

Tourism Network Meeting

26th October 2016

Meeting Notes

Present: Mike Studden (Berkeley Community Trust)
Councillor Symon Ackroyd (Dursley Town Council)
Leah Wellings (Dursley Town Council)
Owen Gower (Dr Jenner's House, Museum & Garden)
John Roberts (Dursley Welcomes Walkers)
Heidi Westerlage (Dursley Resident)
Helen Patrick (Dursley Resident)
Nicky Warren (Wild Goose Lodge Slimbridge)
Jeff Walshe (Wotton Heritage/Visitor Centre)
Janet Walshe (Wotton Heritage/Visitor Centre)
District Councillor Ken Tucker (Wotton-Under-Edge)
County Councillor John Cordwell (Wotton-Under-Edge)
Vicky Parr (Berkeley Resident/Tourism Consultant)
Jill Stubbs (Wotton Heritage Centre)
Haidee Jackson (Wotton Heritage Centre)
Alastair Kendall (Wotton Town Council)
Rob Jewell (St Augustine's Farm, Arlingham)
Elaine Jewell (St Augustine's Farm, Arlingham)
Norman Dadd (Under the Edge Arts)
David Harrison (The Swan Hotel, Wotton-Under-Edge)
Nicki Nevitt (Four Market Street Hair Salon)
Claire Wilkinson (Wotton Chamber of Trade)
Alex Wilkinson (Wotton Town Council & Wotton Chamber of Trade)

Apologies: Julie Davies (Dursley Library)
Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre)
Rose Sutton (Dursley Heritage Centre)
Councillor Liz Ashton (Berkeley Town Council)
Councillor Nick James (Hinton Parish Council)
Melanie Mann (Shearings Group Prince of Wales Hotel)
Jackie Pennington (Berkeley Castle)
Nicky Warren (Wild Goose Lodge & Tudor Caravan Park)

1. Welcome

Mike Studden welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies

As above.

3. Introductions

As above.

4. Background & Minutes of the Last Meeting

Mike, summarised the notes from the last tourism meeting held on 5th September 2016 (circulated with the invitation).

The ordering of the agenda was changed; item 6, The Draft Tourism Strategy, was taken before item 5, The Brand Name.

5. The Draft Tourism Strategy

Mike presented the Draft Tourism Group Strategy document, which had been circulated prior to the meeting and is a starting point for discussion.

It was noted that the strategy is born out of the need to take advantage of the economic benefits of tourism and develop a more organised approach within our area, which has not received the same attention as the more easily marketable areas of the Cotswolds.

Comments/points raised during the discussion:

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- The Local Enterprise Partnership for Gloucestershire (4b)) is a County not a regional body.
- Regional bodies include South West Tourism, Visit South West and there could be others that should be mentioned.
- There are many different bodies and partnerships that support tourism which makes the issue complex and confusing – is this not part of the problem?

Page 7 Options Appraisal

Options 6.1. (i), (ii) and (iii) were considered.

- Option (i), '**establish a new, full blown tourism organisation**' was generally considered too expensive, complicated and out of proportion. Also existing bodies such as 'Visit England' would not recognise smaller tourism organisations.
- Option (ii), '**form an association to act as a forum**' to '**work together to improve and co-ordinate activities and use existing mechanisms**' was generally considered to be the preferred option; it would be cheaper, take less organisation/resources and could act as a nucleus for this geographical area. It is also more in spirit of a 'community led' approach.
- Option (iii), '**continue with status quo and lobby the decision makers**' to provide greater focus on our area. This option was seen as unacceptable.

General

- Working within existing mechanisms and partnerships, membership of different local bodies would need to be looked at. How could we work with them? What would they require from an association? Would not want people to be paying out twice.
- It was commented that the Cotswold Tourism Partnership was not as effective as it could be and given its area of focus the group could consider joining 'Destination Bristol'. Concerns were raised about our tourism work getting 'stuck' as a result of other ineffective mechanisms and partnerships.
- It was reported that Wotton's Chamber of Trade discussed tourism at their meeting on 25th October, there are lots of town events happening which they are drawing together, there is a desire to work with the tourism group so that the area has one strong voice.
- Tourism Officer support in Stroud and other areas. It was noted that Stroud District Council has part-time Tourism Officers that work with the Cotswold Tourism Partnership while Cheltenham has its own tourism department (& website). Jeff reported on the Tewkesbury tourism meeting he attended. It was noted that there are opportunities to network and link up with other areas, for example, there is a bicycle hire service operating in Tewkesbury and they are interested in branching out into our area.

