



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

**MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING HELD AT 7.00 pm  
ON MONDAY 17TH AUGUST 2020**

**PRESENT:**

Cllr Dian Warman                      Cllr Lis Every  
Cllr Christine Whelan              Cllr Kevin Wilkins  
Cllr Ian Lindsay                      Cllr Sarah Bellow

Mrs Anna Bennett (Tourism and Town Centre Manager)

**1. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

**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 and Matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting, held on the 21st April 2020, were approved and signed as a true record. Pages T&TC 26, 27 and 28 refer. There were no matters arising.

**5. Terms of Reference for Committee**

The Terms of Reference for the Town Centre and Tourism Committee were reviewed and agreed. Cllr Warman mentioned the Terms of Reference did not mention the Town Centre. Cllr Every mentioned that the previous Manager only took that role on when the City of Ely Council took over the service from ECDC.

Cllr Every gave thanks to Mrs Bennett for work thus far, and the re-building/re-pairing of Ely's Town Centre/Traders relationship with the City of Ely Council

**6. Lead Member**

During the meeting it was suggested that Cllr Wilkins may consider the post. Conversations have since taken place, and Cllr Kevin Wilkins has taken the post, and will act as Lead member of Town Centre and Tourism Committee.

## **7. Update from Tourism Manager regarding Service offered and Town Centre**

Mrs Bennett presented her report which, included detail of income and footfall since re-opening the service, initially from the 4th July. It was clear from the report that OCH income has risen steadily since opening the Visitor Attraction one week later, and moving into a 7-day operation from the 30th July.

Mrs Bennett expressed her thanks to her team for being flexible with temporary rotas to accommodate the new 'normal' and how the team have adapted very well to ensure we offer visitors to Ely a first-class service. Mrs Bennett also expressed that she was extremely pleased with the progress of the 'Walks with a Difference' programme, and how it has been such a success. Mrs Bennett explained as this was a success, she will be planning something similar for Ghost Tours in the autumn.

Mrs Bennett also explained the teams marketing strategy plans moving forward and the statistics for social media/bookings and how the traffic/engagement has improved during lockdown, hence resulting in visits to Ely, booking tours, and enquiries overall.

## **8. Budget**

Councillors noted the budget up to the 31st July 2020. No questions raised. Mrs Bennett explained the relevance of some new codes added to expenditure with regards to PPE. Nothing else was mentioned during the meeting regarding the 20/21 budget or any questions raised.

## **9. Update on proposed Events**

Mrs Bennett explained the high risk associated with Apple Festival 2020. Cllr Warman also mentioned, as the final decision maker, that there was little point in presenting at SAG due to posed risks of public gathering. Without significant further costs to the Council, and risk of closure, it was felt it was best to withdraw this year. Mrs Bennett explained that Apple Day will still be celebrated, but very low key by having some competitions running outside OCH, and possibly some representation from Waterfull Orchards – this has yet to be finalised.

Mrs Bennett also explained Open Heritage Weekend plans were underway. Applications or road closures had been made for Remembrance/Armistices Day and there had been some discussion regarding Christmas Lights, i.e. there will be a switch on day, late shop opening and perhaps a mini Christmas market. All yet to be finalised.

Mrs Bennett also mentioned that Escape Rooms (socially distanced, smaller groups) had re-opened at OCH. This is slow process, but bookings are coming through.

## **10. Personnel Matters**

Mrs Bennett explained that Karen White had resigned from her position as Tourism and Events Officer. Mrs Bennett also mentioned that she would not be recruiting a replacement for the time being, but would need to review this for 2021.

**11. Working Group Updates**

Cllr Bellow suggested that the City Ranger becomes involved with the Covid Working Group. It was also suggested that Mrs Bennet join the Christmas Lights Working group.

**12. Health and Safety Issues**

None were reported

**13. Any other business**

Mrs Bennett briefly mentioned Shopmobility and that the City Ranger, Ms KEB would facilitate this on Thursdays only for the time being. Cllr Bellow also mentioned that a Risk Assessment needed to be undertaken to facilitate this. Ms KEB had been in touch with the two users.

Cllr Whelan mentioned that we must be offering the service as we are fully inclusive, and now our users are not shielded, this must be available. All agreed. Cllr Bellow suggested that a Working Party get together using the Covid Mutual Group Volunteers, as facilitators moving forward.

In addition to the above, Mrs Bennett explained there will be an opportunity to visit OCH to listen to the audio content and experience the tour, with a Q&A session from Stuart Orme, Curator of the Cromwell Museum Huntingdon. The dates have yet to be decided. Mrs Bennett reminded councillors that they are welcome to attend any of the tours available and offer feedback.

**14. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be at 7pm on Monday, 28th September via Zoom. Links to be sent out in the next agenda.

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