

Herefordshire Sustainable Food and Tourism Partnership, 2nd September 2016

Present: Martyn Hammond, Rachel Jones, Claire Greener, Nick Read, David Curtis, Cathy Meredith, Jenny Beard

Apologies: Matt Smith, Christine Hope

Report back on the Away Day

David had led a visit to three farm shops on Duchy of Cornwall tenancies in the south west. Verbal feedback was given at the meeting which highlighted the substantive contribution made by the Duchy in supporting its tenants. David was thanked for a most informative and enjoyable trip.

Marches LEP Food and Drink Task and Finish Group

- This had met in July and there was expectation of a Defra Growth Programme call to be issued in the near future, though it would probably have to wait until the Autumn Statement.
- There had been no response locally to the Great British Food Tourism Grants.
- A food and drink trip was being hosted by the Marches LEP to the United States

Herefordshire Community Network CIC (the Broadband initiative)

This was going strong and it was hoped that Brexit would lead to changes in the political will supporting the roll-out of rural broadband.

LEADER update

Only one bid had actually been signed off locally. Waiting for the Autumn Statement would probably slow things down again.

Visit Herefordshire

- The Worcestershire and Herefordshire annual tourism awards had been held at Eastnor Castle and there was a high percentage contribution from Herefordshire.
- Visit Herefordshire was being restructured. The plan was to have a full-time tourism officer for Herefordshire and a shared manager with Worcestershire. The officer's role was to support local tourism businesses and the post was being advertised.
- The website was being relaunched.

Herefordshire's Destination Plan

The proposal had been submitted to the RPA though it had proven very difficult to fit this revenue project into a form designed for capital spend.

EFRA enquiry on rural tourism

- Rachel had drafted a county response which was endorsed by HSFTP and had submitted. Rachel was thanked for the work that had gone into this.
- The group noted that the LEP's response had been entitled "The Marches and Shropshire" and Rachel had fed back our disappointment that Herefordshire had been omitted from the title of the document.

Membership and status of HSFTP

- Eat, Sleep, Live Herefordshire had applied to join the HSFTP. It was felt that this was inappropriate as the members had a strategic role and were not directly benefiting from the tourism industry. It was felt important to develop a closer working relationship with the City Tourism Group, of which ESL-H was the lead.
- The difficulties associated with the RPA bid for the Destination Plan, in which the advantages of applying on behalf of a much wider constituency were lost because of the vagaries of the application process, led to a discussion on whether the status of the HSFTP needed to be changed. Would it be advantageous to become a legal entity such as a CIC or Social Enterprise? It was agreed that further work needed to be done looking into this.

Any Other Business

- A report was given on the recent Hereford Indie Festival, involving three young food companies in the city. It had proven to be highly successful.
- Rural Concierge had been shortlisted for a national award and it was suggested that they should be invited to talk to the Partnership.

Date of Next Meetings

- 10.00am on Monday 7th November 2016 at the Duchy offices
- 10.00am on Monday 9th January 2017 at either the NFU or Plough Lane (venue to be confirmed)
- 2.00pm on Friday 10th March 2017, venue to be confirmed