

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT FORUM

MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Colin Rayner (Chairman), David Burbage (Vice-Chairman), Nicola Pryer and Shamsul Shelim.

Also in attendance: Amanda Bryett (Windsor Tourist Guides), Nick Day (The Crown Estate), Chris French (French Brothers), Wyatt Gates (South West Trains), Steve Harris (Fringilla), Emma Humphrey (Macdonald Windsor), Sunil Kalia (Jetset Coaches), Danny Mare (South West Trains), Alan Mellins (Maidenhead Heritage Centre & Sterling Travel), Mark Persad (The Crown Estate), Rebecca Sparrow (Windsor Carriages), Don Yates (French Brothers).

Officers: Tanya Leftwich, Julia White and David Scott.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was announced by the Chairman that the meeting would be recorded and posted to the web.

The Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked the Cliveden House for kindly hosting the meeting, providing the meeting room and refreshments.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerry Clark, Councillor Jesse Grey, David Berry (Cophthorne Hotel), Laura Comley-Smith (Professional Tourist Guides), Richard Clarke (The Bull, Gerrards Cross), Denise Ellis (Monkey Island), Sean Gleeson (Oakley Court), Debbie Keenan (Windsor & Eton Tour Guides), Peter Langthorne (Windsor Town Horse Drawn carriages Ltd), Anna Palmer (Dorney Court) and Claire Pearce (Moor Hall Conference Centre).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

MINUTES

RESOLVED Unanimously; That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO CLIVEDEN HOUSE

The Food and Beverage Manager at Cliveden House, Daniele Quattromini, welcomed everyone to the venue and informed the Forum that although the General Manager and Deputy General Manager were unable to attend the meeting tonight they extended their welcome and hoped to have dealings with the Royal Borough in the future.

The Food and Beverage Manager explained that he had left some business cards out and that if anyone did want to book with Cliveden House he could offer them a glass of champagne.

The Chairman thanked Daniele Quattromini for addressing the Forum and for Cliveden Houses hospitality.

VISITOR MANAGER UPDATE

The Chairman informed everyone present that the name of the Forum had been changed from the Visitor Management Forum to the Tourism Development Forum.

The Visitor Manager gave Members the highlights since the last meeting via a brief presentation which covered the following subjects:

- ❖ Visitor Management Strategy 2017 – 2020.
- ❖ Marketing - Premium Destination Partner on Trip Advisor.
- ❖ Marketing – Events.
- ❖ Marketing – Mice marketing activity.
- ❖ Marketing – FAM visits & Funding Bids.
- ❖ Royal Windsor Information Centre.
- ❖ Digital and Social Media.

The Visitor Manager informed everyone present that it was a busy time of the year with sales events and marketing for the year. It was noted that a number of people present had been involved in the consultation for the Visitor Management Strategy 2017 – 2020.

Members were informed that the Royal Borough had been invited to become a Premium Destination Partner on TripAdvisor which would allow the Council to add official content alongside the existing user generated content, including video, image gallery, editorial and collections. It was noted that there would be lots of links back to Windsor.gov.uk and the opportunity to drive sales through the Windsor e-shop.

The Visitor Manager explained that the Tourism South East media party had taken place on the 15 February 2017 and whilst there had been fewer journalists in attendance there had been some excellent quality journalists present.

It was noted that last week the Visitor Manager had spent two days at ExploreGB which had taken place in Brighton on the 02 and 03 March 2017. It was noted that ExploreGB had provided an invaluable opportunity to meet and do business with up to 350 hosted international travel buyers from 40+ countries. The Visitor Manager explained that she would be putting together a report that business in the Royal Borough would need to follow up on.

Members were informed that Business Visits @ ExploreGB was a parallel event specifically for MICE buyers.

The Visitor Manager went on to explain that the new MICE marketing activity had launched and included a venues directory, website development and social media. It was noted that the Council had joined up with Tourism South East on their Meet Beyond London marketing activity which would also help promote the area for corporate, meeting and event business. Members were informed that there was currently a database of 8,500 buyers.

