

## **Herefordshire Sustainable Food and Tourism Partnership, 19<sup>th</sup> February 2016**

**Present:** David Curtis (DC), Jenny Beard (JM), Rachel Jones (RJ), Cathy Meredith (CM), Nick Read (NR)

**Apologies:** Christine Hope (CH), Clare Greener (CG)

### **Minutes of the previous meeting.**

These were accurate except that Rachel had sent her apologies.

### **Rural strategy for Herefordshire**

Anthony Bush had suggested that Herefordshire might develop a rural strategy. RJ indicated that the intention was that the Herefordshire's Economic Master Plan should encompass rural and that we should ensure that we inputted into its development and helped to "rural proof" it. It was agreed that a separate rural strategy was not, therefore, required.

It was also noted that the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (MLEP) was reviewing its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and that this should also be rural proofed.

### **Vinia's paper on the LEP round table**

Vinia Abesamis, from Herefordshire Council, had attended the Rural LEPs gathering. Her report indicated a number of issues of relevance to Herefordshire, but it was not clear how we should proceed with these. There was a more general discussion on the continuing lack of communication between MLEP and the wider Herefordshire constituency. Hereford Business Board (HBB) was meant to be the conduit for this, but HBB was not proving effective in this regard. HSFTP debated whether it should forge its own relationships with MLEP and strategic bodies rather than seek to rely on HBB.

### **LEADER**

CM reported that c100 enquiries had been received in response to LEADER. There was good response to the farm productivity grants. To date, seven had submitted bids which would go to Defra to check for eligibility, 3 were for farm diversification and 1 was tourism related. JB and CM had been on an appraisal training session and CM estimated that it would take a day per application in order to comply with the Defra rules which would be a serious burden on the LAGs capacity. It would take an estimated 6-8 months between application and approval.

### **Broadband**

DC reported that the Duchy offices were being connected with the benefit of a grant from Fastershire/Herefordshire Council. He wished to place on record his appreciation for the work that Matt Smith and Herefordshire Council (via Fastershire) had done to support this. They were now waiting for BT to connect. Fibre is also now being laid for the adjoining Hereford Community Networks CIC with the benefit of a number of Birmingham City Vouchers. To replicate the model it would be helpful to have a large landowner within the group and you needed someone with David Bland's experience and tenacity. DC also wished to place on record his appreciation of David Bland's outstanding work supporting this community initiative. Of benefit to HSFTP is that the project was one of the trial areas identified in the original scoping report, which shows what can be done.

### **Destination Plan**

NR reported that the Expression of Interest had been submitted on time and was being appraised. Letters of support were being received from organisations within Herefordshire and we needed to

dovetail in the DP (if we succeeded in obtaining the funds) with work going on in the city. JB had been invited in January to address the Eat, Sleep, Live Herefordshire forum.

Members of HSFTP had also attended the Visit Herefordshire Forum run by the Chamber on 18<sup>th</sup> February. They were impressed with the Rural Media's "Golden Fire" project and the proposal to develop an app based on the cider trails. The DP needed to highlight a major project and based on the concept there are wider ranging opportunities worthy of a Visit Herefordshire/HSFTP discussion to develop marketing material for the county.

There was funding available from Discover Britain to market a region, it was not known whether Herefordshire would qualify. It was proposed to invite Rural Media to the next meeting to explore how we might better integrate food and drink within the tourism portfolio.

It was reported that the Chamber has appointed a tourism marketing manager for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Liz Pullen was now the VH representative at Hereford Town Hall.

NR reported that Hereford Cathedral proposed to host a County Harvest Festival on 23<sup>rd</sup> October at 3pm.

**Date of Next Meeting**

18<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm at the Duchy offices.