

Minutes of the meeting of the Tourism Committee, held on 14th October 2015 at the Guildhall, at 6.00pm

Present: Cllr Mrs J. Dunay
Cllr Mrs V. Liote
Cllr C. Trim
Cllr Ms L. O'Donoghue
Mr S. Laslett
Mr J. Hennessy
Mrs J. Linning
Mrs I. Crean

Officer: Mrs K. Palmer

12.10.15 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from the Mayor, who was on holiday, Cllr Gisbey, who had a personal commitment, Cllr Wood due to a work commitment and Cllr Moorhouse due to ill health.

13.10.15 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS.

No disclosable pecuniary interests or other significant interests were declared.

14.10.15 MINUTES

Minutes of the Tourism Committee meeting, held on 15th July 2015 were received and the following update was provided:

Item 10.07.15

Mrs Palmer explained that Theme Events has since withdrawn their interest in holding events on the Guildhall Forecourt, due to the enclosed layout.

Mrs Crean entered the meeting at this point.

15.10.15 WCCTA

The Committee received an email update from Cllr Gisbey on the content of the most recent meeting of the White Cliffs Country Tourism Alliance that he attended on 22nd September. Once again, the meeting concentrated on Dover itself and the problems they faced promoting tourism in the town. Cllr Gisbey had also given WCCTA an update on tourism events in Sandwich.

16.10.15 HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 2015

The Committee received a verbal update from Mr Hennessy on the outcome of the recent Heritage Open Days on the 12th and 13th September. Fifteen venues took part in Sandwich. Disappointing weather and lack of prominent advertising in the local paper had an effect, but nevertheless, visitor numbers were good and Mr Hennessy read out some positive feedback from one of the visitors. Mr Hennessy reported that the Heritage Open Days event was kindly supported this year by a grant of £200 from Sandwich Town Council.

17.10.15 WATERFRONT TOWN TRAIL BOARDS

The Committee received a verbal update from Cllr Ms O'Donoghue on the progress made since taking over this project. She has recently had a site

meeting with Adrian Fox from Dover District Council and Mr Laslett and is currently submitting a planning application. Only two sites have been found for boards. The redesigned boards will consist of digital copy behind Perspex, which will lower the cost and mean that the copy can be removed and updated in the future.

18.10.15

MAGNA CARTA EXHIBITION

Mrs K Palmer gave the following information to the Committee verbally, on behalf of Miss Laura Fidler, Town Clerk:

- The *Magna Carta Rediscovered* exhibition had now left Sandwich for Rochester Cathedral, but Sandwich's Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest now remained in a secure, locked location at the Guildhall.
- Over the course of the exhibition there were 3383 visitors, who were managed by 35 volunteers, completed 1005 visitor questionnaires and spent £3070 on souvenirs. When the exhibition had finished touring this information would be compared to the other venues. Oliver Dunn would hopefully collate the information from the questionnaires, although he was soon to start a full time job, if he would be unable to extract the information from the questionnaires in time volunteers may be asked to help.
- Thank you letters from the Clerk have been sent to all the volunteers, all of whom did an excellent job, with a special thank you to Oliver.
- There were no anti-social problems or risks (to the staff/volunteers/documents) encountered during the exhibition. However, one visitor tripped on the edge of the carpet and the Town Clerk is in contact with this person.
- The leftover souvenirs from the exhibition's stay in Sandwich were now available for sale in the TIC and Museum.
- Sandwich's charters had remained for the moment in their display cases, as this was deemed to be the safest location with a controlled environment available. The Strong Room will be the eventual storage destination but Laura believed that the environmental controls of this room would need to be assessed before the documents could be transferred to this location. Kent History & Library Centre were arranging storage cases for the charters but these had not arrived yet.
- Prior to the exhibition arriving, Cllr O'Donoghue and Laura had met with Sarah Corn, Museum Development Officer for Kent & Medway (South East Museum Development Programme). The primary purpose of this meeting was to establish that all the correct plans were in place for the exhibition – this was established.
- The second part of this meeting was concerned with how to take forward the proposal for a new or redeveloped museum, Sarah's suggestion was to do the following:
 - Lead into the possibility of a new museum with another smaller project, a trial for a new museum;
 - This would be a high quality temporary exhibition solely managed by the Council/Trustee;
 - This project would have a budget of around £50k - £100k, to be obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund;
 - Funding from the HLF would pay for a creative practitioner who would ensure that the project met the Heritage Lottery Fund outcomes, and who would be experienced with audience engagement;