It was noted that three FAM visits had taken place so far this year – Korea on the 25 – 28 February, South Africa on the 6 – 13 March and Great British Food on the 10 and 11 March. Members were informed that 10 European MICE Buyers would be on the 20 and 21 May and New Meridian group travel organisers on the 11 and 12 June.

The Forum was informed that the Royal Borough was involved with Discover England funded projects, Great West Way, Last Mile and Majestic Waterways. It was noted that any opportunities arising from those projects would be communicated to partners. The Visitor Manager explained that the Royal Borough had also bid for round two funding of £150,000 to deliver a rebranding project designed to change international travellers perceptions on where to base themselves in the UK, i.e., Windsor rather than London. It was noted that the working title was 'London's Country Estate'.

The Visitor Manager informed the Forum that the refurbishment of the Royal Windsor Information Centre was now complete. It was noted that advertising was available on the six digital screens and another three screens were being installed into monoliths in high footfall areas of the town – Station Approach, Coach Park and outside Riverside Station.

The Visitor Manager informed everyone present that windsor.gov.uk had been updated over the last two months and the team were continuously working to improve the content. It was noted that the Council had now employed a blogger, Emily Wren, who had produced three pieces so far and was gearing up to do more as the season got underway including covering the Royal Windsor Horse Show, Jaguar Festival and racing at Ascot.

It was noted that the Council's social channels were performing well with a reach so far this year of nearly 1 million and 1.5 million impressions on Facebook. Members were informed that the Royal Borough had just run its first Facebook contest which attracted nearly 700 entrants – the prize of which was an overnight stay and dinner for two at the Castle Hotel. The Visitor Manager explained that the next Facebook contest would run through April and was in partnership with Ascot Racecourse, Harte & Garter Hotel, Bateaux Windsor and Windsor Carriages.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That whilst Emily Wren was a blogger, rather than a vlogger (someone who did video links / blogs) it was possible for the Council to use video content from local businesses on the website.
- That there would be a new destination page created in the future – it was currently at quote stage.
- That the only negative complaints received on the website regarding tourist expectations was at Christmas when a group of people had protested about the reindeer parade.
- That the Tourism Development Day would take place on the 04 October 2017 at Ascot Racecourse. It was noted that the Royal Collection Trust would be present to speak on the day.
- Wyatt Gates (South West Trains) agreed to chase up the response the Visitor Manager was waiting for following her meeting.
- Nick Day (The Crown Estate) stated that he felt the Visitor Manager and her team did an extremely good job with an extremely tight budget regarding tourism in the Royal Borough.

The Chairman informed everyone present that if anything needed funds to please let him know by September at the latest so it could be included in the budget.

The Chairman thanked the Visitor Manager for her update and for all her hard work throughout the year.

SOUTH WEST TRAINS, MAJOR EVENT PLANNING UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Wyatt Gates from South West Trains to the meeting and invited him to address Members to give an update on the subject of major event planning (September 16 – December 2017).

Wyatt Gates explained that some of the South West Train carriages had been increased to ten cars and took just under an hour to get to Waterloo. Councillor Shelim explained that some of the ten carriage trains overhung the platforms which was causing a few issues. Wyatt Gates agreed to highlight the issues to Network Rail to see what could be done.

Danny Mare from South West Trains gave Members a short presentation on their project and explained how it would affect the Royal Borough. It was noted that work was taking place on the former Waterloo Int. Terminal and once complete would be referred to as the 'Windsor Terminal'. It was noted that a new track would be installed, platforms shortened and a bridge

installed throughout March – July. It was noted that Platforms 1-9 would be closed from the 5 – 28 August and Platforms 1 – 4 would be extended to cope with the ten car suburban service. It was noted that new track and signalling would be installed on Platforms 1 – 8.

Danny Mare went onto explain that maps had gone out to South West Train passengers in January to notify them of the impacts to the service. It was noted that the impacts highlighted to passengers would be supported by bus services and other rail services. The Forum was informed that tourists to Windsor may be affected by issues as on the 25 August Windsor would be at 66.7% of it's normal 100% usage.

