

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL – EXTERNAL COMMITTEE

TOURISM AND BUSINESS & HIGH STREET REGENERATION SUB-COMMITTEE

NOTES OF A MEETING ON 11th December 2018

Present: TTC Cllrs. Mulholland, & Mrs. Smith. ABC Cllrs. Bennett & Galpin. Mike Bartlett (TDCC), Shawn Dewey (K&ESR) and Seren Welch. Claire Gilbert (Deputy Town Clerk) took notes.

1. **Apologies for Absence.** Cllrs. Carter, Crawford, Mrs. Ferguson, Nelson & Mrs. Walder (TTC), Cllr Bill Barrett & Sarah Barber (ABC), Simon Robinson (TDCC) and Glenn Thompson.
2. **Minutes.** The last meeting was the presentation of the Destination Management Plan. Some members did not recall receiving the presentation via email. It was agreed that this would be recirculated.
3. **Election of Chair.** Cllr. Mrs. Smith was elected as Chair for the remaining duration of the Council year, with Cllr. Mulholland as deputy.

It was agreed that this Sub-committee should meet at least 4/5 times per year. Cllr. Galpin commented that Tourism & Business needs to be taken seriously and suggested that he would support a bid for money from the Future High Streets Fund. A business plan needs to be drawn up and Cllr. Galpin offered to work with the Committee on this.

Cllr. Mulholland suggested that the scope of this Committee needed to be reviewed and it was suggested that the Terms of Reference would be recirculated.

4. **Destination Management Plan.**
 - 4.1 Seren Welch highlight the three core work streams from the DMP Action Plan: Destination Management, Customer and Media/Partnerships. Part of the media/partnerships highlight liaising with ABC to avoid overlap.
 - 4.2 Green space management in the Town was discussed; Tenterden is seen as having a green, tree lined High Street. However, key periods hit pressure points when the Maintenance Team cannot keep up with the grass cutting.
 - 4.3 Seren reported on the spreadsheet that she had drawn up of buildings throughout the Town that were not well maintained. Seren had walked the High Street with Cllr. Bill Barrett and Claire Gilbert, and it had been agreed that this spreadsheet would be updated. Since the spreadsheet had been started, several of the buildings with frontage issues have already been repaired.
 - 4.4 Tenterden as a destination – Seren reported that Sarah Barber and Tracey McKeen are keen to help, but are currently overstretched. Funding was in place for a Tenterden Tourist Information Representative. Seren had proposed that a part time Town Manager be appointed to close the links with Ashford. Cllr. Galpin asked why Tenterden wanted more visitors; Seren responded that this was down to income for businesses. Retail is currently shrinking by 3.7% and it is hoped that tourism can counteract this. Cllr. Galpin reported that it needed to be an experience to visit Tenterden. Shawn Dewey (K&ESR) reported that the railway has 80-90,000 visitors per year. Currently the railway are not engaged with the local community, however, the Railway should be liaising with everyone. There is a forum where liaising could be discussed (TDCC), however, there are clashes between attendees and this does not help discussions.

Shawn reported that there were 15,000 visitors for the Santa Express and the Railway/Town could be looking at how to encourage visitors up to the High Street. One of the suggestions was vouchers for certain shops/businesses which would be given out to Railway visitors.

4.5 Mike Bartlett (TDCC) suggested a co-ordinated approach between the Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Railways and Shops/businesses. The DMP now needs to be turned into a project.

4.6 Seren provided some feedback on the recent Christmas Market. On survey to local businesses, six responses had been received so far and four of those had commented that the Friday was their most successful trading day all year. Shoppers seemed encouraged by the Black Friday deals. There was a 20% increase of visitors to the High Street compared to last year. There has already been a 94% sign up rate from market traders for next year's event. The survey so far had shown a £52 average spend by shoppers.

Cllr. Galpin asked if the figures from the Christmas Market weekend were to be published; Seren confirmed that these would be public once all the figures were in. Cllr. Galpin is very interested in how Town's assess their progress and stated that all Towns need a champion. Cllr. Galpin also reported that the Future High Street Fund comes out next month, so it will be important to investigate this.

4.7 Both Seren and Cllr. Galpin reiterated how important it is to recruit a Town Co-ordinator/Champion to focus on the job in hand. Cllr. Galpin also suggested a possible secretariat/curator to be the support. Seren reported that we need to focus on the next four months and look at developing core tools for the Town.

4.8 A discussion took place about the current websites available and none purely focused on Tenterden as a destination; what Tenterden offers is not represented digitally. The Chamber's website is more business focussed, the Town Council's is more about the Council and residents, and MyTenterden encompasses many areas as there is currently a void.