- Feedback from this exhibition (along with the information gathered from the Magna Carta Rediscovered exhibition) would then help inform the feasibility study required for a new museum, again the HLF could help fund the person that would need to undertake this work. A creative practitioner would still need to be involved, working with the archivists to establish what history and artefacts could be used, and
- An exhibition to promote one of the following commemorations had been suggested:
 - 2017: Battle of Sandwich Bay 1217 (800 years)
 - 2018: Birth of the 4th Earl of Sandwich 1718 (300 years)
 - 2019: Start of World War II 1939 (80 years)

The Archivists were already thinking about an event in 2017 for the 800th anniversary of the Battle of Sandwich.

Recommendations from the Museum and Archive committee meeting held on 12th October 2015 were read out by Mrs Palmer as follows:

- Should the Tourism Committee agree in principle that involvement in an internet-based heritage co-ordination group would be desirable, the Museum / Archive Committee recommends that Cllr Ms O'Donoghue should co-ordinate the group, Linda Elliott should be the representative of the Archive, and John Scollard should represent the Museum.
- The concept of a Battle of Sandwich 800th Anniversary Exhibition should be explored in more detail, with further information to be considered at the next Museum & Archive Committee meeting

Key questions were then raised by Mrs Palmer to the committee regarding the future use of the Sandwich Magna Carta and Charter of the Forest and the possibility of an internet-based coordination group.

Cllr Ms O'Donoghue gave the committee further information about planning of the proposed 'Battle of Sandwich 800th Anniversary' Commemoration and gave examples of local groups who might be involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) That interested parties from local historical groups should be invited by Sandwich Town Council to a meeting at the Guildhall in order to discuss the Battle of Sandwich 800th Anniversary Commemoration and how to work together effectively in order to organise a series of events in 2017.

(ii) That the formation of an internet-based heritage co-ordination group, as recommended by the Museum and Archive committee, should be put on hold until the organisation of the Battle of Sandwich 800th Anniversary Commemoration planning was more advanced.

19.10.15

PUBLIC FEEDBACK FROM THE TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The committee received a verbal report from Mrs Linning regarding public feedback that has been received by the Tourist Information Centre during this year about the various events in Sandwich. Although much positive feedback had been received for events earlier in the season, Mrs Linning was concerned that the general public had given so much negative feedback about

the Sandwich Festival and the Sandwich Showground events; those events both mistakenly attributed to the Town Council.

Mr Laslett agreed that there had been problems this year with the Sandwich Festival, and explained that the plan was for the Festival to take place next year under the umbrella of the Sandwich Community Events Association. Cllr Ms O'Donoghue added that the Sandwich Festival AGM was being held on the 20th October, and all were welcome to attend. New volunteers would be very welcome to join in the organisation of next year's Festival, to ensure that it is a more successful event.

20.10.15 TOURISM LEAFLETS

The committee agreed to re-form the working group for the Sandwich Tourism leaflets, consisting of Cllr Mrs Liote, Mr Laslett and Mrs Palmer. Mrs Linning has volunteered to join the group, replacing Cllr Mrs Russell.

21.10.15 TOURISM BUDGET 2016-17

The committee considered the report detailing the breakdown of tourism expenditure during 2015-16 and discussed the proposed budget for 2016-17. Mr Laslett explained the importance of continuing to get the Visit Sandwich leaflets distributed to as many places as possible, in order to bring visitors into Sandwich. Mrs Crean added that there had been quite a few visitors arrive with a copy of the Visit Sandwich leaflet, proving that the leaflet was bringing visitors to Sandwich.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Cllr Trim work on a detailed proposal for the 2016-17 budget, which has been suggested as £6,000.

Mrs Linning left the meeting at this point.

22.10.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 13th January 2016 at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____