

Tourism Partnership Meeting

Meeting Minutes

August 1, 2016

Present: Councillors Eleanor Cohen [Chair] and Rosie Adams (Totnes Town Council), , Richard Ayres (Dart Harbour Navigation Authority), Lindsay Garner (Totnes Chamber of Commerce), Karen Jonas (Dartington), Matt Bulford (English Heritage), , Frances Northrop (Town Team), Chantelle Norton (Totnes Pound), Andrew Pooley (DSRRB), Kathy Alexander (Bay Horse Inn), Dick Wood (South Devon Railway, Visit Devon, DATA), and Helen Nathanson [Minutes] (Totnes Town Council)

Apologies: Katie Tokus (Sharpham Trust) Sarah Stride (Visit South Devon)

Next meeting: 22nd August 2016 at 10am in the Guildhall

I. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made

II. Gillian and Mark Healey attended the meeting to give a presentation about the new Visit Totnes website and the 2017 Totnes Guide.

The following points were covered:

The existing website is 7 years old and the content is dated. Google analytics show a high hit rate of over 8,000 views per month. Most are from the UK, with London the highest, followed by Torquay, Exeter and Plymouth which represents local day trippers. Spain and the US are the next highest hit rates from outside UK.

The new website need to engage with local community, in addition to visitors, and have relevant and up to date content. The hits from within Totnes are low average which shows that it is not well used by locals.

On average, people spend 3.6s before leaving the site which suggests that they haven't found what they want.

The content on the existing site is limited to paying advertisers so the site is sparse and doesn't give the full profile of the town.

Target markets and opportunity for growth – who are the audience? Left Bridge have identified some typical groups around which the site will be based. We need to pre-empt questions before people come to the site so that they can navigate easily and we hold their attention. It will be designed to use before planning a holiday and then on the ground when here.

The website will have a magazine feel – quick, easy channels for people to browse with more in-depth information available behind this but not on the front page.

Visual photography will be essential to the buttons.

The website has to work on smartphones: the current website will be penalised by Google for not being mobile compatible. 33% of internet users view smartphones as the most important device for getting on the web – so this is designed for mobile first.

The site will use geolocation to find places when you're on the ground.

The website needs to be live, with constant updating of information through links with social media.

Left Bridge are keen to source more photography, especially of people actively enjoying themselves, and businesses were asked to contribute.

Mark explained the idea of a brand rather than a logo – the first is broader and aims to make things start to feel like part of the same family whereas the second is more limited.

A question was asked about how the advertising will work. This is something that needs a lot of thought: it is essential to have as much relevant content as possible on the website to make it successful but it also needs to be monetized to ensure its sustainability. Initially, the content will be added at no charge, recognising the need to have the site established before asking people to advertise and ensuring that social media links are bedded in. Then we can approach advertisers once the success and value of the site is proven. In future, they are looking at creating a flexible system to allow advertising opportunities.

The website will be Open Source and accessible to a certain number of people who will have responsibilities for certain areas.

Totnes Guide – paper and online

Gillian explained that the 2017 Totnes Guide will be similar to previous editions but will run to a greatly increased print from 15,000 to 50,000 and will be distributed outside of Totnes as far as London and along the M4 and M5 corridors. An e-version will be downloadable from the site and they are also looking at how people can target individual sections for download if they wish.

Distribution of the Guides through an external company is relatively inexpensive. The Chamber of Commerce has already sent out a leaflet via this method and they feel it is proving successful.

III Terms of Reference

A vote was held and it was unanimously agreed to adopt the draft Terms of Reference.

IV Overview of Town Council tourism plans

The Town Clerk gave an update about the plans – this information is available on the Town Council website.

V Grant Funding bid – EU Growth Fund for rural tourism

The group discussed the draft for the final application with a focus on the items for which we will be seeking funding. The following list was agreed by all present as the most pressing items and those which fit the specification for the bid:

- Creating an aerial (drone) film of the town for the website
- Signage and wayfinding throughout the town for pedestrians
- A feasibility study into how we can increase the accessibility on Steamer Quay for wheelchair users wanting to board the river boats
- Resurfacing Longmarsh to make it wheelchair friendly
- Beacon technology throughout the town
- Leaflets and online trails

- Translations for the new information website
- Welcome training webinars/online package
- An Access Audit for the town to identify accessible trails

Other items which need to be addressed but which do not fall within the scope of this bid are:

Car parking - It was felt that negotiations were needed with SHDC about opening the Follaton car park at weekends and with schools who might be able to offer parking during school holidays.
Small craft pontoons for visiting boats – more could be made of the river by offering increased berthing

We could make more of the cycle route from Sharpham to Dartington by creating a clear link through the town section, providing trail guides and advertising it.

VI Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday 22nd August from 10.00am – 12.00pm. The purpose of this meeting will be to finalise the grant application for submission on the 24th August.