



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF TOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT
SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY AT
7.05 PM MONDAY 17TH AUGUST 2026**

PRESENT:

Bold indicates a voting member of the Committee

Cllr C Phillips, Cllr S Sandhu and Cllr M Hucker

Mrs Anna Bennett -Tourism and Events Manager

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from **Cllr D Warman, Cllr C Bebu-Vijianu, Cllr M Wade and Cllr R Denness.**

2. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr Hucker proposed Cllr S Sandu, and Cllr C Phillips seconded the proposal. He was therefore elected as the Vice Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the last Tourism Committee Meeting held on Tuesday June 2nd and Matters Arising

The minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting held on Tuesday June 2nd were unanimously approved by attending members and signed by the Chairman, Cllr C Phillips. Pages T122 and T123 refer. There were no matters arising.

5. Budget Update

Members noted the budget updated, which was up to the 30th June. Cllr M Hucker raised a question about pitch fees and whether these we should consider raising these to increase the income received. The Tourism and Events Manager explained to Cllr M Hucker that by raising pitch fees, Visit Ely Events run the risk of loosing traders due to cost of attending events/rising cost of fuel etc. However, it would be considered at the budget meeting. Cllr M Hucker raised a question regarding the equipment spend which he felt was high and ask for clarification. The Tourism and Events Manager said she would refer to the Clerk and provide nominal ledgers offering Cllr M Hucker specifics. There were no further comments regarding the budget update.

6.To Receive an Update on Tourism and Events

The Tourism and Events Manager presented the report discussing admissions over the 8-week period to Oliver Cromwell's House, noting the increase due to VAT reductions for Family/Children admissions during the peak summer season. Cllr M Hucker requested comparables to the last report as the stand-alone figures were irrelevant. The Tourism and Events Manager agreed to supply these.

An event update was provided for the Autumn and Orchard Fayre, to be held on the 10th and 11th October 2026 on Palace and Cross Green. The Tourism and Events Manager encouraged the Tourism Committee to attend as representatives of the City of Ely Council, which would also benefit from press and PR opportunities. The Tourism and Events Manager told the members that we had good sponsorship support from local businesses, a new 'Children's activity gazebo' and many new and exciting traders – an average of 20% change from the 2026 event.

The Tourism and Events Manager explained that the Heritage Open Days bookings for 2027 were already complete, and that she was mindful again this year of tours, limiting City Tours to just two this season.

Ely Foodie Week was suggested by the Tourism and Events Manager to the members with a full explanation regarding the initiative, costs, outcome and what Visit Ely hoped to achieve. The idea was met with much enthusiasm, and it was agreed that the initiative would be further developed with the aim to grow the event year on year.

A brief update was given regarding the re-launch of the Ely Passport together with the discount offered by town centre traders alongside the passport, now valid for 5 days. The attending members all agreed this was a good idea and looked forward to hearing more about it at the next meeting in October.

Concluding the report was a brief update regarding Digital Signage.

7. To receive and update on Cambridgeshire and Peterborough LVEP

The Tourism and Events Manager told the committee that since her presentation at Full Council, there had not been any significant changes and that the working group were still finalising the brand identification and brand narrative. She explained that there was some hesitation from one of the partners, and this was in discussion regarding full inclusion into the partnership.

8.To note the building schedule of works required for OCH, following annual inspection by Estates Manager.

The schedule of works for Oliver Cromwell's House was noted and there were no comments made.

9. Update of the Building Work Project for OCH

Cllr C Phillips mentioned the start date for the project and issues were arising regarding the use of materials during the autumn and winter, prolonging the project. He also raised the subject of scaffolding and the current delay with confirmation of this to be erected on consecrated ground. This matter should be resolved by the end of September, and the committee hoped that the front building work could commence without any further delays.

10. To discuss possible conflict with a member of the Tourism Committee working as a volunteer guide for the City of Ely Council/Visit Ely

Cllr C Phillips opened this conversation with how the Council are being open and transparent regarding said Councillor and could not foresee any issues.

Cllr Hucker disagreed, quoting cases and employment law stating he had considerable knowledge of tribunals. He stated that 57% of cases were lost when employed personnels sued organisations for employment offered to volunteers, when shifts could be offered to paid employees. He deemed that this was a risk to the Council.

Cllr Sandhu appreciated his concern and remained impartial. The Tourism and Events Manager explained the process of how tour guides are booked, and both Cllr Phillips and the Tourism and Events Manager remained positive that this would not pose a risk given the very small team. She also went on to explain to Cllr Hucker that the *Councillor in training* would only be used if all other avenues of employment had been exhausted, otherwise the true risk to the council would be loss of tours, loss of income as not enough staff to cover, so risk was very minimal. The decision as to whether the Councillor should be permitted to be a volunteer guide and also remain on the Tourism Committee will be referred to the next Full Council.

11. To discuss the outcome of the Digital Signage consultation on Forehill.

Cllr Philips explained to the committee that the above issue was still on-going, with the local MP, Charlotte Cane now involved. A meeting was held at the property on Forehill to discuss. Cllr Phillips explained to those in attendance that the board would not be removed. To compensate, the suggestion of a decorative decal could be purchased by the Council to cover the back of the board, however the shrubbery was still in its infancy, therefore in due course, this will cover the board, and it would not be in plain sight. The Tourism and Events Manager explained she had received an email from Cllr Trent regarding the consultation as he attended the meeting. Cllr Trent gave an estimate of cost of producing the decal. She responded that her team had researched this request and found a more suitable supplier. The issue would be progressed in house with the Visit Ely team and updates would be provided at the next meeting.

12. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be on the 19th October 2026.

The meeting concluded at 8.05pm