



# Visit Dursley

## Minutes of Meeting

On Zoom - Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May at 10:30am.

### **Present:**

Councillor Danae Savvidou (Dursley Town Council (DTC) & Dursley After Hours), Chris Shaw (Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW)), Sam Tombs (Visitor Information Centre (VIC) – Dursley Library), Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre), Councillor Theresa Kinnison (DTC & Play & Sculpture Trail), Georgie White Winter (Kingshill House), Amy Helliwell (Stroud District Tourism Officer), Councillor Alex Stennett (DTC Town Mayor), Zoe Hopkins (Boots), Claire Parry (Hewitts), Flo Yapp (Oxfam), Ben Edwards (Escape Room), Miranda Clifton (Cam Parish Council) and Leah Wellings (DTC).

### **1. Welcome**

Councillor Danae Savvidou opened the Visit Dursley meeting and welcomed everyone.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies at the meeting - Councillor Symon Ackroyd ( DTC & The Chantry Centre), Karen Crowcombe (The Pulse), David & Julie Orchard (Ashen Plains Campsite), Charlie Marwood (The Engine – Escape Room).

### **3. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The following points were noted:

- 'The Royal Trail' for the wider area was launched on the 'Discover Stroud District Trails' app for the Kings Coronation. The route features four points in Dursley.
- Publicising events on online calendars was discussed. Visit Stroud have a calendar on their website, events can be uploaded if you have a login, its easy to register. Leah (DTC) can assist if required.
- Amy (SDC) highlighted the Cotswolds Tourism events page and Visit Gloucestershire which also list events. Information is ideally required at least a month before with a photo. Amy can list if others can't access. It was recognised that it can be hard to keep up with the admin time taken to list on lots of different calendars.
- The Cotswold Tourism website is the gateway site for Visit England.
- The National Heritage Open day events are taking place nationally, 8-17<sup>th</sup> September if anyone interested in seeing how we might take part please speak with Leah (DTC).

### **4. Update from Stroud District Tourism Officer**

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

- Visit England work with Destination Management Organisations (e.g. Cotswold Tourism) across the country, this structure is now changing with a shift towards Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP). The LVEP programme aims to streamline and strengthen the way Visit England and others work together and is currently being considered by Cotswold Tourism, Visit Gloucestershire and others moving forward.
- There has been some work going on to network and develop links with Visit Cheltenham, Visit Gloucester to try and tap into their marketing programmes.
- Working with the So Glos publication, looking at write up - ideas are welcome if you have them.

- Looking at website presence, out of date information – hope to use the content produced by Market Towns/Tourism Angles to refresh. Need up to date information and photos.
- The Discover Stroud District Trails App continues to grow with 1780 users to date. The Cam peak and around trail is most popular at the moment. Currently looking at whether some funding could be made available through the Stroud District Council walking and cycling team. Keen to develop scavenger hunt trails and make more of food and drink options.
- The Instagram page **discover\_stroud\_district** continues to grow. If you use the platform please tag your posts **#discoverstrouddistrict @discover\_stroud\_district**

## 5. Update on the Stroud District Tourism Forum 10<sup>th</sup> May meeting

Leah (DTC) gave an update. The following points were noted:

- Not many business sector representatives were present at the meeting which was disappointing.
- [www.visitstroud.com](http://www.visitstroud.com) is considered by the group to be the main communications hub for the stroud district visitor economy. The website [www.visitthecotswolds.org.uk/](http://www.visitthecotswolds.org.uk/) previously run by Stroud District Council is to be deactivated. The relevant content and images will not be lost, but lifted and reused.
- There is a need to look at how the Visit Stroud website and branding for the district can be enhanced.
- The group need to look at how they can finance add on work and any website improvements. Possible funding streams/grants would be looked at.
- The group are keen to use the Market Town content created by Jackie Ellis/Tourism Angles. It would be good to build on the foundation it gives.
- The group received some data/graphs related to the visitor economy but these were not broken down sufficiently to be really useful to the group. There will be some future rail station survey work that will pick up more detailed data from visitors.
- The Stroud area is featured in a Gloucestershire food and drink map soon to be published.
- There is work around linking train use and local Pride events, which the Gloucestershire Rail Partnership are involved in. The dates of Pride events were shared, including Dursley Pride in September.
- Stroud District Council are to open up their Rural Business Grant opportunities soon. This is Government funding of £400,000 over 2 years. The grant application process is expected to have a local call out every 2 months, so it will be a rolling programme over the 2 years. Information should be released soon.

