

MINUTES OF WELCOME VISITOR PROJECT DELIVERY GROUP MEETING HELD 20th NOVEMBER 2019

IN ATTENDANCE

Julien Lake	Berwick Community Trust
Tony Kirsop	Northumberland County Council
Paul Nichol	Northumberland County Council
Gareth Davies	Berwick Town Council
Stephen Scott	Berwick Chamber of Trade & Commerce
Jude Leitch	North Northumberland Tourism Association
Jenna Shields	Welcome Visitor Project
Andy Ashcroft	Welcome Visitor Project

1. APOLOGIES RECEIVED

Julian Smith, Philip Mawer, Ros Lamont, Harvest Harris-Jones, Alan Irving, Cris Brown.

2. MINUTES OF PDG MEETING HELD 24/9/19

The draft Minutes of the PDG meeting held on 24/9/19 were approved by the Group.

MATTERS ARISING/UPDATE

Wayfinding Scheme – GD reported that scheme deployment would be undertaken by NCC following clarification of any planning issues and that the scheme would be in place for the visitor season 2020.

Tweed & Coast Environmental Trail – PN reported that he had met with the project developer, issues raised by NCC Highways had been clarified. The project developer will meet with NCC Countryside to finalise the scheme and arrange implementation.

3. DESTINATION EVENTS 2019/20 PROPOSAL

Julien welcomed and introduced Tania Willis, Bren Boardman and Nick Jones from Berwick Creative Guild who presented a proposal to the Group for the development of 'Berwick Arts Trail', a proposed 10 day event to take place in Berwick over the Spring of 2020.

Further to answering questions raised by Group Members the presenters departed.

The Group gave detailed and thoughtful consideration to the proposal, reflecting the growing development of arts and creative industries across Berwick.

Overall, the Group were minded to assist and encourage the development of the proposal, requesting that the proposal is finalised with additional information be supplied and that a detailed budget breakdown is made available at the earliest opportunity.

Action Points

Respond to proposers with PDG recommendations.	AA
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Arrange follow up meeting/discussions between Guild and interested PDG Members, as appropriate.	AA
Provisionally allocate Ca £15K to proposal from 2019/20 Events budget.	AA

4. LOCAL VISITOR SURVEY PILOT AND DEVELOPMENT

GD reported that ‘testing’ of the local visitor survey had taken place around Berwick Heritage Open Days and the Film Festival with volunteers using handheld tablets. Some survey questions were queried as to their purpose and value. Gareth confirmed that the list of survey questions would be reviewed as part of the next phase of development along with testing circulating the survey on social media.

Jude requested that a question relating to ‘accessibility’ be included in the survey questions.

Action Points

Circulate revised list of questions for Members comments.	GD
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5. PLACE-BRAND & BRAND GUIDELINES

GD confirmed that the Brand Narrative and Toolkit had been produced and would be made available on the Town Council Website.

A brand ‘launch’ was in planning further to discussion with HemingwayDesign, to attend an event for local designers, to be issued with a ‘manual’, and public sector partners to promote brand usage.

A number of Members commented that the brand was already in use, e.g. Chamber of Trade Loyalty Scheme, Berwick Bitesize Marketing.

Julien commented that there was a need to formally ‘launch’ the brand to maintain momentum and to allow the effective deployment of the brand amongst businesses which were now looking at marketing materials for 2020, and that this should take place within the current calendar year.

Action Points

Arrange brand ‘launch’ event to take place pre Xmas.	GD, Project Staff
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6. MARKETING AND BRAND DEPLOYMENT

AA introduced a Paper regarding the Projects Marketing Budget for 2019/20 addressing the issues of both brand deployment and promotion of the Visitberwick Website.

The paper recommended the establishment of a marketing ‘team’ with the Town Council Project Officer working alongside the Welcome Visitor Project Officer to coordinate the approach to Berwick’s marketing and promotion, including the development of new targeted marketing materials, using a delegated budget from the Project.

A number of Members asked if the Town Councils Project Officer had both time and capacity to undertake this work. GD confirmed that he had seen a draft of the Paper, which had been shared with the Town Council Project Officer, and supported the approach detailed.

Action Points

Establish operational arrangements for marketing and promotions 'team'.	GD, Julian, Julien, Project Staff
Allocate £15K of Project 'underspend' to new/additional marketing activity	AA
Retain Ca £3K of Project 'underspend' to address unforeseen issues/opportunities	AA

7. COACH OPERATORS FAM TRIP REPORT

SS reported on the Fam Trip to Berwick for coach company owners and representatives which took place on 9th November. Jen had organised an itinerary which included a 'Walls' walk, a river trip on the Border Rose and lunch. SS hosted the visit on behalf of the Chamber of Trade and the PDG. The Group received a promotional film, over lunch, and a pack of promotional materials. As part of the visit the Group were informed of the ambition to create a coach park at the Port in time for the 2020 visitor season.

Feedback from the Group was positive with Ca 20 companies requesting additional information/updating on the visitor offer which will be provided by Jen.

TK added that negotiations between NCC and the Port regarding the creation of a coach park facility at the Port were progressing.

AA informed the Group that Berwick had been included in a cruise ship itinerary for 2021 and that the Port would promote this significant development locally.

Action Points

Follow up with coach companies.	Jen
Keep the Group informed regarding the development of a coach park facility.	TK, AI
Circulate information regarding the Noble Caledonia cruise ship Circumnavigate the UK itinerary.	AA

8. BERWICK BITESIZE BUSINESS PROGRAMME

AA confirmed that following agreement at the last PDG Meeting a Service Level/Funding Agreement had been established with NBSL to deliver the coordinated business training programme.

Jen had coordinated the launch event of the training programme on 12th November held at the Kings Arms Hotel. Over 20 attending business representatives received presentations from Berwick Town Council and NBSL.

The training programme held its first training session on 19th November and will run until March 2020.

9. PREMIER INN

AA reported that recent contact with Whitbread regarding the opening of the Premier Inn in Berwick had considered a civic 'welcome' to Berwick being arranged.

The Group requested that Berwick Town Council extend a formal offer to Whitbread, GD agreed to do so on behalf of the Group.

Action Points

Provide contact details for Whitbread to GD.	AA
Offer civic opening for the new hotel to Whitbread.	GD

10. PARTNER UPDATES

Jude reported that the NNTA are undertaking a Member survey to establish the wants/needs of businesses to shape future support.

SS reported on the Xmas Loyalty Scheme launched by the Chamber of Trade. Customer feedback was very positive and 95 businesses had signed up in participation.

GD reported that the Town Council had committed to a focus on place management going forward.

PN that a strategic tourism delivery review had commenced, involving both NCC and NT. A new County tourism brand was in development and a new NT website would be launched around April 2020.

11. AOB

None reported.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Julien reported that in order to avoid a diary clash with an NNTA Strategy Meeting the next meeting of the PDG, scheduled for 22nd January, would be postponed.

Action Points

Consult Members on a revised January 2020 Meeting, Ca w/c 27 th Jan.	AA
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Destination Events Assessment Panel, 11am, 12h December 2019, Berwick Community Trust Offices