



Visit Dursley

Minutes of Meeting

On Zoom - Tuesday 14th May 2024 at 10:30am.

Present:

Leah Wellings (Dursley Town Council (DTC)), Cllr Chris Rowston (DTC), Amy Helliwell (District Tourism Officer), Charlie Marwood (The Engine), Sam Tombs (VIC/Library), Claire Parry (Hewitts), Helen Williams (Helen's Wishes), Karen Crowcombe (The Pulse), Laura Pardoe, Maria Strzewiczek (Kingshill House), Brigid Schoombie (Belles Kitchen), Cllr Tyler White (DTC / Pride) & Julie Orchard (Ashen Plains).

1. Welcome

Leah chaired the meeting; the Council's Town Improvements Committee would consider chairing arrangements at their July meeting following the recent elections/change in Committee membership.

2. Apologies received

Chris Shaw (Dursley Welcomes Walkers (DWW)), Andy Barton (Dursley Heritage Centre), Joe Dymond (Kingshill House) and Miranda Clifton (Cam Parish Council).

3. Confirmation of the 20th February 2024 Minutes

The above minutes were confirmed.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

The following points were noted:

- Leah had been in touch with Cotswold Partnership, who were happy to support the Dursley VIC by setting up a listing on their website. They were also happy for Visit Dursley to add events to their website and the Town Council would be included on their email list for upcoming campaigns.

5. Confirmation of Terms of Reference & Chairing Arrangements 2024/25

The Terms of Reference were confirmed. As per item 1 above, the Chairing arrangement for 2024/25 would be agreed at the next meeting.

6. Update from Stroud District Tourism Officer, Incl. Market Town Vitality Fund

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

- Work had started on new secret scavenger hunts and a food and drinks trail.
- A Visit England grant had been received by the LVEP for a PR photography project – to get new photos. The theme was 'Heros' (unique stories/diversity). A shoot would take place in June around the canal in the Slimbridge area and paddleboarding. Cotswold Tourism are also involved.
- A Market Town meeting would be held in June to discuss the new Market Town Vitality Fund and how this would work. Projects would be looked at for funding August time onwards and into 2025/26.
- **Amy to liaise with Dursley Pride/Tyler White and supply a template for the creation of a Pride Trail on the Discover Stroud Trails app.**
- **Amy to supply latest Footfall data to be circulated with the minutes.**

7. The Action Plan so far

The latest copy of the draft action plan was reviewed for further ideas and lead volunteers as follows:

- Charlie may be able to help Leah with the list of accommodation suppliers, drawing on business survey.
- Dursley lacks accommodation. Could similar to Cirencester's YHA Barrel Store be developed here?
- Charlie happy to help out with USP/Website activities.
- Claire happy to help out with banner/flags project and insider guides.

- Claire, Charlie, Laura happy to help out with the development of new Insider Guides.
- Julie still interested in cycle hire links with Ashen Plains. **Leah to chase contact at District Council.**
- Concerns were raised about promotion of Dursley as the ‘cycling capital of the cotswolds’ due to current limitations with cycling infrastructure and also difficulties with traffic/location for cyclists, cycling out from Dursley - could raise expectations only to disappoint. Need to be careful.
- Some issues with cyclists along Parsonage Street. Need designated cycling areas – Market Place building?
- Bike Trails on the app? The app does refer to cycling advice on some routes.
- In relation to a future website there was some discussion on the use of Discover Dursley or Visit Dursley within address – the group was pretty evenly split on this issue and it wasn’t agreed one way or the other. There was a desire to keep things simple (*the council already has a visitdursley domain*) and also a suggestion to find a way to use both as part of the website design.
- Use of shop windows to display art work / information – e.g. for Summer Festival or Rednock students.
- Use of empty shop units for pop up shops.
- Creation of hubs – for walkers/cyclists – drink, socks, fix a tyre, guides.
- **The action plan would continue to be amended before being returned to Town Improvement Committee meeting.**

8. Town Map

The latest draft specification for the town map and ‘mock-up’ was reviewed for further comments:

