



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

**MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT 7.00 pm
ON MONDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 2021
HELD AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY**

PRESENT:

Cllr Dian Warman - Chairman

Cllr Sarah Bellow Cllr Arnie Arnold Cllr Ian Lindsay Cllr Chris Phillips

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Every, Cllr C Whelan, Cllr Wilkins and Cllr Austen.

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 on the 18th October 2021 at the Maltings, Ely were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Pages T&TC 58 and 59 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 gave a full and detailed presentation regarding the TIC service and Attraction for the month of November. Cllr Warman gave her thanks to all the hard work and commitment from Mrs Bennett and her team, which has been outstanding.

Mrs Bennett explained that there had been a noted decline in admissions, which is normal and with the ERA being declared in Cambs/Peterborough she felt more people are staying away. Average visitors during the week approx. 30-40 daily with a noticeable increase at weekends to around 70 visitors. Due to staff changes and upselling admissions, there has been noted differences. Mrs Bennett also gave a brief description of stock, what's new and what's on sale and her aim to really push the #shoplocal idea by supporting local arts and crafts.

The Visit England 'Hidden Gem' award was also discussed and councillors gave their praise to Mrs Bennett and the Team for the award. Mrs Bennett also explained that additional signage has been purchased for the outside of OCH to display the fact it's an accredited Visitor Attraction. Mrs Bennett also discussed the Escape Room and that the bookings are slightly down, it was explained that a new puzzle would be introduced with the new website in Spring 2022.

TTC 60

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Committee Chairman
24th January 2022

Ms Reddick provided a report to Mrs Bennett on Ely High Street Traders. It was fed back that there was a noticeable decline in footfall over the last month. However, all that participated in the advent calendar initiative gave their thanks for support. A 'Christmas' window competition is now underway, with judging from the Mayor and Consort – results to be presented at the next meeting.

The Visitor Guide book for 2022 is now underway, with a wonderful ELY front cover commission from 'Tales of the Fen' artist Lizzie. The quotes for production are 90% ready together with details to all our current business partners, and potential newcomers to Visit Ely.

School Trips have suddenly seen an upturn with three groups of 60 children booked in for various tours at OCH, plus U3A groups booking in conjunction with the Cathedral Christmas Fair. For the first time, schools have visited Sessions House and curriculum leaders of Year 6 are showing an interest in our Crime and Punishment tour, which has been a success.

5. Budget

There were no issues raised with either TIC or the Switch On budgets. Cllr Warman gave her thanks to Mrs Bennett as the increase in income was noticeable and that overheads still remain an issue.

6. Website development and Digital Signage project

Website development is well underway with Mrs Bennett and Studio Nova as the designated designers. Mrs Bennett presented the committee with examples of new designs and brand ideas. Further updates will be provided at the next meeting in January 2022.

The Digital Signage project was touched on briefly with Mrs Bennett explaining that a full, explanatory brief will be provided by ECDC at the Full Council meeting in January. Mrs Bennett explained to the Committee that the branding and revenue opportunities would be the responsibility of the City of Ely Council (VE) and that plans were underway to facilitate that. To conclude, Mrs Bennett gave a brief explanation of events taking place through to June 2022.

7. Christmas Event at OCH

Cllr Arnold gave his thanks and praise at the organising of a very successful, first ever 'Christmas Shopping and Lights' event. Footfall data for the day has yet to be communicated, however Mrs Bennett gave an approximate figure of over 1800 in attendance. Mrs Bennett also explained safety measures due to the ERA and new rules regarding face covering were coming into compulsory force and all areas were kept ventilated and social distanced. The traders that participated were overwhelmed with the success and gave their thanks to the organising team.

8. Audit Report

The report was sent to all members for their reference. Comments and positive feedback were given to comments noted on the report on Mrs Bennett's enthusiasm and Leadership skill during very challenging times.

9.AOB

Mrs Bennett used this opportunity to brief the Councillors about a proposal from Mr Geraint Hughes. Mr Hughes had approached Mrs Bennett regarding an exchange trip for our guides and vice-versa to Ribe, our Twin Town. Mrs Bennett has approached the City Guides and would report on progress in January. The trip to Ribe would be planned in the Spring 2022, just before the opening of the season.

A further project was proposed by Mr Hughes namely Fixing the Link! The project focuses on improving the walking route to the City from Ely Station. As Ely is a major tourist destination this is a project worth exploring. Meetings are arranged with ECDC and to collaborate with the Digital Signage project. Both ideas will be updated at the next meeting in January 2022. A full and detailed explanation was given to all Councillors in attendance to consider the idea.

10. Date of the next meeting

7pm on the 24th January 2022.

The meeting concluded at 8.15 pm.