The Committee looked an example website which was Petworth. Their website is 100% focussed on the economy of the Town and focusses on three core objectives. Petworth has the same problems at Tenterden and the demographics are similar. Not all businesses/places of interest are listed on their website (mainly the most popular), however, it contains 'hooks' which lead to the others. The website is mainly pictorially led. Petworth also have a map of where all the shops are located, places to eat, etc. and these are contained on a pad whereby a sheet can be ripped off for visitors (can easily be designed and purchased via Vistaprint for example).

A destination focussed website could be set up with a Town brand. Cllr. Galpin reported that Sarah Barber and Tracey McKeen have extremely detailed plans to ensure all areas are covered fairly and Tenterden could have the same. Cllr. Galpin highlighted that things are in place for the future, i.e. Chapel Down having their brewery based in Ashford will be setting up a bus to transport visitors between both Ashford and the winery in Tenterden. This service could be utilised.

4.9 Cllr. Galpin asked what the next steps will be. Seren reported that a new website could easily be set up, with a four-layer platform, for approximately £2,500. Claire Gilbert reported that the Council had agreed for the 2019/20 precept to include £20,000 for a Town Co-ordinator.

Seren reported that in March 2019 it was English Tourism Week. This would be a good time to kick start the new venture. However, it was important to sit down with

Sarah Barber and Tracey McKeen and other representatives to look at a job description for a Co-ordinator.

- 4.9 Task Group. It was agreed to set up a task group to move this forward. A meeting will be proposed in the second week of January. This group would look at information sharing between Ashford and Tenterden; content and site map planning. The task group should include the Railway and Chapel Down/and or Biddenden Vineyards.

Cllr. Bennett suggested meeting with ABC urgently. Seren agreed to draft an email to Sarah Barber about meeting as soon as possible in January. The Town Co-ordinator position could be part time to start with and the ABC Team might be able to help mentor the Co-ordinator and provide advice.

- 4.10 Seren suggested using a good local website design company, who could do this for under £2,500 and the aim would be to have a 'soft website' ready for mid-February. There would be no charge for those businesses included on the website. Seren reported that 'InTenterden' – a Community Interest Company of which she is one of the Directors, would be willing to pay £500 towards the website to get it going.

- 4.11 Co-ordinator's job description – Cllr. Galpin agreed to send a copy of the latest ABC job description that has been drawn up for a Town Co-ordinator, which could be adapted for Tenterden. The revised job description would need to be approved by full Committee.

- 4.12 It was agreed that Cllr. Mrs. Smith, Seren Welch and Claire Gilbert should meet with Sarah Barber in early January. It is hoped that a Job Description would be ready and a proposal to put forward for the Town Co-ordinator post at the 14th January 2019 Council meetings.

- 4.13 Seren suggested that 'Visit Tenterden' could be the brand. ABC currently have the website rights to this brand. Seren had secured the Visit Tenterden Facebook and is looking into Twitter.

- 4.14 Claire Gilbert agreed to check the Town Council's Standing Orders regarding the new website expense expenditure. Subsequent to the meeting, it was confirmed that the expense would need to be ratified by the External Committee. This can be an agenda item for the 14th January 2019 meeting.

5. **Any Other Business.**

- 5.1 Heritage Trail Leaflet. As referred by the External Committee on 12th November 2018, the re-printing of the Heritage trail leaflet was discussed. Seren reported that most visitors look to digital copies of information and the Heritage trail leaflet is very out of date, i.e. it refers to the 1960s parade of Manor Row as being on the site of a medieval manor house. However, in reality, you do not see any evidence of the manor house. Seren suggested that, rather than updating and reprinting the Heritage trail leaflet, liaise with Sarah Barber and look to include a two-page spread about Tenterden in the Ashford & Tenterden Visitor Guide. The distribution of those leaflets is already in place, whereas if we print the Heritage trail leaflet, we would then have to organise distribution outside of Tenterden.

Claire reported that most visitors who ask about Tenterden are mainly looking for a map of the Town. This raised the idea of the tear off book with a detailed Town map (the same as what some other Towns do and hotels).

- 5.2 Christmas Market. Cllr. Bennett applauded the efforts of the organisers of the Christmas in Tenterden weekend. However, he raised his concerns at the unprofessionalism of the compare at the Friday night light switch on. Seren assured

Cllr. Bennett that it would not happen again; the compare was over enthusiastic on the night.

5.3 High Street Experts Panel. Cllr. Galpin requested to conduct a half hour presentation at the next meeting regarding High Street Experts Panel.

6. **Date of Next Meeting.** Tuesday, 22nd January 2018 at 5.30 pm.