

5th December 2012

At a meeting of the Tourism Committee of Sandwich Town Council held this day
present: -

The Mayor (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs Laslett
“ Mrs Liote
“ Moorhouse
“ Scollard
“ Scott
Mr Steve Laslett

1. Apologies were received from Councillors Carter, Graeme and Mrs Leatherby.
2. The minutes from previous meetings were revisited and the following updates provided:
Meeting of 7th November 2012:
 - The council has agreed that the Tourism Committee be given a budget of £5,000 next year, however, the redesign and printing of the Tourism Guide will need to come out of this money.
 - Cllr Carter and Miss Fidler have been chasing up the missing signpost from Seven Post Alley with various people at DDC and KCC. A report will be going to the next meeting of the council about the matter.
 - Mr Laslett and Miss Fidler have not had an opportunity to discuss improvements to the Town Council website yet.
 - The Town Council has agreed to let all accommodation providers in the town be listed in the 2013 Tourism Guide as long as a disclaimer is included explaining that we take no responsibility for the standard of accommodation that is listed.
 - Atlas UK Ltd is happy in principle with our proposal to update the maps in the A0 notice boards to include spots indicating key facilities and services. They will provide the committee with a map on which to make the proposed updates.
3. The following updates were received for use with the Waterfront Town Trail:
Costings – The existing town trail was established in 1991 and the Town Council was not involved in the funding of the project. When The Sandwich Society rejuvenated the boards in 2000 the council provided a grant of £300 only, we have no record of what the total costs were. In 2008 Ray Signs Limited renewed all 18 information boards at a cost of £6099. The current town trail boards are of a very high standard and it is hoped that the costs for new Waterfront Town Trail boards could be much less if necessary, we could have the content printed and shop around for the best quote on framework.
Flood Defence Work – The latest plans for work at the Quay were received, however, there was a discrepancy as to when the work is due to start and be completed. It was agreed that the Environment Agency/Halcrow will be contacted for clarification on the matter. Hopefully there will be no planned work at the Quay during the summer months, this will also be checked. The intention is to put the Waterfront Town Trail boards up when the flood defence work at the Quay has been

completed, the content of the trail can be finalised in advance of this work. The EA/Halcrow will also be asked for clarification on what is happening at the slipway by Jesus Quay.

4. The Thursday Market manager has been working throughout the year to attract coaches to Sandwich when the market is on and the Town Crier has been greeting these coaches at the Guildhall, which has been very popular with visitors. Mr Cook is happy to do as much work as the Crier as possible, however, it must not affect his work at Town Sergeant/Mayor's Chauffeur/Caretaker, and there is not a back up for Mr Cook at the present time, although the Mayor does assist where possible. It is good that these coaches are being welcomed and encouraged.

It was agreed that the Mayor will ask the toilet attendants at the Quay to start making a note of which coaches arrive at the Quay and when, this will allow us to make contact with these companies to help promote the town. There are currently no planned coach parking developments in the area, however, the coach parking area on Ash Road is virtually unused. It was agreed that when we find out which tour operators visit the town we can inform them about this parking space, it is a piece of local knowledge that visitors might not be aware of.

An email from Morrison Tours requesting photos of the town was considered. It was agreed that the Town Clerks office will make contact with Morrison Tours and provide any photos, contacts, information and assistance that they require.

5. The minutes from the 'Meeting Regarding Road Closures Summer 2013' were received. This meeting had helped explain why the meeting with the Safety Advisory Group in September had gone so badly, there had been a lack of communication between departments in DDC to explain what we wanted and why were there. However, this meeting was not particularly constructive either and impression remains that DDC has no desire to help with the matter. Mr Laslett expressed his concern that community groups and event organisers will tire of the constant battles with the district and county councils and stop organising special occasions. Under the current restrictions a budget of approximately £10,000 would be required to achieve the summer road closures that we want.

The next step, which might be looked upon more favourably by KCC, is to go down the route of full pedestrianisation, possibly of Market Street/Butchery/Potter Street to start with. However, the consultation process requires a lot of work. It was agreed to defer the matter until the meeting in January in order to let the committee go away and think about the issues involved.

6. Information about the new Visit Kent Website 2013 was received and considered. It was agreed that the town clerk's office will ensure that all STC/STBF functions are listed on the website and that Visit Kent has the correct contact details for Thomas Paine's Cottage, White Mill Rural Heritage Centre and Sandwich River Bus & Seal Spotting. Mr Laslett has already provided the necessary information about the community events and it was agreed that it is not the responsibility of the committee to chase up all private businesses.
7. Mr. Laslett has recently become aware of the 'Best Sandwich in America' television series and it alerted him to the fact that we have this wonderful opportunity of promotion in Sandwich this is not being exploited to the full. The committee were asked to consider how we might help promote and assist the Sandwich Celebration 2013. It was agreed that the committee will brainstorm this request and feedback at the next meeting in January any ideas on how to encourage the event, possibly a better prize could be given?. The Mayor agreed to look into whether the town council could fund a large and small trophy to be used at the 'Sandwich Bites' competition.

In response to promotion of the 2012 Sandwich Celebration Mr Laslett was contacted by an Israeli TV production company who are looking for a location to film a cookery show next summer (similar to the Great British Bakeoff). A member of the production company will be meeting with Mr Laslett and the Mayor this month and hopefully they will be able to promote Sandwich favourably as a location.

8. The Visit England TIC Update for November 2012 was received and noted. Now that all accommodation providers will be listed in the town guide it could be possible to charge for these listings in the future.
9. The White Cliffs Country Visitor Guide 2013 was received and noted. The design of this publication is very good, however, it is a shame that only two accommodation providers in Sandwich are included.

(Cllr Moorhouse left the meeting at this point)

10. Information about the 'Walkers are Welcome' scheme was received and considered. It is apparent that this scheme should be driven by local walking groups and not local government. Miss Fidler will remind Mr Laslett to make contact with the local walking group in two weeks time.
11. The following information from 'Kent's Coast – a Vision for the Future' was received:

- CAST Interreg Project – Project Scoping Report January 2012
- CAST Interreg Project – Development Opportunities Report Aug 2012
- CAST Interreg Project – Signage Audit Report
- Visit Kent 'Kent's Coast – A Vision For The Future Workshop Report'

Cllr Mrs Laslett had attended one of the seminar days at which this information was presented, there was not a lot of information provided that the committee is not already aware of, for example, the need for good quality local amenities and the need for areas to work together (a visitor doesn't care if they are in the Dover/Canterbury/Thanet district). However, this project into Kent's Coast has unfortunately not made any mention of Sandwich Bay and the unusual position of this being private land. Cllr Mrs Laslett suggested that there is possibly some project work with Hidden Britain coming up that may be of more relevance for Sandwich.