



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

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 27th JUNE 2018 AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY**

PRESENT:

Cllr Mike Rouse (to start meeting)	Cllr Richard Hobbs	Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Ian Lindsey	Cllr Alison Wheelan	Cllr Dian Warman
Cllr Peter Moakes	Cllr Christine Wheelan	
Tracey Harding (Tourism, Town Centre and Events Manager)		

1. Election of Committee Chair and Vice Chair

Cllr Rouse declared the meeting open and started the proceedings by asking for nominations for the committee chair. Cllr Every proposed Cllr Hobbs and this was seconded by Cllr Warman. This was then unanimously voted through. Cllr Rouse then left the meeting.

Cllr Hobbs then asked for nominations for a vice chair and Cllr Every proposed Cllr Warman and this was seconded by Cllr A Wheelan. This was then unanimously voted through.

Cllr Hobbs welcomed everyone to this new committee and hoped that this would be a stepping stone for the service as it was the intention for it to work towards becoming a standalone entity.

Cllr Lindsay asked if this committee would have Terms of Reference in line with all other City of Ely Council's committees. It was suggested that the Visit Ely Service Plan already provided the relevant information and that by changing the first title from "Overview of Service" to "Terms of Reference" then this document would suffice.

Action/Recommendation by Committee:

Tracey H to amend Action Plan title as detailed above.

2. Apologies for absence

None

3. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Minutes of last Tourism, Town Centre and Events Committee Meeting

Non-applicable as inaugural meeting.

5. Budget Update

Tracey H explained that as the budget had been set before the transfer she had not had any direct input. She would be working with the Parish Clerk to make tweaks and obtained a better understanding of how it works as it is very different to ECDCs. Cllr Every re-iterated that this was the first service within the City of Ely Council that had full control over its own budget.

6. Review of Draft Service Plan

Cllr Hobbs asked for member's comments regarding the plan. All were in agreement that the Action Plan was acceptable. Cllr A Wheelan agreed that as this would be a trial year in terms of the budget, it was right that the budget figures included in the report had been done as they were. Tracey H explained that she intended to present the budget in a different format for future committees so that it was more relevant and easier to understand. Cllr Every agreed that the profit and loss accounts that Visit Ely had worked with previously were more relevant and all Cllrs welcomed a new approach to showing this service's budget. This would be in addition to the Clerk's overall budget sheets.

Cllr Lindsay was concerned that some of the action points in the plan, such as signage, overlapped with the Council's Environment Committee. Cllr Hobbs said it was important for the relevant committees to work together and have clear lines of responsibilities to avoid any duplication. It was agreed that all signage should come under the remit of this committee.

Cllr Every had been speaking to a number of local independent traders who had expressed their concern about business rates amongst other matters. It was suggested that Tracey H should re-engage with this particular group and gather their opinions and report back formerly to this committee. Tracey H confirmed that she still conducted Welcome Visits to all new city centre businesses and could certainly re-engage with others but was concerned that we still had no resources to provide any answers to them. Cllr Every felt that by re-engaging with them their voice could be used to lobby other bodies to address the issues and source funding.

Cllr Moakes agreed that now that the City of Ely Council had a direct remit for the town centre they needed to be seen to be responding to businesses' concerns.

Cllr Every asked how the service was doing generally since the transfer and were there any issues that this committee needed to be aware of.

Having come from a larger organisation, Tracey H said it was inevitable that there were operational and procedural differences and she very much appreciated this. However, she did feel that in order to maintain a professional image that all payments should be made by BACS and not cheque. All agreed that the Council should be deemed to be forward thinking and that BACS payments should be looked into. Cllr Lindsay had concerns over authorisation rights and Tracey H advised that at ECDC senior offices had rights to approve up to £5K. Cllr Moakes agreed that delegation might be a way around this issue. Cllr A Wheelan agreed that the matter should be

6. Review of Draft Service Plan continued

investigated but was mindful that actions should be made within the guidelines for Parish Councils and that she would be happy to assist if required.

Tracey H also explained that as the Council does not operate any automatic invoicing system it was difficult to know when payments had been made. Cllr Every commented that the Maltings had equally had issues with not knowing if deposits had been received for bookings. Access to the bank statement would resolve this issue.

Tracey H explained that Visit Ely now had a secure, digital back-up system for all of its PCs. Cllr A Wheelan asked if it could be confirmed that this was GDPR compliant.

It was suggested that the Estates Team did not have sufficient man hours to assist with the level of caretaking and maintenance support that a new service might need, especially during the summer when their priority is to their outdoor work. Members agreed that by taking on another building (Oliver Cromwell House), the workload of the Estates Team may have increased and a review was needed.

Cllr Every asked if there were any staffing issues. Tracey H said that they had just gone out to advert for some more casual staff as there had been some difficulties covering all the weekend shifts. She also said that it was still a concern that permanent TIC assistants were not allowed to claim additional hours and had to claim TOIL. This would prevent permanent staff from willingly coming in for staff meetings and training outside their normal working days. TOIL does not work for rotated staff as for every hour they took off we have to pay another member of staff to cover. The causal budget had always had this allowance built in. Cllr Moakes said that staff should definitely be paid for additional hours worked and the City of Ely Council wanted to be known as being a good employer. Cllr Every suggested that other council staff may be paid additional hours, eg the Maltings, and if so a precedent had already been set.

Tracey H asked if committee papers needed to be sent out by post or whether e-mail was an acceptable form of communication. Cllr Hobbs said that ECDC still send out hard copies, although this was being reviewed. Members agreed that it was a consideration and that e-mail would reduce costs and time and therefore it should be investigated.

Action/Recommendation by Committee:

Tracey H to add a new item to the Action Plan about re-engaging with the town centre businesses.

Tracey H to confirm that the new cloud back-up system is GDPR compliant

The Parish Clerk be requested to investigate BACS payments for all payments across the Council and to look into delegated powers to allow allocated staff access to bank records.

To request the Personnel Committee to permit TIC Assistants' remuneration for additional hours.

To request the Personnel Committee to review the Estates Team workload to ensure all Council services were adequately resourced.

Tracey H to finalise Action Plan as directed and re-circulate with minutes.

7. Health and Safety Issues

Cllr Hobbs clarified to Tracey H what was required to be reported to this committee under this section in the future. Tracey H explained that the service had a comprehensive health and safety reporting system and would flag up any incidents that required action. None were noted for this period.

Cllr Lindsay asked whether Oliver Cromwell's House, being an old building, was compliant with accessibility issues and had East Cambs Access Group ever been consulted? Tracey H explained that during the last refurbishment in 2008, the Access Group had been fully consulted and were instrumental in the changes made. She also asked members to note that in the Action Plan there was a specific item regarding accessibility where we would be improving the accessibility information for the whole of Ely.

8. Any Other Business

Cllr Every suggested that we add "Public Question Time" to this agenda for future meetings to give tourism and town centre stakeholders the opportunity to engage. This was agreed by all members.

Action/Recommendation by Committee:

Tracey H to add Public Question Time to future agendas.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 5th September, 7 pm, Ely Sessions House