



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

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT 7.00 pm  
ON MONDAY, 6TH SEPTEMBER 2021  
HELD AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Warman (Chairman)

Cllr Christine Whelan  
Cllr Chris Phillips

Cllr Sarah Bellow

Cllr Arnie Arnold

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Every and Cllr Wilkins.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The minutes of the last meeting, held in person, July 19th, at the Maltings, Ely were approved and signed as a true record. Pages T&TC 52, 53 and 54 refer. There were no matters arising.

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

Mrs Bennett expressed how thoroughly pleased she was with the income generated and provided a brief breakdown of how income has been raised on adult and family admissions to the attraction, and a clear increase with family groups. This Mrs Bennett contributed to artefacts in-house, family activity and new audio guided tour. The average shop spend had also increased as a direct result of stocking more local produce/arts and crafts.

Planning meetings have been held for the Ghost season that are selling well, some tours sold out as soon as they were available to purchase. Mrs Bennett explained price increase to cover costs were in place and that how wonderful it is to run the tours at full capacity.

Escape Room bookings are double to the comparable month in 2019, again very encouraging. Cllr C Whelan asked Mrs Bennett how Junior Escape Rooms have been marketed and she could help promotion in schools. Mrs Bennett to action by supplying leaflets. Corporate bookings for ER's are increasing, and the Tithe Room is now being used for more mid-week meetings.

Futher tours/talks, new and revived are now in planning for Autumn and Winter. Coaches are booking house tours and there is a noticeable increase in bookings around the time of Ely Cathedral Christmas Fair. School booking enquires are coming in, which again is encouraging.

Mrs Bennett was asked by Cllr Arnold how the Digital Signage project was progressing. Mrs Bennett explained the project had been approved, and we were waiting for further news from ECDC. Mrs Bennett explained manpower concerns when in-house managing the project, it was discussed that volunteers could be an option. Cllr Bellow raised she had attended an access group meeting with Mr Nick Lancaster and many ideas were raised and it was a very positive meeting. The question was raised about downloading an App on their phone and a speaker device. Mrs Bennett to discuss with ECDC.

Heritage Open Day events were planned for the forthcoming weekend, and all other Heritage sites have participated with providing Ely with a full programme of activity. Mrs Bennett gave praise to the Living History Actors that attend.

Visit England feedback report was discussed and areas discussed. All Councillors were given a copy. Mrs Bennett also pointed out that we are a Visit England accredited attraction which needs clearer signage. This will be actioned by Mrs Bennett. Mrs Bennett also advised that OCH had received a Travellers Choice award, and nomination for Hidden Gem (Visit England).

## **5. Budget**

Cllr Warman mentioned that the budget was interesting, and that Mrs Bennett and her team were doing extremely well. Again overheads are high, but they are being addressed. Mrs Bennett explained no staff had been replaced, so there were cost savings with staff. Cllr C Whelan asked the question if funds were available to cover costs, to which Mrs Bennett explained there was.

## **6. Staff updates.**

Mrs Bennett explained that Mr Routledge had been employed part-time to cover social media on a temporary, freelance basis. Cllr C Whelan raised as Editor of the City of Ely page for social media she needs to be aware of any changes in admin, which has been actioned.

## **7. Christmas Switch On Event**

Unanimously, after voting, it was agreed at the last Sub-Committee meeting that the event would not take place this year. This was futher enforced at this meeting. This was due to budget, health and safety.

The Councillors proposed a smaller, niche event take place involving the town center traders. Mrs Bennett proposed a smaller OCH event/Christmas shopping event so the community could still celebrate. The lights would be switched on as normal. Cllr Warman gave thanks to the previous organisers. Previous minutes of the last Sub-Committee meeting still remain un-signed and the meeting that took place was quorate. Cllr Arnold proposed a statement be made by Cllr Austen

that the event would not be taking place this year, this would be actioned by Cllr Bellow and Mrs Bennett.

#### **8.Any Other Business**

Mrs Bennett presented quotes from three website providers, and asked that the cheapest quote from Studio Nova be proposed for approval at the next Full Council meeting. Further update will be discussed at next T&TC meeting.

#### **9.Date for next meeting.**

Date for the next meeting was agreed for 18<sup>th</sup> October 7pm at the Maltings, Ship Lane, Ely.

The meeting concluded at 8.15pm.