- The group was made aware of the South West Group Travel Show in Cheltenham on 4th February 2017. It was suggested that if we could organise a stall this could be a great first opportunity to showcase what our area has to offer.
- The group discussed the need to work together to create packages/itineraries to keep visitors in the area for longer and manage and share information effectively (a leaflet would be a start or a live map)
- Rob drew attention to The Forest of Dean and Wye Valley leaflet as an example.
- The need to promote different forms of transport was highlighted e.g. public transport, walking routes, cycle hire. Heidi made people aware that visitors to the area can join Dursley Bike Club and borrow a bike.
- Problems with Stroud District Council's website were highlighted. There are no buttons on the front page for visitors or tourism, it is also hard to find tourism information or links to Cotswolds Tourism Partnership. **Councillor Tucker agreed to report this back to Stroud.**
- The importance of gathering and managing tourism information for our area and the issues with this were discussed. Help from willing volunteers would be required to collate the information. It was suggested that Heritage Centres may be able to help. It was agreed at the September meeting that a template would be sent out to Parish and Town Councils requesting information for their area (e.g. sites, walks, food, heritage etc.)
 - **Heidi volunteered to help with industrial heritage information.**
 - **Janet suggested that volunteers at Wotton's Heritage Centre may be able to help.**
 - **Helen volunteered to help with accommodation information.**
- It was suggested that the map of the geographical area for our group should follow parish boundaries. It was noted that the map is very flexible and can be changed if needed.
- It was noted that Vicky is a member of Cotswold Visitor Network. In relation to marketing and sharing information, Vicky suggested it would be much better to work with existing websites (e.g. Visit the Cotswolds) as they already have large exposure. It may be possible to have a section for our area on such websites. It would be worth speaking with the Tourism Officers at Stroud District Council to find out what we can do, the different models and what do we/they need?
- The group should follow a model that works.
- It was noted that Mike had scheduled a meeting with the Tourism Officer Sara Chardin.

Actions Agreed by Group

- **To focus efforts on Option (ii) (as above).**
- **To set up a small Steering Group to focus on the strategy. (4/5 Volunteers sought - please email Leah).**
- **To set up a community of willing volunteers/small specific interest groups to help collate tourism information for our area. (Volunteers should email Leah with interests).**
- **To write to Town and Parish Council's with an information template (agreed at the 5/9/16 meeting) and to request that funding towards tourism activities is considered within their budget setting processes. Funding request could also go to Stroud District Council. (Mike to draft a letter – suggested 25p per head for Town/Parish Councils)**

6. The Brand Name

A paper including survey results and feedback on the area names from Nicky Warren (Wild Goose Lodge & Tudor Caravan Park), Owen Gower (Dr Jenner's House, Museum & Garden), Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre), Rose Sutton (Dursley Heritage Centre) and Councillors Grecian and Cairns (Dursley Town Council) was circulated and considered.

It was noted that in the online survey '**Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale**' had come out on top, 'Cotswold Edge & Vale' was a close second; the survey at Wild Goose Lodge & Tudor Caravan Park had found '**Cotswold Edge & Vale**' to be the most popular with visitors.

Comments from the floor included the following points:

- 'Cotswold' and 'Severn' are two key names that are recognised and should be included;
- individual town names should be avoided because it could become too focused on one spot, it should also be inclusive;
- 'Cotswold Severnside' received positive feedback and was the favourite at the Wotton Heritage Centre.

It was noted that the map produced by the group showing the geographical area of focus is flexible and the lines can be changed to draw in areas.

It was agreed that at this time the brand name for the area remain fluid, it can be agreed at the next meeting.

7. Date and Venue for next meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in January 2017, date and venue to be confirmed and that a smaller Steering Group would meet before January to work on the strategy (see 5 above).

Minutes would be emailed out when ready and consideration would be given to setting up a file share for the group via the cloud.