



# Visit Dursley

## Minutes of Meeting

On Zoom - Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August at 10:30am.

### Present:

Councillor Danae Savvidou (Dursley Town Council (DTC) & Dursley After Hours), Chris Shaw (Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW)), Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre), Councillor Theresa Kinnison (DTC & Play & Sculpture Trail), Amy Helliwell (Stroud District Tourism Officer), Zoe Hopkins (Boots), Ben Edwards (Escape Room), Naomi Dix (Artisan Market), Nola Bradley (Tyndale Arts), Helen Williams (Helen's Wishes) and Leah Wellings (DTC).

### 1. Welcome

Councillor Danae Savvidou opened the Visit Dursley meeting and welcomed everyone including new attendees Naomi, Nola and Helen.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies at the meeting - Sam Tombs (Visitor Information Centre (VIC) – Dursley Library), Karen Crowcombe (The Pulse), David & Julie Orchard (Ashen Plains Campsite), Charlie Marwood (The Engine), Claire Parry (Hewitts) and Miranda Clifton (Cam Parish Council).

### 3. Matters Arising from the Minutes (14.05.23)

The following points were noted:

- The local press hadn't really picked up on the 'Fairy Sculpture' installation at the Dursley Sculpture & Play Trail which was disappointing. A press release had been circulated to all contacts with a good photo. Amy (SDC) was asked for help.
- A Fairy story did feature in the Council's newsletter which had been delivered to every household within Dursley which was positive to raise awareness. It also featured in the Shakespeare promotional info.
- It was difficult to get feedback on who had visited the woods to see the Fairy Installation. **It was suggested that the Dursley Sculpture & Play Trail promote it again on their facebook with an invitation for people to share any pictures.** Zoe (Boots) highlighted the use of Hash Tags to help public engagement/feedback, something fun for example **#findthefairies**. Hash Tags could be used for future campaigns.
- Dursley's first Insider Guide featuring Danae (DTC) published on Visit Stroud.
- The Shakespeare Trail on the app was now live and had been developed with the help of a local volunteer linked to the Heritage Centre.

### 4. Update from Stroud District Tourism Officer

Amy (SDC) gave an update and the following points were noted:

- The Discover Stroud District Trails App gained an extra 101 users following the launch of the Shakespeare Trail and some good feedback on the trail's inclusion, including from Councillors, had been received.
- The App now has some funding through the Stroud District Council walking and cycling team to help help develop the pop up feature for events and also Scavenger Trails, which is great news. Work has started and will hopefully come online October/Christmas time.

- Wiltshire Council are the latest to be interested in the App and finding out what Stroud District are doing.
- Continuing to look at website presence and out of date information, working with Visit Britain and Visit Gloucestershire to update sections of their websites. Photographer will be going out during the Autumn time, there is a need to get photos of people doing things, food etc.
- The Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership are developing a Black History Month map for the Stroud District – **Amy (SDC) will share.**
- Gloucester Services Farmshop & Kitchen is the focus of a new 6- part documentary series for Channel 4. It began on 8<sup>th</sup> August and is showcasing local producers picking up some of the Stroud District area.
- Promotion of Halloween and Christmas activities now we are moving into the later part of the year.

## 5. Update & Feedback on the Trial Weekend Shuttle Bus Service & Service 65

A Shuttle Bus presentation had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were noted:

- The shuttle bus service is expected to end 27<sup>th</sup> August 2023, earlier than expected. Its future is uncertain due to funding, the cost to run it per day is £350 (plus contingency).
- User feedback on the service had been good, with 393 user numbers so far. There had been challenges due to delays at the canal bridge, road works, rail strikes and the closure of Box Road.
- The shuttle bus working group would be meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 1-2pm. **Feedback can be passed to Leah/Amy (DTC/SDC) or online via the survey link to be shared via email.**
- Chris (DWW) had engaged in some discussions with the operators about the possibility of using the service for event-based activities e.g. to support the Walking Festival in the future, which there may be funding for. **Chris to copy Leah into communications.**
- Amy (SDC) had spoken to contacts at Stroud District Council regarding possible funding sources and opportunities to link to Berkeley (e.g. The Castle, College).
- There had been some positive changes to the Stagecoach number 65 service incorporating new early and evening stops at the rail station, to start from 20<sup>th</sup> August.

## 6. Plans & promotion for Tour of Britain – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2023

- The draft poster promoting Dursley for the Tour of Britain event had been circulated for comment; several activities would be taking place on the day. **Leah (DTC) to circulate shortly.**
- Festive Dursley would be hanging the big flags out of the Town Hall windows on the day. **They would be approached to share a post on their facebook page encouraging the public to get involved by making their own banners to welcome and cheer riders etc.**

## 7. Updates from group members:

### Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW) – festival & new walks (Chris Shaw)

- Booking for the festival taking place 4<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> Oct, opens very soon.
- DWW going very well, lots of new walk leaders - 20.
- Chris and Zoe (Boots) liaising about a Boots footcare display to coincide with the festival.
- Walks related to Sculpture Trail (Terri) and Escape Room (Ben) to be finalised for the programme.
- 500 people on the mailing list and growing. People on the list get walking programme a week early.
- Lots of other events/activities to be included in the festival programme, its very collaborative – **if you have events please let Chris know.** Naomi put the Artisan Market forward for inclusion.
- Chris shared information on the ‘Green Drinks’ regular networking event held at Kingshill House – all welcome to come along and talk about environment/green ideas and issues.