## 6. Launch of the new trial weekend shuttle bus service linking the rail station & places

Leah (DTC) and Amy (SDC) gave an update on the new shuttle bus service as follows:

- The new Shuttle Bus service starts weekends from 20<sup>th</sup> May, it will run over the summer months until September covering Dursley, Cam, The Rail Station and Slimbridge. Following feedback from Visit Dursley a stop in the bus station has been included.
- Chris (DWW) informed the group that Dursley Welcomes walkers are planning a Saturday morning walk before the festival, using the bus service. DWW are also exploring the possibility of working with the Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership to actively promote walks in the Dursley area/from the station, maybe recreate maps similar to those produced for Stonehouse.
- There had been a Gloucestershire Radio interview on the shuttle bus service earlier today (16/5/23).
- Please share information and promote the service on social media channels wherever possible, the trial period needs to be successful for any chance of continuation. For further information & timetable see: <https://www.gloucestershirecommunityrail.org/slimbridge-shuttle>

## 7. Market Towns Tourism Content Project – update & next steps

Leah (DTC) gave an update on the latest content from the Market Towns project which had been circulated with the agenda. It included the following, which was noted:

- *Pitching document.*
- *Spend a weekend in.*
- *Childs Play in the Hidden Cotswolds.*
- *Did you know?* Top fun facts about the market towns of the Hidden Cotswolds.

- *Five Hidden Cotswolds market towns you'll love.*
- *An insider guide to Dursley* –developed with Danae Savvidou as suggested by Jackie with child/dog friendly emphasis.
- *Annual Events & Festivals* –only includes that big ones that Jackie believes will attract people to visit and stay in an area so is not designed to list everything we have going on.
- *People Power shapes Hidden Cotswolds*
- *The Hidden Cotswolds celebrates Vegetarian & Plant Based Cuisine*
- *When & where seasonal wildflowers brighten the Hidden Cotswolds*
- The Tourism Officer, Visit Stroud and others are really keen to start using the content ASAP to start promoting the area to visitors and now is the perfect time, as we are nearing summer.
- It should be noted that although we need to get this content in use now as Market Towns, it has been designed so that it can be updated should things change over time in terms of businesses for example, it's offered some useful templates and ideas for the group to develop future content and all those involved in the project have been able to learn from the experience and advice given.

Leah (DTW) passed on thanks to all who helped develop with comments.

## **8. Dursley Welcomes Walkers – festival & new walks update**

Chris (DWW) gave the group an update, highlighting the following points:

- The festival is still in early planning stages. 17 out of 30 walks so far confirmed.
- Looking at a linear walk back from Market Place.
- Some interesting walks in the pipeline, including a heritage walk and also a family walk on the Sunday.
- Dursley is a Cotswold Gateway Town and is featured on the National Trail website in places.
- DWW currently have around 48/49 walk leaders which is a fantastic resource and an opportunity to try and get lots of ideas on the table.
- Zoe (Boots) suggested that planned stops at cafes/pubs are made as part of longer routes e.g. Lantern Way.
- Terri suggested that a walk features the Dursley Play and Sculpture Trail in Twinberrow Woods. E.g. on Sunday afternoon? Chris and Terri agreed to liaise on this.
- There is a geocaching walk planned for the Sunday afternoon. This is an area of interest for Amy (SDC) who is interested to see how it goes.
- The festival will include a toddler trail around the town linked to the Library.
- DWW are considering printed material. The move to online info had promoted some feedback to say printed material was still very much required.
- There is a new version of the Cam Historic Graves walk being developed.
- Chris (DWW) and Amy (SDC) agreed to talk about getting another larger walk onto the Discover Stroud District Trails App.
- Chris (DWW), Amy (SDC) and Ben (Escape Room) agreed to discuss how the escape room could be brought into the outdoors, maybe with a link to geocaching.
- Zoe (Boots) highlighted that Boots gets lots of walkers stop by for plasters/medication and it may be possible to have a stand in the shop linked to footcare items that also promotes the walking festival and the walking app. Chris (DWW) agreed to pop in and have a chat with Zoe about this idea.
- Miranda (CPC) suggested that it would be good to strengthen the links with Cam, there has been huge housing development at Box Road with lots of new people moving to the area. Developing that sense of connection for people across the whole settlement and to show off what the area has to offer is important. Chris (DWW) agreed to copy Cam into key information and promotional materials; the walking festival itself crosses Cam and Dursley areas so there are opportunities to further develop connections.

