

## **Herefordshire Sustainable Food & Tourism Partnership, November 12<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Present:** David Curtis (DC, Co-Chair), Jenny Beard (JB, Co-Chair), Matt Smith (MS), Nick Read (NR), Rachel Jones (RJ), Andy Black (AB), Liz Lloyd (LL)

**Apologies:** Clare Greener (CG)

**In attendance:** Christian Dangerfield (CD), Anunda Hill (AH)

The Partnership reported its pleasure at seeing DC at meetings again, following his incapacity.

### **Green Dragon**

CD and AH came to talk about the proposals for the future of the Green Dragon Hotel in Hereford. A consortium has bought the hotel and want to develop it so that it becomes a showcase to promote Herefordshire's food and drink. The consortium is chaired by Robin Sheppard of Bespoke Hotels. There are five potential food and beverage spaces including a restaurant, bar & coffee shop, lounge, ballroom and the Old Offa Bar. The hotel contains the largest private space in Herefordshire. Refurbishment will begin before Christmas and be substantially completed by 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

There are complimentary initiatives and ideas in support including:

- Road surface enhancements funded by the government's city regeneration funding. If successful, £5m would be available to turn the road outside the hotel into a single lane road that could be closed for events.
- Using Broad Street facilities to build on the success of the Indie Food Festival.
- Whether Hereford might become a UNESCO City of Gastronomy. There are currently 180 "creative cities" registered in 7 different categories. The next call will be in 2019 and they want to raise £40k via crowd funding to pay for a design consultancy. None of the 10 creative cities registered in the UK is registered for gastronomy.

AH talked about the food mapping she is undertaking. The want to create a Hereford Food Network to bring producers and retailers together.

This led to a discussion on whether Herefordshire had a global brand, though they want to create an international footfall as well as enhanced local one. There is also a need for enhanced car parking in the city. In response to questions CD said that the pricing would be somewhere in the middle of what was already available, but with a high quality product.

### **Herefordshire Destination BID**

The Mosaic Partnership had been awarded the contract to conduct the feasibility study of the BID. Three consultants had been shortlisted, two supplied further details and attended interview. The interview panel had found it a difficult job to choose between the two but had agreed on appointing Mosaic.

## **Members' updates**

### **Visit Herefordshire**

AB had attended the International Cider Conference in Spain. The group was establishing a website to boost visitor numbers based on cider and were aiming to have an annual conference. Herefordshire was bidding to host the conference in October 2019 and VH was looking to approach private companies to sponsor the event.

### **Brightspace Foundation**

- NR reported that bids were in preparation to Sustain and The Eveson Charitable Trust to develop a Food Poverty Alliance for Hereford and begin to tackle the high levels of food insecurity within the city.
- Hereford Food Bank was looking for new premises

### **Duchy Estates**

- DC reported that the Duchy was involved in the Food & Drink Awards at Lyde Arundel in November.
- It had fed into a DCMS/Defra meeting on rural broadband which had been hosted by the CLA. There was a need to agree a Memorandum of Understanding between landowners and companies rolling out broadband.
- They were applying for a gigabyte voucher for the Herefordshire Community Network (HCN). DC was standing down as a Director of HCN at the end of the year.

### **RFN/Herefordshire Rural Hub**

- The Rural Business Day was taking place at the Three Counties Hotel on November 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Cathy Meredith was retiring at the end of the year but will continue as a Director of the Herefordshire Rural Hub.

### **Fastershire**

- MS reported on the Gigaclear roll out, which had received adverse publicity in the national press but primarily because of events in Devon and Somerset rather than locally. The local contract was being renegotiated, it would take longer to deliver but there would be more beneficiaries.
- EAFRD funding was available for Herefordshire to support some fibre to premises approaches, with the cabinet fed by radio. This was being delivered by Airband.
- Superfast should attain 97% coverage and the Business Grant scheme existed to plug any gaps.

### **Herefordshire Council**

- RJ reported that there had been a round table meeting with the Lord's Select Committee on the rural economy, including the Hub, NFU, the Council and local businesses, held at Skylon Park. The Committee visited local businesses afterwards. HSFTP had submitted written evidence.
- There was still £7.5m for the Growth Programme for the Marches, though new applications closed in May. 54 outstanding applications, worth £23m remained to be processed for Herefordshire so the competition was very high.

### **LEADER**

LEADER was on hold for new applications because of a potential overspend.

**Future proofing HSFTP**

DC reported that his replacement at the Duchy will be located at Newton St Lo rather than in Herefordshire, and this may affect the relationship. It was agreed to review HSFTP membership and TOR after the conclusion of the feasibility study for the Destination BID as that could affect any future decisions.

**AOB**

- JB reported that the Forest Holiday's proposal had been withdrawn for Mortimer Forest. HSFTP had been invited to look at a proposal for the Brecon Beacons.
- HSFTP are members of Herefordshire & Worcester Chambers of Commerce. AB would make a connection for NR, as secretary, to realise the benefits of membership.

**Date of next Meeting**

10am on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January, at the Duchy offices at Dewsall.