

**Visit Herefordshire
Tourism & Leisure Group
at
Gardner Hall, RNC, Venns Lane, Hereford**

Tuesday 17th November 2015

MINUTES

This is a newly formed group, looking at issues relating to tourism and leisure in Herefordshire. It is the intention of the group to report back key issues to partners and strategic bodies, including the Marches LEP Board, to action key issues which can significantly impact on the County.

PRESENT:

Mike Ashton (Chair)	Chamber of Commerce
Clare O'Reilly	Visit Herefordshire
Cllr Charles Nicholls	Mayor of Hereford
Rachel Jones	Herefordshire County Council
Steve Kerry	Hereford City Council
Andrew Blake	Wye Valley AONB
Annie Millen	Brightstripe Cultural Health
Arthur Lee	Herefordshire Ramblers
Ann Edwards	Kington Tourist Group
Caroline Utting	ProRoss
Christine Hope	Hopes of Longtown/Golden Valley & Black Mountains Assn.
Ian Officer	Wye Valley & Forest of Dean Tourism Association
David Callinan	Ross-on-Wye Tourism Association
Jenny Beard	Herefordshire Food & Tourism Sustainable Partnership/HWCTA
Sam Phillips	Ross-on-Wye Walkers are Welcome
Zoe Hooper	Brightstripe Cultural Health
Jean O'Donnell	Hereford Guild of Guides
Linda Crichton	Hereford Guild of Guides
Wendy Soilleux	Hereford Guild of Guides
Bobby Heavens	Caelum Associates
Diane Rodgers	Kidwells
Dominic Harbour	Hereford Cathedral
Gill Jinman	Temple Bar Inn
Jane Jones	Gardner Hall, RNC
Kate Tudge	Oaker Wood Leisure
Keith Munn	Waterworks Museum
Ken Davies	Woodside Lodges
Liz Hill	Rural Concierge
Mr & Mrs R Huckle	Heron House
Nick Price	Oakchurch Farm Shop
Pat Churchward	Brinsop Court
Patrick O'Reilly	Linden House
Richard Middleton	Buzzard House
Serena Thirlwell	White House Cottages

1.	<p>Welcome and Introduction from Mike Ashton Mike Ashton welcomed everyone to the meeting and remarked how pleased he was to see so many attendees.</p>	
2.	<p>Round Table Introductions Attendees introduced themselves, many representing a variety of organisations.</p>	
3.	<p>Herefordshire Tourism Update – Mike Ashton/Clare O’Reilly</p> <p>New Office The offices and TIC in King Street were vacated and a new office in the centre of Hereford, at the Town Hall established. VH is joined by 2 Chamber staff and Hereford BID.</p> <p>Tourism enquiries Visitor enquiries are being received and dealt with in response to our marketing website and e-shots. We do a great deal of sign-posting.</p> <p>Roadshows 7 Roadshows were delivered to promote the county’s tourism opportunities, explain coming changes to management and to develop partnerships.</p> <p>Tourism & Leisure Sub Group Organised for the first time, VH is looking for this to become the voice of the county’s tourism and leisure industry.</p> <p>Website Work has started on redeveloping http://www.visitherefordshire.co.uk/. Contracts have been negotiated with market leader NVG who currently deliver Destination Worcestershire’s site and over the coming weeks training will take place. The site will be designed and developed over the winter period and launched in spring 2016 in time for Easter. It will have additional functionality.</p> <p>Publications Publications continue to be delivered with work currently being undertaken on advertising sales for the county’s official Stay Herefordshire & The Wye Valley 2016 guide. Work of the county’s Explore Herefordshire & The Wye Valley 2016 guide will start within a few weeks.</p> <p>Funding VH is applying for EU funding, particularly to support the development as a Destination Management Plan which will act as a guide for taking tourism forward in the county in the next 5 years.</p> <p>Membership Scheme It is our intention to create a viable membership organisation. The scheme will be developed over the coming months and launched in the spring.</p> <p>Flavours Festival The Chamber are working on delivering a Flavours Festival (potentially a</p>	

