

Totnes Tourism Partnership

Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2016

Present: Councillor Eleanor Cohen [Chair] (Totnes Town Council), Lindsay Garner (Totnes Chamber of Commerce), Matt Bulford and Michael Sweeney (English Heritage), Chantelle Norton (Totnes Pound), Dick Wood (South Devon Railway, Visit Devon, DATA), Sam Branch (Totnes Destination Manager), Thea Platt (TTT), Sarah Stride (Visit South Devon) and Helen Nathanson [Minutes] (Totnes Town Council)

Apologies Katie Tokus (Sharpham Trust) Karen Jonas (Dartington Trust), Frances Northrop (TCDS)

Next meeting: Tuesday 8th November at 10am in the Guildhall

I. Welcome from the Chair and Introductions

The Chair welcomed new members and introduced Sam Branch, the new Destination Manager for Totnes.

II. Minutes of the last meeting

The following points were discussed:

Website and Guide 2017

An update was given about the new website and Guide. Sam is having regular meetings with Leftbridge and is very pleased with the new website. It is user friendly with not too much content up front to distract.

The Launch Event was discussed, which is planned for January. Michael Sweeney suggested that it would be better to have the official launch once the website has had time to bed in – this will be discussed with Leftbridge.

The “Totnes Information” title was discussed and all agreed that they would prefer to use “Visit Totnes” because this fits in with other layers of tourism providers such as Visit South Devon, Visit Devon etc. Visit Totnes URL is owned by Visit South Devon so Sarah was asked to investigate whether we can have it.

There are no existing social media accounts under Visit Totnes so we can set these up and create a #VisitTotnes.

It was therefore agreed that we would use Visit Totnes if it is available.

Michael asked what we will be doing to drive more traffic to the new website. Discussion was held about Search Engine Optimisation and AdWords. Dick suggested looking in to the Google grants for free adverts for charities – are not for profit organisations included in this? The launch will be aimed at getting local businesses engaged and Sam is creating a social media strategy. Leftbridge have created new visuals for social media that will tie in with the website.

The Guide will be similar to previous years in terms of format but the style will be fully integrated with the website.

Leftbridge has been trying to get more food and drink businesses to advertise in the Guide but this is proving difficult and has historically always been the case. Sam has been introducing herself to local businesses in person and this has been useful.

It was agreed to invite Leftbridge to the next meeting to speak to them about these issues and to discuss progress.

Visitor Information Point

The Totnes Bookshop is up and running as the Visitor Information Point for the town, though there were some teething problems at first. There is a small area within the Bookshop for leaflets and there will be an information decal on the door.

In sorting out which leaflets to include in the Visitor Information Point, it became clear that we need more for the Totnes area because there is only a very small range and it does not showcase Totnes. The leaflets also need to tie in with the website and Guide.

Funding Opportunities

We have submitted the final application to the EU funds and are awaiting an answer.

It was agreed that we should look around for other funding in the meantime, to make sure we can progress the projects if we are unsuccessful. This includes the leaflets, as mentioned above, and the signage work.

Helen will investigate the following: Discover England, Coastal Communities, SDLAG, CRPF and TAP Funds.

III. Terms of Reference

The future set up and membership of the Partnership was discussed and the following points were made:

Sarah explained how Visit South Devon works:

It is a CIC. All paying advertisers are members and the Board is made up of an elected group of those members. Representatives from each type of business and area are included. Board members do not pay more but they give their time and expertise. The Chair has a discretionary spend limit but otherwise all decisions are taken by the Board.

Discussion was had about whether we should set up as a CIC. It was considered that there could be a lot of work involved in doing this and there are downsides such as having to create annual reports and accounts. We would also have to transfer ownership of the website and Guide from the Town Council to the CIC and there would be legal issues around this.

If we are not a CIC we can use the strengths of the individual organisations on the Board, which includes charities, CICs, private businesses and local authorities. The Town Council could continue to hold the accounts and the Partnership could be an Advisory Body to the Town Council or a Steering Group.

Helen will investigate what advice is available at no cost such as via Visit Britain. There are grants available via *Power to Change* and *UnLtd* which offer free business advice – Helen will investigate.

It was agreed that we need to make the minutes and all information about the Partnership easily available. Helen will create a new page on the Town Council website for Tourism.

IV Date of the next meeting

Future meetings will be on the second Tuesday of the month at 10am in the Guildhall until further notice.

Members were thanked for a very positive meeting and we will meet again next month on 8th November.