



Minutes of the Tourism Working Group

Held on 3 May 2022 at 6.00pm

Present: Samantha Roberts, Sheryl Birtles, Councillor Peter Groves, Councillor John Statham, Councillor Arthur Moran, Dominic Hibbert, Bill Pearson, Kris Thurbin, Steve Cook, Dianna Hall, Douglas Bowyer-Bates, Dawn Sandry, Steve Dering, Caroline Buckley, Kate Dobson, Steven Misfud

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Emma Riley, Kevin Hassall and Jessica Tipton

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The working group discussed the appointment of a chair with Councillor Arthur Moran nominating Councillor Peter Groves as he is soon to be appointed Mayor.

Steve Dering from Direct Access volunteered to act as Vice Chair.

Resolved: It was agreed that Peter Groves would be appointed as chair and Steve Dering as Vice Chair.

3. SCENE SETTING

Sheryl Birtles informed the group that in 2020 the Town Council approved its first Corporate Strategic Plan which contained an ambition to develop a Tourism Strategy. Then in November 2021 the Town Council committed to setting up a working group with key stakeholders from the town to develop a strategy.

Sheryl highlighted to date that the Council already considers tourism and provided details of some of the work it already does including promotional videos for the town and what it has to offer, litter and dog fouling campaigns with additional videos, a maintenance programme for the street furniture, recently replaced notice boards, partnership working with Nantwich Partnership, Civic Society and Nantwich in Bloom, the Comfort Scheme, CCTV provision, Coach Friendly Scheme, street entertainment, financial support for the museum and festivals, the Tourist Information Centre at the Civic Hall and mobility Scooters. The Town Council is also currently reviewing toilet provision with the aim of reintroducing toilets at Snowhill. There are also actions within the Corporate Plan to replace the gateway signs into the town and introduce Tourist Information Points.

The group moved to introduce themselves and share why they had committed to the working group: -

Peter Groves, advised that he was a Borough Councillor and a Nantwich Town Councillor and had lived in the area for 30 years, shops in the town and had previously worked in the town. He is a member of the Civic Society and on the board at the Museum. He is interested in the prosperity of the town, and whilst it had weathered

the storm compared to many towns, he believed we need to work to maintain the footfall, keeping the town an attractive and safe place for people to work, visit and live.

Dominic Hibbert, from the Chamber of Commerce informed the group that he had recently moved to Nantwich in the last 12 months. He advised that he could help and support communication with businesses.

Kris Thurbin, shared with members that he has been a resident of the town for 16 years, and wants to get more involved in supporting the town. He loves to travel and believes he has a good sense of tourism. He suggested he could use his consultancy skills to help the group.

Bill Pearson stated he had worked in the food industry for 35 years and believes in local food. He is a volunteer in the museum and has a good understanding of the history of the town. He believes we should use the strengths of the food and history of the town to help tourism.

Dianna Hall shared her previous experiences in tourism in Sheffield and expressed her concerns relating to transport and its importance for tourism. She had also previously been a town councillor for the town council.

Douglas Bowyer-Bates informed the group that he is the representative from Nantwich in Bloom and is responsible for the planting at the Station. He has connections with Transport for Wales and is keen to encourage people from the Station into the town. He had formerly been a councillor for the town council.

Steve Dering lives on Welsh Row and works for Direct Access, working with local authorities to improve access for all, and he hopes to bring this to the group to ensure accessibility when considering tourism.

Steven Misfud is the CEO of Direct Access and has lived in the town for 10 years. He wants to help make Nantwich inclusive for everyone. Direct Access also sponsor Nantwich Visually Impaired football team.

Dawn Sandry informed the group that she had left the NHS four years ago where she was an accountant and hopes her financial background may help the group. She is now a business owner on Pillory Street and hopes she can help with local businesses and the economy and provide feedback from customers. She believes there are a lot of businesses still recovering from Covid which need help.

Katie Dobson works at the Museum and has strong knowledge of the history and heritage of the town. The museum offers guided tours of the town and has seen an increase in visitors. The work of this group has coincided with the museums work on a marketing strategy. She is interested in transport and how the museum can link with other businesses in the town.

John Statham advised the group that he is a town councillor and agreed there are many aspects of the town that he enjoys such as the food and retail offering. He would like to see how we preserve what we have and improve the offer.

Caroline Buckley manages Missy's Beauty which is a family run business owned by her sister. The family love the town and have lived in the town all their life. She wants to be involved in helping.

Steve Cook moved to the town 10 years ago after initially only intending to stay for 6 months. He has his own business in the town Applestump Records. He wants to help and support the group and hopes his skills in audit and risk management will help the group.

Arthur Moran advised the group that he is a Borough Council and a town councillor. He believes the built history as a market town is very important for tourism which needs to be protected. Historical events such as the great fire and civil war are very important to incorporate into tourism. He said the town has a great events calendar along with shows and events at Nantwich Players and the museum. He suggested the group should consider campervan parking and linking with Alvaston Hall.

Sheryl suggested that there is one sector not represented on the group, which is hospitality and asked if she should seek some support from this sector. The group agreed it would be helpful with Caroline suggesting that she could contact St. Martha's restaurant and the owners of The Cat.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Sheryl brought to the attention of the group the Terms of Reference that had been previously circulated and had been approved by the Town Council.

Bill suggested that the group does not need to be too rigid particularly if the group needs more members.

Resolved: The Working Group agreed the Terms of Reference.

5. WORKING GROUP PROGRAMME

Sheryl opened discussion with members about their opinions on how the group should progress and often they wished to meet.

Steven suggested the group could meet once a month during the evening. Dawn agreed and suggested that as the group became more established it could meet every 6-8 weeks. The group also agreed that a Monday evening at 6pm via Teams would be a good day. Sheryl advised that if the group did need to meet in person the Civic Hall would be available.

Sheryl asked the group for their views on developing a SWOT analysis of the town, identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which could then help steer the group on future actions. She also suggested she could collect evidence where other towns have already created strategies and send examples through to the group.

Peter Groves agreed this would be a good idea to start with at the next meeting. Bill and Dawn both agreed that it is important to include everyone in the town on the journey, with Dawn adding that festival organisers need to be involved. Steven Misfud suggested the group needs a clear set of KPI's (key performance indicators), what are we aiming for and what does success look like?

Arthur Moran asked if a log of all the events could be considered at the next meeting, with Peter Groves agreeing that many people re-visit the town after festivals and we need to understand the numbers.

Caroline suggested that the Nantwich Players theatre is a gem in the town and are in the All-England final. It could be used to encourage joint working with hospitality offering pre-theatre meals.

Sheryl also suggested the involvement of external agencies such as Marketing Cheshire which she had been in touch with.

Resolved:

- a) Sheryl would include a SWOT on the agenda for the next meeting with a log of events and consideration for KPI's.
- b) That Meetings would be held on the 1st Monday of every month at 6.00pm
- c) GDPR consent forms and code of conduct would be issued to all members to complete

6. NEXT MEETING

Resolved: The next meeting of the Tourism working group will take place at 6.00pm on 6th June.
