

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF A TOURISM & BUSINESS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT TENTERDEN TOWN HALL ON 24th APRIL 2017

Councillor Members Present: M. Carter (Chairman), Mrs. S. Ferguson, K. Mulholland, J. Nelson & Mrs P. Smith.

Non-Councillor Members Present: Mrs. S. Barber, Mr. J. Crawford & Cllr. G. Galpin.

Officers Present: Town Clerk Mr. P. Burgess.

Others Present: Ms. S. Welch, Mr. S. Robinson (Tenterden & District Chamber of Commerce) and Mr. S. Dewey, Mr. P. Shaw, Mr Mr. M. Yonge (all of Kent & East Sussex Railway).

0247 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Cllr. Ms. C. Bell (ABC).

0248 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** None.

0249 **MINUTES.** The minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2017 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

0250 **MATTERS ARISING.** None.

0251 **PERSONAL REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.** None.

0252 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.** Cllr. Mrs. Smith expressed disgust over the front-page headline "Ghost Town" in the Kent Express. The article had even named shops that were still trading but had moved to new premises. A response by ABC was circulated at the meeting. Cllr. Galpin advised that Cllr. B. Barratt would shortly be available to assist the Town Council with press releases but the Committee felt that releases should be driven by Tenterden rather than ABC. Cllr. M. Bennett (a former editor of the Kent Express) should be approached to complain on the Council's behalf.

0253 **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

(a) High Street Revitalisation. No recent meeting.

(b) Great British High Street Competition. No recent meeting. Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson felt that Tenterden would not meet the requirements at present but no announcement had been made from the organisers.

0254 **KENT AND EAST SUSSEX RAILWAY.** ABC had recently withdrawn the discretionary business rate charity exemption from the organisation. This will cost the railway £9,000 per annum which may increase as a result of the impending revaluations for business rates. Cllr. G. Galpin suggested that the Town Council should write to Mr. P. Purcell (head of revenues at ABC) supporting KESR in their bid to have this decision reversed.

0255 **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR TOURISM.** Ms. S. Welch presented the case for a destination management plan (DMP) for Tenterden. The principle advantage is a “dashboard” to give visitor figures for all attractions. This information is very useful for press releases and for retailers thinking of moving in to the area. Cllr Galpin said a similar scheme in Ashford had reduced the shop vacancy rate to 9% from 20%. The use of Google Trips and Trip Advisor reviews should be encouraged. This plan would also benefit locals as well as increase visitor numbers. It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) Ms Welch would be engaged to carry out the following phases of the DMP at a cost of approximately £3500:
 - 1. Establishment of a working group
 - 2. Research, Audit and Consultation
 - 3. Creating a sense of place and destination brand
- b) Following completion of the above phases, the Chamber of Commerce and Borough and County councillors would be approached for funding for the remainder of the project.

0256 **ROBERTSBRIDGE RAIL LINK.** An update was given by Mr. M. Yonge. There had been some opposition from local MPs to the road level crossing but their arguments were countered by the consultant’s report. The crossing would only be used off-peak. The project is still on target but any public enquiry would delay it by a year.

0257 **COOMBE LANE AREA AND LINK TO STATION.** This needs to be progressed by an approach to Kent Wildlife Trust to carry out a survey of the cemetery and advise what improvements can be made whilst remaining sympathetic to the wildlife. The sub-committee would be re-formed.

0258 **MUSEUM AND STATION ROAD CAR PARKS.** Cllr. Carter enquired whether ABC would be amenable to a land-swap regarding the town council owned land at the top end of the Cemetery and 4 spaces within the Museum car park for a project there. No decision could be taken at this meeting as reference to both the Museum and ABC representatives would need to be made.

0259 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

- a) Mr. M. Yonge gave a progress report on the positioning of a locomotive on the High Street on one of the greens to the west of Station Rd. KCC are not opposed to the idea in principle and KESR would construct the concrete plinth and crane the locomotive into position onto a short section of rail. The loco would be changed every 3 years.
- b) Cllr. Mrs. Ferguson reported that the May Food Festival, organised by the Market Square Group, runs from the 19th – 21st May and will be publicised this week.
- c) Cllr. Mrs. Smith reported that the May Fayre will take place on 1st May.
- d) The notice boards are in need of a clean/replacement perspex.

The Meeting opened at 5.00 p.m. and closed at 6.35 p.m.

The foregoing Minutes and Reports were confirmed and signed at a meeting of the *Town Council* on the 15th day of May 2017.