

Tourism Network Steering Group Meeting

15th August 2017

Meeting Notes

Present: Mike Studden (Berkeley Community Trust)
Leah Wellings (Dursley Town Council)
John Roberts (Dursley Welcomes Walkers)
Vicky Jennings (Foresters B&B)

Apologies: Owen Gower (Dr Jenner's House, Museum & Garden)
Councillor Fiona Firth (Dursley Town Council)

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting dated 7th June 2017 were reviewed and accepted.

Leah reported that she had spoken to the Tourism Officer at Stroud District Council about social media and the possibility of setting up a short workshop for network members in the future; it is a subject that comes up from time to time but to date she has been unable to get a suitable facilitator. At the time of the discussion the Tourism Officers at SDC were looking to attend social media training and in the near future there may be an opportunity for them to step in and help to share those skills via a workshop.

It was suggested that Gordon Craig has some experience of twitter and may also be able to help set up a social media masterclass.

3. The Strategy & Action Plan

a) Network Feedback

The group went over the minutes of the meeting held on 6/7/17 and reviewed Strategy feedback from the Network. The following points were made:

- It was noted that the 'Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale Update' circulated was well received. We should attempt to issue updates at regular intervals.
- It was agreed that the priority work at the moment is the area audits. They would enable the Network to go on to create a brand story and packages.
- Vicky mentioned a contact that has an interest in local history who might be able to help us.
- An offer from the Tourism Officer at Stroud District Council to link into their website <http://www.visitthecotswolds.org.uk/> and the 'Discover Stroud District' should be explored and programmed in.

- Packages and future publicity should take account of different users over the different seasons and target accordingly e.g. families during summer school holiday, retired/older population during term times etc.
- The group discussed the success of Ashen Plains and what we might learn from their approach.
- It was agreed that members feedback and the SWOT analysis on pages 4 and 5 of the strategy would be kept under review moving forward. The strategy remains very flexible and will evolve.
- Maps and QR Codes were both raised as possible projects that could be developed by the Network and taken forward.
- It was agreed that the ability of the Network to deliver was very limited at the moment, capacity needs to be built up and the Steering group need to take a step by step approach focusing on priority actions.
- Vicky mentioned that the Clifton Camera shop are involved in drone courses and could prove to be a useful contact – Leah to explore further.

b) Heritage Strategy for Stroud District Consultation

The group considered a consultation paper issued by Stroud District Council titled 'A Heritage Strategy for Stroud District – Valuing our historic environment and assets'.

Given meeting time restraints, it was agreed that the Steering group would correspond via email to agree a suitable response, taking into account the Tourism Strategy.

It was agreed that a response from the Network would help to raise its own profile within the district.

It was noted that page 14 of the document discusses the economic benefits and contains some useful information, it was felt that the group could use this in some of the letters that would be going out from the Network to partners (**e** & **f**).

On a separate note, Vicky made the group aware that she is rebranding her own business website and thinking of using 'Old Spot County' as a tag line.

c) Update from Harris Ethical Projects

It was noted that discussions were currently ongoing with Bainton Bicycles and Harris Ethical relating to the Cam and Dursley Station and getting some bicycles located there. There is interest from the company. The Network's details have been shared with the relevant parties so a watching brief should be kept on this project and any developments.

Regarding the Locality leaflet there continues to be some confusion about this project. Since the information reported at the Network meeting on 6/7/17 regarding costs and lack of time/budget to progress, Leah had spoken and fed back to Sandy who had agreed that the team would, in the first instance, investigate the level of interest from tourist attractions to sponsor the leaflet. Sandy had since taken a long period of leave and when asked for an update Jon Harris had reported that Sandy had been awaiting feedback on the wording to be issued from the Network; also another

delay had been trying to secure a licence agreement from Gloucestershire County Council on the use of the thinktravel materials and permission to secure sponsorship funding.

In response to this update, the group felt that at this point the project had stalled and may be difficult to progress at this time. The question was asked - **What do people really need?**

From Vicky's experience as a B&B operator and working in the tourism industry people want information about food, drink and activities. The group could develop a sample 'Eating and Drinking' leaflet/map for the area, keeping it very simple, to test the waters. Nailsworth did something similar which was successful.

d) GWR Customer & Communities Improvement Fund Year 3

It was noted that Leah had been approached by Cam Parish Council on 15th August regarding the above fund.

The Parish Clerk at Cam was putting together a funding bid working with Gloucestershire County Council (integrated transport and rail unit) and the Cam & Dursley Transport Group and had asked whether the Tourism Network wished to include anything. The deadline = 31st August 2017!

Mike agreed to liaise with Cam on current proposals and the tourism ideas discussed as follows:

- an information noticeboard (bearing in mind proposals relating to the Cotswold Gateway bid which is currently ongoing),
- development of the recommendations outlined in the taxi feasibility study (see Dursley Town Council's website under 'community' for copy),
- a pilot station circular service and a taxi standing service to meet each train and do a looped route.

e) Chairman's draft letter

The group considered a letter drafted by Mike to be sent to the Clerks of parish/town councils in the area.

It was agreed that the economic benefits for the area (see **b**) above) would be stressed.

It was agreed that all further comments/amendments should be forwarded to Leah/Mike

f) Action Plan and priorities

It was agreed to incorporate the following actions:

- Write a separate letter to the District Council and relevant Councillors.
- Write a letter to the LEP including a copy of the Strategy. The letter should suggest that they could provide support incl. social media master class for tourism industry in our geographical area.

It was agreed that approaches should be made in this order – Town/Parish Council, District Council, County Council, Cotswold Tourism and Businesses.

- Press releases to be issued at intervals – first one could be an intro and pick up audits – asking people to get in touch with info.

It was agreed that Vicky would speak with Vicky Parr as she is a good contact with a wealth of experience. Vicky Parr has attended Network meetings in the past and may be willing to work with the Steering Group to help fine tune the Strategy and Action Plan.

Vicky agreed to look at some samples for an eating and drinking map covering the Cotswold Edge & Severn Vale area and get some prices and test the waters.

4. Next Steering Group Meeting

The next Steering Group meeting was scheduled for 26th September 2017 at Jacob's House.

Provisional date for Network meeting 16th October.

The meeting closed at 8:10pm.