

Herefordshire Sustainable Food and Tourism Partnership, 18th April 2016

Present: Jenny Beard, David Curtis, Cathy Meredith, Rachel Jones, Nick Read, Christine Hope

Apologies: Claire Greener, Matt Smith

Updates

1. MLEP Food and Drink

Rachel reported that the next round of the growth programme is likely to be in September though Gill has been in touch with the tourism group regarding the potential to fund R&D. It was felt that R&D would be useful in audits if the tourism businesses in the county, customer perception feedback and their motivation for visiting the area, modelling return on investment. We needed basic data on the contribution made by food and drink to tourism in Herefordshire.

Within the EoI VH had offered to undertake a STEAM survey and use the money from the SLA to support the inclusion of the City in the Destination Plan. Rachel was meeting with the new rep from H&W Chamber on Wednesday.

2. Broadband

David reported on the Community Network which was ready to go, except that BT Openreach had found that there were problems with the connection though it was anticipated that the problem would be solved shortly.

Prince Charles had visited the site and met members of the CiC. The learning outcomes showed that it was important to have someone with David Bland's expertise helping to support community groups.

3. LEADER

Cathy reported that 25 bids had been submitted. 11 bids were on farm productivity but if all were approved it would exhaust the budget so further applications had been put on hold. There were 3 on forestry, 3 on rural tourism and 8 concerning micro-businesses.

4. Visit Herefordshire

No one from VH was present though it was noted that the website had briefly gone live. VH was to become a membership organisation again and it had published its "Where to Stay" guide.

5. HSFTP Away Day

David had arranged an itinerary for 20th June and all members of the Partnership were invited to come. Barbara Allen at the Duchy offices needed to have final figures by 29th April, e-mail ballen@duchyofcornwall.org

6. Destination Plan for Herefordshire

The Partnership noted that the Expression of Interest had been successful and that a full bid was being invited. The meeting expressed a unanimous resolution supporting the partnership bid and requested that a formal agreement should be developed expressing how the partners could contribute to its development and its delivery.

There was a discussion on the governance arrangements concerning the Destination Plan and this would need to be determined as the bid progressed. Nick and Jenny were meeting with Graeme Hawkings, from the RPA on Friday 22nd April to discuss the application.

It was proposed to establish a group to progress the bid. It was provisionally to comprise: Nick Read, Cathy Meredith, Sharon Williams, Jenny Beard, Rachel Jones and approaches can be made to Tim Gilbert and James Manning, plus someone representing the City of Culture bid.

We will need to ensure that the bid is also reflected in the Economic Master Plan for Herefordshire and that the contributions from films (Rural Media) are also included.

The match-funding arrangements were not clear but we should log meetings and attendances. We could approach the LEP to see if it could provide matched funding if necessary.

Skills Round Table

It was reported that H&W Chambers of Commerce are establishing a skills round table, to be chaired by Bill Wiggin MP, looking at how the lack of skills in the area are affecting economic development. The skills strategy action plan will be updated following the discussions.

Any Other Business

An approach had been made from Jennie Hermolle asking what food and drink networks existed in Herefordshire. Although Food Links was still available there was a lack of provision within the county. Anthony Bush had funding to support local outlets but it was not clear whether that still existed.

John Coleman had left Defra and we might approach him in the future to use his specialist knowledge.

Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is the Away Day on June 20th.