	<p>different format) next October half term. The intention is for this to become an important and permanent feature for the county.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Hereford Tourist Information Centre – Steve Kerry</p> <p>Steven Kerry reported that Hereford City Council were looking for local initiatives and partners in order to provide a Hereford TIC. Plans should be resolved by next year and sites are currently being sought. There will be opportunity for those interested to share the facility and for commission based activities to be included.</p> <p>The City Council has no statutory obligation but is very supportive and prepared to put a substantial amount of funding aside annually to assist. This would be enough to cover overheads and one staff member should no further funding or partners be achieved.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>European Funding – Rachel Jones</p> <p>There will be business support of different types becoming available to Herefordshire businesses over the coming months. This is mainly from EU funding via the Marches LEP to address the priorities identified in the Marches Strategic Economic Plan http://www.marcheslep.org.uk/what-we-do/economic-plans/ .</p> <p>Business support is available via the new Marches Growth Hub http://www.marchesgrowthhub.co.uk/ and will be delivered locally by the Economic Development Team from Herefordshire Council under the Growth Hub branding, alongside other strategic partners.</p> <p>Funding which is allocated to tourism businesses comes from the EAFRD/DEFRA funding which is aimed at rural businesses as follows:</p> <p><u>Growth Programme</u></p> <p>Tourism projects in the Marches LEP are have an allocation of around £2.5m (subject to change relating to the value of the Euro).</p> <p>Grants for this programme are for between £35,000 and £100,000 for 40% of the project, so a match of 60% would have to be found. The minimum project size to get a £35,000 grant would be £87,500. Calls in the Marches will be around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Processing • Small Scale Tourism Infrastructure • Tourism Cooperation <p>The next calls will be in the New Year or Spring 2016 and the calls for applications will state the types of grant applicants can apply for.</p> <p>Broad overview of the scheme can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/growth-programme-grants-for-the-rural-economy</p>	

	<p>LEADER Herefordshire has received formal approval from Defra for the LEADER programme 2015-2020. The programme will deliver grants totalling £1.7m over the next five years.</p> <p>Projects may be eligible for a grant of £2,500 up to a maximum of normally £35,000 to fund specific activities. Higher grants may be awarded to projects demonstrating exceptional output levels. LEADER funding contributes to around 40% of total project costs, match funding will be required.</p> <p>Broad overview of the scheme and further details can be found here: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/leader</p> <p>Rachel can be contacted on rejones@herefordshire.gov.uk</p>	
6.	<p>AONB</p> <p>Ambassador Scheme it was suggested that the Brecon Beacons Ambassador Scheme would be worth looking at as a blueprint to both map the offer and provide enthusiastic and professional support for the County.</p> <p>OTA It was asked if there were any plans to provide a VH OTA to give VH commission income. Some commission will be generated via the new website once introduced. It is an idea that could be pursued if the skills exist amongst the industry to develop it on behalf of the County.</p> <p>County of Culture Bid Is the local authority making any funding available to support the bid?</p> <p>Disability Facilities The RNC has excellent facilities, particularly for sport, which the county operators could exploit.</p> <p>Support for small independent Museums Linda Stone, the new Museum Development Officer is now in post, replacing Sue Knox who funded entries for all independent museums on the destination website as well as entries for all in the EXPLORE Herefordshire & Wye Valley 2015 guide. Contact will be made with Linda to discuss entry into EXPLORE2016 and continuing presence on the destination website from 01.04.2016.</p> <p>Walking Tourism Herefordshire Ramblers would like a discussion with Mike Ashton regarding the role walking tourism does and can play in the county.</p> <p>Funding from central Government The government will no longer subsidise tourism, making it imperative that organisations work in partnership to achieve many of the aspects previously delivered by local authorities.</p> <p>Herefordshire Food and Tourism Sustainable Partnership Chaired by Jenny Beard, this voluntary partnership brings together influential county leaders and seeks to influence at a strategic level for the benefit of the whole county. It actively seeks to influence the Marches LEP, LEADER programme, and has had a big influence on rural broadband. It is active in</p>	<p>Rachel Jones to investigate.</p> <p>VH</p> <p>AL/MA to agree meeting date</p>

	<p>feeding into the government and DEFRA on behalf of rural tourism.</p> <p>Suggestions for Future Speakers Marches LEP Nic Millington – Rural Media Company Local Authority ‘brown signs man’ Listed building personnel (new rules may be forthcoming) Senior Local Authority Planning Officer Andrew Blake – Wye Valley River Festival 2016</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting – 2pm Thursday 18th February 2016. Venue to be confirmed</p>	