### Tyndale Arts – 2023 activities & events (Nola Bradley)

- Nola gave the group an update on Tyndale Arts and the trail which takes place 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> October.
- There are 40 artists of all different disciplines (e.g. paint, photography, jewellery) exhibiting their work on the trail.

- The first event will be held at Kingshill House on 5<sup>th</sup> called Cut & Construct with a TV costume designer.
- On the 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a launch event at Kingshill House with Artists and the Leader of Stroud District Council, Cllr Catherine Braun.
- The art trail venues include Kingshill House, the Tabernacle, St James Church, Methodist Church, The Kingshead and Leaf & Ground.
- **Chris (DWW) agreed to liaise with Nola to include Tyndale Arts on the Walking Festival programme and discuss whether a possible walk link could be made crossing the 2 events.**
- Promotion is taking place across the website ([www.tyndalearts.co.uk](http://www.tyndalearts.co.uk)), Instagram and will include banners around town.

### **The Artisan Market & new Coordinator (Naomi Dix)**

- Naomi had recently started at The Engine as the new Co-ordinator for The Artisan Market.
- The Market on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September will be the first since Naomi joined the team.
- The Market is looking to grow with the aim of increasing market traders next year.
- The timings of the market would be looked at e.g. against the Farmers Market calendar.
- Footfall was also discussed, including the impact of the Saturday Car Boot sale on the high street.

### **Any other member updates:**

#### **Heritage Centre**

- Looking at a new exhibition on immigration for October, to follow the Shakespeare one which ends at the beginning of September.

#### **Dursley Quiz League**

- Andy (Heritage Centre) and Nola (Tyndale Arts) spoke of the Dursley Quiz League, one of the oldest running leagues in the country, which meets at the Community Centre, October through to April. **All teams are welcome if anyone wants to put a team together.**

#### **Boots**

- Zoe (Boots) recently raised £4500 for Macmillan charity undertaking a Great Wall of China trek, using the walking festival to help train. The next fundraiser is a coffee/cake event on 29<sup>th</sup> September at the Boots store. **If anyone can help bake cakes they would be gratefully received.** The store also focusing on flu vaccinations before Christmas, around Sept-October time.

#### **Helen's Wishes/Traders**

- Helen (Helen's Wishes) shared thoughts and reflections on own shopping behaviour prior to becoming a high street trader. How can we work together to get people to shop local, come into town during their lunch break etc?.

## **8. Upcoming Seasonal Promotions**

### **Halloween**

- Festive Dursley event in the Market Place Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> – children's stories, activities and dance.
- Half term - Halloween Trails in town centre & Sculpture & Play Trail planned with brooms & pumpkins. The Pulse usually have children's activities for half term.

### **Christmas**

- Helen's Wishes plan to run a 'Write to Santa' activity and post box.
- Christmas lights switch on event will be held on the last Friday of November, 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Please forward any seasonal events and activities that could be promoted under Visit Dursley banner to Leah (DTC).**

## 9. Update on the Stroud District Tourism Partnership (SDTP) Work & Upcoming Trends

- The Communications Strategy document for SDTP had been circulated.
- Visit Dursley is represented on the group by Charlie Marwood (The Engine), Amy (SDC) and Leah (DTC).
- The group needs greater attendance from businesses/traders in our area.
- The partnership is looking at its branding and web presence, getting quotations. Amy (SDC) is investigating funding streams to assist with this work. The website currently used is <https://www.visitstroud.uk/>
- In relation to the upcoming slow-paced tourism trend, SDTP are looking at running 'Slovember' again. Other trends to tap into include weddings, cultural immersion (local crafts) and experimental tourism.  
**What do we have in Dursley that we could use to take advantage of these current trends??**
- **Visit Dursley group to look at how it feeds into and fits with the work of the wider Partnership.**

## 10. Promoting Dursley – opportunities & ideas for improvements

The following ideas were discussed:

- How can we cultivate an identity? What is our USP? As a town we are strong in landscape and heritage.
- Chris/DWW keen to develop our walking identity as a town similarly to Winchcombe who for example have become known as "The Walker's Capital of the Cotswolds".
- Andy (Heritage Centre) gets emails from across the world in relation to industrial heritage - Listers/Pedersen Cycles.
- Another example is - Ironbridge Valley of Invention – could we be the Ironbridge of the Cotswolds or the Kirby Lonsdale??
- Helen (Helen's Wishes) - Some towns have appeal and something that you can't quite put your finger on (e.g. locally Nailsworth). How could we cultivate a natural appeal or buzz?
- **It was agreed that a smaller group of people would meet to try and start to look at the deeper identity question for the town. The content created by Tourism Angles and SDTP work would be considered alongside. Please email Leah to volunteer to be part of this small group. (Danae interested).**
- The town map on the noticeboard by Gravity is out of date and needs to be updated and modernised to show key areas. Also audit town centre signs generally to see if other improvements could be made.  
**Leah/Danae (DTC) to investigate and raise with the Council's Town Improvements Committee.**

## 11. Feedback on Evening Informal Group Event/Meet Up Idea

- It was agreed that an informal networking event would be a great opportunity to try and engage the rest of Dursley and other traders and businesses positively in what Visit Dursley are doing and make new connections.
- There could be an opportunity to generate and further develop some ideas too.
- The Golf Club had kindly offered use of the club house FOC subject to availability. **Leah (DTC) to liaise.**
- It was agreed that the group would look to organise for the end of October.

## 12. Date of next & future meetings

14<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024. All on Zoom, 10:30am start.

**Members are encouraged to work together and share information between meetings.  
Regular updates relating to existing activities/projects can be circulated via email.**