



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

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD AT 6.30 pm
ON TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 2020**

PRESENT:

Cllr Dian Warman	Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Christine Whelan	Cllr Alison Whelan
Cllr Arnie Arnold	Cllr Kevin Wilkins
Cllr Ian Linday	Cllr Chris Phillips
Cllr Rebecca Dennes	Cllr Sarah Bellow
Cllr Richard Morgan	
Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)	

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Rouse.

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

The minutes of the last meeting, held on the 11th February 2020, were approved and signed as a true record. Pages T&TC 22, 23, 24 and 25 refer. There were no matters arising, aside of progress regarding presentation of budget figures that had not been resolved.

5. Budget Update

The issues were once again raised that the budgets were presented in a way that did not make any sense, and clear profit and loss accounts were required. Cllr Warman mentioned she was very concerned about new Financial year's figures. Cllr Alison Whelan mentioned that she had discussed the budget with Mrs Bennett and the Clerk to categorise costs incurred during the current situation and to provide reports on income that has been lost. Cllr Whelan also added that no one could have foreseen the current situation, so no resolve has been made to the current style of budget presenting. The issue would be picked up again once lockdown was over.

5. Budget Update continued

Cllr Lindsay asked the question about TIC Salaries and would this reflect in the budgets as some staff are furloughed. Mrs Bennett advised Cllr Lindsay to refer to the Clerk regarding furlough issues.

Cllr Kevin Wilkins expressed concerns regarding the figures in place for Town Centre Initiatives. It was explained to Cllr Wilkins that this was the Ranger's Salary for 20/21. Cllr Every also confirmed this. Mrs Bennett advised Cllr Wilkins that if he had any further queries he should refer to Mrs Coulson the RFO and Clerk to City of Ely Council.

6. Update from Tourism and Town Centre Manager

Mrs Bennett presented her report regarding what her team had been working on since Lockdown. This included all the virtual resources, dealing with queries, cancellations and re-scheduling of events. Planning for late summer events. Creating and marketing a campaign based around VE Day 75 and Eel Festival, and her plans to commemorate and celebrate virtually. Cllr Bellow and Cllr Denness mentioned some ideas they had and asked when Visit Ely would be launching their programme. Mrs Bennett replied that this would be w/c 27th April.

Mrs Bennett also mentioned managing her Staff during lockdown and that they are all working extremely hard creating, communicating and keeping Visit Ely/OCH alive during uncertain times. Mrs Bennett also discussed her involvement with the Covid-19 Community Hub Facebook Page. This is predominantly led by the City Centre Ranger as the City Council's representative, but how this has been a very busy hub, so she and Marketing Officer have been assisting with calls, referrals and general enquiries. Mrs Bennett mentioned she takes calls over the weekends and refers/helps where she can and a rota system between her staff has been created.

7. VE Day 75 Virtual Celebrations

Ideas were discussed as mentioned in item 6. Cllr Rouse (although absent) had previously emailed Councillors ideas of how to commemorate. Since the virtual meeting, all ideas have been launched and there's a big uptake on Visit Ely Bunting packs, which are downloadable and ready to hang/or colour in and hang from windows. It was discussed that lighting the peace beacon was not conducive with lockdown rules, and would be costly. Our Town Crier will perform her planned cry on the day via Visit Ely Facebook and shared, together with the Last Post and other community engaging ideas.

Eel Day

Mrs Bennett also mentioned that she was busy planning to also celebrate Ely's 17th Eel Day (virtually) and has been working with Fascinating Fens/Babylon and Ely Cathedral to create a virtual Eel. Many other activities such as live footage of Eel Tank, Eel Crafts to do at home and much more are currently in production.

8. City Centre Ranger Report

All Councillors had received a copy of the report and commented how good it was. Cllr Alison Whelan also wanted it to be noted that on behalf of the Committee she wanted her gratitude and thanks communicated to team Visit Ely in all that they are doing to support the community during these uncertain times.

9. Shopmobility

No further answers were concluded on how (in the future) Shopmobility would be managed. Cllr Every mentioned that due to Coronavirus, the build/rennovations of Ely Museum has been delayed until January 2021. Cllr Warman mentioned that would a group of Volunteers facilitate this service. Mrs Bennett mentioned that that this has been discussed within her team and in the future she plans to look into 'Friends of Cromwell House, or Visit Ely' and that this could be factored into the voluntary help required. However this is something Mrs Bennett will not be looking into immediately.

Cllr Every mentioned that maybe 'furlough' was introduced too early and some of our furloughed staff could have taken on other projects such as this.

10. Health and Safety Issues

None were reported aside from notices of closures on websites Oliver Cromwell's House/Visit Ely due to Virus.

11. Personnel Issues

None were reported.

12. Any other business

Mrs Bennett briefly mentioned and reported on website/social media traffic since Lockdown and it's significant rise and interest and engagement.

13. Date of next meeting

Next meeting agreed for June 2nd at 6.30 pm.

Due to enforced social distancing caused by the Coronavirus, this meeting took place by video communication, accessed by the Zoom meetings facility.