

# Communities and the Environment minutes

Held on Monday 5 March 2012 commencing at 10.00 am

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## Membership

- absent

### Councillors

- |                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Sue Saddington (Chair)   | Eric Kerry        |
| Geoff Merry (Vice Chair) | • Keith Longdon   |
| Allen Clarke             | Sheila Place      |
| Victor Bobo              | Mike Quigley      |
| • Michelle Gent          | • Lynn Sykes      |
| Glynn Gilfoyle           | • David Taylor    |
| • Keith Girling          | Parry Tsimbiridis |
| Kevin Greaves            | Gail Turner       |
| • John Hemsall           |                   |

### Also in attendance

Councillor Vincent Dobson

Mrs J Spencer - Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire

### Officers

- |                |   |                                         |
|----------------|---|-----------------------------------------|
| David Forster  | - | Governance Officer                      |
| Martin Gately  | - | Scrutiny Co-ordinator                   |
| Matt Lockley   | - | Policy, Planning and Corporate Services |
| Heather Stokes | - | Policy, Planning and Corporate Services |
| Ursilla Spence | - | Policy, Planning and Corporate Services |
| Jason Mordan   | - | Policy, Planning and Corporate Services |

## 1. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 January 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## 2. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillors Allen Clarke (Other County Council Business)  
Keith Girling (Other County Council Business)

Lynn Sykes (Other)  
David Taylor (Other)

### **3. Declarations of interest**

Councillor E Kerry declared a personal interest on agenda item 4 as a Canal side Heritage Trustee.

### **4. Response to Heritage Review**

Mrs H Stokes took members through the report and highlighted the reason for the acceptance of the Heritage Strategy is due in 2014 is so that suitable consideration can be given to the development of the strategy.

Members welcomed the response to the review and agreed that the report is noted.

### **5. Tourism and Economic Regeneration Review.**

The Chair informed members that the visit to Bassetlaw was a good fact finding tour and those members who attended were met by Sandra Withington from Bassetlaw District Council. Members visited the Church at Babworth where they had sight of a Chalice dating back to 1553. These sites connect the Pilgrim Fathers to their plight and voyage to America need to be utilised more as a tourist attraction.

The Chair thanked the Officers involved in arranging the worthwhile visit.

The Chair informed members that Colin Walker, Newark and Sherwood District Council was now unable to attend the meeting so Jason Mordan and Ursilla Spence were in attendance to give a slide presentation on Newark Tourism sites.

Mr Mordan highlighted the history around the Workhouse site in Southwell and the importance of this heritage for not only Nottinghamshire but the UK's history as a whole.

Ms Spence also highlighted the historic importance of Newark in the English Civil War 1642/46 whereby Newark was a strong hold for the Royalist and therefore the Castle is of significant importance. Other sites of significance which surround Newark are the Sconce with the Queen's Sconce being the most significant site which shows how the defences around the Royalist Town worked.

Mr Mordan also informed members that there is a Heritage Lottery Funding Bid in to help create a Civil War Museum in Newark. He also took members through slides of the great number of timber framed buildings which feature in Newark Town Centre, such as The Old White Hart Inn on the Market Place and Woolpak (now Prince Rupert) on Stodman Street. He also informed members that Newark is recognised at a national level as one of the top 50 historic Market Towns in the Country.

Ms Spence also informed members that Newark was currently suffering like other towns an economic downturn with regard to the recession and therefore there are a lot of empty shops and offices, which doesn't have the appeal that Newark should have with all of its historic architecture and history.

Members thanked Ms Spence and Mr Mordan for their presentation.

Mrs J Spencer, Chief Executive of Experience Nottinghamshire (EN), gave a short presentation on the current position regarding Nottinghamshire as a tourist attraction. Currently Nottinghamshire is in the top 40 destinations for tourists. Although it is one of the least performing County but has many selling points. The Bed and Breakfast industry is having a tough time with reduced usage, but Caravan and Camping is on the increase across the Country. There is a current trend with people having "staycations" rather than going abroad.

There is a need to sell the product Nottinghamshire has to offer as a holiday destination. Branding is important to attract tourists and there are campaigns going ahead which are about selling what Nottinghamshire has e.g.

- Love Local – food drink and local life
- Do it out doors – exploration of countryside and wildlife
- What legends are made of – using local heroes like Robin Hood and the Pilgrim Fathers
- Cultural Inspirations – the use of cultural history and heritage.

There is a lot of work to be undertaken to achieve what is needed but with the support of all partners and the appropriate funding it could be done. The EN web site to date has had over 50k hits a month, over 3000 twitter followers and a similar number of Facebook likes along with 35k requests for the e-newsletter which is produced. There is also a lot of work being undertaken with Visit England, who have put 3 attractions from Nottingham/shire into the "Top 10 things to do during half term" campaign

Members asked questions and made comments as follows:-

- The majority of jobs that would come out of the campaign would be in the service industry
- The challenge of creating the tourist trail to the home of the pilgrim fathers is having something to see when people visit
- The adverts are not free in the booklet because EN is a non-profit organisation
- EN are currently in discussions with Notts County FC as its their 150 anniversary in 2013
- Are we missing an opportunity by not putting the brochure on to Amazons web base to help promote Nottinghamshire.
- Discounts to attractions is a good idea if the Attraction is able to offer it

Members made comments about the draft recommendations set out in the report and it was agreed that the final draft report be presented at the April meeting for confirmation. It was further agreed that a copy of the draft report be

circulated as soon as possible so members can make further comments if necessary regarding the proposed recommendations.

Members made comments at the meeting as follows:-

- Could towns be encouraged to take over the distribution of any tourist information leaflets with the demise of Tourist Information Centres
- The use of apps for phones is a good use of technology and once someone has downloaded it the updates will be easily circulated.
- The contribution made to EN enables the Council to have an input to how the company is developed.
- There is a need to set a target of how many visitors expected in the County
- With the imminent return to the Committee system it is important that the work undertaken in attracting visitors is kept as a priority.
- There is a need to ensure the Pilgrim Fathers connections are not lost and the establishment of a working Party should form part of the recommendations to include all interested parties.
- Encourage more working with schools by including local history as part of their teaching

It was agreed that these comments be incorporated in the Final report.

## **6. Work programme**

It was agreed that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 12.05 pm

CHAIR

Ref: M\_5 March 2012