



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT
SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT
7.00 PM MONDAY 12th AUGUST 2024**

THOSE PRESENT:

Cllr D Warman (Chair), Cllr M Banyard, Cllr C Whelan, Cllr W Novick, Cllr C Phillips

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr K Holtzman and Cllr M Wade.

2. Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of last Tourism and Town Centre Meeting held Monday 10th June 2024 and matters arising

The Minutes of the last Tourism and Town meeting held on the 10th June were agreed by members and signed by the Chairman Cllr D Warman. Pages TTC 100, 101, 102 and 103 refer.

Matters Arising: Page TTC 100 item 3 Cllr Banyard wanted to express thanks to Deputy Clerk, Sarah Jay for the design of the Volunteer Leaflets, and that we are progressing with applications once a job description has been completed. Mrs Bennett to follow up. Page TTC 102 item 4 paragraph 14 - Cllr Banyard followed up with Cllr Novik's suggestion regarding empty shops to be used as potential art galleries to assist Babylon Arts. Cllr Banyard to provide ECDC contact, Mr Nick Lancaster (Economic Development Officer) to Cllr Novik to progress the possibility.

4. To appoint a Vice-Chair for the Tourism Committee

Cllr Mike Banyard was voted as the Vice-Chair, agreed by the Tourism Committee.

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

The report for July/August was presented by Mrs Bennett. It was explained to the committee that during the last 8 weeks, Oliver Cromwell's House had received approximately 260 visitors per day, with 2505 adult visitors to the attraction. Overall, visitor numbers are slightly less compared to 2023. However, Mrs Bennett was pleased to announce the gift shop was continuing to do well, with increased basket spend over the last 8 weeks, and the new on-line shop. Mrs Bennett expressed her thanks, as did the committee, to Miss Sarah Thompson (Senior TIC Assistant) and her commendable attention to purchasing stock, displays and overall hard work and commitment.

TTC 100

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Committee Chairman
14th October 2024

Relationships continued to grow between Ely Museum, and meetings are planned with Ely Cathedral and newly appointed Visitor Experience Manager. Cllr Banyard expressed an interest in attending the meeting. Mrs Bennett agreed to invite Cllr Banyard and advise other attendees. Mrs Bennett explained that the stand was booked for GLT show 2024, and that the platform would be used to promote Ely Group Day passes/Individual Day Passes, and the benefit of travelling to Ely by train. Cllr Novik suggested discount offers for attractions in collaboration with Train Operators, which is already in discussion. The 'Travel by Train' day, for various operators was presented to the committee as a huge success with representatives in attendance from Cross Country, GA, EMR, SRB, Govia and HCRP. Mrs Bennett thanked Cllr Banyard for attending the day, and the committee all agreed this was an extremely worthwhile project in progress. Further updates regarding the action plan would be provided at the next meeting.

Escape Rooms were discussed. Mrs Bennett explained to the committee that bookings remained healthy, with continued enthusiasm from the puzzle team. Visit Ely absorbed costs for generic branding (shown to committee), and new logo, future proofing the rooms and highlighting that the rooms Est 2017, of which we are very proud. Cllr Novik questioned the Latin translation, and it was explained further (and corroborated by Cllr Phillips, that 'Life Given' is the translation for Vita Datum. Cllr Novik questioned the sensitivity and the nature of the game. Mrs Bennett and the committee agreed that discussions would be held with the facilitators, and that perhaps a 'tweak' could be made at Cllr Novik's request. The committee suggested that all games be 'house/or Ely' related preferably. Cllr Whelan asked how the rooms operate in comparison to others, Mrs Bennett explained that they are marketed as 'pop up' rooms, unlike others that are room-set designed to suit the game. Mrs Bennet explained that a lot of work goes into the games, prop designing and ideas. Further updates would be provided at the next meeting.

A brief update on Digital Signage/Wayfaring Boards was provided. Any questions, or queries were to be referred to the appropriate email address, particularly if boards were not operating. Mrs Bennett advised the committee that Mr M Routledge would deal with any queries.

Tours for Summer 2024 were discussed together with social media. Cllr Novik expressed that 2.5 posts were made daily across all channels and thought that this was excessive. Mrs Bennett explained that this was minimum engagement, and after much experience, by posting across all channels (mainly weekdays) led to sales, and further collaboration, and this remained a healthy level of activity. The remainder of summer 2024 tours were discussed with the delight that the Bishops Garden/King's School sold out over 48 hours. It was explained to Cllr Novik that collaboration with King's School was indeed a positive, with the focus on Ely being a safe place to live, work and of course study, with reputation of Visit Ely at the forefront.

Spooky Season, as explained to members, had recently launched, slightly earlier, due to popularity. Cllr Phillips mentioned an interesting story that he would share with Mrs Bennett regarding a ghost tour of the cemetery. Cllr Phillips also added that the tours (for the future) would be communicated to the Visit Ely guides team to allow them to present. The committee were pleased to hear about the summer holiday offerings of Prof A Bismal and further plans for the year and 2025 sponsorship ideas. Cllr Whelan asked if it would be possible to have more food demos for the spring 2025 events, Mrs Bennett explained that post covid, this has proved to be expensive, and risks the budget running at a loss without hefty sponsors. It would however be explored with an update at the next meeting.

A very brief discussion was held regarding repairs to OCH, Mrs Bennett advised the committee to refer to Mrs T Coulson with any enquiries.

6. To discuss budget updates

There were no comments regarding budget updates.

7. Town Crier Competition

Cllr Warman suggested the competition and all relating admin be taken away from the Tourism Office and dealt with by City of Ely Council staff. Cllr Whelan suggested that forms and advertising start imminently. Mrs Bennett agreed to relay this decision to the office at SH

8. TTC name change to TC and any other relating matters.

Mrs Bennett thanked the committee and all members for progress in this matter. Mrs Bennett also briefed the committee that consultation had taken place with Mrs Coulson (Clerk) regarding her remit, and amendments would be made forthwith.

9. Date of next meeting agreed 14th October 7pm

Cllr Warman advised she would be on holiday, and Cllr Banyard would deputise.

The Meeting closed 8.15 pm