



## **Minutes of the Tourism Working Group**

Held on 6 June 2022 at 6.00pm

Present: Samantha Roberts, Sheryl Birtles, Councillor Peter Groves, Councillor John Statham, Bill Pearson, Kris Thurbin, Douglas Bowyer-Bates, Dawn Sandry, Emma Riley

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies from Councillor Arthur Moran, Dominic Hibbert, Steve Cook, Diana Hall, Steve Dering, Steven Mifsud, Caroline Buckley.

### **2. MINUTES**

**Resolved:** It was resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting on 3 May 2022 as a correct record.

### **3. LIST OF FESTIVALS & EVENTS IN NANTWICH**

Sheryl advised the group that she had drafted the list following a request from Councillor Arthur Moran at the last meeting, adding that there were events not included on the list from the Nantwich Players etc., but that it is good as a starting point and would be useful in the future when drawing up the action plan. Douglas asked about the amount of promotion given to the Scooter event the previous weekend. Both Sheryl and Sam advised that they had not had any involvement in the event, so it would have been promoted by the organisers.

**Resolved:** It was resolved the note the list of events.

### **4. SWOT ANALYSIS**

Sheryl spoke to the previously circulated SWOT analysis, seeking suggestions from the group to further develop the analysis.

Bill advised that when he had considered the town's strengths and weaknesses it had been very similar to the analysis prepared by Sheryl. He added that one opportunity that could be included was to have free Wi-Fi through the town. Sam advised the group that the Town Council had considered this action within its draft Corporate Plan, but when they consulted on the proposals within the plan with residents, the comments received back were that it would be pointless having free Wi-Fi now as most people had unlimited Wi-Fi with their mobile phone contracts.

Peter sought additional views from the group, with Kris suggesting that the group should contextualise the analysis rather than add to it. Asking the group what type of tourist are we looking for? Councillor Groves suggested the group could read through some of the example Tourism Plans by other towns provided by Sheryl to help answer this question. Sheryl highlighted that Dover have a clear set of five themes and asked if themes are something the group want to look at. If the group were to agree themes, they could be linked to the SWOT analysis which would help develop an action plan

within each theme. Douglas agreed that the group needs to identify who the key audience is so that the group knows where to concentrate its efforts.

Dawn advised that she comes from Bury St. Edmonds, which is very similar to Nantwich, and have developed a Tourism Strategy. However, Bury St. Edmonds had a consultant develop their plan. She advised that there are some quite interesting sections to the plan that the group could consider, including identifying that the age demographic changes a lot, suggesting that some age demographic figures for Nantwich would be beneficial.

Kris advised that he had picked up about building infrastructure for visitors, but it is also important that a plan must benefit our residents and refers to sustainability.

John agreed that the SWOT analysis was great agreeing with the comments that the group need to identify who it is trying to attract. He added that an additional weakness could be the external marketing of the town. John added that the group also needs to be mindful that some of the Strategy examples are very visually impressive, whereas Mendip is simple but effective which would impact on the cost of producing a strategy.

In response to the demographics and they type of tourist the town wants to attract, Bill suggested that the plan needs to be all embracing, with broad themes which appeal to all. Our history and food are a great resource for tourism. It was also suggested that the architecture within the town should be a strength within the SWOT analysis.

Sheryl informed the group that she had a meeting set up with Brine Leas to discuss how the council can engage with young people better, and this could present an opportunity for a young person to feed into the tourism strategy work.

In response to the architecture, whilst agreeing with the comment Kris also suggested that in contrast there are also some of the ugliest signs and shop frontages in the town which should be identified as a weakness. Dawn as a shop owner herself informed the group that she had used a consultant to enable her to erect her signage, and the consultant used the Cheshire East app to which provides details of the signage you can or can not have. She also advised that she has spoken to visitors to her shop, and they have stated that they visit the town based on recommendations, but they also comment that they don't know where they are going once, they are in the town due to the poor sign posting.

In considering opportunities Kris suggested that work could be done with the landlords of empty shops which could be used as seasonal pop-ups to help encourage small start-ups. In response Dawn suggested that the Market could be an opportunity for young people from the local schools to have a stall to help raise money for the school. Peter added that there could also be an opportunity with the empty shops to place attractive vinyls on the windows to improve the appearance.

Doug added that the Railway could also be seen as an opportunity.

Emma introduced herself to the group and shared her skills which she believed would help in the work of the group. She now works with Moody's but has a tourism background having worked on cruise ships previously and has also worked as a retail manager in Manchester.

In considering the threats, Kris added that the threat goes beyond supermarkets, it is also about the threat of other areas, and where people could also visit.

**Resolved:** That the SWOT analysis would be updated to incorporate the comments from working group members.

## 5. KPI's

Sheryl advised that Steve had asked for KPI's to be considered, but at this stage we haven't got anything measurable. Sheryl did inform the group that she has a meeting set up with Cheshire East to see if we can get access to the type of figures for the town we are looking for

John suggested that the Town Council's kiosk is really good and maybe it could be used at a weekend to get the data the group are looking for. He had also noticed that once of the examples Tourism Plans had conducted a survey, and maybe a survey could be carried out on the Kiosk which he would be happy to work on.

Sam added that a survey is a good idea, and potentially a survey monkey could be prepared which could also be used on the kiosk, at the Tourist Information Centre and shared with traders and the working group to attempt to obtain the data to help develop the tourism strategy.

**Resolved:** To develop a survey for visitors and residents of the town to be used at the Kiosk, with traders and the working group to obtain data for the development of the Tourism Strategy.

## 6. MEETING DATES

Sheryl advised the group that the August date will clash with holidays so with the support of the group this meeting would be cancelled. Sheryl also informed the group that the Museum has kindly offered to do a history walk of the town with representatives from the working group. Sheryl also informed the group that she had reached out the Food Festival organisers who are happy to join the working group to represent all festival organisers. Caroline will also reach out to the hospitality sector to try and get representation from that sector.

**Resolved:** The next meeting of the Tourism working group will take place at 6.00pm on 4<sup>th</sup> July.

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