



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

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2018 AT 6.30 PM AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY**

PRESENT:

Cllr Mike Rouse Cllr Richard Hobbs Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Alison Arnold Cllr Peter Moakes
Tracey Harding (Tourism, Town Centre and Events Manager)

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Dian Warman, Cllr Christine Whelan and Cllr Alison Whelan.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Question Time

A parishioner expressed disappointment that she had reported that the Cloisters Notice Board had still not been fixed despite her reporting this in the summer and the information displayed in the Market Place Notice Board was out of date with the Premise Licence for the Market displaying an out of date name.

Mrs Harding responded by saying she had requested ECDC to look at the Cloisters Notice Board and apologised for not following this up. She then explained that the Market Place notice board did not come under her remit and updating it was the responsibility of ECDC.

The parishioner also stated that she could not find the minutes and agendas for this committee.

Action/Recommendation by Committee:

Cllr Hobbs directed Mrs Harding to follow up the notice board issues with ECDC.
Cllr Hobbs to speak to the Clerk to ensure that this committee's documents were put on the Council's website.

4. Minutes of last Tourism, Town Centre Committee Meeting

Cllr Every commended the layout of the minutes in the way that "Action/Recommendation by Committee" was listed at the end of each item making it very clear. She proposed that all minutes should be presented in this way. Cllr Moakes seconded this.

Feedback on actions:

Feedback, Page TTC5 – Mrs Harding explained that as directed, she had spoken to ECDC regarding the cleaning contract and as a result a meeting had been held and the service had been improved.

Refurbishment, Page TTC5 – Mrs Harding explained that two quotes had already been obtained and she was waiting on a third and then the contract could be awarded, subject to the approval of the Chair, Cllr Hobbs.

Town Centres, Page TTC7 – Cllr Every and Mrs Harding had begun to look at alternative models for Visit Ely but it was clear that this would take some time and the process should not be rushed. It was therefore, agreed to bring this item back to committee in February 2019.

The Seminar on Saturday 6th October had been held and notes circulated.

All other actions/recommendations were dutifully carried out as instructed and there being no other updates, the minutes of the last meeting held on the 5th September 2018 were agreed and signed as a true record. Pages TTC 4, 5, 6 and 7 refer.

5. Budget Update

Mrs Harding updated members on the proposed budget for her service for 2019/20. She explained that there were no major changes other than some of the budget headings which would make future coding easier. The only addition was the proposal to include a new budget specifically for town centre initiatives of £10K.

Cllr Every proposed and Cllr Moakes seconded that in addition to the £10K, a further £10K should be added to this budget heading to allow for the employment of a Town Centre Ranger. This new role would provide a much-needed pair of eyes and ears for the city centre and provide a regular, visible presence for shops and businesses to report operational issues to. With High Streets experiencing such difficult times at the moment, the introduction of this role would show that the City is listening and addressing some of their needs.

After further discussion Cllr Moakes put a second motion forward to increase the figure to £15K and Cllr Every seconded this.

Cllr Moakes raised the suggestion that the Council should consider purchasing a town centre property in order to rent it out as pop-up shops, or for a start-up business or some other suitable scheme that would encourage more independents into the town. Cllr Every also raised that it had recently come to her attention that there were a number of empty units either above the current shops or behind that were falling into disrepair and could be brought into use to encourage the vibrancy of the town and perhaps loans for this could be investigated.

Action/Recommendation by Committee:

Mrs Harding to prepare a full job description for a new Town Centre Ranger post for presentation at the next committee.

Cllr Hobbs to take the recommendation to Full Council that a total of £25K for Town Centre Initiatives to be included in the budget.

Cllr Hobbs to take the recommendation to the CIL Committee that the City should purchase a shop in the town centre.

6. Health and Safety Issues

Mrs Harding raised one incident of a minor cut where a visitor had caught their finger on a door latch. The latch had been looked at and was deemed to be safe.

7. Any Other Business

Cllr Arnold had been approached by a business in Chequers Lane asking if we could use that area for a series of mini-events to encourage footfall. Tracey H explained that this had been raised at the Town Centre Seminar in October and was one of the suggested ideas and that this was exactly the kind of activity that the proposed town centre initiative money could be spent on.

Following the recent Remembrance Day commemorations, Cllr Hobbs had received a request from the Royal British Legion requesting assistance in organising the activities next year. Tracey H confirmed that she would make contact and offer support.

Ely Cathedral's Gift and Food Fair starts tomorrow and Mrs Harding had arranged for a shopping voucher to be put in every programme which had been well supported by the shops with ten taking part.

The Ely Borrow Bag scheme is gathering momentum and now that we have some stocks behind us Mrs Harding will be out and about this week recruiting more shops.

Mrs Harding explained that once again Ely shops and businesses will be involved in the national initiative, Small Business Saturday. Launching on 1st December, Visit Ely would be working with Ellgia in a promotional campaign which will culminate in a presentation evening in aid of EACH on Monday 17th December at 6.30 pm at Poets House. All members were invited to attend.

The Visitor Guide was in production and Mrs Harding explained that this would be the highest number of advertisers that they had ever had with more businesses in the surrounding area coming on board.

The findings of ECDC's recent District's Tourism Strategy are being presented to members on Thursday 22nd November and several acknowledged that they would be attending.

8. Date of Next Meetings

Tuesday 12th February 2019 at 6.45 pm

Tuesday 9th April 2019 at 6.45 pm

No further dates were set due to forthcoming elections in May 2019.