

Herefordshire Sustainable Food and Tourism Partnership, 9th January 2017

Present: Jenny Beard (JB), David Curtis (DC), Andy Black (AB), Martyn Hammond (MH), Nick Read (NR), Cathy Meredith (CM), Christine Hope (CH), Rachel Jones (RJ)

Apologies: Matt Smith (MS), Clare Greener (CG)

Previous meeting notes

The notes from the meeting held on 7th November 2016 were approved as accurate.

Destination Plan

It was reported that £31,800 funding had been received from the growth programme to support the writing of a Destination Plan for Rural Herefordshire. However, no funding was available for co-ordination or accountancy.

Updates

- **Fastershire** – Matt was unable to attend the meeting but DC reported that government was still supporting the roll out of superfast broadband.
- **Herefordshire Community Network CIC** – This was working well and further support from government was expected for community schemes. A second community project was under development in Herefordshire to extend the existing coverage.
- **LEADER** – there was little further to report since the last meeting, there was still only one project that had been signed off. Herefordshire was lagging behind the rest of the region. There is growing concern that future funding schemes (post Brexit) will be amalgamated into one pot which will disadvantage rural areas.
- **Visit Herefordshire** – AB is getting to know the area and meet local tourism groups. The Cider Route website is progressing and should be completed by the end of Feb. He has been approaching major supermarkets in the centre of Hereford about coach parking spaces for tourism coaches. There was a request for images that could be used on the VH website. JB reported that local tourism groups often had libraries of images.
- **WMLEP** – the LEP funding announced in the Autumn Statement was generally less than hoped. However another tourism/food and drink funding call was expected with a total grant available of about £75k. It was proposed to explore a joint event with Defra to enable people to know what grant aid was available. At the moment RDPE was not part of the monitoring carried out by the ESIF Officer's group and it should be.
- **Economic Masterplan** – The Masterplan went to Council for approval on 16th December and was adopted. It will be launched in the Spring. It is in two parts: and economic plan and project ideas. RJ reported that the Hereford Bypass (part of the forward planning) had not been funded by DTp.
- **Bulmer Foundation** – NR reported that in November the Foundation changed its name to The Brightspace Foundation. A new website is to be launched in Spring.
- **Herefordshire Hub** - CM reported that the new Hub website was running and it was agreed to provide a hyperlink with VH. The Hub had successfully bid for funding from the Prince's Countryside Trust to support farm resilience, based on a one-to-one approach. This contrasted with the more general approaches being taken elsewhere, such as Shropshire. It would be useful to evaluate the two approaches.

Christine – the activism culture

CH reported on an initiative in Bristol with Fresh Start Land Enterprise who were running a horticultural academy. Speakers had been gathered to talk about new initiatives. She reflected that Bristol had an “activism culture” which encouraged food producers to explore local markets, launched the “Bristol Pound” and set up Food Assemblies across the city. These were not always part of a wider network but achieved significant change where they happened.

Herefordshire also had similar developments, such as the Golden Valley Food Assembly (with 138 products). However, only 3 or 4 business were offering multiple product lines and it was debateable whether the Golden Valley initiative was really supporting local food. However Herefordshire also had “Edible Herefordshire” and “Big Bull” events though these were not linking up. It was possible to fund activism via Awards for All and a level of co-ordination should be possible. On the negative side it was reported that Herefordshire Farmers’ Market had effectively disappeared.

General Roundup

- DC reported on a sustainable food conference he had attended in Stow on the Wold where de-regulation (post Brexit) had been a major topic. This opened the possibility of reintroducing local abattoirs. A risk-based approach to regulation was envisaged.
- Gloucester Motorway Service Station – one of the producers we had helped to introduce to the buyers for the Service Station, Ruby’s Fudge, had significantly expanded as a result of the contract.
- Eat, Sleep, Live had held tourism forums last year and more were planned for 2017. Golden Valley are also promoting a Forum and asking structural organisations to participate by donating skills.
- Roger Morgan, of the Cultural Partnership, was unable to attend this meeting so it was resolved to extend an invitation to the next. HSFTP members (MH and AB) both attended the City of Culture events and were involved with the “A Great Place” bid, so they would be the formal links with HSFTP.

Future ideas

- JB speculated whether Herefordshire might apply for Unesco World Heritage Status. It was agreed to pursue the idea.
- Were there more opportunities for Protected Geographical Status for Herefordshire products?

Next Meeting

This was scheduled for Friday 10th March at 2pm at the Duchy of Cornwall offices.