- The issue of QR codes was discussed, traders were keen to have two codes one being for businesses. It was suggested we change the reference to businesses to shops and maybe move the codes away from each other. Others felt that one code would be sufficient as long as it took the visitor to a well-designed page where they could clearly see all they might need. **This issue would be resolved with the help of the design professional contracted to produce the map.**
- Julie requested Ashen Plains be marked, being the closest campsite.
- **Leah to feedback to the Town Improvements Committee and gather quotations for map production.**

9. Introduction to New Ideas

a) Promoting the town via ‘friendly photos of the local business owners’ (Claire Parry, Hewitts)

- The photo idea would be to promote the high street and the town, to encourage people to shop here and do business here. Friendly and welcoming.
- This could be incorporated into ‘Insider Guides’, poster with photo collage, leaflet, social media posts or even videos, for example.
- It could be used to promote the town by publishing a series of articles e.g. ‘trader/shop of the month’, that sort of thing. Filling space in windows/ on walls.
- Once we have the content it can be used in any number of ways to help promote the town.
- Laura volunteered to help with some suitable questions for the Insider Guides, building on the template that we have used previously as a starting guide. (see the Visit Dursley pages on website)
- Tyler also suggested a TikTok page for the town.
- **Helen, Laura, Claire and Charlie all volunteered to look at the idea as a project which could be developed in stages.**

b) Herb Towns Initiative in the Cotswolds (Laura Pardoe)

- There is scope for Dursley to become a Herb Town. Cam and Dursley could become a Herb Centre of the Cotswolds and part of a wider network of Herb Towns.
- Laura has a professional marketing background having worked with the National Trust and links to the National Herb Society.
- The Dursley and wider area has a brilliant plant heritage and is great for foraging.
- Kingshill House and Dursley Welcomes Walkers have in the past been involved in foraging walks/events which had been successful.

- Links could be made with activities already happening in the town e.g. Dursley in Bloom, the Secret Garden, the Environmental Sub Committee plans.
- There may be scope to develop a herb trail on the app/hold regular walks.
- Helen suggested shops having pots of herbs outside with recipe cards – would be a good promotion for the town.
- **The overall idea was welcomed, Laura would consider the feedback and also liaise with Amy regarding a possible Herb Trail.**

10. Updates from group members:

The Engine – plans for Silver Street unit (Oxfam) (Charlie Marwood)

- Plans for pop up retail/business/community activity space, as a trial for 2 years. It needs to generate an income to be sustainable.
- Ideas for use very welcome – notices in window and space being painted.

Summer Festival 13th July & The National Gallery Art Road Trip (Leah Wellings/Festive Dursley)

- Plans are underway for the Summer Festival in the Town Centre with the usual stalls, music etc.
- This year the theme will be Art (to tie in with The National Gallery visit to the area, 15th -17th July).
- Cam and Dursley are one of only 18 places in the UK selected to be part of the road trip which celebrates 200 years of the National Gallery in 2024.

Dursley Pride events (Tyler White for Pride)

- Plans are underway for 3 Pride events: a pre-pride event in the town centre/Market Place on Saturday 24th July, the main Pride event on the Rec bank holiday Monday 26th August and an after party event on 7th September.

Library Challenge 13th July to 14th September (Sam Tombs)

The library challenge this year, which includes 9 tasks, would have a sports theme.

Visit Stroud Update (Leah Wellings)

- An update had been circulated with the agenda.
- The graphic for Dursley, designed by Visit Stroud for use in their campaigns to promote the market towns, was welcomed.
- The use of the same colour palette (orange background) should be explored in Visit Dursley's work.

Kingshill House (Maria Strzewiczek)

- A new project had started with a focus on Jazz music. Monthly Jazz Jam sessions had started and at 8pm on 25th July a Jazz workshop would be held.

11. Events List

The events list was noted. Please forward further information to Leah.

<https://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/uploads/events-list-updated-may-2024.pdf?v=1715349021>

12. Dates for 2024/25 meetings:

13th August 2024. 12th November 2024. 11th February 2025. 13th May 2025. 10:30am Start.

- Varying the timings to include some meetings in the evening/different days, was suggested.
- Julie offered to host mid-week at Ashen Plains Camp Site. Tyler suggested leaflets to B&B's to raise awareness.
- **Leah to work with new Visit Dursley Chair once appointed on the meetings schedule/timings and also with Charlie to organise some evening network meetings/opportunities.**

Meeting finished at 12:30pm

Members are encouraged to work together and share information between meetings.