

**Runcorn & Widnes Tourism Business Network**  
**9.30am Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, Widnes**  
**18<sup>th</sup> March 2010**

**Present**

S. Bullen (SB), I. Bisset (IB), S. Garnett (SG), P. Bentham, (PB), J. Doyle (JD), B. Horabin (BH), C. Houghton (CH), D. Nowell (DN), A. Terry (AT), S. Jones (SJ), P. Audoire (PA), L. Harrison (LH), M. Jameson (MJ)

**Apologies**

C. Colquhoun, A. Munday, E. Gilpin, K. Jones, E. Fenton, R. & J. Maher, J. Chadwick, S. Rimmer, R. Greensmith, J Burgess-Wilson

**Minutes from Previous Meeting**

- Previous minutes discussed developments in Farnmouth village. This should have read Farnworth Village.

**Business Update**

- Ski Centre – Busy up to Easter. Play area being built outside in Park.
- Selwyn's – Business has been picking up over past month.
- The Brindley – Business up and down but generally doing ok. Teenagers 'take over' event 13-15<sup>th</sup> August
- Halton Castle – Waiting for the outcome of Norton Priory's bid for money before they can proceed with any developments
- Diane Nowell – Merseyguides still going. Attending Big History weekend at St George's Hall 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> March.
- Farnworth – Good Bluebadge guide in area. Developing as heritage area funded by Area Forum money. St Luke's Church celebrating 150 year anniversary. IB suggested BH speak to David Felix and Steph Davies regarding funding.
- Catalyst – School bookings are level. Attended Big Bang event in Manchester which proved very popular. Day visits up this month. Catalyst won Team of the Year and Family Friendly (Sue Halliday) at Tourism & Business Awards. Jules Burgess –Wilson (JB-W) has now left and the vacant Director position has been filled. More details to follow
- Everglades – Lots of activity through targeting local community for pub quizzes and Sunday lunches. Wedding bookings are up but conferencing is down. January was really bad month but things are improving now.

**The Way Ahead For The TBN**

- The group will need a new chair as JB-W is no longer in post at Catalyst. IB suggested that the lead come from the accommodation sector for a change. New Chair to be elected at next meeting. Anyone interested to let SB know in advance.
- Tourism function within HBC reduced. SB will maintain TBN secretariat but will need more support.
- PB moving to a position in Marketing so may be able to support tourism promotion.
- Need new promotional leaflet for the area but we need clarification on what budget if any is available.
- TBN needs to be more active. SB may still be able to attend events as in past such as Great Days Out etc but the group will need to push and request this to happen.
- Tourism Awards will go ahead as money is still in place. However, again the TBN needs to take a more active role as HBC will not be able to drive as in the past.
- Mervin ([www.visithalton.com](http://www.visithalton.com)) will be maintained although IB/SB are not sure as yet who

will do this.

- Breeze calendar has been removed and is due to be replaced by internal HBC calendar but this is not running as yet.
- IB suggested it may be worth trying to get some political involvement in the TBN in future.
- Future of the group to be discussed on the next agenda.

### **Tourism Update**

- Runcorn Station & Widnes Market kiosks are in place and working.
- Halton Lea kiosk in situ but awaiting BT line.
- Hough Green Station kiosk delayed due to renovations which have overrun.
- New Halton maps being produced. 50p each. All providers will get a free box.
- SB & SG attended Great Days Out. Very busy with over 1,200 visits. Good opportunity but if SB is to attend next year she will need support from within the group to man the stand.
- Disability Day at Walton Gardens on 11<sup>th</sup> July. May attend but will get more information closer to the time. Anyone interested in going, get in touch with SB. Event has over 27,000 visitors.
- We need to do more to promote heritage of the Borough. This needs to be pushed through HBC marketing and the feeling is that there will be no budget to do this.
- SB to speak to Jean Bradburn regarding links with St Luke's church.
- SB to circulate list of media contacts as provided by MJ prompted by the media course run by TMP at Catalyst. Will attach to minutes.

### **TMP Round Up**

- CH said it was a little disappointing from Halton in terms of entries. Creamfields and Outstanding Customer Service winner will be Halton's representatives.
- National advertising campaign for February. Mainly in Sunday supplements and London tube stations. 18,000 new visits to website on the day after campaign.
- As information directs people to the website we need to make sure visithalton.com is up to date. New event info & photos to SG & SB
- New Visitor guides handed out.
- David Andrews is new Director of Tourism for TMP from 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- TMP currently promoting cruise market and have been in New York promoting with KLM recently.
- CH confirmed that TMP will continue to support the group in the future after changes to the group occur.

### **Tourism Awards**

- Successful night with lots of positive feedback.
- Team of the Year – Catalyst
- Outstanding Customer Service – Chris Thompson (Holiday Inn)
- Outstanding Young Person – Paul Crompton (De Vere Daresbury Park)
- Family Friendly Assistant – Sue Halliday (Catalyst)
- Unseen Hero/Volunteer – Irene Rutter (Daresbury Church)
- Will start promoting next year's awards from late summer so people need to start thinking about their nominations now rather than leave until last minute.
- Any suggestions on improving awards in the future please let SB know.

### **AOB**

- Creamfields have been awarded a new 3 year licence so there will be opportunities related to

this.

- MJ spoke on behalf of group to thank IB for all his efforts and passion that he had shown in his role as Promotions & Tourism Manager & wished him well in whatever new role he undertook.

**Next Meeting**

De – Vere Daresbury Park Hotel mid June. Date TBC