It was noted that work was currently on-going 24/7 and the communications campaign was well underway by way of stickers, leaflets, social media and information on the South West Trains website. Danny Mare explained that South West Trains were unable to publish its final timetable until twelve weeks from the final date. Members were shown an artists impression as of December 2018 which showed a retail offering underneath the terminal and a direct link to four train lines.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

- That whilst the terminal would not officially be called the 'Windsor Terminal' the name might be considered in the future.
- That South West Trains were unable to confirm at the present time whether more concessions would be available in the future. It was noted that the franchises were due to be announced in April.
- That the timescales mentioned were currently accurate. It was noted that an anticipated timetable could currently be found on the South West Trains website but that this timetable might change.
- That South West Trains were reviewing the potential of a fast train from London to Windsor and Eton.

The Forum agreed that the Council should start lobbying the new franchise holder for a fast train to Windsor and Eton.

The Forum was informed that regular calendar updates would be provided to Members.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD IN WINDSOR

The Chairman informed the Forum that in the New Year, without consultation with the Council, a change had been made to the changing of the guards in Windsor. It was noted that the changing of the guards had been four times a day, every other day (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and never on a Sunday. Everyone present was informed that the new scheme was to no longer have the changing of the guards on a Saturday, just on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Visitor Manager explained that whilst there was no formal update available at present the Ministry of Defence was currently reviewing the new scheme and were considering re-instating the changing of the guards on Saturdays. It was noted that from the end of March until the end of July it reverted back to a daily guard change.

Amanda Bryett (Windsor Tourist Guides Ltd) stated that children would specifically come into Windsor on a Saturday as they were at school all week to see the guard change and that this change to the scheme was a sad loss.

The Chairman went onto explain that the Royal Borough needed to work with the Government to bring back the guard change on a Saturday.

MAJOR EVENTS FOR 2017

The Forum noted the major events for 2017 to be the Windsor Horse Show in the middle of May and that the International String Competition (violins) started now.

It was noted that the British Duathlon was not taking place in the Royal Borough this year (had previously been in April), that the DogFest was also not taking place in the Royal Borough this year.

Nick Day (The Crown Estate) explained that they had some new events planned – one for mid-September which would be hosted by Jessica Ellis called ‘Move with Jessica’ which was family athletics and one in late October which would be hosting a new 24hour cycle endurance event around Windsor Great Park.

It was noted that the Royal Borough were also looking to host the Windsor Half Marathon and the Polo event. Members were informed that the Jaguar event would be taking place in May at Windsor Castle. Nick Day (The Crown Estate) explained that he believed the Red Bull Air Race would not be coming back to the Royal Borough this year.

The Forum was informed that there were three new Managers at Windsor Racecourse who were working across two sites. The Chairman suggested that it might be worthwhile meeting the new team at the next meeting and suggested it might be held at Windsor Racecourse if they were agreeable.

The Visitor Manager added that Legoland had a new castle themed hotel which was due to open soon along with a new land Ninjago World. It was noted that Legoland was trying to encourage visitors to book in advance so they could manage numbers .

ITEM SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE FORUMS

Members were asked to email any additional item suggestions for future meetings directly to the Visitor Manager, Julia White at julia.white@rbwm.gov.uk and the Clerk, Tanya Leftwich at tanya.leftwich@rbwm.gov.uk

Alan Mellins requested on behalf of Maidenhead Arts that the Forum pressed the Council to get new digital information boards installed as the ones in Maidenhead had been suspended due to the regeneration plans. It was noted that it was felt that one of the three designated for Maidenhead would help at least ideally in the High Street or at the Railway Station. Councillor Burbage agreed to take this forward on behalf of the Forum.

Councillor Shelim informed the Forum that the Town Centre wifi and app was currently being worked on with the app following a little later.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chairman informed Members that the date of the next meetings were as follows:

- 15 June 2017 (6.30pm start) – venue to be confirmed.
- 12 September 2017 (6.30pm start) – venue to be confirmed.
- 30 November 2017 (6.30pm start) – venue to be confirmed.
- 13 March 2018 (6.30pm start) – venue to be confirmed.

The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....