



WARWICK TOWN COUNCIL

ECONOMIC & TOURISM COMMITTEE

MINUTES

6.30pm

Thursday 11 August 2016

PRESENT:

Councillor R Eddy (Chairman)

Councillors, Mrs L Bolton, Mrs D da Cruz, S Cross, Mrs M Grainger, Mrs M Littlejohn (sub), J Holland, T Morris, N Murphy and the Mayor (ex Officio)

Co-Opted members Mrs J Baldry, Mrs E Healey, Mrs S Butcher.

Also in attendance were: -

Kushal Birla- Head of Customer Services at Warwickshire County Council with Colleague Gill Paige.

David Butler- Warwick District Council Strategic Economic Development Officer

Nicki Curwood -Warwick District Council Business and Events Officer.

100. Apologies

Apologies for inability to attend were received on behalf of Councillors M Ashford, R Mann,

Mr L Bartlett, Mrs C Hodgetts, and Mr A Klein.

101. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that they should declare the existence and nature of their Personal interests at the commencement of the relevant item (or as soon as the interest becomes apparent). If that interest is of a prejudicial nature, the Member must withdraw from the room unless one of the exceptions applies.

102. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2016 were signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.

103. Shire Hall- Events & Licensing.

Warwickshire County Council Officers, Kushal Birla & Gill Page attended the meeting and gave an update as to the present situation with the Old Court Side of Shire Hall.

It was acknowledged that an arm's length company had been established, with WCC being the sole shareholder and that the aspiration for future use of the space would be as an elegant up market venue for significant occasions such as weddings, award dinners, civic ceremonies and classical concerts.

An application for an entertainment and alcohol licence had been made to WDC covering Sunday to Thurs 8am to 12 midnight Fridays & Saturdays 8am to 01.00 with Christmas and New Year extensions. It was confirmed that a change of use application was not necessary.

Members were particularly concerned that with the refurbishment of Northgate Street Houses, that any concerts or late night activities would have a detrimental effect on residents as it was accepted that Grade 1 listing of Old Shire Hall would not allow the necessary soundproofing to protect residents from noise nuisance. Whilst some attempt to mitigate this especially at the end of an event (Attendees would be directed out of Shire Hall via the front entrance straight onto Market Place) there would also be a need for extra security to be put in place. The Police had been approached to advise.

Parking was of similar concern as larger events would be given parking in both Barrack Street Car Park and overspill into Cape Road car park which would prove to be extremely unpopular with Cape Road residents as they were not aware of that at present.

These Car Parks were presently open at weekend for the general public on a pay and display basis but with bigger events this could add to the already overcrowded parking problems that exist. Reassurance was given that wherever possible, parking would be of paramount concern and mitigated for. Possible Mini bus transfer from the Race Course/ St Marys lands was also suggested.

Members felt that whilst in support of the Old Shire Hall being put to use that more research into the type of use had not been pursued with all of the difficulties considered. Such as a history of Law and Order; Living Museum combined with a Judicial Museum, encouraging school visits, daytime opportunities a still with a capacity for evening events built in.

Designated Smoking Areas was also of concern?

Acoustic Report paramount.

Present and future renovations and their effect.

Positioning of Licensing notices.

It was requested that any further research and solutions to questions be communicated back to the Town Council with a request for a trial period of ideas to test for acceptability.

104. Information Services Review

David Butler attended the meeting to update Members on the present review of visitor services. Warwick Town Council receives a grant to cover the Hub operations of Warwick Visitor Centre with Manager Liz Healey covering Leamington VIC as a Spoke; options going forward were based around the Leamington Visitor Information Service which consequently would have an effect upon the input required from Warwick and therefore effect the grant going forward.

Options were

- Keep as it is
- Change how it works
- Possible involvement of increased volunteer service.

This review would look to be presented to the Executive at WDC on 2 November 2016 and assurances were made to inform the Town Council as to possible impacts.

A further report was submitted following the restructure in March to create the Business and Events team. All team members were across any event in the district and would link to businesses also. Nicki Curwood was lead in the statistical analysis as part of the Destination Management Plan for WDC.

Feedback from members was that there didn't seem to have been a business plan put in place before these changes were made so affecting the continuity of a 'go to' person particularly for businesses in Warwick. This in turn created a disconnection between the Business team and the Business Community as there was no two-way flow of useful information where it had existed before.

This was acknowledged by David Butler who assured members that the team would endeavour to place the right officer at the right meeting going forward and to reintroduce a continuity for projects/ events.

105. Visitor Audit- Warwick

Members were informed of the Visitor Audit which would be undertaken by 'The Tourism Company' under WDC direction on behalf of WCC. Scrutiny of the Visitor experience would be derived by in situ mystery audits which would cover Information Centres, local coffee shops and destination attractions and would encompass signage, particularly pedestrian signage as opposed to electronic mapping.

The Audit would be led by officer Paul Garrison with a future workshop to be confirmed.

106. Town Centre Development

Business and events Officer Nicki Curwood submitted an update of the Town Centre Management Group and its actions. Nicki in her former role had co-ordinated and worked with this group and the intention was to carry on with this committee but that it would be more business orientated and led by business as opposed to Council. Local Businesses such as DCA, Warwick Castle, Volvo were to be approached and the Business and events officers would rotate its organisation of the group. It was suggested that one Councillor from each of the Councils would sit on this Committee going forward. Town Clerk would seek to identify the Town Council Representative and inform the relevant Officer.

107. Footfall Working Group

ATC submitted a report regarding the progress on each of the projects currently targeted at increasing footfall into the Visitor Information Centre.

The 'In the Ballroom' Social group would be organised by ATC, Cllr Mrs L Bolton and Unlocking Warwick Volunteers and would hopefully begin in October.

Consent was given by the Committee to investigate and rearrange the present exhibition space in order to accommodate the new Exhibition of the Fighting Turpins. Not all of the information presently on display would be lost but it was acknowledged that it did not encourage visitors into the space.

The central Rotunda would be totally removed.

108. Parking across Warwick Working Group

A report was circulated to members regarding the meeting held on 22 July. It was acknowledged that the Town Council would submit alterations to parking in certain areas around the Town and would be advised of the short listing in January from WCC. Resident’s parking on Church Street had previously been put forward but it was considered that of the 15 that would go through from each district that it was unlikely to be actioned. Concern was expressed as there seemed to be a contradiction regarding residents parking and parking bays for Northgate Street.

It was confirmed just prior to the meeting that there were no residents parking spaces on Northgate Street. However, Northgate Street residents were to be eligible for permits. This was against WDC Planning conditions which dictate that due to oversaturation of Parking availability in Warwick, that no more Resident Parking permits were to be issued.

109. Visitor Information Centre & Court House Usage

Liz Healy circulated her report regarding the Visitor Centre, Footfall was 20% up on July 2015 and more than double the number of people than in June. Staff adjustments due to Summer cover and work experience as well as volunteers.

Sales of Warwick Castle tickets were also up with souvenir sales down so Liz would look to change the type of souvenirs available.

110. Community Events

Application from Iconoclassic Mountain bike event in Market Place for £179.00 was agreed. Application from Leamington Music for £1250 towards concerts in Warwick was also agreed. Application from Percy Estate Community Projects run from the Packmores Centre in association with The GAP, for £950 was discussed at great length and it was resolved that the ATC request further information from the Applicant and this be relayed to the members via email and a decision made in time for their event. The outcome would be reported at the next meeting.

111. Report from Co-Opted members

No reports received

Signed..... Date.....