



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD AT 7.00 pm
ON TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2020**

PRESENT:

Cllr Dian Warman Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Christine Whelan Cllr Kevin Wilkins
Cllr Richard Morgan Cllr Sarah Bellow
Cllr Chris Phillips

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present, so there were no questions raised.

4. Minutes of last Tourism and Town Centre Committee Meeting and Matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting, held on the 9th November 2020, were approved and signed as a true record. Pages T&TC 36, 37 and 38 refer. There were no matters arising.

5. To Receive an Update on the Service and the Town Centre (see report from T&TC Manager)

Mrs Bennett proceeded to present her report explaining that due to Lockdown 2, Oliver Cromwell House had lost a further 28 days of business. She explained how a vast majority of November tours and events were able to re-book for December/January, with only three refunds requested.

Mrs Bennett also explained that one event was able to take place on-line. It was mentioned how safe and secure Escape Rooms were and that they were able to continue under Tier 2, providing they are in a family bubble and follow Government Guidelines regarding C-19 safety. The latest town centre initiative was discussed and Mrs Bennett explained how delighted our Ely Independent Traders had been with the response. The raffle will be drawn on Monday 20th December with collection before closure for Christmas. Mrs Bennett expressed her thanks to all the Independent Traders for their kind donations towards the raffle and was sure the lucky winner would be delighted with it's contents. Trader feedback was great overall, given that there was

5. To Receive an Update on the Service and the Town Centre (see report from T&TC Manager) continued

only a three week lead time to promote initiative, post Lockdown 2. Mrs Bennett relayed tours to date, final Ghost Tour and Witchcraft Tour and the huge positive response Visit Ely have received to date. It was also mentioned that new tours were being developed for 2021 including a 'Tour of Old Ely Inns' and 'Artists Trail'.

In collaboration with the Business Liaison Assistant, Mrs Bennett explained that there would be a reprint of local History books, and Cllr Rouse (who holds copyright) had sanctioned this. The books will be ready for sale mid-end January 2021.

Mrs Bennett explained that things were slowly improving regarding bookings for 2021. She explained there had been over five group bookings for tours of OCH, plus Paranormal bookings and of course those that had postponed tours during Lockdown one have been contacted to re-schedule depending on what Tier Ely is placed in during that time.

Social Media stats were briefly discussed as were OCH footfall and income generated via the OCH Gift Shop. Mrs Bennett explained there would be an evening event, December 18th, offering discounts for 2 hours, entry into a raffle and guest traders. This was to be a free event and Mrs Bennett encouraged all the Councillors to attend if they were available.

Mrs Bennett gave her proposed schedule of 2021 events to the Committee, commencing with The Boat Race 2021. It was explained that Visit Ely had received many enquiries regarding a potential event. Mrs Bennett also explained that she had been assisting the Oxford University Boat Club regarding accommodation for a preliminary race taking place on the 18th December. Mrs Bennett suggested that Eel Festival should take place early June and join celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Food and Drink Festival would take place in August. All dates were agreed and all Councillors seemed content that the 2021 Festivals should be spaced out throughout 2021, leaving a longer leadtime to organise.

6. To Receive an Update on the Budget and Setting of Budget for 21/22

Cllr Warman explained to the Committee that the budget for 21/22 had been agreed at PF&G and there were no further comments regards to this matter. Cllr Whelan mentioned that we were to arrange more regular meetings to discuss the service's budget in the New Year, which was all noted.

7. To Consider the Principle of Forming a 'Friends of Oliver Cromwell's House.

Mrs Bennett expressed her interest in forming such a group and explained that the staff costs could be substantially reduced if the Council were to introduce a 'Cromwell Club' scheme and that by forming such a group could potentially have many benefits. Cllr Every explained that it must be made clear as to what the Council would be starting and able to offer. Cllr Phillips expressed that such a group would require to be managed and also how there were a number of positives surrounding the idea. Cllr Wilkins also added that such a group could have many benefits from overseas as Cromwell is such an International figure, there is a broad sweep of objectives and that at some point this requires brainstorming. Cllr Warman requested a show of hands regarding whom would be interested. All Councillors participated. Mrs Bennett agreed that this would be well worth pursuing and with Cllr Wilkins, was happy to lead discussions.

8. Health and Safety Issues

There were no Health and Safety issues to report.

9. Personnel Matters

It was agreed to extend the Business Liaison Assistant's contract to the 31st March 2021. Amendments to a staff member's job description was also agreed. These will be recommended to the next Full Council for approval.

10. Any Other Business

There was no other business to report.

11. Date of next meeting

Date of the next meeting was agreed to take place virtually at 7pm on the 1st February 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.54pm.

Due to enforced social distancing caused by the Coronavirus, this meeting took place by video communication, accessed by the Zoom meetings facility.