## 9. Dursley Sculpture & Play Trail – new sculpture update

Terri (DTC) reported on some ongoing maintenance to sculptures other developments:

- A crown trail for the King's Coronation was installed. It had been difficult to get feedback from trail users but the reception had been positive.
- The Engine would be developing a new sculpture.
- The Men's Shed at GL11 are developing 2 new sculptures, an insect home and a 'Dursley Donkey' train.
- The existing information board is rotten. The group is looking at content for a new board.
- One of the volunteers met the artist and sculpture Jackie Lantelli, whose ghost-like sculptures of First World War soldiers brought many people to Slimbridge. As a result of this contact Jackie agreed to supply several fairy sculptures to be placed in the woodland treetops for the summer at no charge, which is fantastic news! It is hoped this temporary installation will help bring the trail to new audiences.
- Terri (DTC) and Ben (Escape Room) to discuss the possibility of a longer term project to make an accessible outdoor escape room offering.
- Amy (SDC) requested some photos of trail and new installations that could be used to help promote on socials etc.
- Terri (DTC) encouraged everyone to follow the Dursley Play and Sculpture Trail facebook page.
- Chris (DWW) mentioned the DWW and Dursley Rambling facebook pages. Chris offered to make Terri an admin so that the trail can be promoted on the DWW page.

## 10. Any other updates from members

### Dursley After Hours

- Danae shared that Dursley After Hours starts again under the Market Place on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2023 for the summer.

### New Town Mayor

- Cllr Alex Stennett (Town Mayor) offered to help promote town events in any way if required (e.g through attendance, provide a welcome/opening etc). Please get in touch with the Mayor/Council Office.

### Pedersen Event

- It was noted that the Pedersen event went well, a new organiser had to step in at last minute. The cycling group involved are making plans for a bigger event in 2024. Visit Dursley were able to carry out some joint promotion of linked events via a poster, including the new Pedersen Trail on the app.

### Heritage Centre

- Andy shared plans to put on a Shakespeare themed exhibition from July. Work is ongoing with others looking at possible links to Dursley.
- There may be opportunities to link the exhibition with other related activities e.g. art, literature (maybe/Kingshill House event (see below)).
- Amy (SDC) keen to promote possible links to Shakespeare across the District and will make contact with Andy outside the meeting/via email to discuss.
- Leah (DTC) happy to look at a Visit Dursley promotional poster if there are enough 'Shakespeare' themed activities to publicise during July, similar to that done for the Pedersen event.

### Kingshill House

- Georgie informed the group that there will be a Shakespeare theatre event at the end of July.
- A regular Dursley Green Drinks social event is starting on a Wednesday, 7:30pm for anyone with an interest in conservation/sustainability/the environment etc.

### VIC/Library

- Sam reported that the Library staff will be visiting the VIC at Stow on the Wolds Library to see how things are run and to get ideas.
- Nailsworth Town Council and TIC volunteers will be visiting Dursley's VIC to get ideas.

- The Library will be starting their reading challenge which runs over the summer holiday period. Dursley are considering developing their own version of the reading challenge with linked activities, music theme to run as a pilot for a year.
- Any joint working opportunities would be very welcome.

### **11. Events List for 2023/24**

The events list circulated and available at <https://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/events1.html> was noted. Please forward any updates to Leah (DTC).

### **12. First year review of 'Visit Dursley' & ideas for any improvements to group**

The following points and ideas were raised:

- It was recognised that the current format, with the Council facilitating/chairing the Visit Dursley meetings quarterly, works well at the moment.
- It's good to see trader/business representatives at the meeting but as a group we could look to encourage more to attend so that we have wider representation. It was recognised that business attendance can be restricted sometimes due to working times and other demands.
- The meetings are positive, the information shared is useful and they are productive.
- The meetings are great for making connections and links within the town, so that we can share knowledge, join up work and activities were possible.
- It provides a great opportunity for people to get together to try and improve and make the town a better place for everyone.

### **13. Date of next & future meetings**

15<sup>th</sup> August 2023, 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.**