

Runcorn & Widnes Tourism Business Network
9.30am De Vere Daresbury Park Hotel
17th June 2010

Present

S. Bullen (SB), S. Garnett (SG), P. Bentham, (PB), J. Doyle (JD), P. Audoire (PA), I. Rutter (IR), S. Fowler (SF), N. Harrison (NH), R. Maher, (RM), T. Leather (TL), C. McDade (CMc), M. King (MK)

Apologies

A Munday, M Jameson, K Jones, L Harrison, C Gallagher

Business Update

- **De Vere** – Variety Club June event had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers but in general, business doing ok. MK said he would get Calum to send information on events to SB to promote within HBC.
- **Daresbury Church**–Work has not started yet on the build but all planning systems have now been passed. Due for completion Spring 2011. Main funding in place but fundraising continues. Less than 100 left of the 30,000 Lewis Carroll prints. Now have a tea towel based on the print, selling at £5 each. CMc said that Norton Priory may be able to sell these on behalf of Church. Also possibilities to sell them in Direct Links and De Vere hotel.
- **Norton Priory** – Doing well at the minute; developing new marketing plan with the aim of making the business leaner. Now claiming gift aid which has boosted business income. ‘Whatever The Weather’ fundraising event taking place on 1st August. Looking for donations of prizes to raffle at event. Halton Housing Trust are the business charity partners this year.
- **Ski Slope** – Skiing has gone quiet, however the play area is up and running and of great benefit to the business. 50% of revenue in the summer months now comes from the sale of ice cream etc which is a new venture utilising the old ranger hut. Ski Parties and Tubing still going well. No age limit for Tubing.
- **Miniature Railway** – Also benefiting from the new play area. It provides focus and increasing income. If Miniature Railway is to open any extra days, JD to inform SB or SG to put onto visithalton.com . Website issues for Railway still ongoing. RM to put JD in touch with his website designer. Official opening of the play area on 4th July.
- **Everglades Park** – Quite good business over the past few weeks. Sales up in all areas. Event nights are selling out. Christmas brochures are now available. Lavender Group hotels all over the area are doing well at present. Tesco based at 3MG are proving lots of additional business. Still looking to provide community based events.
- **The Brindley** – New Summer brochure now out & PB distributed some to group. Sales are up on last year. Looking to target the areas which previously attracted Chester Gateway customers before it closed down. Not as many general or young visitors to the Brindley so looking to develop this. PB now part of Council’s Marketing Department alongside Iain Bisset who now has responsibility for marketing Stobart Stadium.
- **The Courtyard** – Business expanding. 4th cottage ‘Number 1’ now open and functioning. Discovered business fits into niche market of ex pats to the area who need somewhere to stay whilst visiting. Lots of positive feedback on Trip Advisor. Business won Self Catering Holiday of the year at Visit Chester and Cheshire Annual Awards and now goes forward to North West Awards.
- **HBC**– Built some of old tourism functions into SB’s new role within Business

Development. Need to see exact budget, which has yet to be finalised, before it is known for sure what can and cannot be done.

- **Halton Castle** -Nothing happening at the minute.

Election of New Chair

- Claire McDade offered to become new chair of TBN. She was formally proposed by PA & seconded by SB.
- CM would like to meet with all members individually to see what ideas can be developed.

TMP Round Up

- David Andrews is the new Director of Tourism for TMP and is looking to meet with Gary Collins & SB from HBC.
- Business Support Programme available for businesses for the next 2 ½ years. More information on TMP website.
- New TMP brochure is due to be out soon.
- TMP currently looking at how things will continue to function after EDF runs out in 2013.
- Currently looking to see how the information on who offers what can be linked up to offer the consumer more.

TMP Training

- HR Toolkit For Managers
- Mentoring Webinars Programme
- Handling Difficult Conversations
- Confident Chef (2 Day programme).
- More information on the above is available from the MOST website <http://most.merseyside.org.uk/>
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Halton Business & Tourism Awards / TMP Awards

- Chris Thompson represented Halton at the TMP awards in Excellence in Customer Service category. She didn't win but the feedback was that she had done well in the interview.
- Some categories that Halton could definitely enter so need to look at this next year.
- Halton Awards to take place at Holiday Inn on 25th February 2011. Press launch will take place at Claymoore Narrowboats in the next couple of weeks.
- Family Friendly Award thought to be not working as well as hoped so this has been replaced by a Tourism Support, Travel and Leisure category. This should allow a wider range of applicants to apply.
- Closing date for applications will be 3rd December so people need to start thinking about their nominations now.

AOB

- New Council events calendar not up and running yet. Waiting for new Council website to go live.
- Steven Youd- Thomas is new chair of Catalyst and has stated he would like to be active member of the group

- SB no longer able to send information on individual business' events to TMP for Tourism Scene magazine as it is no longer part of her role. She will attempt to get businesses to send them to TMP direct.
- Halton Lea information kiosk up and running.
- New maps have been distributed; each business got at least half a box. More available from SB.
- Bridgewater Boat Club Rally taking place over May Bank Holiday weekend 2011. Opportunity for businesses to market themselves. SB has contact details.
- Daresbury Church Fete taking place on 26th June. Daresbury estate is currently up for sale.

Next meeting tbc.