

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Tourism and Economic Development Committee Meeting held in the Town Hall, Wallingford

On

Monday 5th March 2018

PRESENT

The Mayor, Councillor Kidley
The Chairman, Councillor Cockman
Councillors Holland, Hughes, Lester and McGregor
Mrs Claire Blacker, Market Town Co-ordinator
District Councillor Elaine Hornsby
Town Information Staff: Sue Ross and Penny Curl

Non Member: Councillor Whelan

Officer and Minute Taker: Mrs Barbara Atkins

Before the start of the meeting the Chairman, Councillor Cockman introduced new staff member Sue Ross to Members of the committee.

603. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from The Town Clerk.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Holland and

RESOLVED:

THAT should the Chairman have to leave the meeting suddenly (work commitment) The Members will appoint a Chairman for the rest of the meeting.

604. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

Members to consider and resolve those agenda items for admission of the public. There were no admissions of the public.

605. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Information for each member was available at the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

606. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (10 MINUTES IN TOTAL)

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

607. MINUTES

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Tourism and Economic Development Committee held on the 4th December 2017 as set out on pages 188 - 192. Copies attached.

It was Proposed by Councillor McGregor, Seconded by Councillor Holland and

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the of the Tourism and Economic Development Committee held on the 4th December 2017 as set out on pages 188 - 192, copy attached to the Minute Book and copies previously circulated be signed as a correct record.

608. UPDATE FROM CLAIRE BLACKER, MARKET TOWN CO-ORDINATOR

(i) **Wallingford Economic Action Plan.** Mrs Blacker provided the following update regarding actions on the previous copy of plan (Minute 450/12/2017 refers) to include:

- **Non-retail first floor audit** - The survey had been interesting in that most of the top floor empty premises were in fact residential, therefore if any home workers/professional were looking for offices/meeting rooms they could be encouraged to use The Old Counting House. At the last count there were 11 empty retail premises which was a percentage of 8% which is less than the national average of 11%.
- **Potential for an Agatha Christie Sculpture** – The Prichard family has have given consent for an Agatha Christie Sculpture providing the same sculptor that produced the memorial in London is used. The proposed sculpture is a full size Agatha Christie sitting quietly in the shade of a tree and will be made of hollow bronze. The anticipated cost is £60,000 and there are grants available for this. The sculptor has stated that it will be 4 to 6 months of work. Members discussed and it was Proposed by Councillor Cockman, Seconded by Councillor Holland and

RESOLVED: THAT Members fully supported the Agatha Christie Sculpture and that Mrs Blacker should progress the concept and feasibility of the statue and also investigate funding for the project.

- **New Residents Pack** – Mrs Blacker has obtained an estimate for the new residents' pack which can be customised. The cost is £900 and Mrs Blacker has this amount left in the budget that she receives from the District Council. Members discussed and it was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Cockman and

RESOLVED:

THAT Members supported the production of the new residents' pack and that Mrs Blacker progresses and obtains the packs with her District Council budget.

- **Signage** – Mrs Blacker reported that the Finger Posts signs within the town are accurate. The owner of Busy Baskets whose business is by the Slade End Roundabout has suggested that he would like to help with additional signage on the roundabout to promote Wallingford. Members discussed, stating that it was a good idea and expressed their thanks to the owner. Members concluded that they supported the idea in principle but asked Mrs Blacker raise the proposition with the District Council as they are currently responsible for the sponsorship of the roundabouts in this district. Mrs Blacker also reported on possible signage outside the Town Information Centre which allows visitors to access information when the centre is closed. Members discussed and were concerned about vandalism and also positioning of any signage as the building is grade 1 listed. Mrs Blacker stated that signage could come under Art Grants. Members concluded that they would like to put signage on hold for the time being.
- **Incentives and Promotions for People Paying to Moor in Wallingford** - Mrs Blacker reported on some statistics on the number of moorers. Mrs Blacker has been looking at better incentives than just handing out brochures to visitors mooring at the Thames for example two nights for the price of one. The Chairman, Councillor Cockman suggested that perhaps businesses could buy a batch of mooring tickets that they could give out to moorers if they use their services thereby encouraging them to extend their stay. The map by the moorings was briefly discussed and it was also suggested that Mrs Blacker contact Visit Thames to see what incentives they might suggest such as inclusion within Apps.

