Coulson.

The Committee were updated regarding OCH shop and Mrs Bennett gave praise to the senior TIC member of staff, Ms Thompson and her planning when purchasing, adding stock, sales stock and managing the budget with Mrs Bennett. Mrs Morgan complimented the stock sold and that there

TTC 98

.....
Committee Chairman
10th June 2024

was always a good selection of local craft and merchandise, hence the increase in sales and much improved from many years ago. Ms Thompson is also due to take over management of on-line sales with the biggest seller being books.

It was reported and Mrs Bennett explained how Visit Ely are assisting other attractions in this period of low footfall. It was explained that all press releases received from other attractions are released through all Visit Ely media channels. Mid-week newsletters were also used to promote Ely Museum, the riverside, and tours with a difference. Ely Cathedral launched multi-media guides which Visit Ely supported and encouraged the Committee to support their latest launch.

All attractions were supported during English Tourism Week, and the week concluded with a visit from Lucy Fraser MP KC who took a tour of Ely, and compiled some short interviews, captured by her assistant which we hope will appear digitally, shortly.

Updates were given with comments from Cllr Morgan saying he had heard they were doing well. Mrs Bennett explained the new game was due to launch 6th April with a sell out weekend. Events and event planning updates were provided, with Mrs Bennett encouraging councillors to attend the three-day, forthcoming Eel Festival. Cllr Morgan mentioned that it was very encouraging to read from Mrs Bennett's report that the trader pitches have a waiting list for Eel Day, and Vistry Homes had been approached regarding sponsorship. The members were briefed on other events, Green Fair (with Ely Cathedral), Armed Forces Day – no further comments were made.

A brief update was provided to the Committee regarding sales activity for Digital signage. The project is running smoothly with all Visit Ely events live, plus other contributors. The latest board is now powered and will go live shortly. That takes the total number of boards up to 17, across Ely.

The update presentation concluded with brief updates on sales of smaller events, such as Roast and Ramble (collaborating with RBK) and Architectural Walks with Tea (Collaboration with Poets House) and that sales were all doing well. City tours are running every weekend in addition and new tours will be launched 'Hidden Gems', 'Ely Militia' and 'Evacuees' would be coming soon.

5.To discuss budget updates.

Cllr D Warman gave thanks to Mrs Bennett and her team for the budget achievements and how the service income has much improved since the City of Ely took tourism over from ECDC. No further comments were made regarding updates.

6.To discuss Town Crier Competition and 50th Celebrations

Mrs Bennett explained that we were looking to perhaps plan a competition again around the weekend of Apple Festival 2024. Cllr Morgan and Cllr Warman suggested Mr M Routledge be considered. Regarding 50th Celebration ideas, nothing was decided, aside of researching what other Councils maybe doing, and possibly a re-paint of the OCH figures.

7.Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting will be 7pm, June 10th 2024.

The meeting closed 8.15pm