

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Tourism Committee, held on 6th August 2014 at the Guildhall, at 6.00pm

Present: **The Mayor (in the Chair)**
 Cllr Mrs Russell
 Cllr M W Moorhouse
 Cllr Mrs Laslett
 Cllr Wood
 Mr S Laslett

Officer: **Mrs K Palmer**

01.08.14 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Carter, who had a work commitment and Councillor Scollard and Councillor Liote who also had prior commitments.

**02.08.14 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS.**

No disclosable pecuniary interests or other significant interests were declared.

**03.08.14 SANDWICH TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES -
PEDESTRIAN PRIORITY AND CONTINENTAL STREET SCENE
OPTIONS**

Mr Laslett spoke to the Tourism Committee regarding the history of discussion around a part pedestrianisation of Sandwich. The plans were originally pushed back by Dover District Council due to the cost implications and also the issue of traders and businesses in Sandwich suffering. As a result of the Lorry Watch scheme, a Traffic Transport paper has been drafted by the Town Team. This paper supports the issues that had previously been discussed regarding pedestrianisation. Different pedestrian priority schemes have since been researched, which would still allow vehicles to drive through the town, but offer priority to the pedestrian. There is also a case for applying specific times or days for vehicle access in the town centre - schemes such as Faversham and Hythe already successfully operate.

The ultimate vision would give Sandwich a continental café culture appeal, and could potentially attract far more tourists, especially if achieved in conjunction with a greater number of events happening on the forecourt and better story-board signage around the town, pointing out buildings of interest - making the most of the medieval architecture.

RECOMMENDATION:

(i) That the Town Clerk's Office, in conjunction with Mr Laslett, writes a 'Statement of Vision' for Sandwich Town Council, which lists the key points involved in making Sandwich a more pedestrian-friendly and more Tourist-friendly town. The draft 'Statement of Vision' is now attached at the end of these minutes and has been shared with all Committee Members subsequent to the meeting.

(ii) That Sandwich Town Council agrees to support this vision.

04.08.14 VISIT ENGLAND TRADE PASS

The Committee considered the email from Visit England detailing information about the Official England Product Trade Pass. This is a scheme which would give free access for a member of TIC staff (plus one other) to all the attractions in England which are also part of the scheme. The purpose would be to learn and share knowledge about running a successful visitor attraction and also to share experiences via social media.

It was agreed that the option of a Visit England pass should not be pursued currently as there is no conduit for disseminating any information obtained and no link between the TIC and the Tourism Committee. It was suggested that consideration be given to a member of the TIC being invited to attend the Tourism Committee as a non-voting representative.

05.08.14 DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Dates were discussed and resolved. Future dates of meetings will be:

2014

Wednesday 1st October

Wednesday 19th November

2015

Wednesday 14th January

Wednesday 11th February

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

As per item 03.08.14 Recommendation (i) :

Draft Policy for STC support of Sandwich Town Tourism economy:

In order to support the development of tourism in Sandwich, it is the policy of Sandwich Town Council to:

- Support initiatives to make the town centre more attractive to tourists
- Support the development of plans to make the town centre more pedestrian friendly and traffic managed by supporting the development of plans for pedestrianisation or pedestrian priority.
- Encourage the development of a continental street café culture with outdoor seating facilities
- Encourage imaginative plans to make more use of the Guildhall Forecourt and Market Street as visitor friendly facilities
- Work with other bodies to promote support for the independent tourist related retail sector
- Build on the accolade that Sandwich is ‘the most complete medieval town in England’; help promote accessibility of buildings; improve signposting and history story boards where appropriate.