(ii) **Events – Past and Future** – Mrs Blacker distributed a report showing the events that occur in Wallingford and how the Town Council supports them in terms of time and financial contribution. Members discussed but agreed that a working group should be set up to evaluate past/current expenditure and make recommendations for the future. It was Proposed by Councillor Cockman, Seconded by Councillor Holland and

RESOLVED:

THAT a working group consisting of Councillors Cockman, Lester, District Councillor Hornsby, Mrs Blacker and The Responsible Finance Officer/Town Clerk be set up to fully discuss events in the Town.

609. REPORTS FROM THE TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE

(i) **Statistics** – Mrs Curl’s statistics had been distributed in advance of the meeting and she summarised the data for Members who were pleased to note that visitors were up by 20% the best result for 3 years. Enquiries were down but this is probably due to people using the internet to find out information.

(ii) **General Report** – Mrs Ross who had been introduced to Members at the start of the meeting has replaced Mrs Powell and one of her responsibilities will be to take over the formatting of the statistics however Mrs Curl will be working alongside her when she completes the end of year figures. The staff in the information centre complained that the smoke fumes from the smokers outside their office is very unpleasant and asked if a no smoking sign could be erected. This will be investigated.

610. THE TOWN HALL

(i) **Brief update on the condition of the Town Hall** – Mrs Atkins reported that the full conditional survey report was still awaited and that some investigation work in the undercroft will be carried out this month.

(ii) **Use of the Town Hall for Events and Refreshments** – Mrs Atkins reported that this month as it had been included in estimates, she would be purchasing a screen, protector and modern hi fi unit for the Town Hall which should help in the promotion of events. Councillor Whelan stated that the Town Hall still needed a hearing loop which was a legal requirement under the disability act.

611. SODC – ART GRANT

Mrs Blacker reported to Members that the District Council had an art grant of which £36,000 is available now with a further £172,000 available later. An officer from SODC will be attending the Council meeting on the 19th March to appraise Councillors of the details. The art grant can include signage, lighting and physical sculptures. At this point it was suggested that a mural on the undercroft of the Winterbrook Bridge had been suggested. Councillor Holland stated that the Neighbourhood Plan had been considering art structures and encouraging the return of swifts. Councillor Lester asked if the grant could be used to refurbish the pond in the Castle Gardens. It was Proposed by Councillor Cockman, Seconded by Councillor Hughes and

RECOMMENDED:

THAT some of the initial grant money could be spent on a feasibility study.

612. SMARTPHONE BASED GUIDED WALKS

Consideration to be given to a proposal received from TrailTale to host town trails and walks on their App. <http://www.trailtale.co.uk/>

Mrs Blacker reported that TrailTale had stated that they would include Wallingford Town Council's content at no cost. Members discussed and expressed concern that TrailTale may be able to use the content as they wished. The museum earns revenue from its walks and this App may affect that. Councillor Cockman offered to look into TrailTail, to contact the museum and report back to the committee.

613. THE PROPOSED MARINA – TOURISM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Cockman asked Members to consider if the proposed marina and the benefit on tourism and economic development. Members had mixed views and Councillor Holland advised that unfortunately an adverse effect on tourism and economic development was not a planning objection.

614. TOWN INFORMATION CENTRE – STAFFING

Mrs Atkins reported that Members were already aware that unfortunately Penny Curl of the Town Information Centre was leaving after 8 and half years. A prospective new employee will hopefully be starting in April but would spend some time in March working alongside the current staff to learn the ropes. The recording of data that Mrs Curl had undertaken for the statistics had been no mean task and this data had been used by the Tourism and Economic Development Committee as well as The Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Holland asked that the committee's thanks to Mrs Curl be recorded.

615. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Agatha Christie Sculpture, Arts Grant, Town Hall, Events, New Bridge Mural and Twinning.

Meeting Closed at 8.40pm