



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

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD AT 6.30 PM ON
THURSDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY

PRESENT:

Cllr D Warman, Chairman	Cllr I Lindsey
Cllr M Rouse	Cllr E Every
Cllr Christine Whelan	Cllr R Denness
Cllr Arnie Arnold	

Ms K Edmonson-Brown (City Centre Ranger)
Mrs A 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 (18/06/19) and Matters Arising

Minutes of the last Tourism and Town Centre Committee meeting held on the 18th June 2019, were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Pages TTC 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 refer.

Matters arising:- Cllr Rouse raised the subject of how the minutes are presented and that it is not clear who is actioning what issues raised. It was agreed minutes should be written in the 3rd person. Cllr Every agreed. Cllr Rouse also mentioned that clerical support should be offered for the taking of the minutes and the writing of the minutes moving forward. This has been discussed with City of Ely Council Clerk and agreed it was the responsibility of the Tourism & Town Centre Manager to undertake this task.

Cllr Every mentioned that there has been some discussion with ECDC regarding the current state of Steeple Row and discussions are in place.

5. Introduction from the new Tourism and Town Centre Manager

Mrs Bennett introduced herself as the new Tourism and Town Centre Manager as from 1st November 2019. She explained that although she has only been in post for two weeks, she has been working both in the Tourist Information Centre and Visit Ely for just under 2 years.

Since January 2019, Mrs Bennett supported both the previous Tourism and Town Centre Manager and the Tourism Development Officer, in providing effective marketing campaigns and increasing social media engagement by 90%, as previously this was non-existent. This had a positive effect and resulted in additional business. This is a service that must be maintained effectively to achieve maximum results.

It was discussed that Mrs Bennett's initial priorities were to form a strong team, thus consisting of her replacement (Eleanor Butcher, employment due to commence Jan 2020) and the replacement for the current Tourism Development Officer.

Mrs Bennett explained that there was a huge part of the tourism development market which had never been explored. Therefore, the replacement role would be advertised as a Tourism/Sales & Events Officer. The hours, to maximise time management from a sales perspective have been increased to 37 per week.

Cllr Denness asked what priorities Mrs Bennett had after her team were in place. Mrs Bennett confirmed that once staffing was addressed, she would be moving into planning for the festival season and to look at ways to increase footfall to Oliver Cromwell's House. Mrs Bennett explained that City tours need to be looked at effectively and incorporating Sessions House, the Riverside and other locations around Ely. Educationally, markets have never been explored, neither has there been follow up on any group travel shows attended. Mrs Bennett explained there is much to do and feels it's an exciting time moving on into January 2020 for Visit Ely and the TIC/OCH.

Cllr Every showed concern that Mrs Bennett was 'dropped in the deep end' due to the resignations of previous staff within a short space of time and assured her that support and guidance will be given as she goes through a period of transition and change. Cllr Every mentioned that when all the recruitment was finalised, could Mrs Bennett supply the Committee with a Service Plan and Action Points, together with the budget broken down to profit and loss as opposed to accountants' figures. Mrs Bennett said she would do her very best to supply this information ready for the next meeting in February 2020.

6. Budget Update

The subject of budgets was discussed regarding format, breakdown and presentation in preparation for the next meeting.

Mrs Bennett expressed her concern at looking at the current budgets and fully aware that during the next financial year there has to be increased income and cuts on expenditure as the service currently carries a large deficit.

7. Town Centre Initiatives – Introduction from City Centre Ranger, Ms Edmonson-Brown

Kerry Edmonson-Brown, Ely’s City Centre Ranger introduced herself to the Committee. She gave a detailed account of her background and how her role has developed since June 2019.

Since the position of the City Ranger has come into effect, Mrs Bennett mentioned that the previous relationship between previous Managers and the City Centre has improved by at least 80%, plus an increase in Tourism Partners, some old and some new. The Visitor Guide for 2020 has already accrued t £2000 profit and figures are not quite finalised. This is very positive for the City Centre and the relationship with Visit Ely.

Ms Edmonson-Brown has been working on various other projects such as ‘Just a Card’ for Independent Businesses in and around Ely, Ely Christmas Lights best window and many more. Councillors all agreed that this role is having a very positive effect. Visit Ely would be present with a stall at the Ely Lights Switch on and this would be a welcomed presence. Social media traction has increased, as engagement has been made with the Rotary and other sponsors/organisers.

Ms Edmondson-Brown expressed her concern about Shop Mobility and how, at times, this deters her from her other responsibilities. In her absence, there is no back-up or contingency plan to supply this service. Cllr Every and Cllr Rouse discussed the possibility of Prospects Trust taking on this service as Ely Museum does not wish to take this back.

Cllr Rouse to explore the possibility of this option.

Cllr Lindsay asked both Mrs Bennett and Ms Edmondson-Brown if they had contact with Mr Elworthy from the Ely Standard and Spotted in Ely. Both explained that meetings will be arranged in January 2020

8. Review of Tourism Development Officer

Mrs Bennett advised Committee that the current role showed no business development; therefore, the role should be revised to that of Tourism/Sales and Events Officer with emphasis on bringing in more profitable business. Mrs Bennett explained she had someone in mind from the last round of interviews but Cllr Every and Cllr Warman explained as we offer a public service, the vacancy would have to be re-advertised. This was agreed and the advert would be placed with Indeed (employment website). It was also agreed this role would be full-time.

9. Health and Safety Issues

There were no health and safety issues to report.

10. Any Other Business

Cllr Rouse advised that the Mayor's staff drinks would be on the 10th December at Oliver Cromwell's House would also be a thank you and farewell to Mrs Aileen Sharp, who is leaving on the 13th December.

11. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday, 11th February at 6.30 pm.