



Minutes of the Tourism Working Group

Held on Teams, 4 July 2022 at 6.00pm

Present: Sheryl Birtles, Councillor Peter Groves, Councillor John Statham, Dominic Hibbert, Bill Pearson, Kris Thurbin, Steve Cook, Dianna Hall, Douglas Bowyer-Bates, Steve Dering, Douglas Bowyer Bates, Christine Farrall and Kate Dobson.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Steven Mifsud, Councillor Moran, Samantha Roberts, Dawn Sandry and Caroline Buckley

2. MINUTES

Resolved: It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting on 6 June 2022 as a correct record.

3. INLAND WATERWAYS ASSOCIATION

The Chair welcomed and introduced Graham Russell and Michael Haig from the Inland Waterways Association.

Michael thanked members for inviting them along to the meeting and highlighted that he and Graham covered the Shrewsbury district which incorporated Nantwich. He informed the group that Nantwich was part of the Four Counties Ring, which made it a popular tourist destination, with over 3000 boats visiting each year. He added that the area is also well served by marinas making it even more attractive to visitors.

He informed the group that within their plans they are looking at renewing benches along the canal in the Nantwich area to replace those that are in poor condition and commented that the disabled access to the tow path needs repair and that they were working on broken CRT website links.

Michael highlighted that there was opportunity for improved signage along the canal to encourage visitors into the town.

Douglas commented that we should look at how we can embrace the canal more and could more shuttlebus links be considered for the town's larger event, Christine said that this could be incorporated for the Food Festival. Michael said that many of the visitors along the canal are first timers to Nantwich and improvement in signage including what is happening in the town would be well received.

Bill raised that the sculpture trail along the canal, especially the horse was fantastic, but required some attention. Graham informed the group that this had been a project by Malbank School and that some sculptures had been removed as they were in a very poor condition. He put to the group that this is a project that could be investigated possibly as part of the Tourism Strategy.

Sheryl asked if the notice boards along the canal could be populated by the group included general information about the town, but also date specific information. Graham advised that he had access but would work with the group to update.

Resolved: It was resolved:

- a) Sheryl to speak to Graham about the potential for using the canal notice boards
- b) Working group members to take on board the discussion and ideas to be brought forward when completing the action plan

4. **TOURISM SURVEY**

The working party were asked to consider the previously circulated Tourism Survey. Sheryl commented that at the last meeting it had been agreed that the group should establish who Nantwich's visitors are and get some background information before moving forward with an action plan.

Sheryl informed the group that later in the week she would be meeting with Cheshire East and Marketing Cheshire to find out if they can offer any figures, but that a survey would help the group gain some information. She further commented that the survey would be available online and promoted through social media but could also be carried out within the information centre, at Nantwich Show at the end of July and through market stalls. Sheryl advised that during the summer when visitor numbers increase would be an ideal time to launch the survey and would provide the group with some information to move forward with a strategy later in the year.

Kate asked if heritage and culture could be rated within the questionnaire and asked if we should consider extending demographics. Sheryl advised that she had wanted to seek advice from the group in relation to extending demographics.

Douglas suggested that as the Town has won many awards for their floral displays this element too should be incorporated into the survey.

Steve advised that once complete he could assist with making the survey accessible to all, with Steve Cooke and Kate offering to have the questionnaire available at their premises.

Christine suggested connecting with the Church as one of the main focal points/attractions of the town.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) Update the survey with the group's suggestions
- b) Sheryl and Steve to work on making the document accessible to all
- c) Distribute the survey as widely as possible during August for results to be discussed at the next meeting
- d) Sheryl to speak to Rev Mark Hart about an input in the Tourism Strategy

5. **NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: The next meeting of the Tourism working group will take place at 6.00pm on Monday 5th September.
